

## Atif Aslam Unplugged

by Ahmed Hayat

**How did your performance go in Dubai with Umeed 2006?**

Well, I really enjoyed performing there. Dubai is a very rocking place. Since, it was for a good cause, it felt so much more worthwhile. It's great to see other artists participating in such an event. The crowd was full of energy. I had a lot of fun.

**What's next?**

I am going to continue playback singing. My songs are becoming hits in India and the people there really like my music.

**Does that mean no more music for the Pakistani market?**

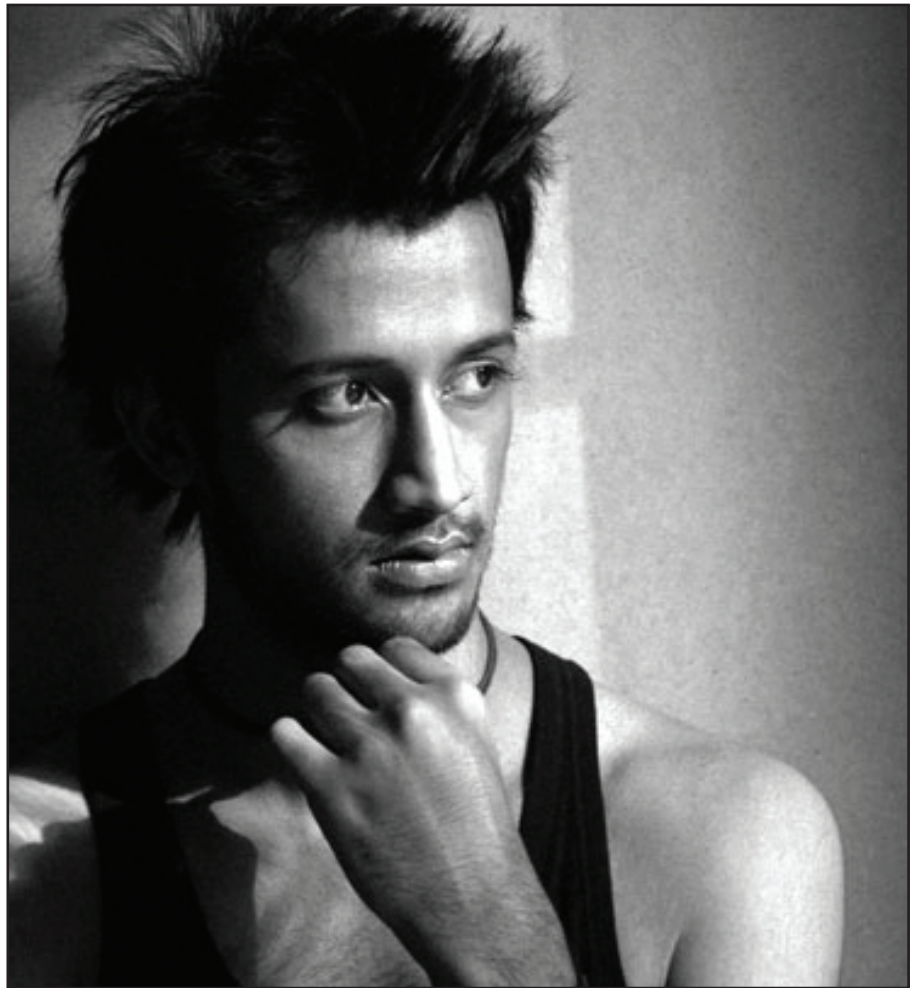
I basically want to experiment. Pakistan has a market for Pop Music while India doesn't. I want to go there and go through this new experience of playback singing. I see playback singing as a step ahead of Pop Music.

**What do you think about all the remixes of your songs being released?**

It depends on what kind of audience is being entertained. Remixes are basically for pubs and clubs. The remix of "Woh Lamhey" was just wonderful. The other day when I was in India, I was traveling with John and Bipasha. John told me that whenever the two of them were together they used to listen to my song. That feeling was good. Sometimes remixes don't turn out very well. I personally didn't like the remix of "Aadat" in Kalyug.

**What about Lollywood?**

Well, it depends on the movie. If it's good then I might give it a try. For right now, I'm not doing anything in Lollywood.



**You're considered a style icon. What do you say to that?**

Personally, I don't think of myself as a style icon. It's basically because the public loves me so much. It's God's blessing and their loyal support that I am where I am today.

No other artist has been nominated for a style award. Now three of my songs have been taken for a Hollywood movie. It's an amazing feeling when I think of myself being able to take Pakistan to this level.

**Tell us something about your upcoming music video.**

My new video will come out soon. It's going to be a surprise for every one. Bilal, a friend of mine from California, is going to direct it.

**Do you plan to sing any patriotic number in the near future?**

Well, only a year and a half has passed since I released my album. I can't force myself to make up a song. Music comes to me naturally. I will definitely come out with one, when I feel like it.

