

# A British jihadist

by Aatish Taseer

*Hassan Butt, a 25 year old from Manchester, helped recruit Muslims to fight in Afghanistan. Like most of the London bombers, he is a British Pakistani who journeyed from rootlessness to radical Islam*

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It is not hard to imagine what the Leeds suburb of Beeston was like before it became known that three of London's tube bombers worked or lived there. For someone like me-- a Punjabi with parents from each side of the India/Pakistan border--the streets of Beeston reveal a pre-partition mixture of Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs. Despite the commotion caused by half the world's media, men in shalwar kurta (traditional dress from the subcontinent) stand around on street corners chatting as if in a bazaar in Lahore. They oppose Britain's involvement in the Iraq war, they "hate" America, they might even think that the west has united in a fight against Muslims, but these are not the faces of extremism. Their involvement in 7/7 is a generational one: they have raised the people who are the genus of Islamic extremism in this country--the second-generation British Pakistanis.

One appears next to his father on the street corner. Unlike his father, there is nothing about his appearance that indicates he is a Punjabi Muslim. He is wearing long Arab robes and keeps a beard cut to Islamic specifications. I ask him why he is dressed the way he is. "It's my traditional dress," he says in English. "Isn't your father in traditional dress?" I ask. "Yes, but this is Islamic dress," he clarifies. His father looks embarrassed. A man standing next to me jokes of how he complained to his neighbour that his son never did any work, and the neighbour said, "You think that's bad, mine's grown a beard and become a bloody maulvi [priest]."

As a half-Indian, half-Pakistani with a strong connection to this country, I have observed the gulf between what it means to be British Pakistani and British Indian. To be Indian is to come from a safe, ancient country and, more recently, from an emerging power. In contrast, to be Pakistani is to begin with a depleted idea of nationhood. In the 55 years that Pakistan has been a country, it has been a dangerous, violent place, defined by hatred of the other--India.

For young British Muslims, if Pakistan was not the place to look for an identity, being second-generation British was still less inspiring. While their parents were pioneers, leaving Pakistan in search of economic opportunities, enduring the initial challenges of a strange land, the second generation's experience has been one of drudgery and confusion. Mohammad, who owns a convenience store on Stratford Street in Beeston and who knew all the local bombers, says, "They were born and raised here, we did the work... and these kids grew up and they haven't had a day's worry. They're bored, they don't do any work, they have no sense of honour or belonging."

Britishness is the most nominal aspect of identity to many young British Pakistanis. The thinking in Britain's political class has at last begun to move on this front, but when our tube bombers were growing up, any notion that an idea of Britishness should be imposed on minorities was seen as offensive. Britons themselves were having a hard time believing in Britishness. If you denigrate your own culture you face the risk of your newer arrivals looking for one elsewhere. So far afield in this case, that for many second-generation British Pakistanis, the desert culture of the Arabs held more appeal than either British or

subcontinental culture. Three times removed from a durable sense of identity, the energised extra-national worldview of radical Islam became one available identity for second-generation Pakistanis. The few who took it did so with the convert's zeal: plus Arabe que les Arabes.

The older generation of Beeston is mystified as to where some of their children found this identity. By all accounts it was not in the mosque. I met Maulana Munir of the Stratford Street mosque, which, according to some newspapers, was attended by some of the London bombers. Munir, a small, soft-spoken man, said he had never known them. "This younger generation," he says, "are owners of their own will, they come when they like, they don't when they don't like. The mosque is not responsible for these people." Munir, like the others of the older generation, is a man cut off from the youth movements around him. He has not faced their loss of identity and meaning.

Hassan Butt, the young British Pakistani who was a spokesman for the extremist group al-Muhajiroun, and active in recruiting people to fight against the coalition forces in Afghanistan, embodies this journey from frustration and rootlessness to radical Islam. The world he describes before he was first approached, aged 17, by members of the Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), was a disordered one. When I interviewed him last year, he described HT as showing him an Islam that could bring order to his life. Accepting Islam meant the creation of a social equilibrium that had been absent before. Islam was playing the role it had in 7th-century Arabia of bringing law and structure to decaying communities.

Butt parted ways with al-Muhajiroun (itself a breakaway from HT) and its founder Omar Sheikh Bakri because they supported the Islamic idea of a "covenant of security," by which Muslims in Britain are forbidden from any type of military action in Britain. Butt believed that military action against Britain would be unwise for the practical reason that it would jeopardise the protection "Londonistan" was offering radical Muslims, but he could not tolerate the position that such action was un-Islamic.

