

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE SEVENTH 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 Seventh Contentions

1. Engage only in such leisure pursuits as may be offered to God.
2. *Rida* is the true freedom.
3. God gave us the Prophet because He loved what we might become.
4. Islamism is the West's only victory.
5. The world is iconic, or it is ironic.
6. Men and women sin differently.
7. The moon is always at its best. Miss Hayd is not worse than Dr Jekyll.
8. Identity religion: be proud of your prison!
9. The devil, not God, heareth the zealot's prayer.
10. Our perception is a superimposition, which may be guided by Him.
11. The world is the instantiation of useful metaphors.
12. *Taklif* is the only ennoblement.
13. Know when to feel ashamed of feeling ashamed.
14. Only Islam is good enough for Sufism.
15. We are punished because we don't know that we deserve to be punished.
16. There is no neutral understanding of the Companions' view of the Sunna.
17. Who is better: the one who is all *fitra* and no *fiqh*, or the one who is all *fiqh* and no *fitra*?
18. The Other begins with the I, not with the Us.
19. Will our dialogue be clearer if we have lost our teeth?
20. The Caliph's first task will be to flog those who call Islam an ideology.
21. Tradition: the signs of *tawakkul* are an authorisation. Formalism: the signs of anger are an authorisation.

22. Which of our cities is still *'alem-penab?*
23. Preaching presupposes inculturation.
24. It is not possible to be right in a way that is barren.
25. Only God is both inescapable and indispensable.
26. Love is the only cure for the desire to follow the crowd. (*'Khalq-i 'alam bir yana oldu, bu shayda bir yana ...'*)
27. Nothing is fresher than tradition.
28. Theodicy? *In divinis*, cause is not anterior to effect.
29. If you would truly be Against Marcion, be with us.
30. God is always there for us, but never on our terms.
31. Male and female cannot be equal, for they are mutually superior.
32. True humanism: there is no account of God without a knowledge of human potential.
33. The breadth of the Garden is reached through the narrow door of humility.
34. The real Original Sin was the Christian myth of the Fall.
35. Careless talk costs wives.
36. Censor the senses, but be not censorious of the sensory.
37. *Ex nihilismus nihil fit.*
38. Sin is the refusal of our glorious potential.
39. From Plato to Nato? Try from *El* to *Elle*.
40. 'I should' now only means 'I should not obstruct my neighbour's "I want".'
41. If you want to judge modern Islam, acquire a taste for beauty.
42. Make manifest your thankfulness for what you must conceal.

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43. The Ma'had's *muqarrar*: Mere *tamrin* means moronisation.
44. A superman is *ultra vires*.
45. Only the sight of theophany allows true courtesy to the Other.
46. Nestmaking is to be a mutual flattery.
47. He shows the virtue of every virtuous marriage.
48. Maidens! Where is the hierarchy when the *turab* produces the *tara'ib*, which produce the *atrab*?
49. Does the path of Islam grow broader or narrower?
50. Today the rigidity that comes from the spirit and not from the ego is rare indeed.
51. Some want to serve, others to deserve.
52. Vulgar factions cause long division.
53. The *ijma'* is the least selective reading of Scripture.
54. The *shari'* is the new *Shari'*.
55. The Umma is the dumping-ground of Edom's parricide.
56. All that we have, we must offer to God. All that we keep back will burn.
57. Who sits in judgment of our youth, post the *post-nishin*?
58. Then: many *muhaddiths* and few *muftis*. Now: many *muftis* and few *muhaddiths*.
59. Liberation is always mutual.
60. *Juda-yi Ism*: the iron in the soul became the irony in the soul.
61. Happiness consists in performing good tasks well.
62. Ishmael is Bab-i Yar; Edom is Babi Yar. (*Perhaps you may return.*)
63. We are good enough for the age.

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64. Modernity deprives us of the most basic right of all: the right to be traditional.
65. Nothing is not a test of *tawakkul*.
66. *Hijz* ensures that the Liber Asian can never be closed.
67. Only the Caliph can help them keep the Sabbath.
68. Edom: Rabbinism is nothing but a phantom pregnancy.
69. The Law is to be a series of unlockings.
70. Islam is mainly threatened by those who mainly say that Islam is threatened.
71. The *niqab* exists to indicate the strength of the theophany.
72. If you wish to excel at your work, consecrate it to God.
73. Our age is at the outermost edge of Being. Rejoice: for the turn upstream, when found, must meet with less resistance.
74. The paradox of Edom: the *felix culpa* of Judas.
75. The West is crepuscular – it only advances because the East recedes.
76. The Passion: the tragedy that is a tragedy.
77. The kings were ruled by *adyan*; now they are by *duyun*.
78. Mu'tazilism: unity and justice. Ash'arism: unity and justice and mercy. (*'And thy Lord shall surely give unto thee ...'*)
79. Judge people by the extent to which they are alive.
80. Loyalty is simple: it is to the oppressed.
81. The classical classifies the pre-classical better than does the post-classical.
82. The command ethic? Only Ash'arism taught us the *maqasid*.
83. The Manu mission: the four castes. The *Liber Asian*: the four *madbhabs*.
84. God is only just if Ishmael and Isaac are equal.

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85. The secular are just like everyone else, only less so.
86. The only thing that is inherently uncertain is the claim that everything is inherently uncertain.
87. Our name among the nations matters only when *da'wa* is important.
88. Be attached to God, not to the fruits of your actions.
89. 'Do unto others ...' A wonder! They are *in loco divinis!*
90. The fight against suffering in this world that takes no account of the next world can only yield a suffering that is greater still.
91. Akhbaris and Usulis: has the Pharisee claimed al-Farisi, and the Sadducee al-Sadiq?
92. The Jews are not deceived. Parousia is to be a *royal* presence.
93. Fundamentalism imitates the future, not the past.
94. Ishmael finds a Bab El even in Babel.
95. The Founder bears a sword, not a whip.
96. There is Bliss, and there are consolations.
97. The Koran is prism or it is prison.
98. Maximalism has a habit of yielding minimal results.
99. Can one belong to the West and not subscribe to the illusion of a secular ethic?
100. Despair of self is the door into religion; despair of God is the door out of it.