

Characters of Deputy Nazir Ahmed's novel "Ayami" In Postcolonial perspective

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Abstract

The first brick of the Urdu novel was laid by Deputy Nazir Ahmed. Marat-ul-Urus is considered not only his but also the first novel in Urdu. Deputy Nazir Ahmed has priority in Urdu novel writing. He laid the foundation of the Urdu novel by writing interesting and instructive stories. The color of objectivity is dominant in his novels. His novels are famous for their reformist aspects, of which "Marat-ul-Uroos", "Taubat-ul-Nasooch", "Ibn-ul-Waqt", "Fasana-e-Mubatala" and "Ayami" are noteworthy. Nazir is the first person who kept his novels away from metaphysical elements and made them a reflection of the world of reality. He took the content and themes of his novels from his own circle and the characters he created were also members of the same society. Simplicity is prominent in his novels instead of pretentiousness and artificiality. His novels are a mirror of the era in which they were written.

Nazir Ahmed's novels depict the streets, buildings and the changing conditions of Delhi in the 19th century. Since he belonged to the middle class, he made the economic and social problems of this class the subject of his novels. The element of objectivity is prominent in all his novels and this is his identity. This objectivity is sometimes based on the education and training of children in "Taubat-ul-Nasooch", and sometimes it encompasses the benefits of the education and training of girls in "Marat-ul-Uroos". Sometimes in "Ibn-ul-Waqt", he proves to be a master in showing the disadvantages of accepting the effects of Western civilization. Sometimes in the novel "Ayami", he makes the remarriage of women the subject. In other words, the element of objectivity is scattered in different colors in all of Nazir Ahmed's novels.

Key Words:

Deputy Nazir Ahmed, "Marat-ul-Uroos", "Taubat-ul-Nasooch", "Ibn-ul-Waqt", "Fasana-e-Mubatala", "Ayami", characterization, pretentiousness, 19th century, remarriage of women.

Literature Review

It has been assigned the task of researching and criticizing the characterization of Nazir Ahmed's novel "Ayami". Before discussing Ayami's characterisation in detail, it is necessary to briefly discuss Nazir Ahmed's characterisation. Characters are present in both genres of literature, be it poetry or prose. Characters are not essential in all genres of literature, but there are some genres of Urdu that are incomplete without characters, especially fictional literature such as epic novels and short stories. If the characters in Deputy Nazir Ahmed's novels are examined, he gives places to characters of his own free will. If a character is very good in his

eyes, then he is so good that we do not see any kind of evil in him from afar, and a character who is bad is very annoying in his novels. Dr. Sambal Nigar also admits this in these words.

"Nazir Ahmed ki kirdaar nigari be daagh nahi is
ka aik aib bohat numaya hai koi insaan nah sirf
naik ho sakta hai nah sirf bad balkay neki aur badi
dono mein sher o shakr ho jatay hain ya sirf
khoobiyon ka mujasma ".1

From the above quote, it is clear that the characters in Nazir Ahmed's novels are either angels or devils because angels are symbols of goodness and devils are the embodiment of evil. However, the characters in his novels seem to be adorned with purpose. Most of his characters are named after their names, meaning that whatever the name is, the actions of these characters will also be in accordance with that name, such as Nasuh, Zahir Dar Beg, Fitrat, Ibn Al-Waqt, Hujjatul-Salam, Noble, Sharp, Ghairat Begum, Akbari Asghari, etc. That is, if the name is Akbari, then she will be older in age and will surpass everyone in actions and deeds. Similarly, if it is Nasuh, then he will one day sincerely repent for his bad deeds. Regarding these characters of Nazir Ahmed, Professor Abdul Salam writes.

"Jis terhan machine wohi kaan sir injaam day
sakti hai jis ke liye woh waza ki gayi hai is
terhan Nazeer Ahmed ke kirdaar bhi –apne
label ke mutabiq kaam sir injaam dete hain is
se inhiraf karne ki un mein salahiyat hi nahi
hoti" 2

The above quote makes it clear that the characters in Nazir Ahmed's novels remain the same, they do not change from the beginning to the end of the novel. The greatest characteristic of his characters is their extremism, and in each of his novels we find characters with contradictory characteristics, either they are all-good or all-godly, that is, one character is good, absolute good, and the other character is completely bad, absolute evil. For example, look at Asghari and Akbari from Mirrat-ul-Arus. Nazir Ahmed has tried to instill moral values by presenting the conflict between good and evil through these two characters, which has also been supported by Aal Ahmed Sarwar.

" un ke kirdaar ya to farishtay hotay hain ya phir shetan,

insaan nahi hotay ". 3

A human being is one in whom virtues and faults are mixed, for example, Zahir Wadi is a collection of people who remain like this from the beginning to the end. It is impossible for any good to come out of them. The fact is that his characters are the eyes of a critic. They are the saints of May, they will be the same as they are in the beginning till the end. They are not subject to evolution, while circumstances keep creating changes in a person. Although Nazir Ahmed's characterisation does not meet the criteria of contemporary characterisation, his characterisation is free from supernatural elements and due to its compatibility with the people of our society, it is considered the first example of characterisation in Urdu literature. The correct, childish, natural and real impressions of life that are found in his characterisation are not found even by searching for them. His characters are certainly the epitome of good and evil, but it is Nazir Ahmed's characters that give him the status of priority in Urdu novel writing. As far as the characterization of the novel Ayami is concerned, it is discussed in detail.

