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\* Titles provided by the editor

## AWARENESS

- 1 What is normally understood by the terms 'clash of cultures' and 'second-generation immigrants'? Distinguish between 'clash of cultures' and 'clash of civilizations'.
- 2 If you emigrated to another country, how much of your culture would you wish to keep? How much would you want to pass on to your children?

## COMPREHENSION

- 3 Who takes part in the conversation?

## ANALYSIS

- 4 Analyse and compare the two views of the immigrant's tragedy presented here.
- 5 Determine the narrative point of view. What does the reader learn about Nazneen and her way of life?
- 6 Why does Dr Azad say so little? What can the reader infer from this?
- 7 Why does Nazneen feel 'giddy' (l. 77)?
- 8 What seems to be Mrs Azad's view of education?

## OPINION

- 9 Who does the reader sympathize with more, Chanu or Mrs Azad? Which opinions is the reader more likely to agree with? What is the effect of this narrative technique?

## PROJECTS

- 10 'Shakespeare wrote about it.' (l. 11). Try to discover where Shakespeare wrote about the problems of different generations or of minorities, and present your findings to the group.
- 11 Use Internet resources to try to make a 'country profile' of Bangladesh and suggest why people might want to emigrate from it.
- 12 Find out what dishes might be on the menu in a typical Bangladeshi restaurant in the UK.

# 13

Hanif Kureishi

## "My Son the Fanatic"



Hanif Kureishi's father was a Muslim from Bombay (his family moved to Pakistan after Indian independence) and his mother English. Born in 1954 in South London, Kureishi grew up very much aware of the racial and cultural tensions experienced by immigrants, but refused to be determined by them. His novels, stories and film screenplays often show uncanny sensitivity to the times. His screenplay *My Beautiful Laundrette* (available in Viewfinder Literature) was a surprise mainstream success. The story from which this extract is taken was also made into a feature film starring Om Puri as Parvez. – 'My Son the Fanatic', in *Love in a Blue Time* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), pp. 124ff.

1 The next day, Parvez went immediately to the street where Bettina stood in the rain wearing high heels, a short skirt and a long mac on top, which she would open hopefully at passing cars.

- 5 'Get in, get in!' he said.  
Bettina put her arms around him.  
'What's happened?'  
'I've just had the worst experience of my life.'

As Bettina rubbed his head Parvez told her that the previous evening he and Ali had gone to a restaurant. As they studied the menu, the waiter, whom Parvez knew, brought him his usual whisky and water. Parvez had been so nervous he had even prepared a question. He was going to ask Ali if he was worried about his imminent exams. But first, wanting to relax, he loosened his tie, crunched a popadom and took a long drink.

Before Parvez could speak, Ali made a face.

'Don't you know it's wrong to drink alcohol?' he said.

20 'He spoke to me very harshly,' Parvez told Bettina. 'I was about to castigate the boy for being insolent, but managed to control myself.'

He had explained patiently to Ali that for years he had worked more than ten hours a day, that he had few enjoyments or hobbies and never went on holiday. Surely 25 it wasn't a crime to have a drink when he wanted one?

'But it is forbidden,' the boy said.

Parvez shrugged, 'I know.'

'And so is gambling, isn't it?'

30 'Yes. But surely we are only human?'

Each time Parvez took a drink, the boy winced, or made a fastidious face as an accompaniment. This made Parvez drink more quickly. The waiter, wanting to please his friend, brought another glass of whisky. 35 Parvez knew he was getting drunk, but he couldn't stop himself. Ali had a horrible look on his face, full of disgust and censure. It was as if he hated his father.

Halfway through the meal Parvez suddenly lost his temper and threw a plate on the floor. He had felt like 40 ripping the cloth from the table, but the waiters and other customers were staring at him. Yet he wouldn't stand for his own son telling him the difference between right and wrong. He knew he wasn't a bad man. He had a conscience. There were a few things of 45 which he was ashamed, but on the whole he had lived a decent life.

'When have I had time to be wicked?' he asked Ali.

In a low monotonous voice the boy explained that Parvez had not, in fact, lived a good life. He had broken 50 countless rules of the Koran.

'For instance?' Parvez demanded.

Ali hadn't needed time to think. As if he had been waiting for this moment, he asked his father if he didn't relish pork pies?

