

## Sermon 11: Mountains may move from their position, but you should not...

*Delivered in the Battle of Jamal when Amir al-mu'minin gave the standard to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah<sup>1</sup>*

(ومن كلام له) (عليه السلام)

لابنه محمد بن الحنفية لماً أعطاه الراية يوم الجمل

Mountains<sup>2</sup> may move from their position, but you should not move from yours. Grit your teeth. Lend to Allah your head (in fighting for Allah, give yourself to Allah). Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Have your eye on the remotest foe and close your eyes (to their numerical majority). And keep sure that succour is but from Allah, the Glorified.

تَزُولُ الْجِبَالُ وَلَا تَرْكُلُ! عَضَّ عَلَى نَاجِذِكَ، أَعْرِ اللَّهَ جُمْجُوتَكَ، تَدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَدَمَكَ، ارْمِ بِبَصَرِكَ أَقْصَى الْقَوْمِ، وَغُضْنَ  
بَصَرَكَ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ النَّصْرَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ.

### [Alternative Sources for Sermon 11](#)

(1) Al-Mamatiri, *Nuzhat al-'absar*, see 'Abd al-Zahra', I, 340;

(2) al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi'*, IV, *bab al-qatl wa al-shahadah*.

<sup>1</sup>. Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was Amir al-mu'minin's son but called Ibn Hanafiyyah after his mother. His mother's name was Khawlah bint Ja`far. She was known as Hanafiyyah after her tribe Banu Hanifah. When people of Yamamah were declared apostates for refusing to pay zakat (religious tax) and were killed and their women-folk were brought to Medina as slave girls, this lady also came to Medina with them. When her tribesmen came to know it they approached Amir al-

mu'minin and requested him to save her from the blemish of slavery and protect her family honour and prestige. Consequently, Amir al-mu'minin set her free after purchasing and married here whereafter Muhammad was born.

Most historians have written his surname as Abu'l-Qasim. Thus, the author of *al-Isti`ab* (vol. 3, pp. 1366, 1367–1368, 1370, 1371–1372) has narrated the opinion of Abu Rashid ibn Hafs az-Zuhri that from among the sons of the companions (of the Prophet) he came across four individuals everyone of whom was named Muhammad and surnamed Abu'l-Qasim, namely (1) Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, (2) Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (3) Muhammad ibn Talhah and (4) Muhammad ibn Sa`d. After this he writes that Muhammad ibn Talhah's name and surname was given by the Prophet. al-Waqidi writes that the name and surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was suggested by `Aishah. Apparently the Holy Prophet's giving the name of Muhammad ibn Talhah seems incorrect since from some traditions it appears that the Prophet had reserved it for a son of Amir al-mu'minin and he was Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah.

As regards his surname it is said that the Prophet had particularised it and that he had told `Ali that a son would be born to you after me and I have given him my name and surname and after that it is not permissible for anyone in my people to have this name and surname together.

With this opinion before us how can it be correct that the Prophet had given this very name and surname to anyone else since particularisation means that no one else would share it. Moreover, some people have recorded the surname of Ibn Talhah as Abu Sulayman instead of Abu'l-Qasim and this further confirms our view point. Similarly, if the surname of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was on the ground that his son's name was Qasim, who was among the theologians of Medina, then what is the sense in `Aishah having suggested it. If she had suggested it along with the name how could Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr tolerate it later on since having been brought up under the care of Amir al-mu'minin the Prophet's saying could not remain concealed from him. Moreover, most people have recorded his surname as Abu `Abd ar-Rahman, which weakens the view of Abu Rashid.

