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HISTORY'S ECHO IN URDU NOVELS

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Abstract
The echo of history is a significant literary and intellectual theme in the Urdu novel, serving as a medium to reflect past events, cultural traditions, political shifts, and social attitudes. Historical consciousness does not confine the Urdu novel to a mere recounting of events; rather, it transforms the genre into a vehicle for exploring human experiences, collective memory, and the formation of national identity. By focusing on various historical eras, Urdu novelists have sought to understand and articulate the intellectual, cultural, and societal challenges of their own times. In this context, history is not merely a recreation of the past, but a means to comprehend contemporary issues and contemplate future possibilities.

Within the tradition of the Urdu novel, authors such as Deputy Nazir Ahmed, Abdul Halim Sharar, and Naseem Hijazi incorporated historical events and figures into their creative expression. Their works highlight the rise and fall of Muslim civilization, political strife, wars, conquests, sacrifices, and the fragmentation of a nation. Conversely, other novelists have utilized historical backdrops to explore social transformations, the colonial experience, the Partition of India, and questions surrounding human identity. Thus, the fusion of history and imagination generates multiple layers of meaning within the Urdu novel.

This discussion examines how historical events are integrated into the literary narrative of the Urdu novel, how historical characters and collective memory are constructed, and how the echoes of the past connect to the political, social, and cultural challenges of the present day. The primary objective of this study is to underscore the artistic, intellectual, and cultural significance of historical consciousness within the Urdu novel.

Key Words:
Urdu novel, Deputy Nazir Ahmed, Abdul Halim Sharar, Naseem Hijazi, Intellectual theme, Political, Social, Cultural significance, Historical consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

Literature Review

There are various types of novels, among which social, romantic, tragic, detective, humorous, psychological, character-driven, and historical novels are particularly noteworthy. From the era of Nazir Ahmed to the present day, Urdu novelists have explored all these genres; however, the historical novel holds a prominent position due to its thematic breadth and artistic significance. It encompasses not only historical events but also elements of romance and reflections of social life. Although some critics do not classify the historical novel as a distinct subgenre, others argue that its artistic nuances and literary objectives grant it a unique status. The historical novel brings the atmosphere of the past to life, presents well-known historical figures from a fresh perspective, and narrates significant events in a manner that leaves a lasting impression on the reader's mind. Abul Lais Siddiqui has also articulated the distinction between the historical novel and the craft of historiography from a unique vantage point.

"Tareekh mein kirdar aur waqiat dono haqeeqi hote hain aur moarrikh unhein pesh karne mein apni shakhsiyat, kirdar aur faisla shamil karne ka haq nahin rakhta. Us ka kaam camera ki tarah asal ki ek aisi naqal utaarna hai jo asal se sar-e-moo inhiraf na kare. Novel mein, khaas taur par tareekhi novel mein, naam chahe haqeeqi hon, dastaan, muamlaat, manazir sab novel nigar ke takhayyul ki paidaawar hote hain aur haqeeqat se un ka talluq bara-e-naam hi hota hai. Is liye yahan us ki naqal nahin, ijaad aur takhleeq par zor hota hai. Is tarah tareekhi novel mein sirf chand naam tareekhi hote hain aur bas. Haan, unhein tareekhi novel sirf is aitibaar se keh sakte hain ke novel nigar tareekh ka ek shuoor rakhta hai aur baaz tareekhi kirdaron ya waqiat ko apne novelon mein bator-e-pas-e-manzar istemaal kar sakta hai."1

Abu al-Laith Siddiqui further explainsAnother excerpt is as follows.

"Tareekhi novel ki tarkeeb bajaye khud behas talab hai. Tareekh mein halaat-o-waqiaat ka is tarah bayan hota hai jis tarah woh fil-waqia pesh aaye. Novel aur afsane mein halaat-o-waqiaat is tarah pesh aate hain jis tarah novel nigar aur afsana nigar ke khayal mein unhein dar-haqeeqat pesh aana chahiye."[2]

The question is: given the existence of history, what is the need for historical novels? According to Ali Abbas Hussaini.

"Novel ki jagah wahan hoti hai jahan tareekh ke safhe saada aur khamosh hon. Imtidad-e-zamana ki wajah se jo waqiaat saaf nahin dikhai dete ya shakhsiyatein dhundli par gayi hain, unhein qisse aur afsane wazeh kar ke dikha sakte hain. Lekin yahan tareekh ka aaftaab-e-aalamtaab khud hi nisf-un-nahar par chamak raha ho, wahan novel ki shama jalana baad darja mazahiya hai, kyun ke baqaul Professor Darwin, tareekhi mazameen ke bayan mein har tarah ki khilaf-e-waqia cheezen nikaal daalni chahiye. Haqeeqat-o-waqeyat se inhiraf ki wajah se jo asqaam-o-masaaib paida ho jate hain, unhein tehreer ki nudrat , khayalat ki nazakat aur bayan ki latafat bhi door nahin kar sakti."[3]

When Sharar began writing novels in Urdu, the trend of historical writing in the language was quite limited. Alongside his historical writings, he also presented historical events within the framework of the novel, aiming to acquaint readers with the past and the achievements of their ancestors. A sense of national zeal and enthusiasm served as the driving force behind his historical fiction. *Malik-ul-Aziz Varjana* was his first historical novel, which was published in installments in the journal *Dilgudaz*. Upon the novel's conclusion, Sharar shared his thoughts regarding the work in the same journal in 1888.

"Ghaliban Urdu mein yeh apni tarz ka pehla novel hai. Hamare Musalman doston ne is novel ko had se zyada pasand kiya. Is novel ne qaum-e-Islam ke woh karname dikhaye jo bujhe hue joshon aur murda hauslon ko az-sar-e-nau zinda kar sakte hain. Hamare qadr-afza aur dil-gudaz ke qadr-dan gawah hain ke is ka har jumla rag-e-hamiyyat-e-Islami ko josh mein lata tha. Aur yaqeen hai ke woh hazraat jinhon ne ghour se aur shauq se is novel ko awwal se aakhir tak mulaahiza farmaya hoga, un ke dilon mein qaumi khoon josh maar raha hoga aur woh taraqqi par tule hue honge."[4]

The discussion here is not about the extent to which the reading of these novels awakened a sense of national spirit among the readers; rather, it centers on the fact that the primary objective behind Sharar's historical writing and novel-crafting was to acquaint the public with the renaissance of the early Islamic era and with Islamic history itself. For this purpose, the novel proved to be a more effective medium, as it allowed for the presentation of historical events and the achievements of one's forebears in an engaging manner—thereby fostering national consciousness and a spirit of revival among the readers. This perspective is further supported by a statement from Muhammad Ahmad Panipati, offered in the context of his translation of Omar Abu al-Nasr's book *Al-Haroon".

"Islami mu'arrikheen ibtida se tareekh likhte waqt ibarat ki dil-aavezi aur bayan ki dilkashi ka khayal nahin rakhte the. Lekin is se tareekh ek khushk mazmoon ban jata tha, jis ki bina par aam qari ki dilchaspi bhi qayam nahin rehti thi. Jabke Europe mein fan-e-tareekh-nigari taraqqi kar gaya tha aur wahan tareekh-nigari ke saath adabi chashni ka bhi khayal rakha jata tha. Jaisa ke Sir Syed ne Lord Macaulay ki tareekh-nigari ka zikr kiya hai, lekin use tareekhi haqaiq ke liye nuqsan-deh qarar diya hai.

Haqeeqat yeh hai ke jab Europe mein Andulus aur Siqiliya ke Musalmanon ki badolat uloom-o-funoon ki taraqqi shuru hui aur Musalmanon ki dekha-dekhi un mein tasneef-o-taleef ka shauq paida hua, to un ke baaligh-nazar musannifeen aur hoshiyar dimaghon ne rafta rafta is haqeeqat ko maloom kar liya ke kitabein jab tak dilchasp tareeqe par nahin likhi jayengi, us waqt tak woh qubool-e-aam ki sanad hasil nahin kar sakti. Albattah almariyon aur libraries ki zeenat beshak ban sakti hain.

Chunanche unhon ne bohat jald yeh baat mehsoos kar li ke kitabon ko dilchasp aur pur-lutf banane ke liye tehreer mein rangeeni aur dilchaspi paida karna zaroori hai. Is ke baghair kitabein jasad-e-be-rooh ki manind hain.