**What do you enjoy doing the most?**

I think have my own style; no one has ever tried playback singing before. I might release a punk rock song that perhaps other won't appreciate, but I like doing my own thing. I make music for my own satisfaction, not for money or fame.

**In a recent interview with Ali Azmat, he mentioned forming a Music Artist Association. What do you think about that? Do you think it will work?**

Well, I have no idea about that. I think it's a flop idea. They won't be able to do it. These people will be sitting and deciding things for themselves. It might work if they are well-managed and disciplined, otherwise not.

### **How much have you struggled to reach this stage of your career?**

I think I didn't have to struggle at all. My luck has always been with me. God is with me. So, it really wasn't hard at all. Well, I've only released a single album so far. I have a long way to go. Like I mentioned earlier, I do music for my own satisfaction. The day I'm satisfied with myself, I'll quit music.

### **Where do you see Atif Aslam in the next five to ten years?**

Well, I will still be the same Atif Aslam. I don't think it matters if I am a big star or not. I'll probably be working somewhere.

### **The media in Pakistan is growing. Is there anything that the Indian media has that the Pakistani media lacks?**

Actually, Pakistan has come up with good television channels. This is basically needed because there are so many artists in our country. The Pakistani pop industry is growing day by day. People are learning more about music and are becoming more professional about it. The idea that music is not allowed in Islam has been fading and so people are keener to expose and spread it. The only thing that Pakistani media lacks is the hype that the Indian media creates for any artist.

### **Do you think that a mainstream artist should help an upcoming artist?**

Yes, definitely. I would love to create some sort of organization to help out upcoming artists. However, Pakistani people have a different way of thinking. If I come with such an organization, others might think, "Pata nahee kya samajh ta hai apnay app ko". I hope I'll be able to do something like that one day.

### **Who is your favourite new comer to the music industry?**

Honestly speaking, every other person is talented. There is this band called "Siege". They are really working hard their music is awesome. You still have to keep your fingers crossed until your album is released. You don't get instant fame by making one hit song. So, let's wait and see.

### **As a critic, what do you think of Jal?**

Well, I personally think they are a good band. They have released a good album, except for four songs. I don't think Farhan should have sung Aadat. It would have been better if he had proved his talent by coming up with a new and original song. It was quite funny when I saw them on T.V. the other day. Farhan was asked why the band was called "Jal". Farhan claimed that he had suggested the name. The truth is that the band was named when Gohar and I made Aadat about 2-3 years back. I thought that was quite funny, because Farhan forgot that he was HIRED to sing. He wasn't the one who created the band.

When I went to India with my song "Woh Lamhey", I received a lot of appraisal. Not only from Mukesh Bhatt and Mahesh Bhatt, also from many other influential people. When my song became a hit in India, then they started protesting, about 5 to 6 months later, that "Woh Lamhey" belonged to them. They were basically cashing in on the name. I don't have such a mentality, but they really should get over it. Come on guys, please move on and come up with something new.

Besides that, I have no other criticism for them, their music is great and I wish them best of luck.

### **Islam teaches us equality. What are your views?**

Through my eyes, everyone is the same for me. I don't think of anyone as rich or poor. If a person considers himself rich then money is everything to him. He has his own worries about the world

and this man probably never gets a relaxed sleep. On the other hand when we consider a poor person, he has no worries like that about this materialistic world. His life is perfect and he can even have a relaxing sleep at the side of the road.

Islam not only teaches us equality but humanity. It's our duty to help others in need. Every human being has the right to live a peaceful life. I think we should encourage and educate our people about humanity and teach them how to be fair to others.

### **As a pop artist, how do you think you can change the society?**

Well, as a pop artist, I think it is my duty to be available 24/7 for all the people, not only for my fans. You shouldn't treat me as a pop icon because I am a normal human being and it is my duty to help every one in need. I can help by sending messages to my fans to become better citizens and human beings.

Pakistan is a big country and we have to work together. Some artists have proud attitudes and they don't work with others for the welfare of the country. I believe we have to collaborate work towards people as a force. We should try to create awareness among people. We should educate them. For instance, Shehzad Roy is doing a great job. Other singers and bands should take inspiration from those who try to help others. Such acts of kindness and charity really make a difference in today's society.

### **Tell us something about your family?**

Well, we're four brothers and I have no sister. All us brothers are very artistic while our parents are not. I'm the youngest son. My brother's have helped me a lot with my career.

### **What are your plans about marriage?**

I have 2 kids (laugh). Just kidding! No, I don't plan to marry anytime soon. I have to concentrate on my career. That

is, unless my parents force me to get married. I believe in friendship, I don't believe in love.

**Any message to your fans!**

Keep rocking...enjoy every bit of your life. Keep growing...never get disappointed. Highs and lows are a part of life. Keep trying to achieve your goals in life.