I was reminded of Butt's cold hatred for Britain when a colleague of mine said that Beeston's younger generation were saying to her, a week after the London bombs, "Well what's the difference between al Qaeda and MI5 anyway?" and "It's sad people died, but what about the ones who died in Iraq?"

There it is again, the extra-national sentiment, in which no nation matters save the Islamic nation and its Arab culture. Butt spoke passionately about Arabia and wants to go there. "I believe the Arabic language will give me that key to have access to those things I don't have access to at the moment." Again, that yearning for Islam to fill the gaps in his own identity.

And yet, on the one occasion he came close to having a national identity, he seemed to love it. From the way he described his two years in Lahore, it sounded like the only place he ever felt a sense of belonging. "I've never had a better two years in my life. I see Pakistan as the only country having the potential to lead the Muslim world out of the disarray it is in."

Butt is an ardent supporter of "martyrdom actions." Whether he will achieve the martyrdom he desires remains to be seen. But during our interview, he did say something very interesting in the light of the London bombs. "If someone were to attack Britain, they would be a completely and utterly loose cannon. It would be someone who wasn't involved in the network." What worried me when I went to Beeston and met some of its youth, many as full of vitriol as Butt, was that maybe the London bombings had been such a "loose cannon" operation. The bombers certainly had outside support, but there seemed to be a frighteningly independent quality about the operation, a cottage-industry terrorism growing in Hamara youth centres.

Radical Islam draws recruits from many walks of life, but in Britain its agents are of a type--second-generation British Pakistanis. Somehow they have been worst hit by the populations shifts of the last 50 years and the alienation that came with them. A few have rallied under a banner which brings an intense sense of grievance. And when they are done chasing absurd dreams of caliphates, there is always martyrdom. "For me there's nothing bigger," said Butt. I met many in Beeston with his makings: small, rootless lives, seeking bigger things.

Butt briefly became a minor celebrity of British Muslim extremism when he returned from his recruitment activities in Lahore in December 2002. He was arrested, had his passport revoked, and remains under surveillance. This interview took place last year in his home town, Manchester. Butt is short but powerfully built and was wearing robes. He has an Islamic beard and a

pleasant, friendly face. He collected me at the station and we went to Sanam, a restaurant in Manchester's curry mile which does not serve alcohol. Everyone there knew him and greeted him like a celebrity.