Critics have written a lot on Deputy Nazir Ahmed's novels and even today his novels are the subject of discussion by critics, but on one of his important social novels, "Ayami", they either add to the fire by writing a few sentences or do not mention it at all. This is the reason why

many editions of his other novels have been published, but only two editions of *Ayami* have been published so far.

"*Ayami*" is Deputy Nazir Ahmed's sixth novel, published in 1891. This novel narrates the tragic story of a widow. The title of the novel "*Ayami*" is taken from the Arabic word which means widow. Nazir Ahmed felt the pain and suffering of the widow in her heart and made it the subject of this novel. The status of a widow in her time and her place in society is best reflected in this novel. The description of the characters in the novel *Ayami* is a research and critical topic. The discussion on this can be seen here.

Azadi Begum is the main female character of this novel. Her father's name is Khwaja Azad while her mother's name is Hadi Begum. She was not only the only child of her parents but also the only one in the family, the only granddaughter, the only son-in-law and the only niece. She was faster, healthier, stronger and more intelligent than other children. At the age of nine, she had learned everything. Azadi's education and training grew up in a conflict between two forces. Azadi's father was in favor of English education while her mother was in favor of giving Azadi an Eastern education. There was often a dispute between the two on this issue. See the quote.

"Aik din is baat par miyan biwi mein takraar
ho pari bachon ki taleem ka kuch tazkara tha
miyan ke mun se nikla ke tum bachon ki sab
terhan se bardasht karti ho magar un ke
parhnay likhnay ki bilkul khabar nahi rakhti
mein ne doray se aakar imthehaan liya to dono
mein se aik ko bhi pichla parha sun-hwa yaad
nahi tha. har roz madrasay nahi jatay ya ghar
par kitaab nahi dekhte. master meri murawwat
se dar guzar karta ho ga agar yahi haal raha to
madrasay se aik din un ka naam kat jaye ga ".

4

There was a conflict between Azadi's parents regarding his education and upbringing. Both sides were pushing their respective agendas. Azadi's mother was in favor of giving him a religious and oriental education, while Azadi's father wanted a western education instead of a secular one. Thus, there were frequent arguments between the two. However, in this fight, Azadi's mother would have won. Thus, Azadi was educated in a typical Indian madrasa, but Azadi's father succeeded in teaching him English manners. Khwaja Azad had relations with the British government, so he wanted to take Azadi to the house of an English woman named Miss Mary so that she could get acquainted with English civilization. But Hadi Begum flatly refused and said, "Why should we go to the house of infidels? You can take your daughter with you." But Khwaja Azad did not consider it appropriate to do so and left the matter there. One night, Azadi slipped while descending from the bridge and got a serious injury to her foot, but no one knew how to treat it. Hadi Begum asked Khwaja Azad to call the priest's wife, maybe she could treat the injury. Khwaja Azad called Wife. Mary came and saw Azadi and said that her leg was broken. However, Miss Mary started treating Azadi. She treated Azadi at Khwaja Azad's house. When there was no change in Azadi's condition, Wife shifted Azadi to her bungalow and continued treating her continuously. Thus, Azadi and Wife met and this meeting then turned into friendship. The two of them would continue to talk about various things. Azadi would ask Wife about her marriage and her family, and Wife would tell her everything as it was, as if they were in Western civilization and would never be separated. When Azadi was completely healthy, she came to her own home. Thus, Azadi became acquainted with Western

society. Miss Mary's friendship created a feeling of disgust for Eastern society within Azadi, but these feelings were limited to thoughts only. When Azadi reached the age of youth, the talk of her marriage would begin. Azadi would see all this with her own eyes. Whenever someone came to ask for a relationship, Azadi would not be allowed to sit next to her, let alone hear their conversation. See the quote in this regard.

"Maa ne beti ko is terhan samjhaya ke jab tumahray bayah baraat ka mazkoraah sun-hwa kere to tum tal jaya karo ya milnay ka mauqa nah ho to ankhen neechi kar ke sir jhuka liya karo. Dekho khabar daar apni saheliyo mein bhi is ki barri ahthyat karna warna baaz shareer larkiyen aap hi to khoud khoud kar chaten hain aur aap hi muhallay mein dhandhora petthii pari hoti hain." 5

The above quote shows the nobility and modesty of a mother from an Eastern family in how she wants to raise her children. However, Azadi had her own ideas. She wanted her marriage to be in the Western style, but this was not possible in Eastern society. Meanwhile, Azadi is struggling with different thoughts and at one point she thinks about her future husband like this:

"Keya haqeeqat mein yeh log mujh ko kisi ajnabi aadmi ke hawalay kar den ge jis ki soorat tak mein waaqif nahi aadat aur mizaaj ki kon kahe itna gazabb, itna andher agar mein ne is ko na pasand kya ya meri is ki marzi nah mili to mein jeetay jee meri ". 6

Due to Miss Mary's mediation, it had become impossible for Azadi to live like ordinary Indian girls, so the world of a Western girl was inhabited within her. She would definitely try to get rid of Indian civilization, but her dreams and thoughts remained unfulfilled because she knew that her parents were more intelligent than her, so she was happy with the decision her parents had to make. Thinking this, Azadi became the bearer of an Eastern civilization. Good relations came from different places for Azadi, but there was also a dispute between the husband and wife over whether the daughter's relationship should be given here and denied there or whether Hadi Begum would win in this fight and Hadi Begum willingly arranged Azadi's relationship with her relatives. Azadi's relationship was arranged with Maulvi Mustajab, who was among Hadi Begum's relatives. After some time, they got married very simply and thus Azadi Begum started her new life. Both husband and wife were happy with each other, but Azadi Begum wanted her husband to leave the Maulana and do some other work so that religion would remain in its place and work in its place. So Azadi Begum convinced her husband to do some work now. The Maulana agreed to this and took up a job with the Nawab in Bhopal, writes Dr. Zeenat Bashir in this regard.

