

## **The Political Role of the Alawis in Time of the Caliph Haroon AL-Rasheed 170-193H./786-808AD))**

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**Abstract:** This study aims at arising the political role of the Alawis in the reign of the Caliph, Haroon AL-Rasheed 170-193H./786-808AD, through the getting out of some of the Alawis, who escaped after the battle of the Trap of Al-Hadi Time (Fakh Zamman el-Hadi) (169H.-170/785-786AD). The study shows the policy followed by AL-Rasheed with them and how he could attract some of them and then got rid of them, in spite of showing the policy of softness and peacefulness with them. The study deduced the extent of AL-Rasheed's worldly wisdom in eliminating their political attempts to rebel against the state and announce the Caliphate, which did not reach the degree of the revolution, as happened in the reign of his ancestors. AL-Rasheed traced some of the Alawis, especially Mousa AL-Kathem, whom the study cleared that he did not have a political role as far as his followers used to turn about him, for his cognition and asceticism, though AL-Rasheed got rid of him, yet not he gets developed.

**Key words:** Alawis • "Fakh" • Adaylam • Revolt

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The follower of the Abbaside Caliph's history since the establishment of the state in (132H./749AD), finds there a difference in their policies, which they followed. AL-Saffah (132-136H./ 749-753AD) firstly attempted to avoid any collision with the Alawis, personalities, in spite of his perception with the existence of actions supporting the Alawis in Iraq and Khurasan [1], that was not of weakness, but AL-Saffah wanted to have the Alawis' concert to give the new state an opportunity to stable itself [2]. And from the other side the Alawis are in need of more time to collect their powers, to confront what emerged of new conditions with the advent of the Abbasides, [2].

though their efforts did not cool down thinking of revolt and pulling out Caliphate, especially that Mohammad Bin Abdullah, nick named "the Righteous Spirit" and his brother Ibrahim, they did not acknowledge the Abbasides with the Caliphate [3] and since that time they decided to prepare for the revolt. [4] But AL-Saffah could extinguish the fire of the revolution in his reign.

But AL-Mansour (136-158H./ 753-774AD) collided with the most powerful Alawis Revolts, which greed to reach the Caliphate and their most dangerous revolts, led by Mohammad Bin Abdullah, nick named "the Righteous Spirit" (145H./762AD) [4], but AL-Mansour's worldly wisdom and power enabled him of eliminating them in cradle in AL-Hijaz [3] and the people of AL-Hijaz never to be joining Mohammad Bin Abdullah, except for their Alawi inclination, but because of their hostility to the Abbaside state, which they considered the state of Iraq and Khurasan [3]. The Azdi mentions that Mohammad Bin Abdullah could bring to him notable people of AL-Medina [4], also the "Righteous Spirit" claim that he is "AL-Mahdi" following the right path and he is the savior brought to him many followers, especially the weak and poor people. Therefore, he always shows the Abbasides with the appearance of the dissidents of religion, usurpers and negligents of their duties and submerged in their pleasures [2].

Mohammad, the Righteous Spirit thought that time became appropriate to announce the revolt in "the Medina" in 145H./62AD [5], Thinking that those,

who surround him from able supporters to achieve victory on the Abbasides, so that when AL-Mansour heard the news of revolt announcement than he equipped a trained army by Iisa Bin Mousa [3] having the news reached Mohammad's supporter than they started to escape fearing from confronting the Abbasides. This what made the task more easier in front of the Abbasides Army, which assisted Iisa Bin Mousa to achieve victory and killing Mohammad, the Righteous Spirit [8].

