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## Intertextual Influence of the Quran on the Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai

### Abstract:

*Intertextuality is all about texts influencing the creation and interpretation of other texts. The close study of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, the renowned Sindhi poet, reveals that it is influenced by a number of religious and literary texts. Among the literary texts that have shaped the thought and content of Latif's poetry are Risalo of Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri and Masnavi of Molana Jalaluddin Rumi and the religious text that has influenced his poetry more than any other is that of the Holy Quran. The philosophy of the Quran lends Shah jo Risalo, the collection of Latif's poetry, a truly mystic light. His poetry, interspersed with a number of Quranic verses, touches the soul like a divine script.*

*This research article is the intertextual analysis of particularly those of Shah Latif's verses which directly quote expressions from the text of the Holy Quran.*

**Keywords:** *intertextuality, divine, mystic, content-analysis, postmodern.*

### Introduction:

It was the French poststructuralist Julia Kristeva (1986) who gave the term intertextuality in her essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel* and she believes that a text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; and that any text is the absorption and the transformation of another text (p.37). Similarly, Barthes (1977) in his essay *The Death of the Author* explains that the text is a tissue of citations resulting from the thousand sources of culture (p.4). While Bakhtin (2010) argues if the word 'text' is understood in the broad sense – as any coherent complex of signs – then even the study of art deals with texts. Thoughts indicate something about other thoughts, experiences of experiences, words about words, and texts about texts (p.103).

No writer writes without the external influence of the social and literary trends, and that goes for the great literary giants like William Shakespeare, John Milton, Eugene O'Neil, and

James Joyce and so on. No matter what form of writing; poetry or prose, formal or informal, whatever the approach of the writer; subjective or objective whatever their purpose; educative or informative or simply entertaining, their works are directly or indirectly influenced by the works of those writers who preceded them or by the corpus of knowledge and literature which was there in or before their era. Shakespeare's history plays like *Richard II* and *Henry IV* are simply the dramatic reproductions of great historical events and portrayal of political figures of Europe particularly Britain and the adjacent countries. Some of his plays are clearly influenced by some other literary works as the plot of his play *Antony and Cleopatra* is based on Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are largely based on Biblical themes as Kazi, I.I. (1996) points out that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is the tale of the *Old Testament* retold in verse (p.213). O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* is a retelling of Aeschylus' *The Oresteia*, and *Ulysses* by James Joyce is the rewriting of Homer's *Odyssey*. In contemporary fiction there is the example of 2002 Man Booker Prize winning novel *Life of Pi* by Yan Martel, the plot of which is influenced by Moacyr Sicliar's novel *Max and the Cats* (1981). There have been countless literary works in the history of literature with their texts showing clear traces of intertextual influence and a number of researchers have closely studied those works to open up new ways towards their understanding.

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, the legendary poet of Sindh, has been influenced by a number of religious, social and literary texts some of which stand out as most prominent. Most of the researchers believe that *Shah jo Risalo* particularly indicates the influence of three of such religious and literary text sources but some of them indicate fourth one also, as Khamisani (2012) explains that the *Holy Quran*, the *Hadith*, the *Masnavi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi* along with the *collection of Shah Abdul Karim's poems*, were the constant companions of Latif, copious references of which have been made in the *Risalo* (p.18). She has mentioned Hadith as the fourth source of intertextual influence as there are clear traces of Hadith in Latif's poetry. Other

researchers point out to only three major intertextual sources of influence as Sodhar, Shaikh and Jojo (2014) believe that Shah Latif always kept three books with him i.e. *The Holy Quran*, *Masnavi of Rumi* and *Risalo of Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri* (p.199). The number of Quranic references in the poetry of Shah Latif varies according to different compilers of *Shah jo Risalo*. This research article is based on some of the direct Quranic quotes in Latif's poetry and draws on material from different versions of *Shah jo Risalo* especially *The Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai* translated in verse by Amena Khamisani, *Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif* translated by Elsa Kazi, *Shah jo Risalo* compiled by Kalyan Advani, and a number of research articles on Latif's poetry. As for the translations of Quranic verses and their commentary Abdullah Yousif Ali's *The Holy Quran, English Translation and Commentary* has been referred in particular and a number of other translations in general. Regarding the textual and philosophical link between the *Holy Quran* and *Shah jo Risalo*, Brohi (1996) argues that the source of the Sufi doctrine is ultimately to be traced to some of the verses contained in the Holy Quran, and in particular, to the primeval covenant between man and the Creator. 'Am I not your Lord?' was the question asked by God from the souls, and the answer by them was 'Indeed Thou art.' Latif's poetry carries copious references to this cardinal doctrine of man's innate and insatiable hunger for things divine (p.7). This study is mainly a content analysis of the text of Latif's poetry in the intertextual context, that is, to see how the text of his verse has been shaped up through other textual influences, particularly the influence of Quranic text.