Chunanche unhon ne apni kitabon ko aise sanche mein dhalne ki poori poori koshish ki aur woh is mein kamyab hue. Un ki ilmi aur tareekhi kitabon ko parh kar mehsoos nahin hota ke hum kisi khushk mazmoon ka mutala kar rahe hain, balkeh yun lagta hai jaise koi nihayat mazaydaar qissa ya bohat dilchasp novel parh rahe hon.

Yooropi musannifeen ka yeh tarz-e-tehreer itna maqbool aur mashhoor hua ke aaj Misr-o-Shaam ka har Arabi musannif, Iran-o-Afghanistan ka har Farsi adeeb aur Pakistan-o-Hind ka har Urdu adeeb is ki taqleed aur pairwi karne par majboor hai."[5]

Continuing further, Shar Rabat adds.

"Yeh umeed rakhna ke novel ke zauq par koi aur zauq ghalib aa sakega, na-mumkin hai. Chunanche isi wajah se novel har mulk aur qaum mein deegar qisam ki kitabon se zyada shaya hote hain. Agar tareekh likhne wale apne fun ko achhe saleeqe se tarteeb de sakein aur logon ki khwahish ke mutabiq tareekhi tasaneef murattab kar sakein, to beshak yeh mumkin ho sakega ke mu'arrikheen ko apni kasad-bazari ki shikayat baqi na rahe aur un ki kitabein bhi har sar-garam aur tabaqe mein dilchaspi ki nazar se dekhi jane lagein."[6]

This opinion of Sharar is open to question. While it is true that his historical novels may have fostered an interest in history among the public, it is certainly unreasonable to expect a historian to adopt a highly embellished, literary style of narration. This is because the requirements of creative prose and the craft of historiography are distinct. If, for instance, Muhammad Hussain Azad were to use a work like *Qasas-ul-Hind* merely to showcase his linguistic prowess, the historical significance of that book would be diminished. Historiography is a scientific discipline; its traditions, criteria for evaluating the reliability of accounts, and standards for distinguishing truth from falsehood are fundamentally different from those of the novel.

Similarly, we also do not agree with Ahsan Farooqui's opinion that.

"Mu'arrikh ko tareekhi waqiaat ke bayan mein takhayyul se kaam nahin lena chahiye. Is se tareekhi waqiaat ki sehat mutasir hogi."[7]

The primary duty of a historian is to recount political events—grounded in authentic facts—within the context of geographical conditions and key historical figures. In contrast, a novelist explores human nature, social customs, and economic trends to derive creative insights. While a novelist employs imagination, a historian is bound strictly by facts. Consequently, the requirements for writing history and writing a novel are distinct; history cannot be presented in the style of a novel, nor can a novel be presented in the style of history. Although historical events may be incorporated into a novel as authentic references, the events depicted within a novel cannot be equated with historical facts.

Let us now examine the work of Naseem Hijazi, the most renowned historical novelist in Urdu literature

Naseem Hijazi is counted among the preeminent Urdu historical novelists. he brought widespread popularity to the genre by casting historical events into the mold of fiction. His original name was Sharif Hussain. He championed the historical novel during an era when the Pakistan Movement, national independence, and the legacy of colonialism were the dominant themes in Urdu literature. While writers such as Abdul Halim Sharar had already made significant contributions to this genre, Naseem Hijazi elevated the historical novel by linking it to national consciousness, Islamic identity, and a spirit of action. His notable novels include *Shaheen*, *Khak aur Khoon*, *Qafila-e-Hijaz*, *Muhammad bin Qasim*, *Andheri Raat ke Musafir*, *Yusuf bin Tashfin*, *Aakhri Chattan*, *Dastan-e-Mujahid*, and *Aur Talwar Toot Gayi*. These works explore the rise and fall of Islamic history, the struggles of Muslims, their civilizational identity, and the yearning for freedom. His objective is not merely to recount past events, but to awaken a sense of self-respect, national dignity, and a spirit of active struggle within the .readers through historical experiences

Naseem Hijazi's style is simple, fluid, and narrative, characterized by an oratorical tone, emotional intensity, and a clear sense of purpose. His protagonists are typically brave, principled, and loyal—imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice—while the antagonists emerge as symbols of tyranny and treachery. Although this binary opposition sometimes leads to a certain oversimplification in characterization, it simultaneously reinforces the purposeful nature of his narratives.

From a critical perspective, questions have been raised regarding his blending of historical fact with imagination, his use of emotional embellishment, and his idealized character portrayals. In some instances, the literary reconstruction of historical events blurs the line between reality and fiction. It must be remembered, however, that Naseem Hijazi was primarily a novelist, not a historian; therefore, his works are best understood as literary interpretations of historical themes rather than as authentic history. His writing also reflects a strong anti-colonial consciousness, cultural self-respect, and a distinct sense of national identity.

Ultimately, rather than reducing the historical novel to a mere source of entertainment, Naseem Hijazi transformed it into a vehicle for expressing intellectual, cultural, and national consciousness. The significance of his work lies in his ability to connect past events with contemporary concerns, thereby fostering an interest in historical subjects among Urdu readers. Despite their stylistic simplicity and clear intellectual purpose, his works hold a prominent place in the tradition of the Urdu historical novel. Among Urdu historical novelists—following the era of Sharar—the name of Naseem Hijazi stands out for its great significance and enduring appeal. He authored around two dozen historical novels. A detailed, chronological account of these is provided below.

Dastan-e-Mujahid* is Naseem Hijazi's first historical novel, which he wrote while he was a final-year B.A. * student. The novel was first published in 1943. At that time, he was known by the name Muhammad Sharif. Later, he adopted the pen name "Naseem," to which his teacher added "Hijazi"—a reference to the *Hijaz-e-Muqaddas*. Shedding light on the themes of this novel, Naseem Hijazi writes.

"Har qaum ki tameer-e-nau mein us ki tareekh ek aham hissa leti hai. Tareekh ek aisa aaina hai jis ko saamne rakh kar qaumein apne maazi-o-haal ka muwazna karti hain. Yahi maazi aur haal ka muwazna un ke mustaqbil ka rasta tayyar karta rehta hai. Maazi ki yaad mustaqbil ki umangon mein tabdeel ho kar kisi qaum ke liye taraqqi ka zeena ban sakti hai, aur maazi ke roshan zamane par be-ilmi ke naqaab daalne wali qaum ke liye mustaqbil ke raste bhi tareek ho jate hain."[8]

The historical backdrop of Naseem Hijazi's novel *Dastan-e-Mujahid* encompasses events spanning from 75 AH to 125 AH—a period during which Muslims achieved conquests in various regions. The novel presents the roles and accomplishments of historical figures such as Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik, Qutaybah ibn Muslim, Musa ibn Nusayr, and Tariq ibn Ziyad. Military campaigns undertaken by Muslims in Khurasan, Iran, Spain, and France are described within the context of Islamic history. Regarding the historical aspects of this novel, Dr. M. Zaman writes.

"Dastaan-e-Mujahid ki kahani tareekhi waqiaat ki roshni mein aage barhti hai. Is mein musannif ne us aham daur ko muntakhib kiya hai jab Arab faujein bayoqt shumal mein Africa, maghrib mein Spain, shumal mein Wusta Asia aur mashriq mein Sindh ki taraf Islami jhande tale pesh qadmi kar rahi thin."[9]

Muhammad bin Qasim" is the second historical novel by Naseem Hijazi, published in 1945. While his first novel, " "Dastan-e-Mujahid," gained popularity among readers, "Muhammad bin Qasim" further expanded his renown. This novel was also translated into Arabic, Sindhi, and Bengali. In the preface to the novel, Naseem Hijazi writes.

"Main bizaat-e-khud shayad tareekh-e-Islam ka koi aur waraq ulat-ta, lekin jin hazraat ne mujhe Dastaan-e-Mujahid ki tarz ke aur novel likhne ki targheeb di, un mein aksar ka pehla mutalaba yeh tha ke main Muhammad bin Qasim ke mutalliq zaroor kuch likhun."[10]

The initial advertisement for Naseem Hijazi's novel *Muhammad bin Qasim* appeared under the title *Fatih-e-Sindh* (The Conqueror of Sindh); however, upon its completion, it was titled *Muhammad bin Qasim*. The novel depicts the historical circumstances under which Hajjaj bin Yusuf dispatched his seventeen-year-old nephew, Muhammad bin Qasim, to invade Sindh. It chronicles Muhammad bin Qasim's conquests—extending as far as Multan—as well as the events that unfolded as a consequence of the personal vendetta harbored by Sulaiman bin Abd al-Malik. Regarding this novel, Dr. S. M. Zaman writes that..