And the revolt failed, his brother, Ibrahim's revolt had also failed in AL-Basra and AL-Koufa in the same year [2], because of nonexistence of coordination between them both for the far distance between AL-Basra and AL-Medina, [6] for AL-Mansour sent Iisa Bin Mousa to AL-Koufa after his return from AL-Medina and killed Ibrahim, his companies separated [5] and as an effect of that AL-Mansour followed a more severe policy with the people of Hijaz, [6] by politically and economically tightening by severing sustenance and rations from them [2], because of their support of the Alawis when they revolted in AL-Medina [1]. Then AL-Mansour pursued the Alawis and killed a number of them [7]. And after AL-Mansour had put an end to the Alawis revolts, he stabilized the Abbasides' power and truly was considered of the Abbaside state.

But AL-Mahdi (158-169H./774-758AD) had followed a different policy with the Alawis from the caliphs, who preceded him. He did not follow the policy of power and collision, but he worked to approach the people of AL-Hijas [8] and followed with them a policy with more leniency, by setting jails free [4] and distribution money [2] and followed the policy of Alawis containment of those who had political ambition [1] and chose five hundred men of supporters (AL-Ansar) and made them a private guard of him [4], therefore we did not witness any revolt of the Alawis in his reign, till his son AL-Hadi came (169-170H./785-786AD), who led a different policy from his father's policy, AL-Mahdi, therefore, the battle 'the Trap' "Fakh" happened in his reign [8] in the year (169H./785AD), which was led by AL-Hussein Bin Ali [7] and in spite of AL-Hadi had supported the revolt, but its consequences appeared in the reign of the Caliph AL-Rasheed [8].

AL-Rasheed followed a policy more lenient with the Alawis, to eliminate the effect of his brother, AL-Hadi's violent policy toward them [4] and in return the Alawis are still aspire for attaining the Caliphate and they many revolt when never they have the opportunity [3]. AL-Rasheed attempted at the beginning of his reign to

calming conditions, by leading a policy fewer firm than AL-Hadi, in spite that AL-Rasheed knew their danger. In the year (171H./787AD) AL-Rasheed commanded with lifting control of those, who were in Baghdad and moved them to AL-Medina except AL-Abbas Bin AL-Hasan Bin Abdullah [3], to show his good intention toward them.

But AL-Rasheed puts in mind the danger of those Alawis, who participated in the battle of Trap "Fakh" led by AL-Hussein Bin Ali Bin AL-Hasan and he does not know their place [2]. AL-Rasheed used to put in mind, their rebel and revolt at any time if they had the opportunity, especially Yahya Bin Abdullah and his brother, Idrees. We shall start talking about Yahya Bin Abdullah's movement in Adaylam country [5].

**Yahya Bin Abdullah Revolt:** The year (176H./792) witnessed the most dangerous Alawis' revolt in AL-Rasheed's reign by Yahya Bin Abdullah's rebel, who escaped after the battle of Trap "Fakh" to Adaylam country [6], the preferable is that he had exploited the policy of leniency followed by AL-Rasheed toward Alawis. So he was absent from sights until he had the opportunity in Adaylam country, lifting the banner of revolution, claiming the Imaam [3], in spite of sources with Alawi inclinations mention that the killing of the people of the "Fakh Battle" he feared what happened to his both brothers, the Righteous Spirit and Ibraheem. So, he went too far seeking shelter and not demanding the Caliphate [6], but what denies that people in Adaylam country surrounded him and was recognized as caliph, AL-Rasheed was disturbed of this news for the distance of the area and its inaccessibility [7].

AL-Rasheed perceived that the Alawis greeds in the Caliphate are still acting. By the Yahya Bin Abdullah's rebel started a new stage of AL-Rasheed's relationship with Alawis [3], it was distinguished by terminating the policy of leniency and peacefulness and followed a more firm and stronger policy [8]. After Yahya Bin Abdullah's affair became stronger and his supporters surrounded him [9]. His intentions of demanding the Caliphate were proved and rebellion against the Abbaside when he began stretching his control on the regions. And AL-Rasheed started perceive the growing of his power and enlargement [2]. This did not prevent AL-Rasheed from attempting stopping his political activity and propaganda in Adaylam country [9]. He entrusted this task to AL-Fadel Bin Yahya AL-Barmakiy [10], by following the policy of peacefulness with him by enticing him with money and granting him security if retreated his movement [7].