Butt: I used to be part of al-Muhajiroun, but we parted because of differences... They have this idea--derived from the Koran, a valid Islamic opinion but not one I believe is applicable to British citizens--of a "covenant of security." This means Muslims in Britain are forbidden from any military action in Britain. Now, I am not in favour of military action in Britain, but if somebody did do it who was British, I would not have any trouble with that either. Islamically, it would be my duty to support and praise their action. It wouldn't necessarily be the wisest thing to do, but it wouldn't be un-Islamic, as al-Muhajiroun said. This, I believe, is a compromise when it comes to representing certain key concepts of Islam. I've always had a policy that if you're going to come to the media, either speak the truth or don't speak at all. Don't come to the media if the heat is too hot for you. Taseer: Where do you think the covenant of security idea comes from? I spoke to an imam who said that you cannot strike against your host country. If you want to support Iraqis, go there and support them. Butt: Most imams, as you know, have come here not as British citizens. There is a difference between a citizen who is born in a country and someone who is here on a visa or a permit. Islamically, I agree that someone who runs from the middle east--where people like me are persecuted--and says, "Britain, I want you to protect me" has entered a covenant of security. They say, "Look, protect my life and as a result I won't do any harm to you." That I agree with 100 per cent, but most of our people, especially the youth, are British citizens. They owe nothing to the government. They did not ask to be born here; neither did they ask to be protected by Britain. Taseer: So they've entered no covenant? Butt: They have no covenant. As far as I'm concerned, the Islamic hukum (order) that I follow, says that a person has no covenant whatsoever with the country in which they were born. Taseer: Do they have an allegiance to the country? Butt: No, none whatsoever. Even the person who has a covenant has no allegiance, he just agrees not to threaten the life, honour, wealth, property, mind, and so on, of the citizens around him. Taseer: Your argument is based on these people being "British," so don't they necessarily have some loyalty to Britain? Butt: No, that's what I'm saying. They have no loyalty whatsoever; they have no allegiance to the government. Taseer: Perhaps not the government, but to the country? Butt: To the country, no. Taseer: Do you feel some? Butt: I feel absolutely nothing for this country. I have no problem with the British people... but if someone attacks them, I have no problem with that either. Taseer: Who do you have allegiance to? Butt: My allegiance is to Allah, his Shari'a, his way of life. Whatever he dictates as good is good, whatever as bad is bad. Taseer: Has it always been this way for you? Butt: Always? No. I grew up in a very open-minded family; there are only four of us. My parents never made us pray, never sent us to the mosque, which was very different from your average Pakistani family who would make sure that the child learned something. I learned absolutely nothing. Taseer: So how did you discover Islam, or rediscover it? Butt: Well, being Kashmiri, I'm hot-headed by nature, and so are my brothers. Even before I was a practising Muslim, I was very hot-headed. That hot-headedness was leading us down a path of destruction. A lot of the people I grew up among were on drugs, were involved in crime, prostitution, at very young ages. I remember when I came across the first Muslim who talked to me about Islam in a language I understood. He pointed out that I had a lot of anger and frustration that I should direct in a more productive manner. It was from there that I got discussing Islam seriously--even though we were hotheads, me and my brothers always had brains, we weren't thugs. We were still excelling in our studies and getting top grades in our exams. Taseer: How old were you when you changed? Butt: I was 17 when I really started practising. Taseer: Was it through a mosque? Butt: No. It was through individuals whom I met, who started speaking a language that I understood, who went beyond just the prayer. I understand the huge importance of that. Taseer: How did they approach you? Butt: My elder brother was in college, I was still at secondary school. The college being a bit more open to Islamic activities than high school, we met some members of Hizb ut-Tahrir inside a masjid (mosque) and got talking. At that time the masjid was full anyway, since it was Ramadan. They showed me that beyond the recitation of the Koran, the praying, the fasting, the hajj--that Islam is a complete system, a complete way of life, and how that applied to us and our place in society. Taseer: What is the philosophy of Hizb ut-Tahrir? Butt: The idea is that Muslims in Britain need to keep to their Islamic identity and work for the re-establishment of an Islamic caliphate, or khalifah as they would say, based upon the first four caliphates of Islam. Taseer: Where? Butt: In the Muslim countries. That is one of the differences I had with them. Taseer: You would like to see the caliphate here too? Butt: Absolutely. How could we restrict something that initially started in Medina but then spread through the entire Muslim world? Taseer: Would everyone have to be a Muslim, or would it work within our existing society? Butt: No, it's a structure of law and order... Taseer: A central authority? Butt: A central Islamic authority. Whether the people are Muslim or not is irrelevant. But even orientalist authors