### Literature Review

Some scholars have carried out valuable research in this area so far, particularly the highly enlightening work of Muhammad Yaqoob Agha's *Shah Jo Risalo alias Ganj Latif* cannot be overlooked, besides the groundbreaking treatise: *The Life, Religion and Poetry of Shah Latif* by Lilaram Watanmal Lalwani deserves a lot of commendation. Dr. Abdur Rahman Jaskani has devoted a detailed section to the religious aspect of Latif's poet-

ry in *Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Ji Shairee Mein Islami Qadr* (Islamic Values in the Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai), his doctoral dissertation, later published by Culture Department, Sindh in 2010. Mr. Tanvir Abbasi, in his book: *Shah Latif Ji Shairee* (Poetry of Shah Latif) has given an extensive list of Arabic expressions, Quranic verses and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH) [Hadith] quoted by Latif. This study is an attempt as part of the continuation of the scholarly research these luminaries initiated.

### Research Methodology

This study is in line with qualitative research method, and content analysis has been its basic research tool. Multiple translations of both the Quranic and Latif's verses have been quoted, wherever appropriate, for comparative study; moreover verses from different compilations of *Shah Jo Risalo* have been cited to indicate slight changes in the text and diction according to the research of different compilers therefore each extract from the *Risalo* is followed by the name of the compiler or editor.

### Intertextual Analysis of the Quranic Influence on the Poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai

The study of Shah Latif's verses which quote Quranic text leads to the understanding of deeper meanings and message of divine words and their link to his poetic representation. It is through this rediscovery of the poet's association with the text of the Quran that we know how deeply immersed his heart was in the heavenly light of Love of God and His creation and how high he held in his heart the divine message.

Following is the content analysis, through intertextual approach, of those verses of Latif which directly quote expressions from the Holy Quran.

اڳي ڪيانہ اڳهين، نسورو ئي نور،  
لاخوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون، سچن ڪونهي سور،  
موليٰ ڪيو معمور، انگ ازل ۾ ان جو.  
(ڪلياڻ آڏواڻي، سُرڪلياڻ، ص: ۱۳)

Khamisani (2012) has translated the above verse as follows:

**All light, Master made them unique of old,  
Nor fear nor sorrow such ones can hold,  
For He made them fortunate, in their origin bold.**(p.36)

The second line has a direct quote of a Quranic verse: لاخوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون which literally means 'they will neither have fear nor grief' the words occur at about 12 places in the Holy Quran and were revealed in different contexts as a solace to the prophet (PBUH), his companions (RA) and to the righteous in general. These words are also part of Surah Baqara's verse number 62. Ali (1989) translates the complete verse as: 'Those who believe [in the Qur'an], and those who follow the Jewish [scriptures], and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (p.27)'. Agha (1016) believes that this Quranic verse applies more fittingly to the Prophet. But its application to the friends of Allah cannot be ruled out (p.42). Moreover, Sodhar, Shaikh and Joyo (2014) quote Agha's translation of the same verse of Latif: 'At the time of creation Allah made him/them as embodiment of light. The truthful have no fear of interrogation on the Day of Judgement nor remorse at what they left behind in this world. In fact Allah had decreed their elevation before the world was created.' Latif is quite clear on the point that the truthful are the Light incarnated, they cannot have harm whatsoever as they were declared the lucky ones right at the time of their creation .

"فاذڪروني اذڪرکم" ، ڪهيو قرآنا،  
"واشڪروالي ولا تکفرون"، ڪي تون ڪفرنا.

