



## Archbishop 'Abdallah Qarā'ī Biography and Achievements (1672 -1742)<sup>1</sup>

### The Childhood and Adolescence of Archbishop 'Abdallah

'Abdallah was born in Aleppo on September 8, 1672, to parents known for their piety and good reputation. His father was Mikha'ūl and his mother was Helen, daughter of al-Ḥāj Ya'qūb Barakāt. His father named him 'Abd-ul-'Aḥad after his great grandfather<sup>2</sup>, hoping their son would grow to be a good servant to God. His parents were on the greater side of the devoutness and were somewhat affluent. They raised him as best they could and exposed him to all education accessible in that era. He had four brothers and two sisters. When he was old enough, they sent him to study the Arabic and Syriac languages under expert scholars. He continued to study both languages until he was 12 years old, at which point he began to peruse books on asceticism until he turned 14. By then he had begun to show signs of asceticism and worship. His father then enrolled him to learn grammar such as morphology and syntax under the famous Aleppian Sheikh Sulaymān an-Naḥawī, and then under the Maronite Father Buṭrus at-Tūlāwī as his father wanted him to also learn the Italian language, in order to use it in trade and commerce and working at the port. His father saw potential in his son's incisive mind, as well as great decorum, and he was liked by one and all.

<sup>1</sup> This biography is derived briefly, with some changes and some other references, from this book: Buṭrus Fahd, *Al-Muṭran 'Abdallah Qarā'ī mu'assis ar-Rahbaniyyah al-Mārūniyyah al-Ḥalabiyyah sanat 1694 fī Wādī Qādīshā al-Muqaddas fī 'ahd al-Baṭriyark al-Mārūnī al-'aẓīm Istfānus ad-Duwayhī 'allamat dahrihi* (Lebanon: Uni Printing Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> The Qarā'ī family is one of the most notable and oldest Aleppian families, and it is written and pronounced in two ways: either Qarā'ī (with the hamza) or Qarā'ī (with the 'ayn). The family is originally not Christian and descended from the great grandfather, 'Abdul 'Aḥad. There is disagreement over his descent, where some claim that he was Persian and left his homeland during the 16th century, while others believe that he emigrated from Lebanon during the 17th century. Qarā'ī is a Turkish word meaning black hand, which was the epithet Turkish rulers used for him, for the blackness of his hands, and this epithet came to be applied to the whole family. Buṭrus Fahd, 7–9.

## The Monastic Way

When ‘Abdallah turned sixteen, he grew more interested in monasticism and would secretly wonder about the means to realize his desire, because in the city of Aleppo and its surroundings there were no monasteries, while Mount Lebanon was popularly known to have been home to monks and monasteries in the name of Saint Anthony, Father of monks. ‘Abd-ul ’Aḥad could see no possible way to head there due to the long distance. Even so he did not possess the courage to express his feelings to his parents and hid his desire from them as his father could not possibly accept to send him to an remote land at such a young age. However, ‘Abd-ul ’Aḥad persisted in this desire, sometimes it would wane and other times it would intensify.

This young man remained like this until he was eighteen. He was stricken with disease but was completely cured by some divine circumstances. Bedridden and too weak to move, he would entertain himself by reading spiritual books, one of which was *Bustān al-Ruhbān* ‘Abd-ul ’Aḥad (*The Garden of the Monks*), and *Sullam al-Fada’il* (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*) by Saint John [Climacus] of the Ladder<sup>1</sup>, as well as biographies such as that of Saint Anthony of the Desert, Saint Macarius, and Saint Arsenius. His heart was moved with an intensity that surpassed any time before, and he became more than ever determined to leave the corporeal world and bear the yoke of Christ.

Following his recovery, ‘Abd-ul-’Aḥad Abdallah returned to spending time with his friends, namely Gabriel (Jibra’īl) bin Tūmā Ḥawwā, Yūsuf bin al-Baṭn, and Gabriel bin Farḥāt. They shared the desire for asceticism and were always engaged in the study of all things spiritual and reading the books of saints. When ‘Abd-ul-’Aḥad Abd-Allah confided with Gabriel Ḥawwā about his intentions, the latter expressed the same, and in turn they each promised to pursue this together. Yūsuf bin al-Baṭn found out and vowed to them that he would follow the same path. Ḥawwā and ‘Abd-ul-’Aḥad Abd-Allah agreed that they would each seek each of their fathers’ permission. Ḥawwā had his father’s consent to pursue his wishes and advised him to take some merchandise and head for Tripoli as it is the port of Bsharrī, seat of the Maronite patriarchate. Patriarch Iṣṭfān ad-Duwayhī was from the village of Ihdin and also related to the Ḥawwā family. Thus, Gabriel headed there on the pretext of trade, upon his father's advice, in order to explore

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<sup>1</sup> [Saint John Climacus (525-606 AD) was a Syrian man who lived in the monastery of Saint Catherine. Known as the Ladder in reference to his famous book *Sullam al-Faḍa’il* (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*), which is made up of thirty rungs or chapters.]

the area and test his resolve. He had his father's promise of support whatever his choice would be.

Gabriel Ḥawwā shared with 'Abdallah his discussion with his father and his intention to travel. 'Abd -Allah was then encouraged to confront his father and told him of his determination to accompany Ḥawwā. However, his father refused due to his weak and frail physique. Finally, after persistent pressing, his father promised to send him to Jerusalem by way of Damascus, after which he would return by sea to Jaffa and then Tripoli. From there he would visit the Patriarchal seat in Qannūbīn along with many other monasteries, where he could observe asceticism and if he possessed the ability to live in recluse or not. Meanwhile, Gabriel Ḥawwā headed for Tripoli with his merchandise on October 1, 1693, with only his parents aware of his secret.

A year later in 1694, and having obtained his parents' consent, 'Abdallah left the city of Aleppo for Jerusalem with Yūsuf al-Baṭn. They arrived in Mount Lebanon and then headed with Gabriel Ḥawwā on the Thursday of Corpus Christi to the monastery of Qannūbīn in the holy valley, where they met Patriarch Iṣṭfān ad-Duwayhī and told him of their ascetic intentions after having kissed his blessed hands. They finally earned the Patriarch's blessing through the intervention of some of his bishops on the condition that they commence immediately, whereby they would set up home at the monastery of Mart Moura in Ihdin.

### **The Test of Monastic Life in the Monasteries of Lebanon**

After listening to these three young men, 'Abd Allah and his two Aleppian companions, the Patriarch expressed his desire for them to develop, as per their words, a constitution based on the commands of the ancient saints, such as Anthony, Basil, Ephram, and create a new order fit for them and others. They commenced work at the monastery of Qannūbīn, doing what beginners usually did once they joined a monastery. After a while, Gabriel al-Blūzānī, Maronite Archbishop of Aleppo and founder of the monastery of Ṭamīsh, extended an invitation to 'Abd Allah and his companion Yūsuf al-Baṭn after getting the approval of their older brother, Gabriel Ḥawwā, who preferred to stay at Qannūbīn. They moved to Ṭamīsh for almost three months and examined how its monks and nuns were living. They were nine monks plus Archbishop al-Blūzānī and a large number of nuns who lived in a section of the monastery away from the monks. They found that these monks shared the same customs and traditions as the other

monastic communities in the country, monks did not have to take the monastic vow, they did not abide by the concept of sacred obedience, and wore the monastic habit on any agreed day or as per the suggestion of the superior at the monastery. Oftentimes it was up to the archbishops, and rarely the superiors of the monastery, to oblige the novitiates to wear the monastic schema habit. Their commitment to the vow of monasticism was without the declaration of intentions. The superior, who presided over them in the absence of the bishop, was not addressed by his honorific title but simply by his name.

Thus the heads of all the monasteries were only addressed by their name: monk so and so. The title “Father Superior” did not even exist amongst the followers of Saint Maron. They also had no time frame for the experience of novitiates at the monastery, nor any gestures or genuflections by monks for their superiors, nor laws for the discipline of monks who commit mistakes. Rather they were proceeding with the naivety and simplicity of the righteous but with danger to the non-righteous, to borrow the words of Archbishop ‘Abd Allah. Their kitchen, pantry, laundry and tailoring were all taken care of by the nuns who were living in isolation from their male counterparts, as was the custom in those lands. However, the church was shared by everyone.

The ascetic life of abstinence lead by the monks of the Ṭamīsh monastery appealed to ‘Abd-Allah and Yūsuf al-Baṭn. After deliberation with Gabriel Ḥawwā, resident at the monastery of Qannūbīn, the two decided to join Ṭamīsh provided that the nuns were moved out of the monastery. They felt satisfied at the monastery and in their fellowship with the monks but opposed the idea of sharing the monastery with the women. Therefore, they corresponded with Archbishop al-Blūzānī asking him to remove the women from the monastery in order for them to stay there but he refused.

### **Establishing a New Monastic Order**

When Archbishop Gabriel al-Blūzānī refused to separate the nuns from the monks, in compliance with laws and for the men’s peace of mind, ‘Abdallah abandoned the idea of joining the monastery of Ṭamīsh and returned alone to Ḥawwā in Qannūbīn while Yūsuf al-Baṭn remained at Ṭamīsh awaiting to hear from ‘Abd Allah. In 1694, after the bloody events in the Jibbah (Qādishā) region, the Patriarch left Qannūbīn and embarked on a tour of Batrūn and Byblos and their surrounding villages collecting the annual tithes. He brought along ‘Abdallah

and Gabriel as his deacons. For them, the purpose was to visit Byblos and Batrūn and examine life there in order to discern whether it suited them. In 1695 ‘Abdallah and Gabriel returned to Qannūbīn, where they stayed until the beginning of the summer. His Beatitude offered them the monastery of Mart Moura in Ihdin, on August 1<sup>st</sup> of the same year. Filled with gratitude and having obtained his permission, they went up to the monastery of Mar Sarkīs (Saint Serge) in Ihdin having brought along their brother Yūsuf al-Baṭn from Ṭamīsh. When the three met again at Mar Sarkīs, they decided to reside together in the monastery of Mart Moura, which until then they had not found their right fit in the ancient monasteries of Lebanon. These were the wishes of Patriarch ad-Duyahī, and Archbishop Jirjis Binyāmīn al-Ihdinī, who helped and advised them in their pursuit of monasticism.