And in the same time AL-Rasheed wanted showing his seriousness and firmness in quelling Alawis by taking precautionary procedures, by congregation armies and fighters to confront Yahya Bin Abdullah and his movement at any time, if it was necessary, thought AL-Rasheed recommended AL-Fadel to commence reconciliation first, preventing of bloodshed and treating Alawis with kindness [11].

AL-Rasheed commanded AL-Fadel to march to Adaylam country, heading an army of fifty thousand fighters [2], to terrorize Yahya Bin Abdullah and showing his determination to fight if that was necessary, the thing that pushes him to accept reconciliation and terminate his movement in its cradle. AL-Rasheed had confidence in a AL-Fadel Bin Yahya AL-Barmakiy to convince Yahya Bin Abdullah with reconciliation and security, for what he was distinguished for his evidence of persuasion and confidence in him [8].

AL-Fadel arrived at (Atalgan) in a place called (Ashabba) [3] with an army [2] and started writing to AL-Rasheed with what comes new of things through Mansour Bin Ziyad [1] and AL-Fadel letters began reaching Yahya Bin Abdullah consecutively avoiding fighting and confrontation due to AL-Rasheed's recommendation. By threatening and frightening once and leniency and awakening desire a second time [9]. He promised him if accepted reconciliation, he will find him an excuse at AL-Rasheed to forgive him. Actually AL-Fadel could convince Yahya Bin Abdullah of reconciliation after the latter had perceived his inability confrontation, especially many of his supporters were attracted AL-Fadel [8]. It was said that they were seventy men, after they were enticed by money and gifts, the thing that urged them to give up supporting him. At this point AL-Fadel Bin Yahya AL-Barmakiy was ascertained of Yahya's companions disconnection and scattering from his side and he is approaching peace [13].

The most important of that, that AL-Fadel Bin Yahya could attract AL-Adaylam ruler [8], who was at Yahya's Bin Abdullah side, as considered a political power incubating his movement. By this Yahya's condition became more critic at after AL-Fadel had sent to Adaylam ruler a letter, in which it was agreed to not supporting Yahya in return for an amount of money [14], reached a hundred thousand dirhams. The Adaylam ruler agreed AL-Fadel's offer. At that, Yahya Bin Abdullah lost an important element used to stand beside him and support him [12].

After he had perceived that his stand started to weaken, Yahya Bin Abdullah initiated to accept reconciliation and asked security [8] and so his movement

terminated without fighting and reconciliation was agreed upon. He left Adaylam and went with AL-Fadel to AL-Rasheed [2]. And for more safety Yahya conditioned on AL-Fadel to write him a security letter at AL-Rasheed [1]. AL-Fadel agreed and sent to AL-Rasheed with that. AL-Rasheed wrote a security letter and asked the jurists, jurists prudentes and Bani Hashem's Sheikhs [15].

It is apparent that AL-Rasheed wanted to arrest Yahya Bin Abdullah by any means, so it was agreed with Yahya after he had got a copy of the condition of security [7]. And in spite of sources were silent from mentioning the items of security, it is clear that Yahya Bin Abdullah was untroubled to its items and that he is warrantor to make AL-Rasheed say nothing of his rebellion and not harm to him.

AL-Rasheed was ascertained of Yahya's acceptance of reconciliation and that increased when Yahya came with AL-Fadel and entered Baghdad [16], AL-Rasheed showed good intention at meeting Yahya and ordered him with a lot of money, granted him sustenance, met him cheerfully [2] and commanded to build him a house in Baghdad [16].