"Azadi pehlay apne miyan ko meethi meethi aur mudlal baton se sehar karti hai. . . dheeray dheeray molwiyat se is ke dil mein nafrat peda kar ke is se churrwati molwiyat hai jab is kamiyan chore kar gharbaith jata hai to woh daur andeshi aur maamla fehmi se kaam letay hue is zareya par majboor karti lekin jab shore mulazmat ke liye bhopal jata hai to is ko rawaangi ke haq mein nahi hoti." 7

Azadi's father was against the Maulvi and Azadi herself was familiar with English culture, so she instilled hatred for Maulviism in her husband's heart so that people would not slander that the Maulvi makes a living on the scraps of others. After sending her husband away, Azadi stayed with her in-laws, but her misfortune began when the news of her husband's death came from Bhopal. Thus, Azadi had to see the terrible face of widowhood at a very young age. The main theme of the novel begins from here, Hadi Begum stayed with her daughter to reduce her grief, but neither her mother nor her in-laws could remove this shock from Azadi. To reduce the feeling of widowhood, she started living alone in her house where there was nothing but the memories of her husband. Sometimes she would engage in worship, sometimes she would recite the Holy Quran, but Azadi herself did not know what she was reading or doing. No work could relieve her of the feeling of widowhood. On this occasion, Maulvi Muqtadi was also teaching Azadi, but Azadi listened to all this in one ear and left out the other. Azadi's mind had become a place of conflict. She started preferring life to death. She often thought of suicide and then she would abandon this idea in her heart, saying that suicide is forbidden. In other words, Azadi did not like anything good or bad. She had a separate world in which she was alone. In this world, there was nothing except thoughts and ideas. Even if the world of ideas had settled for some time, it would have scattered like sand dunes after a few moments. In this conflict, another turn came in Azadi's life which took his mental conflict to another direction. A woman named Chhalawa entered Azadi's life. Chhalawa was a cunning woman. Mushtaq had set Chhalawa after Azadi to convince her to marry another man. To achieve this goal, Chhalawa started coming to Azadi's house. Here is a quote from their first meeting.

"Is ne kya mujhe ko azmooda khanam kehte
hain mein hon to lkhno ki rehni wali magar
muddat se bhopal mein rehne ka ittafaq hota
hai tumahray miyan molvi مسجحاب ko Allah
jannat naseeb kere hum logon se barri raah
rasam thi mere samnay un ka intqaal sun-hwa
woh aksar hum logon se tumhara tazkara karte
kya karte thay mein yahan anay lagi to dil
mein keh kar chali thi ki tum se zaroor milon
gi to aaj kkhuda ne yeh arzoo poori ki magar
jaisa haal tumahray miyan molvi Mustajab ne
bayan kya tha is mein aur ab ki haalat mein
zamee aasman ka farq hai ". 8

Chhalawa told Azadi fabricated stories of Maulvi Mustajab's kindness and love, while many also showed him green gardens. After meeting Chhalawa, Azadi's thoughts changed. Azadi believed everything Chhalawa said to be true, even to the point that Chhalawa accused her husband of having an affair with another girl in Bhopal. However, Chhalawa managed to subdue Azadi with her fabricated stories and sweet words so that Azadi agreed to a second marriage.

Azadi agreed to a second marriage after listening to Chhalawa's words. Now Azadi's world of thoughts changes and she thinks that spring has come to her lifeless life. She is half-confused and agonized after hearing Khwaja Mushtaq from Chhalawa. Now she has decided that she has to get married again. She thinks that a second marriage is permissible in Islam too. She also reads a magazine in which it is written about a second marriage and in her autobiography she says.

"Beshak mujhe se itna qasoor toh sun-hwa ke
mein ne dosray nikah ka iradah nahi kya aur

nah mera z hun is taraf muntaqil ho laiken na
is khayaal se ke dosra nikah be izzati ki baat
hai balkay mein ne baithy rehne ko Shewa
murawwat aur shart wafadaari samjha tha
mein murawwat aur wafadaari ko paighambar
zaadiyoun se behtar kya samjhun gi mein to
kisi baat mein bhi is ki jootion ki barabari nahi
kar sakti ". 9

After the death of her husband, Azadi had made her condition worse, but after listening to Chhalawa's odes of her beauty and hearing her mention of being seduced by other lovers, Azadi recovered a bit. Now she has started to improve herself. Now the ghazals read by the neighbors do not bother her. But after seeing the love letters on the door, Azadi seizes the opportunity and decides to go to her mother's house for her own safety and honor. Chhalawa clings to Azadi. Chhalawa seduces Azadi and takes her doll to her own door instead of taking her to her mother's house so that Azadi can meet Khwaja Mushtaq. Azadi could not understand the situation at first, but by chance, a friend of her mother's comes there and informs Azadi about the whole situation and thus Azadi comes to know about Chhalawa's true nature and thus escapes from her fate. In this way, Azadi's honor is not tarnished. After escaping this misfortune, Azadi once again takes widowhood upon herself and gets lost in the world of old thoughts.