(آڏواڻي، سر سريراڳ، ص: ۱۱۰)

**Quran says, 'remember Me that I remember thee  
'Remove doubt from your heart and thank Me'** (Khamisani p.76)

تو جنين جي تات، تن پڻ آهي تنهنجي،  
فاذڪروني اذڪرکم، اي پروڙج بات  
هت کاتي ڳڙ وات، ڀڃڻ پر پرين جي.

(آڏواڻي، سر ڪلياڻ، ص: ۲۰)

**He whose remembrance you crave longs for you too**

**'Recollect me that I may remember you.'**

**Try to understand the deep truth of it,**

**Sweetness on tongue, knife in hand, is for you, His concern.**

(Khamisani p.43)

The first line of the first extract above and the second line of the second excerpt from the Risalo of Shah Latif quote Quranic words فَادْڪُرُونِي اذْڪُرْكُمْ which mean 'Therefore remember Me, I will remember you.', and the second line of the first extract contains the quotation from the Quran: ولا تكفرون واشكروالي which literally means 'Thank me and do not disbelieve.' According to Ali (1989) the complete Quranic verse means 'Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.' Ali, who is the commentator of the Quran as well, explains the verse that 'the word "remember" is too pale a word for *dhikr*, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious literature. In its verbal signification it implies; to remember; to praise by frequently mentioning; to rehearse; to celebrate or commemorate; to make much of; to cherish the memory of as a precious possession (p.62).' Latif says, in the above excerpts, that when you remember your Beloved, He remembers you too, it is something mutual. It is in fact the secret to a lasting link with your Lord. The thing that is the cause of concern is that you must not have duplicity in your heart.

پاڻو هي هڪار، مون کان پڇيو سڄڻين،  
آلست ڀڙبڙڪم، چيائون جنهن وار،  
سندي سور ڪنار، تن تڏاهڪون نه لهي.

(آڏواڻي، سر ڪلياڻ، ص: ۳۰)

**Smiling the Divine Beloved from me once asked,**

**'Am I not your Lord'?**

**Since then love's pains' thorn from me never departs.** (Khamisani p.43)

آلست ڀڙبڙڪم، جڏهن ڪن پيوم،  
'قالوا بلي' قلب سين، تڏهن تڻ چيوم،  
تنهن وڻ ڪيوم، وڃن ويڙجن سين.

(آڏواڻي، سر مارئي، ص: ۳۱)

**'Am I not thy Lord?' came a voice;  
a voice so sweet and clear;  
And I said, 'yes' with all my heart;  
when I this voice did hear;  
And with a bond I did adhere  
that moment to my love.** (Kazi E. p. 179)

The same verse has been translated by Allana (1983) as follows:

**'Am I not you Lord, your Creator?'  
I hear God these words utter,  
'Yes,' I replied, with all my heart spontaneously,  
There and then, unhesitatingly,  
At that very moment my people I acknowledge,  
And to be loyal to them I pledged.** (p.60)

Both of the above verses of Latif carry the Quranic words *الست بربکم* which mean 'Am I not your Lord?' Lalwani (1985) points out that the belief of Muslims that before the souls are sent down to enter human shapes, they are asked by God in this way (p.5). The second of the above excerpts quotes some more words of the same Quranic verse, which are: قالو بلى (They said you are.) Ali (1989) has translated the complete verse as 'When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"- They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful.' Ali comments on this Quranic verse that humanity has been given by Allah certain powers and faculties, whose possession creates on our side special spiritual obligations which we must faithfully discharge (p.456-57). The Quranic expression 'الست Am I not?' is part of quite a few verses of Latif, as Khamisani (2012) explains that the spiritual significant of the Sur Suhni, as in the major part of the Risalo, is the verse of the Holy Quran: *الست بربکم قالوبلى* ['Am I not your God?', 'Verily Thou art.'](p. 98).

گھڙو ڀڳو ته گھوريو، آسَر مَر لاهيج؛  
لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ، تُرْهِي أَنْ تَرِيح،

**حَبِيبَاتِي هِيَج، پَسِين مَنُهَن مِيهَارَ جو.  
(آڏواڻي، سر سهڻي، ص. ۱۵۴)**

**It is well that the pot broke, give up not hope,  
Swim on the raft of having faith in God's aid,  
Longing alone will reveal to you Mehar's face.** (Khamisani p.101)

This verse of Latif quotes Quranic words *لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ* which mean 'do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah.' The translation of the complete verse of the Holy Quran, according to Ali (1989) is 'Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' He explains that Allah forgives all sins: i.e., on sincere repentance and amendment of conduct (p.1413). Latif, in his verse, has advised not to be hopeless no matter how difficult the conditions are, as the mercy of Allah is infinite.