In spite of all this AL-Rasheed remained alert of the Alawis, ordered Yahya AL-Barmakiy the father of AL-Fadel to care about him and take care of his affairs, because AL-Rasheed's fears towards Alawis did not sluggish and encompassed him with his spies where he resides [2], especially he received that many of AL-Adaylam's people used to come to him and pledged of allegiance for him [17].

It seems also that AL-Rasheed was entrapping Yahya Bin Abdullah and putting him in this way to be an excuse for him to kill and get rid of him, especially that Yahya AL-Barmakiy asked his son Jaafar to release him to be invited whenever he wanted, because he was fearing AL-Rasheed's intention [18]. Actually AL-Rasheed commenced to arrest Yahya Bin Abdullah and imprison him. When he realized of danger, Yahya started beseeching AL-Rasheed with what connects them both of kinship [2]. But AL-Rasheed received the news that Yahya first the soldiers and calls the people to pledge allegiance for him. AL-Rasheed feared of collecting a group round him in Baghdad and be a support to him in rebellion against the state [16].

In spite of these justifications AL-Rasheed was bearing in mind intention to get rid of Yahya Bin Abdullah, so he brought the jurists to revoke the security letter. No one of them dared to revoke it, except for the jurist AL-Bukhtiri [19], who delivered his legal opinion of its illegality and excused AL-Rasheed to kill Yahya. AL-Asfahani certifies that AL-Rasheed had the intention

to harm him [7], meanwhile some others viewed that AL-Rasheed did not conceal harm and he encompassed him with his care [20].

Whatever were AL-Rasheed intention Yahya a haddied in prison as a result of disease [8] and some persons give preference that he died with poison [7]. And in a narration he was jailed in the prison and was prevented from food until he was sick and died from hunger [1]. Mostly he died poisoned in prison, for what was shown of evidence before his death. It appears that AL-Rasheed put him in front of the spectators to notice the effect of disease on him [2], that proves doubts about his killing.

With Yahya Bin Abdullah death, AL-Rasheed terminated his movement and his followers and supporters scattered from his round, eliminating any ambition for the Alawis to demand their right in Caliphate after him. But pursuer of the Alawi revolts in the Abbasid state, ascertains that their ambition did not stop, or end by killing the leader of the revolt or subjugation of the revolt itself.

**Mousa AL- Kathem:** As AL-Rasheed put an end to Yahya Bin Abdullah's movement, he hurried to pursue Mousa AL- Kathem [10] in AL-Madina accusing him that he intends to rebel against the state. AL-Rasheed eyed the Alawis in AL-Hijaz and concealed in spies, who informed him that the people believe in Mousa AL- Kathem Imam (leadership) and that they carry one fifth of their money of him. AL-Rasheed was confused of that [15] and he did not delay to arrest him, though sources do not mention any political role of him. He was known for asceticism and abundance worship, but AL-Rasheed wanted to foresee things, before his supporters push him to revolt [15].

When he made pilgrimage (to Mecca) in the year (179H./795AD) he arrested him and was carried to Baghdad [15], then he put him in Issa Bin Jaafar Bin AL-Mansour's car, ruler of the AL-Basra. After a year of his arrest, Issa sent to AL-Rasheed asking him to take Mousa AL-Kathem [7], AL-Rasheed took him and put him at AL-Baramkeh to care about him and follow his news until looking into his affair. Existence of Mousa AL-Kathem at AL-Fadel Bin Yahya AL-Baramki was one of causes of AL-Rasheed's annoyance against AL-Baramkeh because they treated him well [9]. He accused them of their Alawi inclination. Therefore AL-Baramkeh took him and put him in AL-Sindi Bin Shahek's care [21].

It is mentioned that Mousa AL-Kathem rejected to send who mediates between him and AL-Rasheed on his affair and remained in prison till he died in Baghdad in the year (183H./799AD) [1], for AL-Rasheed to get rid of the most important Alawi personality in his reign. And in spite of different narrations about his killing, before his death AL-Rasheed informed the jurists and writes to observe that there is no effect of affliction on his body [14].