Khwaja Mushtaq was sitting in the other room of the hall where Chhalawa had taken Azadi. Azadi sometimes felt hatred for him and sometimes she felt regret that she had not met Mushtaq. It is possible that the matter of a second marriage would have progressed. She also felt sorry for Chhalawa for having arranged a meeting with Khwaja Mushtaq. She wanted to establish a connection with Khwaja Mushtaq with the help of Sambhagi so that the matter of a second marriage could have been discussed, but society did not allow her to do so. Therefore, she went through this mental conflict every day. Every day her thoughts would come up with a new color and then fade away. These thoughts of hers licked her from inside.

After Azadi's death, she remembers her deeds and reviews them, which reveal Azadi's foresight and spirituality. Azadi was in favor of a second marriage, but society did not accept her act. Her last will is a clear proof of this. Before dying, she wants to express her desires and longings in front of everyone and vent her heart's anger. In a soliloquy, she says:

"Mana ke ab mein nikah karne ke qabil nahi to kya logon ko nasehat
karne aur samjhane ke qabil bhi nahi bawajood kay Muzeeb mein
bhi ijazat balkay takeed hai aur aqal ki ro se bhi koi qabahat nahi phir
bhi jo musalmanoon mein bewa ka nikah nahi ho taa ho nah ho
yeh rasam bad unhon ne hndon se li hai, avr tain zid se ziyada sharam
kar ke ani azadi kho aur –apne haq se haath dho bathain mardon ko
is ka khayaal nahi aur khila honay ki wajah bhi nahi, khud aurat hon
to aurton ki bewgi ki qader jaanen un ki museebat ko pehchanen be shak
barri umdah aur mo-asar naseehat wohi thi ke mein mun se aik harf nah
kehti aur kar ke dikha deti ". 10

This last will of Azadi is the soul of this novel and also the purpose of this novel. This last will of Azadi is quite long, but the purpose of the novel is summarized in this will. Technically, Azadi is the central female character of this novel and the entire story of the novel revolves around this character. In short, the character of Azadi represents those middle-class Muslim widows of the post-1857 period who received a little education and to some extent also saw a

glimpse of Western education and tried to benefit from Western civilization but were deprived of practicing it because the Eastern society refused to accept.

Badi Begum is the second important female character of this novel. Hadi Begum is the mother of Azadi and the wife of Khwaja Azad. She is the daughter of the wise Maulvi Muqtadi of her time, and therefore inherited Maulviism. Badi Begum was a woman with conservative and religious views. She preferred a madrasa for her daughter's education so that Azadi could get acquainted with Eastern traditions and live like a normal Indian girl. On the contrary, Azadi's father was in favor of giving her an English education. He was a free thinker and enlightened person like his name. Due to the lack of harmony in the thoughts of the husband and wife, there were often arguments between the two and hardly a day passed when there was no quarrel between the husband and wife. Khwaja Azad used to call the Maulvis bad and also prove with some arguments that the Maulvi world is a place where good people live. But when did Badi Begum give up? She would have the answers to her husband's questions ready in advance. Whenever the name of English education was mentioned in the house, she would get angry. Hadi Begum's role is that of a well-mannered wife of an Indian society. She knows how to cook, sew, and is also knowledgeable about the customs and traditions of marriages and other ceremonies. As far as Eastern education is concerned, she can read and write, and is well-versed in the Quran, Hadith, and jurisprudence. When Khwaja Azad chooses an English school for the education and training of her children, Hadi Begum fights against him. She considers English education a source of shame for herself and her family. At one point, she says, as quoted.

"Keya jane sara shehar thare thare kar raha hai
aur abba jaan hi ko log aakar puchhte hain ke
aisay barray molvi aur waiz ke nwase padrion
ke madrasay mein daakhil ?
Mein to is shar mand gi ke maaray logon ke
bayah baarat mein bhi jana chore diya ". 11

Hadi Begum Dar was a true conservative and reactionary woman. She was not ready to completely abandon Eastern traditions. When Khwaja Azad said that the children had been brought from far away, and that the names of the children would be erased from the madrasa due to the lack of education, Azadi Begum became angry and said.

"Is madrasay ko lagey jhalsa mein to kkhuda
se chahti hon ke buray bachon ke naam kal ke
liye kitney aaj hi kat jayen."12

When Khwaja Sahib asks to meet the priest's wife at her house, Badi Begum refuses to go there and does not want to invite Meem Sahib to her house. She considers it a source of shame for her. And she says, what is the work of the elders in the presence of the priests? Then there is a dispute between the two. However, Badi Begum's role represents the Muslim society, especially the women of the Muslim society.

When a child from her family enters an English school, Badi Begum considers him to be the ill-mannered child of the parents and Hadi Begum did not want to make her children disrespectful. Being from a Maulvi family, Hadi Begum stood firmly holding the rope of the religious beliefs of the society. This is the reason why when educated boys came for freedom, she did not accept her daughter's marriage to them. In this regard, Dr. Zeenat Bashir write.

"Hadi begum dar asal Hujjata al - islam ka
niswani roop hai Hujjata islam chunkay parha
likha hai mazhabi qabahat mein behas o
takraar karna mudlal aur thos dalail paish

karta. haadi begum gharelo hai itni parhi likhi
aalam o fazil nahi is liye is ke paas thos dalail
nahi taham woh jo aatrazat yahan sunthee aur
phir jaakar aik aik ke chaar chaar jawab
dandan shikan seekh aati. is ne miyan ki zad
par angrezi society ko aisi roti dengi keh goya
series of London is ko azber thi".¹³

It is clear from the above quote that Hadi Begum wants the same traditional system that she has seen in her Mecca to prevail in her own home. Her husband and her daughter should also live in this way. Her religious discussions with her husband and the completion of the conversation by giving arguments is a sign of a scholar. Badi Begum's character is a stubborn character who wants to get her point across. She does not give in to her husband at any cost or listen to his words. She does not even respect her husband. She interrupts her husband before he finishes speaking. This is the reason why she gets her daughter married to a cleric and strongly opposes her husband.