هُوتُ تَنْهِنَجِي هِنَجَ مَر، پُچِين ڪُوهُ پَهِي؟  
وَ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ، أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ، سُوْجِهِي ڪَرِ سَهِي؛  
ڪڏهن ڪانه وهي، هوتُ ڳولن هت تي.  
(آڏواڻي، سسڻي آبري، ص. ۱۱۰)

**Beloved is in your lap, why ask others?  
'His signs are in your soul, contemplate and so act further'  
To seek her love, none went to market place** (Khamisani p.131)

The words of the Quran in the above extract: *وَ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ*، *أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ* literally mean, 'And in your own souls (too); will you not then see?' Ali (1989) has translated the Quranic verse as 'As also in your own selves: Will ye not then see?' and he explains that 'The Signs and Evidence of Allah are in nature everywhere and within the body and soul of man, if man has but the spiritual eyes to see (p.1612).' Jaskani (2010) explains that Latif advises the lovers of Allah that they need not grope here and there in search of Allah Almighty as Allah Himself directs them to see inside their inner beings to find Him there because He says He is very close to His creatures (p.247). This advise of Latif is the very soul of Sufism or *Tasawwuf* (Islamic Mysticism).

هُوتُ تَنْهَجِي هَنْجَ ۾، ڀُڀين ڪُوهُ پَرِيَانُ؟  
وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ، تَنْهَجُو تَوْهين سَانُ؛  
پنهنجو آهي پاڻُ، آڏو عَجِينِ ڪي.  
(آڏواڻي، سسئي آبري، ص. ۲۱۰)

*Beloved within you and you seek Him here and there,  
He is 'closer to you than your vein jugular',*

*Your self is the Hurdle between your Love and you.* (Khamisani p.131-132)

In this verse of Latif the Quranic words وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ mean 'and We are nearer to him than his life-vein.' Ali (1989) translates the complete verse of the Quran as 'It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.' He comments on the verse that 'Allah created man, and gave him his limited free-will. Allah knows inmost desires and motives of man even better than man does himself. He is nearer to a man than the man's own jugular vein. As the blood-stream is the vehicle of life and consciousness, the phrase "nearer than the jugular vein" implies that Allah knows more truly the innermost state of our feeling and consciousness than does our own ego (p.1600).' Latif has indicated here the closeness of the True Beloved: Allah to His creatures and says that it is futile to look for Him somewhere else when He is in fact closer than our main passage way of blood on which the very life depends.

وَوَڙِيَمِ سَپِ وَتَانُ، يَارَ ڪَارُڻَ جَتَ جِي:  
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ، اِي آريَاڻِيءَ أَهِيَانُ؟  
سَپِ ۾ پُنهنون پاڻُ، ڪينهي ٻيو ٻروچَ ري.  
(شاهواڻي، سرسئي آبري، ص. ۱۳۳)

*'I searched all places for my Beloved Baloch',  
'God surrounds all and everything' she came to know,  
Punhoon is in all, nothing exists without Baloch.* (Khamisani p.132)

Ansari (1983) has translated the same verse as follows:

*I sought all paths for the camel-man,  
'Allah pervades all things,' this gave the hint,  
He is in all, so the sublime truth ran,  
No beauty exists that bears not His tint.* (p.200)

Ansari (2003) has also translated this verse of Latif in simple and beautiful prose as 'I searched several places to find out my beloved. I got the indication from this verse: 'God pervades everything and controls everything from 'within'. In everything there is *divine* presence. Nothing exists except Allah (p.32).'

