

## Tributes to ‘Abd-Abdallah Qarā‘lī (Chronological Order)

Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī was appointed Bishop of the See of Beirut by the Patriarch Jacob ‘Awwād, in 1716. And as circumstances, then, prevented him from living in Beirut, his permanent See, he headed, guided by the Providence and the Patriarch’s advice, to live in this monastery (Saint John Ḥarrāsh Monastery) that he transformed into a nearly heavenly paradise. Hence, Abdallah became the guardian of that paradise, caring for its nuns as a soulful father, drawing up, in addition to the rules which were adopted as a constitution by the nuns in our Church, psalms also called Ephrameeyate or Mayamer chanted nowadays during the mass. We found a manuscript dated of the author’s era with the following prologue:

“Furthermore, these are illustrious panegyrics composed by Bishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī when he lived in Harras Monastery, and which became an entertainment for the nuns who chanted them from time to time to exorcise boredom and sorrow and were, later, appreciated by some bishops as part of the liturgy mass during the relevant feast days. Hence, the first celebrated was the Annunciation, the first of all secrets: who is that who possesses a brain to realize etc...”

The author’s main aim as well as the appropriation of these Mayamer in our religious rituals are absolutely evident through these lines. And it is no secret to anyone that this bishop made proof of mastery in composing these panegyrics and else, which bespeaks his deep piety and fine poetic talent.

### **Father Ibrahīm Ḥarfūsh, The Lebanese Apostolic Nuncio,**

“The old Monasteries in the Kisirwān: Saint John Harrash Monastery”, *Al-Machrek* magazine, Year 7 (1907), Issue 7, April 1, 1904, page 218

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The reverend Bishop was brimmed by God with wisdom, creativity and monasticism. Witty and knowledgeable, voluble and eloquent, he was cherished by all who met him, venerable to all who confronted him as they vowed him a great esteem and feared him, overwhelmed with humility and devotion. And yet, he was not good-looking, plain with his tanned skin, skinny looking, black-thin beard, lanky face, slender body, delicate long hands, long fingers, big head, protruding eyes, broad forehead, wearing a polite smile as a sign of devotion and humbleness.

**Father Thomas Al Būdī (Al-Labbūdī),**

“Biography of the Honorable ‘Abd-Allah Qarā’ī the Maronite Aleppine, founder of the Lebanese Maronite Order and Bishop of Beirut”, first edited and footnoted by the Jesuit Father Antoine Rabbat in El Machrek magazine, tenth year, Issue number 14, July 15, 1907, page 632.

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And he is the bountiful Most Reverend ‘Abdallah Qarā’ī, the first founder of the Lebanese Maronite Order and its Superior General for sixteen consecutive years. He was appointed Bishop of Beirut which he protected with an apostolic ardour for twenty-four years and bore the burdens pertaining to his position with piety, ascetism and wisdom, which set him as a living example to all his ascetic contemporaries and all their followers.

**The Jesuit Father Antoine Rabbat,**

“Preface to the biography of the Honorable Most Reverend Abdallah Qaraali the Maronite Aleppine (written by his scholar, Father Thomas Al-Boudy [Al-Labboudy]), El Machrek Magazine, tenth year, Issue 14, July 15, 1907, page 625.

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Religious’ biographies, either saints or pastors and leaders are pearls in the beaded crown of the Church they belong to and a pride to the East they brighten. Not to mention that they constitute valuable examples to the parish and enlightening lanterns to its leaders.

And as Bishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī, the man of God, the man of the people, the man of the Order, gathered in his self the virtues of the righteous, and as he proved to possess the greatest leaders’ and workers’ endeavor and wisdom, and bequeathed to the Church and to the whole East an extremely well organized and respected Order which aim has been, for twenty-two years now, righteousness and reform, and left a cultural heritage appreciated as a reference by scholars and as a religious and literary cresset, I considered, since my youth-hood, to gather evidence of his virtues and bounties, enquiring about his contemporaries’ and companions’ news and behaviors as well as about the most crucial events he influenced or that influenced him.

### **Father Būlus Qarā‘ī,**

“Preface” to Allali in the life of Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī, Section 1, Beit Shabāb (Lebanon), 1932, page 1.

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No wonder then, he was loved by his monks who yearned for him, till the end of his life, as a father and as their Superior General and would consider him as so, both in word and deed, even following his appointment as a bishop.

Hence, in the 1714 Council, they did not respond to his urging insistence to be exempted from the General Direction, thus, granting him the wish to head to the hermitage he yearned for; However, at the outcome of the vote - which showed one and only paper without Addallah’s name on it, and it was his - they cheered “as long as you live there would be no other Superior but you. And He, who has overseen your life till now, will oversee your children’s lives after you.”

