

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ وَلَدِ آدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

When a City Changes

This is something which occurred around the end of the third century in Islamic history. In Baghdad, the person in charge was Al Mutazid Billah. In this period, his army had taken a complete new dimension and were considered as a professional group of soldiers.

This one time city of Babel had suddenly become a new Babel in the making. Thousands of people began to migrate to this city which was fast expanding into one the greatest cities in that period. In fact, after Rome and Cairo, it was considered as one of the third largest cities in the world in population and expansion.

But the people who were once called “humans” had also suddenly taken a turn for the worse. It is seen that when a community is small, they are generally pious and well-mannered and when this same community begins to expand and grow, then same amount of piety and good manners seem to distance itself from them. In fact, for them

to be less in numbers is actually a Divine Grace and a means of peace for the earth and those who live on it.

When a community is in a small village, love and respect are their symbols and their houses become a symbol of peace and Ibadah. However, when these same humans leave their small houses and go outside to live, it is like a pack of wolves have suddenly come together. There is also a strange and terrible change which overtakes them.

In one side of the town, bazaars and shops are opened and on the other side large factories and other trade begin to appear. Through this wealth, large mansions and bungalows are then built. The government also plays a large role in facilitating all of this.

However, on the other side, piety seems to leave the community and Islamic brotherhood and unity also disappears. In this manner, a journey of social upheavals and tyranny begins in the community which seems like it will never end. The same humans who were once symbols of good manners and politeness have suddenly become thieves and crooks and poverty seems to be the new “evil” among the rich and famous.

In this environment, all types of crimes begin to emerge. Within the city, self-enrichment and self-enabling power becomes the buzz word. The rich and famous, or shall we say those wretched, completely close their eyes and ears to the poverty which builds around them. While these people spend millions, the number of orphans are begin to grow around them and many widows do not even have proper clothing or even material to cover their heads. Instead of man being one creation, suddenly classes appear within the community and the status of someone is determined by how much money and power he has.

When this evil of wealth and self-enrichment becomes a curse in society, at that moment, the poor and needy start to steal and rob thinking that they have no other choice open to them. Suddenly, new words are created such “law and order and justice”. Courts are created to suit the powerful and nothing else. Fancy names like “courts and place of justice” are given to fancy looking houses which are nothing but instruments of the rich and powerful.

The same pious person, who was once a good person, is forced to steal because of circumstances is now called a thief and robber. In other words, the state creates an environment to steal and then says that it needs to maintain law and order and hence, it has to punish these robbers. Why do so many people steal? That is not investigated. The environment which has been created and which forces a person to steal, that is completely ignored. After all, when we look at it carefully, can a father see his family suffering from hunger? Can a husband see his wife suffering from hunger? None of this is possible because they have been given specific roles in society. Can a father stand and see the tears rolling down the eyes of his child who cannot stand the hunger? When society feels that they are now fed up with this person, the only thing that it says is that this person should be put to death. The background and where he comes from are never looked at. This is considered as the final decision of the community.

These are some of the things that people in cities suffer from on a daily basis because society in general refused to look at the actual reasons.

As we have mentioned, in the fourth century Baghdad was considered as one of the largest cities in the Muslim world and one of the most progressive. In fact, it was the capital of the Muslim world. There had to be reason for its downfall when we see some of the instances of crime which occurred in that period. Flies and mosquitoes are not found just anywhere. There has to be dirt and filth which creates these flies to appear. Although the jails in Baghdad were filled with prisoners, yet there was also no shortage of criminals in other parts of the country.

It is said that one of the strange things in Baghdad is that as the personality of Hadrat Sayyiduna Junaid Al Baghdadi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - is famous. In like manner, in the history of crime, the name of Ibn Sabaat also stands out. This person was famous for his crime spree and also committing some of the most daring robberies in his period. Hadrat Sayyiduna Junaid Al Baghdadi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - became famous for his piety and Ibn Sabaat became infamous because of the life he led. Obviously, even though people might think to become famous in crime pays in the long term because they may never be caught, but this never happens. It is mentioned that Ibn Sabaat was someone who was in prison for nearly ten years in Madaa'in. Although people were now safe from his crime spree, but people couldn't forget what he had done to the community. In fact, the people of this city were so traumatised by this person

that whenever they heard of a new crime boss, they used to say that this is another Ibn Sabaat. However, such is the state when Islamic rule leaves a country that while he is in jail, society itself gives birth to many ibn Sabaats.