

Ayad Akhtar's American Dervish: Analysis and Revaluation

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Abstract

Apparently the best and yet the most famous work by Ayad Akhtar is *American Dervish* which was published in 2012. It has gained quick attention, but not by many, as a debut novel about the identity issue. Yet, no studies have been devoted to studying the novel from an analytical point of view of Pakistani-American migrants' issues in America, in general. However, the novel has received some attention, there remain some aspects, in our view, and an essential aspect amongst them is the analytical study of the novel, which is not explored yet. In general migrants to new countries will usually face difficulty and especially if they are followers of a different religion. Also, the difference in their culture with culture of the country they migrate to will be an obstacle in integrating themselves into the new culture as seen in the character of Hayat Shah's father; whereas to some extent different for Hayat himself. Hayat befriends a Jewish girl and neglects Islam and similarly his father becomes friend with a Jewish teacher, Nathan. It is not easy for the migrant people to integrate into the American culture and tolerate the other religious beliefs such as Judaism as it is quite a novel experience for them. The migrants obligingly ignore their surrender to their own Islamic religion and assimilate into the Judaism and American culture, which is very difficult. These are the two key aspects that the paper focuses on by analyzing and highlighting the challenges that Hayat Shah and his family members face in America. Akhtar demonstrates the difficulty for the migrant characters between either choosing Islam or Judaism or secularism to be able to live like Americans.

Keywords: Diaspora, Assimilation, Culture, Quran, Judaism, Love.

1. Introduction

The novel, *American Dervish* has been written to tackle the cultural and the religious aspects of the Muslim people in diaspora. More precisely it is about the religious aspect of life as Akhtar says that he intended to present the status of belief through a global tale. It will be about the entire Americans and Muslims or non-Muslims as well as their way of living and that titled *American Dervish* (Akhtar, 2012).

The opening lines of the novel, introduces Hayat, a boy, together with Rachel who is a Jew. Firstly, the writer shows Hayat with a bosom student Rachel, who possesses such a beauty that attracts his attention. Rachel and Hayat together are ready to take part in one of the lectures of Edelstein, which is a 15-minute lecture on the recorded events of the Islam. One of the friends of the German professor in his study talks about Quran and this draws his friend's attention, and he has concluded that in brief, Edelstein asserted that 'his German' partner was going to all the 'bedrock Muslim' faith 'in the Quran' which is supposed to be like immediate, unaltered, unceasing expression of God was a not real (Akhtar, 2012). The negative statement did not cause any concerns and worries for Hayat. This demonstrates that even the intention of the author is towards the same direction as the way it is depicted it shows that it is normal to consider Quran as a tale. Not only that Hayat found that normal but also, he said that is 'a true and tried Mutazalite. He frankly told this to Rachel. This work consists of an epilogue and some book, each of which contains four chapters, but the

second book has one more chapter. From the beginning to the last section of the novel the writer gives negative roles to the Muslim characters. The promise of God that after difficulty there comes ease and tranquility gives Muslims a kind of relief. Hayat referred to Surah of 'Expansion' of Quran (Akhtar, 2012):

Have We not opened your heart
And removed your burden?
Have We not remembered you?
Truly, with hardship comes ease,
With hardship comes ease!
And so, when you are finished, do not rest,
But return to your Lord with love

2. Literature Review

For the last several years, several papers have been written on Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*. All the scholarly articles have praised this novel because of its themes. Its themes are mainly about identity and religion. None of these papers has so far tackled this novel in terms of its complete analysis. Here are some of the papers written about *American Dervish* and praise it: Lorraine Ali's '*American Dervish*' review: 'A Muslim boy grows up in the Midwest' is talking about the life of antagonist in the novel. Then, another paper by Ali in 2015 about loss of Identity is talking about loss of identity of the Muslim characters in diaspora. Also, more recently Faris Fajar (2017) has written a paper about feminist perspective in the *American Dervish*, which tackles the agony and sadness as well as all the challenges the women faced in Pakistan before arriving in America. Moreover, there is 'The Process of Assimilation in Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*' by Ismail which again like many other papers studies the loss and assimilation of identity of the Pakistani-American Muslims in America. Malik (2017) tackles the novelist's plays in an article. Also, Hasan and Sharif (2020) in their article on Golding's novel, have been considering Akhtar as a contemporary American novelist whose influence is continuing. Moreover, Fedtke (2019) discusses American nation in Akhtar's novel in his article. Daley (2012) talks about the plot of his novel in the *USA Today Review*. Then, Chaal (2018) discusses the identity of Muslims in USA through Akhtar's novel.

