

## Humour in Relevance Theory: A Contextual Analysis of *Tasi's* Poetry

**Abstract:** *This study aims at exploring Tariq Tasi's poetry during the first spell of COVID-19 when face-to-face human interaction was drastically limited. He kept writing on contemporary issues using satire as a literary genre that employs humour, irony and ridicule to highlight social issues. This study is delimited to Tasi's Urdu poetry shared on WhatsApp in the months of March, April and May 2020 in the post-COVID-19 scenario. The discourse has been analysed using the conceptual framework of Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's (2006) relevance theory of humour using discourse analysis as a research method. The analysis reveals how using a social media app as a swift means of circulation, the poet highlights contemporary social issues and follies of human behaviour to which people can relate quite easily and further circulate to create ripples in the human minds to ponder. His poetry presents the sudden desolation of the world because of the unseen, unimaginably strong enemy called Corona that changed the world.*

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**Key Words:** Relevance Theory, Social Satire, Humour, COVID-19, Social Media

### Introduction

This study aims to explore our great native talent and showcase the creative sensibilities, skills and expertise of our people to our national and international academic community. Tariq Tarsi is one such Pakistani Urdu writer and poet who writes for art as well as for life.

The relevance theory of humour was used for the theoretical foundations of the study, as it provides an overarching view of how communication takes place in reality or in contemporary literary genres. Although relevance theory was originally proposed to explain real-life, everyday instances of communication, it has been extended to analyse

metaphor, irony, parody, and literary texts. The main propositions of the relevance theory approach to humour are that humorous effects arise when the listener or reader is able to resolve the conflict between what is said and what is implied – the resolution of the incongruity. While relevance theory generally takes a cognitive stance towards communication, it also pays excessive attention to the context that drives the interpretive process, whether the immediate context of the utterance/text or the wider socio-cultural context.

While [Yus \(2003\)](#) talks about the theory of relevance, he says that the basis of this cognitive theory is based on a single interpretive principle that is relied upon by the people who participate

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in the conversation. It plays on their intended interpretation of the discourse. This intended interpretation is based on shared experience. Therefore, the steps of this interpretive procedure are largely predictable, providing communicators with the key to necessary control over the eventual interpretation of their humorous discourse (Yus, 2003).

Zohra (2016) argues that literary interpretation depends on intended relevance because the reader when reading a text, looks for the meaning the author intended to create based on available contextual assumptions. Relevance theory implies that statements that have more relevance are more likely to gain the listener's attention and are more likely to be understood and used as humorous discourse.

Looking at Tasi's poetry through the lens of the relevance theory of humour, we can see his humour as a social critique that generally revolves around politics, social hierarchy, technology, the environment, religion, and, most often, current events. Satire uses irony, exaggeration, humour or ridicule to criticise various aspects of human society that need to be exposed. It is not absolutely necessary to incorporate all of the devices mentioned above into every scenario, but at least one of them must be there for the text to qualify as satire. The use of irony is one of the most effective tools to highlight the hypocrisy, expose absurdity or induce laughter. Verbal, dramatic, and situational irony can serve a purpose.

In order to create awareness among the masses of what is happening in the world after COVID-19 at the individual, societal, national and international levels, Tasi used social media as a tool. The advent of social media has increased the frequency, dissemination, action and reaction of social satire, making its appeal and scope faster and wider. Electronic media provide a variety of applications and social media platforms for the dissemination of ideas. WhatsApp is one of the most used applications. It is one of the most popular media for sharing and connecting with people (Dey & Parabhoi 2017).

In Tasi's selected discourse shared on WhatsApp, we find beneath the layers of relatively simple and schematic linguistic meanings how the context-based meanings of

richer speakers can be conveyed (Wilson and Sperber, 2006). An analysis of Tasi's poetic discourse reveals not only what is said but also what is implied. We can find many examples of the current problems of the world we live in, which are related and therefore complex.

