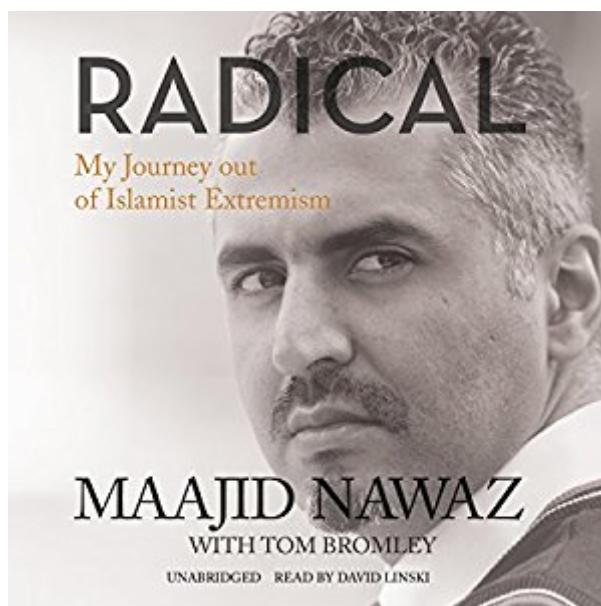


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Radical: My Journey Out Of Islamist Extremism



Synopsis

An insightful account of one man's drastic evolution from religious fervor to enlightened peace. Maajid Nawaz spent his teenage years listening to American hip-hop and learning about the radical Islamist movement spreading throughout Europe and Asia in the 1980s and '90s. At 16, he was already a ranking member in Hizb ut-Tahrir, a London-based Islamist group. He quickly rose through the ranks to become a top recruiter, a charismatic spokesman for the cause of uniting Islam's political power across the world. Nawaz was setting up satellite groups in Pakistan, Denmark, and Egypt when he was rounded up in the aftermath of 9/11 along with many other radical Muslims. He was sent to an Egyptian prison where he was, fortuitously, jailed along with the assassins of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Twenty years in prison had changed the assassins' views on Islam and violence; Maajid went into prison preaching to them about the Islamist cause, but the lessons ended up going the other way. He came out of prison four years later completely changed, convinced that his entire belief system had been wrong and determined to do something about it. He met with activists and heads of state, built a network, and started a foundation, Quilliam, to combat the rising Islamist tide in Europe and elsewhere, using his intimate knowledge of recruitment tactics in order to reverse extremism and persuade Muslims that the narrative used to recruit them - that the West is evil and the cause of all Muslim suffering - is false. Radical is a fascinating and important look into one man's journey out of extremism and into something else entirely.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book written by Maajid Nawaz goes into much detail of the frustration faced by men and women. How looking for a place to be and use their talents when the door opens to radical Islamism. A book part biography and very much a wake up call to those who have no understanding of Islam or Islamism. Read the book you will find in its pages hope. Maajid is able to go beyond and write the insight so many westerners crave THE WHY? In a well written book you may even find yourself amongst the pages.

A fascinating autobiographical account of a young English man growing up in the 80s and 90s, becoming radicalized through his love for hip-hop, then joining an Islamist group and finally withdrawing. While he may not be typical of all young people growing up in Western countries who join radical Islamist movements, Nawaz provides useful insights into how this young man and his friends became enmeshed in the movement. Nawaz is clear-eyed and self-critical and he provides a good explanation of what attracted him to Islamism and what eventually repelled him. The book constitutes a valuable antidote to some of the simplistic explanations of Islamic radicalization. It reminds me a bit of the rise of Students for Democratic Society (SDS) and the Weathermen in the U.S. during the 1960s, although the latter movements did not arise so much out of exclusion and prejudice as did Islamism in Europe and the U.S. What links them was a frustrated desire to engage with a political system that seemed incapable of hearing their ideas and unable to understand the roots of revolutionary movements in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

I'm glad I read this book. It's invaluable to have the kind of insight that Nawaz provides here. His account of how he found himself so deeply entrenched in Hizb ut-Tahrir was compelling. It even occasionally called to mind for me other personal stories shared by former members of Scientology. I think his story serves as a healthy warning for anyone who may be eagerly searching for a deep meaning and purpose to life, and how "ripe for the picking" people can appear to those pushing a particular ideology (whether it be religious, political, or both). This is not to suggest that the author was a weak-minded individual. The opposite appears to be true. My guess is the confidence with which he expresses himself is largely responsible for other reviewers claiming that he comes across as self-glorifying and/or conceited. He does also, as others have mentioned, do a great deal of name dropping. If he were merely a celebrity hound reporting on every empty encounter with famous people, I could understand the objection. But such name dropping never came across as pointless or gratuitous. There are some passages where run-ins with adversaries seem potentially embellished, but since I'm neither psychic nor was I ever a fly on the wall during these alleged

encounters, I can only speculate, and it did not in any way subtract from my reading experience. I recommend this book because the two main goals I had in reading it were achieved: 1) To better understand how a fellow Westerner could get swept up in such a violent movement 2) To clear up my own lingering misconceptions of Islam and the difference between it and Islamism (descriptions of his parents and the evolution of his relationships with them, as well as his friendship with a girl named Fatima, were particularly helpful in this regard) If you're looking for something that delves into which passages of the Qur'an are used to directly (and indirectly) support Islamists' ideology, this book might disappoint as it focuses mainly on the author's personal journey. For this, I suggest picking up a copy of Dr. Tawfik Hamid's book "Inside Jihad: Understanding and Confronting Radical Islam". It's worth noting that while Nawaz and Hamid share different experiences in terms of their recruitment, involvement, and ultimate retreat from Islamism, their ideals and proposals for education, discussion, and reform seem to be mostly in line with one another. I would even argue that both titles are equally important to read.

A great book! Anyone who cares about what is happening in the world today or what it might be tomorrow should read this book. So much confusion exists about Islam, even within Islam. Maajid Nawaz is a very articulate and brilliant man who "walked the walk" of the jihadist before it got him confined for years in one of the world's worst prisons. He went in knowing well the Islamist's position but while there he also met other political/religious prisoners, some among the most educated and brilliant within his faith, men who helped him sometimes see radically different ways to interpret the Koran and put it into better historical context. I found it not only extremely informative but also a fast-paced read that often made me unable to put it down. Great book!

A phenomenal book. With the topic of radical Islam being caught in a tug of war between political correctness on one side and bigotry on the other, this book clears up a lot about Islam's role in jihad and oppression. For those who don't know (or didn't read the subtitle LOL), Maajid was radicalized in his youth and found himself getting in a lot of trouble before having a change of thought. His story is remarkable. An incredible thinker and great man.

This book illuminates muslim beliefs and how many facets exist to the religion of Islam. As an old woman who only knew what she's seen on TV this book has been a revelation. I grew up in the segregated south and instinctively hated racism. Now I see how the muslims are facing their own trials and am glad I understand it a little better and how it affects us all. I can perhaps guide my

grandchildren.

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