The Guards and their Role in maintaining Security and imposing State Authority in Basra from 41 A.H. to 247 A.H.

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Abstract

This research, titled "**The Guards and their Role in maintaining Security and imposing State Authority in Basra from 41 A.H. to 247 A.H.**", deals with the role of the guards since the Prophetic Islamic Message Era and the emergence of the role of night watchmen "*Al-Ases*". Due to the importance of the role of guarding in Basra Province, the guards have diversified and their duties have expanded from bodyguards to guards of State-owned institutions, such as, the Muslims' Treasury "*Baytul-Mal*", the Principality House "*Darul-Emara*", roads, bridges and markets guards, as well as border and prisons guards. These guards have become closely associated with the commander of the police or his deputy.

Introduction:

All praise due to Allah, the Cherisher of the world, and peace and blessing be upon the Prophet of Allah, our master Muhammad, Allah's blessing and peace be upon him and his family, on his family and all his companions, may Allah's blessings be upon them all.

The guard service is considered one of the services that played a crucial role in developing civilization in civil societies. It was urgently needed at the inception of the new Islamic State. The emergence of this service coincided with the inception of the Islamic State during the lifetime of the noble Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, in its early stages in the dawn of Islam. It was simple in its structure, just like the police force represented by the guard, which was also simple in its institution. However, it evolved during the reign of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate "Rashidun Caliphate" as the State developed and its boundaries expanded, responding to specific historical circumstances. This led to the generalization of this regulation in Islamic territories, becoming more complex and advanced during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, playing an important and decisive role in many historical events and political conflicts. Finally, it became one of the important foundations on which the civilization of civil society in Islamic cities and territories, especially Basra, relied upon. Basra has witnessed many events on both the security and political levels.

First: The Importance of Research

The importance of research for the role of the guard in Basra and assuming its holders of this position can be summarized. This institution is directly related to the police and its relation to the latter with governors and caliphs, as well as the responsibility of those who covet power in Basra. Additionally, the selection criteria for the guard according to specific qualities of obedience, loyalty, harshness, and influence, as well as the astuteness, vigilance, experience, and expertise can be discussed.

Second: The Problem and Obstacles of Research

The problem with research lies in the scarcity of sources and the lack of clear and extensive mention of this city, i.e., Basra Province. It is also challenging due to the absence of a clear history regarding the assumption of these positions by the guards.

Third: The Most Important Sources of Research

The researcher has relied on most important sources, which are "Subh Al-Aa'sha" by Al-Qalqashandi, the book "Al-Iqtidhab" by Al-Batliyusi, the book "Wafiyat Al-Aa'yan" by Ibn Khalkan, the book "Ansab Al-Ashraf" by Al-Baladhuri, the book "Al-Istee`ab" by Ibn Abdulbir, the book "Nihayatularb fi Funoon Aladab" by Shihabuldeen Al-Nuwayri, and the book "Akhbar Al-Basra" by Ibn Shabba.

In this research, I have relied on modern scholars such as Sayyid Jaafar Murtad¹a Al-Amili "*Ali* and the Kharijites", Dr. Salma Abdulhameed Al-Hashimi "*Demographic Conditions in Basra* and their Impact on the Attitude towards Al-Hussein's Revolution", and Dr. Jawad Kadhim Al-Nasrallah in his book "*The Role of the People of Basra*", along with other references.

Fourth: Methodology and Structure of Research

The researcher's methodology can be summarized as follows: a comprehensive review of texts and references are conducted, as much as possible, and different perspectives are presented. I have divided the research into an introduction and four topics based on the aforementioned.

First Topic: The Guards First: The Bodyguard Second: Guarding the State Institutions Third: Guarding the Roads and City Gates Fourth: Deputies (Guarding those Punished by Banishment or Detention)

First Topic: The Guards

First: The Guards

The use of guards has appeared since the time of the Prophet's era, and the role of night watchmen "*Al-Ases*" became prominent during the reign of Omar ibn Al-Khattab, who entrusted them with patrolling the city's streets and markets to guard them, as we mentioned before.

