

Poems by Sarmad

Sarmad lived in the Kashan region, between Tehran and Isfahan, in what is today Iran. Some biographies say Sarmad was originally from a Jewish merchant family, while others say he was Armenian; some think he formally converted to Islam, while others claim he was a universalist. Because of his possible Jewish heritage and his later migration to Delhi, he is sometimes called the Jewish Sufi Saint of India.

Companion

(English transl. Azarm Ghareman)

Along the road, you were my companion
Seeking the path, you were my guide

No matter to whom I spoke, it was you who answered
When Sun called Moon to Sky, it was you who shined

In the Night of aloneness, you
were my comforter

When I laughed, you were the smile on my lips
When I cried, you were the tears on my face

When I wrote, you were the verse
When I sang, you were the song

Rarely did my heart desire another lover
Then when it did, you came to me in the other.

Every man who knows his secret

(English transl. Ivan M. Granger)

Every man who knows his secret
becomes a secret,
hidden from the skies.

The sage says Ahmad rose to the heavens;
Sarmad says the heavens
rose in him!

He and I are one

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

He and I are one,
like the word and its meaning.
Behold union in separation,
like the eye and vision.
Not for a moment is He separate from me --

Behold us together everywhere,
like flower and fragrance.

He dwells not only in temples and mosques

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

He dwells not only in temples and mosques -
The whole creation is his abode.
The whole world is bewitched by his tale,
but wise are those who are lost in his love.

He is happy on account of my humble self

(English transl. Dr. Zahurul Hasan Sharib)

He is happy on account of my humble self
Evil eye and wine is stolen from my hands
He is in my bosom; search for Him in me!
Tis strange that a thief has caused me to be naked!

Hundreds of my friends became enemies

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

Hundreds of my friends became enemies,
but the friendship of the One gave solace to my heart.
I chose oneness -- now I am free of the many.
I became his and He became mine at last.

My friend, engage your heart in his embrace

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

My friend, engage your heart in his embrace
and rise to the inner sky.
Do not forget the words of this devotee:
Erase both worlds from your heart.

My heart searched for your fragrance

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

My heart searched for your fragrance
in the breeze moving at dawn,
my eyes searched for the flower of your face
in the garden of creation.
Neither could lead me to your abode --
contemplation alone showed me the way.

Once I was bathed in the Light of Truth within

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

Once I was bathed in the Light of Truth within,
I abandoned all planning and scheming.
If you, too, seek this transcendence,
leave your lower self -- then from head to foot
you will see your whole being as God's refulgence.

The ocean of his generosity has no shore

(English transl. Isaac A. Ezekiel)

The ocean of his generosity has no shore.
The tongue is powerless to thank,
the heart too bewildered to understand.
Though my sins are many
his compassion is greater still--
I swim in the sea of disobedience
but I do not drown.

The universe

(English transl. Peter Lamborn Wilson and Nasrollah Pourjavady)

The universe
is a kaleidoscope:
now hopelessness, now hope
now spring, now fall.
Forget its ups and downs:
do not vex yourself:
The remedy for pain
is the pain.

To the dignified station of love I was raised

(Transl. unknown)

To the dignified station of love I was raised,
And from the favours of the people I was freed.
Like a candle I was melted in this assembly,
By being burnt, in the divine mysteries I was initiated.