"Muhammad bin Qasim ko Dastaan-e-Mujahid ka takmila samajhna chahiye. Is novel mein Muhammad bin Qasim ke bachpan se lekar Basra mein us ke ibtidai karnaamon tak ka zikr hai, jahan ka governor us ka chacha Hajjaj bin Yusuf tha. Sindh ki muhimmaat ke waqiaat ke saath musannif muhabbat, nafrat, bahaduri aur chaalaki-o-makkari ke chhote chhote dramay dikhata jata hai. Us ke qalam ka kamal yeh hai ke kahani par us ki girift dheeli nahin padti aur qari ki dilchaspi mein bhi koi farq nahin aata."[11]

Naseem Hijazi held a profound interest in the Islamic history of Andalusia, a fact reflected in his novels *Shaheen* and *Yusuf bin Tashfin*. Published in 1952, the novel *Yusuf bin Tashfin* focuses on the decline of Andalusia, the fragmentation of the empire, and the era of political anarchy. The narrative highlights the struggle of Yusuf bin Tashfin—a *mujahid* from North Africa—who advanced into Andalusia to rouse the complacent Muslim rulers and alert them to the dangers looming at their borders. This book was published in 1951. In its preface, he writes.

"Yusuf bin Tashfin ek aaftaab tha jo Andulus ke Musalmanon ke liye azaadi aur masarrat ki subah ka paigham le kar aaya tha, lekin us ki namood un gumnaam mujahidon ki qurbaniyon ka sila thi jinhon ne aalaam-o-masaaib ki tareek raaton mein umeed ki qandeelain buland ki thin.

Main yeh kitab waqt ke un farzandon ki nazr karta hoon jo hamari tareekh ke har daur mein waqt ki aandhiyon aur toofanon se barsar-e-paikar rahe hain, jin ki be-loos qurbaniyon ke tufail hamara maazi qabil-e-fakhr hai aur jin ki jurrat-o-himmat hamare mustaqbil ki zamin hai."[12]

Naseem Hijazi's novel *Aakhri Ma'arka* (The Final Battle) was published in 1952. It focuses on Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions of India, specifically the expedition to Somnath. Following his travels through Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Hijazi—in this novel—examines religious beliefs and the lives of temple priests from his own distinct, critical perspective. Historical events are presented in a continuous narrative flow within the opening and concluding chapters of the book.

Naseem Hijazi's historical novel *Aakhri Chattan* was published in 1946. It centers on the invasions by Genghis Khan and Hulagu Khan during the final era of the Abbasid Caliphate, depicting their brutality and the subsequent collapse of Islamic empires. The novel highlights the non-Islamic influences permeating the society of Baghdad, as well as the negligence and hedonism of the Caliph. While the conflict between Jalaluddin Khwarazm Shah and Genghis Khan is portrayed in great detail, the destruction of Baghdad is covered with relative brevity. At the end of the preface, he writes.

"Aakhri Chattan hamare maazi ka ek aaina hai aur is aaine mein hum apne haal ke khadd-o-khaal dekh kar apne mustaqbil ko sanwaar sakte hain, warna tareekh shaahid hai ke qudrat kisi qaum ki siyasi ghalatiyan maaf nahin karti.

Aakhri Chattan mein main qaum ke un naujawanon ko pesh karta hoon jinhon ne apne kandhon par Pakistan ki azeem-ush-shaan tameer ka bojh uthaya hai."[13]

Commenting on this novel, Syed Waqar Azeem writes.

"Aakhri Chattan" mein fan aur usloob ke aitibaar se khitabat aur adabiyat ka imtizaj hai. Novel ke waqiaat aahista aahista ubharte hain aur nuqta-e-urooj tak pahunchte pahunchte qari ko apni girift mein le lete hain. Alfaaz, fiqron aur jumlon ki tarteeb bhi munasib hai aur novel ke baaz hisson mein alfaaz ka sailaab parhne walon ko apne saath bahata hua le jata hai.

Ibarat ki dramai saakht mein bhi aam tor par yaksaangi aur hamwari payi jati hai. Kahani mein tablighi ehsaas ki lehar kahin kahin uthti hai, lekin adabiyat barabar is ki aan-gir rehti hai. Kirdaron ke naqsh wazeh hain aur un ki guftagu mein ikhtisar, ijaaz aur ma'navi gehrai maujood hai. Yeh sab kuch is liye mumkin hua hai ke musannif ne kahani ke mukhtalif pehluon par ghour kar ke har cheez ko us ki munasib haisiyat di hai."[14]

Naseem Hijazi's novel *Shaheen* (1947) depicts the final phase of Muslim rule in Andalusia—a period when Ferdinand and Queen Isabella seized the last remaining Muslim stronghold, including Granada. The novel's historical backdrop spans the era from the reign of Abu al-Hasan to that of Abu Abdullah. Waqar Azeem writes.

"Shaheen" ki taseer mein jahan ek taraf is ke mauzoo ko ahmiyat hasil hai, wahin doosri taraf musannif ke shairana aur imaai usloob, ikhtisar-o-ijaaz se mamloo haqeeqat nigari aur takhayyul ki rang-aamezi ke imtizaj ka bhi bara haath hai. Manzar nigari mein mubalighe ki halki si jhalak, kirdaron ki musawwari aur khaas taur par un ke jazba-e-muhabbat ka izhar, basiti jazbatiyat se ijtinab, islahi aur tablighi maqsad ke izhar mein walwala-o-josh ke bawajood tawazun aur aitedaal, is novel ki mazeed sifaat hain."[15]

Naseem Hijazi wrote the novel *Khak aur Khoon* against the backdrop of the tragic circumstances and riots surrounding the Partition of India. The sight of destitute caravans of refugees and the profound human tragedies of 1947 inspired him to take up his pen on this subject. The novel presents a harrowing account of the freedom movement, the establishment of Pakistan, and the communal riots. Rather than merely aiming to evoke an emotional response, the author invites the reader to reflect upon these historical events. While the characters are fictional, the events are drawn from a dark chapter in the history of the Subcontinent—a time when religious prejudice and violence trampled upon human values, and migrating Muslims were subjected to massacres, plunder, and various other atrocities. Discussing *Khak aur Khoon*, Dr. S. M. Zaman writes.

ke Hindu-Muslim fasadaat mein un ke ۔"Jin dinon woh Quetta mein Shaheen likh rahe the, unhein ittila mili ke 1947 khandan ke gyarah afraad un ke aabai gaon mein shaheed kar diye gaye hain. Is haadise ne un ke mashhoor novel Khaak Aur Khoon ko janam diya, jise Naseem Hijazi ne Abbottabad mein likha tha. Meri nazar mein yeh novel un ke behtareen novelon mein shumaar hona chahiye."[16]

Naseem Hijazi's renowned historical novel, *Muazzam Ali*, was published in 1957. Its historical backdrop spans the period from the Battle of Plassey to the Third Battle of Panipat. The novel also focuses on the struggles of Hyder Ali in Mysore and Srirangapatna. Its central theme is the decline of Muslim rule in India and the gradual erosion of Muslim political power. The author provides a detailed account of significant historical events occurring from the eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century.

Naseem Hijazi's historical novel, *Aur Talwar Toot Gayi* (And the Sword Broke), was published in 1958. It serves as a continuation of the events depicted in *Muazzam Ali*, tracing historical developments as they pass from one generation to the next. The narrative covers key events of the nineteenth century, including the defeat and martyrdom of Sultan Hyder Ali and Sultan Tipu, as well as the collapse of the final bastion of Muslim power in India. The author highlights the role of internal conspiracies and treachery among Muslims—specifically through figures like Mir Sadiq and other hostile elements—to explain the causes of Sultan Tipu's defeat.

