

Ma'qil ibn Yasār narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Worship during times of turmoil is like migration to join me.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

- ﴿Seek strength in patient perseverance and in prayer, which is indeed a demanding task except for the devout.﴾ (2: 45)
- ﴿Follow, then, the right course as you are bidden, together with those who, with you, have turned to Him; and let none of you transgress. Surely, He sees all that you do. (112) Put no trust in those who do wrong, lest the Fire engulf you. You would, then, have none to protect you from God, nor would you find any help.﴾ (11: 112-113)

The Narrator

Abu 'Alī Ma'qil ibn Yasār of the Muzaynah tribe was a companion of the Prophet and narrated a number of hadiths. He embraced Islam before the signing of the al-Ḥudaybiyah Peace Treaty. He participated in the pledge given to the Prophet shortly before the peace treaty was made. He moved to Basrah and resided there. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Basrah. The River Ma'qil in Basrah is named after him because he supervised the digging of its course, in fulfilment of an order given to him by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. He died in Basrah towards the end of the reign of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān.

Summary

To remain constant in worship during times of turmoil and strife earns great reward, equal to that of people who migrate, leaving their homes, to support God's cause.

1 Related by Muslim, 2948.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights the great importance and benefit of worship during the time of temptation and turmoil. During such periods people concentrate on pleasure and the satisfaction of their desires. Sinful practices become very common, and bloodshed increases. The Prophet says that attention to worship during such periods earns a person great reward, reaching the level of the reward of a person who deserts his abode and family to serve God's cause and join the Prophet (peace be upon him).



'Worship' is used here in its general sense which refers to everything that pleases God of word and action, apparent or subtle. Thus, it includes prayer, zakat [i.e. obligatory charity], fasting, hajj, speaking truthfully, being true to one's trust, dutifulness to parents, kindness to relatives, honouring promises and pledges, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil, striving against disbelievers and hypocrites, good neighbourliness, kindness to orphans, helping the poor and the weak, kindness to animals, supplication, remembrance of God, reciting the Qur'an, etc. All these are covered under the term 'ibādah, which means 'worship'. Likewise, love of God and His Messenger, being in awe of God, turning to Him in repentance, pure submission to Him, accepting His verdict, feeling grateful for His blessings, being happy with whatever He determines, relying on Him, hoping for His mercy, and fearing His punishment, etc. are all aspects of worship, in its general sense. ⁽¹⁾



In this hadith the Prophet uses the Arabic word harj, which is translated here as 'turmoil'. It refers to a time of great strife and an increase in killing. The same word is defined by the Prophet as meaning 'killing'. This is in the hadith that says: 'Time will become short; good action will decrease; stinginess will take hold; and harj will increase'. People asked: 'What is harj?' He said: 'It is killing; it is killing'. ⁽²⁾

That worship during such times earns great reward and is highly effective is due to the fact that most people will be involved in strife, and they will care little for doing what is lawful and refraining from what is unlawful. Therefore, a person who stays away from most other people is like a migrant who leaves his people who are unbelievers to join the community of believers.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū' al-Fatāwā, Vol. 10, p. 149.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6037; Muslim, 157.

Implementation



Unless one concentrates on acts of obedience of God, one will be tempted by sinful action.



Those who follow falsehood are numerous. The one who chooses the right way, even though its followers are few, is for sure one who is wise.



The hadith makes clear that worship during the time when most people are negligent is commendable. It is clear that God is pleased with it. Some scholars of the early generations of Islam used to recommend voluntary prayer in the interval between Maghrib and 'Ishā prayers, as it is a time when most people are preoccupied with worldly matters. Likewise, night worship in the middle of the night is considered preferable because most people are inattentive of it.



Worship during a time of turmoil and temptation earns a reward equal to that of migration from the land of disbelief to the land of Islam. No action earns a greater reward than such migration. God says in the Qur'an: 'Those who believe and leave their homes and strive hard for God's cause with their property and their lives stand higher in rank with God. It is they who shall triumph'. (9: 20)



The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that turmoil and troubles will occur towards the end of time, so that every Muslim is prepared and hastens to do good deeds, holding on to his bond with God.



Worship during a time when most people are oblivious of it ensures other's safety for mankind. Without those who concentrate on worship during such times, God would let human life on earth come to an end. Every Muslim should try to be amongst those who help to provide such reassurance to the Muslim community.

