

## **Selected Writings by Fr. Buṭrūs At-Tūlāwī<sup>1</sup>**

(Chronological Order)

### **Theoretical and Practical knowledge**

Theoretical knowledge is acquiring the knowledge of truth in the mind, and having this knowledge settle there. The practical is acquiring what is related to action because truth is the goal of the theoretical thinking and action is the goal of the practical. This shows that practical knowledge as it is distinguished from the theoretical considers the fitness of the subject and seeks it. Two results are concluded: first is that the practical should master his subject intellectually and practice it accordingly. The proof is that the practical's goal is to perform the task, and no one is led to perform a task without discerning its benefits and convenience, and so the practical is supposed to be aware of the tasks goodness and benefits. Another proof is that no one approves an action if he does not find it suitable and rewarding. Revealing it as such is a proof of its goodness and possible benefits, and the practical is supposed to be aware of its goodness and rewards. Secondly, practical knowledge, being practical in its nature, does not deal with what is impossible; the proof is that nothing of the attainable good is impossible so it is the duty of the practical person to seek the possible good instead of seeking the impossible whose actions are restrained in all aspects and causes. Be then certain of knowledge, which, when it is convinced of the truth of a subject and abstains from a further search, is indeed theoretical. He who does not stop when reaching the truth but desires it and strives to pursue it is practical. This desire is twofold: apparent and hidden. Apparent when it is commanded to do or not to do it. The hidden is found in the provided truths as when it is said that the harm of evil is uncountable and the profit of virtue is very great. What is understood is that the listener should practice virtue and discard evil.

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<sup>1</sup> On the last page of the manuscript the following remark is written: know that the writer of this book translated the Writings of At-Tūlāwī. He is Bishop Germanus Farḥāt student ... The sign of the copyist indicates that at-Tūlāwī wrote in Arabic in Syriac script (Karshūnī) and later rewrote in Arabic.

**Fr. Buṭrūs At-Tūlāwī,**

Second book in Philosophy: *The Book of logic* (1693) Manuscript of the Maronite Patriarchy in Bkirkī, number 163; the copyist: deacon Augustine bin Yūsuf Ibn al Hindī al-Ḥalabī al-Mārūnī, date of copying, May 1719; Second study: Exposing the essence of logic in five chapters; Chapter one.

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**Introduction**

(to At-Tūlāwī's book *The Divine Science*)

Also it is well known to you as an attentive reader that Divine Science is the noblest part in philosophy and the most venerated as all the other sciences are considered inferior to it. This is demonstrated by Aristotle in fourteen books on the essence of this art where he defines three names. It is called the discipline of metaphysics, for its search of the universal being who is free from all corporeal characteristics. It is called philosophy or the primary wisdom for its description of beings that are free from all movement. These are the noblest beings and the primary causes and the source of all existing beings. It is called natural Divine Science for its search of the spiritual essences to reach what our finite mind is capable of understanding God the Almighty who is the beginning and end in the universe and in existence. What we say is natural to be distinguished from the discipline of Theology that searches for God the Almighty as is revealed by his bounty to his prophets and selected dignitaries. This discipline could be divided in two: The first looks at the universal existence and what follows it, and the second at the spiritual essence which represent the pure spirits, the angels, and God the transcendent, the end of all. We start now to explain these two disciplines with the help of God the almighty, the Lord of all beings.

**Fr. Buṭrūs At-Tūlāwī,**

The Fourth book in Philosophy: *In the Divine Science - The Absolute Existence* (1703) - Manuscript of Dayr al-Kuraym, Ghustā the Maronite Lebanese Apostolic Society, number 130, the name of the copyist and the date of the manuscript are not mentioned.

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## **Introduction on the way of a rational prayer**