My approach is to some degree not the same as other authors approaches because it is an analytical approach and did not praise the work like the majority of the authors did. The novelist has merely considered the failure of a lady in marriage and the unhappy marriage of another family. He must have considered more than to Muslim families to be able to objectively present the lives of the Muslim families in the US. The way some of the Muslim characters speak about the Quran demonstrates the outcome the unsuccessful marriage of those characters but they ascribe it to Islam and the Quran. The shortcomings of these people lie in considering a relationship with a female or male character who is a Jew, or an atheist as a happy and successful relationship but considering the most principled type of relationship which is marriage a failure.

3. Migrants Adaptation with the New Culture of America

The novels talk about the religious, social, cultural, and even political sides of life and the challenges the Muslims confront in America owing to integrating themselves into the new country. The novelist negatively discusses the role of religion but positively presents the role of love, which is to some extent, exaggerated. Dale just simply refers to the narration of the novel which is the role of religion is negative and the one of love is positive (Daley, 2012).

In an interview with Akhtar, Aditi asks him about his work. The novelist intends to make his work a multi-layered work to cover almost the full life of a Muslim migrant family who live in America. However, it must have been referred to as one of the worst examples of this because there are thousands of Muslim families live in diaspora, yet they do not live in such a worse manner although they also live a challenging life. Akhtar's insightful perceptions of the conflicts between two worlds: the old and the new, between the unbeliever and the believer and among outsiders may appear to be natural to pursuers of both contemporary and classic writings (Langer, 2012). The majority of Ayad Akhtar's novels and plays deal with the life of Muslim families live in diaspora. He might have lived such a miserable life and therefore out of his personal experience he appeared to write about such issues. Akhtar thinks that he is like a narrative writer. Ayad Akhtar does not consider himself a novel writer or screenwriter or dramatist. Those he calls them modalities, are clearly dissimilar, and he says that he does not know that he favors 'one over others' (Sriram, 2014).

This novelist opens the lines of novel by introducing two female characters; his mother; Muneer and his mother's friend; Mina. His mother narrates to Hayat the sad and miserable story of Mina's marriage to Hamed Suhail in their home country before migrating to America. Hamed sent his lawyer to say to Mina that Hamed divorces her. The lawyer says repeats it three times, which implies he has completely divorced her (Akhtar, 2012), this repetition in Islam means that he has permanently divorced his wife. Also, the lawyer says that he recently gave life to Suhail's child. The boy was

named Imran by him. The two will be together for seven years, so, he will have the full privilege, unquestionably as a guardian (Akhtar, 2012).

The miserable life that Mina had in Pakistan obliges her to leave to America after receiving an invitation letter from Shah's household to stay with him in Milwaukee. The relationship between the child and his father was quite strong as Hayat asserts, yet he was fascinated by Mina. Hayat says that he liked her voice and wanted to attach to her. 'His time now turned around the expectation of that night-time hour listening—my eyes closed—to her breathy voice while the baby's mother told stories to him (Akhtar, 2012).

The moment the divorced woman goes to America, Hayat, who has been fascinated by Mina as his mentor, commences learning some Islamic teachings: the way one devotes himself like dervishes and knows the Quran by heart. Mina merely starts to explain to Hayat about Islam, but his guardians do not like this as 'Hayat's father was a mainstream humanist who' would not accept being limited to the he restrictions of any religious books (Fresh Air, 2012). Furthermore, his mother was frankly showing her hatred to Islamic teachings.