AL-Douri views that both incidents show that AL-Rasheed used techniques of deception in his relation with the Alawis and did not avoid the excuse to eliminate them [11].

Also AL-Rasheed tightened the grip around the throat of Abdullah Bin AL-Hasan AL-Alawi known as (AL-Aftas) [21], he had participated in the Trap battle (AL-Fakh) and because AL-Hussein Bin Ali was a trap owner had recommended to him if an incident happened to him the matter is up to him, thereupon AL-Rasheed brought him and imprisoned him for an accusation of continuing the revolt and collecting the Alawis around him. He remained in prison until he was killed by Jaafar AL-Babmaki at AL-Nairooz Night [21].

#### **Idrees Bin Abdullah And Formation of AL-Adarisa State:**

Idrees Bin Abdullah, who escaped from AL-Fakh Battle (Fakh) established an independent kingdom in the far Maghreb (Morocco) in the year (172-343H./788-954AD), its center (Walila) [22] after their efforts had failed in forming their state in AL-Madina [23]. The formation of this state after he escaped to Egypt then to Morocco. AL-Barbar joining him and formed his independent state at after area from the capital of Caliphate in Baghdad. Idrees was more fortunate that his brother, for he went too far from the capital of the Caliphate to Maghreb (Morocco), he had escaped with his master, Rashed who knew the Arab tongue and had concealed from sights in merchants uniform with the caravans. And after a journey that lasted two years, they both arrived to (Tangier) and Rashed's call for Idrees started in the year (172H./788AD) [23].

The people began to assemble around Idrees as a result of the social and economic conditions, in which they were living that the Abbasid Caliphate reached the climax of its power and sovereignty [23]. He announced himself Caliph and it was the first Caliphate for the Alawis and the first time we observe two Caliphs in the Islamic world. Establishing this state was the beginning of the ultimate separation of the far Maghreb from the

Islamic world [7]. The state of AL-Adarisa is from the independent long age states and had assisted in its establishment two factors:

- Alawis ambition in establishing them a state far from the Abasside Stat's reach.
- Wish of the far Maghreb's tribes in establishing entity especial for them.

Idrees Bin Abdullahpower started to increase and began to subdue the tribes until his sovereignty extended at less than a year from Telmisan to Tangier in to AL-Gira valley. This is an immense area, was a nucleus of establishing the state Adarisa.

AL-Rasheed could not eliminate this state inspite that he could kill Idrees Bin Abdullah withpoison in the year(177H./793AD).[2] By his death his son(Idrees the second)cameinto power and started ruling independently all by himself starting from the year (192H./808AD) where he transferred to(Fas) wich became the capitalof AL-Adarisa state in the year) 196H./811AD). He worked to stabilize the pillars of the state. But no sooner than this state caught dissolution after it had bean weakened and was divided by his sons [22], until they commenced to lose what they own of the country, to be captured in some by the Omayyads in Andalusia, and to be extracted in the other some by the Fatimids. That was an indication of the termination of the Adarisa state in the year(343H./954AD) [22].

The stateof AL-Adarisa is considered the first step in constructing the social and the political entity of the Moslem ArabMaghreb(Morocco). For the first time since the conquest, her is performed anArab Islamicstate. By establishing it, the constitution began an Islamic civilization concentrated in (Fas) [22], shared in the great change which made the FarMaghreb an Arab country with complete Arabism and culture.

These are the outline of the Alawi revolts in AL-Rasheed's reign, which proclaimed their political role at the most important and powerful periods of the government in the Abbaside state.

After studying this role it was shown that:

- The Alawis ambition in competing the Abbasides on the Caliphate since constituting their state, did not stop.
- The Abbaside caliphs perceived the Alawis danger, so they pursued their revolts and eliminated them in their cradle.

- The Abbaside followed the leniency policy more than once with the Alawis, but at the end they sought power to beat them.

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