

## Sermon 73: Didn't he swear me his allegiance after ...

*Amir al-mu'minin said about Marwan ibn al-Hakam at Basrah. When Marwan was taken on the day of Jamal, he asked Hasan and Husayn (p.b.u.t.) to intercede on his behalf before Amir al-mu'minin. So they spoke to Amir al-mu'minin about him and he released him. Then they said, "O' Amir al-mu'minin he desires to swear you allegiance" Whereupon Amir al-mu'minin said:*

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام)

قاله لمروان بن الحكم بالبصرة

قالوا: أُخِذَ مروان بن الحكم أسيراً يوم الجمل، فاستشفع الحسن والحسين (عليهما السلام) إلى أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)، فكلّماه فيه، فخلّى سبيله، فقالا له: يبايعك يا أمير المؤمنين؟ فقال:

Did he not swear me allegiance after the killing of `Uthman? Now I do not need his allegiance, because his is the hand of a Jew. If he swears me allegiance with his hand he would violate it after a short while. Well, he is to get power for so long as a dog licks his nose. He is the father of four rams (who will also rule). The people will face days through him and his sons. 1

أَفَلَمْ يُبَايِعْنِي بَعْدَ قَتْلِ عُثْمَانَ؟ لَا حَاجَةَ لِي فِي بَيْعَتِهِ! إِنَّهَا كَفُّ يَهُودِيَّةٍ لَوْ بَايَعَنِي

بِيَدِهِ لَعْدَرٌ بِسَبْتِهِ. أَمَا إِنَّ لَهُ إِمْرَةً كَلَعَقَةَ الْكَلْبِ أَنْفَهُ، وَهُوَ أَبُو الْأَكْبُشِ الْأَرْبَعَةِ،  
وَسَتَلْقَى الْأُمَّةَ مِنْهُ وَمِنْ وَلَدِهِ يَوْمًا أَحْمَرًا!

## Alternative Sources for Sermon 73

- (1) Ibn Sa`d, *al-Tabaqat*, I, in the account of Marwan;
- (2) al-Baladhuri, *Ansab*, II, 361;
- (3) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi`*, I, 37;
- (4) Sibt, *Tadhkirah*, 78;
- (5) Ibn al-'Athir, *al-Nihayah*, I, 67; see al-Damiri, *Hayat al-hayawan* and Ibn Abi al-Hadid, II, 54.

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1. Marwan ibn al-Hakam was the nephew (brother's son) and son-in-law of `Uthman. Due to thin body and tall stature he was known with the nickname "Khayt Batil" (the thread of wrong). When `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan killed `Amr ibn Sa`id al-Ashdaq, his brother Yahya ibn Sa`id said:

O' sons of Khayt Batil (the thread of the wrong) you have played deceit on `Amr and people like you build their houses (of authority) on deceit and treachery.

Although his father al-Hakam ibn Abi al-`As had accepted Islam at the time of the fall of Mecca but his behaviour and activities were very painful to the Prophet. Consequently, the Prophet cursed him and his descendants and said, "Woe will befall my people from the progeny of this man." At last in view of his increasing intrigues the Prophet externed him from Medina towards the valley of Wajj (in Ta'if) and Marwan also went with him. Prophet did not thereafter allow them entry in Medina all his life. Abu Bakr and `Umar did likewise, but `Uthman sent for both of them during his reign, and raised Marwan to such height as though the reins of caliphate rested in his hands. Thereafter his circumstances became so favourable that on the death of Mu`awiyah ibn Yazid he became the Caliph of the Muslims. But he had just ruled only for nine months and eighteen days that death overtook him in such a way that his wife sat with the pillow on his face and did not get away till he breathed his last.

The four sons to whom Amir al-mu'minin has referred were the four sons of `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan namely al-Walid, Sulayman, Yazid and Hisham, who ascended the Caliphate one after the other and coloured the pages of history with their stories. Some commentators have regarded this reference to Marwan's own sons whose names are `Abd al-Malik, `Abd al-`Aziz, Bishr and Muhammad. Out of these `Abd al-Malik did become Caliph of Islam but `Abd al-`Aziz became governor of Egypt, Bishr of Iraq and Muhammad of al-Jazirah.

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