

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) قاله لمروان بن الحكم بالبصرة قالوا: أخذ 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 (عليه السلام):

Amīr al-mu'minin said about Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam at Baṣrah. When Marwān was taken prisoner on the day of Jamal, he asked Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (a.s.) to intercede on his behalf before Amīr al-mu'minin. So they spoke to Amīr al-mu'minin about him and he released him. Then they said, "O Amīr al-mu'minin he desires to swear you allegiance" Whereupon Amīr al-mu'minin said :

أفلم يبايعني بعد قتل عثمان؟ لا حاجة لي في بيعته! إنها كف يهودية لو بايعني بيده لغدر بسبته. أما إن له إمرة كلعقة الكلب أنفه، وهو أبو الأكبش الأربعة، وستلقى الأمة منه ومن ولده يوماً أحمر!

Did he not swear me allegiance after the killing of 'Uthmān? 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 hard days through him and his sons. [1]

Footnote :

[1] Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was the nephew (brother's son) and son-in-law of 'Uthmān. Due to thin body and tall stature he was known with the nickname "Khayṭ Bāṭil" (the thread of wrong). When 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān killed 'Amr ibn Sa'īd al-Ashdaq, his brother Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd said :

O sons of Khayṭ Bāṭil (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-Ḥakam ibn Abi'l-'Āṣ 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 dismissed him from Medina towards the valley of Wajj (in Ṭā'īf) and Marwān also went with him. Prophet did not thereafter allow them entry in Medina all his life. Abu Bakr and 'Umar did likewise, but 'Uthmān sent for both of them during his reign, and raised Marwān 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'āwiyah 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 Amīr al-mu'minīn has referred were the four sons of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān namely al-Walid, Sulayman, Yazid and Hishām, who ascended the Caliphate one after the other and coloured the pages of history with their stories. Some commentators have regarded this reference to Marwān's own sons whose names are 'Abd al-Malik, 'Abd al-'Aziz, Bishr and Muḥammad. Out of these 'Abd al-Malik did become Caliph of Islam but 'Abd al-'Aziz became governor of Egypt, Bishr of Iraq and Muḥammad of al-Jazirah.