In September of that year, they finally agreed on Mart Moura in Ihdin. During then, Gabriel’s parents, who were on their way back from a trip to Jerusalem, visited and requested that the Patriarch ordain their son Gabriel a priest before their return to Aleppo. The Patriarch agreed and ordained both Gabriel and ‘Abdallah in Ihdin as deacons. On the second day, Gabriel roamed as a priest without donning the monastic habit and rather carried himself as a common priest. This was on November 10, 1695. After they all decided to live at the monastery of Mart Moura, they began preparations for its reconstruction as most of the monastery was dilapidated. It housed only one monk and an old man named Antonius, who had joined them in their monastic fraternity. The construction and restoration works took two months, the expenses of which were covered by Reverend Gabriel Ḥawwā and deacon Yūsuf al-Baṭn while Deacon ‘Abdallah had no money to contribute.

### **Father Ḥawwā as the First Superior**

In November of 1695, the Hamada clan, who had been the rulers back then, were the cause of much terror in the region. So they left the monastery of Mart Moura and took refuge in the monastery of Qannūbīn, where they spent the winter as the cold in Ihdin was intense and the snow very thick. Whilst in Qannūbīn, the Patriarch insisted that Ḥawwā, al-Baṭn and ‘Abdallah wear the schema habit, which they accepted but did not take any monastic vows. On November 10, 1695, the Patriarch placed it over their heads following prayers, as had been the norm throughout the region’s monasteries. They decided amongst themselves to assign Father Gabriel Ḥawwā. After a while, Patriarch ad-Duwayhī left for the region of Kisirwān fearing the Pasha of

Tripoli. They moved to Tripoli in early 1696 and rented a flat at the monastery run by the Jesuit Fathers, where they spent the whole winter away from the severe snow and cold of Ihdin.

### **Possession of Mar Ilshāʿ (Saint Ilshāʿ) in Bsharrī**

In the early spring of 1696, they ascended to the monastery of Mart Moura and completed the rest of the construction work during the summer. The three signed a deed amongst themselves pledging that if they ever were to be separated, they would take no money with them. It was signed by Archbishop Jirjis Binyāmīn. They then deliberated over the condition of the monastery and the heavy snow conditions during the winter and decided it would be wiser to reside in a warmer place the coming winter rather than at Mart Moura. The people of the village of Bsharrī had been calling on them to move to the monastery of Mar Ilshāʿ in the holy valley (in the belly of the Great Rock, upon which the town of Bsharrī rests). Like this both Father Superior Ḥawwā and ʿAbdallah went to the monastery and purchased it with the consent of the townspeople. The Father Superior moved to the monastery some of the monks who came to join their monastic order and assigned Deacon Yūsuf al-Baṭn to deputize for him during his absence as the president was responsible for running the monastery. On the other hand, ʿAbdallah was assigned to the monastery of Mart Moura.

### **The Ordainment of ʿAbdallah**

The Deacon ʿAbdallah was ordained priest at the monastery of Mart Moura on December 14, 1696, the feast day of Saint John the Cross, whereby Archbishop Jirjis Binyāmīn performed on him the ritual of the laying on of hands. During the winter season, it was customary for Ihdin’s residents to go down to Zghartā to spend the winter there. At the behest of the Superior, ʿAbdallah joined them to serve as a teacher at Mar Yūsuf (Saint Joseph) school in Zghartā. The monks went down to spend their winter at the monastery of Mar Ilshāʿ in the valley and the Father Superior handed over the running of the monastery of Mart Moura until the spring to the monk Antonius al-Shaykh. In the spring of 1697, the monks went back up to the monastery and so did ʿAbdallah, who spent all summer there teaching the boys at the monastery.

### **His Collating the Monastic Constitution**

During this period (1697) Father Superior Ḥawwā and the monks were greatly interested in the collating of monastic laws and choosing the best books written by the Eastern fathers. Many

monks joined them, some of whom began wearing the monastic schema at the hands of Father Superior Ḥawwā, without taking a vow, as was the Maronite tradition, and some of them were novitiates. Father Superior Ḥawwā preferred to have the novitiates' experience with the cape (or schema habit) like that of the Western rite monks (Carmelites and Capuchins), in that if a monk was not fit for monastic life, he would be divested of his schema habit and sent back to the corporeal world.

However the Patriarch prevented him from applying this measure and made it imperative that whoever wore the schema habit would by default relinquish the power to ever take it off. He was enraged at some monks who had worn the schema habit with just the mere intention of experimentation on the basis that they may not be prepared for lifelong monasticism. However, and after some time, his monks all became established in monastic life. In this year (1697) a constitution was collated with twenty-two chapters. It regulated monastic administration, the concept of vows, and the code of conduct for monks. Four counselors general would be chosen by the monastic community to aid the superior general in the management of affairs and the selection of abbots. The superior general is appointed to a term of three years, at the end of which the general monastic assembly would be held on November 10 in honor of the first day of monasticism.

### **The First General Chapter**

A general chapter was held on November 10, 1698, by which Father Gabriel Ḥawwā was established as their superior general along with four counselors general, including 'Abdallah Qarā'ī, Yūsuf al-Baṭn and Gabriel Farḥāt, who had left Aleppo to join his comrades in Qannūbīn in 1696. 'Abdallah Qarā'ī was appointed abbot of the monastery of Mar Ilishā' and Gabriel Farḥāt abbot of the monastery of Mart Moura. Superior General Ḥawwā enjoyed the qualities of virtuousness, power of imagination, empathy, cognizance and high morals. But he was ill tempered and fond of solitude and the quiet, whereby he could read, meditate, and connect with the Creator. He preferred the pen over being at the helm and thus had composed poetry on classes...



### **Conflict within the Monastic Order over its Purpose and the Enactment of the Constitution**

The noble qualities of Father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī prepared him to address the fierce dispute that arose that year, between him and most of the monks on one hand, and Father Ḥawwā on the other hand, regarding the purpose of the order and the roles of the counselors-general. Fr. Superior Ḥawwā preferred a monastic order dedicated to preaching, missionary work, teaching and spiritual exercises, and for superiors general to serve life terms like the Jesuit Fathers, with whom Ḥawwā had mixed and whose example he wanted his monastic order to follow. ‘Abdallah and most of the monks, on the other hand, wanted a secluded cenobitic monastic way of life, which did not concern itself with proselytizing and education except whenever necessary, as well as calling for a limited term presidency and preserving the role of the counselor. This fundamental dispute between Ḥawwā and ‘Abdallah almost disbanded the monastic order while still in its infancy.

Superior General Ḥawwā realized that his desire would not transpire and advised them to seek the Patriarch to approve their new constitution and upon which to take their vows. They walked to Qannūbīn seeking the Patriarch and had the constitution approved in the presence of a few archbishops. He wrote the following confirmation statement: “We do not absolve our children monks from the laws of Saint Anthony the Great.” It was this statement that caused them to regretfully reject his confirmation as they explained to the Patriarch that the laws of Saint Anthony were many and mostly devoted to anchoritic monks rather than those living in monastic communities. It meant that accepting this statement carried many ramifications for their monastic order. They thus pleaded with the Patriarch to relieve them from this statement. Angered by their insistence, he rescinded the confirmation and they returned desponded to their monastery.

### **The Conflict Ends with Father Ḥawwā Resigning and the Election of ‘Abdallah**

This major disagreement ended only after the resignation of Gabriel Ḥawwā as superior general and the election of ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī by a general chapter held prematurely in 1700 without the knowledge of the two men. ‘Abdallah became the new superior general after having accepted an order by the Patriarch to share the governing of the monastic order with Father Ḥawwā, who was given the monastery of Mart Moura and ‘Abdallah the monastery of Mar Ilishā‘. The monks were offered the choice to follow either superior. Only one schema monk and a few novitiates followed Ḥawwā before they dispersed by the end of the year. ‘Abdallah remained at Mar



Ilīshāʿ in the valley, looking after his monastic community with fatherly care, maintaining harmony between him and the counselors general, and making sure respect was maintained for the constitution, which he had the upper hand in formulating. After previous failed attempts and after having finally redrafted and shortened it to fifteen chapters, the constitution was confirmed by the Patriarch on June 18, 1700. A copy is preserved at the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize. The monks, who were twelve, rejoiced and took their vows in compliance with the wishes of Father ʿAbdallah.

Qarāʿlī took over the general presidency on March 14, 1700. On the following day, both him and Gabriel Ḥawwā, who resigned from the presidency, went to the Patriarch ad-Duwayhī to inform him of what had transpired. When the Patriarch learned the news, he ascertained that Ḥawwā had stepped down at his own behest and certain that this was best for the growth of the monastic order and also his own peace of mind. Then the Patriarch, who was pleased with the news, congratulated Qarāʿlī and addressed a message to the monks asking them to obey Qarāʿlī. They then bid the Patriarch farewell and returned to Mar Ilīshāʿ, where the general chapter was held.

### **Confirmation of the Constitution**

A few days later, Father Ḥawwā went to see Superior General Qarāʿlī, of his own accord, and offered to accompany him to visit the Patriarch in another attempt to have the constitution confirmed. They both left for Qannūbīn. The Patriarch was in the company of four archbishops, two of whom accepted it (Archbishop of Ihdīn, Jirjis Yammūn and Archbishop Yaʿqūb ʿAwwād al-Ḥaṣrūnī) while the other two rejected it. However, the Patriarch did not confirm the constitution and the two men returned to the monastery disappointed and dejected.