At the end of the Council all the monks were elated with their Superior General. However, I would be unable to describe their overwhelming spiritual joy. (Al Būdī [Al-Labbūdī], in The Pearls, Page 167, and in The Levant 10, page 730).

And there is no fantasy in Al Būdī’s [Al-Labbūdī] description of the monks’ sorrow and lament when he resolved to become a Bishop. He declared: “Not to mention the elation of those, namely the Elders. And the missionaries, together with guides, showed exultant elation. As for Abdallah and the few monks in Louaize, they were lamenting and moaning and screaming so ardently that

many Elders, missionaries and others, started lamenting, merely laying eyes on them... There is no more eloquent than the moment the news reached the other monasteries, which I leave to the reader's imagination as I find myself incapable of construing the mourning which lasted around a fortnight." (Al Būdī [Al-Labbūdī], in *The Levant* 10, page 734 and *The Pearls*, C 2, Page 296).

Thus, no wonder if they shared his bitterness when, in 1719, he was falsely charged of the most terrible accusation and was humiliated and fined due to his discord with His Beatitude the Patriarch and his nephew Archbishop Semaan °Awwad. No wonder if they condemned throughout three years, along with the majority of the bishops and people, the infringement on integrity and right and instituted a fierce advocacy that crowned, thanks to the Holy See and the French Consul in 1722, with the right unraveled and the integrity recovered before the Church and the country.

### **Father Gerges Mūrānī, The Lebanese Aleppine priest,**

A brief biography of the author, Bishop °Abd-Allah Qarā'ī, in the book entitled "Al-Misbah ar-Ruhbanū fi Sharḥ al Qanūn al-Lubnānī (The Monastic Lamp for the Explanation of the Lebanese Rule) by Archbishop Qarā'ī, founder of the Lebanese Maronite Order and Bishop of the See of Beirut, 1672-1742, prefaced and published by Father Gerges Mūrānī, the Lebanese Aleppine priest, on the occasion of the sixteenth centennial of Saint Anthony the Great, the patron of monks, 1956-356, Beirut, Samya Press 1957, pages 30-31.

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For almost twenty-seven years, judges and legislators in our mountain range, though among clergymen, had been adjudicating and judging all civil actions only subject to the regulations and parameters of the Islamic Sharia Law except for faith and ethics issues, contrary to their predecessors who had proved to judge subject to the book entitled "Summary of the Law", by the Honorable and merciful the late Bishop °Abd-Allah Qarā'ī the Aleppine, and other books.

And that Bishop was one among many other monks who belonged to the Great Lebanese Council and was consecrated by The Honorable Pope Benedict XIV. Hence, we may rationally believe that the Honorable late Archbishop Assemani must have been informed about the conduct of Archbishop Abdallah, mentioned above, and about his fellow clergymen, regarding the separation of civil laws, and accepted it or at least did not counter it as it would be

inconceivable that the late Assemani could have omitted such a detail or could have neglected to question it all through the time he spent in Mount Lebanon, in his capacity as the Apostolic envoy assigned to hold the Council above mentioned. He must also have been informed of the measures regarding the Church status that the, above mentioned, Bishop Qara<sup>l</sup>i, who was a learned specialist of that time, was negotiating.

And Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah’s book includes other documentations and presumptions which constituted the basis for previous fathers and provincials in proceedings and in civil provisions. Some implemented Christian and Dhimmi laws, others the Islamic Sharia Law and some others practices and traditions followed here. It was not mentioned that any of the previous judges contested the difference ...

### **Archbishop Youssef Hubaysh (1823-1845),**

An extract from “a letter sent to the Council held around the spread of Holy Faith, on September 29, 1826”, **Summary of the Law or The Juridic Journal and Personal Status of Christians in Lebanon during the Shihabi Era**, compiled by Bishop ‘Abdallah Qara<sup>l</sup>i, prefaced and edited by Father Būlus Sa‘d Al-Ḥalābī, Beirut, Catholic Press, 1959, pages 29.

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When ‘Abd-Allah Qara<sup>l</sup>i was appointed Bishop of the See of Beirut and started ruling as a Minister in his parish, he noticed a chaotic status in the rules with no relevant referential book among the multitude of references which constituted a bundle<sup>1</sup> of expanded unorganized massed texts including interpretations, mostly contradictory, written in a poor linguistic and literary form, presenting inappropriate legal structures except for the book entitled “The Rules”. Nevertheless, they would all enable a wide interpretation and confusion; and yet, as he was the guardian of people’s interests, money and personal status, justice was a due, equity a sacred duty, and accuracy an obligation in such cases. Not to mention that the established practices in the Lebanese legislation were not specified in these collections.