### **The Objective of the Study**

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- An attempt to introduce the Pakistani Urdu writer to a wider audience
- Satire still remains a rarely discussed subject of research in relevant studies
- The effort is to record history in a world after COVID-19
- The aim is to explore the satirical elements of the selected texts and relate them to the material world in which we live.

### **Literature Review**

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Satire is a type of biting humour. The understanding of such humour depends on the context as well as on the cognitive abilities of the reader or listener. Relevance theory focuses on the context in which certain texts are produced, disseminated and interpreted (Sperber and Wilson (2006). Relevance theory is taken as a framework because it provides an overarching view of how communication takes place in reality or in contemporary literary genres.

Although originally proposed to explain real-life, everyday instances of communication, relevance theory has been extended to analyse metaphor, irony, parody, and literary texts. Relevance theory was proposed by Sperber and Wilson(2006) to extend the inferential model of communication—to present an overarching account of the process of human understanding. While the relevant theoretical framework has been applied to many aspects, including language use and text interpretation, when it comes to humour, relevance theory proposes that understanding humour requires more effort on the part of readers compared to other forms of communication.

The main propositions of the relevance theory approach to humour imply that humorous effects occur when the listener or reader is able to resolve the conflict between what is said and

what is implied – the resolution of the incongruity. While relevance theory generally takes a cognitive stance towards communication, it also pays excessive attention to the context that drives the interpretive process, whether the immediate context of the utterance/text or the wider socio-cultural context.

However, there is a common core of knowledge related to any particular referent that communities typically share (Cruse, 2006). Because of this, people have different reactions to any humorous example, and in many cases, humour is also tied to culture. Lycan (2008) speaks of “universal cognitive processing” driven by the search for “relevance”. Due to this inherent ability to search for relevance, the receiver of a communicative act constantly searches for a plausible interpretation until he reaches the most relevant one (Wilson & Sperber, 2006).

According to Baldick (2001), satire is aimed at exposing the faults of society, institutions and individuals. More specifically, satire is more dependent on content and context. According to relevance theory, irony refers to the specific use of echoic statements. An echoic utterance is an utterance that "achieves most of its relevance by expressing the speaker's attitude toward the views she [or he] tacitly attributes to someone else" (Wilson & Sperber, 2006, p. 621).

Zhao (2011), while developing an understanding of irony within relevance theory, also argues that when it comes to understanding irony, the relevance lies in the various inconsistencies that exist in ironic expression. Ironic utterances gain attention because there is an incompatibility between the information provided through the contextual elements and what is explained by the utterance. The receiver must then access some underlying contextual assumptions in order to obtain the intended interpretation. This "contextual selection" (Zhao, 2011) is governed by the principle of relevance. The intended audience takes the statement as a critical comment or evaluation, and the statement is not taken as a superficial value but as an expression of dissociative attitudes such as satire, sarcasm, ridicule, etc. (Zhao, 2011).

Similarly, Furlong (1996, as cited in Zohra, 2016) argues that literary interpretation can be defined as the search for "intended relevance", as

the reader, when reading a text, looks for the meaning the author intended to create by drawing on available (and intended) contextual assumptions. As Relevance Theory states that statements that have more relevance are more likely to gain the listener's attention (Furlong, 1996, as cited in Zohra, 2016). In the case of written communication and humorous, literary texts, as in this case, the reader must rely largely on his knowledge of the world in which he lives in the current context to understand the content on the one hand and identify the writer's intention for humour on the other.

## Methodology

Discourse analysis has been used as a research method to explore the message the poet tries to convey in a particular context. The study is delimited to the analysis of 22 texts shared on different WhatsApp groups, including Jugno WhatsApp Group (A Literary Group), in the months of March, April and May 2020 on different current issues revolving around the major theme of Corona to see how Tasi has employed satire to create awareness. The membership of these literary groups is more than seven hundred. It is pertinent to mention here that the researcher has translated the selected texts into English and analysed them using the conceptual framework of Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's (2006) relevance theory of humour using context-based discourse analysis as a research method.