Naseem Hijazi's historical novel, *Qaisar-o-Kisra* (Caesar and Chosroes), chronicles the rise and fall of two great empires—Rome and Persia—that existed prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The novel recounts the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) dispatch of letters inviting various rulers to Islam, the desecration of the letter sent to Khosrow Parviz (Chosroes II), and the subsequent collapse of the Persian Empire. The historical timeline begins with the assassination of Khosrow Parviz and extends into the Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA), highlighting the Muslim conquests and the final dissolution of Persian authority.

Naseem Hijazi's significant historical novel, *Qafila-e-Hijaz* (The Caravan of Hijaz), was published in 1968. This work focuses on the campaigns, advances, and conquests of the Muslims against the Roman Empire during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA). The events in the novel begin in the year 17 AH. From a technical standpoint, *Qafila-e-Hijaz* and *Qaisar-o-Kisra* stand out as prominent novels by Naseem Hijazi; the coherent presentation of events and compelling characterization within them highlight his artistic mastery.

Andheri Raat Ke Musafir depicts the final days of Muslim rule in Andalusia. The events covered in the novel span from 1491 AD to the fall of Granada in 1492 AD. Through this work, one truly appreciates the greatness of Naseem Hijazi's craft; he has presented a dark chapter of Islamic history in a remarkably effective manner. In the preface to the novel, Naseem Hijazi writes.

"Andulus mein Musalmanon ki aakhri saltanat Granada ki tabahi ke baad woh azeem quwwat bhi mit gayi thi jis ke ghaziyon ne aath sadiyan qabl Jabal-ut-Tariq ke saamne apni kashtiyan jala daali thin... Aur phir meri aankhon ke saamne woh lamhaat bhi ubhar ubhar aate jab Ferdinand ki afwaaj Granada mein daakhil ho gayi thin. Tariq aur Abdur Rahman ki betiyon ki aah-o-buka main barabar sunta raha. Granada ke un boorhon aur jawanon ki zillat-o-ruswai ke dil-kharaash manazir bhi dekhta raha jin par reham-o-bakhshish ke saare darwaze hamesha ke liye band ho chuke the. Andulus ki tareekh ki waraq-gardani main ne us waqt shuru ki thi jab ek Hindu Mahasabhaai leader ne yeh kaha tha: 'Agar aath sau saal ki hukoomat ke baad bhi Spain mein Musalmanon ka naam-o-nishan mit sakta tha, to Hindustan mein aisa kyun nahin ho sakta?'"[17]

Naseem Hijazi's historical novel, *Kaleesa aur Aag* (The Church and the Fire), was published in 1977. It recounts the story of the atrocities inflicted upon Muslims following the fall of Granada—including the violation of peace treaties and forced conversions—which ultimately compelled them to abandon their homeland. *Shaheen*, *Yusuf bin Tashfin*, *Andheri Raat ke Musafir*, and *Kaleesa aur Aag* are significant novels based on the history of Andalusia. In these works, rather than focusing on the zenith of Muslim rule, Naseem Hijazi highlights the causes of its decline, conveying the message that nations must strive for themselves to safeguard their freedom and rights. These novels are significant both for their close adherence to historical facts and for their artistic presentation

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Naseem Hijazi's final two novels are *Pardesi Darakht* and *Gumshuda Qaflay*. In the preface to *Pardesi Darakht*, he writes…

"'Pardesi Darakht' aur us ke baad 'Gumshuda Qafile' Ahsan Sahib ke supurd karte hue mujhe yeh mehsoos hota tha ke yeh kaam Aansa Seema Root se behtar koi bhi nahin kar sakta tha, jis ke liye main is zaheen aur mehnati bachchi ka shukr-guzaar hoon.

Mujhe is baat ka afsos rahega ke taweel alaalat ke baais main yeh kaam jaldi khatam na kar saka aur Mujahideen-e-Afghanistan ki imaan-afroz aur rooh-parwar dastaan teen saal ki taakhir se shuru kar raha hoon. Allah se dua hai ke jo ahbaab mujh se Jihad-e-Afghanistan ke mauzoo par qalam uthane ka taqaza karte rahe hain, main un ki tawaqqaat poori kar sakoon. Aameen!"[18]

Whereas, in the preface to "Gum Shuda Qaflay" (The Lost Caravans), he remarks as follows.

"'Gumshuda Qafile' Angrez ki Islam-dushmani aur baniye ki ayyari-o-makkari ki dastaan hai.

Hindu muddaton se aise halaat ka intezar kar rahe the jab woh is barsagheer mein basne wale Musalmanon ke khoon se apni pyaas bujha saken. Angrez ne Hindustan se apna boriya bistar lapette hue un ki is derina khwahish ka ehtram malhooz rakha aur jate jate apne do mohre, Lord Mountbatten aur Radcliffe ki shakal mein aage kar diye. Chunanche, saazish ke in baanioun ne pehla qadam yeh uthaya ke zila Gurdaspur ko Pakistan se nikaal kar Bharat ki

jholi mein daal diya. Is tarah un Musalmanon ke raste masdood kar diye gaye jinhein umeed thi ke jab kabhi bura waqt aayega to woh Kangra ke paharon aur jangalon se nikal kar Gurdaspur mein panah le sakenge.
Is naye faisle se qabl Gurdaspur Pakistan ka hissa tha!
Zila Gurdaspur aur zila Hoshiarpur ke darmiyan darya-e-Beas behta tha. Wahan ke rehne wale Musalmanon ko yaqeen tha ke jab bhi woh chahein ge, darya-e-Beas paar karke Pakistan ki pehli manzil, Gurdaspur, pahunch jayenge. Lekin Angrez aur Hindu ki saazish ne na sirf Gurdaspur jaise khoobsurat aur zarkhaiz ilaqe ko Musalmanon se chheen kar Hinduo ke supurd kar diya, balki is ke saath zila Kangra ke pahari ilaqon aur chhoti chhoti riyasaton ke hazaron nihatte Musalmanon ko bhi un ke khoon ki pyaas bujhane ke liye muhayya kar diya.
Is tarah Jammu ka ilaqa bhi Hinduo ke qabze mein aa gaya.
Aaj hum sirf tasawwur hi mein maazi ke un qafilon ko manzil ki taraf barhta dekh sakte hain jin mein auratein bhi hain, jawan mard bhi, bachche bhi aur boorhe bhi. Yeh qafile pahari silsilon se apni manzil, Pakistan, ki taraf rawan hain, lekin har ilaqe ka kona kona Hindu balwaaiyon aur Sikh riyasaton ke faujiyon ne apne ghere mein le rakha hai. Awam tak sirf un logon ki dastanein pahunch sakti hain jo raste ke kisi shehar ya aham sarak par maare gaye the. Jo log raste ke jangalon aur kheton hi mein gum ho gaye, un ka zikr kahin nahin aata."[19]
An examination of Naseem Hijazi's novels reveals the following recurring themes.
1. Conflicts between truth and falsehood
2. The causes behind the rise and fall of nations—specifically, the saga of the rise and fall of the Muslim *Ummah*.
Based on their subject matter, these novels can be categorized into three broad groups.
1. Novels set against the backdrop of the political, social, religious, and cultural history of India—for example, *Muhammad bin Qasim*, *Insaan aur Devta*, *Khak aur Khoon*, *Muazzam Ali*, *Talwar Toot Gayi*, and *Aakhri Ma'arka.
2. Narratives concerning the decline of Muslims in Andalusia—such as *Yusuf bin Tashfin*, *Shaheen*, *Andheri Raat ke Musafir*, and *Kaleesa aur Aag.*
3. Works depicting the struggle between truth and falsehood involving Muslims—for instance, *Dastan-e-Mujahid*, *Aakhri Chattan*, *Qaisar-o-Kisra*, and *Qafila-e-Hijaz.
The purpose of Naseem Hijazi's historical novels is not merely to regale Muslims with tales of past glory—thereby inducing a sense of pride in a bygone era—but rather to highlight their shortcomings and point them toward a path of action, struggle, and awakening. Against the backdrop of the anti-Muslim policies pursued by the British in India, Hijazi chose the era of Muslim decline as his subject. His objective was to convince a nation gripped by despair that, through determination, hard work, and persistent struggle, it is possible to attain greatness once again.
"Ek wazeh maqsad pesh-e-nazar hona chahiye. Apni qaum ko darpesh masail ke hawale se is qaum ko bedaar karna, us ke maazi se roshnaas karwana aur use zinda qaum ki haisiyat se zinda rakhna mera maqsad tha. Main ne yeh faisla kiya ke aainda apne inhi khayalat ki bunyaad par novel likhe jayen. Is silsile mein Maulana Shibli ko parha, jin ka mujh par gehra asar hua. Mere saamne Islam ki shandaar fatahaat bhi thin aur Hindustan mein Musalmanon ki bhi. Main ne ek taraf Andulus ki tareekh ke daur ko novel ka mauzoo muntakhib kiya aur doosri جدوجہد tareekh-saaz taraf Islami daur ki fatahaat ko bhi apna mauzoo banaya, taake ek taraf mere qari apni zillat ke asbaab par ghour karein aur doosri taraf yeh mehsoos karein ke maazi ke shandaar karnaamon se un ki tareekh tahi-damaan nahin hai."[20]
In the novels he wrote against the backdrop of Indian history, Naseem Hijazi compares Hindu civilization and society with those of the Muslims. Through his works, he has endeavored to reveal the true nature of Hindus, enabling Muslims to recognize them in all their various guises. In an interview with the *Daily Jang* (Lahore)—featured in the 'Jang Forum' in December—Naseem Hijazi addressed the question of why he chose history as his subject matter.
"Jab main ne likhna shuru kiya to Musalman Angrezon ke saath apni jadd-o-jehad-e-azadi mein masroof the. Taham, Musalmanon ke bahut se tabaqaat abhi khwab-e-khargosh mein so rahe the. Unhein muttahid ho kar tehreek-e-azadi mein shirkat par ubharne ke liye tareekh ke hawale se aise waqiaat sunane ki zaroorat thi jin se yeh pata chal sake ke Musalmanon ka maazi kitna azeem tha, lekin har mulk aur har ilaqe mein jab woh taaoos-o-rabaab ke aashiq hue to kis tarah un se hukoomat chheen li gayi aur woh masaib-o-ibtala ka shikar ho gaye.
Chunanche, parhne walon ko mayoosi ki daldal mein dhakelna bhi mera maqsad nahin tha. Is liye ubharti aur mitti hui Islami tehzeebon ki dastanon ke saath saath aali-himmat aur bahadur kirdaron ko bhi pesh kiya gaya, jo har muashre ke aise afraad ki numaindagi karte hain jo haath par haath dhar kar baithne ke bajaye aala maqsad ke liye aakhri lamhe tak jadd-o-jehad karte hain. Agar woh apni koshish mein jaan tak nichhawar kar dein, tab bhi tareekh ke safhaat mein apna maqam muayyan kar jate hain.

