

= Francis Marrash =

Francis bin Fathallah bin Nasrallah Marrash (Arabic : ?????? ?? ??? ????? ?? ?????? ?????? / ALA @-@ LC : Frans?s bin Fat? All?h bin Na?rall?h Marr?sh ; June 1836 ? 1873) , also known as Francis al @-@ Marrash or Francis Marrash al @-@ Halabi , was a Syrian writer and poet of the Nahda movement ? the Arabic renaissance ? and a physician . Most of his works revolve around science , history and religion , analysed under an epistemological light . He travelled through the Middle East and France in his youth , and after some medical training and a year of practice in his native Aleppo , during which he wrote several works , he enrolled in a medical school in Paris ; yet , declining health and growing blindness forced him to return to Aleppo , where he produced more literary works until his early death .

Middle Eastern historian Matti Moosa considered Marrash to be the first truly cosmopolitan Arab intellectual and writer of modern times . Marrash adhered to the principles of the French Revolution and defended them in his own works , implicitly criticising Ottoman rule in the Middle East . He was also influential in introducing French romanticism in the Arab world , especially through his use of poetic prose and prose poetry , of which his writings were the first examples in modern Arabic literature , according to Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Shmuel Moreh . His modes of thinking and feeling , and ways of expressing them , have had a lasting influence on contemporary Arab thought and on the Mahjari poets .

= = Life = =

= = Background and education = = =

Francis Marrash was born in Aleppo , a city of Ottoman Syria (present @-@ day Syria) , to an old Melkite family of merchants known for their literary interests . Having earned wealth and standing in the 18th century , the family was well established in Aleppo , although they had gone through troubles : a relative of Francis , Butrus Marrash , was martyred by Greek Orthodox fundamentalists in April 1818 . Other Melkite Catholics were exiled from Aleppo during the persecutions , among them the priest Jibrail Marrash . Francis ' father , Fathallah , tried to defuse the Sectarian conflict by writing a treatise in 1849 , in which he rejected the Filioque . He had built up a large private library to give his three children Francis , Abdallah and Maryana a thorough education , particularly in the field of Arabic language and literature .

Aleppo was then a major intellectual center of the Ottoman Empire , featuring many thinkers and writers concerned with the future of the Arabs . It was in the French missionary schools that the Marrash family learnt Arabic with French and other foreign languages (Italian and English) . But Francis at first studied the Arabic language and its literature privately . At the age of four years , Marrash had contracted measles , and had ever since suffered from eye problems that had kept worsening over time . Hoping to find a treatment , his father had therefore taken him to Paris in 1850 ; Francis stayed there for about a year , after which he was sent back to Aleppo while his father remained in Paris . In 1853 , Francis accompanied his father once again , on a business trip of several months to Beirut , where there was a noticeable presence and cultural influence of Europeans . Francis experienced similar cultural contact later on , when he received private tutoring in medicine for four years under a British physician , in Aleppo ? he had by then developed a keen interest in science , and in medicine in particular . At the same time , he wrote and published several works . Marrash practiced medicine for about a year ; however , deeming it safer for his trade to become a state @-@ licensed physician , he went to Paris in 1866 so as to continue his medical education at a school . But his fragile health and his growing blindness forced him to interrupt his studies within a year after his arrival . He returned to Aleppo completely blind , but still managed to dictate his works .

= = Literary career and thought = = =

=== Ghabat al @-@ haqq ===

Around 1865 , Marrash published Ghabat al @-@ haqq (" The Forest of Truth " or " The Forest of Justice ") , an allegory about the conditions required to establish and maintain civilization and freedom . This allegory relates the apocalyptic vision of a war between a Kingdom of Liberty and a Kingdom of Slavery , resolved by the capture of the latter 's king and a subsequent trial before the King of Liberty , the Queen of Wisdom , the Vizier of Peace and Fraternal Love , the Commander of the Army of Civilization , with the Philosopher from the City of Light ? who represents the author ? as counsel . In this work , Marrash expressed ideas of political and social reforms , highlighting the need of the Arabs for two things above all : modern schools and patriotism " free from religious considerations " . In 1870 , when distinguishing the notion of fatherland from that of nation and applying the latter to Greater Syria , Marrash would point to the role played by language , among other factors , in counterbalancing religious and sectarian differences , and thus , in defining national identity .

