

THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

On the 10th of Muharram Al-Haram, 61 A.H., a most abominable and tragic event occurred in the desert of Karbala that resulted in the martyrdom (*shahadah*) of Hussain Ibn Ali (RAA), the grandson of our Prophet (SAW) and the son of his daughter, along with most of the members of his family and their supporters. It should be borne in mind that this tragedy did not take place all of a sudden like a bolt from the blue. It was in fact the manifestation of the plot of *Sabayees* which had claimed the life of Uthman (RAA), the third Caliph and the son-in-law of the Prophet (SAW) twenty-five years earlier. Caliph Uthman's (RAA) martyrdom took place on 18th of Dhu Al-Hajj, 36 A.H.

We must not overlook the fact that the struggle between the forces of good and evil is a continuous process which never ends. In the history of mankind, evil has reigned supreme most of the time whereas the triumph of good has been sporadic and short-lived. Another well-established fact is that the evil forces, even if subdued and subjugated, never acknowledge total defeat. On the contrary, they become submissive for a while and lay low, waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Often the evil forces, when subdued, go underground but never abandon their struggle to cause rift and strife among their opponents. The Prophet of Islam (SAW) brought about an incomparable and unprecedented revolution in the history of mankind, a unique miracle for all times, and established a

two Caliphs. The first target of these reactionaries was the person of Omar (RAA) who was assassinated by Abu Luloo Feroze, a Parsi slave from Iran. It was purely an Iranian plot hatched by Hurmuzan, an Iranian general, who thought that if Omar (RAA) was removed from the scene, the empire of Islam would fall like a house of cards. But by the grace of Allah (SWT), it survived the calamity. Abdullah Ibn Saba, a Jew from Yemen, under the garb of a Muslim, took his sojourn at Madinah. He had all the trappings of an expert plotter and the Jewish genius at intrigues, an attribute of his clan. He planted subversive ideas among the people. He pleaded for the usurped rights of the house of the Prophet (SAW), carried out a propaganda campaign against Caliph Uthman (RAA) and incited the people to revolt. He declared Ali (RAA) to be the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and dubbed Uthman (RAA) as a usurper. He told people that every Prophet has a *wasee* and Ali (RAA) is the *wasee* of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and, therefore, entitled to be the caliph after the Prophet. He also preached the divinity of Ali (RAA), thus striking at *Tauheed*, the very root of Islam. The Iranians, who had embraced Islam only a few years before, were taken in by this propaganda because they had a long history of kingship and hero-worship. They were familiar with the divine rights of kings, and hero-worship was diffused in their blood. They readily accepted these ideas and became their champions. Similarly Abdullah Ibn Saba floated another viewpoint related to the second appearance of Prophet Isa (AS). He argued that Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who is the best amongst the prophets of Allah (SWT), would also appear

The murder of Habeel (son of Adam) by his brother Qabeel is perhaps an incident comparable to Caliph Uthman's (RAA) assassination. When Qabeel declared his intention to kill Habeel, the latter announced his resolve, in the words of the Qur'an:

لَئِنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ
لَأُقْتَلَ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ (المائدة ٥ : ٢٨)

Even if thou stretch out thy hand against me, I shall not stretch out my hand against thee to kill thee; lo! I fear Allah the Lord of the worlds. (Al-Ma'ida 5:28)