Thus, Hayat knows the majority of the Quran by heart. Hayat thinks that the best dream for one in life is to be a 'hafiz' one day, while Mina narrates stories of the dervishes to Hayat wishing to see him become one of those people. Perhaps she wants him to continue and be like dervishes as identified in the story told by Mina. She looks at two human beings in a glimpse, holding oranges, why scorn him. The two, chase a dervish by throwing orange peels; this makes the dervish thank them instead of becoming furious (Akhtar, 2012). Regarding this, Mina states that he found that quite normal and considers it to be similar to the 'ground' and 'those peels as those men' as well as the entire things made by God (Akhtar, 2012).

4. Role of Education in Hayat's Breeding

Since this young boy has been prepared to embrace the life of a hafiz (a memorizer of the holy Quran) relying on Mina, he, at the final part of the 'Second Book', 'asks God not to allow his father to be scourged in the flares of Hell fire for his transgressions. The boy sees his 'father waving at' him 'through the' unlimited blazes and he asked 'God to' pardon 'him, to' dismiss the father for all the wrongdoings. He 'heard father's cries of' agony similar to flames burnt the father (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat could only help his father be rescued from the hell by memorizing the Quran as a hafiz. 'It's Mina's word. While Mina during her teaching told Hayat that Hafizs could be protected from the hell, and he could be a protector for his parents. This encourages him to be a hafiz (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat and Mina have a spiritual and physical relationship. He values her truly, especially 'in the wake of having seen her' exposed 'body in the' restroom. Hayat asserts that her bare body is the best he has ever seen, 'its expanding at the chest and hips'. This stirred his sensual feeling. A strange feeling 'inside' him was at that point arousing (Akhtar, 2012). Because he had a 'physical adoration for Mina' and studying about Islam, Hayat cannot approve her marriage to Nathan, as he was a Jew. Therefore, Hayat tells Mina's family in Pakistan about their daughter who has a plan to get married to a Jew, in a letter. Mina's parents leave to the US and disapprove her marriage. Thus, she is obliged to marry a Muslim boy, Sunil. Mina's new life is not better than her previous marriage with Hamed. Unfortunately, her recent marriage is catastrophic for her because she dies by a cancer disease. Her disease does not make her sad, but she rather finds it as a solution for her on going familial issues with the person who is like a dervish.

Hayat starts to rely on Mina since his parents dislike religion and simultaneously he likes to know about Islam. Hayat finds it quite essential to know about Islam because it is something which is missing while being brought up by his parents. He rarely hears anything about Islam from his father and mother all he learnt from her mother about Islam is her mother's story of her husband's white mistresses (Akhtar, 2012). As a result of the agony Mina has from her partner, Muneer starts telling the 'child the' assumption 'that he ought to' reject 'the Muslim conduct' towards girls and accept a girl who is a Jew. Muneer usually tells her child that her father wants his child to be similar to the Jewish people, which is what he likes much about Judaism and he says that the sole reason behind raising him up in a special way is to make him know that woman must be respected. The true thing is that. She also says that Kurban she is raising him up as a Jewish person (Akhtar, 2012). It is shown that the mother never works in the Jewish families, but she is in rest which is opposite to the Muslims in feeling with women; Jewish people respect women, whereas 'the Muslims' disrespect women. Therefore, Muneer asserts that Jews know how to regard ladies, in a better way. They know how to leave a lady alone as a lady, to let her look after them. They know how to give a lady consideration (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat's love for Jewish people has a precedent and it has been transferred to him from her mother and this love comes to her 'from her father'. Muneer's parent told members of his family a principle 'that Jews were the' extraordinary individuals, and God loves them more than believers, especially Muslims (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat's has stemmed from their ideas regarding the Jews. Hayat pinpoints 'that his grandfather's' regard 'for the' Jewish people 'originated from his experience living with them as a university student in Britain after the Second World War' (Akhtar, 2012).

The opinion of Hayat's grandfather about the Jewish people is that he believes that they know the benefit of learning more than Muslims do that is why he considers the education that Jewish people receive true not the repetition remembrance and careless spewing forth of custom he saw as regular to Muslims (Akhtar, 2012). His understanding of Muslims and Jews has been used as a relying source of knowledge in American Dervish and it leaves impact on Hayat.

