

KILLING IN THE NAME OF

By

QASIM ANSARI

Int – Mosque

The stage is an empty prayer hall. All except for two people sitting by the altar: an Imam (a Muslim cleric) is tied up and sitting in a cross-legged position. Sitting opposite him is Saleem (a young British Asian in his early twenties). Saleem is saying his prayers in silence.

Imam: Saleem. What do you want?

Saleem says nothing.

Imam: Saleem. What. Do. You. Want?

Again Saleem ignores him.

Imam: Let me go!

Just then Zahid (a British Asian in his late twenties) enters the prayer hall and runs towards them. He is breathing deeply.

Zahid: The – the police are outside, they said we have five minutes before they come in.

Saleem ignores him and keeps praying.

Zahid: Saleem!

Saleem is now praying with his eyes closed.

Zahid (to Imam): This is your fault.

Imam: My fault? He's your brother.

Zahid: Don't give me that crap. He came to you for guidance and you corrupted him. All your lies, all your speeches, you/

Imam: It is all in the name of Allah!

Zahid: Shut up! What you preach isn't God's word!

Imam: The Quran says/

Zahid: That is not going to work on me anymore. I've read the Quran. You are a liar. I know what it says. In no way does it justify what you did today.

Imam: Those who died today are martyrs; they died for our cause. Now untie me and/

Zahid: I'm not going to untie you, you bastard. You're going to prison!

Imam: For what?

Zahid: You planned all this.

Imam: You have no proof!

Zahid: Saleem will testify.

Imam: He doesn't seem to/

Zahid: Wait, hang on...

Zahid runs off stage.

Imam (to Saleem): Saleem, why are you here? Why didn't you do what I asked, what you promised me you would do?

Saleem doesn't respond. He puts his index finger up to indicate the end of his prayers. He turns his hand right and left without looking forward, the final part of the prayer when one says Salaam.

Zahid returns.

Zahid: They say we've got three minutes; then they are coming in.

He sits next to the Imam.

Zahid (to Imam): How does it make you feel knowing that so many people died today? What kind of a God would reward this?

Imam: We are at war with these infidels!

Zahid: Who decides if they are infidels?

Imam: Allah!

Zahid: Mohammed always said that he was only re-establishing the teachings of Abraham, not creating a new religion. Muslims, Christians and Jews; we are all the same.

Imam: They are corrupt; they watch injustice happen everyday like it is commonplace. They serve their pockets and not their God.

Zahid: What makes this any better? Do you really believe that Allah is going to welcome you with open arms into Paradise?

Imam: Allah believes in justice just like I do. Those people who died today/

Saleem suddenly interrupts.

Saleem: Uncle...tell me, would you be willing to die for Allah?

Imam: Of - of course my son.

Saleem: I thought I could. Today I thought I was going to/

Zahid (to Imam): I knew it, you bastard! You corrupted him, you/

Saleem: Please Zahid be quiet.

Saleem stands up and starts walking around the two of them.

Saleem: Today I stood in that shopping centre ready to sacrifice myself for Islam, ready to do what you told me to do.

(Pause)

But then I saw this child, a sweet inquisitive child looking at me. Then I looked around, first time I really looked around, and saw other people. I then I thought how can I do this? How did I let you make me do it?

Imam: It's a war, it is Jihad.

Saleem: That's right uncle. And are you willing to die for this?

Imam: Yes but/

Saleem: Okay then.

He unbuttons his jacket to reveal a bomb.

Zahid: Oh my God/

Imam: Saleem wait!

Saleem: No uncle, you said you were willing to die for Islam, well let's see it then.

Imam: Please Saleem I – I/

Saleem: Let's kill ourselves and all these infidels outside. Let's all do to Paradise.

Zahid: Saleem/

Saleem: Zahid be quiet! I want to die with both of you. I want to see that door in Paradise. I want the seventy virgins.

Zahid runs off stage.

Saleem: Come on uncle, lets go to Paradise/

Imam: Please Saleem!

Saleem: Tell me the truth!

Imam: But I/

Saleem: Tell me what awaits me!

Imam: Saleem/

Saleem: Tell me what all my brothers see when they die for you.

Zahid returns.

Zahid (to Saleem): They are coming any second.

Saleem ignores him.

Saleem: Tell me what I will see!

Imam: Please, I can't die I/

Saleem: Will we go to Paradise?

Imam: Saleem/

Saleem: Will we go to Paradise? Tell me you bastard!

Imam: No, no we won't!

Saleem: We are going to Hell?

Imam: Yes! Yes! Yes!

Saleem: Suicide means Hell!

Imam: Yes!

The sound of police entering the mosque can be heard in the background.

Zahid: They're coming in!

Saleem: Let's go to Hell then!