like Gilles Keppel agree that Islam was so powerful that it was the only way of life that both the conquered and the conqueror embraced. When the Mongols attacked Islam, they became Muslims; the same happened with the Turks. Even the people Islam conquered, they themselves embraced the way of life. People say it was forced by the sword, but if so, when the sword was removed, why did these people not revert back? Simply because it was never actually forced upon them. The inherent beauty of Islam made people want to embrace it. Taseer: There are places it didn't happen, like India. Butt: For me, the subcontinent was a tragedy; it never had the Islam that was introduced in Spain, for example, or north Africa. Very early on, the Mughals took power and India distanced itself from central Islam. The Arab Muslims never concentrated on these people enough, which is why the majority of Muslims there never embraced it. Taseer: You said that you were once hot-headed; are you calmer today? Butt: I find myself just as emotional as I was then, but more able to express that emotion in an Islamic manner. I would hate to be an emotionless person. You hear this a lot in the Muslim world today, from certain intellectuals: "Don't be emotional about it, think rationally, think logically." I guess it's an imperial complex from being under British rule for so long. British people are seen as being very cool-headed, calm and collected, but if your sister has been raped, your mother tortured and your father is being brutalised, how could you stay without emotion? Having no emotion is like being a brick. Now I can channel my emotion in an Islamic way rather than an un-Islamic way. Taseer: Tell me a bit about your daily life. Do you read books and see movies? Butt: No, no, no. (He laughs) Taseer: How do you pass the day? Butt: Daily routine would be getting up to pray the fajr without failure, staying awake for as long as I can, for at least an hour, an hour and a half, reciting the Koran, purely in Arabic... Taseer: Is your Arabic good? Butt: My Arabic, unfortunately, is not the best and I guess I have my parents to blame for that. But I do plan, once they give me back my passport, to go to an Arab country. I think it's the key to everything. Taseer: Do you work? Butt: I don't want to go into specifics. I do have business partners, but they don't like me coming out publicly and saying that they're affiliated with me. I do various different trading things. I don't have a normal nine-to-five type of job. Whenever I have applied for a job in the past, they have found out who I am and the views I hold, and as a result they don't want me. But wherever I go, I will always be involved in Islamic work. Taseer: At work? Butt: Even at work. I'm always trying to help my colleagues, as Muslims, to have a more Islamic way of life. Taseer: How would you describe yourself as a Muslim, given that there are so many labels bring thrown about--"moderate," "extremist" and so on? Butt: I would agree to being called a radical and one day I may even be called a terrorist, if Allah permits me. That is something it would be an honour to be called. Taseer: Surely, even in an Islamic context, that can't be a positive label? Butt: There is a speech by the Prophet in which he says: Allah gave me five things. One of them was the power to strike fear, to strike terror into the heart of the enemy from a mile's distance, and this was a reference to a battle he had commenced. The way the warriors had prepared themselves was so terrifying that the enemy didn't even turn up to the battle. Besides that, in the Koran the word irhab is the root word for terror in Islam, and irhabiyyun is the word for terrorist. Allah mentions the word in the Koran many times--the one who strikes terror into their hearts is an irhabiyyun. If I could have that title Islamically then I would be more than happy to take it and be proud of it. But unfortunately, I haven't reached that level yet. Taseer: Why not? Butt: Because I am stuck in this country. It would be unwise to carry out military operations here. Taseer: Why? Butt: It would harm a lot of people. Britain is a very liberal country in comparison to America where Muslims don't have many rights. This is the type of country where you do have a lot more rights. Now with Afghanistan gone, the Muslims don't really have a place where they can come back to and regroup, have time to think and relax, without the authorities breathing down your neck. Taseer: Was it difficult growing up here as a Muslim? Did you sense an anti-Islamic feeling? Butt: The British establishment has always hated Islam. Look at the crusades. I watched that programme on the BBC, The Secret Policeman (an undercover report on trainee policemen) and one of the police officers had the honesty to admit what he felt: he said he would kill a Muslim if he could get away with it. What he said briefly is that he represents the majority, the only difference being that he has the courage to articulate it. And I do believe in my heart of hearts that the majority of British people--the majority being outside of London--would do that if they had the opportunity. Historically speaking, there has always been an enmity. I experienced it as I was growing up, going into majority white schools and having a problem trying to be a Muslim. Taseer: Would you try to leave? Butt: If they give me my passport, I will fly straight out of here. I won't be here a day longer than I have to. Taseer: And never come back? Butt: And never come back unless absolutely necessary. Taseer: Until they give you your passport back, you can't leave? Butt: There's no point in my leaving. I could leave if I wanted to, but it would be illegal and it wouldn't be very hard for them to start taking criminal proceedings against me. Taseer: In the past you have demonstrated the failures of British security. Has it improved? Butt: It's funny you asked me that. I have been reading a book--Jihad by Gilles Keppel--not for the sake of learning anything, but to see whether these people have understood us. In the past, and I'm talking 100, 200 years ago, the reason the British were successful in destroying Islamic government or the Ottoman caliph is that they actually lived among them and they made an effort to

