

## Youssef VII Tyan - - يوسف السابع تيان



**Joseph VII Peter Tyan** (1760–1820), (Arabic: يوسف السابع تيان), was the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch from 1796 until his resignation in 1809.

Joseph Tyan was born in Beirut, Lebanon on March 15, 1760. He studied in Rome in the College of the Propaganda where he remained from 1773 to 1782. In 1783 and 1784 he played an important role in supporting Patriarch Joseph Estephan reconciliation with the Roman authorities. Joseph Tyan was ordained priest in 1784, and he was appointed Maronite bishop of Damascus and consecrated on August 6, 1786 by Patriarch Joseph Estephan. Even if Rome judged his episcopal ordination as not in line with the current rules, Tyan in 1788 was appointed Patriarchal Vicar. After the death of Patriarch Joseph Estephan in 1793, two short-reigning Patriarchs followed, and finally on April 28, 1796 Joseph Tyan was elected patriarch, even if opposed by the Khazen Sheikhes. His election was confirmed by Pope Pius VI on July 24, 1797.

In March 1801 Joseph Tyan wrote an encyclical to his faithful against the Jansenistic doctrine of Germanos Adam, thus defending the papal primacy. Patriarch Joseph Tyan took a stand against the Ottoman government, and during the French Campaign in Egypt and Syria he supported Napoleon in the siege of Acre (1799), urging Maronites to volunteer and asking Emir Bashir II to ally himself with Napoleon. Despite Tyan's hopes, Emir Bashir remained neutral and the British-Ottoman alliance defeated Napoleon in Akko.

The difficulties of the Patriarchate of Joseph Tyan increased: he came in conflict with Emir Bashir II not only about his support to Napoleon, but also about the excessive taxes imposed by the Emir on the Maronite peasants. He also had to face the discontent of some of his bishops, led by the Khazen Sheikhes, which already in the 1800 wrote to Rome complaining that Tyan took illegally church properties and instigated discord. Actually the real reason of the opposition to him by the Khazen Sheikhes seems to have been his attempt to implement the reform of the administration of the monasteries, which in great measure were owned by the Sheikhes. Only Tyan's successor, John Helou, could start such reform with the 1818 synod.

Due to the above difficulties, already in 1805 the Vatican appointed an Apostolic visitor in the Maronite Patriarchate, Germanos El Khazen bishop of Damascus, followed on March 7, 1807 by Aloisio Gandolfi, who took a stand against Joseph Tyan, and advised him to retire. On October 3, 1807 Patriarch Joseph Tyan wrote a letter to Rome with own resignation, that was communicated to the Maronite bishops on September 24, 1808. Consequently Aloisio Gandolfi summoned a meeting of all the bishops in Harissa in April 1809. Short time later, on June 8, 1809, John Helou was elected Patriarch.

Joseph Tyan retired in a hermitage and later moved in Kfarhaye (Batroun District) to teach theology in the newly erected seminary of Saint Maron. He died in odor of sanctity on February 20, 1820 in the patriarchal residence of Qannubin Monastery, into the Kadisha Valley. His body was found to be still incorrupt almost two hundred years after his death.