## Analysis

In this section, I will briefly discuss the context of the discourse that provides relevance to the shared

experience and then analyse the text, highlighting which literary devices have been used in each text for which particular effect. The first text is named:

### 1. Qaumi Idaron ko Salam (Salute to National Institutions)

When we look at the context of this text, we observe that in our society, it is a common practice to criticise the institution. Rather, it is considered very trendy and fashionable. In war or

peace, in calm or storm, in calamity or disaster in emergency or normal situation, there are a large number of people working in different capacities in different institutions to maintain law and order, for the smooth running of the public affairs and to keep the peace. It is these humans who work to ensure our well-being, security and safety. This text is an indirect satire on the attitude of those who have been ungrateful to those who sacrifice their comfort to maintain peace in other people's lives. This tribute highlights all those who serve others in different capacities by putting themselves in difficult situations.

In a tribute to all those national institutions which are serving humanity amidst the most fearful scenario, Tasi writes that the city presents a picture of a deserted land where death is dancing around everywhere. Amidst this bleak scenario of risk and fear, it's the people of law enforcement agencies who are materialising their ambition to serve their land by providing living proof of their loyalty and devotion. The poet prays for the safety of all these saviours of the nation. Indirectly he tries to create awareness about the sacrifices these people offer to ensure others' safety. He continues telling in metaphoric terms the news that all the 'Meeshas' have reached the site of the storm along with their boats to save humanity. The comparison of the present saviour with Quranic reference to the Boat of Hazrat Nooh is again a great tribute and a devout prayer for the past and present saviours.

He pays a rich tribute to the policemen who have been performing their duties far from their homes. He can feel their exhaustion, fatigue and anxiety and prays for the well-being of each one of them, whether he is exhausted or heartbroken.

He offers a prayer for the workers of WAPDA, the devoted employees of Rescue operations, for these are the ones who offer help to the helpless. He prays to God for the well-being of each kind-hearted person and all the security workers.

He prays to Allah to grant livelihood to the labourer who does not get work to earn, for whom life has become agony and who is undergoing the worst period of his life, for he neither has resources for livelihood nor does he have a shelter to live in. The obvious reference is

to the post-Corona world, where everything comes to an unexpected halt making the life of the poor all the more agonising. Once again, in the concluding line, he prays for the well-being of all the security personnel.

This poem is a social satire that incorporates the relevance theory in the sense that the characters depicted there, the activities highlighted, and the attitudes indirectly alluded to all are a part of the world we live in. Directly he satirises the attitude of the people who call the role of law enforcement agencies, health service providers, poor bread earners, electricity system maintainers—in short, all those who are serving outside their homes amidst the very challenging situation of the post-Corona world in question.

## **2. Shahr Nama (Tale of the City)**

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In the context of the second text, Shahr Nama again posted the COVID-19 scenario. The tale of the poet's city is the tale of misery and unprecedented suffering that have taken away the hustle and bustle of life. We find the relevance here not in humour but rather in a sad state of affairs.

In this text, Tariq Tasi says that he does not have the heart to write because of overwhelming sadness. His city has turned into a wilderness of difficulties and loneliness. The hunter and the hunted both are forced to exist in one place...it is difficult to foresee who will be hunted by whom. All men and women, young and old, are restricted to their homes.

In some places, there is an illness; in others, there is hunger and starvation. In the post-Corona world, life has become difficult while death has become easy. His silence in this utter solitude is in communication with the creator urging the Lord to accept his supplication.

In the next couplet, he implores the humans in the name of humanity and brotherhood to help those who do not have the earning of a single penny. He expresses with the sense of utter grief that he listens to the cries of the deprived children of the have-nots and can feel the agony of their helplessness. He suggests that in order to avoid the feeling of guilt and pricking of conscience, they should better share their bread (food) with

those who don't have any.

Shahr Nama is a sad depiction of the post-Corona World soon after its first wave when it took the world and people by surprise, which the targeted readers of his discourse find much relevant to the situation they see around.