To communicate his undesirable childhood because 'of Mina who' wanted to consider him to 'be a hafiz or a dervish, Hayat' highlights that his spirit was growing out of the kid measured attire 'with which' his childhood had equipped him as a Muslim child (Akhtar, 2012). In the epilog, Hayat states that 'it was in Rachel's arms—and it was with her affection—that he at long last found himself as a man, yet as an American' (Akhtar, 2012). It was Hayat who finds himself in nowhere but in company 'of the Jewish' female youth, 'Islam was' not, at this point important to him. His heart longed to ask. He puts 'my hands out before' him in the 'Muslim style' and attempted to invoke the sincere 'fire he' knew quite 'well from back when Mina lived' with them. However, 'his words rang empty'. 'Like sounds' addressed 'the deaf, or more terrible, to nobody (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat discloses his refusing 'of Islam and its' principles, while speaking with Mina He intended to inform Mina that he had been abandoning Islam step by step in the previous time, and now nothing 'left' (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat is such a naïve character who has been deceived by his friends who are not Muslim; they teach him some taboo words before leaving Islam. Farhaz and Hamza are his two friends.

By the end of *American Dervish*, Hayat unhappily announces 'that he has' barely 'read the Quran for some' years and he no longer loves Quran and does not consider it important in the library, the garbage bin was loaded up with books. He did not really think about the occasion. He did not kiss the cover as he normally did. He simply 'put the Quran down' on the 'top of' different 'books' and looked at 'it slide' aside, until it was no longer seen. It was the last time he would contact 'the Quran' for nearly a decade (Akhtar, 2012).

At the last part of the novel, it has been crystal clear that 'Hayat is' not a proper person to American Dervish for some reasons. For instance, he refuses all the Islamic rules and principles and points out the point 'that his' character 'in America' rotates only 'on his' closeness 'with the Jewish people' and gatherings, especially with Rachel. Consequently, Hayat needs to repudiate his related 'people, the Muslims' when what is supposed to be done, they will do it particularly 'the Pakistanis'. As observed 'toward the end of the novel, when Hayat needs to know more information about Mina's two children after her death', it is 'Professor Nathan Wolfsohn, the Jewish' instructor, who 'illuminates him about their lives'. Hayat's information about people from Pakistan is 'from Professor Wolfsohn'. Also, the reader is totally aware 'of the way that Hayat cannot be the American Dervish since' he, in his dream, was not honoured to remain and supplicate with the prophet. 'Mina' stated it was an extraordinary gift 'to see the Prophet in a dream', however there did not appear as a gift in hers. Despite continuing and supplicating with him, she had left (Akhtar, 2012). This lady did not tolerate sincere preliminary in his life. He was unable to deal with the idea 'that Professor Wolfsohn may marry Mina' regardless of the way that he is altogether set up as associated 'with Islam for her own specific' reason. Nearly 'towards the end of the novel when both Hayat and Professor Wolfsohn' meet, the later states that he did not give up her aunt. 'She was, and consistently will be', the adoration for my life (Akhtar, 2012). Also, Hayat could not accomplish or show enough ingenuity 'with his father's grave changes' that unfortunately upset 'his relations with his family'. Despite proposing appeal to his father 'not to drink' or look 'for the white American' lovers, he cooperates with his mother to reveal his father's motivations of weaknesses. While Hayat is tuning into his father and the clinical guardian's playful 'demonstrations, he' ends up being totally aware of his father's contaminated deeds (Barzinji & Hasan, 2016). Hayat enlightens readers regarding the method he comprehends 'his father that he was listening as she talked about', all aspects 'of him' inclined 'in toward her'. He was drinking and gesturing. He looked cheerful. The two of them kissed each other (Akhtar, 2012). The author tries to show the weak relationship of the father and the child. The child is looking 'out for the father while the father's position' may go 'to pieces' once 'he sees his child is watching him'. As though identifying something, 'father halted'. He looked at 'the window'. He solidified. At that point, the lady turned to look. He said that he knows 'her now'. She was the medical caretaker 'from the' clinic room, Julie (Akhtar, 2012). 'Mina is the best character in the novel' since she has kept her burdens secret from everybody. She never protests of any bad behaviors done by any character against her and attempts to tell Hayat the best way 'to be a dervish', which exposes probably the best quality. 'Her being' another 'dervish is very' clear 'in her taking after the' message passed on to Hayat to demonstrate 'him being a dervish'. It reflects her psychological state when life and death, bliss and feel sorry for, 'and châteaux' and confinement offices are no different 'in her eyes', that mirror her honest accommodation to the spirit 'of Sufism and shows how she is' just worried about finding 'the genuine way to Him'. Mina asserts that confidence 'has never been' about a life following death for her, Hayat. It is tied in with discovering God now. Nothing changed with you. Regardless of whether I am living in a jail or in a palace, wiped out or solid, it is not different. That is the thing that the dervish teaches. What 'comes our' direction, 'whatever it is, that is the vehicle'. Every individual's life, regardless of how small or big, how merry or 'how sad, it' very well may be a way to Him' (Akhtar, 2012).

