

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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# THE FIFTEENTH CONTENTIONS

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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 Fifteenth Contentions

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1. Bradford youth: *ta'weel* of fortune.
2. He is Newtonian; she demonstrates the quantum principle
3. Oneness cannot be exaggerated.
4. *Al-Jamil* means 'He That Reminds'.
5. Remember: your state is always contagious.
6. European Islam: the hand at Belshazzar's feast.
7. Bless him, and you will travel to the secret of the Names.
8. The *zabid* experiences the Sunna as a boundary. The *rind* experiences it as a breaking of bounds.
9. Relative existence has no reality of itself. See it only as signs made of shadows.
10. Who is less redeemed than the Lying Tongue?
11. Childhood has been electrocuted.
12. Israel is 'Nebuchadnezzar, My servant'.
13. Servanthood is the mark of humanity.
14. Only they who underestimate Shari'a despise Tariqa.
15. Tyler Durden: without functional women, no functional men.
16. Laugh at Christendom until it defends Bethlehem.
17. Islam is *mumabhid*; the monoculture is *mumabhad*.
18. The position of prayer in your list of priorities points to your state.
19. The first social law: for every true affinity between a man and a woman, there are ten attractions which are from the devil.
20. The Mahdi will be appointed by Theos, not Demos. The blood of warrior-patricians will run in his veins.

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21. Woman is between *khanf* and *raja*.
22. Her home is her *zawiya*; but *khidma* must be only the first of her degrees.
23. Love your beloved better to love the Beloved. Love the Beloved and you will better love your beloved.
24. Zionism: the absolute priority of blood.
25. Tories are all Whigs now.
26. The Moderate Muslim: 'Islam is against mass murder! Deep down, we're just as lovely as you! er ... Where's the buffet?'
27. Modernity is confined to Westernness; Islam is not.
28. Honour is honour, whether or not others know.
29. Marriage is not to give you what you want, it is to make you what you know you should be.
30. Between the Pelagian and the pagan *El* and the true I lie.
31. Islam is not about 'being yourself'; it is about improving yourself.
32. After converting, treat yourself to your favourite meal.
33. Modern holidays: the *nafs* will heal the *ruh*!
34. A gopeller called Tony Blair  
Destroyed all Iraq from the air,  
And then with decorum  
His Interfaith Forum  
Soon made him a smug millionaire.
35. Modernity offers us everything except pleasure and leisure.
36. Paul laid the cuckoo's egg.
37. Religion is not difficult; we are difficult.
38. Lie to others, and you will soon lie to yourself.

39. If you are sceptical about coincidences, God will help you.
40. If Sufism is marginal to your life, then try to be that margin.
41. The saint is serious, but not judgmental; the false Salafi is judgmental, but not serious.
42. The Teacher knows that only the tedious is forbidden.
43. Tradition: we are on Religion's leash. Modernity: religion is on our leash.
44. Joining religion is like unearthing your family tree.
45. Reality is a System. *Kufr* is not a malfunction in that System, it is the illusion that a malfunction exists.
46. 'It's kind of bad we destroyed everything, but at least we gave them a chance for a new start' (Uncle Same's warrior, after Fallujah).
47. Hamlet's tragedy was to read St Mark.
48. It is not arbitrary creation that is amazing; what is amazing is the perfect occasions He employs. *'Do you see any flaw in the Merciful's creation?'*
49. Only view her objectively if you view her as an object.
50. The beginner resents being laughed at. The wayfarer forgives those who laugh. The Arriver laughs with them, long and loud.
51. Being Muslim is the only authentic way to belong to your country.
52. Do not trust a culture where the religious leaders do not have the best sense of humour.
53. Did Paul's Jesus have hormones? *Ecce homo ...*
54. We can know nothing other than the Unknowable.
55. Allat, Manat and al-Uzza cannot compete with your potential for harm.
56. The Yawning Gulf lacks the principle of having principles.
57. Augustine: the Gospels allow us to put down the body, and pick up the sword.

58. When heart and body are in harmony, *fiker* results.
59. The Siddiq and the Murtada are like Isaac and Ishmael: we do not say *either-or*, but *both-and*.
60. You will only choose the right tariqa when you realise in what sense it does not matter which tariqa you choose.
61. If you are a doctor, and your heart does not grow softer each day, then burn your coat, and dance on the grave of your pretensions.
62. The monoculture's son is Zahid; you are the Rind. But among the Zahids of Islam, where are the Rindan?
63. Be still, and know that you are odd.
64. In a democracy there should be no private beliefs.
65. Only a hypocrite is proud that he despises himself as a hypocrite.
66. You have underestimated His *rahma*.
67. It is eudaimonian, or it is pandemonium.
68. Revelation is everything that allows us to discern the Good.
67. The world's texture is as rich as it is because of what you are called to be.
68. The only principles in this world which are impressive are Paradisal: the beauty of nature, of women, perfume, friendship, the sound of God's word.
69. Utopia? The devil tempts you to attempt heaven on earth, as he tempts you with *zina*.
70. There are no loopholes in the Law, only well-crafted opportunities for sloth or gratitude.
71. Traditional architecture: materials praising their Maker. Modern architecture: materials praising Man. Postmodern architecture: materials mocking man.

72. Tradition: a low expectation of this world; high hopes for the next. Result: happiness. Modernity: high hopes for this world, low hopes for the next. Result: misery.
73. He who says, 'I am patient', is not patient.
74. Maidens! Only use hairspray so the hairs pray.
75. If you want light in your house, use electricity from a sustainable source.
76. The saint says a few simple things, and changes the world. The academic philosophises, but does not change even himself.
77. We are the *Shi'at Ali*.
78. Trust in God, but don't trust your trust in God.
79. *Sharia* – to hammer in the tent-pegs. *Tariqa* – to pitch the tent. *Haqiqa* – to dwell in the tent as a Prophet in glory.
80. Only Karaite Muslims demand adherence to a detailed creed.
81. Not all autonomy is dignity; but all dignity is autonomy.
82. *Fasḥ*: Calmness lies on the other side of your tasks. *Wasḥ*: Your tasks are your calmness.
83. Wisdom and safety are humility's twin daughters.
84. *Zuhd* is to make the soul feel at home in the body.
85. How much asceticism do you need?
86. Pogonophilia without fitraphilia is a Jahilia.
87. False culture opposes consciousness.
88. Do not treat the world as though you were its centre.
89. Sufism: 'the ways to God are as numerous as human breaths.' The False Salafism: you take one breath, and hold it.
90. 'Facts are chieftains that winna ding'. (Burns)

91. Be the heart of your family by having your family in your heart.
92. Only patriarchy can guarantee gender equality.
93. Self-limitation allows you to find your character.
94. The Yawning Gulf: no taxation without representation.
95. The New Kalam: a thoughtful engagement with modern thought. The Third World elites: a thoughtless conformity to modern practice. The False Salafism: no conformity, and no thought.
96. Secularity excludes universals.
97. True marriage happens when there is true perception of beauty. True perception of beauty happens when there is true religion.
98. It is *zuhd*, not violence, that will melt the heart of Uncle Same.
99. Secular morality: modernity's saving fiction.
100. The whats and thou-shalt-nots  
all tie you up in knots,  
for only in the whys  
are humans reckoned wise.