Although Marrash 's poetical expression lacked the legal meticulousness found in works from Enlightened Europe , orientalist Shmuel Moreh has stated that Marrash became , with Ghabat al @-@ haqq , " the first Arab writer to reflect the optimism and humanistic view of 18th @-@ century Europe . This view stemmed from the hope that education , science and technology would resolve such problems of humanity as slavery , religious discrimination , illiteracy , disease , poverty , war , and other scourges of mankind , and it gave utterance to his hope for brotherhood and equality among peoples . " Yet , his views on freedom differed from those of the French revolutionists and of his Middle Eastern contemporaries ; indeed , he considered pleading for freedom on the basis of natural analogy to be superficial , for even nature responds to its own set of rules , according to Marrash . As a consequence , nothing in the universe may yearn for liberty without satisfying essential rules and needs that guarantee its existence . Being one of these , the need for progress may therefore justify the abolition of any restriction that does not serve as a regulator for a good system . In light of this reasoning , and in reference to the ongoing American Civil War , he thus in Ghabat al @-@ haqq supported the abolition of slavery .

But the significance of this work also lay in Marrash 's attempt to blend European thought with his own reading of the Christian belief in universal love . Indeed , he had tried to reconcile his philosophical understanding of the concept of liberty with his belief in the benevolence of the Catholic Church 's authority . As stated by Nazik Saba Yared :

He argued that only the spiritual kingdom [i.e. the kingdom centered on religion] could curb evil [...] and consequently guarantee the freedom of man . Love is one of the pillars of Christianity , and Marrash , like some Sufis and Romantics , considered it to be the basis of civilization , indeed of the entire universe [...] . Since love , for Marrash , was the general law , and freedom meant participation in that law , it followed that freedom would be inseparable from love and religion .

=== Later writings ===

In 1867 , Marrash published Rihlat Baris , an account of his second journey to Paris . The book begins with a description of his progress from Aleppo to ?skenderun , Latakia , Tripoli , Beirut , Jaffa , Alexandria , Cairo , and then back to Alexandria from which he had boarded a ship to Marseille , where he arrived in October 1866 . The Arab cities had inspired in him revulsion and indifference , except Alexandria and Cairo , where Ismail Pasha had already begun modernization projects . He had then travelled through France , with a stopover in Lyon before ending up in Paris . Marrash was fascinated by France , and by Paris the most ; everything he described in his account , from the Paris Exhibition of 1867 to gas lighting in the streets , served to praise the accomplishments of Western civilization . In Mashhad al @-@ ahwal (" The Witnessing of the Stages of Human Life ") , published in 1870 , Marrash would again compare the East and the West , writing that " while the East sank deeper into darkness , the West embraced light " . The optimism he had formerly

expressed about the first reform currents under the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz in the Ottoman Empire gave way to pessimism in Mashhad al @-@ ahwal , as he realized these reforms were superficial and that those he had hoped for would not soon come into being . Yet , in Durr al @-@ sadaf fi ghara 'ib al @-@ sudaf (Pearl Shells in Relating Strange Coincidences) , which he published two years later , he depicted the Lebanese social life of his day and criticised the blind imitation of Western customs and the use of the French language in everyday life .

Throughout his life , Marrash composed many essays about science (especially mathematics) , and about education , a subject which mattered a lot to him ; indeed , he wrote in Ghabat al @-@ haqq that " without the education of the mind , man is a mindless beast " . He also wrote many articles in the popular press ; in those published in Butrus al @-@ Bustani 's journal al @-@ Jinan , he showed himself favourable to women 's education , which he restricted however to reading , writing , and a little bit of arithmetic , geography and grammar . In an 1872 issue of al @-@ Jinan , he wrote that it is not necessary for a woman " to act like a man , neglect her domestic and family duties , or that she should consider herself superior to the man " ; he nonetheless closely followed his sister 's studies . Marrash also condemned Arab men 's severe treatment of their wives and daughters . In his later works , he tried to demonstrate the existence of God and of the divine law ; the Sharia , as he conceived it , was not restricted to the sphere of the Islamic law alone .