This declaration implies 'that being a dervish implies, similar to a real Sufi, to be dissolved in the Almighty's Being in spiritual and physical ways'; that is to say., one's character, 'self and identity' are to be broken down in a more prominent one of Being, consequently quitting any pretense of everything to God (Allah). 'Such an image of a' decent dervish is the contrary side of retention into any gathering. She clearly reports 'that she could be' some 'dust, or sand, or nothing at all' with the objective 'that she will not' do any harm 'or be hurt by anybody on earth'. In doing as such, 'she best practices' the noteworthiness of ingestion 'to the extent that she' was unable to think less about the outside sorts 'of her religion'. Thus, she did not wear a headscarf; and 'nor did she fast in Ramadan' (Akhtar, 2012). To present the significance of a real 'dervish or Sufi, Mina' sees being a Sufi, way to surrender 'the world and everything in it'. Being a Sufi is way to rely upon nothing, to need 'nothing, to be nothing. A Sufi is a day that needs no sun, a night that needs no moon, no stars. 'A Sufi' resembles 'the dust on the ground, not the stones that hurt' individuals' feet, yet the dust is there although nobody realizes (Akhtar, 2012).

The above statement of a dervish or a Sufi shows that Mina is a dervish. Her marriage is with Hamid Suhail who separates with 'her to take his child back to' himself. 'Mina and Milwaukee, joined by her child Imran, live as two visitors with Hayat's parents'. Mina teaches Hayat Quran in futile, pauses 'when his father' demands her to stop. She prepares food 'for them like a cleaning' professional, exhibits her willing to get married with the Jew, yet marries the horrendous man Suhail 'Chatha who's American' spouse quits him, and finally 'dies because of' Suhail after an extended length of awfulness. To acknowledge 'what society forces upon her, Mina' changes her 'physical structure' to adjust 'herself into' the general public in such a way that her stylish hair made her fashionable, an American lady, an amazing possibility to people 'like us' who could not imagine we could look like that (Akhtar, 2012). Also, part of her inundation 'into society' is appeared in her condition 'to marry Professor Wolfsohn', a Jew.