55 'Well. . .'

Parvez couldn't deny that he loved crispy bacon smothered with mushrooms and mustard and sandwiched between slices of fried bread. In fact he ate this for breakfast every morning.

60 Ali then reminded Parvez that he had ordered his own wife to cook pork sausages, saying to her, 'You're not in the village now, this is England. We have to fit in!' Parvez was so annoyed and perplexed by this attack that he called for more drink.

65 'The problem is this,' the boy said. He leaned across the table. For the first time that night his eyes were alive. 'You are too implicated in Western civilisation.'

Parvez burped; he thought he was going to choke.

'Implicated!' he said. 'But we live here!'

'The Western materialists hate us,' Ali said. 'Papa, how can you love something which hates you?'

'What is the answer then?' Parvez said miserably. 'According to you.'

Ali addressed his father fluently, as if Parvez were a rowdy crowd that had to be 85 quelled and

convinced. The Law of Islam would rule the world; the skin of the infidel would burn off again and again; the Jews and Christians would be routed. The West was a sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug takers and prostitutes.

As Ali talked, Parvez looked out of the window as if to check that they were still in London.

'My people have taken enough. If the persecution doesn't stop there will be jihad. I, and millions of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause.'

'But why, why?' Parvez said.

'For us the reward will be in paradise.'

'Paradise!'

Finally, as Parvez's eyes filled with tears, the boy urged him to mend his ways.

'How is that possible?' Parvez asked.

'Pray,' Ali said. 'Pray beside me.'

Parvez called for the bill and ushered his boy out of the restaurant as soon as he was able. He couldn't take any more. Ali sounded as if he'd swallowed someone 110 else's voice.

On the way home the boy sat in the back of the taxi, as if he were a customer.

'What has made you like this?' Parvez asked him, afraid that somehow he was to blame for all this. 'Is 115 there a particular event which has influenced you?'

'Living in this country.'

'But I love England,' Parvez said, watching his boy in the mirror. 'They let you do almost anything here.'

'That is the problem,' he replied.



*Finsbury Park Mosque in London, which became a centre for 'jihadist' Islamic preaching associated with the extremist cleric Abu Hamza al-Mazri between 1997 and 2003*

## Vocabulary

**3 mac** (n.): (BrE) raincoat – **14f. imminent** (adj.): coming soon – **16 popadom** (n.): large, circular, thin, crispy snack served at the beginning of a meal in an Indian restaurant – **21 to castigate** (v.): to criticize sharply – **21 insolent** (adj.): rude, disrespectful – **31 to wince** (v.): to show an expression of pain – **32 fastidious** (adj.): showing disgust – **37 censure** (n.): criticism, disapproval – **54 to relish** (v.): to enjoy – **63 perplexed** (adj.): confused and worried – **67 to be implicated in** (v.): to be involved in something bad – **68 to burp** (v.): to allow gas from the stomach to come through the mouth noisily – **90 to quell** (v.): to force to be calm – **92 infidel** (n.): non-believer, non-Muslim – **93 to rout** (v.): to defeat completely – **94 sink** (n.): (here) a swamp, a place

full of dirty things – **94 hypocrite** (n.): a person who acts differently from the beliefs they claim to have – **98 persecution** (n.): being treated badly because of one's beliefs – **99 jihad** (n.): (Arabic) a holy war – **108 to usher out** (v.): to escort s.o. to the door

## Explanations

**91 Law of Islam:** Sharia law, based on the Koran and centuries of interpretation by scholars; it sets out rules of behaviour in most spheres of life.

### AWARENESS

- 1 What happened on 11 September 2001 (nine-eleven)?
- 2 What is the meaning of the word 'Islam'? What do you know about things Muslims are forbidden to do, and things they are expected to do?

### COMPREHENSION

- 3 What is Bettina's profession? What is Parvez's?
- 4 What aspects of Parvez's behaviour does Ali criticize?
- 5 Who does Ali mean when he talks about 'my people' (l. 98)?

### ANALYSIS

- 6 What are the effects of the use of indirect and direct speech?
- 7 Why has the author juxtaposed the two stories in this way?
- 8 In what ways does the author signal the extent to which Parvez agrees or disagrees with his son? Does Ali understand these signals?
- 9 What are the differences between Parvez's and Ali's conception of right and wrong?
- 10 Comment on the sentence: "As Ali talked, Parvez looked out of the window as if to check that they were still in London." (ll. 96f.).

