

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Quilliam Press

THE TWENTIETH 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 Twentieth Contentions

1. He that hunts religion for sensual strength shall be Aqta', the Actaeon deceived by Diyana's crescent crown.
2. In the Time of Turbulence, God gives you all you need behind your private door: perfume, prayer, woman.
3. Feel sorry for the moderns, for they never know desire.
4. Never, never, never, grow old in vain.
5. Respect the young, for they are likely to be closer to the *fitra* than you.
6. The worm of decay eats you while still you live; aspire, then, to the Pure Abode.
7. If you want to make religion so flexible that it disappears, identify rigidity with piety.
8. Let not liars sadden you; Truth will one day banish all shades.
9. If you feel the yearning for God it is inevitable that your style of life will change.
10. Whoever staggers upstream in this torrential age: for him blow the trumpet, play the drum!
11. Fundamentalism is a rival monoculture.
12. God is not subject to the rules of organised religion.
13. Forgiveness and sadaqa remind you that you only gain when you give.
14. Your quest for happiness is like seeking to grow taller; instead, love the Saga City, and happiness will be granted to you.
15. *Dhiker* and *fiker* are not enough: only after supplication may the rain fall.
16. Love God for what He offers you. Fear him in what He decrees for you.
17. Beware the devil when he persuades you that you are worthless.
18. Your indifference will spread indifference.
19. Hindutva? It is the Mussulman, not the Hindoo, who has a *sanatanadharma*.

The Twentieth Contentions

20. That man only is to be envied who loves women for the right reasons.
21. Pray at midnight, see the light. Think at midnight, die of fright.
22. The Salafi begins with *husn al-zann*, the False Salafi with *su' al-zann*.
23. The *Liber Asian* is scripture,
24. The sage helps you repent by showing you that you cannot apologise to a mirror.
25. Some see through others, others see others through.
26. Do you dare to look at creation even though you know how thin a veil it is?
27. *Insan* with the e-culture becomes insane.
28. If you long to see God's grace, work for the unity of the Muslims.
29. Only by courtesy and compassion will you find your way to the starting-line.
30. If you knew anything about the soul you would have infinite respect for the Prayer.
31. Nobody dishonours the Salaf more than the False Salafi.
32. The purpose of religion is to produce human beings who can be unconditionally loved.
33. Intelligent Islam is not 'liberal Islam', it is the remembrance of the Names of Beauty.
34. The Prayer is God's caring hand held out to help and support you.
35. How can you relate to the Absolute when you absolutise your own relativity?
36. Do not underestimate your capacity to underestimate others.
37. The absence of a Teacher is the worst excuse for sloth.
38. Which do you love more: a financial windfall, or accurate criticism by a foe?
39. No *fatwa* without *futumma!*

40. Every passer-by has rights over you; excuse yourself by finding a way to love him.
41. The world is not as it is.
42. Go to the one who has gone.
43. Hope, not humility, is the true alternative to pride.
44. Love of the Shard is caused by *tasharrud*.
45. Do not divulge any fact that will help nobody.
46. Service is a purification. What more do you need?
47. If you are not a giver and a forgiver you will be a grumbler.
48. The False Salafism must recognise that emotion is not a *dalil*.
49. Does your mosque welcome the sinful, and give them a space to reflect?
50. Ibn Taymiyya is like Ibn Arabi: both are dangerously misread by fools.
51. You will never be happy if you believe that religion exists to give you what you want.
52. Da'wa – you can never embrace a man if you clench your fists.
53. Watch what you drop when you flee.
54. Let not the bridal become your bridle.
55. Orientalism wishes Islam to be Taymiyyan.
56. Calligraphy is a drawing-out.
57. You will not achieve enlightenment unless you lighten up.
58. The world's deeper battle is not between fundamentalism and fun; it is between holiness and hollowness.
59. The narrower you make Islam, the fewer the people who will fit into it.

60. Makkah has become Mecca.
61. Capitalism's fullest slogan: *Arbeit macht frei*.
62. Riddastan fails, but Istihsania's empire shall never be overcome.
63. The use of reason is to diminish, not increase, the human content of the Law.
64. If you forget that the world is always dissatisfying, you will always be dissatisfied.
65. Revere the one whose nature is to love the saints.
66. To the extent that Islam has holiness it has Sufism.
67. The Salaf did not translate hadiths into English.
68. You crave not paradise, but only your image thereof.
69. Nature retreats in dismay from our cities; let us learn from her.
70. Empiricism? If the world is disenchanted, we will be disenchanted with the world.
71. Your doom is in your denial, just as Pharoah found his doom in de Nile.
72. Modern man is a candle that achieves everything except burning.
73. You are more likely to become what you crave than to achieve it.
74. Be a faster, not faster.
75. The False Salafism is fed by misanthropy, which is fed by unhappiness.
76. Atheism is like excrement: when enough builds up in the body, it has to come out.
77. *Huwa* plus *hiya* equals *hawa*.
78. In our age, *futuwwa* lies in training oneself to be strengthened by the sight of the *jalal*.
79. This short journey is not to hurt us, but to allow us to recognise its source, and to sing for joy.

80. Pain is to show you that life is authentic.
81. 'Divine law is strict, but it is not rigid.' (Claude Addas)
82. Why do you embrace anger with such readiness, when you know the suffering it brings you?
83. In our time, if people thank you, it is likely to be because you have shown them a way to be greedy.
84. Do not fight the one who angers your ego, for he is nothing but illusion.
85. True Islam is only that which helps you celebrate the joy and passion of life.
86. Men! Be shrewd, not shrewed.
87. No *kunst* surpasses Unst.
88. The main function of the façade which you work so hard to maintain is to bar you from seeing others.
89. Begin the day with the knowledge that it is sacred.
90. Should you seek the humanism of Islam, know that the *maqams* are casts of characters.
91. Always attend the mosque of someone else's ethnicity.
92. Delaying prayers is not worth the effort.
93. In the Yawning Gulf, the new Muslim is either pet or threat.
94. Ascension is to become aware of the divine below and around as well as above you.
95. Help every feminist, for Mother Nature is invincible.
96. *Qiwama* does not mean protecting from above, but supporting from below.
97. The False Salafism is not a method, it is a rhetoric.

The Twentieth Contentions

98. The English to the Native Australians: Give us your land, and in exchange we will give you the Church of England and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.

99. Hubby is either hubb or hubbub.

100. First Islam meant goodness, then it meant rightness, then it meant distinctiveness.