The guards have diversified and the responsibilities of those in charge have expanded with the early establishment of the police force in Basra. There are bodyguards as well as guards for state institutions, such as, the Muslims' Treasury "*Baytul-Mal*", the Principality House "*Darul-Emara*", and the Administrative Bureau. Additionally, there are general guards for roads and markets, and border guards at the entrances of the city of Basra. Not to mention the prison guards, as will be further elaborated.

The responsibility of security guards in all their forms and types has become associated with the commander of the police or his deputy, as the role of the commander of guards has emerged [1].

Some of the most important guards include:

1. The Bodyguard

The origins of the emergence of the bodyguard can be traced back to the Umayyad period. Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan was the first to establish the guard [2]. It seems that Muawiyah's decision to establish the guard dates back to his time as the governor of Levant during the reign of Omar ibn Al-Khattab. This was done to demonstrate a certain level of splendor, inspired by the practices of the Persian and Roman kings. Supporting this view is the fact that when Omar ibn Al-Khattab arrived in Levant in the year (16 AH, 637 AD) and saw Muawiyah being received in a grand procession, he asked him, "Are you the one with the grand procession?" Muawiyah replied, "Yes, O, Ameer ul-Mu'mineen." Omar then inquired, "What do I hear about people with needs waiting at your door?" Muawiyah responded, "We are in a land surrounded

by enemy spies, so it is necessary to display the might of our authority to intimidate them [3]." It is also said that Omar ibn Al-Khattab used to view Muawiyah and say, "He is the Khosroes of the Arabs" [4].

Muawiyah did not settle for the guards who accompanied him during his travels and movements. Muawiyah has established a bodyguard to be with him in his sitting, ensuring his safety. It was even said that he commanded to be guarded at night, and that the police would stand by his side when he prostrated (during prayer) [5]. This action was taken, apparently, as a precaution, fearing the exposure to an assassination plot similar to the one in which Muawiyah himself participated in plotting to assassinate Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), which led to his martyrdom in the year (40 AH, 660 AD) [6].

Regarding the bodyguards in Basra, they emerged during the Umayyad period. Ziyad ibn Abeeh was the first to establish a bodyguard, as people were loyal to their kings.

It is narrated that Ziyad was the first to have striking military force, in this regard. They were under his command when he held governance of Basra Province [7]. It is also mentioned that Ziyad had a private guard consisting of five hundred men who never left the mosque [8].

As judges have guards, among them were the guards who protect the judiciary council in order to preserve the dignity of the council and prevent judges from any verbal assault. They are also tasked with deterring litigants and preventing any insults, slander, or attacks between them. Those who carry out this task are called "*Al-Jalwaz*; Policeman" and are also known as the chairman for their role in disciplining the session [9].

The judge Shurayh was one of the first to appoint "Al-Jalwaz; Policeman" [10], and this may have been during the Umayyad perion because Shurayh worked in the judiciary for a long time, starting from the time of Omar ibn Al-Khattab until his dismissal during the days of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi [11].

It is reported that the judge of Basra, Iyas bin Muawiya [12], was surrounded by guards [13]. When Al-Hasan Al-Basri assumed the judiciary in Basra during the reign of Omar ibn Abdulazeez, he did not have a guard in his council. As a result, he was subjected to violations by people, especially since he reluctantly took on the judiciary due to his old age and weakness [14]. He was unable to maintain control over the council of judges, and it was said, "He neither stood for them nor had the power to do so", and when people took advantage of him, he would say, "People cannot be corrected except by the quick response of the police" [15].

The guards included individuals other than state officials, and it appears that this was done according to a request submitted to the governor in order to obtain his approval for assigning guards to protect the requester. In this regard, it was mentioned that Ruaya bin Al-Ajjaj entered Basra market wearing a green "burnous". He was subjected to attack and mistreatment by some boys who started playing with him and stuck palm thorns in his woolen cloak "burnous", while shouting, "O cursed one... O cursed one." Ruaya bin Al-Ajjaj went to the governor of Basra, requesting police protection, saying, "Send the troops with me, as the boys have hindered me from entering the market." So, he was accompanied by a number of police officers who confronted the boys until they fled [16].