On the other side of the picture, Hadi Begum is a loving mother. She does not want to see her children in trouble. When Azadi Begum slips while coming down from the roof and her hip comes off, she tries very hard to make Azadi's treatment possible, but no such doctor is available at that time. For the sake of her children, she chooses the Englishwoman Miss Mary, although Hadi Begum had a strong hatred for the British, but to relieve the suffering of her children, she calls Miss Mary to her house with the help of her husband, gets Azadi treated, and until Azadi's health is restored, she sends Azadi to Miss Mary for treatment. Hadi Begum's character is stubborn, but loving her children and then getting the treatment from the Englishwoman and sending Azadi to their home despite so much opposition is no less than the love of a mother.

When Azadi becomes a widow, Hadi Begum leaves her home and clings to her. She shares her daughter's sorrow equally. She mourns his wife more than Azadi. She thinks of various suggestions to cheer up her daughter and then gets Azadi Begum to do the same thing so that her widowhood can cheer her up. Here is an excerpt in this regard.

"Hadi begum beeni ko dekh dekh kar jalti jati
thi. unhi inhen kya karoon kya nah karo. iddat
mein nah hoti to bulaa se is ko baghoon mein
liye phir qi kutub sahib ki sair karwati shayad
is ka dil behalta. aakhir is ko khayaal aaya ke
is ko molvion ke waaz sunwao bas yahi aik
tadbeer hai nah laga to nika lag gaya to teer
hai."¹⁴

The above quote shows the mother's maternal attitude towards her daughter. Hadi Begum's affection was more than her own children. After entertaining her daughter for a few days, she returned to her home and then kept asking for the address of freedom from time to time. Hadi Begum's character reflects the stable middle class women of Delhi who have not stepped outside the four walls of the house and live in a closed society with the prevailing rules. Who have neither seen the outside world nor do they want to see it.

Technically, Hadi Begum's character is straightforward and there is no ambiguity in this character. Mary is a supporting character in the feminine character of the novel, which is seen in the beginning of the novel. She is a proof of her nobility, decency and intelligence. She is an English girl who is the daughter of the priest. The priest has married a second time and this was from his first wife. The character of Miss Mary appears in the novel for a short time and

then disappears. Through this character, Nazir Ahmed has represented Western women. In the West, girls are considered independent and they can come anywhere. This is the reason why when Azadi meets Miss Mary, who introduces Azadi to the Western customs and traditions related to women in the West. Nazir Ahmed has tried to convey the message through this character that the Western civilization that was gradually influencing India was also influencing Muslim families. Miss Mary's preparation for Azadi and then calling her for permanent treatment reflects that she is not greedy and selfish, but serving the people is her profession. This is the reason why Hadi Begum, who does not accept the British in any way, gets her daughter treated by her after being influenced by Miss Mary.

Although there is a difference of more than seven years between the ages of Azadi and Miss Mary, Miss Mary's stay with Azadi for a long period of three months and her frequent visits to Azadi's house during the day, during the treatment and in her free time, the two of them discussing various national and religious issues, especially religious issues, become a source of love between the two, according to Dr. Ahsan Farooqi.

"Jo is azadi ko rehan sehan ki baabat aur bayah
shadi ki baabat naye khayalat se itna hi aagah
karti hai jitna ke woh miss meri azadi ki taang
ko apne naye ilaaj se theek karti hai ". 15

Everyone knew that Azadi was intelligent since childhood, but after meeting Miss Mary, this intelligence came to the fore in a more vivid way. Azadi's world of thoughts changes with the love of Miss Mary, which is expressed before Azadi's marriage. When Azadi becomes a widow, these thoughts come to the fore and shock the reader. By presenting Miss Mary's neatness, neatness and usefulness, Nazir Ahmed made it clear how European women are bound to their time and how responsibly they carry out their work. In contrast, Indian women are confined to homes devoid of knowledge and skills, they neither care about their cleanliness nor take care of their children and home.

Miss Mary has formulated some rules for living her life. Miss Mary has enough ability to decide for herself whether she is good or bad. Miss Mary's mother wanted to make her a nanny, but her nanny did not like it. Miss Mary remains stubborn, but Miss Mary uses her own judgment and decides against her mother and does not become a nun. See the excerpt:

"Meri nahi mein tan nahi hon aur none hona
pasand bhi nahi karti balkay meri walida ne
apni zindagi mein mujh ko none banana chaha
tha magar mein ne saaf inkaar kya. is se
shayad woh mujh se kisi qader naraaz bhi buri
ho to taajjub nahi."16

Miss Mary knew what problems might arise tomorrow, so she made her own decision, which turned out to be absolutely right. Miss Mary may not be married yet, but she seems to be a well-mannered and more experienced woman than most married women. For her, marriage is not a game of dirty dolls like Indian girls, but is also the most important and greatest event in life, she says about marriage.