The Quranic words in Latif's verse وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ are actually اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ in Surah Nisa which mean 'Allah encompasses all things' and Ali (1989) has translated the complete verse as 'But to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth: And He it is that encompasses all things (p.255).' the Quranic expression in Surah Fussilat is اِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ which means 'surely He encompasses all things' Ali (1989) has translated the entire verse as "Ah indeed! Are they in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord? Ah indeed! It is He that doth encompass all things! Short-sighted people may like to think that there may be no Judgement. But Judgement is inevitable and cannot be escaped, for Allah 'doth encompass all things' (p.1471)." Latif has used the Quranic expression with a slight change in the text, to point out the all-encompassing attribute of Allah that He is omnipresent and omnipotent. Latif's message is all clear to those who are in search of God that do not look for Him anywhere else just look into your inner self and you will find Him right there and then.

جَدِهِن اُڪُنَ فَيُڪُونُ، مَنُ تَدَهَانُڪُونُ مَارُڻِين:  
تُون ڪِڪُنَ وَجِهِين تَن ڪِي، سُوْمِرَا! شُڪُونُ؟  
هَمِيرَن هُڪُون، جَاڙَ جُسي ڪِي پَاتِيُون!  
(گربخشاڻي، سر مارڻي، ص. ۳۱۴)

*When God said 'Be' and it Became',  
my heart was my love's since then,  
why then O Soomra! You put on me chains?*

*Prince has forcibly put chains on my frame.* (Khamisani p.207)

Agha (2016) has translated this verse in prose: 'Ever since the souls were created under the Divine directive, my mind has always remained attached to my Beloved. O Soomra! Wherefore then do you fasten fetters on me? In fact, it is quite gratuitous

for the worldly authorities to apply fetters to my body [i.e. create temporal handicaps or afflictions for me] (p.668).

Latif, in this verse, quotes Quranic words *کن فيكون* which mean 'Be and it is'. Ali (1989) has translated the complete verse of the Quran as 'Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is: "Be," and it is.' He explains the verse that 'His creation is not dependent on time, or instruments or means, or any conditions whatsoever. Existence waits on His will, or plan or intention. The moment He wills a thing it becomes His Word or Command, and the thing forthwith comes into existence (p.1338). The Quranic expression *کن فيكون* is part of the number of Latif's verses. Above verse of Latif points out to the eternal love in human heart which cannot be bought or sold or had by force. Love is something invaluable and no bondage can diminish it or change its course.

ڪونهي قادر ڪو ٻيو، ائين جو اياڳو؛  
'قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا، اِيْ مَعْدَرَتَ مَاڳو؛  
سيوڻي سپاڳو، مارئيءَ مُساوي ٿيو.  
(آڏواڻي، سرماڻي، ص. ۳۵۲)

***There is no other God but He, misfortunes are All ordained***

***Say 'no trouble comes to you, save what He ordains'***

***Luck or ill luck to Marui are the same.*** (Khamisani p.213)

The Quranic expression *قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا* in this verse of Latif means 'Say Nothing will afflict us save what Allah has ordained for us.' Ali (1989) has translated the whole verse as: 'Say: "Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us: He is our protector": and on Allah let the Believers put their trust (p.516).' Above verse of Latif conveys a divine message that our luck is designed by our creator, so good or bad whatever it is, lamenting over it will not help. Marui welcomes her misfortune the way she receives something fortunate, both good luck and bad luck are the same to her.

نه ڪنهن ڄاڻو ڄامر ڪي، نڪو ڄامر وياڻ؛  
ننڍيءَ وڏي گندريءَ، سين آه سڀاءَ؛  
"لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ"، اِيْ نِجَابَتِ نِباڻ؛

that *Samad* is difficult to translate by one word so he has used two, 'Eternal' and 'Absolute'. The latter implies: that absolute existence can only be predicted of Him; all other existence is temporal or conditional; that He is dependent on no person or thing, but all persons or things are dependent on Him, thus negating the idea of gods and goddesses who ate and drank, wrangled and plotted, depended on the gifts of worshippers, etc (p.2028). According to the above verse of Latif it is an inexplicable mystery that only the best ones are chosen for sacrifice by Allah, only the chosen ones are tried and tested the hard way. This, he believes, shows how beyond one's understanding are the ways of the Absolute and Almighty Allah.