They made another attempt soon after, and the two opposing archbishops from the previous time were still steadfast in convincing the Patriarch to turn away from confirming the constitution. Their later attempts were still in vain. Qarāʿlī realized that had no choice but to reduce the constitution to just fifteen chapters. He then visited the Patriarch in Qannūbīn, together with two of his monks, and insisted incessantly that he confirm the constitution. The Patriarch finally acquiesced and confirmed the constitution with the Patriarchal seal in June of 1700. The new constitution, which Father ʿAbdallah reduced to fifteen chapters, is arranged as mentioned in his memoirs under the following headings: obedience, chastity, poverty, monastic habit, hermitage,

travel, sustenance, handiwork, silence, mental prayer, verbal prayer, the sacrament of penance, conduct and the ailing.

As for the Patriarch's text of confirmation, it reads:

“The approval has been granted after we have examined all fifteen chapters and the introduction, which have been put in place for our dear children monks, so that they may honor and by which to walk together the one right path in observance of the vows taken by them. He who fails to comply with whatever is contained within these chapters would not be considered errant unless the mistake was grave, especially if this mistake posed a stumbling block for his brethren and others. For we, by our Apostolic Authority and the counsel of our honored brethren archbishops, confirm it for them and exhort them to behave in accordance it, so that they may observe the Good Hereafter. Written on 18 June 1700”

+ The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East  
The Despicable Stephanos

This is the solid foundation (constitution) that was established by Father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, its original founder, on the dawn of his reign of the Lebanese Aleppian Order. He erected this magnificent bastion that has withstood the storms of time and the whirlwind of events that swept through Lebanon from 1700 until now. After the passing of all this time, the monks still feel the same feelings that filled the heart of this pious and passionate monk, and the hearts of his brethren monks, from joy and delight in their victory with this grand confirmation of his beloved monastic order after the countless trials and tribulations over the years. When Father ‘Abdallah returned to his monastery and announced this splendid victory to his monks, he took advantage of their excitement and invited them to make their vows under the official constitution and happily obliged. They numbered together 13 monks with their superior general, Father ‘Abdallah and the others were Ya‘qūb al-Ghazūrī, Yuḥannā al-Bānī al-Shimālī, Ya‘qūb Arutin al-Ḥalabī, ‘Abdallah al-Bshirrānī, Mūsā al-Blūzāwī, Mīkhā‘īl al-Ḥalabī, of Syriac origin, Yuḥannā al-Hidnānī or al-Ihdinī, Gabriel al-Shnan‘ūrī, Manṣūr ash-Shabābī, and Yuḥannā al-Ghazīrī.

### **The Division of the Monastic Order into Two Branches by Order of Patriarch**

After the monks took their vows under their new constitution, Father Gabriel Ḥawwā stayed at the monastery for short intervals at a time as he seemed unable to settle there for long before taking off to other places and remaining absent for long periods without consulting the Father Superior. This caused a rift between both men, which was exacerbated as he was very neglectful in both obedience and observing the constitution, and some of the monks began to cast aspersions on him. It escalated to the point where he went to the Patriarch complaining about Father Superior ‘Abdallah. He had many complaints, namely that the Father Superior wanted to abandon and completely leave the monastery of Mart Moura. The Patriarch then sent after ‘Abdallah. When he came before him, he found no reason to reprimand ‘Abdallah, and instead preached both men about empathy and then sent the Archbishops Jirjis Yammūn and Ya‘qūb °Awwād to the monastery of Mar Ilishā’. They interviewed the monks one by one and listened to their testimonies on how they voluntarily chose ‘Abdallah as their superior general. When the archbishops left, Father Superior Qarā‘ī addressed a letter to the Patriarch informing him of his willingness to step down in favor of Father Gabriel. The Patriarch, in turn, called on the latter to return to the monastery of Mar Ilishā’ as the reinstated superior general, but Ḥawwā declined claiming that even if he were to accept, the monks themselves would not, thus making it difficult for him to live with them.

When the Patriarch found that his endeavor was in vain, he ruled for a split between the two parties, resulting in two orders, and sent after Father ‘Abdallah. When he was present before him, he informed him of his decision to divide them, as the following reads:

“This has been written for the purpose of our having examined the dispute between our children, the Aleppian monks, which is that Reverend Gabriel Ḥawwā is focused on missionary work and salvation of souls while Reverend ‘Abdallah Qarā‘ī is more focused on asceticism, prayer and spiritual exercises. So we acquiesced to their requests, and have ordered Reverend Gabriel to be bound to the monastery of Mart Moura in Ihdin and its buildings, and Reverend ‘Abdallah controls Mar Ilishā’, the valley in Bsharrī, and its surroundings. As for the livelihood of the brethren, who were living with them as per their contract of union, it shall be divided between them equally, after the fulfillment of debt if there is any, and each of the monks could take

whatever provisions and clothing they may need. They will live in obedience of either superior they choose. This has the consent and acceptance of both sides. We ask the Just Almighty to look after them and help them and others in achieving salvation. This was drafted at the Monastery of Qannūbīn on the fifth of November of the year 1700 of the divine incarnation.”

### Despicable

Stephanos the Antiochian Patriarch +

After they learned of the Patriarch's decision, they both went in their separate ways and began the division as had been arbitrated. As the monks had the freedom of choice, only one monk followed Father Ḥawwā and the rest followed Father Qarā'ī. Then the provisions were divided amongst them in proportion to the number of monks each of the fathers had. This is how the separation ensued, turmoil was no more and quiet and calm pervaded both monasteries.

### **Father Farḥāt Abandons Monasticism**

The situation had almost calmed down following the split before the nascent order encountered a new problem. Reverend Gabriel Farḥāt had gone to the Patriarch and informed him of his desire to secede from the monastic order. The Patriarch then sent after Qarā'ī and told him of Farḥāt's desire to leave and live alone in Zghartā and teach the children there because, as he claimed, he felt weak bodied and lacked the strength to keep up with them. So he decided to leave the monastic order in front of the Patriarch and in spite of Father Qarā'ī's attempts to change his mind.

### **A New Dispute Between Reverend Ḥawwā and his Archbishop Jirjis al-Ihdini**

When Father Ḥawwā withdrew along with those who followed him to Mart Moura, he began to observe Jesuit traditions of monasticism: tolling the bell before lunch for the examination of conscience, visiting the sick in villages and towns, permitting women to enter the monastery's church, not adhering to daily fasting without the superior's permission, reciting the following words after the Marian devotion is delivered at church prior to bedtime: “O Saint Ignatius, pray for us.” The intention behind that is to be fully versed in the law of Saint Ignatius. They admitted novitiates other than those who had followed Father Ḥawwā after the split and the monastic order continued to grow. Love spread between the two divided orders, and the monks of Father

Ḥawwā began to drop by the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ, whose monks would remark that what had happened was a measure of God and that it was all good in the end.

By the end of 1701, a dispute arose between Father Gabriel Ḥawwā and his Archbishop Jirjis Binyāmīn (of Ihdin, who later left the episcopacy to become a Jesuit monk) and intensified to the point where they took their dispute to the Patriarch. Prior to this, several of Father Ḥawwā's monks had retired from his order leaving him in a state of deep sorrow and great distress, where he found himself back at the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ to propose to Father Qarāʿlī his leaving the monastery of Mart Moura and returning to Mar Ilishāʿ as one of Qarāʿlī's monks but without having to take the vow. Superior General Qarāʿlī consulted with his brethren but they declined his return unless he took his vows and submitted to the constitution as one of them. Left with no choice, Ḥawwā returned to the monastery of Mart Moura and reluctantly made peace with Archbishop Jirjis. However, he did not last long enough there as some of his monks had abandoned him, and he lacked the patience and forbearance. So he approached the Patriarch seeking authorization to travel to Malta in order to fetch a printing press that would benefit the community. With the Patriarch's permission, he first headed to Tripoli in October of 1740 and from there to Malta. When the purpose behind his trip did not succeed, his destination was then Rome. As for his monks, there were only two left at Mart Moura, while some had abandoned monasticism and returned to the corporeal world and others had joined the monks of Father Qarāʿlī.<sup>1</sup>

### **Stability, Organization and Prosperity**

Monasticism began to grow and flourish under Father ʿAbdallah. His monks were keen to honor their new constitution. On November 10, 1702, the anniversary of the establishment of the monastic order — the same day in 1695 when Patriarch ad-Duwayhī placed the schema habit over the heads of the three founders — and before the expiration of the three year period for the presidency (it was supposed to end in March of 1702), a General Chapter was held whereby Father Qarāʿlī was elected superior general for the second time. Soon after, the number of monks would continue to grow until the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ was full by 1704 and plans for expansion were underway. On November 10, 1705, Father Qarāʿlī was elected superior general

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<sup>1</sup> With regards to what happened to Father Ḥawwā after his arrival in Rome, and what happened to the monastery of Mart Moura, see: Buṭrus Fahd, *ibid.* p. 41.

by another General Chapter for the third time in a row. At the same time, all the monks took their fourth vow, which was to not demand presidencies. The Superior General then shortened the *cheirotonia* (*laying on of hands*) ritual of wearing the schema habit, borrowing the ritual of vows from the Discalced Carmelite monks.

### **The Wise Leader**

As for his wise leadership, we summarize the main points of Father Tūmā al-Labbūdī on this subject. After the establishment of both Mart Moura and Mar Ilishāʿ, and after all disagreements that took place, ʿAbdallah remained at the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ and established a monastic way of life as explained previously.

### **Farḥāt Returns to Monasticism**

Father Gabriel Faraḥat had, as aforementioned, abandoned monasticism in 1700 and lived alone in the village of Zghartā where he taught some children there. In 1705, he returned to the monastic order as he had fallen sick and the doctors forbade him from staying in Zghartā due to its unsuitable climate. Farḥāt feared for his health and asked Father Qarāʿlī to allow him back at the monastery, who happily consented. It was in that same year that he was appointed Superior General of the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ for the qualities of his acumen and heedfulness... He was sharp tempered, with great resolve, widely read, a philosopher and poet, and greatly esteem amongst the elders and younger for his eloquence and great discernment.