### OPINION

- 11 In what ways could this story, published in 1997, be described as prophetic?
- 12 Where do the sympathies of the reader lie? How are they relativized?

### PROJECTS

- 13 Find out about some of the different branches of Islam (e.g. Shia / Sunni / Sufi / Wahabi).
- 14 Watch the film *My Son the Fanatic* and compare it with this extract.
- 15 Read or watch other works by Hanif Kureishi about ethnic diversity in the UK, e.g. *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Black Album*.

## The requirements of Islam

Islam means 'submission', or the total surrender of the self to God (Allah). It originated in the seventh century with the prophet Muhammad (Mohammed), whose followers are called Muslims. Muslims follow the Sunnah (the deeds of Muhammad) and his teachings as they are written down in the Qur'an (Koran).

Most Muslims belong to two major denominations, Sunni and Shi'a. There are almost six times as many Sunni as Shi'a Muslims.

Islam claims to be the purest form of the religion of the one God, from which Jews and Christians have deviated.

Muslims believe in a life after death.

Sunni Islam has five 'pillars' of faith:

- That there is one God and that Muhammad is his prophet.
- Muslims must pray five times a day facing Mecca.
- Muslims must give money to the poor or to help spread Islam, according to their wealth.
- Muslims must fast (not eat or drink) from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadan.
- Every able-bodied Muslim should make a pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) at least once in a lifetime.

In addition, Muslims should fight for their faith (Jihad), should live virtuously and avoid evil.

A system of rules and laws has grown up over time. These include rules of diet (halal food – no pork must be eaten or alcohol drunk, and animals for meat must be ritually slaughtered) and behaviour (male circumcision, eating with the right hand, using Islamic greetings, burial of the dead). Not all Muslims follow these rules strictly.

Apostasy (abandoning the Islamic religion) leads to damnation and is punishable by death.

Islam lays particular stress on sexual morality. Sex is approved of within marriage, but not outside. For this reason Islam has encouraged marriage as soon as possible after puberty. Masturbation is regarded as a sin, and sex outside marriage or homosexuality are to be severely punished, by whipping or death, although not all Islamic states apply these punishments. Marriage is a social contract, and a Muslim man may have up to four wives, provided he treats them equally, while a woman is only allowed one husband. Divorce is possible if the man says 'I divorce you' to the woman three times.

Shariah, or Islamic, courts settle disputes between people or determine penalties for misbehaviour.

14

Nadeem Aslam

### "After a Murder"\*

Kaukab and Shamas, immigrants from Pakistan, live in an industrial town in Northern England which has recently been the scene of a murder: Shamas' younger brother Jugnu and his girlfriend Chanda have been murdered by Chanda's brothers for living together without being married, which the brothers regarded as an attack on the family honour. Now Kaukab has cooked a meal for her sons Ujala and Charag, daughter Mah-Jabin, and her eight-year-old grandson. However, there are tensions at this family reunion, which come to the surface when Kaukab sees an article about her artist son in the magazine of a Sunday newspaper. The author, born in Pakistan in 1966, grew up in Huddersfield. – Nadeem Aslam, *Maps for Lost Lovers* (London: Faber & Faber, 2004), pp. 320 ff.

- 1 Kaukab, smiling proudly, takes the magazine and looks at Charag's photograph. *The Uncut Self-Portrait* is pictured inside too and she closes the magazine when she sees it. Charag has painted himself without any
- 5 clothes standing in a pale grove of small immaculate butterflies, fruit and flower-heavy boughs, birds, hoopoes and parakeets and other insects and animals, the mist rising from a lake in the background – and he has an uncircumcised penis.
- 10 He sees the distress on her face and says, 'What I am

trying to say is that it was the first act of violence done to me in the name of a religious or social system. And I wonder if anyone has the right to do it. We should all question such acts.'

'That such wickedness can be!' Kaukab says quietly. 15  
'Why must you mock my sentiments and our religion like this?' Outside the window a large moon has appeared, its mountains and valleys a greyish black-and-white, very faint, as though it were a bad photocopy. She wishes she could fly away out of the window. 20