هئي هدايت حر ڪي، ازل ۾ اصلا؛  
چڙهي آيو جنگ تي، هلي هنن پارا؛  
ايندي چيائين امام ڪي: "گهوريس ان مٿاءَ"  
"لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا"، جيڪا پڇندير سا؛  
گهوت به لڳا گهاءَ، سر پڻ شير شهيد ٿيو.  
(آڏواڻي، سر ڪيڏارو، ص: ۳۱۵)

***Hur was given this advice since long,***

***He left enemies camp and came along,***

***To Hussain he said, 'May I be over you sacrificed doing all I dare,***

***He too was wounded and as a martyr died.*** (Khamisani p.255)

In this verse Latif quotes the Quranic words *لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ* which mean 'Allah does not put burden on any soul more than its ability.' Ali (1989) has translated this part of the Quranic verse as 'On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear.' He comments that 'here burden is in terms of spiritual duty. Assured by Allah that He will accept from each soul just such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further on for the fulfillment of that promise (p.132).' Latif believes that a great cause is destined for those who can play their role to achieve it.

ڪوبا ڪلي ڪوڏيا، راوت ڪين زهن؛  
سائڻ سر فدا ڪيا، اڳيان امامن؛  
"يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ"، ڪم اهو ئي ڪن؛

کِبْرُ کَبْرِيَاءَمْ تَخْتُ تَمَاجِي جَامَرِ جَوِ.

(نبي بخش، سرکيڏارو، ص: ۲۸۳)

*The King is neither begotten nor does He beget,  
He is a relative to all the young and old fisherwomen,  
'Neither begets nor is begotten', His justice and equity is for all,  
His state is kingly; glorious is His seat of power.* (Khamisani p.232)

Latif here quotes the Quranic expression لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ which means 'He does not beget, nor is He born.' Ali (1989) has translated the verse as 'He begetteth not, nor is He begotten.' He explains the verse: This is to negative the Christian idea of the godhead, "the Father", "the only begotten Son" etc (p.2028). The Quranic words : لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ are repeated by Latif in a number of his verses. These words are in fact for Allah Almighty, Latif uses this Quranic verse to symbolically assert the position of the King Jam whom he believes to be just and majestic and a relation of all fisherwomen because of his spousal relationship with Noori a fisherwoman.

دوستِ کُھائي دادِلامِ مُحَبِّ مَارائي؛  
خاصنِ خَليلِنِ کي، سَخْتِيُونِ سَهائي؛  
اللهُ اَلصَّمَدُ بي نياز، سا کري، جا چاهي؛  
انھين مَنجھ آهي، کا اُونهي ڳالھ اسرار جي.

(آڏواڻي، سرکيڏارو، ص: ۴۰۸)

*God lets His dear ones and friends be sacrificed,  
Trials and tribulations are for the select ones,  
'Eternal and Absolute God,' He does what He wills,  
Some deep secret lies hidden in this.* (Khamisani p.250)

Above verse of Latif has been translated by Sorely (2012) as follows:

*God killeth whom He loveth most:  
Thus are His favourites slain.  
The All-Best, Allah, recking nought,  
Doth as His heart is fain.* (p.449)

This verse of Latif quotes the Quranic words اللهُ اَلصَّمَدُ which mean 'Allah is He on whom all depend.' Ali (1989) has translated the verse as, 'Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.' He explains

حُورُونَ هَارَ بَدَنٍ، سَهْرًا شَهِيدِنِ كِي.

(آڏواڻي، سرکيڏارو، ص: ۴۱۰)

*To cast off their head in war, these warriors hesitate not,  
Courageous ones laid down their lives in presence of Imams,  
'Since they fought in the cause of God.'  
Houris in heaven, adorn these martyrs with garlands of flowers.*

(Khamisani p.255)

This verse of Latif quotes the Quranic words يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ which mean 'they shall fight in the cause of Allah.' Ali (1989) translates this part of the Quranic verse as 'fighting in the way of Allah' and explains it as 'to wrongdoers they (believers) will offer no mealy-mouthed compromises; they will always strive and fight for truth and right: they will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form (p.303). Latif believes that those who die as martyrs in the way of Allah will have great rewards in paradise.

صُلْحُ جِنِّ سَهْرَتِ سَيْنِ، سَبِيحَ مَائِينَدَا سِي؛  
"الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ"، اِنْ پَرِ اِيَا جِي؛  
نيئي نُوندين تي، ڏکي چتي چاڙهيا.