2. Guarding the State Institutions

The emphasis on securing the protection of state-owned institutions, such as the Principality House "Darul-Emara", the Administrative Office "Diwan", and the Muslims' Treasury "Baytul-Mal", as well as guarding prisons, is evident. The governor of Basra, Othman ibn Haneef, entrusted a group of Sayabijah (people came from India) and Al-Zutt (Jat people from India) with the task of guarding the Muslims' Treasury "Baytul-Mal" and the Principality House "Darul-Emara", in Basra. Their number was reported to be forty men, while some sources state four hundred men, led by Abu Salama Al-Zutti [17].

When Talha and Al-Zubair have entered Basra in the year (35 AH, 656 AD), their forces attacked the Principality House "Darul-Emara", the Treasury "Baytul-Mal", and engaged in a battle with the guards, brandishing their swords against them [18].

Ziyad ibn Abeeh had increased the numbers or individuals of Basra police force, making them four thousand men to maintain security and order [19]. Ziyad may have relied on five hundred men from the guards who were said to never leave the mosque in protecting the state institutions as well. They were stationed near the mosque, and the state institutions such as the Principality House "Darul-Emara", the Treasury "Baytul-Mal", the Administrative Office "Diwan", and the prison were located near the Basra Mosque [20].

Third: Guarding the Roads and City Gates

A group of police officers has been assigned to guard the public roads and entrances leading to Basra in order to maintain security and enforce the authority of the ruling government. When Ziad bin Abeeh issued a curfew in Basra after the evening prayer "Isha'a", within a mechanism specified by Ziad, which is to delay the final evening prayer until the latest person arrives to pray, then he orders a man to recite Surah Al-Baqarah or something similar with a melodious recitation. Then he allows enough time for a person to reach the last home, and then orders the police chief to leave..." [21].

Here, the police chief accompanied by a group of guards goes out for night patrols in the streets of Basra. If they catch someone, it will be beheaded [22].

This action had a political aspect associated with Ziyad's attempt to instill fear and terror in people's minds and compel them to submit and obey, rather than being an action related to combating corruption and pursuing thieves and criminals. This is evidenced by what was mentioned in Ziyad's sermon "Al-Batraa" [23], which resulted in the decision to impose a curfew. The sermon stated: "...withdraw your hands and tongues from me. Remove your hands and swords. Let no one among you show any dissent from what your community agrees upon, or else it will be beheaded..." [24]. He also said, "We have become your rulers, and you are our subjects under the authority of God, who has granted us power. We defend you against the rebellion that opposes God, which we have been authorized to do. Therefore, you must listen and obey us in what we desire...", Ziyad added, "There are many rebellious individuals among you, so let every one of you be cautious not to be one of them" [25].

Due to the importance of guarding the roads and city entrances, Ziyad increased the number of police officers to four thousand [26]. When Ziyad was told that the roads were frightening, he responded, "I do not fear anything behind the territory until I have fixed the territory..." [27].

One of the most important roles performed by the police is the nighttime road guarding, as it was mentioned that the police chief must order the guards to inspect the paths and streets [28], from the beginning of the night until its end. This also necessitated the installation of lookout posts and the deployment of armed forces "military barracks" at the entrances and roads of Basra, especially during the outbreak of revolutions and opposition movements. The position of what is known as the military barracks chief emerged [29].

We find the role of the armed forces "military barracks" and the guarding of roads and entrances during the revolution of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him). After he left Mecca heading towards Kufa in the year (61 AH, 680 AD), Yazeed bin Muawiyah wrote to the governor of Iraq, Obaidullah bin Ziyad [30], instructing him to take strict measures of surveillance and prevent the people of Iraq from joining Imam Hussein's convoy. In a letter from Yazeed bin Muawiyah, it is mentioned: "... I have received information that Hussein is heading to Iraq, so deploy observers and armed forces, intensify surveillance, and be cautious in every way..." [31].