One can argue that it is Mina who becomes a dervish in the novel not Hayat since she is worth calling her dervish owing to her features which resembles the ones of a dervish. Hayat is the individual who dismisses the American convention as he continued looking for his identity, a request which shut in abnegating his Islamic precepts to find his personality. It is not easy for Hayat 'to be a hafiz for certain reasons. He has been trained 'by Mina who has taught him the Quran in English, not in Arabic'. Clarifying her conclusion, Mina expresses that all deeds are estimated by objectives, not appearances, which helps Hayat the best 'way to memorize the Quran in English'. Souhef, who was the 'Imam' discredits this point of view, advising Hayat that she needs to become familiar with the blessed book in its heavenly language. Yet, she does not need be debilitated. (Akhtar, 2012). Second, Hayat's spiritual and physical connections with Mina is emphatically solidified straightforwardly 'after Hayat sees her' uncovered body 'while she is having a shower'. The image of Mina's bare body gives off an impression of being unshakable and overwhelming in his life. Hayat says the picture he thought he'd trained himself to overlook would return, 'unbidden—her breasts'; and long periods of disarray and would follow. Hayat made new endeavours to stifle the psychological picture. It was useless. The more he opposed, the more tenacious it demonstrated (Akhtar, 2012). Afterward, he inclines 'down to give Mina' a kiss. The love 'relation between the two' has been shared and both let it be known after kissing her, Hayat says: 'That is so sweet, behta.' 'I love you, Auntie.' And she says, 'I love you, too, Hayat' (Akhtar, 2012).

Hayat is quite attracted by 'Mina's' naked body and her photo, 'that his mother posted on our refrigerator door' (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat elucidates the indescribable influence the picture has on him both physically and emotionally. 'One night I lost myself. Mina's picture before me, my hands between my legs, I disappeared into pleasure. Before I knew it, my loins shuddered and convulsed, releasing something thick and wet inside my underwear' (Akhtar, 2012).

Mina's naked photo and her physical region raise Hayat's feeling and shiver his body as he sees Mina inclined 'in to turn the page. Her arm brushed against mine, her touch murmuring along my skin and repeating up my arm to the rear of my neck' (Akhtar, 2012).

Somewhere else, Mina embraces, exhorting him that he would transform into a hafiz soon. (Smith, 2012) It is brief which observes the mixture of both physical and academic manners of thinking. Mina intends to assist him with recollecting transforming into a hafiz while he focused on her amazing greatness and squirmed with convincing emotions. She embraced him, and at the same time he felt it once more that dazzling shiver 'running along' his limbs, 'up my back' (Akhtar, 2012).

When the novel begins the novelist shows 'that Hayat is' not very close to 'his father like his mother. In this manner, the peruse envisions 'that Hayat will take after his mother's' movements in venerating her viewpoints as for the Jews. This is the explanation for Akhtar's start of 'his novel with Hayat and Rachel's connection in the' prelude and conclusion of this literary work with a similar association in the epilog. The beginning and the end of the novel with the nearby association between 'Hayat and Rachel' causes the focal point of the novel to give off an impression of being 'a midsummer night's dream'. In that capacity, what isolates the prelude, and the epilog is only a record prompted 'by Hayat who' tends to 'Rachel about his' nearby relative Mina'. Truth be told, Rachel requests Hayat to relate the tale of Mina'. At the point when he educates her regarding 'Mina's passing', she does not react as solidly as he envisions 'that

she will, yet' she finally does. Hayat attempts 'to hear a word' from Rachel to demand him portray Mina's story. The truth was, he might not want to leave. He was expected to stop. He expected to prompt her. They sat calmly 'for a long moment', and thereafter Rachel touched his hand. 'Let me know,' she said (Akhtar, 2012). If Rachel did not 'mention Hayat to relate Mina's story, there would have been no American Dervish using any and all means. Along these lines, one can say that the whole story is depicted at Rachel's own specific requesting. Hence, Hayat who is directed by 'Mina can be neither a dervish nor a hafiz' (Barzinji & Hasan, 2016). It is a piece of the writer's skill to demonstrate Hayat's unproductive undertaking 'to be either a dervish or a hafiz when Akhtar portrays Hayat's life as being constrained' by his obsession with his tutor, Mina."

5. Losing of the Previous Identity and Gaining a New Identity

The other person who speaks of lack of respect for 'Islamic personality among the older generation in American Dervish is Hayat's father, Naveed Shah'. In the entire novel, the writer makes it obvious 'that Naveed is an abominable man for a modest bunch of reasons. Moreover, he says: 'to begin with, his wife Muneer tells nothing about him except' how he behaves with the beautiful female companions. Hayat observes, 'I heard more tales from Mother about Father's mistresses than anything else' (Akhtar, 2012). He 'also recalls his father's difficulties with his family' and asserts: 'throughout my childhood, Mother spared me little detail about her troubles with Father. And at ten, I already knew myself well enough to know that if I listened too closely to what she said, my blood would start to boil' (Akhtar, 2012).