Doosri baat yeh hai ke main ne Islami tareekh ko qata'an masakh nahin kiya, balkeh sirf tareekh ka canvas istemal kiya hai. Jahan tak tareekhi shakhsiyaton ka talluq hai, unhein man-o-an pesh kiya gaya hai. Agar is ke saath novel ke doosre kirdar tarashe gaye hain, to unhein bhi usi muashre ke mukhtalif tabaqaat se liya gaya hai."[21]

The themes explored in Naseem Hijazi's novels offer considerable scope for narrative development. Although he did not write a novel on a renowned historical figure such as Salahuddin Ayyubi, a notable aspect of his literary craftsmanship lies in his ability to transform simple plots into engaging narratives filled with suspense and dramatic interest. Historical events and fictional narratives are so closely interwoven in his novels that it is often difficult to separate one from the other. He pays particular attention to the sequence, continuity, and logical coherence of events. While some critics argue that his speeches interrupt the flow of the narrative, these speeches generally emerge from the demands of the situation and serve to express the characters' emotions and collective national consciousness. Thus, Hijazi integrates historical facts into his narratives with considerable skill, preserving the unity and effectiveness of his plots.

Naseem Hijazi employs dramatic tension, unexpected developments, and fluctuating circumstances to make relatively simple events interesting. He introduces twists that heighten the reader's curiosity and anticipation. Whether depicting the conflict between good and evil or exploring themes of love and romance, he maintains the continuity and momentum of the narrative. Whenever the story begins to lose its pace, he introduces a new dramatic situation that restores its movement and vitality. This narrative technique enables his novels to sustain the reader's interest from beginning to end.

Hijazi divides his novels into chapters, assigning each a meaningful and intriguing title that encourages readers to continue reading. The scope of his plots sometimes expands and sometimes contracts around the central events, thereby sustaining interest even in lengthy narratives. In Muazzam Ali, the story begins with the imprisonment of the central character, immediately raising questions in the reader's mind. In Aakhri Chattan, parallel narratives eventually converge at a central point. In Caesar-o-Kisra, Qafila-e-Hijaz, Andheri Raat Ke Musafir, and Kaleesa Aur Aag, historical events remain closely connected with the progression of the story. In Shaheen, the rapid succession of events and dramatic twists continually intensifies suspense, whereas in Yusuf bin Tashfin, each event appears logically connected to the next. In this way, Hijazi avoids unnecessary details while maintaining plot unity, continuity, and narrative interest.

The plots of Naseem Hijazi's novels are coherent, well-organized, and progressive in structure. The events are interwoven so skillfully that the continuity of the narrative remains intact. Whenever gaps occur in the sequence of events, he often fills them through historical information. In Caesar-o-Kisra, Qafila-e-Hijaz, Dastan-e-Mujahid, and Muhammad bin Qasim, historical and semi-historical events enrich the narrative atmosphere rather than undermine the organization of the plot. By evoking surprise, suspense, hope, and anxiety, Hijazi sustains the reader's interest throughout the narrative.

Characterization is another significant aspect of Hijazi's literary art. Alongside actual historical personalities, he creates fictional characters to portray the social classes, customs, and cultural life of different historical periods. The central protagonist in his novels is generally an imaginary hero endowed with courage, moral integrity, intelligence, humility, and loyalty. His romantic relationship develops alongside the main plot and usually culminates in marriage. Romantic episodes are presented in accordance with the values of modesty and morality associated with Eastern culture.

His heroes frequently demonstrate exceptional bravery, perform remarkable feats on the battlefield, and inspire collective awakening and Islamic zeal through their speeches. Although their idealized personalities and extraordinary abilities sometimes appear more aspirational than realistic, these qualities contribute to their appeal among readers. Through such characters, Hijazi communicates messages of national determination, moral steadfastness, and perseverance, which constitute defining features of his historical novels.

The heroines in Hijazi's novels also follow a largely traditional model of characterization. They are generally portrayed as exceptionally beautiful, modest, chaste, faithful, and sincere. The author describes their beauty in a poetic style and, rather than restricting them to romantic roles, occasionally assigns them active participation in significant events. They support the hero through difficult circumstances and express their affection within the framework of Eastern modesty and cultural values.

The supporting characters in Hijazi's novels also contribute significantly to narrative development. While assisting in the growth and evolution of the central characters, they often retain distinct identities of their own. Badr bin Mughirah in Shaheen, Zahir in Aakhri Chattan, Sadr in Yusuf bin Tashfin, and the central character of Muazzam Ali illustrate different dimensions of his characterization. His historical figures are also presented through their

achievements, weaknesses, and political roles. In Muazzam Ali, the greatness of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah is contrasted with the negative portrayals of Ghasiti Begum, Mir Jafar, and Lord Clive. Similarly, Aur Talwar Toot Gayi highlights the greatness of Tipu Sultan in contrast with the treachery of Mir Sadiq. In Shaheen, the weaknesses of Abu al-Hasan and Abu Abdullah are juxtaposed with the political cunning and ruthlessness of Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

Hijazi's characters are not always static embodiments of virtue or vice; they may also undergo change and development under the influence of circumstances. He portrays their psychological states, emotions, happiness, sorrow, love, hatred, and practical conduct within the context of unfolding events. In Aakhri Chattan, for instance, the religious conversion of certain characters is presented as a consequence of particular circumstances and experiences rather than as an inexplicable occurrence. He also uses his characters to depict Indian cultural traditions and religious practices. Overall, his characterization combines portraiture, the representation of moral character, and elements of psychological development, contributing to the artistic significance of his historical novels.