First stand in God's presence and think that you are in front of Him while he is watching over you. Second: Seek his help and the intercession of Mary, His Mother, and his saints. Third: If you wish to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord and on the four penalties, then imagine the place where this mystery took place, and its time and place and who was there and the context. If you are seeking for something beyond the sensory world, you are to believe in the value of virtues and the evil of vices. Fourthly: occupy your mind with the subject of your meditation. If your intention is a concrete matter, you have to think of the identity of the person, his action, place, time, his intention and who is the one who helped him. If your intention is not a concrete matter, then understand its reality, advantages and disadvantages and the methods to approach him or to be remote from him. Fifthly: stir your heart to love God and hate sin, to long for eternal life, to fear hell, to keep the joy of conscience, to abhor bad habits, to rely on God, to subdue your will to his Almighty Will and to prostrate in front of his majesty. Be ashamed of yourself and your way of life. Thank God for his promise to patch up your life, etc. Sixthly: adopt good specific goals, not only general goals such as when you decide to acquire a virtue and abandon a vice. Follow a definite goal to attract you to your work and do not take more than two or three objectives from the meditation, and be aware that all this is the result of meditation, Seventh: Thank God who facilitated for you to achieve this meditation and inspired your intentions towards Him and intercede to the Virgin Mary and the saints to praise God with them. Eighth: Expose your intentions in front of God and seek his blessing and help to complete it and intercede His Mother with your guardian angel and the saints are your intercessors. Seek refuge in God with the merits of his beloved son to obtain what you desire and remember the immensity of your weakness and your need for His great support. Amen.

### **Fr. Buṭrūs At-Tūlāwī,**

From the *Spiritual meditations on the Monastic Biography* (1721), Monastic Maronite Mariamite Manuscript, Collection of Notre Dame University, Louaize, number MC/SPO55, The copyist: Brother Ni'-mat Allah ash-Shibābī, date of the copy: 1873.

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Day Meditation: In Memory of the Four Ends

Ben Sirach mentioned in Chapter seven of the Holy Scripture: Remember your four ends in all your actions and you will never make a mistake. Think of the greatness of he who lives on this earth without a deadly sin. The saints have stormed heaven in seeking this gift. The hermits have forsaken the whole world, abhorred all its gifts, settled in the wilderness and led an austere life to obtain this gift which is already with you - you own it when you want without torturing your body. It is enough that you recall the advice of the learned to remember your ends in all your actions. He promised that you will as a result never sin, or commit a deadly sin even if you lived hundreds of years or till eternity.

How ignorant you are as a human being. The prophet did not require that you continuously review your ends, for this is not always possible, but he asked you to remember it from time to time in all your actions. Know that death is the first of the four ends, yet this is not sufficient for some who remembered death to become engulfed in their desires as Solomon<sup>1</sup> related that these on imagining death maintained the following: Our life ends like clouds and disappears like fogs. What conclusion did they reach here? Their saying: let us profit from the available goods and follow our desires while young. They thought that their souls disappear with the body. They at the same time say that the body turns to ashes and the soul is powered forth with the air.<sup>2</sup>

This is why the prophet does not advise you to review your ends only, but He advised you to remember your ends to realize that death is followed by judgement as Paul the Apostle affirmed<sup>3</sup> that all people are expected to die once, and then comes the judgement. It is not sufficient to remember only the judgement, but also the verdict accompanying the judgement. This is either everlasting damnation or eternal bliss, as our Savior<sup>4</sup> affirmed. The damned go to everlasting suffering, but the righteous to everlasting life. Meditating the ends then is beneficial for you to preserve you from sin.

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<sup>1</sup> A quote from the book Ecclesiastes chapter 2 appears in the margin of the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> This is how the writing appeared in the manuscript. Whether it is air or whim it is not certain. In the sense that the soul's desires disintegrate in death.

<sup>3</sup> A quote from Hebrews 9:27 appears on the manuscript in the margin.

<sup>4</sup> Mathew 25 is quoted at the end of the manuscript.

This is why he advised you to remember your ends. Be aware that the prophet did not tell you to remember the ends, but to remember your ends as if addressing you to say: If you desire to be preserved from all sin you have to think that after a short time you will be laid on a bed and carried over a coffin and pushed in a pit and your soul will be carried to face the judge. You will gain a profiting judgement if your soul resists temptations and eternal happiness or you will be surrendered to unending punishments. Know then and believe that this matter is related to you so do not related it to others and keep your meditation actual and not theoretical for he said remember your ends in all your actions. What is the use if you imagine the ends in exalted and theoretical simile's and measurements while you are inside the walls of your home? Make sure it is fixated before you the moment you face temptations and in your daily life and then what is said will then apply to you: remember your ends in all your doings and you will never sin.

**Fr. Buṭrūs At-Tūlāwī,**

From the *Spiritual meditations on the Monastic Biography*. (1721), Monastic Maronite Mariamite Manuscript, Collection of Notre Dame University, Louaize, number MC/SPO55, The copyist: Brother Ni'-mat Allah ash-Shibābī, date of the copy: 1873.