### 3. Ghazal (Critique of Feminist Aunties)

In the first couplet of the ghazal, Tasi laments the lack of social contact and human interaction, which has resulted in the loss of patience and wits. In the second verse, he refers to those representatives of feminism who challenged the way they used to be addressed. He wonders where are those 'aunts' who were proud of their bodies as their own sole possession (Mera Jism Mei Marzi). He wonders where they have hidden and indirectly urges the world to go and find them from their hiding places. All their hue and cry and tall claims have not been cooled down, and they have not been heard of for quite some time. Now is the time for them to come out and stand up to their stated ideals and propagated ideology when the world needs them for the daughters of Eve who are really suffering and in need of their help. Their worth will be recognised only if they lit their candles now to decrease and banish the darkness of the sorrows and dismay prevailing all around.

This is a deep satire on the self-proclaimed champions of women's rights. Previously they were on the roads to ensure unbridled rights for women. Alluring them to follow the path that does not go with our religious, social and cultural traditions. They projected themselves as the saviour, but in the post-Corona world, when the daughters of Eve are in real trouble, and it is high time to help and facilitate them, these 'aunts' cannot be seen anywhere. It's a satire on the foreign-funded NGOs and their representatives. The obvious reference is to the procession of such women in the name of MERA JISM MERI MURZI in Islamabad. [Jan \(2020\)](#) writes in an article entitled, *Mera Jism Meri Mrzi & Feminism in Pakistan* that "what we are going through in Pakistan right now is the third wave of feminism. This wave, unfortunately, has taken a wrong turn by emphasising that instead of the genuine rights of women, it demands clear violation of all moral and ethical norms". But Corona made them

disappear from the roads, press, social and electronic media, and quite humorously, the poet makes an appeal to someone 'koe' to go and find where they are when the enclosed daughters of Eve are in need of their actual help. The theme of the poetry with reference to the way some NGOs try to propagate the Western model of feminism is also relatable.

### 4. Imdad Tera Shukria (Thank you Aid)

The text goes like this the whole building has been cracked, the very foundation has been shaken, but even then, it is okay. I was scared of CORONA a while ago, but now I got the aid, and all is fine.

This text ridicules the attitude of the third world countries whose whole foundation got shaken and got cracks, but they seemed to live in a state of denial and did not show any desire to rebuild and repair it. The first wave of Corona made them afraid for a while, but then the aid came from the outside world and 'all get fine'. Here is a deep satire on the parasitic attitude of the ruling elites having no urge and plan to improve and no desire to struggle for self-reliance. They can see their world crumbling down but do not come out of their slumber to strengthen the foundations or repair the cracks. They seem to be least bothered. Even the menace of Corona, which made them afraid, could not make them work, and they were content with aid. It is a beggar's attitude where individual and collective dignity gets compromised. The very title *Imdad Tera Shukria* refers to the compromised dignity for the short-term gains, which is sorrowful but relatable.

### 5. Werainion ki Rawanqain (The Dazzle /Magnificence of Desolation)

Man kills the man, and the dazzle kills the dazzle. The fear has engulfed even the wedding celebration, and their razzle-dazzle is getting vanished.

*Werani* stands for desertion and desolation, lack of the hustle and bustle of life, while *Rawnaq* is just the opposite of it. This discourse satirised the attitude of a man who kills his fellow man just for petty purposes. The outward glow 'the dazzle' itself is self-destructive. Here Tasi refers to those



who have got everything in abundance, but instead of saving those who are in dire need, they prefer making a display of it to bewitch the world. An example of this attitude is the competition people indulge in at wedding ceremonies. But Corona engulfed these celebrations, and the razzle-dazzle of these celebrations vanished. In our context wedding ceremony is an event of celebration, but with the passage of time, this celebration becomes a show of outward glow to bewitch others. The strong impact of the pandemic has stopped these shows of magnificence for the time being. Its desolation is in full swing now, and ironically the poet suggests that desolation has its own razzle-dazzle.

### **6. Khudayya Rehm Kar (Mercy oh God!)**

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All and sundry are crying in one voice 'Corona, Corona, Corona'. It has overshadowed everything from one's thoughts to one's dreams. It has made waking and sleeping both equally difficult.

