



## BĀBĀ'Ī BEN NŪRĪ'EL

---

**BĀBĀ'Ī BEN NŪRĪ'EL**, a rabbi (*ḥākām*) from Isfahan who, at the behest of Nāder Shah Afšār (r. 1148-60/1736-47), translated the Pentateuch and the Psalms of David from Hebrew into Persian. Three other rabbis helped him in the translation, which was begun in Rabī' II, 1153/May, 1740, and completed in Jomādā I, 1154/June, 1741. At the same time, eight Muslim mollahs and three European and five Armenian priests translated the Qur'ān and the Gospels. The commission was supervised by Mīrzā Moḥammad Mahdī Khan Monšī, the court historiographer and author of the *Tārīk-ejahāngošā-ye nāderī*. Finished translations were presented to Nāder Shah in Qazvīn in June, 1741, who, however, was not impressed.

There had been previous translations of the Jewish holy books into Persian, but Bābā'ī's translation is notable for the accuracy of the Persian equivalents of Hebrew words, which has made it the subject of study by linguists. Bābā'ī's introduction to the translation of the Psalms of David is unique, and sheds a certain amount of light on the teaching methods of Iranian Jewish schools in eighteenth-century Iran. He is not known to have written anything else.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

J. P. Asmussen, "Einige Bemerkungen zu Baba ben Nuriel's Psalmenübersetzung," *Acta Orientalia* 30, 1966, pp. 15-24.

M. Mahdī Eşfahānī, *Neşf jahān fī ta'rīf al-Eşfahān*, ed. M. Sotūda, Tehran, 1340 Š./1961, p. 256.

W. J. Fischel, "The Bible in Persian Translation," *Harvard Theological Review*, Cambridge 1952, pp. 33-42.

G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum* I, London, 1899, pp. 120-21, nos. 159, 160, mss. Or. 4729 and Or. 2452.

A. Netzer, *Montakab-e aš'ār-e fārsī az ātār-e yahūdīān-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1352 Š./1973, introd. pp. 21-22.

*Search terms:*

□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ baba ibn e nuriel baba ebne nouriel baabaa ben nuriel  
baba ebne nuriel