Naveed, on the other hand, is 'from a third- world village, Muslim, rough-hewn, and sardonic. Their colleagues at the hospital called them the Odd Couple' (Akhtar, 2012). 'To make the contrast more apparent, Naveed's son says' 'the butt of most of Father's jokes was Nathan's love for all things cultural: the theater, symphonies, art museums, and above all books' (Akhtar, 2012). It is clear that Naveed's bad characteristics became a proof when Naveed is dissimilar to Nathan Wolfsohn in terms of social relations. He had a shattered family because his relations with his wife and child have been weakened. In this regards Hayat points out: my parents now fought as they never had. They cursed and slammed doors and threatened to leave each other. More than once, Father walked out, car keys in hand, and did not come back until the next day, or even later' (Akhtar, 2012). He disrespects his wife, Muneer states, 'all I wanted was to know how he was feeling! That is all! And if he did not want to say anything, he should just tell me. But no! Instead, he finds a way to hurt me. He's a cruel man' (Akhtar, 2012). Hayat confirms the bad marriage of his parents: 'my parents' marriage was difficult almost from the start. In short, by the time I was ten, she had been miserable for years' (Akhtar, 2012). Naveed discloses his hatred for his wife and his love for western girls. Muneer asserts: 'he doesn't like my mouth, he told me. Not the way he likes the mouths of his white prostitutes. Free hearts, free minds, free mouths, he said. Not like Eastern women, who are heavy and dark and mentally imprisoned' (Akhtar, 2012). Naveed's wife did not behave well with her husband. She highlights, 'after all, a man who drank and cheated on his wife could not claim to have any credibility, she liked to say' (Akhtar, 2012). These bad behaviors are seen as Naveed's loss of Islamic Identity.'

Hayat's father, 'Naveed, despite what might be expected, 'is from a third-world' town, Muslim, unpleasant cut, and cynical. Their partners at the medical clinic considered 'them the odd couple' (Akhtar, 2012). To make the difference obvious, Naveed's child says the aim of the majority of Father's jokes was Nathan's affection for everything social: the theatre, orchestras, craftsmanship historical centers, or more 'all books' (Akhtar, 2012). Essentially, Naveed's bad behavior ends up being totally apparent when he is socially appeared differently in relation to Nathan Wolfsohn. He had a very weak family and his relations with the two broke. Hayat insinuates his folks' separated associations when he says that his folks currently battled as they never had. They reviled and hammered entryways and took steps to leave one another. More than once, father exited (Akhtar, 2012). He abuses his partner, Muneer who says that all he needed 'was to know how he was feeling!' That it is in a nutshell! What is more, on the off chance that he would not like to state anything, he should simply let him know. However, no! Rather he figures out how to hurt him. He is a pitiless man (Moody, 2014). Also, Hayat declares 'that his mother's' union with 'his father has been a pitiful' one from its beginning. He says that his folks' marriage was troublesome nearly from the start. So, when he was ten, she had been hopeless for quite a long time (Akhtar, 2012). Naveed illuminates his life partner Muneer that he abhors her a lot that he adores the white ladies. Muneer says that he does not care for his mouth, he let him know. Not in the manner which he prefers the lips of the beautiful whores. 'Free hearts', free personalities, 'free mouths, he' stated, dissimilar to Eastern ladies, who are hefty and dull and intellectually detained (Akhtar, 2012). Naveed, like an accomplice was not regarded by his partner. She features, all things considered, a man who drank and undermined his better half could not profess to have any validity, and she jumped at the chance to state (Akhtar, 2012).'