Therefore, Obaidullah ibn Ziyad stationed his troops in Kufa and arranged the armed forces around it [32]. Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) had written a letter to a group of dignitaries in Basra, along with his slave named Sulayman Abu Ruzayn, inviting them to support him and obey his command [33]. Meanwhile, a group of Shia residents of Basra used to gather at the house of a woman named Mariya bint Munqith [34], whose house served as a meeting place for Shia in Basra [35].

After Obaidullah ibn Ziyad headed to Kufa, he wrote to his agent in Basra instructing him to set up checkpoints and to secure the roads [36]. It is reported that Obaidullah ibn Ziyad specifically ordered the closure of the road that connects Waqisa [37] to the route from Sham to Basra, allowing no one to enter or exit [38].

This means monitoring the road that connects Mecca to Basra, and Mecca to Sham (Levant) through the installation of surveillance points and obstacles to prevent joining Imam Hussein (peace be upon him). Despite the strict measures taken by Obaidullah ibn Ziyad and his associates, some managed to leave and join Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), like Yazeed ibn Nabeetţ Al-Qaisi [39] and his two sons, Abdullah and Obaidullah. They defied the dangers of the road and the fate that awaited them if they were captured with their sons. Yazeed used to say, "By Allah, even if the matter were extremely difficult, it would be easy for the one who asked me. [40]" He succeeded in reaching the convoy of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), crossing the barriers that were set up, and participating with the Imam until martyrdom [41].

One of the researchers believes that the ability of Yazeed bin Nabeett and others who were able to evade the armies of Obaidullah bin Ziyad in Basra is due to three things, which are [42]:

1. The first matter: Either Yazeed bin Nabeett and others had extensive knowledge of the roads and crossed them away from the eyes of the censors and guards, or they sought the help of those who had knowledge of the roads and were able to use other roads.

The second matter: There may be members of the guards and police who hate the Umayyads or who love the family of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon them, and who support the revolution of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), so they facilitated the passage of the revolutionaries with great care.

The third matter: is the possibility that Yazeed bin Nabeett and others succeeded in getting out of Basra after guiding the guards, and paying exorbitant and tempting sums, and this matter cannot be ruled out due to the spread of bribery in the country [43].

The aforementioned possibilities are supported by what came about the small numbers of those who joined Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) from the people of Basra [44] and that the enrollment was on an individual basis and not collectively, as it did not witness the departure of tribal groups, but rather the exit was on an individual basis [45].

It was mentioned that Ibrahim sent a man called (Mawqif) to write to the people of Kufa calling them to his revolution, during the revolution of Ibrahim bin Abdullah Al-Hasani in the year (145 AH, 762 AD), so he delivered it and took the answers to those letters and hid them in his bag [46].

On his way back from Kufa to Basra, he passed twelve-armed barracks that had been set up in order to monitor those entering Basra, and to investigate their relationship with Ibrahim bin Abdullah Al-Husseini, and in every armed force that he passed by, the guards caught him, and he swore to them that he did not know Ibrahim, and he was not one of his sects. As it was reported that he said (So I took in twelve-armed barracks, and I swear to divorce and manumission, to free, and to give alms of what I possess, "I am not a sect of Ibrahim, and I do not like his desires, and I do not harbor the best of what I show..." [47].

Had it not been for that man hiding the letters in the container of the animal carrying him, he would not have been able to survive, and this means that the search was for people only, as the guards did not expect that the letters would be hidden inside the animal food containers.

4. Deputies (Guarding those Punished by Banishment or Detention)

Among the types of guards carried out by police officers are the guards of those punished by banishment or detention, or those who have been imposed on house arrest. These guards are called "Deputies", as they are entrusted with the task of leading the exiles and carrying them to the countries of exile, with the powers and capabilities they possess and the weapons they carry [48].

When Amer bin Abdullah bin Abd Qais [49] was exiled from Basra and carried to the Levant on a camel [50], then his carrying and guarding must have been carried out by agents, and other exiles, since it is unreasonable for them to go by themselves without escort or delivery. Indications have been stated regarding the exile of some people (not from the people of Basra) and that they were brought to the country of exile through people mentioned as (the guards) and in other narrations as (the delegates). They are among the police who have the capacity and powers to play this role [51].