One of the principal strengths of Hijazi's characterization is the close relationship between his characters and the plot. He presents historical personalities in ways that make them appear vivid and natural, without surrounding them with an unnecessarily exaggerated aura of greatness. A measured infusion of imagination lends these figures greater appeal and dramatic effectiveness. Similarly, his fictional characters think, feel, and experience inner conflicts like real individuals of their respective periods, enabling readers to develop emotional attachment and sympathy towards them.

Hijazi gives greater importance to the inner states and practical behaviour of his characters than to their outward appearance. Rather than constructing them solely through abstract moral qualities or idealistic concepts, he endows them with natural human emotions and varied personal characteristics. This artistic awareness sustains the interest and appeal of his characters until the conclusion of the narrative.

Dialogue occupies a particularly important position in Naseem Hijazi's novels. His dialogues reveal the personalities, individuality, and inner conflicts of characters while also contributing to the development of the plot. Establishing the atmosphere of a particular historical period through dialogue is an important requirement of historical fiction, and Hijazi fulfils this requirement with considerable skill. Although his novels contain lengthy dialogues and speeches, these generally occur in specific contexts, such as addresses to soldiers, public gatherings, or conversations among military commanders. It is therefore not entirely accurate to dismiss them as unnecessary elaborations.

The language of his dialogues is simple, fluent, and accessible, while concise and well-constructed sentences effectively convey the intellectual and emotional dimensions of the characters. Through dialogue, Hijazi reveals their psychological states and internal conflicts, keeping these elements connected to the development of the plot. These qualities distinguish his dialogue-writing from that of many of his contemporaries and predecessors in historical fiction.

Syed Waqar Azeem, commenting on Hijazi's novel Aakhri Pathan, writes:

"Aakhri Chattan mein usloob aur fan ke aitibaar se khitabat aur adabiyat ka imtizaj hai. Novel ke waqiaat aahista aahista ubharte hain aur nuqta-e-urooj par pahunchte pahunchte qari ko apni girift mein le lete hain. Alfaaz, fiqron aur jumlon ki tarteeb bhi munasib hai aur novel ke baaz hisson mein alfaaz ka sailaab parhne walon ko apne saath bahata hua le jata hai.

Ibarat ki dramai saakht mein bhi aam tor par yaksaangi aur hamwari payi jati hai. Kahani mein tablighi ehsaas ki lehar kahin kahin uthti hai, lekin adabiyat barabar is ki aan-gir rehti hai. Kirdaron ke naqsh wazeh hain aur un ki guftagu mein ikhtisar, ijaaz aur ma'navi gehrai maujood hai. Yeh sab kuch is liye hai ke musannif ne kahani ke mukhtalif pehluon par ghour kar ke har cheez ko us ki munasib haisiyat di hai."[22]

The dialogue of the female characters in Naseem Hijazi's works is highly engaging and compelling; it reflects their cultural background, their personal world, and their sensibilities. The heroines in his novels never engage in bold or unreserved speech. Conversely, when he portrays women raised within a non-Muslim culture, their tone takes on an element of boldness and informality. His female characters never adopt an unnatural or artificial demeanor; rather, they express themselves in a manner entirely consistent with the nature of a traditional Eastern woman. For instance, when a character says, "Mother, he has arrived—he has arrived!" and then blushes, such expressions allow the audience to clearly perceive the deep emotional bond the heroine shares with her beloved. Hijazi utilizes dialogue to advance the narrative, conveying his meaning through concise, direct sentences. A notable example occurs during the final battle, when Was-Deed recounts his life story—explaining why he became 'Abdul Wahid'—and describes his meeting with Asha. Every word in this dialogue serves to heighten the reader's curiosity.

"Main ne apna sar neeche karte hue kaha, ‘Yeh dar nahin, tumhein kuch nahin kahunga, lekin agar tum ne shor machaya to main tum par haath uthane se daregh nahin karunga.’
Larki ne sehmi hui aawaz mein kaha, ‘Tum kaun ho?’
Main ne kaha, ‘Tum sirf meri baat ka jawab do. Tumhare peechhe koi is taraf aa raha hai?’
Woh boli, ‘Nahin, lekin agar tum ne meri taraf haath barhaya to main nadi mein chhalang laga doongi.’
Main ne kaha, ‘Tumhari basti yahan se kitni door hai?’
Us ne jawab diya, ‘Bahut nazdeek.’
Main ne kaha, ‘Is ka matlab yeh hai ke shaam tak basti ke kai log paani bharne yahan aayenge.’
Woh boli, ‘Nahin, basti khaali ho chuki hai. Log jangalon ki taraf bhaag gaye hain.’"[23]

After reading this dialogue, a sense of curiosity arises in the reader’s mind as to why people have fled toward the forests. Later on, the author addresses this further through a series of dialogues. The arrival of Tahir at the court—within the context of the Khwarazmian Empire—and the conversation between the envoy and Genghis Khan are particularly engaging.

Mutarjim: "Changiz Khan se mukhatib ho kar Khalifa-e-Baghdad ka ilchi, Khaqan-e-Azam Shahenshah-e-Tatar ko, jin ki shafqat ka haath doston ke liye baa'is-e-rehmat hai aur jin ki talwar dushman ke sar par saaiqa ban kar toot-ti hai, nihayat adab-o-ehtram ke saath salam karta hai."
Changiz Khan: "Hum Baghdad ke ilchi ko dekh kar bahut khush hue. Use itminan dilaya jaye ke yahan us ki jaan ko koi khatra nahin."
Mutarjim: (Tahir se Arabi zaban mein mukhatib ho kar) "Shahenshah aap ki aamad par izhar-e-masarrat farmate hain aur yeh bhi farmate hain ke aap ki ghabrahat bila-wajah hai. Aap ko al-taaf se mala-ma’al kar ke bheja jayega."
Tahir: "Main inaam lene ke liye yahan nahin aaya. Agar Shah is qadar mehrban hain to mujhe Shah ka khat pesh karne ke baad Islam ki tableegh ka mauqa dein. Yeh mere liye sab se bara inaam hoga."
Mutarjim: "Khalifa ka qasid Khan ki nazar-e-inayat ka shukriya ada karta hai aur khat pesh karne ki ijazat mangta hai."
Changiz Khan: "Ijazat hai."
Mutarjim: "Khaqan-e-Azam farmate hain ke Khalifa ka maktub pesh kiya jaye."[24]

In the novel, the interpreter’s alteration of words and meanings during the exchange between Genghis Khan and Zahir adds a layer of intrigue and curiosity. Overall, Naseem Hijazi’s dialogues are concise, comprehensive, and meaningful. No word feels superfluous; rather, each word reinforces the significance of the others. For him, dialogue is not merely conversation for its own sake; it serves as an effective medium to articulate the characters' astonishment, their mental states, and the nature of the situation. Naseem Hijazi ensures that his underlying purpose does not overshadow his artistry; instead, he employs his creative skill to convey his message in such a way that the reader never feels as though they are being lectured or preached to. It is this quality that renders his dialogue writing both effective and compelling. Dr. S. M. Zaman observes.

"Islami tareekhi novel likhne walon ki tarah Naseem Hijazi ke novelon par bhi tanqeed hui hai ke un ki kahaniyan haqeeqat se door, aik hi sanche mein tarashe hue kirdar liye phirti hain aur lambi taqreerein novel ki kahani mein ghair zaroori tawalat ka izafa karti hain. Lekin un ke qari un ke waizana tarz-e-tehreer se na thakte hain, na bore hote hain. Woh nuqqad-e-adab se ittefaq nahin karte."[25]

Naseem Hijazi’s novels, *Dastan-e-Mujahid* and *Muhammad bin Qasim*, have been translated into English, Sindhi, and Bengali—a testament to their popularity and literary impact. He adopted the genre of historical fiction with a clear purpose, yet he never allowed this objective to overshadow his artistic craft. His primary aim was to instill a love for the past in the hearts of the younger generation and to revive the illustrious traditions of Islamic history. Simultaneously, he highlights tragic historical episodes that demonstrate the devastating consequences of chaos, rebellion, and treachery. In novels such as *Muazzam Ali*, *Aur Talwar Toot Gayi*, *Yusuf bin Tashfin*, *Shaheen*, *Andheri Raat Ke Musafir*, and *Kaleesa aur Aag*, he explores the causes of national decline, identifying figures whose betrayal and negative conduct profoundly shaped the history of nations. Thus, alongside recounting the glories of the past, Naseem Hijazi seeks to draw lessons from historical errors and awaken national consciousness. Regarding the purposeful nature of Naseem Hijazi’s work, Dr. S. M. Zaman writes.