"Aakhir mein bhi to aqal rakhti hon aisay
shakhs se raah rast hi kyun karne lagi. surat,
shakal, khandan, zaati Liaqat tandruti mizaaj
aadat aamdani pesha yeh cheeze dekhnay ki
hoti hain to kya mein nahi dekh sakti aur bayah
to mujh ko karna parre ga. Meer a yahi kehna
muqaddam hai. mard aur aurat ka mein jab is

terhan ka talluq honay ko hota hai to ghar walon se chhupa nahi rehta aur chhupanay ka dastoor bhi nahi kasrat se aana jana *مخپ* o katabat, tohfay Ahaef bohat si baatein hain jin ke maloom hona hai ke aik dosray ki taraf mael hain to agar ghar walon ko aitraaz hota hai woh mulaqaat ko bherne hi nahi dete. "17

Girls of Miss Mary's age have given birth to many children. Nazir Ahmed has depicted the customs and traditions of British marriage through this character. Miss Mary herself will decide whom she wants to marry. Technically, Miss Mary's character is a simple character and appears at the beginning of the novel and lights the candle of her part that burns until Azadi's death. This character has left its mark at the beginning of the novel. If Miss Mary had not come to treat Azadi and had not called Azadi to her, Azadi would have lived like an ordinary oriental woman. In fact, Miss Mary's character reflects the era where Indian civilization had died. The people of India were fed up with their civilization. Miss Mary's character dealt a blow to this fading civilization that had permeated her soul.

A Katni is a woman who, with her smooth talk, lures noble women into her trap and then rules over these noble women, turning some into prostitutes and others into market women. However, in the novel *Ayami*, there is a Katni named Chhalawa who appears in the middle of the novel and helps Azadi in his second marriage, which fails. This character is representative of the Katni of that time who disguise themselves in noble families and then lure the daughters-in-law of that family into their sweet talk and arouse their sexual feelings and create new temptations. Chhalawa awakens the sexual feelings of Azadi Begum. On the advice of Khwaja Mushtaq, she persuades Azadi to enter into a second marriage. She takes compensation from Khwaja Mushtaq for this work. The excerpt can be seen.

"Sabr ke baithy raho dekho to kya hota hai itna to mein kehti hon ke agar azadi ko tumahray ghar nah bithaon to woh chhalawa apna naam nah rakhwaon mein tum se keh chuki hon ke azadi ki to kuch baat hi nahi koi mushkil se mushkil kaam bana kar mujh nacheez ka kamaal dekh buraiee karne par aon to shaam o shaam azadi ko yahan laa khara kar dun magar woh baat tum ko Manzoor nahi."18

The above quote makes it clear how cunning and cunning a woman Chhalawa is. Chhalawa meets Azadi in disguise and persuades Azadi to marry again. Chhalawa's job is to create a desire for a second marriage in Azadi's heart. When Khwaja Mushtaq pursues Azadi to establish a connection with Azadi, she enters Azadi's house at a specific time and changes her name and appearance.

When Azadi lifts the ban and people start coming to her, Chhalawa also appears there in a special pose, wearing two sheets. Azadi saw her in a strange form. When she asked him more, he said, "My name is Azmooda Khanum and I am from Lucknow. May Allah grant paradise to your late husband, Maulvi Mustajab. He passed away in front of me in a big ceremony. She used to mention you to us. When I started coming here, I had already decided in my heart that I would definitely meet you.

Chhala first introduced Azadi in the traditional way and then started her real work. First she told about Azadi's death and then she also told about Maulvi Mustajab's will which had nothing to do with reality. She succeeds in her first meeting with Azadi. She breaks the estrangement

between her and Azadi and paves the way for Azadi to win her heart. She effectively tells Azadi about her husband's ubiquity and then the fabricated story of his death, bringing Azadi closer to her. In the first meeting, the two get so close that they think of a plan to meet again. Chhala cleverly and artfully makes excuses before and then recruits supporters to meet tomorrow or the day after. In the second meeting, Chhala creates an atmosphere for her purpose and accuses Azadi's innocent husband of having a love affair with some famous woman in Bhopal. She explains all this in such a way that Azadi starts hating her husband and the idea of a second marriage comes to her mind.

After hearing Chhalawa's sweet words, Azadi is no longer the charming woman who considered it a sin to imagine a non-mahram man. She wants to hear about this man from Chhalawa, but Chhalawa makes her restless and then calls Mushtaq's name, saying that this is a man who is not ready to marry a girl. She teases Azadi's dormant feelings and plants the idea of Khwaja Mushtaq's love in his heart in such a way that Azadi decides to remarry him without any offer.

When Azadi's heart is ready for the remarriage, she goes to her mother for a few days. Here Chhalawa brings Azadi's doll to her house. Here the matter turns around and Azadi suppresses the matter in her heart because when Azadi's doll is called, she deceives Azadi and brings him to her house of her own free will. Azadi did not understand anything at first, but here she comes to know the true form of the disguise. Sabhagi, a daughter of Azadi's in-laws, is there at that time and she foils the plan of the disguise and thus Azadi's honor is saved. But she fails in her goal. Now she treats Sabhagi like a raging tigress. At that time, the words of the disguise are as follows.