(آڏواڻي، سرآسا، ص: ۴۵۳)

Those that struggle to please the loved one, their goal will achieve,

*Those who are pious and in God's oneness believe,  
They alone will be adorned as bridegrooms elect.* (Khamisani p.276)

In this verse of Latif the Quranic words: الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ mean 'Those who believe and guarded (against evil)'. This verse from the Quran is translated by Ali (1989) as 'Those who believe and (constantly) guard against evil (p.567)'. According to the above verse of Latif those who patiently persevere on the right path and have a spiritual link with Lord will ultimately be rewarded.

کوني کُنائون، اُجَ پِن اَکْرِيْنِ سَيْنِ؛  
ماسُ وِراهي هَلِبا، کَرَنگَلُ چِڏِيائُونِ؛  
"وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ" ائين اَنائُونِ؛  
مُئي ماريائُونِ، کلي گهائيو سَجْتِينِ.

(آڏواڻي، سر ڀيرو سنڌي، ص: ۴۰۳)

*Beloved called me and killed me with His eyes,  
My flesh He distributed, skeleton He left behind,  
Exhorting me to search my heart, with patience and truth,  
He killed me, the miserable wounded one, with smiles forsooth.*

(Khamisani p.292)

Latif quotes in the above verse the Quranic words: *وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ* which mean 'and exhorted each other to be truthful and exhorted each other to be patient.' Ali (1989) translates the same verse from the Quran as 'and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.' and he explains the verse that 'If he lived only for himself, he would not fulfill his whole duty. Whatever good he has, especially in moral and spiritual life, he must spread among his brethren, so that they may see the Truth and stand by it in patient hope and unshaken constancy amidst all the storm and stress of outer life. For he and they will then have attained Peace within (p.2003).' Latif says that the ways of the True Beloved may apparently be cruel as He can kill through his glances and smiles yet one can do nothing but be patient to win His pleasure.

نَاَزَ مَنْجَهَارَانَ نِكْرِي، جَدَهَنَ پَرِينِ كَرِي تُو پَنَدَهْ  
پُونِ پِي "بِسْمِ اَللّٰهِ" چِي، رَاهَ چَمِي تِي رَنَدَهْ  
اُپِيُونِ گَهِي اَدَبِ سِينِ، حُوْرُونِ حِيْرَتَ هِنَدَهْ  
سَاتِيْنَهْ جُو سَوَگَنَدَهْ سَاچُنِ سِيْنِيْتَانِ سُهْتُو.

(آذواڻي، سربرو سنڌي، ص: ۳۶۱)

*When with infinite grace, loved one walks,  
The very earth saying Bismillah kisses His path,  
In reverence astonished houris stand,  
I swear, loved one is more beautiful than all.*

(Khamisani p.294)

The Quranic words in this verse of Latif *بِسْمِ اَللّٰهِ* mean 'In the name of Allah' and are part of the text of Surah Namil and these words and some more precede all other Surahs also, except Surah Tauba. The complete verse of Namil has been translated by Ali (1989) as "It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." He explains the verse as 'Solomon expressly begins his letter with the formu-

la of the true and universal Religion of Unity, and he invites to the true Faith the new people with whom he establishes honourable relations, not for worldly conquest but for the spreading of the Light of Allah' (p.1098). Latif, in this verse, says when his Beloved moves on the earth He is warmly welcomed on every step and gets a standing ovation by houris in the heaven as He is the most Beautiful of all.

جِڪَرِي جِهَوِ جُوَانِ، دَسَانِ كَوَنَ دِيَهِي هِرِ  
مُهْرُوَ مِيْرَتِي مَرْسَلِيْنِ، سَرَسُ سَنَدِسِ شَانِ  
"فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ"، اِي مِيْسِرُ تِيْسِ مَكَانِ  
اِي اَگِي جُو اِحْسَانِ، جَنَهِنِ هَادِي مِيْتِيْمِرِ هَهْتُو.  
(آذواڻي، سر بلاول، ص: ۵۱۳)

*I see none like Jakhro in this world as a whole,  
Leader of the apostles, honoured most,  
The distance between him and Allah being less than two bows,  
For giving me such a guide, to God I offer many thanks.*

