

Muslim hate preacher 'was allowed to tour British mosques on jihadi recruitment drive that wooed extremists behind July 7 bombings

From [*Daily Mail*](#)

Britain's biggest Islamic sect allowed a militant linked to al-Qaeda to tour dozens of mosques on a jihadist recruitment drive that spawned terror plots and murders.

As Pakistani cleric Masood Azhar delivered extreme messages across the country, he wooed the two Britons who went on to plan the tube and bus bombings in 2005, and the beheading of US journalist David Pearl.

Azhar, then an associate of Osama bin Laden, now leads a globally banned Pakistani terror organisation linked to numerous fatal attacks in Kashmir, Afghanistan and India. Details of his "prepare for jihad" British tour, until now a closely guarded secret, undermine the argument that mainstream mosques have played little or no role in violent Islamist radicalisation.

Omar Sheikh was convicted of orchestrating the 2002 killing of Mr Pearl and is now on death row in Pakistan, while Rashid Rauf went on to co-ordinate the London bombings in 2005 with Al-Qaeda and the 2006 liquid bomb plot to blow up trans-Atlantic airliners.

Azhar, a jihadist active in northern Pakistan, met both Sheikh and Shah during his 1993 tour of Britain, when he was allowed to spout a gospel of violent jihad, documents uncovered by The

Times said today. Over thirty days, he had the opportunity to speak to hundreds of young Britons, with deadly consequences. And his work was sanctioned by the leaders of Islamic movement Deobandi, whose voice is heard in 40 per cent of UK mosques.

Despite being in close contact with Osama bin Laden, Azhar was allowed into the UK. At the time of the tour in 1993 he was chief organiser of the Pakistani jihadist group Harkat ul Mujahideen.

After touring east London mosques, starting at the Madina Mosque in Clapton, Azhar continued north, speaking at the Zakariya Mosque in Dewsbury and Madina Masjid in Batley in West Yorkshire and the Jamia Masjid in Blackburn and Jamia Masjid in Burnley, Lancashire.

Their message was of hatred for Christians, Jews and Hindus and of the glory of murders "for the sake of Allah". Witnesses said that large sums of money were donated after each talk.

A report of the mosque tour, written in Urdu by a London-based Deobandi scholar and recently uncovered by a BBC investigation, states that Azhar 'delivered 42 sermons on jihad in huge gatherings in cities of the UK'. During these talks, young Britons were told that it was their duty to seek weapons-training in Pakistan. Another promised virgins in heaven for martyrs who sought the 'elimination of the oppressive and infidel system by the blessing of jihad'.

... he gave a talk to students and teachers at Britain's most influential Islamic seminary, a Deobandi boarding school near Bury in Greater Manchester. Its topic was "O my dear Prophet, do murders". The assembled children were told that a significant proportion of the Koran was "devoted to murders for the sake of Allah".

Azhar also spoke at three mosques in Dewsbury and Batley in West Yorkshire, including one sermon, "From jihad to jannat

[paradise]", which was heard by a "huge crowd". Islamic leaders who met Azhar in 1993 included Mohammed Patel, the head of Tablighi Jamaat in Britain (*I have never found out what the huge gathering at the proposed Megamosque site in West Ham in 1992/3 or 4 actually was – I wonder if it coincided with his visit?*)

Azhar's message did not fall on deaf ears

BBC Radio 4 will broadcast a two-part documentary,