"Aayi barri shareef zaadiyoun ki kher khuwa
meri bulaa ko kya gharz pari hai. Ashraf
zadiyan mujhe ko ghar se bulaa bulaa kar
senkron dafaa mehnetain karti hain to mein aik
dafaa un ko anay deti hon hai aaj koi aisa ke
ghar beti ko zabar dasti –apne yahan bula
lay"¹⁹

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"Ameer zaadiyoun ko dekh kar bahwon tak
batiyan jamaye zulfein latakaye jora bandhay
ankhoo mein dhuwan daar surma danoton
mein si aur si par laa kha gilaay mein barri
glory dabay turmohi khanam ki shakal banaye
maathey par afshaan haath paon mein mehndi
chaltay phir ne shamni uthte baithtay utar anaa
is ki targheeb is ki badi idhar aawaz idhar
londion ko gaali mamaon ko jhar ki is par jo ti
sharam o haya baalaye taaq mein sach kehti
hon ke mein khodagi aur chhichhoray pan ki
harkatein karti to woh thi aur sharam mujh ko
aati thi."20

The above excerpt does not reveal any individual personality, but overall, the moving pictures of the Amirzadis definitely come to the fore. Their culture, their way of life, their way of getting up and sitting, their clothes, everything comes to the reader's attention. On the one hand, Nazir Ahmed has depicted the habits and customs of the Amirzadis, and on the other hand, he has also tried to show the veiled and refined women of the Maulvi family as a whole. Here is an excerpt in this regard.

"Aadmi idhar idhar bhi itnay thay ke tall
darnay ki jagah nah thi magar kya majaal ke
kisi ki aawaz sunai day bahar ke par day
chhorro to sehan mein kisi ko yeh bhi shuba
nah guzray ke dalaan mein koi hai. larkiyan
tak aisi seedhi hoti ke jis ko dekho machleen
maa ke ghatney se lagi baithi hai soda yeh nahi
maangti. yeh khanay ke liye yeh full nahi
bachati, kapray aur zewar sab ke nisbat durust
hai. qeemti jore bhaari bhaari gahne aur apni
apni Umar ke mutabiq kanghi thi."21

In the above excerpt, Nazir Ahmed has tried to show the women of the Maulvi family with great simplicity and elegance. Nazir Ahmed did not present just a few tangible characters, but in his eyes, the entire society. Overall, he tried to reform the society by highlighting the extraordinary abilities of the female characters in "Ayami".

Apart from all the above female characters, no other female character is mentioned in the novel. The female characters of Ayami are walking characters of our society, among them is Azadi and her widowhood. The only difference is that in Ayami, the name is Azadi and in our society it can be any other name.

Khwaja Azad is the male character of this novel. He is the husband of Azadi and Badi Begum. Being fond of English conditions, he also wants to identify his children with English, but his wife, who is a Maulviist, comes in his way. Khwaja Azad had an average level of English education in Session College, due to which English education is ingrained in his thoughts. A believer in the wisdom of the British, a supporter of girls' education, an opponent of the veil, and greatly impressed by the politeness, skill, purity, cleanliness, kindness, compassion, and thriftiness of British women, he considered the Muslims to be the last of all against the British industriousness, compassion, bravery, perseverance, ability, and intelligence. In this regard, Dr. Zeenat Bashir writes.

"Jahan tak shadi bayah ka talluq hai woh is mein bohat hi azad khayaali se kaam laita tha woh apni tajweez ki shadi ko pasand karta tha kam suni ki shadi ki mukhalfat kar taa tha. barron ka adab aur lehaaz karta un ki tazeem karna is ke nazdeek hindostanyon ki buzdali thi woh nojawanon mein be baki zindah dili raqs o suroor gharz woh har cheez jo ikhlaqi nuqta nazar se buri samjhi jati hai pasand karta tha. Karta." 22

Being a fan of English ideas, Khwaja Azad wanted to get his daughter married to Mushtaq, but he was helpless in front of his wife and could neither teach Azadi English nor marry her of his own free will. When Azadi becomes a widow and Hadi Begum remains with Azadi like a shadow, he says:

"Is ko isi ki raye par rehne do, insaan ko kkhuda ne azad peda kya hai aur har ik insaan azad rehna chahta hai agar azadi ko sakhti ke sath roka jaye to woh doosri buri buraiyon mein phoot nikalti hai ".23

Khwaja Azad had a very bad opinion of Maulvi. The Maulvi, whom he used to call Kal, considered him a bhikkhu. The Maulvi class had a deep hatred for the way they earned money and supported themselves, and he always vented his anger on these Maulvi.

Khwaja Azad could not put his bright ideas into practice due to the lack of cooperation from his wife. He could not even get his daughter married and educated in his own way. This clearly shows that Khwaja Azad was irresponsible and careless in terms of household affairs. At one point, he himself writes.

"Un ki marzi mila ko beti dainay ki ndhi yeh jo kuch sun-hwa un ki raye ki raye ke khilaaf tha aur is muamlay ne umoor khanah daari mein un ki be ikhtiyaari ka parda faash kar diya ". 24

In the character of Khwaja Azad, Nazir Ahmed presented the effects of Western civilization that were gradually affecting Indian society, but these effects were not so deep that they could

act immediately. Although the English society had to accept the effects of English civilization to some extent, the atmosphere was not ready for such freedom.

Technically, the character of Khwaja Azad appears from the beginning of the novel and is shown in the discussion and repetition of various issues with his wife and daughter, and then after the middle of the novel, the action of this character ends.

Maulvi Mustajab is a supporting character in this novel. He is the husband of Azadi who belongs to a family of eaters and drinkers. The ancestral profession of this family is preaching. This character moves forward in the novel with the help of his wife Azadi. After marriage, he resigns from the profession of Maulana after hearing things against Maulana from his wife. He hates his profession. Azadi gives up Maulana and prefers to work. He becomes involved in teaching in Bhopal but gets caught up in state conspiracies and dies. The main theme of this novel begins after the death of this character, that is, the widow of Azadi. Mustajab's quitting the profession of a Maulvi and taking up a job was also an indication of Nazir Ahmed's reformist goal. Nazir Ahmed did not want people to live their lives on the invitations, prayers and charity of people who are hungry under the guise of Maulvihood. And preach on demand. By introducing this character, Nazir Ahmed has encouraged those Maulvis who eat bread without hard work and compassion to eat bread of hard work so that Maulvis can also achieve a better position in society.

