

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE SIXTEENTH 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.

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1. The Soul of Europe has remembered its Pelagian Drinking Song.
2. Every bar is sinister, a stain on your escutcheon.
3. Woking teaches you not to be a Martian.
4. Always attend the mosque of someone else's ethnicity.
5. Defensive religion dies.
6. European Islam? We *Elches* will survive the Holy Office when there are *zambras* as well as *coloabades*.
7. It is not your heart that keeps you alive, it is watching it.
8. Do not think that no woman is a slut, a harlot and a wanton.
9. Let not your experience of Rigour cause you to doubt Gentleness.
10. The least likely of your sincere falsehoods is your words: 'I am a Sufi!'
11. The Teacher brings you near to the Divine rigour and gentleness.
12. Do not say 'The qualities of mercy preponderate', without adding, 'but they do not eliminate.'
13. Let not your final thought be: 'I could have been the dust beneath the feet of the saints, but I refused.'
14. Pray that you be granted knowledge in joy rather than in pain.
15. Finding the Teacher will not makes things easier, but it will make them clearer.
16. Every sin insults your honour, damages your faith, and courts punishment in this world and the next.
17. 'Out of the names of Allah, whoever understands al-Sami', al-Basir, al-Alim and al-Shahid, will never turn his attention towards expensive things.' (Shahidullah Faridi, *r.a.*)
18. Only in generosity is the believer reckless.
19. You have an extended family.

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20. Political theology: what proportion of sin can be removed if the temptation is removed also?
21. The Monoculture's complaint about Islam amounts to only one demand: Be like us!
22. *Khidma* heals where ego ails.
23. Universalism and Egypt: Edom is the child of Moses and Isis. Islam is the child of Abraham and Hagar.
24. Transhumanism serves someone else's ethics, not ours.
25. The 21st century: making love in the ruins of an earthquake.
26. Every *sajda* is a perfect opportunity to repent. ('Did We not give you years enough?')
27. Modernity: turn the world into a single piece of clockwork, which might then break.
28. Edom! Be just, even as James was just.
29. 'The trouble with marrying your mistress is that you create a job vacancy' (Sir James Goldsmith).
30. Real Sufism Rule No.1: I am a nuisance. Nobody else is a nuisance.
31. Were every Muslim only to spit simultaneously at Israel, it would drown.
32. The ego loves the grand gesture.
33. The pluralism born of the *ism* is no pleonasm.
34. The drama of the world is not the clash between Muslim and Pagan, or Tradition and Revolt, but between Love of God and Love of Self.
35. Demonic hatred is to see nothing of yourself in the other; virtuous hatred is to see the worst of yourself in the other.
36. Ignorant is he who believes that God can no longer take him from himself to Himself through a sudden knowledge of himself.

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37. You think the world is His ice; but the water of His being is still water.
38. *Salat* is to teach you your own nothingness; *du'a'* is to teach you your own helplessness.
39. It is hard to die right with God in the arms of Morpheus.
40. Never practice ordinary goodness.
41. The monoculture's religion: God is represented by only one body.
42. Feminism? Tell the maenads to look at the sky.
43. The business of banks is the encouragement of debt.
44. The believer is the one who knows that the factual content of the Qur'an is only a fragment of its significance.
45. The Prophet was not his own.
46. *Fiqh* is to protect the anwaronment.
47. Not Ibrahim, but Brum's *ibram* bifurcates the Big Heathens from the Small Heathians.
48. You will only understand art if you understand that modernity is against it.
49. The Teacher asks for nothing, and offers infinity; therefore give everything that you have.
50. Fitnas shall be bowled to thee. Play up! Play up! and play the game!
51. The gates of paradise are not only for the Sufis, but the inhabitants of Paradise are all Sufis, without the least exception.
52. The Monoculture is blind to the *niqab*.
53. '*Tabriir*' usually indicates affiliation to the Haruriyya.
54. Only *Rind* takes pleasure in the senses; the secular is *Zahid*.
55. Form without meaning is without style.

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56. ‘Asian voter’? Rather Disraeli than Dyce Sombre.
57. Uncle Same was not told that only Ghazali can heal Baghdad.
58. Existence is the perception of being.
59. Fashion is chic-anery.
60. Eudaemonian economics are Edomonics. Ishmael, however, pays with God’s coin.
61. Islam allows you to cut the web of Chalcedonian gerunds, and to see the face of Christ.
62. *al-Ingiliziyyatū fusha al-Khalij.*
63. The Liber Asian was the Dravidian revenge.
64. Our Shaykh-ul-Islam showed that Muslims may have three legs.
65. Guilt is to turn ugly acts into punishments.
66. The feminist has wine in her breasts.
67. *Qawmun li’r-rutab, wa-qawmun li’r-rutab.*
68. The lighter you are, the more you see your own darkness.
69. You have received everything that you have.
70. This is not the Modern Age. This is not the Postmodern Age. This is the Age of *Khawatir.*
71. The beginner looks at the results of action. The sage looks at the action itself.
72. Do not say ‘Halal’ or ‘Haram’ unless you know whether you yourself are Halal or Haram.
73. To respect her, first respect her sanctity. (Dowland, ‘Time Stands Still’)
74. He who marries for self-esteem shall surely be destroyed.
75. A man’s jihad today is to be a man. Women are already good at being women.

76. The fathers have died.
77. Haste is an attempt to steal God's time.
78. The false Salafi cannot see that Allah's light is green, not red.
79. Whatever it is that has taken you from the position of the majority, it is the ego.
80. Wisdom conjoins *tafwid* and *ta'wil*.
81. Modern education: seek knowledge from the cradle to the gravy.
82. Modernity is an out-of-body experience.
83. Islam is the love of the saints.
84. Complaining about the *jalaal*? A volcano is always beautiful.
85. Help Uncle Same by throwing his tea overboard. 'No taxation ...'
86. Understand prayer, and you understand all of Islam.
87. Old age is so that you might grow more beautiful.
88. Modern art: This is what creation would have been like, if atheism were true.
89. If you do not know that *Wudu* is there to humble you, then you will never understand the bathrooms of our *masajid*.
90. Make time for the Prayer, and the Prayer will make time for you.
91. Here Dubai, gone to borrow.
92. Drink deep during the *jaam* session.
93. The Monoculture exists to frown upon the dance of the soul.
94. Fulfilment is predicated on full consciousness; full consciousness is the gift of reflection.
95. Islam is not just a large religion, it is religion at large. *I am sent to all mankind*'.
96. Love the Other to be an athari; love the Self to be a salafi.

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97. Othering is *ithar*, not *ta'thir*.
98. The Book, in which there is no crookedness, will take away your crookedness, if your body is open to it.
99. The world has become small because there is nowhere to go.
100. Maidens! Feminism is the membership-ticket of the Monoculture.