### **The Monastery of Saint Isaiah and Father Sulaymān al-Mishmishānī**

In the same year (1705), Father Sulaymān al-Mishmishānī, who was abbot at the monastery of Our Lady of Ṭamīsh, took the constitution and with the consent of its founder, Archbishop Gabriel al-Blūzānī, moved to the monastery of Saint Isaiah along with monks who followed him. They adopted the constitution and whenever they came across something they had trouble understanding, they would seek the advice of Father Qarāʿlī.

### **Monasteries Founded by Father ʿAbdallah Qarāʿlī**

When the monastery of Mar Ilishāʿ became overcrowded with monks, Qarāʿlī considered establishing new monasteries across Lebanon and abroad; Rashmayyā, the Druze heartland as he called it, Zūq Muṣbiḥ in Kisirwān, Quzḥayyā in the north, Rome in Italy, Bayt Shabāb in Matn, amongst other areas. This prosperity and growth was not confined to his nascent monastic order

and his Maronite community, but extended to various other Catholic denominations, as well as independent branches in congregations that had adopted the Aleppian monastic constitution. Among the monasteries founded by Superior General Qarā'ī was that of Mar Yuḥannā aṣ-Ṣāyigh (Saint John) in Rashmayyā in February 1706. The monastery was already home to two resident monks, Ibrahīm al-Ghazīrī, who did not join the order and remained alone in teaching the children in the village, and the other monk was Father Hanna from Rashmayyā who elected to join this monastic order. Upon acquiring the monastery, Qarā'ī established a school for children.

Towards the end of 1706, Father Ignatius Salhab al-Haqlānī,<sup>1</sup> owner of the monastery of Louaize, contacted Superior General Qarā'ī asking him to take over the monastery, which he did following deliberation with his counselors general. The monastery boasted plenty of properties, but it was itself of mediocre structure and poorly equipped in addition to its debts. Thus, necessary structures were built, and the church became equipped with all required essentials. In 1707, one year after founding the monastery of Mar Yuḥannā aṣ-Ṣāyigh in Rashmayyā, the monastic order was handed the monastery of Saint Anthony Sir (also in Rashmayyā). In that same year, the order was also given the monastery of Mar (Saint) Antonius of Qūzḥayyā from Archbishop Yuḥannā Ḥabqūq. The monastery of Santi Marcellino e Pietro al Laterano in Rome was entrusted to them and monks from Lebanon were sent there (see details in Buṭrus Fahd, pp. 62-69). In 1712, the monastery of Saint Peter was opened in Kuraym al-Tiū, beneath the town of Beit Shabāb overlooking the Valley of the Cross and the sea (Abbot Fahd, pp. 69-72).

### **Changing the Name of the Monastic Order**

In 1707, Qarā'ī preferred to change the name of monastic order from Ḥalabite (Aleppian) to Lebanese because he sensed that some of the “brethren” did not favor the name “Aleppian Order” because the title stressed the shared connection with the inhabitants of Aleppo. He thus persuaded Patriarch Ya'qūb 'Awwad to change the name to Lebanese and from there on they were addressed using the new name.

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<sup>1</sup> He is, before monkhood, al-Hajj Salhab bin Faraj Mujahid bin Ibrahim of the Ḥaqlānī family, the sheikhs (elders) of Zūq Mūshibh and Zūq Mīkāyil. This family had eminence, wealth and renown. For more details about this family and the monastery, refer to Buṭrus Fahd, *Ibid.* pp. 52-55.



### **The Isolated life**

Father ‘Abdallah had established monasteries and centers like those of Saint Ilishā‘, Rashmayyā, Sir, Louaize, Qūzḥayyā, Santi Marcellino e Pietro in Rome, Saint Peter Kuraym al- Tīn and Sindyānag in ‘Akkār as a result of the frequent turnout of secularists at these monasteries seeking a contemplative monastic life and performing, in accordance with the constitution, prayers, meditation, elective fasting, abstinence, manual labor, and more. But some of the brethren, according to Father ‘Abdallah, had their hearts moved towards more silence and isolation, and this was the desire of the late Father Yūsuf al-Baṭn, and so he carried out their wishes and sent them to live alone in the valley of Qūzḥayyā. One of them was a shaykh known as Ibn Shushān and another was a young man known as Ibn Mubarak. He imposed stricter rules on them and handed them the orchard in front of their anchorages (cells or anchor holds) for labor and to fight boredom and a complex, which they turned into a church naming it after St. Paula, one of the first anchoresses and recluses. Their income from the brethren’s monastery of Mar Ilishā‘ was in return for their labor in the orchard.

### **Superior General ‘Abdallah: Patron of Architecture**

These magnificent building works were, under the patronage of the loving, dynamic and watchful superior general, ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, whereby monasteries were founded across the country and abroad during his reign, which was renewed seven consecutive times from 1700 until 1716. During this period, he was promoted to the episcopal rank, against his own desire, which confirms even more the qualities Father ‘Abdallah possessed from wisdom, experience, asceticism, prayer, abstinence and restraint to perseverance in monasticism, which he loved dearly and sacrificed in its pursuit the valuable and invaluable.

In addition, this architectural development achieved by Father ‘Abdallah was not limited to his new order, but extended to the various Eastern orders, namely, the Antonine monastic order of Saint Isaiah in Brummānā and secondly the Basilian monastic order of Saint John in its two branches, Choueirite and Aleppian. Then there is also the Armenian Antonine, the Chaldean Antonine and others.

### **The Exemplary Life of Father ‘Abdallah before his Monks**

Founding father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī was not content with just leading his monks in his full paternal authority, but was bright like a lantern illuminating their way. As the Lord has ordered us in his pure Gospel, “Walk in the light, lest darkness overtake you and you may fall into the abyss.” But he was more like a courageous and astute leader, inspiring strength in them through his pure and good example and his preaching and guidance.

As for the first monks, Archbishop Farḥāt praised them in his writings on monastic history, saying: “They were very careful to keep the constitution, and they were very rich in purity, and cut off every cause that could touch this purity. They also prevented women from entering their monastery under no circumstances and no monk would step out of the monastery without another monk companion. As for poverty, never would one of them say that their garment was owned by them, or that they hid special belongings in their cell... If one of them felt that his brother was upset with him, he prostrates before him and begs for forgiveness...” Father ‘Abdallah, persevered in this pure and complete monastic life until he was promoted to the high episcopate on September 17, 1716.

### **Superior General ‘Abdallah Ordained Archbishop**

When Patriarch Ya‘qūb ‘Awwād, discussed with Superior General Qarā‘lī about ordaining him an archbishop and an aide to him in the Antiochian Patriarchate, he sensed that Qarā‘lī would not accept this high episcopal degree, preferring to remain as the superior general of the monastic order, where he did a lot of great work along with his brethren monks and seculars alike. Patriarch ‘Awwād ordered him to obey his holy commandment to not leave the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize and instructed the elders of ‘Ajaltūn, the Khāzins, and his disciples and the sons of his diocese, “to guard him in Louaize, lest he flee.” They surrounded the monastery with armed men, then carried him as he was crying and pleading to ‘Ajaltūn before the Patriarch so as to forcibly ordain him. The Bishop of Aleppo laid on him a trivial condition, the Superior General stuck to his objection and shouted, “I will not go ahead with the ordainment.” He finally consented only after having witnessed the dispute intensify amongst the elders, the strife worsen, weapons coming out and the two sides ready for a bloody battle. Then the Patriarch categorically ordered him to not leave the monastery of Louaize until he receives the following message from

him: "I want to ordain you an archbishop to work with me and help manage the community." So 'Abdallah went down to the monastery of Louaize awaiting to hear from the Patriarch.

When 'Abdallah realized that there was no escaping this, the church became his refuge where he prayed and fasted for three consecutive days. Finally, he followed the advice of those sent to him, such as the Jesuit Fathers from the school of 'Aynṭūrah, who listened to him and advised him that he was obliged to obey and by that he would please God and benefit his monastic order.

### **New Superior General of the Order**

After the episcopal ordination in 'Ajaltūn, on September 17, 1716, the lamentations in the monasteries of the order ended and the monks resolved to leave their affairs to the divine will, as their Superior General 'Abdallah had taught them. The first thing they did was elect a new Fr. Superior who would be no less virtuous, knowledgeable, and structured than the previous. He is the Aleppian Father Jirmānus Farhāt, who occupied a great position, not only in monasticism, but in the denomination and the East as a whole, owing to his wide knowledge, his virtuousness, his constant praying, his meticulous administration and his wise preaching. Farhāt was then living in the city of Aleppo fulfilling an obligation related to his monastic order. They immediately sent for him to return to Louaize. He returned to the aforementioned monastery and a General Chapter was held on October 10, 1716 officially electing him as superior general. The monks also elected the counselors, who in turn elected the superiors to head each of the monasteries belonging to the entire monastic order. The monastic order operated fittingly under the leadership of their superior general, Farhāt, in accordance with the wise manner that their former superior general, 'Abdallah Qarā'ī, had taught them during his exemplary general presidency.

### **Archbishop Qarā'ī in Damascus**

By 1718, there had been a growing dispute in Damascus over a Maronite church, Our Lady of 'Aryana between the Maronites and the Franciscan monks, who for many years served the Maronites at the abovementioned church. In 1719, Patriarch 'Awwād delegated Archbishop 'Abdallah Qarā'ī to solve this difficult issue and wrest control of the church from the Franciscans, despite the protest of Archbishop Sim'ān 'Awwād, nephew of Patriarch 'Awwād,

against sending an archbishop for this mission other than himself as he was the Archbishop of Damascus.