understand what they wanted to destroy. Now they're trying to understand something that is a theory. It's in my mind, it's in peoples' minds, but it's not a practical manifestation of the system that we aspire towards, so it's very hard for them to contain it. As a result of that, the security services have lost their ability to analyse how Muslims think--I mean real Muslims, the ones who are not ashamed to talk about their opinions and to express them in public. That is why they will lose this war on terror, because guys like Keppel don't understand us. Taseer: Do many Muslims in Britain feel like you do? Butt: I would say the majority of Muslims in this country care about neither moderate nor radical Islam; they care about living their day-to-day life. They're happy with that. But of those people who are practising, the majority of them hold my views. The difference is that some people come out publicly and others keep quiet. Taseer: What would you say the size of this latter group is? Butt: Official figures say there are 3m Muslims here. [There are in fact 1.6m.] Out of that, I would say there are 750,000 who have an interest in Islam and about 80 per cent of those were over the moon about 9/11. Taseer: Why? Butt: The motivation is the pleasure of Allah, first and foremost. Allah says in the Koran "We have sent you,"--the Muslims--"the best nation in the world, to mankind." But there are conditions attached to that because you must enjoy goodness and forbid evil. As long as Muslims do this, they will see themselves as the best nation. And the reason why the majority of Muslims feel this inspiration is because we understand that Islam is by its nature beautiful; it is not a backward, medieval-type way of life as a lot of westerners believe. That's why, historically, even after Islam had left these areas as a political force, people still held on to its way of life. Even in the crusades you had Muslims and Jews fighting alongside one another in order avoid Roman rule because they said Islam was just towards them; Islam gave them rights. In the 15th century, during the Spanish inquisition, where did the Jews run to? To the Ottoman caliphate, Islam was an inspiration. All human rights are based on Islam, to ensure peace and security in the world. Taseer: So given the situation in the world today, what is the duty of the Muslim? Butt: Every Muslim must work for the Shari'a to be implemented as a political way of life. They can do that physically, by involving themselves in revolutionary coups, or through political means. As long as they don't attack or compromise other Muslims who are doing something different from them, I have no problem with any of these ways of establishing the Shari'a. Taseer: Is it going to be possible for Muslims to live alongside non-Muslims? Butt: We did it in the past, why can't we do it now? Taseer: Would it have to be a Muslim polity? Butt: Yes. Taseer: Or could it be like England? Butt: No, it couldn't be like England. The so-called liberal countries in the world, France for example, boast about liberty and their so-called revolution, but they are banning headscarves. Where have the rights of the Muslims gone there? Where are the rights of Muslims in Britain to be able to support their brothers who are being attacked in Kashmir? So many of the organisations proscribed by the British government are Kashmiri freedom fighters, or terrorists as you would call them. Taseer: Why is it that an attack on Muslims in another part of the world affects British Muslims? Butt: Because Allah is the way of love. Racism has infiltrated Christianity and Judaism. It is inbred in the people. Christians never see themselves as one brotherhood, but rather many dominions, whereas Muslims, no matter what colour they are, no matter what race they are, no matter what nationality they are, see themselves as one brotherhood. Ultimately this is what Islam teaches; that black, white, brown, red, green--if there were aliens in Mars--these people are brothers. Poor or rich, it has no effect on how we should treat one another. It doesn't mean that we should divide. And that is why when Muslims are being attacked, the majority of Muslims kick up a fuss, because these are their brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, there are Muslims today whose only reason to pick up a cause is for political support or their personal ambitions. Ultimately, if your brothers and sisters were being killed in any part of the world, you would make your utmost effort to try to help them. Taseer: Where do you see Muslims under attack? Butt: Everywhere. It's not limited to just one place. Wherever Muslims are they are under attack and until they start viewing themselves like that, they will always remain an inferior nation. Taseer: And why are they under attack? Butt: If they're not being attacked physically, they are being attacked mentally. They are being told that their way of life is backward, they're being told that for women to cover themselves is against human rights, they're being told that to cut the hand of the thief, which Allah ordains in the Koran, is outdated. They're being told that their way of life is inferior and bad and should not be followed. And they're often stripped of their identity, as they were in Bosnia: Muslim by name only, no culture whatsoever. That is still a war as far as I'm concerned. Taseer: Why is there a "Muslim problem" today? Ten or 15 years ago there wasn't the sort of movement you see today. What changed? Butt: I don't agree with you. Ten to 15 years ago the Muslims had just experienced their first victory of the 20th century, against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The belief that this was due to American support is ridiculous. Muslims, especially from the middle east, financed the jihad just as much, if not more. This is well documented. With that victory under their belt, the Muslims began to realise that they could control their own political destiny, whether by revolution or other violent means. To be honest with you, I don't think the Americans, British or French are the best lecturers on how to change a society, simply because they have themselves experienced revolution to attain the way of life they believe in. So why, when we do it, are we so different from them? Muslims woke up. You then had Iraq being

