

## D The phenomenon of religious radicalism

1 Before you read the poem, say what you associate with the title.

### Most Wanted

Warning: God has slipped the noose.  
We must confirm the worst  
of our righteous fears –  
God has escaped the mosque,  
the synagogue, the church  
where we've locked him up for years.  
We repeat unto you:  
God is on the loose.

Henceforth beware:  
You may find him in heathen beauty.  
You may stumble upon him unaware.

Take appropriate measures:  
You may have to behave  
as though each human being  
could reflect his Face.

Mohja Kahf

<sup>1</sup>to slip the noose dem Galgenstrick entkommen  
<sup>2</sup>to confirm to say that sth is true  
<sup>3</sup>righteous here: legitimate  
<sup>4</sup>to be on the loose to be free and potentially harmful to others

<sup>9</sup>henceforth from now on  
<sup>9</sup>beware be careful  
<sup>10</sup>heathen non-Christian  
<sup>12</sup>appropriate adequate  
<sup>12</sup>measure action

- 2 Relate your associations to the way God is presented in this poem.
- 3 Who is the warning directed toward? Speculate on the reasons for the warning.
- 4 Is this an anti-religious poem or not? Give reasons. → S6

### Reflections of a former British Muslim extremist

The following interview with Ed Husain, a former Muslim extremist and author of the controversial book *The Islamist* (2007), was recorded in February 2008.

Ms Tippett: You were born and raised in Britain. You were not an immigrant. You were perhaps living in a culture that was defined by immigrants but, you know, talk to me a little bit about your British identity and why your link to that was susceptible or vulnerable or tenuous so that you were captured by some of these ideas.

Ed Husain: We have a real problem in Britain. It was the case when I was growing up and it's still the case now in that it's extremely difficult to define Britishness. Whereas in America it's different. You have a very clear sense of national identity. We don't have that here. There's the Welsh issue, the Scottish issue, and the Irish issue that compounds this problem. And then bring into the mix people who arrived in Britain in the 1960s after the winding up of the British Empire in the West Indies and in India. You have a group of people who arrived here, you know, my parents' generation, initially for economic purposes with some hope of, you know, going back as it were one day. That going back never happened. So my generation, born and raised here, we're confused as to where our parents stood. At home we were exposed to one culture; at school we were exposed to another. So Britishness was never clearly defined for my generation growing up. And the fact that we've got communities up and down the country that live totally separate lives – I mean, in the name of multiculturalism we've


**VIP FILE**



Mohja Kahf is an Arab-American writer who came to the United States from Syria in 1971 at the age of four. She now teaches comparative literature at the University of Arkansas.

**ED HUSAIN**  
Who I am and radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left

**THE ISLAMIST**



- <sup>4</sup>susceptible likely to be influenced by sth
- <sup>4</sup>vulnerable easily harmed
- <sup>4</sup>tenuous weak
- <sup>10</sup>to compound to make sth worse
- <sup>11</sup>to wind up to end
- <sup>16</sup>to be exposed to sth to be confronted with

20 created these monocultural ghettos in Bradford, Birmingham, Burnley, parts of London where there is no interaction between, you know, native white English communities and the children of immigrants. And so it's very much a live problem here in Britain.

Ms Tippett: And I have a sense that when you first became attracted to a kind of politicized Islam, initially not necessarily extremist, but just that some of the words you used to describe what you found worthy in what you were experiencing was that, you know, it sounds like it almost seemed to bridge some of these different aspects of your identity that weren't bridged in the culture. You said it was English-speaking, educated, rooted in faith.


Ed Husain: You see, when we went to mosques – when I went to mosques – most of the imams came from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India. They spoke about an Islam that was very much village-based, a folkloric Islam. It wasn't something that people like myself, born and raised here in Britain in a different cultural-social-political setup, could easily relate to. We were always given Islam in a second language, the language of our parents – Urdu, Bengali, whatever. But suddenly when I reached my teens, there were these young people who spoke Islam in the language that I easily identified with, i.e., English. So it took me a while to cotton on to the fact that the sort of Islam they were trying to sell to people like myself was an Islam that was at odds with my parents' more Sufistic, traditional orthodox Islam. But the English-speaking radicals were trying to promote a sense ... a type of Islam that was, you know, Islamist, politicized.

From: Speaking of Faith with Krista Tippett



- 5 According to Husain, what problems have immigrants to Great Britain had?
- 6 Explain the two kinds of Islam Husain encountered.
- 7 Listen to a further selection of the interview on your CD. Make a list of all the reasons why young Muslims turn to extremism. Discuss them with a partner.
- 8 This is an interview. How does the participants' speech deviate from written language? → S21
- 9 a) According to Husain, how is the situation of the Muslim community in the US different from its counterpart in Great Britain?  
b) Find evidence for Husain's thesis by researching the biographies of the suicide bombers of the attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and on July 7, 2005, in London. → S32
- 10 How has multiculturalism actually helped radical tendencies in the Muslim community?

**VIP FILE**



Ed Husain was born in London in 1975 and is the author of *The Islamist*. He became an extremist when he was 16, but rejected fundamentalist teachings five years later and returned to "normal life" and his family.

- <sup>34</sup>setup situation, system
  - <sup>34</sup>to relate to sth to understand and to connect with
  - <sup>38</sup>to cotton on to sth to understand
  - <sup>38</sup>at odds with in conflict with
  - <sup>39</sup>Sufistic referring to a mystic philosophical movement within Islam that stresses the ability of the soul to reach a personal union with God
- Islam in 2 languages*

**WORD BANK**

**Spoken language**  
intonation • stress patterns • tone of voice • question tags and fillers • repetitions • hesitation • false starts • politeness procedures • bridging information gaps • speech acts • recipient orientation • flexibility

**Written language**  
spelling • word boundaries • punctuation • careful word choice • revision

**Other parameters**  
(non-)standard usage, incl. omission of grammatical and lexical material • (in-)formality of style • word-length