Let alone these people's surname being Abu'l-Qasim, even for Ibn al-Hanafiyyah this surname is not proved. Although Ibn Khallikan (in *Wafayat al-a`yan*, vol. 4, p.170) has taken that son of Amir al-mu'minin for whom the Prophet had particularised this surname to be Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, yet al-'Allamah al-Mamaqani (in *Tanqih al-maqal*, vol. 3, Part 1, p. 112) writes:

In applying this tradition to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, Ibn Khallikan has got into confusion, because the son of Amir al-mu'minin whom the Prophet's name and surname together have been gifted by the Prophet, and which is not permissible to be given to any one else, is to the awaited last Imam (may our lives be his ransom), and not to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, nor is the surname Abu'l- Qasim established for him, rather some of the Sunnis being ignorant of the real intention of the Prophet, have taken to mean Ibn al-Hanafiyyah.

However, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was prominent in righteousness and piety, sublime in renunciation and worship, lofty in knowledge and achievements and heir of his father in bravery. His performance in the battles of Jamal and Siffin had created such impression among the Arabs that even warriors of consequence trembled at his name. Amir al-mu'minin too was proud of his courage and valour, and always placed him forward in encounters. ash-Shaykh al-Baha'i has written in *al-Kashkul* that `Ali ibn Abi Talib kept him abreast in the battles and did not allow Hasan and Husayn to go ahead, and used to say, "He is my son while these two are sons of the Prophet of Allah."

When a Kharijite said to Ibn al-Hanafiyyah that `Ali thrust him into the flames of war but saved away Hasan and Husayn he replied that he himself was like the right hand and Hasan and Husayn like `Ali's two eyes and that `Ali protected his eyes with his right hand. But al-'Allamah al-Mamaqani has written in *Tanqih al-Maqal* that this was not the reply of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah but of Amir al-mu'minin himself. When during the battle of Siffin Muhammad mentioned this matter to Amir al-mu'minin in a complaining tone he replied, "You are my right hand whereas they are my eyes, and the hand should protect the eyes."

Apparently it seems that first Amir al-mu'minin must have given this reply and thereafter someone might have mentioned it

to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and he must have repeated the same reply as there could be no more eloquent reply than this one and its eloquence confirms the view that it was originally the outcome of the eloquent tongue of Amir al-mu'minin and was later appropriated by Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah.

Consequently, both these views can be held to be correct and there is no incongruity between them. However, he was born in the reign of the second Caliph and died in the reign of `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan at the age of sixty-five years. Some writers have recorded the year of his death as 80 A.H. and others as 81 A.H. There is a difference about the place of his death as well. Some have put it as Medina, some Aylah and some Ta'if.

2. When in the Battle of Jamal Amir al-mu'minin sent Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah to the battle-field, he told him that he should fix himself before the enemy like the mountain of determination and resoluteness so that the onslaught of the army should not be able to displace him, and should charge the enemy with closed teeth because by pressing teeth over the teeth tension occurs in the nerves of the skull as a result of which the stroke of the sword goes amiss, as he said at another place also viz. "Press together the teeth. It sends amiss the edge of the sword."

Then he says, "My child, lend your head to Allah in order that you may be able to achieve eternal life in place of this one, because for a lent article there is the right to get it back. Therefore, you should fight being heedless of your life, otherwise also if your mind clings to life you will hesitate to advance towards deathly encounters and that would tell upon your reputation of bravery. Look, don't let your steps falter because the enemy is emboldened at the faltering of steps, and faltering steps fastens the feet of the enemy.

Keep the last lines of the enemy as your aim so that the enemy may be overawed with loftiness of your intentions and you may feel ease in tearing through their lives, and their movement should also not remain concealed from you. Look, do not pay heed to their superiority in numbers, otherwise your valour and courage would suffer." This sentence can also mean that one should not wide open the eyes to be dazzled by the shining of weapons, and the enemy may make an attack by taking advantage of the situation. Also, always bear it in mind that victory is from Allah. "If Allah helps you no one can overpower you." Therefore, instead of relying on material means seek His support and succour.

(Remember O' ye Believers!) If Allah helpeth you, none shall overcome you...(Qur'an, 3:159)

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