attacked, you had Chechnya, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Algeria, you had all these Muslim areas being attacked and you had Muslims waking up and saying, "Hang on, this isn't a coincidence." Taseer: Why do you think that is? Butt: Because after the fall of communism, America began to realise that Islam was a threat. Taseer: The larger fall of communism wasn't the result of Islam even if you think that that may be the case in Afghanistan... Butt: That's what I'm saying; it was a catalyst for collapse in Afghanistan. Taseer: Why? Butt: Because Islam is a way of life, a way of life superior to communism and capitalism. Christianity is a mere religion and can't cater for people's way of life, but Islam can. With the fall of the Soviet Union, people started turning to Islam as a way of life, whereas America wanted to spread capitalism across the world. That's why Islam became the enemy. Taseer: Yes, but why are Muslims the only enemy? Are they the only ones fighting American colonialism? Butt: No, you have your South American states that are involved in the struggle. But with the exception of them and a few African nations, the majority of the people fighting against American colonialism are not Muslim nations, but Muslim people. Muslim governments are more than happy to embrace the other way of life in order to stay powerful. Taseer: Do you consider yourself a religious teacher of sorts? Do you speak to people in the community? Butt: I speak to a lot of people in the community. I have a gym in my house where I invite people to come back and exercise and we have regular study circles at my house. Taseer: What sort of people are these? Butt: A lot of them are youth because I believe that when Islam is being practised by youth, Islam will be alive. If it's practised by the older generation, it will always remain old, slow. Taseer: Are they receptive to your views or do they resist and say, "No, we want to go out with girls and drink" and so on? Butt: A lot of people will say that to me, but when it comes to their absolute happiness, a lot of people realise that Islam is their way of life. Taseer: What do you say to them? Butt: One of the first questions I ask them is: why do you celebrate Eid? If you like their way of life, celebrate Christmas. That provokes thought in their head that the reason they celebrate Eid is because they are different. It's not just Eid or Christmas, it's their whole way of life being different. How they speak to their people, how they speak to their fellow brothers and sisters, how they speak to their teachers, how they progress in their education: they have different ways. Ultimately, if someone believes in Allah and his messenger, he will always have at the back of his mind the notion that he'll go back to Allah when he dies. And I'll ask people, "Don't lie for the sake of me, you don't have to say something to please me, but do you believe in Allah? Ask yourself that question, do you really, really believe in Allah? Do you really believe that there is hellfire, do you really believe that there is heaven and hell, or not?" And if someone believes that, there is no reason why they won't realise that, "Yes, our life does belong to us." And from there, we'll go further. To those brothers who say, "I pray all the time," I reply, "That's not enough: give your life for Allah, that's what he wants, he wants you to live and die for him, that is the ultimate sacrifice, he gave you that life, give it back to him." Taseer: Given that the Koran is incontestable to the letter, and that it is unique because there is no another religion in which there is a text so pure, handed down from God to man, can there be a moderate Muslim? Butt: No. You've hit the nail on the head. If someone believes that it's the incontestable word of Allah, how can he take a moderate view? We must fight if it is the will of Allah. I don't want to say that Muslims don't believe in Allah, but what I will say is that their faith in Allah is weak. They fear man the same way that the Jews feared the pharaoh, who they feared more than Allah and that's why they were afraid to do anything against him, until Moses came and liberated them. The lack of leadership in the Muslim community is simply because they are too afraid to stand up against this so-called undefeatable giant of the United States. Taseer: Coming back to the youth, are they angry? Butt: Many are from quite wealthy families, as I am. Taseer: So you don't see this rise of extremism among British Muslims as rooted in economic disadvantage? Butt: I think that's a myth, pushed forward by so-called moderate Muslims. If you look at the 19 hijackers on 9/11, which one of them didn't have a degree? Muhammad Atta was an engineer [he was actually an architect and town planner] at the highest level. His Hamburg lecturer said, "I didn't have a student like him." These people are not deprived or uneducated; they are the peak of society. They've seen everything there is to see and they are rejecting it outright because there is nothing for them. Most of the people I sit with are in fact university students, they come from wealthy families. Islam caters for everybody: the economically deprived and the most educated person. It doesn't make any difference: the message will still be the same. But this myth--that the only reason these people go for Islam is because they have nothing else to do--is a lie and a fabrication. People who say that should be very careful. Even Osama himself, Sheikh Osama, came from wealth that I could never dream of and he gave it all up because it had no value to him. Who can say he came from an economically deprived condition? It's rubbish.

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