

Dearest sister,

At the time of you holding this letter with your gentle fingers, the sun will be in mid sky and I will be gone, you will be looking at my bed next to yours - and it is vacant. No doubt this will make you very gloomy, my beloved sister.

I will be leaving like a thief in the midst of the quite night, the fox and the moon will escort me. As always you will have to do all the elucidation to our dear parents, Ima and Aba, as always I know you will explain and protect me to their sorrow faces, even if your heart will drop with the heavy weight of loss, this makes me a double thief.

As you know I have been very restless of late, and have had many sleepless nights, black circles under my eyes are my partner witnesses.

Palestine is like a chain around my neck and I am yearning to breath a different air in other lands, I have heard from some Jewish traders tales of their adventures and business encounters with many different cultured people in the Middle East, Persia and Industan and my heart fell for these late night stories. This is sister where I have been spending many late nights of recent, with those adventurous travellers and merchants.

Their stories took hold of my heart, soul and senses and I'm obliged to leave, I am called to leave and I can only hope this is our Jewish God and Moses his servant doing the calling. My heart is heavy with sorrow, as I will be leaving you alone with our old parents of ill health, but if I stay a day longer I am as good as dead.

You might wonder how will an undersized single female travel on her own merits on roads that are hazardous to the bravest and well equipped of men... but after many weeks of pondering I have found a true and good answer! I will dress as a man and travel alone and do as my heart desires in these remote territories, I have been practising in our bathroom many times now; how to conceal my chest, how to deepen my voice and I feel reassured that I can travel safely and without fear.

I have thought that I will trade in sweets, sweets are easy to carry around and humans from East to West and North to South have for eternity wished to sample the sweet flavours of remote cultures, so I collected my pennies and bought enough sweets to destroy a whole village teeth!

I believe I will be returning to the holy land within the next spring season with pockets full of gold and silver so you and our beloved parents must never worry again about the necessities of life and the hurdles that life throw at you as a matter of course.

I promise to keep clean and pray '*Shma Israel*' every night before my eyes will put up the shutters.

Oh Moses Son of God! How will I go to hell!
Yours faithfully
Sarmad

Dearest Sister,

Many moons and suns have passed since I had last written to you, but not a single day have gone by without me thinking of you praying for you and our beloved parents.

I have travelled many lands, and seen so much that one's memory is overflowing with pictures, sounds and smells, I have travelled alone, I have travelled with other merchants, I have learned Arabic and Persian and a bits of Indian dialects. I have travelled with animals of various shapes and sizes and alone on two feet with the stars as my only guide.

My sweets -business is not going as well as expected, but one must not complained as it helped me for many seasons to put food in my mouth and roof over my head. I was stunned to encounter so many different religions and gods and habits and rituals and celebrations on my travels and this had given me many sleepless nights.

I have for now settled in Tatta. As my head is overflowing with ideas like a river without a wall for many months now I have started to write poetry, passers by seem to take pleasure in my poems and in return they give me food and drink. Six lost souls are now following me like shadows wherever I turn and they also took it upon themselves to write as many times as one possibly can the poems and give them to every man in every village we pass by. They also took upon themselves to learn the words by heart and recite them to group of men at the Inns in exchange for drink and provisions. Oh dear sister, when I write poetry it is like the hand of God and the divinity is dripping the ink and caressing the paper, I swear to god, this is not me who is writing these poems, but my destiny, the words pour out like honey and milk and I am not awake.

I have to admit sometimes I look back at the days when no one had followed me or knew me and wish for them to be back, I feel lonelier now that I have six faithful shadows. I know how important it is to be God's servant at all time, but sometimes I just tire of this position.

I have been spending much of my time reading the writing of Mohammed and found them to be fascinating. Like Moses, Mohamed was a true vessel for the good words of God.

Your Sarmad the poet

Dearest sister

There is no good way of telling you my news, and I know you will be pulling your hair from the roots and slapping yourself upon reading my words, please dear sister never take blame for what I have become. Dear sister one thing I will ask of you and this is not to let our dear old parents know what I am about to tell you, and if you feel this will cause you too much grief to be hiding secrets from them, please refrain from reading now. Knowing what I am about to say will bring them a sure and sudden death. And what of the people in the synagogue?

I wish to hold to the empty space of this paper as to not having to reveal to you what had happened to me, but I know that you have always loved me for who I am and I know that you will keep loving me, even if I was imprisoned for murder, such is your faithful heart.

Sister I have turn fully to Mohamed and his sacred words. Dear sister I have betrayed Moses and there is no return, my heart belongs to Mohammed the prophet and Allah. How will I go to Hell!!

Now I will go to Hell!
How will I go to Hell!!

I have spent months crawling the streets like a mad man, walking with tigers, hiding from my own shadow, you know how deep in blood our Jewish God Jehovah and his servant Moses is, and maybe I am a madman, but sister I believe Mohammad has the true calling for my heart and those of others, I have not turned my back on Moses, but I am trying to find peace in both, believe me dear sister this is not an easy task. I am now sure that Mohammed is spoken of in the Jewish bible.

Day follow night follow day follow night follow day follow night and all is 120 years of life and death in one person cycle, in death we turn to vegetable, mineral and animal, this much I have learnt from the Hindus.

Oh sister how will I go to hell!! Is there hell? I no longer know!