The same is the case with those punished by the penalty of confinement, as it was mentioned that the deputies were carrying out the task of guarding the detainees to prevent them from contacting others, especially if the reasons for the confinement were political, as the detainee was placed under house arrest in a town or in his home, or he was confined in prisons or in other countries (country of exile).

The task of the deputies here is to guard, watch, and follow up on the affairs of the detainees. The deputies who were members of the police had the ability to carry out these tasks [52]. We mention, for example, what came from the judge of Basra, Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Ansari [53], who misbehaved during his second term in the district of Basra in the year (199 AH, 814 AD), So the governor of Basra, Ismaeel bin Jaafar [54], wrote to dismiss him, so Judge Al-Ansari entered his house, and the commander of Basra police, Ismaeel bin Muhammad bin Harb, took over the implementation of the order of tight security over him throughout the night, then imposed on him house arrest in his house and appointed an deputy to guard him (55).

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- 7. See: Al-Amili, Sayyid Jaafar Murtadha: Ali and the Kharijites (Edition 1, Islamic Center for Studies, Beirut, 2002), Part 1, pp. 61-69; Al-Korani, Sheikh Ali: Jewels of History (Edition 1, Dhuhur Press, Dar Al-Huda, 1426 AH), Part 2, pp. 300 -301.
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- 9. Al-Nuwayri, Shihabuldeen Ahmad bin Abdulwahhab (d. 733 AH): "Nihayatularb fi Funoon Aladab", Costa Thomas Press, Cairo, 1st ed., Part 5, p. 408; Salma Abdulhameed Al-Hashimi, The Firsts "*Al-Awael*", p. 92.
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- 11. Wakee', idem, Part 2, p. 215.
- 12. Ibid, pp. 200-392-397-398.
- 13. Iyas bin Muawiya bin Qura bin Iyas Al-Mazni, nicknamed Abi Washila, took charge as a judge of Basra during the days of Omar bin Abdulazeez and died in the year (121

AH). See: Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, Part 7, pp. 434-435, Al-Dhahabi, The Noble Personages' Biographies, Part 5, p. 155.