In the time of trial, we go back to God for salvation, redemption, penance and mercy. The same thing happened in the pandemic. It overpowered everyone and engulfed everything. The terror-stricken cries heard all around are 'Corona, Corona, Corona'. Corona has overshadowed everything from human thoughts to human dreams. Thoughts during the daytime and dreams during the night are both haunted by the fear of Corona. It is a satirical commentary on human nature, which makes people unite only in adverse times. So under the fear of Corona, they all seek God's mercy to end this trial. The relevance of the text lies in the fact that adversity always unites people, and they often forget God in happy times and pray only in trying times.

### **7. Rabitoon Main Fasla Rakha Karo (Keep Distance in Connection)**

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Tasi says that we are falling victim to disease and spreading it partly because of ignorance, but we are equally responsible for the criminal activity of doing so by either actually hugging or kissing the forehead. In this way, we are spreading Corona in the name of friendship.

Distance is the hallmark of safety to avoid falling victim to Corona, which is dancing around to catch and kill. Here the poet gives a piece of

advice to maintain distance while keeping the company of loved ones. Our loved ones and we are falling victim to it because of our own attitude, which is partly because of our ignorance and mostly because of the criminal negligence of the warnings. Hugging a friend or kissing the forehead of our very own kids may prove fatal. In the present state of affairs, such activities cannot be taken as an expression of friendship or bond of love but as criminal negligence and enmity because it may cause the loss of life. In terms of the theory of relevance, it is a sad commentary on the attitude of those whose stubbornness and lack of adaptability to avoid the disease endanger their own safety and those of their loved ones. It's a biting satire on the so-called friendship and expression of love.

### **8. Chein Amreica China America**

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The hunter is in a difficult situation of a trapping move of spreading a net by the hunted (prey, fish). The life seems to seize to exist---who knows who has played what game?

The title mentions two superpowers that have been in a tug of war for supremacy. The rivalry is so intense that even in the most critical times like the pandemic, they keep playing blame games with each other. America is depicted as a hunter who initially mocked China that was hunted by the invisible enemy, Corona. But then, strangely enough, the tables were turned, and the hunter started blaming the hunted for spreading the nets to trap the hunter when they fell victim to Corona himself. When once the unseen enemy overpowered all, life seems to come to a sudden halt, and it is difficult to decide who has played a trick on whom. This discourse displays the irony by displaying the relevance of the unprecedented hunting of the world and its peoples across the globe. The mocking hunter also becomes the hunted. The pandemic becomes the leveller. All this in biting satire in terms of [Yus\(2008\)](#)

### **9. Arbab-I-Ikhtiar say (to the Rulers)**

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When will you come for help? How much more cruelty do you inflict upon people? When hunger goes beyond limits, humans will turn into cannibals. They will start eating each other.

In this text, the poet satirises the delaying tactics of the rulers. Looking at the sad state of affairs, he questions them when they will help people. Non-provision of the basic necessities is a cruel act. He questions the rulers on how long they will go on inflicting cruelties on the masses. When hunger goes beyond limits, humans turn into a cannibal. He questions whether the rulers are waiting for the people to eat each other, compelled by hunger. The depiction of deprivation, hunger going beyond limits and man turning into a savage all have relevance to the present state of affairs.

### 10. Kab Samjho GAY? (when will you Understand?)

This is the opportunity to please God and take sorrow as a blessing. Offer thanks to sorrow for providing you with an opportunity to please God--Lord Creator. The wilderness dancing around is a warning--try to understand and mend your ways.

When will you understand? It is indirectly a warning that it is high time to understand. The sad state of affairs can be taken as a blessing in disguise to mend our ways. We should be thankful for this sorrow and take it as a blessing which may bring us closer to God, and we may become thankful to Him. The wilderness spreading around is a wake-up call to mend our ways and not to further displease God. The question posed in the beginning is a warning that if you do not understand now, you never get this chance again to understand and improve.