Yours
Sarmad

Dear sister,

It has been many seasons since I have written and this is the season of flowers and sweet air for I have seen the light. I can not sleep at night no longer as I have seen the most beautiful thing in this world her name is Abhichand and we spend all our time together, reading and writing poetry, translating from Persian to Hindi, and vice versa, lounging and running in the fields, praying to Mohamed and Moses, for she has converted for our love from Hinduism to Mohammedism and a touch of Judaism too for good measure. I look at her beauty and purity for days and I have no need for food or drink, she comes from a religious family and can not marry a travelling Sufi poet like me even that by now, if I may say so myself, I have 50 disciples following me like shadows, but still she is very brave and does not tell her family about me, we are getting to know each other

I had never known life could be so pure in its beauty my sister, God and my love are all I ever need. What has kept me all these years from letting the light of another fall upon myself? For I never knew I have been so lonely until I met Habichand.

Brave is not the man who travels! Brave is not the man who fights! Brave is not the man who makes gold! Brave is not the man who peruses knowledge! Brave is the man who dare fall in love with a beautiful woman!!

Hope love resides in your life too

Yours

Sarmad the lover

Oh sister, Oh sister, if only you were here to console me

My heart is black black black, like the abyss
for I am a silly silly donkey,

After all these years I had forgotten myself that I am not a true man, not in the right places, anyway. I never thought much of this matter any longer, since I arranged myself a vessel from which to piss through standing up many years ago, I had never given it a second thought. So used I got to being a man that I never had the reason to contemplate the ins and outs of the situation.

And one night...one precious night... if only Habichand screamed for the world to know of the horrors, of my terrible deceit!!! But no, she only whispered in my ear she whispered in my ear my sister:

"You lied to me Sarmad, you are not a true Muslim! Neither a true Jew! Nor a true man!! As if you were a true something, you would have put your trust in me and not deceiving me in this insidious way, you have let me lay my hands in places I have never before dare even dream of, only to find a lie, to find nothing, nothing but an empty lie"

Sister, my ear is still full of puss dripping down my neck, puss from these words of truth she had whispered in my ears. Her whisper had turned into puss.

Sister I have not been eating for days now. I am walking the streets tearing my hair and dreaming I have a snake between my legs, eating my head, if only! If only I was dead. If only a snake would eat my head!!

Hey sis'

I am a modern man, a modern secular man, Hee, Hee, God had deserted me along with my beloved Habichand and so I had deserted him.

I now drink sugar and coffee in coffee houses and am planning to take up my sweets business from where I last left it, I am planning a business venture with an old acquaintance from my previous travels.

I ask no questions and have no doubts, I hang with friends who don't care for my religion or my past and I am learning many pleasures of the body and the mind, I have taken lightly to Opium which makes my thinking sharper and my senses intensified by many folds and I can finally sleep at night.

I am a happy modern man. I am planning to make much gold. I will send you some of it as soon as I can.

Yours truly, Sarmad the dude

Dearest sister.

After spending time in pure isolation in the forest, I have found the Divinity again. I have found myself. I am told by travellers from the West this to be called a Re-Hab. For which there are many special such clinics in the West for all those souls who go astray and follow the path of music, Opium and coffee.

It has been many many years and I have not heard a word from you, the fault will be with me as I had never an address to which letters can be posted. You are now a beautiful aging angel with wrinkles telling many a sad and delightful tales and a feature of my imagination, I have made myself remember and repeat every times we spent together, every moment has been so cherished to me.

I am delighted to tell you that now I am an old man, wiser and slower, I sleep very well at night, not for many hours and wake up very well in the morning, I have continued writing my poetry and receive great pleasure knowing that this brings people's heart nearer to Divinity in all its manners and shapes. I enjoy my disciples and train them in the art of thinking, seeking knowledge, debating, drawing and translation, and I must admit- simple cooking!

I have given up on love many years ago but never feel lonely any more, am one with myself and those around me, I am a devoted servant to God, Mohammad and Moses, but mainly I am devoted to my Sufi beloved folk.

The only black cloud bearing over my head since the death of the tolerant ruler Shan Jehan, is his predecessor Aurungzebe who is pestering me now for many days.

Sister it is now time that you should send me a letter, my address is enclosed, I would love to hear from you as I see you in my mind eye every day and night and knowing that life has been hard for you but that all is well with you now. I wish for us to meet up and mourn the many years of death of our beloved parents together, I will travel the world to find you before I am too old.

Yours always
Sarmad

Dear sister of Sarmad

This is an official letter from the state council under the rule of Aurungzebe.

This is to let you know that on the spring of 1660 Sarmad has been prosecuted. On request of Aurungzebe he was ordered to complete the Muslim prayer in the magnificent court yard declaring that there is one God only. Allah our only God, our Divinity.

Sarmad had refuse the order from Aurungzebe, and this had left the crown with no alternative but to proceed with the death punishment given to those who refuse the orders of our great ruler.

The poor bastard was beheaded. As his head collapsed to the floor like a sack of melons My heart did go for Sarmad as I am a great admirer of the poetry and the translations for many years, and I wished one would see the light in this crucial time and declare and respect the one God Allah! Our Divine!

Or at least Sarmad could have lied to save the life! Why did he not think of lying I do not know, for what would it cost him to declare there is one god? What is an instant of forgery in comparison to a life time of divine work? For what good is he as a dead poet? Another dead Sufi.

I would like to reassure you that he died like a brave man, he swore to love and unity of all things divine with not a shake of a muscle.

Any doubt I had in my mind and heart as to the tragic circumstances of Sarmad's death has evaporated when it has been discovered in the pitiful burial that he was never a true man, not in the right places anyhow! as you probably know. In the light of this we have burnt all her poems, where we could find them. The poems that are remembered and recited by heart by simple folk - time will take care of - and they too will get forgotten.

If you wish to gather her bones and take them back to the holy land, as I know this to be a ritual of the Jews, you are welcome to do so at your convenience. She is buried near Jama Masjid in Delhi, a place that become somewhat a mark of worship now to Sarmad's Sufi disciples, transients and all manner of misfits.

Yours sincerely

The administrator On behalf of Aurungzebe