- 14. Wakee', idem, Part 1, p. 317-318.
- 15. Wakee', idem, Part 2, p. 7.
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- Ibn Shabba, Akhbar Al-Basra, p. 411; Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, Part 20, p. 367.
- 18. Al-Baladhuri, Futouh Al-Buldan, p. 421.
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- 20. Ibn Shabba, Akhbar Al-Basra, p. 236.
- 21. Al-Baladhuri, Futouh Al-Buldan, p. 394.
- Abu Hilal Al-Askari, Al-Hasan bin Abdullah bin Sahl (d. 395 AH): Al-Awael (reviewed by: Muhammad Al-Sayyid Al-Wakeel, Al-Madeena Al-Munawwara, 1966), pp. 241-242.
- 23. Abu Hilal Al-Askari, Al-Awael, p. 242.
- 24. Al-Batraa is derived from Al-Batr, which means completely removing something else. Any matter that has lost its good influence is considered "Abtar" (cut off). Al-Khutba Al-Batraa (the sermon of Al-Batraa) refers to a sermon in which Allah Almighty and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are not mentioned. Ibn Mandhur, Lisan Al-Arab, Part 4, pp. 37-38.
- 25. Ibn Shabba, Akhbar Al-Basra, p. 232.
- 26. Ibn Shabba, Akhbar Al-Basra, p. 233.
- 27. Al-Nuwayri, Shihabuldeen Ahmad bin Abdulwahhab (d. 733 AH): "Nihayatularb fi Funoon Aladab", Costa Thomas Press, Cairo, Part 5, p. 408.
- 28. Ibn Al-Atheer, The Complete History "Al-Kamil fi Al-Tareekh", Part 3, p. 307.
- 29. Ibn Abi Al-Rabee, The Behavior of Kingdoms "Silook Almamalik", p. 115.
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- 31. Obaidullah bin Ziyad bin Abeeh Abu Hafs, took over Iraq in the year (55 AH), described as a bloodshed who Muslims hated for what he did to Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), he was killed on the Day of Ashura in the year (67 AH), Al-Dhahabi, The Noble Personages' Biographies, Part 3, p. 545-546-548.
- 32. Al-Baladhuri, Ansab Al-Ashraf, Part 2, p. 85.
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- 35. Mariya bint Munqith, or the daughter of Saeed, or Saad Al-Abdiyya, a pious Shiite who used to convert to Shiism, and her house was meeting place to Shiites in Basra. See: Al-Tastari, Qamus Alrijal, Part 2, p. 343.
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- 37. Abu Mikhnaf, idem, p. 18; Al-Tabari, idem, Part 4, p. 423.
- 38. Waqisa: A house on the road to Mecca, see: Yaqut Al-Hamawi, Mu'jam Al-Buldan, Part 5, p. 354.
- 39. Al-Baladhuri, Ansab Al-Ashraf, Part 3, p. 173, 225; Al-Tabari, History, Part 4, p. 295; Sheikh Al-Mufeed, Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Al-Nu'man (d. 413 AH): Al-Irshad (reviewed by: Aal Al-Bayt Foundation (PBUH) for the Achievement of Heritage, 1st edition, Dar Al-Mufeed, Beirut, 1993), Part 2, p. 72.
- 40. Yazeed bin Nabeett, and it was said that Ibn Thabeett Al-Abdi is from Abd Al-Qais from the Shiites of Basra: See: Shams Al-Deen, Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi: Ansar Al-Hussein (PBUH) (2nd edition, Islamic House, 1981), p. 112.
- 41. Abu Mikhnaf, The Killing of Al-Hussein, peace be upon him, p. 18; Al-Tabari, History, Part 4, p. 263.
- 42. Al-Hashimi, Salma Abdulhameed, the Demographic Conditions in Basra and their impact on the attitude towards Al-Hussein's Revolution (research under publication).
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- 45. Al-Nasrullah, Dr. Jawad Kadhim, The role of the people of Basra, p. 277.
- 46. Bag: A container made from the cuticle of a sheep in which grain, flour, and the like are deposited. See Al-Farahidi, Al-Ain, vol. 6, p. 113; Al-Turaihi, Majma' Al-Bahrain, Part 2, p. 23.
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- 48. Al-Darraji, Hashim Dakhil Hussein, The Punishment of Exile in the Arab Islamic State Until the End of Turkish Domination (334 AH, 945 AD), a Historical Study (PhD thesis, University of Basra, College of Arts, 2007), p. 198.
- 49. Amer bin Abdullah bin Abd Qais Al-Anbari Abu Amr, and it was said Abu Abdullah Al-Zahid Al-Basri, he was trustworthy among the followers, Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, Part 7, p. 103.
- 50. Ibn Asaker, History of the City of Damascus, vol. 26, p. 14; And see: Hashem Dakhil Al-Daradji, Punishment of Exile, p. 201.
- 51. See: Hashim Dakhil Al-Darraji, Punishment of Exile, p. 197.

- 52. Al-Majid, Mubarak Hasan Dhiab: Detention in the Arab Islamic State until (656 AH, 1258 AD), a historical study (PhD thesis, University of Basra, College of Arts, 2021), pp. 215-219.
- 53. Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Al-Muthanna Al-Ansari, Abu Abdullah, he took over the judiciary of Basra for the first time in the year (192 AH), then Al-Ameen dismissed him and was reinstated in the judiciary in the year (199 AH) and misbehaved so he was dismissed from the judiciary, he died in the year (215 AH). See: Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, Part 7, pp. 294-295; Wakee', Akhbar Al-Qudhat, Part 2, pp. 154-155.
- 54. Ismaeel bin Jaafar bin Suleiman bin Al-Abbas, the governor of Basra in the days of Al-Ma'mun, and he refused to wear green attire, so Al-Ma'mun sent an army to him to fight him, so he surrendered himself without a fight, so he and his son were carried to Khorasan, and there he died. See: Al-Dhahabi, History of Islam, Part 14, p. 5.
- 55. Ibn Shabba, Akhbar Al-Basra, pp. 447-448.