Archbishop ʿAbdallah traveled to Damascus despite his frail body and enfeebled strength. He managed with his wisdom, ardency, impartiality and sound judgement in addressing the various difficulties and overcoming them. He accomplished his purpose, achieved the desire of his superiors, and satisfied the community's demands and returned their church to them, and he even served the church and its see with utmost zeal and enthusiasm. He remained in Damascus for eight months working hard and with love, acuity and spirit until he gained the affection of people of all doctrines. He would mentor them on spiritual exercise and religious teachings. Then he brought in Superior General Farḥāt, who began preaching on Sundays and on festivities and founded orders for nuns. He was the first to preach every Friday on Lent and the first to establish in Damascus the traditions of the Rosary and the Marian tradition. Archbishop ʿAbdallah's attention to the Maronites of Damascus was one of the greatest reasons for the persecution that he was subjected to in 1719, during when he was subjected to insults, slander and fines and the kind of mistreatment only one who is firm in his patience and endurance would withstand.

### **Restrictions on the Monks and their Monasteries**

Patriarch Yaʿqūb ʿAwwād forbade the Maronite monks from proselytizing, in turn both confining them and preventing them from receiving alms from the believers. They were also forced to retire from their monasteries in the north, Mar Ilishāʿ and Mar Antonius in Qūzḥayyā in 1726. The reason for this is that when the *vali* (governor) of Tripoli learned that the monks hid Patriarch ʿAwwād from his troops in the monasteries of Mar Ilishāʿ and Mar Antonius, he imposed the most obscene and burdensome taxes and fees, which compelled the monks to evacuate these monasteries and expand the rest of their monasteries in order to house their monks.

### **The New Patriarch Yūsuf al-Khāzin**

Upon Patriarch Yaʿqūb ʿAwwād's passing on February 9, 1733, the prelates and religious notables nominated as his successor Archbishop ʿAbdallah, who almost assumed the seat of the Antioch Maronite Patriarchate. The story behind this is that when the Maronite archbishops, who numbered fifteen at the time, met at the monastery of Mar Shallīṭā (Saint Artemius) in Miqbis -

where Patriarch ‘Awwād had died and was buried - to establish a new patriarch “by legal decree, and with none of the community elders or commoners in attendance, before they meet again at Mar Sarkīs in Rayfūn to ratify their decision”. When they began casting their secret ballots, five of them were for Archbishop Qarā‘lī and six for Archbishop Elias Mhassib, and the other four were varied and that is how the dispute arose. In that moment, Archishop Yūsuf Dirghām al-Khāzin of Ghuṣṭā reprimanded them for their conduct not being in keeping with the spirit of God [...] and that he did not welcome this dispute, but was willing to obey any elected patriarch, even if he were to be a naive monk. That is when everyone shouted: “You are our Patriarch,” and proceeded with him to the church, where he was ordained patriarch.

### **Archbishop ‘Abdallah and Reform in the Community**

Archbishop ‘Abdallah, despite having been entangled in matters relating to his role as archbishop and far from monasticism, in which he succeeded greatly, worked hard to remedy the issue of monks and nuns sharing the same monastery as was the old custom. For all the many letters he wrote, the correspondences he was involved in and the petitions he raised to the Maronite Synod regarding this issue and explaining the necessity of separating one from the other, he finally received his heart’s desire and achieved what he thought was best for the monastic orders. This was during the Lebanese Synod that was held at the Monastery of Our Lady of Louaize in 1736, headed by the Apostolic Nuncio, Yūsuf al-Sim‘ānī by order of His Holiness Pope Clement XII.

Back in early 1722, when the reconciliation had been under way between Archbishop ‘Abdallah and Patriarch Ya‘qūb ‘Awwād, the former imposed a condition on the Patriarch that he grant his bishops the freedom to administer their legal dioceses and in accordance with their legitimate authority. This was in addition to not having an archbishop ordained against their own will, not imposing a serious directive regarding the denomination without consulting with his bishops and not rescinding a serious directive installed by the patriarchs or the assembly of archbishops except at an assembly of archbishops. Also he would have to distribute books and memoranda received by him from the Holy See, in accordance with the directives received from this Holy See. If an archbishop were to issue a ruling against any person in his diocese, the Patriarch may not hear this person out except in the presence of his archbishop, or his knowledge, etc.

Here it is imperative to share the letter the Consul of France in Sidon, Mr. de Cremouie, sent to the Pontiff, dated September 23, 1722, attesting to the goodness of Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘ī, his impartiality and his efforts towards sectarian reform. It was published in the Vatican magazine, *Illustration*, issued in 1936, and the translation reads as follows:

“Dear Holy Father ...

You shall find hereby attached a letter from Archbishop ‘Abdallah addressed to your holiness. I bear witness to the fact that not only has he accepted the reconciliation from the bottom of his heart, but has made it possible against his own interests, and considered it a complete and permanent resolution. What he has mentioned in his letter about certain downfalls does not affect this reconciliation. For what he has touched upon in his letter is only in the service of his conscience. These problems have long pervaded the community, and I cannot doubt their authenticity as long as this prelate has dared to confirm their existence to your holiness. For he is known as one of the greatest prelates of this land, for his holiness and knowledge, and his good reputation and chastity, and his vigilance over our holy religion, amongst a thousand virtues of his, all of which have made him the subject of respect by all righteous people. Be certain, O Holy Father, that the truth alone drives me to give this testimony that is only denied by his enviers and adversaries. For I have inquired about him and his conduct and found only what has led me to gain more admiration for his person. I consider it my duty, O Holy Father, to commend him for his efforts and the facilities he has made in order to arrive at this reconciliation, and the fulfillment of this noble deed, in accordance with the wishes of Your Holiness ... In the end, I submit myself to your Holiness asking for your apostolic blessing, and I am pleased, if deserved, to express the great respect I have for your holy person and my intent on continuing to safeguard the interests of the Holy See, stressing that I remain all my life at your service.

Your son

And your total obedient servant

Cremouie

Towards the end of September 1729, the abbots sent a letter to their Superior General, Mīkhāʿīl Iskandar al-Ihdinī, who was in Rome in response to a letter he had addressed to them. Their letter reads as follows:

“You had previously mentioned that very soon a papal command will be issued to the Patriarch to establish a synod. We and most members of the community are awaiting this eagerly, because everyone is interested in this synod on a country level, from which shall ensue great benefit for the community and a careful treatment of these arrant maladies that we have mentioned above. There is no doubt that Superior General Mīkhāʿīl Iskandar al-Ihdinī worked diligently in Rome, along with his friend the famed and most learned Yūsuf al-Simʿānī, to achieve this anticipated synod, based on the instigation and petitions of Archbishop ʿAbdallah Qarāʿīlī and his student, father Tūmā al-Labbūdī.”

### **The Lebanese Synod**

In fact, the Apostolic Nuncio and Maronite scholar Yūsuf al-Simʿānī visited the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize, carrying with him all the necessary mandates and papal patents in order to hold the famous Lebanese Synod from which resulted the Constitution. When everyone agreed to hold the Lebanese Synod at Louaize, the Patriarch and the Apostolic Nuncio issued a general invitation to all the primates, prelates, missionaries, priests, abbots, deacons and the rest of the clergy and monks along with the community elders and the rest of the people. The invitation was dated September 29, 1736. The sessions of the synod began on Sunday, September 30, and lasted three consecutive days until October 2, 1736, during when six sessions were held. When the synod was concluded, all the participating members placed their signatures and stamps at the end of the book of the Lebanese Synod<sup>1</sup>.

Following the conclusion of the synod, the time came for application and the establishment of a convent for Lebanese nuns at the monastery of Mar Elias (Saint Elias) al-Rās situated right above the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize and on a beautiful hill overlooking the sea, the

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<sup>1</sup> Abbot Buṭrus Fahd mentions in his book, p. 111, referencing "the records of the official old archives at Louaize, that this monastery paid for the costs of the Lebanese Synod and its members numbering over a hundred, which amounted to seven thousand gold piasters, not to mention the expenses covering the stay of learned scholar Yusuf as-Simʿānī at the monastery of Louaize including living and transportation expenses. For further details on the Lebanese Synod, as-Simʿānī's time at the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize and the welcome he received, and the public invitation to the synod issued by the Patriarch and the Apostolic Nuncio, his staff, the priests and so forth, refer to Buṭrus Fahd, pp. 110- 116.



capital, and the lands of Kisirwān. The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop ‘Abdallah and Father Superior al-Labbūdī had agreed to establish an official convent for nuns, which the monastic order assumed the responsibility of running. In 1740, the monastic order began to accept requests to join them, and in accordance with its rules enlisted the help of three nuns from the monastery of Ḥarash to help guide them and Mother Superior Dominina from the town of Dar‘ūn was at the helm. The decisions of the Lebanese Synod and the regulations of the new Constitution were implemented by the Apostolic Nuncio, Yūsuf as-Sim‘ānī, given his elevated position and authority and his knowledge and scholastic capabilities. The first regulation of the Synod was regarding monastic reform, namely the decision to separate male and female monasteries from one another in order to eliminate the vices and errors that Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī had complained about in his various letters to the Holy Synod.

It goes without saying that Father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, when he was ordained archbishop, was offered to take the monastery of the Sisters of Ḥarash under his wings and organize its nuns and form a constitution specific to them. When he was entrusted with this task, he hesitated before accepting until Patriarch Ya‘qūb ‘Awwād, the al-Khāzin elders and the nuns themselves pledged to give him full freedom in this new task in order to achieve complete monastic reform.

Not long after he took over the convent of Deir Ḥarash, he established a constitution for the nuns, known as “the constitution of the convent of Mar Antonius Ḥarash,” which he expected for it to be circulated to all female monastic institutions. It is worth mentioning that the monastic reforms undertaken by Father ‘Abdallah, who started as a monk, then an abbot, then a superior general and then an archbishop during 16 years spent in dedication to monastic life and his many supporters. The obstacles he encountered, the difficulties he was faced with and the greed he was confronted by were endless. The reason was that the monasteries at that time were then under the control of rulers, the *waqf* (*endowments*) families and the bishops, especially under the patronage of the patriarch.

