Bigotry

- Bigotry, which is the foe of humankind, which has been the ruin of hundreds of prosperous homes, Which broke up Nimrod's merry feast, which offered Pharaoh up to the storm, By whose ferment Abu Lahab was destroyed, and which sank the fleet of Abu Jahl,
- Appears here in a strange guise, under cover of which its harmful effect is concealed.

 The cup which is entirely filled with poison appears to us to be the Water of Eternal Life.

 We think bigotry to be a part of faith, and hell to be the highest heaven.
- 201* This is the teaching our preachers have given us: 'No matter what task there be, religious or worldly, 'It is bad to perform it in imitation of one's opponent. The mark of the real spirit of the True Faith is simply this: 'Think of everything in the opposite way to your opponent. Think of whatever he calls night as day.'
- 'If you find his steps set on the straight road, then go off on a diversion from the direct route.
 'Endure whatever obstacles you may encounter upon it. No matter how much you suffer, let yourselves stumble on it.
 'If his craft gets safely out of the whirlpool, push your boat right into it.
- 'If your features are hideously transmogrified, if your conduct comes to resemble that of beasts, 'If your nature completely alters, if your condition is utterly ruined, 'Then consider that this too is a manifestation of God, that this too is a reflection of the light of faith.
- 'In manners no one resembles you, none can surpass you in morality.

 'No one can attain this same enjoyment in their food, nor discover the same elegance in dress.

 'In every branch of learning your attainments are plain. Even in your ignorance there is a certain grace.
- Bigotry essentially means practising an excess of partisanship, but since this is usually accompanied by an excess of opposition and hatred, it encompasses both injustice and bias. Nimrod, because of his opposition to the prophet Abraham, Pharaoh because of his to the prophet Moses, and Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl because of theirs to our Prophet, were so destroyed that their ruin and destruction remain proverbial to this day.

Text and translation

- 'Do not think that anything of yours is bad. Go on loudly proclaiming what you have to say.
 'Since you stand in defence of Islam, you are free from any evil or sin. 'Evil does not cause believers to suffer harm. Your sins are the same as the obedience of others.
- 'If you speak of your enemy, then mention him with vilification and abuse.
 'Never give ground unwittingly in this matter. You will see its results on the Day of Judgement.
 'It is as if you were freed from sins when you curse your adversaries.'
- When there is no love between Sunni and Shia, no sense of community between Numani and Shafii,
 No abatement of the hatred between Wahhabi and Sufi, and when the Traditionalist curses his opponent,
 There is such civil war being waged by the People of the Qibla that the whole world laughs at God's religion.
- If anyone sets himself to the task of reform, consider him to be worse than Satan.
 The path of anyone who seeks benefit from such a trouble-maker must have diverged from God.
 Both destroy the Holy Law, and both, master and pupil, are accursed.

The reconciliation effected by Islam

209* That faith, which laid the foundation of affection, emptied the world's nature of hate.

That faith, which made friends of strangers, eliminated ill-feeling from the heart of every people.

Arabs, Ethiopians, Turks, Tajiks and Dailamites all mingled together like milk and sugar.

The divisiveness of bigotry

210* Bigotry came to this clear spring and befouled it with the thorns and weeds of ill-feeling.
Once relatives and brothers became foes, dissension spread everywhere among the People of the Qibla.
Now it is impossible to find ten Muslims who will be happy to see one another.

Text and translation

The duty of Muslims

211* It was laid upon us that we should all be friends, that we should feel for our friends in time of trouble,

That we should all mutually help each other, and that when our dear ones suffered we should be sore at heart.

Were we thus steadfast in love, we should be able to call ourselves the Best of Communities.

The effects of disunity

212 If we had not forgotten the saying of the Prophet that 'All Muslims are brothers one of another',

And that so long as a brother goes to his brother's aid, the Just Lord helps him.

Then this ruin would not have befallen our fleet. Even in poverty we would have exercised authority.

The effects of being united

213 That house in which the hearts of all are together, in which all are friends and close to one another in weal and woe,

Where if one heart is glad the whole house rejoices, if one is griefstricken the hearts of all are filled with sorrow,

Is more blessed than the royal palace in which a single heart is vexed at anyone.

The morality of the Muslims

214* If the criterion of faith is based upon seeing how the adherents of that faith behave.

Whether their dealings are upright or crooked, whether their word and bond is true or false,

Then there are very few examples here from which the proof of our Islam may be established.

Slander

215 Slander has reached such a pitch in our gatherings that every man is befouled by this murderous activity.

Brother does not pardon brother here. Neither Mullah nor Sufi shrinks from it.

If the intoxicating power of wine were concealed in slander, no Muslim would be found sober.

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Text and translation

Envy and arrogance

- Those among us who are well off do not think of people as human beings,
 Nor can they bear to see those to whom the times are not favourable being happy.
 Some are steeped in intoxicating pride, others are smitten with the disease of envy.
- 217* If some brother is one to whom everyone may turn, a man in whom there is apparently no evil,
 Whom everyone calls good, and whose greatness is enshrined in every heart,
 Then at him are furious looks levelled. In the eyes of all, he rankles like a thorn.
- 218 If one of our community, formerly flourishing, is ruined, a man who was supported a little while ago by fortune and success, At whose gate necks were bowed a little while before, but who has now had his wings clipped by fate, Then outwardly they mourn, but in their hearts are glad that they have gained someone to share the troubles of poverty with them.

Blindness to good qualities

219 If some intrepid philanthropist make the heartfelt sacrifice of his life for his community,
Then it is the community itself which lays this calumny against him: 'In this he has some hidden ulterior motive.
'What other reason could anyone have for caring about anyone else? All these actions spring entirely from self-interest.'

Selfish wickedness

If he reveals to them the way in which their welfare lies, they will as far as possible put obstacles in his path.

If he succeeds and they hear of his fame, they fashion some fresh reproach in their hearts.

Though they may be regarded as infamous in this world and the next, they will still stop any of their brethren surpassing them.

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Text and translation

Fomenting quarrels

221 If we find sincere feelings existing between two hearts, there we lay the foundations of separation.

The moment both parties are intent on quarrelling, it is as if our desire has been fulfilled.

There is, after all, no better pursuit than this, no spectacle so pleasing.

Notoriety

In cheating, malice and deceit, in showing off, affectation, trickery and hypocrisy,

In calumny and slander in any gathering, whether of strangers of friends, You will find no one more notorious and infamous than us, so how can the glory of Islam fail to be enhanced by us?

Flattery

223 In flattery we have reached such a point that we can turn a man to our purpose in any way.

Sometimes we make wise men of dolts, at other times we make the sober

Some we abase while others we exalt, and thus make dupes of hundreds.

Lies and exaggeration

224 Adding supplements to the Traditions, swearing a hundred oaths in support of false promises,

If one has to give praise, then to do so beyond due limit, while unleashing a very tempest if one has to give censure.

These things here make up the daily practice of those Muslims who are unsurpassed in eloquence.

Conceit

We think our greatest enemy to be the man who reveals our faults to us. Hating advice and at loggerheads with those who give it, we think our guides are out to rob us.

It is this fault which has ruined us all, which has wrecked the whole complement of our ship.