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<sup>1</sup> [The bundle is a parcel the vagrant uses to collect the charities. It is used as a metaphor and as a title to the book of Bahaa Eldine Al ‘Āmilī (1547-1622), “The Bundle”, as it gathered various analyses, compared to the “bundle” used by a vagrant to gather various objects such as Food, drinks, clothes and others.]

Thereupon, Bishop Qarā'li duly committed himself to rigorous work and wrote the book entitled “Mukhtaṣar ash-Sharī‘ā”, or “Summary of the Law”, copying the bulk from the collection entitled “Rules”, omitting the boring explanations and the author’s jurisprudence which are prejudicial to the Catholic Church. He then included what he selected, through concise expressions, rich structures and explicit connotations, which would classify his book as a comprehensive constitution for the issues of his era, a compendium of the rules scattered in the various collections and a compilation of the oldest Maronite practices. Later, he wrote another book entitled “Al-Fatawa”, “Fatwas” which is a relative application to the texts, easily comprehensible and referred to in issues. Thus, his efforts were proof of his tremendous skills, his scarce tact as well as his proficiency in regulations and laws and his love of order and of the Church Common Good.

Elaborating or amending a law, in our century, requires long months and years of efforts achieved by the most knowledgeable and accomplished legislators. What then, shall we say about one and only person who, without any assistance, elaborated a whole comprehensive constitution for a people whose various authorities, namely Islamic, Druze and Christian were fighting for power?

The essential benefaction that Bishop Qarā'li offered to his friends, mainly, and to Lebanon, in general, granted Lebanon its judicial independence for long years and distinguished it by the civil legislation which is not to be found in any other neighboring government.

Spiritual leaders welcomed Bishop Abdallah’s two books with a craving appetite and forthwith, adopted them as soon as edited, as proven by the numerous copies exchanged and the regulations passed through that era and later till the midst of the nineteenth century. They even rejected all other law collections which represented the erring in the desert rather than the pillar of fire.

And the most eloquent proof of this book value was the decision taken by the Maronite leaders on August 19, 1744 and which stated the following:

Priest Semaan Buṭrus (‘Awwād) Most Reverend Patriarch of Antioch,

“We have agreed on the fact that each Archbishop is to legislate in his See and that no one would legislate in any other See unless due authorization is granted by the relevant Bishop. And the reference books would be those written by our brother Bishop Abdallah, namely Mukhtaṣar ash-Sharia (Summary of the Law) and the Fatawah. And if any of us needed any other referee, thus, he is to be advised under submission of a written authorization.

By letter dated August 19, 1744”

The work “Summary of the Law” constituted the constitution of the Lebanese Maronite Church until the establishment of the courts in 1840 or around that date, as mentioned hereafter.

### **Father Būlus Mas‘ad, the Lebanese Aleppine,**

Preface to the book Summary of the Law or The Juridic Journal and Personal Status of Christians in Lebanon during the Shihabi era, compiled by Bishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī, Beirut, Catholic Press, 1959, pages 22-23

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And through that year [1706], Superior General Archpriest Addelahad gave his Order, formerly named “The Aleppine Order” as its founders were of Aleppine descent, the name of “Lebanese Order” for it was founded in Mount Lebanon just as the Carmelite Order, which Bishop Jacob ‘Awwād agreed upon.

And through the month of August of that year (1708), the monks held an extraordinary early General Chapter for the sake of the brothers sent to Rome. This Chapter consecrated Archpriest Abdel’ahad Superior General and determined some obligations regarding monastery Managers, Provincials and Novices. It also decided the yearly renewal of the Order vows, at Saint Judas Feast Day on June, 19 for it commemorated the consecration of the Order Law. It was also determined that the General Chapter would not be attended but by clergymen holding religious honorifics.

In 1708 the Order settled in a monastery in Bcherray, next to the Holy Valley, named after the Saint Anthony the Great, the first Superior General of the Order who endeavoured to its glory and pride. This Monastery is called Monastery of Saint Anthony of Qozhaya, a Syriac term

meaning the “treasure of life”, famous in the Levant for its miracles and wonders, as well as for exorcizing demons, whatever the visitor’s doctrine and religion. It is a place of pilgrimage for people whatever their origins, religion and status seeking blessing in this declared holy place. [...].

In 1719, Patriarch Jacob ‘Awwād sent Archpriest Abdel’ahad to Damascus and restituted the Maronite Church from the European priests of Jerusalem, which engendered a tremendous animosity between the previously mentioned, Archpriest Abdelahad and Archbishop Simān ‘Awwād, the Patriarch Ya‘qūb’s nephew, who was Bishop of the See of Damascus, and the Patriarch referred to. [...].