(Khamisani p.350)

The text of the above verse of Latif that Sorely (2012) translated is slightly different. Its first line reads *عربيء جهڙو آءُ دَسَانِ* The rest of its text is almost the same except that the first word in the last line: *اِيءُ* is missing. His translation is as follows:

*Like Him who Arab was  
No one, nowhere I see.  
In full forefront He stands  
Where the Apostles be:  
And He hath pride of place  
In majesty and grace.  
'Near, nearer came to Him  
The Angel of the Lord  
Than two bows' distance is'  
Thus saith the Holy Word  
Lo: this is the abode  
In Heaven on Him bestowed.  
Almighty God be praised  
Who brought me such a Guide.*

(p.434)

This verse of Latif contains the Quranic words: فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ which according to Ali (1989) mean 'And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer' and he explains these words 'that even if it was a distance of two bow-shots (counting 100 to 150 yards to a bow-shot) it would be a clearly visible distance (p.1637).' Latif says that it is a great blessing to have such an exalted spiritual leader as our Holy Prophet (PBUH), the one who was called by Allah for a visit to heavens and who saw Him from a very close distance.

چُرَن، چُڪَن چَت ۾، وساريان کين وَرَن؛  
'لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ'، پَسُنُ نَاهِ پَرِين؛  
پڪا پَنُوهارَن، نيئي اڏيا ناه ۾.

(داؤدپوٽو، سرمارئي، ص. ۸۹)

*He in my mind is always sought,*

*'Nothing is like Him' woe! that I see Him not,*

*For my Love has built His hut in non-existence.* (Khamisani p.218)

The Quranic expression in this verse of Latif 'لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ' means 'there is nothing like Him'. Ali (1989) translates these words as 'there is nothing whatever like unto Him (p.1476).' Latif, in this verse, says through his mouthpiece Marui that there is none like my Beloved whom I cannot forget, though unfortunately I cannot see Him as He has settled far away in some 'never-never land'.

Latif has put the Arabic expression ] وحده لا شريك له [ (Allah) is One and He has no partner] in quite a few of his verses. In this particular combination these words do not make a Quranic expression though one may find these words separately as وحده and لا شريك له at some places in the Holy Quran.

Quoting the very first excerpt of Latif in this article Abro (2016) argues that having properly studied the Quranic verses one could see how the great Shah has used them in his *Risalo*. There are treasures waiting to be discovered in the poetry of Latif. Every generation will keep finding new meanings in the text of his majestic verse (p.240). The efforts to interpret Latif's verse keeping in view the critical approaches of the contemporary age,

such as intertextuality, will always lead to the fresh understanding of its text which is pregnant with myriad meanings.

## Conclusion

There is much in Latif's poetry which is uniquely his. His verse is remarkable in many respects: poetic depiction of folk stories from Sindh and the region, his highly personalised diction, universality of subject matter and rhythmic quality are to name a few. Despite all this marked individuality Latif's poetry is influenced by a number of social, political, literary and religious factors. Quranic thought and diction has been one of the major influences on the text of his verse. He has literally borrowed words, phrases and at places complete verses from the text of the Holy Quran. Removing these Quranic words from Latif's poetry would mean a collapse of thought to a considerable degree: removal of Quranic expressions like *الست* (Am I not?) or *كل نفس ذائقة الموت* (every person shall taste death) or *والله مع الصابرين* (Verily Allah is with those who patiently persevere) would render the whole poetic line almost meaningless, on the other hand these words give his poetry a touch of sublimity. These expressions are in a way an integral part of his verse which is deeply religious in its tone and texture as it symbolically represents Love of God parallel to Humanly Love. His poetry conveys a spiritual message with such vitality that one feels elevated to a sublime state of ecstasy. Quranic words perfectly fit in the larger scheme of Latif's thought and subject matter. Latif has masterfully blended the folk stories and folk characters with Divine Love and in such an amalgamation the Quranic text plays a pivotal role. Almost all the *Surs* (Melodies) as chapters of his *Risalo* are visibly influenced by the text of the Quran, particularly Sur Kalyan, Susui Aabri, Marui and Aasa. On the whole, the religious tone of Shah Latif's poetry largely, if not only, depends on the Quranic philosophy and message.

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