### 11. Ijtamaiyyat ka Khatima (the Death of Collectivism)

Even in the season of flowering (spring), the enchanted lot is silent. The gardens are full of flowers but, alas! There are no nightingales. Social distances are ever on the rise because there has been no bridge to facilitate (to diminish) the distances between two hearts.

Ijtamaiyyat Ka Khatima is a satire on our social attitudes, which are individualistic and not collective. The text is written in the Post COVID-19 scenario where fear has overpowered everything. No chirping can be heard in the spring, the gardens are full of flowers, but there

are no nightingales to rejoice in their beauty. The social distance between man and man is on the rise, and nothing has been done to bridge the gap or to reduce the distance between the people. In the present state of affairs, it is a satire on the ruling elites who do not have a workable plan to minimise the sufferings of the masses so that the normal routine of life may be restored. On the broader level, it is a social satire on the materialistic individualism that is overpowering collective welfare that can bridge the gap between man and man and bring them closer to each other. The poet takes it as a death of collectivism which in itself is a great loss. Individualistic trends devoid man of the milk of human kindness; he stops feeling the pains of others, so there comes a distance between heart and heart. Spring, flowers and nightingale have been used metaphorically to refer to the beauties of nature. The individualistic approach turns man into such a machine that is devoid of all delicate feelings of aesthetics, sensitivity and humanity.

### 12. Zati Mushahida (Personal Observation)

The whole text is metaphorical--the world started its journey or embarked on its voyage by taking insight from the father, but then the world turned into a well (Chah) where Yousuf was pushed into. So the world changed for the father altogether. Similarly, the post-Corona world is very different from the pre-Corona world (different in multiple ways or more than one way).

Most of us are familiar with Hazrat Yousuf's tale, who was pushed into a well by his brothers. The loss of Yousuf changed the world for his father. The cruelty of the people at the helm of the affairs has been compared to the cruelty of Yousuf's brothers. And the wilderness of the post-Corona world has been compared to the emptiness and desolation of life of Hazrat Yaqoob.

### 13. Ghazal

Translation of Tasi's ghazal is as follows:

- It has played havoc in the cities. Who is spared from this risk and fear?
- All the avenues are closed, and all the worship places are empty of worshippers.

- The theatres are closed and deserted, and the humans have fallen on their faces.
- They barely work and are afraid of going to their workplaces.
- Death is dancing everywhere, and the fear of falling victim to it is overpowering everyone.
- All seem timid, and their thoughts are turned as barren as deserts.
- Today the nearby ones passed by at a distance as if Musa is passing by the Mountain of Toor.
- Try to please Allah yourselves; the Mullah and the Qazi both have failed to do so.
- The heat is scorching; we begged for the shade of hope and blessings.
- May we get more resources to overcome the issues we are facing!

Here the poet depicts the havoc Corona has played all around. He says no one is spared the risk and fear. All the avenues have been closed. The places of worship are empty of worshippers. The places of entertainment (theatres) have been closed. Humans are fallen on their faces. They barely work and are afraid of going to their workplaces. Death is dancing all around, and the fear of falling victim to Corona has overpowered everyone. Even the thoughts got barren like deserts. He urges the people to try to please Allah themselves as both the 'Mullah' and the 'Qazi' have failed to do so. The heat of the menace is getting unbearable, and the humans beg for the shade of hope and blessings. He prays to Allah to bless the humans with more resources to overcome the difficult situation they are facing. The biting satire of indulgence in a worldly pursuit to call the wrath of God is relatable.

#### **14. Bhayinak Dajjali Mansooba (The Dreadful Charlatan Plan)**

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We have stopped working as if all has been done, but on the other hand, Charlatans are busy working on their plans. The happy days are over, and only bleak nights are lying ahead, some in the form of the vaccine and some from the tower of 5G. The inner voice forewarns that human bodies are going to be chipped. He says that first, we have been made to get used to 3G and 4G, and now the planning is to control the world through 5G powerful radiation.