### **The Monasteries Requiring Organization in Accordance with the Decisions of the Synod**

Apostolic Nuncio Yūsuf al-Sim‘ānī, Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, and Superior General al-Labbūdī endured many trials and tribulations in their endeavor to separate and organize the

double monasteries and establish a constitution for them. This is because the rulers had the right to collect taxes from the monasteries, as they claimed to safeguard them, their monks and nuns and protect them against all aggression. The bishops, on one hand, had the right of jurisdiction over the majority of the monasteries by virtue of their authority over their respective diocese, and the waqf families, on another hand, had the right to supervise, intervene and benefit by taking some of what they wanted from them. Moreover, these old monasteries, discussed henceforth, were burdened with hosting duties, payment of taxes, and government greed. For these various reasons, monks and nuns were forced to do manual labor, extracting the silk and preparing for the silk season, in order to sustain themselves, restore their monasteries, and receive guests.

There is no doubt that Archbishop ‘Abdallah sensed the serious difficulties and the many obstacles that could prevent the implementation of monastic reform as desired by the Holy See for the good of the monks themselves and the prosperity of their monasteries. For this reason, Archbishop ‘Abdallah established a distinguished official committee to deal with these problems and it included the Apostolic Nuncio, Yūsuf as-Sim‘ani, Archbishop Ṭūbiyā al-Khāzin, who held sway over the community elders and rulers, Archbishop Ignatius Sharābiyyah, the disciple of Archbishop ‘Abdallah al-Wāfī and the one known for his sound opinion on this matter, and Superior General Tūmā al-Labbūdī, who boasted great vigor, rare acumen and both ethical and financial faculties. The purpose behind this was to convince the elders, the waqf owners and the bishops of the necessity of desired reform; or to convince them to remain neutral so that they may carry out their apostolic duties in the implementation of the serious endeavor of monastic reform.

In addition, Archbishop ‘Abdallah tried to persuade the residents of the double monasteries and their superiors of the benefit to this spiritual, moral and monastic endeavor and urged them to comply fully with the orders of the Holy See. So that they may ensure the success of this task, he proposed an effective practical method that would include establishing convents adjoining each double monastery but detached from the actual buildings. As for the smaller monasteries with fewer nuns than monks, Archbishop ‘Abdallah advised Superior General Tūmā al-Labbūdī, to establish the convent of Mar Elias al-Rās, where the separated nuns who resided in double monasteries would take up residence in their own dedicated convent. This would complete the required monastic reform. Accordingly, he began to reform the monasteries in his diocese and

the diocese of Archbishop Ṭūbiyā al-Khāzin, which belonged to the two branches of the sheikhs Abu Nawfal al-Khāzin and Abū Ṣa‘b al-Khāzin, who supported his ideas and monastic reforms. The abovementioned committee took charge of renovating the following double monasteries: Mar Ilyās (Saint Eliajah) al-Rās in Kisirwān, Mar Jirjis (Saint George) al-Rūmiyyah in Qlay‘āt, Sayyidat al-Ḥaqlah (Our Lady of the Field) in Dlibta, Mar ‘Abdā Harharāyā (Saint ‘Abda Harharāyā) in Ghazīr, ‘Ayn Waraqah in Ghuṣṣā, Mar Antonius (Saint Anthony) in Buq‘ātā Kan‘ān, Mar Mūsā (Saint Moses) in Ballūnī, Mār Shallīṭā (Saint Artemius xxx) in Ghuṣṣā.

In sum, Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī was instrumental in Yūsuf al-Sim‘ānī fulfilling the orders of the Holy See, as we have seen, and exerted tremendous efforts to achieve perfection. He acted as the only mediator between al-Sim‘ānī, the Patriarch and the Khāzin elders in having them execute the decisions of the Lebanese Synod for the good of the community and its organization and the hopes of the monastic order that had exerted itself for this purpose. Qarā‘lī was indeed a devout man, supporting his community and monastic order, which he loved so much under all circumstances and hoped to drive it towards perfection no matter the sacrifices and efforts.

### **The Schools Established by the Founder ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī [and the Monastic Order after Him]**

It is true that the founder, Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī resisted, in the earlier days of the monastic order, the establishment of schools and missions, having been aware that the mission required qualifications and huge funds but there was very little of both. However, the expansion and prosperity of his monastic order with its emerging scholars and preachers and the ample revenue owing to their hardworking brethren monks who were involved in commerce, agriculture, construction, and household chores, drove Qarā‘lī to effectuate the establishment of schools inside monasteries and outside. He would send his monks in pairs into the missionary field and had preachers visit towns and villages to deliver sermons and spiritual exercises that the Maronite community was eager for.

1. The first school opened was the Mart Moura School in Ihdin. This small monastery was granted to him by the great Patriarch Isṭfān ad-Duwayhī in 1695, in the early days of establishment, where he settled with his two Aleppian companions, Father Ḥawwā and Father al-Baṭn. In the summer of that year, Father Qarā‘lī would gather the youth of the

village around him and under a large walnut tree to the east of the monastery and would teach them the principles of religion, morals, catechesis and the Arab sciences. He would train them on how to serve in church mass, hold ceremonies and participate in the Syriac choral prayers. This isolated region was reawakened by the monastic order, its hymns, prayers, and spiritual deeds and scholarly achievements. People started frequenting the monastery, joining in spiritual ceremonies and rejoicing with their children, who tried to refrain from any wrongdoing as they followed the example of these pious monks. As the winter progressed with its heavy snow and bitter frost, the inhabitants of Ihdin descended to the town of Zghartā, their place of residence in the winter. Father Qara‘li accompanied them with his young students, whom he loved and was involved in their upbringing. So Archbishop Jirjis Benyamīn, head of the diocese there, offered him a warm and spacious place to establish a modern school and provided for this purpose enough money. It was named after Saint Joseph the Baptist and still stands to this day. This first small school was the catalyst for the establishment of many other Maronite schools next to churches and monasteries.

2. The people of Bsharrī grew envious of their neighboring town Ihdin and extended to Father ‘Abdallah a monastery in the holy valley of Qādishā. The monastic order, thankful, expanded, restored and organized this monastery. The townspeople had also requested that the monastic order open a school to teach children and that is what happened. Father Qarā‘lī taught and educated them on morals. Inspired by the example of those virtuous monks, many of the townspeople flocked to join the monastic order.
3. The third school was in the Shūf region. Father ‘Abdallah received requests and tempting offers to open a school in the town of Rashmayyā in the Shūf in the name of Saint John the Apostle. As there had been no school there, the monastery owners granted the monastic order access to set up a free of charge school for the monks to teach the youth of the town.
4. The fourth school was located in Zūq Muṣbih, which the monk Ignatius Salhab al-Ḥāqilāni al-Masbahānī had given the then father superior ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī the monastery, its school and its many endowments.
5. The fifth school was established by the monastic order during when Qarā‘lī was superior general in the famous monastery of Saint Anthony of Qūḏhayyā with its famed hermitage.

- Father Qarā'ī established a large monastery and a free school for the children there and the farms in its vicinity.
6. A sixth school was established by the order in 1712 at the monastery of St. Peter Kuraym at-Tīn below the town of Bayt Shabāb in Mātn.
  7. When the monastic order acquired the monastery of Our Lady of Ṭamīsh in Metn, founded by Gabriel al-Blūzānī, bishop of Aleppo during the reign of Patriarch Iṣṭfān ad-Duwayhī and under Prince Ahmad al-Ma'ni, it designated an erudite monk to establish a school near the monastery. He taught the youth of many neighboring villages such as al-Muṭaylib, Dīk al-Miḥdī, Mazra'at Yashū', Hārat al-Ballānī and others.
  8. When the monastery of Saint Ilyās Shwayyā came into the possession of the order in 1727, a school was established for free, for the children of Bikfayyā, Dhūr ash-Shwayr, and their vicinity.
  9. When the monastic order took the monastery of Sayidat (Our Lady of) Mashmūshī in South Lebanon from Archbishop Sim'an 'Awwād, they set up free school adjacent to the monastery to benefit the youth of the towns of Bkāsīn, Mazra'at Mishmushī and others.
  10. In 1752, the order inaugurated Antush (school within a monastery) Dayr al-Qamar in the town of the Emirate of Mount Lebanon, where it opened a children's school that welcomed not only Maronite children but also the children of princes and the Druze community. The order received the support of the princes, women and inhabitants of the town, which was facilitated through the diligence of the Aleppian Father Matta al-Hakim, who was the director of the Antush and school.
  11. In this same year (1752) the monastic order also opened a children's school in the village of 'Ajaltūn, and built a church there along with an adjacent small monastery for the monks. This was during the rule of the al-Khāzin elders.

### **Education and Missionary Work**

Upon the establishment of these schools in Lebanon, the monks began to spread their mission in Beirut, Acre, Latakia, Cyprus, Egypt and Sudan. In 1737, Superior General Tūmā al-Labbūdī wrote to Archbishop Gabriel Ḥawwā in Rome informing him that the pupils of the monastic schools numbered 300 and indicating that his monks were interested in expanding their

missionary work. Father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī persevered in his missionary work in Lebanon and abroad as well as establishing such schools for children, as did his successors.

The missionaries established by the monastic order were widespread since the rise of monasticism throughout Lebanon as the people of Lebanon were eager to learn the word of God. Since the earlier days, the monks roamed the villages and cities preaching, establishing fraternities, and teaching spiritual exercises and leading processions. One of the most popular processions is the Rosary Procession celebrated at the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize, which attracted many people who would travel long distances, as far as Beirut and other areas, and not to mention the residents of the three Zūqa: Zūq Mūṣbiḥ, Zūq Mīkāyil, Zūq al-Kharāb. They numbered at around 600 people in those years, and this is a large number given that era.