Khwaja Mushtaq is the important and central character of this novel. If Khwaja Mushtaq is called the hero of this novel, it will be lifeless. Khwaja Mushtaq was one of the visitors of Azadi's father, Khwaja Azad, and was also a distant relative of Khwaja Azad. There is a clear difference in the ages of the two, but their thoughts were the same, that is why Mushtaq came and went to Khwaja Azad's house without hesitation. Mushtaq was a very bold young man. He did not respect the elders, did not interfere in the elders' conversation, objected to them, drank hakka in front of them without hesitation, whistled, sang songs, and cried at any time and place. He did not respect the elders, sometimes sang songs without a reason, so his character is the same.

He was a liberal-minded Western young man, and Khwaja Azad liked the same things in his character, so he did not stop Mushtaq from coming to his house. He had also seen Azadi many times. He was fascinated by both Azadi's good nature and appearance and wanted him to marry Azadi, but Azadi's marriage was with Maulvi Mastjab with the consent of his mother. Mushtaq was so sad about Azadi's marriage that he wandered out of the city. After Azadi's marriage, he did not even think about his own marriage. Among her relatives, they searched for girls more beautiful than Azadi, but she refused. Whenever he was asked to marry her, he would say.

"Mujhe hindostanyon ki society ka maal achi terhan maloom hai kyun ke is society mein peda sun-hwa aur is society mein bara hon mein nahi samjhta ke koi hindustani aurat woh raahat pouncha sakti hai jis ka mein shohar honay ki hesiyat se tawaqqa rakh sakta hon ".

25

Mushtaq is unhappy with the ignorance, lack of knowledge, and carelessness of Indian women like raising children. He does not feel any special difference between Indian women and animals. He did not want to marry an ignorant woman and darken his future. Khwaja Mushtaq was a true lover of Azadi. When Azadi becomes a widow, he is ready to marry his daughter. He wants to find an opportunity to inform Azadi when he will. For this, he uses the Katni camouflage as a means.

Maulvi Nasih and Maulvi Muqtadi are secondary characters in this novel. Maulvi Nasih is the father of Maulvi Mustajab and the father-in-law of Azadi, who is a very egotistical preacher. This actually represents those maulvis whose only source of livelihood is maulviship, which includes giving sermons. He considers it the best source of his livelihood and prefers it to the seminary. So, in this regard, at one point he says to his son Maulvi Mustajab.

"Mujhe hindostanyon ki society ka maal achi terhan maloom hai kyun ke is society mein peda sun-hwa aur is society mein bara hon mein nahi samjhata ke koi hindustani aurat woh raahat pouncha sakti hai jis ka mein shohar honay ki hesiyat se tawaqqa rakh sakta hon "

26

The sermon of Azadi's grandfather, Maulvi Muqtadi, in which he exhorted his granddaughter Azadi to be patient over her widowhood, is described at such length that the subject itself disappears. Regarding the sermons of the Maulvi, the advisor himself says.

"Aik seeparay ko baras roz tak ghaseettha hon, aisay aadmi ko bolnay ke liye aik bahana kaafi hai aur bolna shuru kya to phir kia rukna"27

By presenting the character of Maulvi Muqtadi, Nazir Ahmed wants to show that Maulvi's only need an excuse to preach, which can be used to gauge their speaking power. Many critics have almost ignored Nazir Ahmed as a successful character writer in Urdu literature. In this regard, see Majnun Gorakhpuri's opinion:

"Sharar aur un se ziyada sarshar ne pehlay pehal urdu mein kirdaar nigari ko rivaaj diya."28

It is true that the clearest traces of characterisation are found in Sharar and Sar Shaar than in Nazir Ahmed, but both of them benefited from Nazir Ahmed in characterisation. And they have improved by following in his footsteps. But in the evolution of the art of characterisation, Nazir Ahmed is the first character writer who gave a new colour and tone to characterisation and put the old stream flowing for centuries on a new direction where only reality and truth prevailed. The character of Nawab Sahib is also secondary in the novel. Azadi's husband works for Nawab Sahib. When he dies, Nawab Sahib gives Azadi a long and thorough advice. In addition, after the death of Azadi's husband, Mustajab, he also appoints a scholarship for Azadi.

In this sense, Nazir Ahmed's status in characterisation of Urdu literature is that of an inventor and in any case, the credit for his primacy will also remain with him. Those who came from them benefited and did not have to face any difficulties in fulfilling their purpose. In the light of Nazir Ahmed's novels, we can conclude that Nazir Ahmed had the ability to write an excellent character. If Nazir Ahmed had paid more attention to this, he could have become a great character writer. And he would have taken a lot of lead over others. However, Nazir Ahmed's name will remain in the forefront of the evolution of character writing in Urdu literature and there is no room for denying his status and position as the first character writer. Thus, overall, we can say that in this novel of Deputy Nazir Ahmed, two intellectual cycles are seen working at the level of presenting the characters. Just as the local characters are impressed by Miss Mary's wisdom and knowledge, they bring out the special thinking of the colonial era. All these characters emerge from their specific era.

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