The third world countries in general and our country, in particular, have always been amidst the conspiracy theories. We do not work and do not want to work as if all has been done. On the other hand, when we look at the west and find people working, we call it ' *Dajjali Mansooba*'. The reference to Dajjal is also metaphoric, the reference of which is found in the Holy Quran 3G, 4G and 5G are compared to Dajjal. The poet finds a relevance between people's attitudes towards Corona and its vaccine. The people in our country are waiting for others to invent a vaccine. Bleak nights that are lying ahead as it is believed that as we have been addicted to 3G and 4G technology, a vaccine may be administered through 5G technology, i.e. through powerful radiations.

#### **15. Raz-I-zindagi (The Secret of Life)**

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Though you have washed the inscription on the slab thoroughly, still the script is quite visible. If the people go out of their town today, they may not escape ill luck then.

The secret of life is that reality cannot be hidden despite all efforts. It comes to the surface ultimately. Amidst the grave Corona condition, if people leave their town, this will be unfortunate, and there is a strong likelihood that they will fall victim to it.

#### **16. Bamisal Qaum (Matchless Nation)**

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Corona is bewildered to see the scholars, the physicians and the philosophers of the nation. Even the one who has not completed his pre-nursery education is delivering sermons with authority.

The very title is ironic; what is meant by BAMISAL QAUM is just the opposite of it. Satirically the poet says that even Corona got bewildered to see the number of people who claimed themselves to be scholars, physicians and philosophers. Even the one who has not completed his pre-nursery education is delivering sermons on Corona as an authority.

#### **17. Ibrat Sara-I-dahr Hay (a Deterrent Lesson for the World)**

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The dire need of the time demands seriousness from the nation, but the nation is busy making



fun (THATAY BAZI). Seen from a rational perspective, Corona is a living reality but what is heard from every nook and corner is the non-serious attitude of making fun and cutting jokes.

Ibrat Sara-i-Dahr Hay presents a word of warning for the world. The post-Corona world is a different world where seriousness is the need of the hour. But the satire is on the attitude of those people in general who are busy making fun of Corona. They are in a state of denial. Corona is a living reality which is very dangerous, but the non-serious attitude of making fun and cutting jokes is quite common in our nation. It is like playing with the fire.

### **18. Natiqa Band--(Silenced)**

Our ruler will not let us open our eyes. They are planning for a complete lockdown. The point is whether Corona will go back after seeing the locked door--- the poet urges him to speak the truth. Are we really safe within the four walls of our homes?

The poet is contemplating the present state of affairs. He thinks that the rulers are keeping the masses in the darkness by planning a complete lockdown. He questions whether locking down will push Corona back, will Corona go back after seeing the locked doors? The obvious answer is no, so he urges the people to be truthful and see eye to eye with reality. We should ponder on the fact whether staying within four walls is the solution to the problem. The implied meaning is it is a short-term solution only. Pigeon like approach highlighted in the text is relevant to our national scene.

### **19. Andar ki Awaz (the Inner Voice)**

Had we offered our prayers on time, we would not have to call for out-of-time prayer. The closed markets at present are the consequence of the malpractices (BAHAYYAE) round the clock.

It is the projection of the inner voice of the people that urge them to realise their wrongdoing that brought life and the world to the verge of destruction. He says had we offered our prayers on time, we would not have to make a call for emergency prayers. The closure of the markets and all business activities are regarded as the

consequence of the malpractices--- immodesty round the clock that called the wrath of God.

### **20. Sub ki Khair ho (May all be Fine)**

Doctors, nurses, news reporters and security personnel light with their conduct and services at this time, moving around at the risk of their lives. All those who are spreading light with their conduct and services at this time of pandemic may be safe from this malady.

It's a prayer of an elder who is concerned about the safety of all those who are the frontline warriors in this pandemic, including doctors, nurses, news reporters and security personnel. They are the torch bearers who spread light with their conduct and services. Who are exposed and are moving around for the provision of service at the risk of their lives. He prays for their safety from the malady of Corona.

### **21. Lajawab Sawal (Unanswerable Question)**

Those flowers that got withered amidst this spring season, when will they come to bloom again? The earth is asking the sky when life will be restored to normalcy.