The towns of Kfardhibyān, Sāḥil ‘Alma, Kisirwān and the dioceses of Beirut, Ṭartūṣ, Acre and Mersin in the north were famed for being home to the practice of spiritual exercises. According to historian Father Louis Blaybil “The Lebanese Aleppian monks expanded their mission to Ṭartūṣ and remained steadfast in the service of the parish for a long time, as well as the neighboring port city of Mersin, both of which were part of the Anatolian land under Ottoman rule, until they were replaced by a secular priest from Aleppo by order of the Patriarch.”

It should be noted that as-Sim‘ānī had suggested to Superior General Tūmā al-Labbūdī that he send a mission to Acre as it lacked both priests and monks. The Superior General obliged and sent two monks to Acre, Father Isṭfān and Father Nilus in service of the mission,” and also opened a school there at the request of Archbishop Gabriel ‘Awwād, head of the diocese. The order also spread its mission in Syria in the dioceses of Lattakia and Aleppo, as evidenced in a letter addressed dated 1734 from Superior General Mīkhā‘l Iskandar al-Ihdinī to the Holy Synod<sup>1</sup>. In 1745 the monastic order sent one of its most zealous monks, Father Mūsā Ḥīllānī al-Shāmī, to the port city of Damietta in Egypt in order to serve the Maronites, who were emigrating there for the purpose of their livelihood. From there, the Maronite mission spread throughout Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Louis Blaybil, *Tārīkh al-Rahbāniyyāt al-Lubnāniyya al-Mārūniyya*, vol. 1, 344 pages; Būlus Qarā‘lī, *Al-La‘ālī‘fi Hayāt al-Muṭrān ‘Abdallah Qar ‘ālī* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Aṣriyyah, 1946), 629 pages.

### On the Reform Carried out by Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī

Father ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī had studied Christian law under famed scholar and deputy of the Archbishop of Aleppo, Father Buṭrus at-Tulāwi, who had established an institute where all the Aleppan founders, Ḥawwā, Qarā‘lī, al-Baṭn and Farḥāt, had studied before they moved to the Lebanese valley of Qannūbīn in the north to pursue monasticism and establish a new and modern order organized along the standards of Western monastic orders. Spiritual leaders, during the reign of Father Superior ‘Abdallah, would make judicial rulings on personal status and related religious cases. When in 1716 Father ‘Abdallah ascended to the episcopal seat, he was entrusted to practice Christian judiciary. He had a pressing need for legal books and legal encyclopedias for reference in his various rulings. At the time, there was only *Kitāb al-Hudā (The Book of Direction)* printed in 1735 in Aleppo, *al-Namūs (The Code)* by Ibn al-‘Asal al-Qubṭī printed in Egypt in the thirteenth century and the book of Roman laws adapted from emperors Constantine the Great, Theodosius, and Leon, and Justinian the Great. This led Archbishop ‘Abdallah to establish a constitution that was adopted by all Christian denominations in Lebanon and remained the only reliable reference for nearly two centuries. It was entitled *Mukhtaṣar ash-Sharī‘ā (Summary of the Law)*. He later added his commentary and expanded its content with information necessary for resolving legal dilemmas. He also published another book, *al-Fatāwa (The Edicts)*.<sup>1</sup>

He first applied himself to the role of Maronite judge within his diocese and was efficient, impartial and compassionate, and thus attracted litigants of all sects and doctrines. He was regarded as an expert of his time in the field of civil legislation and people travelled to see him from all parts of the region, as recounted by his faithful disciple Father Tūmā al-Labbūdī in his biography of Qarā‘lī. It is worth mentioning that by virtue of his legal experience, Archbishop Qarā‘lī benefitted his monastic order with regard to the transactions relating to the monasteries and the preservation of monastic rights, especially the Monastery of Mar Ilyās Shwayyah in Ḍhūr Shwayr. This monastery was involved in a great controversy because of a narrow space between both the Maronite and the Orthodox monasteries. Archbishop ‘Abd Allah took over this case while Archbishop Ibrihūm al-Armani, resident at the monastery of al-Kuraym in Ghūṣṭā,

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Yūsuf Ziyādah, *Al-Qaḍā’ al-Mārūnī* (Jūnyah, 1929); Būlus Qarā‘lī, *Al-La’ālī ‘fī Ḥayāt al-Muṭrān ‘Abdallah Qar’ālī* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Aṣriyyah, 1946), 646.



was entrusted by the Kuraymī missionary Fathers (immediately after their establishment) to defend the case of the Greek Orthodox monastery. Both were appointed judges by the government.

The Maronite and Armenian judges met and examined all the papers and deeds and carefully studied the issue from its inception. After the narration and the testimony of the witnesses, they issued judgments in two copies. The first copy was in the handwriting of the Aleppian poet Father Niqūlā aṣ-Ṣāyigh, Superior of the Shwayrī monks and at some point a disciple of Archbishop Farḥāt, and it was given to the Maronite monks. The second copy was in the handwriting of Maronite Father General Yūsuf Qarā‘lī and it was handed over to the Greek Orthodox monks. However, the Greek Orthodox monks did not accept the ruling and filed a lawsuit in the civil courts. On the same day, they erected a wall with a door that opened into the disputed piece of land. By this measure, the narrow alley that belonged to the Maronites became like a landing to their monastery windows and was being utilized by the Greek Orthodox monks as a deposit for their snow and rain. Not only that, but they forced the Maronite monks to block their windows that overlooked the narrow alley on the pretext that this alley was their property. When the monks filed a case against them, they resorted to Shaykh ‘Alī, the Druze judge, after having won over the local governor there. The Maronite monks, in turn, invited Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, to defend their legitimate rights.

‘Abdallah attended right away to the matter. When he met in private with Sheikh ‘Ali ad-Darazī, the latter said to him, “O Archbishop ‘Abdallah, the Greek Orthodox monks are affiliated with His Highness Prince ‘Assāf and the prince is no juvenile, and being in conflict with him is not easy, and these issues are not worth it. I will exhort the Maronites to remain accommodating...” Archbishop ‘Abdallah replied: "O Honorable Sheikh, what you speak is correct. But what is now required of us is that we reveal the explicit truth. After that we can implore both sides to be tolerant with one another." The Sheikh responded: “I think that the alley belongs to the Melkites, and does the gate, and the Maronites do not have any business using this alley.” Archbishop ‘Abdallah, then asked him: “With what evidence do the Greek Orthodox claim ownership of the alley?” Sheikh ‘Alī replied: “I cannot do other than this,” and before leaving wrote down his recommendations at the courthouse, ruling that the alley belonged to the Greek Orthodox and that the Maronites should close their windows.

Archbishop ‘Abdallah wrote down his recommendation on a paper and sent it with a man free of purpose, along with Sheikh Ali’s recommendation, to Mufti of Beirut Mohamed Ali. When the Mufti examined the case, he ruled that the Druze Sheikh’s recommendation was corrupt because it was not compatible with *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *sharī‘ah* (law) and that Archbishop ‘Abdallah’s recommendation was contradictory in the first place. Then the man, who carried the two recommendations, revealed to the Mufti two legitimate questions that Archbishop ‘Abdallah had sent to him: “How is it permissible for the jurisconsult to judge one in their absence? Is it permissible for him to adjudicate on an issue, for which the litigants did not stand before him?” And so the Mufti annulled the two recommendations.

We find a copy of this fatwa in the records of the Monastery of Mar Ilyās Shwayyā. It carries Archbishop ‘Abd Allah’s signature, the ratification of Mufti of Beirut Muhammad ‘Alī and the Judge of Beirut Mr. Sharafeddine, and the signature of the Greek Catholic Patriarch, Cyril Ṭannās. Historian Paul Qarā‘lī mentions in his book *al-La’ālī*’ (*The Pearls*) (p. 650) that he found in the archives of Bkirkī, while he served there as secretary, the original copy of the edict of Bishop ‘Abdallah, and it reads verbatim:

“If an agreement had been reached between two disputing parties on any certain land, that the paths and spaces are not to be changed without the consent of the two sides, then any attempt to do otherwise without the consent of the other is prohibited by law, and God knows best.

(Signature) Servant of God

Archbishop ‘Abdallah al-Ḥalabī’

Jurist Yūsuf Ziyadah mentioned many rulings issued by Maronite prelates, based on the book of the Archbishop ‘Abdallah, *Mukhtaṣar al-Sharī‘a*, which is kept at the manuscript repository at Bkirkī under the sections of waqf, guardianship, prohibitions, inheritance and so on, from varying topics within writings on Maronite law dealing with Islamic sharia introduced to Lebanon by Prince Bashūr al-Kabīr, in a desire to unify the judiciary. However he left the Christian judges with the liberty to make rulings in their parishes, wishing to observe their Christian customs and their own laws.

### On Ritual Reforms Carried Out by Bishop ‘Abdallah

Here it is a must to share a brief word on the ritual reform undertaken by Archbishop ‘Abd Allah Qarā‘lī. In an article by scholar Ibrahim Ḥarfūsh al-Kuraymī in *al-Mashriq* magazine, the first issue, p. 318, about Dayr Ḥrāsh and Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī establishing a constitution for his nuns to live by, he said the following:

“Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī composed for the nuns of Dayr Ḥrāsh hymns, Ephremiyots, and homilies to be chanted during mass. And some of the bishops of the community saw fit that these be chanted during Sunday mass and the festivals related to them... Everyone knows very well the full extent of the Archbishop’s skill in the composition of such encomiums and their likes, where his piety is felt, and the quality of his poetic faculty, following the example of St. Ephrem the Syrian, the *Malfan* (teacher in Syriac) as declared by the Catholic Church, who enriched the Church with his compositions in order to counter the corrupt folk songs that were common in his days in the cities of Edessa and Nisibis.”