"Woh neem-jaan Muslim naujawano ke seenon mein dabi hui us chingari ko hawa de kar shola banana chahte hain, jis se Islam ki nashaat-e-saniya mumkin ho sakti hai. Un ke zehnon mein woh Islam ki woh azmat roshan kar dena chahte hain, jis se un ke damaghon se ehsaas-e-kamtari jata rahe aur woh aik baar phir yeh sochne lagen ke woh bahut kuch kar sakte hain. Woh aik Khuda-e-Wahid par un ka yaqeen pukhta kar ke apni taqdeer khud likhne ki

dawat dete hain aur is maqsad ke liye unhein baar baar Islam ke karname yaad dilate hain. Agar yeh baat chand logon ke nazdeek adab-e-aaliya ke khilaf jati hai, to bhi Naseem Hijazi is par baja taur par fakhr kar sakte hain."[26]

In the novels of Naseem Hijazi, the language is simple, fluid, and easily understood; yet, his dialogues and speeches also exhibit distinct qualities of eloquence, rhetorical power, and intense passion. His spirited speeches leave a profound impact on the reader and, at times, even enhance the narrative flow. Although some speeches are quite lengthy, they are well-suited to their specific contexts and contribute effectively to the progression of the plot. Conversely, his shorter speeches also create an extraordinary impression, owing to their impactful style and profound meaning. For instance, in the final battle, Mahmud of Ghazni's brief address to the *mujahideen* (warriors) powerfully conveys the spirit of faith, resolve, and the aspiration for either victory or martyrdom. Thus, Naseem Hijazi's art of speech-writing represents a synthesis of purpose, emotional resonance, and technical mastery.

The speeches in Naseem Hijazi's novels appear to be in harmony with historical and cultural traditions. In ancient Arab society, the morale of soldiers was bolstered before battle through epic poetry and stirring orations. A reflection of this tradition is evident in Naseem Hijazi's novels, where characters instill resolve and courage in others by recounting the grandeur of Islamic history, the sacrifices of the *mujahideen*, and past victories. His central characters—speaking in mosques, at gatherings, or in public assemblies—strive to awaken the nation from its state of negligence and foster a sense of collective national consciousness. For example, Tahir's speech before the people of Baghdad in the novel *Aakhri Chattan* stands as a masterpiece of the craft.

"Zindagi ka tamaskhur urane walo! Is aandhi aur aag ko qudrat ki taraf se aik intebah samjho. Tum ne Babil-o-Nainwa ki tabahi ki dastan suni hogi, lekin Khuda woh din na laye jab mustaqbil ke log maazi ke khandar dekh kar yeh kahenge ke yahan kisi zamane mein aik azeem-ush-shan shehar abad tha, jis ka naam Baghdad tha. Jis mein nau lakh insan abad the. Is ke mahal paanch sadiyon ki tameeri yaadgar rakhte the, lekin Babil aur Nainwa ke bashindon ki tarah unhein bhi aik ibrat-naak tabahi ka samna karna para.

Musalmano! Tumhari tareekh shahid hai ke aaj tak tumhein kisi ki talwar maghloob nahin kar saki. Tumhare lohe ne har lohe ko kaata hai. Tumhari muthi bhar afwaj ne dushman ki bari se bari afwaj ko shikastein di hain. Tumhari kisi nakaami ka sabab tumhari kamzori na thi, balkeh hum ne agar kahin shikast khai hai to woh tumhari aapas ki phoot ka nateeja thi. Tum ne agar kahin tabahi ka samna kiya to wahan tumhare ghaddaron ka haath maujood tha."[27]

Throughout this speech, Naseem Hijazi—drawing upon certain historical references—makes it clear that a nation unable to safeguard its historical traditions is destined to face humiliation and disgrace. *Shaheen* stands as a monumental and deeply moving work by Naseem Hijazi. In this novel, the speeches delivered by Abul Hassan and Badr bin Mughira are remarkably powerful, capable of reawakening dormant emotions. Consider the following excerpt:

"Sadiyon tak Andulus ke mazloom Musalman is baat ka intezar karte rahe ke Gharnata se un ke bhai un ki madad ke liye aayenge, lekin tum soye rahe. Andulus mein tumhare bhai zulm aur istibdad ki chakki mein piste rahe. Wahshat-o-barbariyat ka haath tumhari mohtaram qaum ki betiyon ki izzat-o-namoos ke daman ko taar taar karta raha, lekin tum soye rahe. Tumhari ghairat ko yeh sab gawara na aaya. Un ke honton se faryaad nikalti thi ya un ki aankhon se aansu behte the, lekin tum tas se mas na hue. Tum masarrat ke lafzon se dil behla rahe the."28

In Naseem Hijazi's novels *Muazzam Ali* and *Aur Talwar Toot Gayi*, the dialogues not only clarify the unfolding events but also sensitize Muslims to the importance of mutual unity. Through these exchanges, the message is conveyed that fragmentation and internal discord lead to the decline of nations, and that history never forgets the consequences of negligence and treachery. In these works, the author achieves—via dialogue—the same objectives that he might otherwise accomplish through long speeches; yet, these dialogues never descend into mere oratory. In contrast, the tone in *Yusuf bin Tashfin* is far sharper and more incisive. In this novel, the speeches delivered by the central character not only advance the narrative but also infuse it with vigor and dynamism. These addresses are rendered compelling and well-reasoned through the use of logical arguments and historical references. Naseem Hijazi reiterates the position that Muslims have consistently suffered due to a lust for power and internal disunity. He argues that if Muslims were to establish a central authority and foster unity within their ranks, their banner could once again fly across the globe. His perspective is that by rekindling the spirit of *Jihad* in their hearts and firmly grounding themselves in Islamic teachings, Muslims could once again become an invincible nation. Consider this excerpt from *Yusuf bin Tashfin.