The question of the questions and the one that remains unanswered is when will life get back to normalcy? Corona has changed the world altogether. Many have fallen victim to it. It has drained the flowers of their colour and beauty amidst the spring season. One keeps pondering whether they will ever come to bloom again.

Man proposes, and God disposes of it. The whole cult of existentialism has been questioned, and the little unseen enemy has made the world realise that despite all progress, man cannot even fight and destroy a small enemy. And the Creator of the world has the power to change the whole world whenever He wishes to. He makes his power felt, and man has been left to ponder on the questions that are unanswerable. All human progress has been proved a mere illusion. It is a deep satire on the tall claims of humans of their tremendous progress and the helplessness at the hands of a small invisible enemy, and we can all sense and feel its relevance.

## **22. Paimana Labraiz (filled to the Brim)**

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What was happening was not in our wildest imagination. Uncertainty compelled us to hide the truth. Tasi! It is heard that the reality of the world is going to change at the will of the sky.

Tasi comments on the present scenario as one that has never been in our wildest imagination. He indulges in a monologue and says that it is heard that the reality of the world is going to change at the will of the sky. Here defies all the changes brought about in the world by man in terms of progress, enlightenment, harnessing the powers of nature at human will and compartmentalisation of the world at the hand of the power structure by the worldly power stakeholders. The patience of the Divine is at its end. Corona makes the world realise that this time the change that the world will see will be at the will of the sky...here the sky refers to the Lord Creator. What happened to the world with the advent of Corona is quite unimaginable for the inhabitants of the world. All this is to make them realise that there is some power above them who can bring all to a sudden halt whenever it likes. It is a deep satire on human progress.

## **Conclusion**

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To conclude, we find Tasi's poetry shared on WhatsApp, a social media app during the early month of Covid-19, is a commentary on the prevailing situation, various trends and attitudes of people at individual, familial, national and international levels. He employed all forms of humour ranging from light, entertaining humour to irony and biting satire to create relevance in what is said and what is implied to be understood. His texts were analysed using the relevance theory of humour, where targeted readers can relate the text with what has been going on around them. The texts are analysed using discourse analysis as a research method. Discourse analysis deals with the context and content of the text both in the process of meaning-making and interpretation. So that the writer and the reader both can relate to the shared experience of being amused.

Tasi talks about the first shockwave that confined the people to their homes only, and the outer world turned into a deserted land. He refers to the frontline warriors like peace-keeping personnel, doctors and paramedical staff etc., who expose themselves to danger to save others. He prays for all of them. He criticises the attitude of the ruling elites who, while sitting in their comfort zones, are doing nothing to address the issues of the have-nots. The situation has been deteriorating, but they are content with foreign aid without any will for self-reliance. He criticises the world power stakeholders who are busy in blame games. First, the Americans called it the Chinese virus, and then the Chinese blamed the Americans for creating it. But the irony of fate is that it took the whole world off guard. Tasi tells the world at large that despite all the tall claims of progress and scientific advancement, the Creator/the sky can bring the world to a sudden halt at any time.

Tasi also satirises the attitude of the feminist champions of women's rights who suddenly emerged with the slogan of *Mera Jism Meri Merzi* and wanted to defeat the world. But in the Post Covid-19 world, when the majority of the women were suffering from shortages, isolation and sympathisers and were in need of help, they disappeared. He urged someone to go and find them.

Similarly, he talks about 3G,4G and 5G technologies as 'Dajjali Fitna' that have been created to isolate man from man and create barriers to add to the desolation of the world. He expresses the need for collective penance to ward off the menace of Corona. He refers to the humans turning into cannibals due to hunger at the utter neglect of those who have to provide for them to retain their sanity.

All the afore-mentioned things are relevant to life, trends, attitudes and sufferings during the period in which the selected texts are written. They are relevant and hence capable of sparking a thought process that at times brings the amusing smile and, at other times, a bitter smile in accordance with the relevance theory of humour.

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