دُوسراديب چپه

متغلق برنميمه

مرسال<sub>ه</sub>

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## Second Introduction (1886)

How entrancing a story is suffering's tale, Which becomes more delightful the longer it grows!

The Musaddas on the Flow and Ebb of Islam was published for the very first time in 1879. Although society has perhaps derived no significant benefit from its publication, the popularity and renown which the poem has won in all parts of India in six years is truly astonishing. It was of a quite unfamiliar type, and its subject matter consisted largely of criticism and blame. Evils in the community were picked on and exposed in turn, and the tongue was employed as a sword or a spear. Most of the pious and upright members of the community were suspicious of the poet on religious grounds, and bigotry generally acted to prevent the message of truth being heard. The poem has nevertheless spread in this quite brief period to all corners of the country and has already gone through seven or eight editions in various districts of northern India. Selections from it are being taught to the children in some community schools. Stanzas from it are recited in various places in the gatherings held on the Prophet's birthday. After reading it, most people are unable to stop themselves weeping and shedding tears. Many stanzas from it are current on the lips of our preachers. On several occasions its themes have been acted out in community dramatic performances. Many other musaddas poems have been composed in the same style and metre. Reviews, both favourable and unfavourable, have been written about it in most newspapers. Because of its general popularity, it has been introduced into the syllabus of government schools in the North-Western Provinces. These and many similar indications make it apparent that the community has given the poem considerable attention. But this does not in itself provide the author with the occasion for feeling any pride, for this poem and thousands like it would be useless if the community lacked in its heart the capacity to be affected. So, if the author does feel any pride, it is only because he did not cast his seed upon barren ground or vainly try to set a leech upon a stone. The community which he has addressed is off its path, but it is not utterly lost. Its members have strayed from the road, but in their search for it are looking in every direction. Their skills are missing, but their potential is still there. Their appearance may have changed, but their essential nature remains. Their powers may have declined, but they have not altogether passed away. Their shining virtues may have been effaced, but they may be burnished so as to appear once again. In their faults there are good points too, but they lie hidden. In their ashes there are sparks too, but they are buried.

The intention of the poem was to present as accurate a picture as possible of the community's past and present condition. Although free from hyperbole in comparison with the usual poems of the East, it was not free from failings of omission. Where criticism and censure are concerned, the look of a friend acts

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in the same way as that of an enemy, since both are similar in their criticism and their overlooking of faults. But whereas the enemy is desirous that the faults should become apparent while the good points remain concealed, the friend acts from the fear that pride in the good points may inhibit the rectification of the faults. Perhaps the author, who proudly professes his friendship, was constrained to find fault with the community by his very love and affection, and proved incapable of publicizing its good qualities. But while this manner of expression was calculated to arouse a sense of shame, it was equally one to encourage despair. The fire which had blazed in the author's heart had finally died down, and his words had been profoundly affected by its extinction. The poem concluded with verses so gloomy as to terminate all hopes and as to make all efforts appear useless. Perhaps nothing could have been done to make up for this failing had the community's favourable attention not provided the author's heart with fresh stimulus and made him see that the community deserved to be addressed further. The community itself may be unchanged, but its attitude is changing. So even if the time for praise is not yet come, disapprobation ought certainly to be diminished. Such thoughts have been strengthened by the inspiration provided by some friends, and a Supplement suitable to the requirements of the present situation has been added to the end of the original Musaddas. It was not the author's intention to make the Supplement a lengthy one, but once having embarked upon the subject, it proved to be as difficult to avoid dwelling upon it at length as it is to refrain from flailing about with arms and legs after jumping into the sea.

Slight modifications have also been made to the old *Musaddas*. Having become familiar with the old phrasing, readers may dislike some of these changes, but it was the author's duty not to offer the friends he had invited anything disagreeable to his own taste. The poem did not deserve to be popular before, and does not deserve to be so now. But praise be to God that it did possess anguish and truth before, and does so still. It is hoped that the anguish will spread and that the truth will shine forth.

'Our Lord, accept this service from us: for Thou art the All-hearing, the All-knowing' (Quran 2:127).