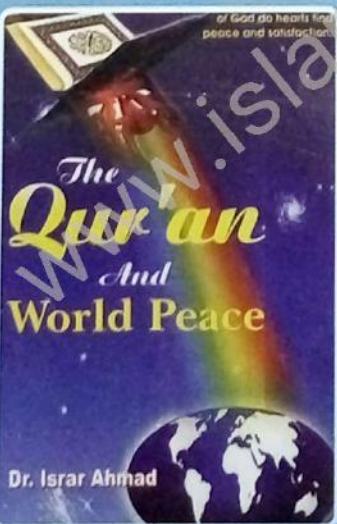
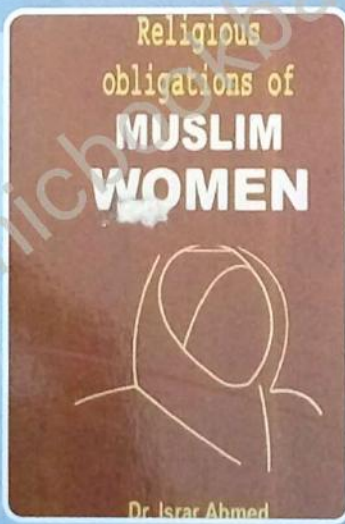
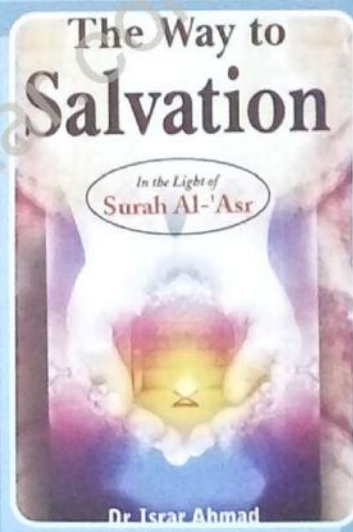
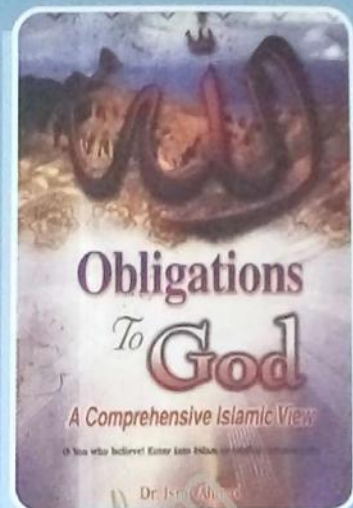
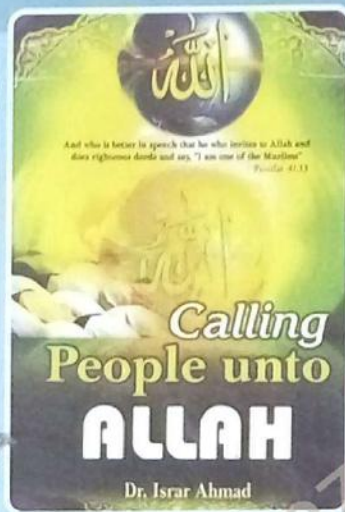
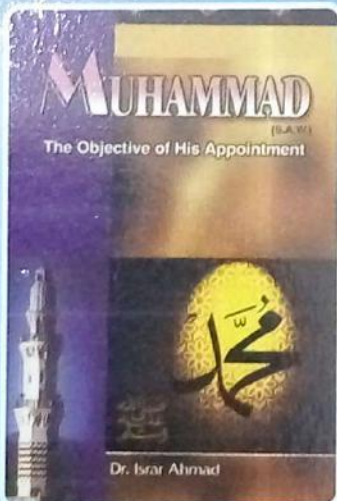
So, Habeel was assassinated by his brother and that was the first act of homicide in the history of mankind. It was a totally unjustified murder in which the victim refused to offer resistance as in the assassination of Caliph Uthman (RAA). For such an act, Allah (SWT) has declared His reward and punishment in the Qur'an:

مَنْ أَجْلِيَ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ
نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا، وَمَنْ
أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا، (المائدة ٥ : ٣٢)

For that cause We decreed for the children of Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and saveth the life of one person, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind... (Al-Ma'ida 5:32).

received a message from Caliph Ali (RAA) for talks and negotiation. It should be remembered that she was never a claimant for the caliphate. Her only demand was that the murderers of Uthman (RAA) must be punished immediately. Ali (RAA) offered to accept her demand if his hands were first strengthened by a declaration of allegiance to him by her group. Both the armies of Ayisha (RAA) and Ali (RAA) were facing each other and camping on the battle field when these negotiations started. The news of this negotiation reached Abdullah Ibn Saba and Malik Ibn Ashter Nakhey. They immediately pursued their nefarious plot to undermine the peace talks. Accordingly, under the cover of darkness, they, along with some of their followers, mounted an attack on Umm Al-Momineen Aisha's (RAA) camp and the rumor was spread that the attack was made by the forces loyal to Ali (RAA). At the same time, they sent the word to Ali's (RAA) camp that Umm Al-Momineen Ayisha's (RAA) forces had initiated the attack. Consequently the opposing armies clashed with each other with all their might, leaving thousands dead on the battle field. It is a very painful part of Muslim history that no investigation to discover the truth in time was ever successful. The same thing happened at the battle of Siffeen. When a stage for peaceful negotiations was set, the Sabayees undermined it and a new scion of dissidents, the Khawarij, appeared on the scene, opening another front for the warring factions.

During the reign of Caliph Ali (RAA), the Muslim empire did not exit as a single state under one central authority but broke up into various power centers. Ameer Mu'awiya (RAA), the governor of Syria, demanded avenge



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