It is worth noting that such songs and *Ephremiyats* are mostly preserved in monasteries and the see of the Maronite Patriarchate. Bkirkī, for example, holds 31 homilies in its archives. In the great monastery in Rome, we find the anaphora of the Maronite Divine Liturgy, written in 1724, with the following hymn: “O Bread of Life and Food of Souls,” which is without a doubt the most beautiful hymn of the Eucharist. We find most of the hymns composed by Archbishop ‘Abd Allah for the nuns to memorize and chant instead of folk hymns at Dayr Ḥrāsh. In the monastery of Saint-Dūmiṭ, Fayṭrūn, we find the book of the Maronite Liturgy of the year 1795, in which the scribe uses this verse (p. 319): “We transcribe some of the *Mimars* written by the late Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī, the founder of the Lebanese Aleppian Order.” At the end, he concludes: “The words, hymns and homilies of Archbishop ‘Abdallah Qarā‘lī have been concluded.” We find in the book of *Ephremiyat Hymns* in *Karshuni* for the year 1889, held at the monastery of Our Lady of Assistance in Byblos, the following phrase: “*Ephremiyat* hymns by Archbishop ‘Abdallah” and the titles are as follows: “The Glimmering Light of the Sun,” “O Son of David and Before Him in Time,” “O Christ of God How You Care for the Son of Man”, “Today the Words are Complete on the Birth of Christ”, “Wake Up Jerusalem and Be Enlightened with Christ’s Entry into the Temple,” and then “Come on, Sons of Mārūn, Let Us

Observe Saint Mārūn in a Great Celebration,” and then Marian hymns, such as: “Rejoice, O Virgin,” “Elevated by Acceptance,” “With the Lord of Mankind.”

Held at the library of the Archdiocese of Beirut, where Archbishop ‘Abdallah was ordained but was not in charge of the diocese, is the *Book of Liturgy* in 1800 and it commences with this phrase: “These *Ephremiyat* hymns have been written by Archbishop ‘Abdallah, the founder of the Lebanese Aleppian Order. It is striking that all these chants and *Ephremiyat* hymns are still mostly unpublished.

### **On the Seals Developed by Archbishop ‘Abdallah**

The seals used by the monks in their signatures on official documents were developed by then Superior General ‘Abdallah Qarā’lī after the year 1706, during when he named his Aleppian monastic order as the Lebanese monastic order since it was founded in Mount Lebanon as previously explained. The first seal he designed was a circular seal that was half the size of a piastre and inscribed in its center was the image of St. Anthony the Great, and running around its perimeter these words: “Who is great among you, shall be your servant.” All monastic documents of the Aleppian order were stamped with this seal. But when Father ‘Abd Allah decided to rename his monastic order as “Lebanese” and his monks as “Lebanese,” he developed two new stamps. The first - still including the above phrase - was a small circular slightly rectangular emblem with the cedar of Lebanon at its center, making him the first to use the cedar as emblematic of Lebanon and now it has become the official emblem of the Republic of Lebanon. The second seal was smaller than the other two, and a rectangle in its shape, and a smaller cedar in its center with this phrase running around its perimeter, “Servant of the Lebanese Monks.” This seal was used by the Superior General of the order alone and each subsequently elected superior.

Thus, the first seal was intended as a signature on documents of the general assemblies, the second for the general chapters and the third exclusively for the superior general alone. These seals continued until the year 1727, when Father General Mīkhā’l Alexander al-Ihdinī traveled to Rome to prepare the monastic law and have it ratified by the Pope. After that date, the counselors general decided to develop new seals for each one of them thus representing their

specific roles. They consulted Archbishop ‘Abdallah and requested that he develop seals that indicated their individual roles.

Archbishop ‘Abdallah’s wisdom and acumen becomes more evident through this endeavor. He created four seals in one form, a little rectangular and larger than the seal of the superior general and distinct from it in design. The seal of the superior general has the cedar in its center with white branches and a black earth and the writing is along its perimeter, while the seals of the counselors general had the cedar occupy a third of the seal’s area hugging two sides towards the top perimeter and it was a short and wide tree with black branches and a white earth and the writing ran along the remaining two thirds of the perimeter. Each seal carried different wording, and the first seal read “Classifying, First Counselor General,” the second seal “Justice, Second Counselor General,” the third seal “Vigor, Third Counselor General” and the fourth “Satisfaction, Fourth Counselor General.” At the bottom of each seal was inscribed “issued the year 1727”.

### **The Death of Archbishop ‘Abdallah**

Archbishop ‘Abdallah remained a reference for the monks, who benefitted from his valuable advice on all important matters, whether related to internal matters within the monastic order or the order’s relations with the religious and civil authorities until his passing on the sixth of January at midnight in 1742 in the village of Zūq Mušbīḥ while on a visit to his congregation.<sup>1</sup> His remains were transferred in a grand procession like never before to the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize, the monastery of his Lebanese Aleppian monks and the main office of the general presidency of the order.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here we observe some discrepancies in the date of death. According to the death records held at the monastery of Saint John Hrach, we read that Archbishop ‘Abdallah passed away on the seventh day of January, the night of the feast of St. John, the monastery’s patron. According to the publisher of the book “The Monastic Lamp” by Archbishop ‘Abdallah, Father George Mūrānī one of his scholar monks, he passed on the fifth of January. This is according to a historical profile written by Patriarch Būlus Mas’ad, which was found in the records of our Lady of Louaize monastery. Father Būlus Qarā’ī, relative of Archbishop ‘Abdallah and who was closer to him than anyone else, writes in his book *al-La’sli* that the Archbishop passed on the sixth day of January, and this is most plausible.

<sup>2</sup> Father George Nassif, quoting Father Louis Blaybil’s book, *History of the Lebanese Maronite Order*, which in turn references the records of the Monastery of Our Lady of Louaize, states that Archbishop Qarā’ī was buried first at the Lady of the Rosary Church in Zūq Mušbīḥ. This is countered by Father Blaybil, who was quoted by Father Nassif, where he mentions his craftsmanship: “Superior General Mārūn ad-Dar’ūnī, the four counselors general came from the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize [...]to the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, the church of Zūq Mušbīḥ. And in the presence of Archbishop Yuḥannā Iṣṭifān and Archbishop Jirmānus Saqr, they opened the tomb where the blessed

To quote from *al-La'ali*' by Revered Būlus Qarā'ī: “In 1749, Superior General, Mārūn al-Dar'ūnī, arrived to the monastery of Louaize accompanied by the four counselors general, Father Yuwakīm Bladyus al-Ḥalabī, Father Ignatius Diab al-Ḥalabi, Father Martīnus Tābit, and a fourth. These four opened the tomb of Archbishop 'Abdallah Qarā'ī, the founder of the Lebanese Aleppian Order, gathered his bones and placed them in a chest and marked it from the outside with the seals of archbishops Yuḥannā Iṣṫfān and Jirmanus Saqr al-Ḥalabi. It was handed to the Superior General, who entrusted with the four counselors to put it in an appropriate place, which was behind the large altar of the Louaize Church in Zūq Muṣbiḥ, covered under a marble slab inscribed with the following: “Here, under this slab, has been placed, with full veneration and a complete ceremony, the skull and bones of the deceased lamented man of God, Archbishop 'Abdallah Qarā'ī al-Ḥalabī, Archbishop of Beirut, Superior General and Founder of the Lebanese Aleppian Order, who passed after having lived a pure life, and many splendid hardships, on the sixth day of January 1742.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of his bones were placed in two chests: one at the monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Ḥrāsh, where Archbishop 'Abdallah took up residence for years working on a constitution for the nuns and looking after them with wisdom, empathy and usual dedication, and the second at the monastery of Mar Ilyās ar-Rās, which he founded with Superior General Tūmā al-Labbūdī as abovementioned. The tops of these chests were stamped with the seals of the aforementioned archbishops. In 2006, the Mariamite Maronite Order proceeded to renovate the church of the monastery of the general presidency, during the period of Abbot Sim'ān Abū 'Abdū and Vicar General Philip al-Hajj in charge at the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize. [...] So the tomb of the founder was opened on July 24, 2006, and his remains were kept in one of the rooms in the monastery after having been examined by a forensic doctor.”

“On the feast day of our Father Saint Anthony, on January 17, 2007, after restoration work was completed, a solemn ceremony was held and presided over by the reverend superior general and attended by the counselors, Archbishop Bishārā ar-Rā'ī, and all of the monastic order from

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Archbishop 'Abdallah Qarā'ī [...] and gathered his precious remains [...] The largest part was transferred to the monastery of Our Lady of Louaize.” George Nassif, *al-Mujaz fi Ḥayāt al-Muṫrān 'Abdallah Qarā'ī*, 1st ed. (Zuq Muṣbiḥ, Lebanon: Manshūrāt al-Rahbāniyyah al-Marūniyyah al-Maryamiyyah, 2007).

<sup>1</sup> Refer to 'Abdallah Qarā'ī, *al-Miṣbāh al-Ruhbānī fī sharḥ al-Qanūn al-Lubnānī* (Beirut: Maṭabi' Samya, 1957), originally edited and published by Father Jirjis Mūrānī al-Ḥalabī al-Lubnānī. Found in the old records of the monastery of Louaize.

students and novitiates to monks and priests. The remains were placed in a crystal chest along with two glass vessels: one contain soil from the old tomb, and the other containing photographs of the old tomb, of the marble slab that was placed upon the tomb and a detailed statement on this subject, marked with the seal of the superior general. The funeral started with a procession from the upper walkway of the monastery, down to the student building, passing through the inner courtyard between the arcades and then entering the church, where the remains had been placed in the new location to the left of the large altar. In addition, a bronze bust of the archbishop was placed over the tomb. Following this ceremony, immediately thereafter, a renewal of (monastic) vows was held on the occasion of the feast day of Our Father Saint Anthony.”