6. Quitting Religion and Identity

Giving two of the most crucial things in one's life is not easy. These two are religion and identity which were gained throughout one's life. 'Having started to show his dislike of Muslim prayers five times a day and considered it duplicity

Hayat postulates that ‘Praying all day long. Nothing to show for it, they are hypocrites’ (Akhtar, 2012). Similarly, Naveed’s spouse has been affected by Naveed and she starts asking about his belief in religion, also this concern that influences the entire of those close to him badly, and more particularly the members of his family, and this has been talked about by’ Hayat:

‘Deep down, Mother was a believer, but the years she’d spent with Father—who thought religion was for fools—had trained her, I think, to check her religious impulses’ (Akhtar, 2012). The writer once more negatively makes a reference to the role of religion, which either Naveed believes religion is not necessary to anyone, or the author intentionally talks about the negative role of the practitioners of religion, which is certainly influenced by his previous culture. He talks about religion to his friends and states, ‘Religion, my friends is a topic for fools. And this conversation is the living proof’ (Akhtar, 2012). After being influenced by the new culture and perhaps the new religion of Judaism, he starts calling Muslims who say prayers in the mosque: ‘There are idiots enough here for someone to lead. Chatha and all those stooges with their masjid on the South Side. Be grateful you do not know any of them yet’ (Akhtar, 2012). It was possible for Naveed to disregard the entire religious beliefs as pressed by Randy Boyagoda (2012) at the time the lady states: ‘Hayat’s father is a philandering alcoholic neurologist who wears his atheism proudly, scorns the local immigrant Muslim community, and regards all religions and Islam in particular as backward and embarrassingly crude.’ (Akhtar, 2012) The novelist is always being influenced by a new culture and religion therefore he hates Islam in particular.’

This hatred of Islam has been transferred to the character of Naveed disallows Mina teaching his son anything about Islam particularly Quran: ‘Your father asked me not to participate in your religious study anymore. He made me promise and I have to honor his promise. I am his guest, after all’ (Akhtar, 2012). The integration ‘of Mina into’ community is based on her surrendering to her ‘visitor’s principles’ and in remaining thankful to her commitments to stop teaching lessons of Islam to Hayat. Naveed likes to go out; notably contrasting, it was discovered by him during his happy remain with the beautiful girls, and it is described in the speeches: ‘what has your Father sacrificed for my sake? Hmm? Tell me! Not even one night’s pleasure with one of his white prostitute.’ (Akhtar, 2012).

Naveed thoroughly rejects Quran believing that it has no significance to him. The reason he hates Quran, is a kind of misunderstanding; because in his culture people mistakenly behaves badly and now, he ascribes it to Quran and Islam. Also, his tearing of pages of the Quran is another hint about his hatred of the Islam because of his own strict and severe culture in his own country. Moreover, worse than this is the act of his father who puts the torn pages of the holy Quran under his feet. While he is quite furious and is acting foolishly is one of the obvious problems that immigrants face in a new culture and country.’

It is said that ‘in Akhtar’s skillful hands, *American Dervish* helps non-Muslims understand the difficulties of following deeply held religious beliefs in a secular society, although we see Hayat [sic] lose his Muslim faith.’ (Ashworth, 2012) Adapting one in a new country does not mean to quit all the personal values that are related to religion and identity because without giving one’s culture and identity or religion one could integrate himself and even make friends.

7. Conclusions

Akhtar was influenced by some western thinkers, who left their impact on his works. In an interview with Aditi Sriram in 2014, Akhtar confirms that some theologians who have influenced him are ‘Jonathan Edwards, Emerson, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich and some others such as, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Woody Allen, Seinfeld’ (Ali, 2015). Akhtar has presented Islamic people negatively. To him Muslim men disrespect women and there is no love and respect between married couples. The writer was not objectively presenting the reality of the Muslim families in diaspora. The novelist demonstrates the hardship and the challenges the Pakistani migrants face in America because of two factors; culture and religion. Their culture and religion differ from the one of most of Americans. His portrayal of the life of Muslim families in diaspora is negative. This lies in presenting the struggle between the parents of Hayat. Hayat’s mother was treated badly by her husband under the name of religion. This makes her hate religion and tells others about her hatred of it. Naveed and Muneer’s thinking of religion leaves Hayat relying on Mina for gaining some knowledge of his culture.

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