= = Legacy = =

Marrash often included poems in his works , written in muwashshah and zajal forms according to the occasion . Shmuel Moreh has stated that Marrash tried to introduce " a revolution in diction , themes , metaphor and imagery in modern Arabic poetry " , sometimes even mocking conventional poetic themes . In the introduction to his poetry book Mir 'at al @-@ Hasna ' (The Mirror of the Beautiful One) , which was first published in 1872 , Marrash rejected even the traditional genres of Arabic poetry , particularly panegyrics and lampoons . His use of conventional diction for new ideas marked the rise of a new stage in Arabic poetry which was carried on by the Mahjaris . Shmuel Moreh has also considered some passages from Ghabat al @-@ haqq and Rihlat Baris to be prose poetry , while Salma Khadra Jayyusi has described his prosaic writing as " often Romantic in tone , rising sometimes to poetic heights , declamatory , vivid , colourful and musical " , calling it the first example of poetic prose in modern Arabic literature .

Khalil Gibran was a great admirer of Marrash , whose works he had read at al @-@ Hikma school in Beirut . According to Shmuel Moreh , Gibran 's own works echo Marrash 's style and " many of [his] ideas on enslavement , education , women 's liberation , truth , the natural goodness of man , and the corrupted morals of society " . Khalil Hawi has referred to Marrash 's aforementioned philosophy of universal love as having left a deep impression on Gibran . Moreover , Khalil Hawi has stated that many of Marrash 's recurring expressions became stock images for Arab writers of the 20th century : he has mentioned , for example , " the valleys of mental contemplation " , " the wings of thoughts " , " solitudes and dreams " , " the veils of history " , " the Kingdom of the Spirit " , " the nymphs of the forest , the spring and the dawn " , " golden diadems " , " the jewels of light " , " the storms of days and nights " , and " the smoke of revenge and the mist of anger " . Poet and journalist Khalil Mutran dedicated poems to Marrash and others of his contemporaries .

= = Works = =

Dal'il al @-@ ?uriyah al @-@ ins?niyah (Guide to Human Liberty) , 1861 .

Al @-@ mir ? ?t al @-@ ?afiyah f? al @-@ m?b?di ? al @-@ ?ab? ? iyah (The Clear Mirror of Natural Principles) , 1861 .

Ta ? ziyat al @-@ makr?b wa @-@ r??at al @-@ mat ? ?b (Consolation of the Anxious and Respose of the Weary One) , 1864 ? pessimistic discourse on nations of the past .

Gh?bat al @-@ ?aqq f? taf??l al @-@ akhl?q al @-@ f??ilah (The Forest of Truth in Detailing Cultured Manners) , c . 1865 .

Ri?lat B?r?s (Journey to Paris) , 1867 .

Kitāb dalʾil al-ʿArabīyah (Guide to Nature) , c . 1867 .

Al-ʿArabīyah kunʾuz al-ʿArabīyah fī al-ʿArabīyah rumʾuz al-ʿArabīyah Maymūniyah (Artistic Treasures Concerning the Symbolic Visions of Maymun) , 1870 ? poem of almost 500 verses .

Mashhad al-ʿArabīyah aʾwʾil (The Witnessing of the Stages of Human Life) , 1870 ? collection of poems and short works in rhymed prose .

Durr al-ʿArabīyah ʾadaf fī gharʾib al-ʿArabīyah ʾudaf (Pearl Shells in Relating Strange Coincidences) , 1872 ? a romance with songs for which he supplied the tunes .

Mirʾat al-ʿArabīyah ʾasnʾ (The Mirror of the Beautiful One) , 1872 .

Shahādāt al-ʿArabīyah ʾabʾīyah fī wujʾd Allāh wa ʿArabīyah al-ʿArabīyah sharʾīyah (Nature 's Proofs for the Existence of God and the Divine Law) , 1892 (posthumous) .