

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE TENTH CONTENTIONS

Sh. Abdul Hakim Murad

The ‘Contentions’ are little sparks, some luminous, others merely hot, which fly from the point where Islam’s sword is resharpened by its encounter with the anvil of modernity. They are not credal articles, or mystical aphorisms; they avoid dull linearity or affiliation to a system. Instead they test the power of speech to point out the paradoxes of our world, and to suggest the transcendence to which those paradoxes point. Like Traherne’s *Centuries of Meditation*, they are arranged in hundreds, each of which may very loosely centre on a theme.

The Tenth Contentions

1. The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is not to be changed by it.
2. Without the *ilm al-hal* we will mistake *imhal* for *ihmal*.
3. *Autres temps, autres Maures.*
4. If you cannot be of the poor, then be with the poor. If you cannot be with the poor, then pray with the poor. If you cannot pray with the poor, then pray for the poor. Beyond this there remains not an atom's weight of faith.
5. 'Blessing' is a large word, but do not be slow to use it.
6. The Umma has no problem that cannot be solved by paying attention to the *Fatiba*. ('*And when the Qur'an is recited ...*')
7. To switch on a television is to acknowledge one's own lack of refinement.
8. Only the immanent God uses the subjunctive.
9. The *Liber Asian* puts the Afro back into Aphrodite.
10. Use silence to suffocate falsehood, not truth.
11. *Fadila* is the proof of *ilm*.
12. Reverence is the opposite of reverie.
13. Feminism? First empower *femininity*.
14. God's glory was, and there was nothing else. His glory is now as it was.
15. Choose your tie for its utility in cleaning your spectacles.
16. Dress in that which you would not see dishonoured.
17. The *Qutb* has been replaced by the *kutub*.
18. Everything is political, but politics is not everything.
19. Flight into self is a retreat from the facticity of the world; flight into heaven is its affirmation.

The Tenth Contentions

20. Remember: the history of Islam is the history of the Muslim ego.
21. 'One lives so badly because one always arrives in the present unfinished, incapable, distracted'. (Rilke)
22. Error exists to compliment truth, not to complement it.
23. Blame yourself, not the age. Blame the age, not others.
24. Knowledge is to see the door. Penitence is to approach it. Prayer is to knock upon it. But to open it is not within your power.
25. Even if you have slipped beneath the waves, the *adhan* may still reach you.
26. The evil eye: between 'ard and sama ' is the distance between *ard* and *sama*'.
27. Kemalism: the *rind-i genç* became the *röntgenci*.
28. Our condition is ignorance of our condition.
29. Only in the *din al-fitra* are women adequately acknowledged.
30. If you reject the Carrot, the Stick will surely come.
31. Only the saint should take women at face value.
32. Islam is the only way of being pro-Western.
33. The inward *istighfar* comes before the *tablik*; the outward one after it.
34. You are your intentions.
35. Do not doubt another's salvation until you are certain of your own.
36. Good *adab* is to jostle to be first in line for Heaven.
37. Renunciation is wisdom's only door.
38. *Fatwa*: only the mad do not pray. *Taqwa*: only the mad do not pray.
39. The false Salafi is Pharoah in the robe of Moses.

The Tenth Contentions

40. The poor ghettos are the *kharabat* of the age; it is dangerous to seek your wine elsewhere.
41. The false Salafism: only the Arab has a *salaf*.
42. There is no worship without knowledge. We have been created to know Him.
43. There is no knowledge of Him without love of beauty. We have been created to love beauty.
44. Despair not of those who are drawn to ugliness, for they too are probing the mysteries.
45. Others are our fellow-travellers, even if they have lost the road.
46. He that struggles to progress, though he has not been shown the road, is better than he that stands upon the road, pridefully mocking.
47. 'Islamic' and 'un-Islamic' are not the only adjectives. (*'And the differences of your tongues and colours.'*)
48. The Triumph of Pera: *Islam-bol* is become *Fut-bol*.
49. The Crucifixion and the Conquest of Mecca: which is higher: to forgive from a position of powerlessness, or of power?
50. The Crucifixion was not suicide: God knows His own powers of self-resuscitation.
51. He who does not love *fiqh* has no body.
52. Islam is no *meteorite* fallen upon Earth; it is its invisible, unregarded core.
53. 'I never think back. Since I cannot change the past, why should I deal with it?' (Shimon Perez.)
54. The Trinity: three *alter egos*.
55. The evil 'T' is the difference between the *lahi* and the *ilahi*.
56. Trust in God, not in your trust in God.
57. God acts in the *asbab*, not through them.

The Tenth Contentions

58. Meat resembles us; so prove the provenance of your provision.
59. Contingent being has no power. (*No fear is upon them, neither do they grieve.*)
60. Nietzsche: God has died because of those who believe that God died.
61. Leviticus, not Deuteronomy, makes the Land female, and truly welcoming. (The Eretz is polyandrous, or she is a desert.)
62. The Vicarious Atonement proves that torture can be a good thing.
63. The Christ of the Apocalypse: No More Mr Nice Guy.
64. Religion begins where empathy tends.
65. A *tariqa* carries fare-paying passengers. If they will not pay, it should not continue as a railway preservation society.
66. Only Islam could help the Pre-Raphaelites to paint men.
67. Utopians are un-Realistic.
68. A mosque is not built, it is written.
69. Islamism replaces religion with the idea of it.
70. The fanatic is the weak man. Strength is shown in generosity.
71. 'Gender is not destiny.' (Simone de Beauvoir) 'God is destiny.' (Hadith)
72. *Cumhuriyet* is possible; *cumözgürlük* is not.
73. Islamic democracy: sovereignty belongs to God.
74. Without the Prayer, each of us is a hole in creation.
75. It is not the giving of a *karama* that transforms; only the manner of its acceptance.
76. To think of the Teacher is to be offered a *karama*, so be utterly attentive in watching for it.

The Tenth Contentions

77. You may show a man a thousand miracles, but if you show him no compassion, he will not believe.
78. The god of the Enlightenment is a jealous god. By insisting on equality, he insists that only things capable of being equal should be tolerated.
79. I am my weakness; You are my strength.
80. Scientists show us only dead matter. (*'God calls you to what gives you life'.*)
81. A good prayer is from Him; a bad prayer is from us.
82. When the wind is fair, set all plain sail. When it blows a gale, send hawsers aloft. In a clock-calm, look below.
83. *Rushd* is to recognise the *Rashidun*. *Ghayy* is *ghulumw*.
84. Do not accuse the Arabs of stupidity.
85. St Paul was the first Westerner.
86. Falsalafium: Islam's unstable isotope.
87. No-one is suited to *tariqa*. *Tariqa* is suited to everyone.
88. The false Salafism: the revolt of the ego against the Caliph.
89. To be with Islam is to live in the valid diversity of signs. To be with the Monoculture is death.
90. 'Equality is not the means to achieve equality.' (Joan Scott)
91. Sijnistan will be Riddastan; so fight the locking of the gates.
92. The overtaken need not be taken over.
93. England chose the Sira, not the Gospel, to confront Hitler.
94. Rumi is among the *dala'il al-nubumma*.

The Tenth Contentions

95. A pious young cricketing fan,
Cheered Middlesex and Pakistan;
For with contemplation
On God's revelation
He found neither team in the Koran.
96. Peace at any price? Not at any price.
97. If you are not a saint, everything is your fault.
98. Men are from Ash'ar, women are from Maturid.
99. Which is it, of the blessings of your Lord, that you deserve?
100. 'There is a Moses for every Pharoah.' (Kemal Pasha-zade)