CHAPTER - 4

Conclusion
Sidhwa becomes a mouthpiece for her community. Her diasporic state, her immigrant experience enable her to present her view point as a Parsi. Most of Sidhwa’s characters (Protagonists) are Diasporic identities. Sidhwa portrays the alienation, isolation and loneliness of the immigrants trying to adopt themselves in the new cultures, suffering an in-between position. The main thrust of the stories is that from a partial identity, the migrants form a global or plural identity. They become partial after having lost touch with their former world and their former culture, they become plural as they stand between and partake of the two cultures. The protagonists are able to relieve themselves from the pressure of two cultures, as they transcend all the boundaries and become ‘trans-national’ and global citizens, but only after, they have undergone some painful experiences in the process of this awakening towards globalization. They do not at all submit to their fate and struggle hard to achieve their identity and make way for themselves. The characters struggle to become accustomed to the new culture but cannot completely escape their own tradition and culture in the process.

The protagonists of Sidhwa shift away from their ‘roots’ but are mentally firmly attached to them. They draw strength from them. Feroza in An American Brat and Faredoon in The Crow Eaters are such characters. Sidhwa’s characters whether they are first generation migrants or the second-generation migrants, they form a global identity for themselves by bridging the gap between ‘the home’ and ‘the host’ culture. Faredoon, his son Billy in The Crow Eaters and Feroza, Manek and to some extent Zareen Ginwalla in An American Brat are such characters who are more flexible for survival. On the other hand, Putli, Jerbanoo, Cyrus Ginwalla and the other generation of Parsis are still in the grip of their traditional values and customs. Sidhwa while portraying her Parsi milieu and ethos through her characters, emphasizes that
one has to be ready for change if one wants to survive in this fast globalizing world. One has to transcend the borders to come out for maintaining their cultural identity and at the same time adapting to the ‘host culture.’ They have to create a fine balance between the two cultures in question and create a “hybrid” identity for themselves.

As a diasporic writer, Bapsi Sidhwa is familiar with the problems and situations faced by immigrants. She exposes the customs and values of her own Parsi religion and the basic mantra of survival for her minority community. Her diasporic state enables her to peep deeply into her own people’s lives as is depicted by the portrayal of different characters in her novels. She exposes the Parsis’ fear of loss of ethnic values and their survival. She does not recommend a shift rather writes for the recognition of Parsis worldwide. She depicts the ‘marginality’ aspect of Parsis and how the Parsis were in the grip of their cultural values. The central character of the novel, *The Crow Eaters*, Faredoon Junglewalla is shown as a champion of their race. He has all the characteristic qualities of a Parsi and behaves in the same way. He believes in and performs all the religious rites of his Zoroastrian faith and his house gives us a glimpse of a typical Parsi household. He is resourceful and ready for change for survival. He adopts the ways of the surrounding community and develops good relations with the people of other faith. He is in the good books of Britishers, as well as maintains good relationship with friends. The flattery, the sycophancy is a survival tactics. It is the ‘need to exist’. Sidhwa realistically depicts the behaviour of the Parsi community who are adjustable and hybrid to any extent to survive but when it comes to question their integrity and faithfulness towards their community, they strictly follow the commands of their Zoroastrian faith. Parsis do not allow conversion or mixed marriages because it is dangerous for the survival of their community. Freddy, strictly opposes his son Yazdi’s decision to marry his Anglo-Indian girl friend
Rosy Watson. He marries all his children in his community only. Freddy’s son Billy is another example of a Parsi who acquires all the characteristic qualities of his father. He is adjustable and ready for change. He marries a modern fashionable Parsi girl Tanya but at home he wants her to behave like his grand mother and mother; a docile housewife. He maintains good relations with the British and prospers as a businessman.

The heroine Feroza of Sidhwa’s novel *An American Brat* is another example of a Parsi teenager girl in the grip of her ethical values. She is ready to change to survive in an alien land but holds supreme respect for her religion. She changes fastly, adopts various ways and very soon assimilates herself in the new culture; but carries the fire of her religion in her heart. She falls in love with David, a Jew, likes his parents, adjusts herself well in the company of her friends but in her heart of hearts, she knows what is acceptable in her religion and follows the moral code and conduct of Zorastrianism whenever she acts or behaves in an un-Parsi like manner. She prays with her ‘Sudra’ and ‘Kusti’ and prays to Ahura Mazda for strength. She is a fine example of a Parsi girl in the throes of change. Sidhwa projects her own community and its ethos in a way so that it gains recognition and identity.

The Parsi attitude towards marriage is shown. This is for self-preservation. Parsis had realized that if they wanted to survive peacefully as a minority, they should not allow mixed marriages or conversion to their faith. Hybridity is the survival tactics of Parsis. In this fast globalizing world, inter-dependence is a must for survival. There is a gradual assimilation of thoughts, ideas, cultures and individual identities. Parsis are as it is marginalized minority and they know that the sustenance and survival is entirely dependant on mutual recognition and respect of other cultures.
also. Sidhwa’s novels are based on this theory of hybridity. Sidhwa beautifully captures the Parsi ethos.

In Sidhwa’s works there is the description of a wide range of Parsi characters with their major problems of adjustment in an alien land, which is accompanied by the familial or social conflicts. However, Sidhwa is an optimist and all her characters are strong enough to solve their problems themselves and make their own way through the problems. The characters get out of the trauma, conflict and frustration and live happily and peacefully. Faredoon, Billy, Yazdi, Zareen, Feroza, Manek are such characters who show their real role as Parsis.

Sidhwa’s emphasis is on representation of Parsis, their cultural values and customs that were so dear to them. Pritli, Jerbanoo, Zareen and Cyrus: the older Parsi generation and Billy, Feroza and Manek, all the characters are shown as cultural hybrids moving ahead in life and finding their way and making place for themselves. They overcome all the barriers.

Bapsi Sidhwa portrays the dilemmas and nostalgia of Parsis. She gives a detailed description of the Zoroastrian religion. Parsis could survive peacefully and prospered even being a minority because of their behavioral traits. The minority group which could easily be lost in the rich cultural diversification of India; maintained its identity because of its cultural and ethical values. Parsis are known and recognized for their typical cultural practices. Their Parsi ethos enabled their peaceful survival. Sidhwa, as a Parsi feels it her duty towards her community to help it achieve worldwide recognition, fame and acceptance and she has succeeded also. The declining population of Parsis is causing grave concern among the members of community and this insecurity and alienation prompts the author to champion the
cause for her community and its peaceful survival. It is in their blood and is the ultimate aim of their life to work for the progress of their people – the Parsis.

The hybrid nature of Parsis is a world-wide known fact. It is for their survival and upliftment. They assimilate and co-mingle with others to survive but also maintain their ethical values.

Freddy, Billy, Feroza and Manek are fine examples of typical Parsis who are strict followers of their Zoroastrian religion and side by side adjust themselves well in the company of the people of other faith. They enjoy life together but when it comes to their unity and survival as Parsis, they are more devoted to their religion. The younger generation of Parsis is more flexible and adjustable for change and progress. It is a must for their survival. Feroza and Manek are Americanized but they hold supreme respect for their religion. As in Sidhwa’s words they carry the fire and spark of their religion in their hearts. We can say that Bapsi Sidhwa has tried to show us the true colour of the community and its ethos. She has represented Parsis in the actual way benifitted from the fact of herself being a Parsi.

Finally, we can say that like other Diasporic writers, Sidhwa has tried to show the true colour, ethos and values of her community. She has performed her duty as a Parsi and as a champion of her race.