In 1721, Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī achieved the interpretation of the Law of the Lebanese Order which proved to be effectively practical, emanating wisdom and righteousness.

### **Bishop Jimānus Farḥāt,**

“History of the Lebanese Order” at the dawn of the Lebanese Order, prepared and submitted by Father Joseph Azzi, Centre of Publishing and Distribution, 1988, pages 129, 137, 152, 153.

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The founders of this Order are initially, Jibrā‘īl Ḥawwā, ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī, Youssef El Biṭīn who were joined by their friend Jirmānus Farḥat. However, whoever consults the history of this institution and examines the facts thoroughly, would realize that its pioneering founder was °Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī.

Laws and rules abode by the Order at its founding, [...] were not drawn up all at once nor were they drawn by a single person. However, all four founders, as well as their assistants, composed them assiduously and achieved the first draft, which comprised a collection of 22 articles, through the year 1694, [...].

In 1699, Jibrā‘īl Ḥawwā and °Abd-Allah Qarā‘ī went to the Patriarch in Qannūbīn asking for his seal of approval on the new Law, [comprising] 22 articles, and his official consecration of the new Order. His Beatitude Patriarch Iṣṭifānus ad-Duwayhī granted them their request although he wrote on the consecration instrument the following: “We do not exempt our children the monks



from the rules of Saint Anthony”. However, Ḥawwā and Qarā‘lī did not accept this expression as rules attributed to Saint Anthony were numerous and diverse and the majority was related to hermits and not to monks, which would create ambiguity and conflicts. Hence, the Patriarch destroyed the instrument of consecration and both receded to their monastery “Mart Moura” empty-handed.

Subsequently to various futile attempts and supplications, ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī reviewed the new Law solely, shortened it and abridged it to fifteen articles only. Hence, His Beatitude Patriarch Ad-Duwayhī conceded and consecrated these laws on June 18, 1700.

Twenty-five years later, three articles dealing with Humility, Patience and Fraternal Love were added to these laws. His Beatitude Patriarch Yaacoub Awwad consecrated all the eighteen articles of the new Law on November 23, 1725.

With respect to a comprehensive historical vision of the Lebanese Order’s Law, it should be noted that these eighteen articles were not sufficient to be consecrated by Papal Bull from the Apostolic Holy See. However, laws and regulations were to define, expressly and accurately, the rights and obligations related to each profession in the Order. Thus, in 1727, the Order, represented by its Superior General Father Mikhā’l (Michael) Iskandar al-Ihdinī, and supported by the notable Monsignor Youssef Chamoun Assemani, referred to the laws drawn up by the Order of Saint Paul, the First Hermit, and consecrated by Papal Bull in 1725. They also drew some of their rules upon the constitutions of the Carmelites Friars’ and the Jesuits Fathers’ Rules. Thus, Pope Clement XII confirmed the Rules and Regulations of the Lebanese Maronite Order by Papal Bull, on March 31, 1732.

Thereupon, this institution which split into two Lebanese and Aleppine (Mariamite) Orders, had become an Apostolic Order. It should be noted that, the Order of Saint Chaaya, best known as the Antonine Maronite Order and established in 1700, adopted these laws themselves and made them confirmed by Papal Bull on December 17, 1740.

The Law is the righteous path for monks to meet God. And the Lebanese Maronite monk considers the eighteen articles to be his first Law after the Holy Bible as they convey the spirituality and spirit of the Syriac Maronite Church. These articles embody, as well, the

spirituality and spirit of Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī who is duly called the monastic and the ecumenical reformer in the Maronite Church. Hence, referring to these eighteen articles and to Bishop Qarā‘lī’s dedicated work, entitled “The Monastic Lamp” through which he explains the eighteen articles, is a genuine return to the pure-clear and nurturing springs that the Second Vatican Council calls us to discover. And if “Christ is the end of the Law” as stated in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Romans, Chapter 10, versus 4), then the aim of reading these articles and reflecting on is, undoubtedly, to follow safely the path leading to Jesus Christ and meet him! And this is the initial wish of an authentic Maronite Lebanese Monk.

### **Father Youssef Mahfouz,**

Laws of the Lebanese Order (18 articles, preamble) at the Foundation of the Lebanese Order, preamble and layout by Father Joseph Azzī, Al Kaslīk, Centre of Publishing and Distribution, 1988, pages 181-182.