"Agar aap phir aapas ke andarooni jhagron mein ulajh kar reh gaye to mujhe andesha hai ke Zallaqa ke shaheedon ki qurbaniyan raigaan jayengi. Dushman kisi din aap par zyada quwwat aur zyada shiddat ke saath hamla karega aur us waqt tak Andulus par hamla karta rahega jab tak aap apni andarooni kamzoriyon ka ilaaj nahin karte.
Aap ki sab se bari kamzori yeh hai ke aap Islam se door ja chuke hain. Agar aap apna difaai muashara Islam ki bunyadon par tameer karein to main dawe ke saath keh sakta hoon ke duniya ki tamam ghair Muslim aqwam muttahid ho kar bhi aap ko shikast nahin de sakteen. Agar aap ne Islam se munharif ho kar koi aur raah-e-nijaat talash karne ki koshish ki to yaad rakhiye, aap ki misaal un logon se mukhtalif nahin hogi jo sailaab se bachne ke liye pahaar se utar kar rait ke twardn par panah lete hain.
Agar aap duniya mein sarbuland rehna chahte hain to Allah aur Allah ke Rasool ki ita'at mein apni gardanein jhuka dijiye. Agar aap Quran-e-Pak ke ahkamaat par chalte hain to main aap ko yeh muzhda sunata hoon ke rooye zameen ki tamam nematein aap ke liye hain."[29]
In the writings of Naseem Hijazi, a sense of decorum, courtesy, and respect is as evident as the passion and fervor. Rather than relying on baseless arguments, he employs simple, logical, and psychological insights.this is why his novels appeal equally to the general readership and the highly educated class. In his descriptive passages, he favors brevity and simplicity, avoiding unnecessary details or superfluous similes. While he mentions mountains, valleys, gardens, rivers, and cities only as the context requires, he depicts scenes of the battlefield with extraordinary, meticulous precision. He presents details—such as the disposition of armies, the names of commanders, feats of valor, fortifications, and weaponry—with such skill that the battle scenes feel remarkably true to life. For instance.
"Agli subah ka aaftaab Somnath ki deewaron tale aik ghamasaan ki jang dekh raha tha. Sultan teeron ki baarish mein khara tha aur us ke janbaaz jurrat aur himmat ke muzahire mein aik doosre se sabqat le jane ki koshish kar rahe the. Faseel ke muhafiz hamla-awaron par teeron aur patharon ke ilawa khaulta hua tail daal rahe the. Kamandein toot rahi theen, seerhiyan jal rahi theen aur faseel ke neeche lashon ke anbaar lag rahe the, lekin hamla-awaron ke josh-o-kharosh mein har aan izafa ho raha tha.
Mashriq ki taraf se chand dostoon ne is shiddat se teer barsaye ke faseel ke muhafiz thori der ke liye moriyon mein panah lene par majboor ho gaye. Pandrah janbaaz bhaagte hue aage barhe aur unhon ne seerhiyan laga kar faseel par charhna shuru kar diya. Teer-andazon ne faseel ke muhafizon ko sar uthane ka mauqa na diya aur aan ki aan mein pandrah hi sipahiyon ne dushman ko idhar-udhar hata kar faseel par paon jama liye. Faseel ke muhafizon ne jawabi hamla kiya aur Musalman un ke dabao se simatne lage, lekin itni der mein kai sar-farosh upar aa gaye. Unhon ne Hinduon ko aik baar phir daayein aur baayein taraf dhakel diya."[30]
This scene spans four pages of the novel. Reading it brings the entire picture of Mahmud of Ghazni's attack on Somnath vividly to life; the reader can almost hear the clashing of swords and witness the mounting piles of the slain. Similarly, the sequence depicting Mahmud of Ghazni shattering the idol at Somnath is highly impactful. In *Muazzam Milli*, the portrayal of the Third Battle of Panipat is also remarkably effective, detailed, and comprehensive. Let us look at another scene.
"Terah January ka aaftaab Hindustan ki tareekh ka aik azeem tareen maarka dekh raha tha. Tulu-e-sahar ke saath Marhatta fauj ne meelon lambi safon mein apne paro se nikal kar aage barhna shuru kiya. Un ke maisara par Pir Gardi ke tarbiyat yafta dastaay the aur us ke saath Gilgawar ki foujein theen. Maimana par Malhar Rao Holkar aur Chiko Ji Sindhia the. Qalb mein Bhaoo aur Peshwa Sawai Rao aik jangju haathi ke howdaj mein baithe hue the.
Musalmanon ke lashkar ke qalb mein Abdali ka wazir-e-azam Shah Wali Khan tha aur us ki kaman mein Durani fauj ke woh aazmooda-kaar janbaaz the jo kai maidanon mein daad-e-shujaat de chuke the. Maisara par Shah Pasand Khan aur Najib-ud-Daulah the. Shuja-ud-Daulah ki afwaj maisara aur qalb ke darmiyan theen. Maimana ki qiyadat bhi us ke hawale thi.
Ahmad Shah Abdali aik safed ghore par sawar ho kar apni uqabi nigahon se maidan-e-jang ka nazara dekh raha tha. Barq-raftar sawaron ki aik jamaat fauj ke generals aur sawaron ko aik kone se doosre kone tak us ki hidayaat pohanchane mein masroof thi."[31]
In the novel *Muazzam Ali*, this scene spans approximately three and a half pages, during which Naseem Hijazi details ancient fortifications and the conventions of warfare. A firm grasp of historical information and a meticulous concern for the accuracy of events are hallmark features of his novel-writing. He makes minimal alterations to historical facts; even when he introduces changes for the sake of the narrative, he ensures that historical truth remains undistorted. In this way, while upholding the tradition of historical fiction established by Deputy Nazeer Ahmed and Sharar, he also forged a distinct artistic style of his own. From a technical standpoint, Naseem Hijazi's novels appear more mature and impactful than those of Sharar. Naseem Hijazi states.

"Agarche main ne duniya ke tamam classical adab ka mutala kiya hai. Dostoevsky aur Tolstoy ka bhi mutala kiya hai, khaas taur par Sir Walter Scott aur Dostoevsky ka. Lekin na kisi ki taqleed ki hai aur na hi kisi se taassur qubool kiya hai, balkeh apna rasta khud mutaayyan kiya hai."[32]

Regarding the acquisition of historical material, he describes his methodology as follows.

"Tareekhi mawaad hasil karne ke liye taqreeban tamam zaraye mere pesh-e-nazar rahe hain. Khaas taur par un kutub se istifada kiya hai jo mukhtalif zabanon mein shaya hui hain aur jin ka tarjuma Angrezi zaban mein hua hai. Tareekh ke saath saath jughrafiya bhi parha aur kai kai muarrikheen ko parhne ke baad phir aik mo'tabar hawala likhta hoon, taake tareekhi aur jughrafiyai maghalta na ho, kyun ke kahani ke liye zaroori hai ke kahani ke zamane ka ilm ho."[33]

Naseem Hijazi has a unique position among all his contemporary novelists. More than forty editions of some of his novels have been published, and most of them have been translated into non-Ali languages. Despite harsh criticism from critics, his novels will live forever. See Dr. Abul Laith Siddiqui's opinion about him.

"Naseem Hijazi ki Musalmanon se mohabbat aur Islam ke saath un ki wabastagi barhaq! In novelon mein unhon ne sirf naare ko fun samajh liya hai, halanke dono mein bara farq hota hai. Yeh novel mazhabi jazbe ka istehsal karte hain aur isi mein un ki maqbooliyat ka raaz muzmar hai. Is liye in novelon mein na fikr ki gehrai hoti hai, na fun ki jigargardī. Aise novel bari aasani se aur bahut taweel likhe ja sakte hain. Yeh baat baraye mahal-e-nazar hai, kyun ke Naseem Hijazi ne na to mazhabi jazbe ka istehsal kiya hai."[34]

They have not turned religion into a mere slogan. In their work, purposefulness is so deeply intertwined with the art itself that it cannot be viewed as something separate from the narrative. However, the opinion of Professor Syed Waqar Azeem carries greater weight. He writes"Maqbool-e-aam novel nigar Naseem Hijazi ne nisbat-an zyada maqbooliyat hasil ki hai aur is ki kai wajahen hain. Aik bari aur pehli tojeeh yeh hai ke unhon ne tareekhi novel likhte waqt Tareekh-e-Islam ke aise waqiaat muntakhib kiye hain jin mein jurrat, shujaat, sadaqat aur haq-parasti ka sabaq posheeda hai. Doosre, in waqiaat mein aam tor par is tarah ke waqiaat maujood hain ke unhein moassar banaya ja sakta hai. Teesri wajah yeh hai ke novel nigar ne waqiaat ke fanni imkanaat se poora faida uthaya hai. Masalan, hum un ke mukhtalif novelon par alag alag nazar daalein to aasani se mehsoos hota hai ke un ki tarteeb aur saakht mein ghaur-o-fikr ki ahmiyat ko azar-andaz nahin kiya gaya."[35]

The primary reason for Naseem Hijazi's popularity is that, in his novels, he catered to both the interests of the general reader and the intellectual requirements of the more serious-minded. His writings combine depth of thought, a dignified style, and a sense of religious commitment with elements of romance. This very diversity makes his novels appealing to readers of varied tastes. His work integrates historical consciousness and intellectual gravity with narrative suspense and the allure of romance—a combination that sustained the popularity of his novels over a long period.

Naseem Hijazi holds a highly significant position in the realm of the Urdu historical novel. He did not limit the historical novel merely to the recreation of past events; rather, he transformed it into an effective medium for awakening national consciousness, fostering a connection with Islamic history, and promoting collective reform. His novels feature a blend of historical fact, imagination, romance, suspense, vivid characterization, and compelling dialogue. He portrayed the rise and fall of Muslim history—encompassing the spirit of *mujahideen* (warriors for the faith), sacrifice, selflessness, unity, and the consequences of betrayal—in such a way that historical events ceased to be mere relics of the past, instead acquiring profound relevance for the present. While certain aspects of his work—such as an overemphasis on a specific didactic purpose, the idealized portrayal of characters, and an emotionally charged interpretation of historical events—are open to critical debate, his enduring popularity, his dedication to historical themes, and his engaging narrative style remain the cornerstones of his literary identity. By advancing the tradition of the historical novel—originally established by figures like Deputy Nazeer Ahmed and Sharar—he imbued the genre with a new level of widespread public appeal. Undoubtedly, Naseem Hijazi is counted among those prominent historical novelists in Urdu who, by synthesizing history, literature, and national sentiment, secured a lasting and noteworthy place within the tradition of the Urdu novel.

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