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He devoted his life in hermitage to serving God, fellowmen, his Order and Church. He devoted his life to being an ascetic monk, a master and guiding monk, a mentoring monk through his words, teaching and ethics, a reforming monk in the fields of justice, law, ecclesiastics and religion, a preaching monk, judge and legislator, a devoted monk to his God and country, a virtuous ministering Archbishop, fervent and ardent, who barely slept, and hardly ate to feed his body, sacrificing his craving and appetite for food to master his strength and desires. And he who keeps virtuous would remain alive in the hearts of the flocks in his Church, Order and country and eternal in their souls.

### **Father Buṭrus Fahd,**

Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī, Founder of the Maronite Lebanese Aleppine Order, 1694, in the Holy Valley of Qadīshā, during the Patriarchal Era of Iṣṭfānus Ad-Duwayhī, the Distinguished and Learned Maronite Patriarch, (D.M), (D.N), 1993, pages 179-180.

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“The whole nation moaned and his scholars moaned bitterly and the monks wept desperately ravaged. I beseech you, O monks, O families of Beirut, O Sages, end his scholars’ laments. Condole with the elders and all the Khāzins and notables for the loss of the beloved, for the will of God prevails...

“The sower ceased to be, embalm him with scents and fulfill the essential before the one beloved is inhumed. Announce his death, spread the news hastily for tears to flow. Let devotees pray for his soul. O son of Farhat, resurrect from your tomb and chant your hymn of praise, and bemoan that, who held your hand and soothed your heart.

Praise his Beatitude Saint Abdallah and welcome the one eminent and befriend him forever. Share joy and happiness with the virtuous in the kingdom of heaven inherited by all the pious. [...].

### **Archbishop Yūssif Al Dibṣī Al Baskintāwī, the Lebanese Aleppine Priest,**

Extract from a poignant eulogy of Archbishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī and his scholar Father Al-Labbūdī, composed according to the Syriac rhyme, known as “Bayt Anaydiyya”<sup>2</sup>, extract from a work by Father Fahd “Bishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī, founder of the Maronite Lebanese Aleppine Order, 1694”, Al Okaibe, Yuni Printing Press, 1993, page 165.

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A few verses from another long eulogy of Bishop ‘Abd-Allah Qarā‘lī:

Let us weep O hermits of Quḏḏayya,	Mar Līshā’, Ash-Shūf and Rishmayyā,
O hermits of Louaize and Mar Ilyās,	Aṣ-Ṣūr, Ṭamīsh and Rā’s,
And Saint Peter in Kouraim at-Tīn	And in Rūmiyyah, Marchaleen,
O Zūq Muṣbiḥ, refreshed by streams and rainfall	For you embraced this pious soul
Louaize cradles his blessed shrineHe,	who visits and gets blessed by the divine
In floods of tears ends:	And the elect of God laments

<sup>2</sup> Meaning literally: among the deaths. It means, in the context, the two first words of the poem which formed “opening verses” adopted as a name for a type of rhyme in poetry.

Quoted from Father Boutros Fahd, *Bishop 'Abd-Allah Qarā'ī, founder of the Maronite Lebanese Aleppine Order in 1694*, Al-Okaibe, Uni Printing Press, 1993, pages 165-166.

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He was a founder as a priest, a reformer as an Archbishop. He worked since the founding of the Order and until his death, relentlessly and tirelessly, making proof of extreme dedication, love, altruism and ardor to enrich his ascending Order as well as the Maronite Church and the homeland through legislations, laws and the liturgical and religious ritual works. He was the most endeavoring to hold the Lebanese Council which, in 1736, reformed the Maronite Church in the Monastery of Our Lady of Louaize, to a great extent. He was also the most enthusiastic about applying its regulations.

### **Father Georges Nāṣīf**

Summary of Bishop Qarā'ī's life, First Edition, Zūq Muṣbiḥ -Lebanon, The Maronite Order Press, 2007, page 49.

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He was renowned for his yearning to prayer, work, hermitage, fasting, austerity and holy being and he largely contributed to the religious reform of the Maronite Church. Hence, he boldly worked for the Lebanese Council which was held in the Monastery of Our Lady of Louaize in 1736 and met success due to his investment. Moreover, a multitude of Eastern Orders adopted the new Laws of the Order through their foundation.

Archbishop Qarā'ī, who imposed the compulsory education, was renowned for wide spreading education and culture and was concerned about erecting a school next to each monastery. Thus, after the death of its founder, the Order pursued its educational mission and opened, organized and modernized schools in Lebanon and abroad, culminating in the opening of a university.

“Archbishop 'Abd-Allah Qarā'ī...the file of a new Saint from Lebanon”, 29/10/2007. Ref. to the electronic site: <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/newspecialar:now>

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