

The quest for the fulfillment of Destiny: A study on Santiago in Paulo Coelho's "Alchemist."

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Abstract:- This paper examines the quest for fulfillment of Destiny as it is presented in the book “Alchemist” written by Paulo Coelho. The modern thinkers explain the concept of human Destiny as self-transcendence. The paper focuses on a theological endeavor within the tradition which Santiago, the protagonist of the book follows. The ethnocentric understanding of human nature is the belief that man was created as of the image of God. Therefore, human life will also be followed and reached to the Destiny in the fruitful relationship. The life of Santiago itself reveals how Paulo Coelho imagines the quest of the human being for achieving the fortune of his expectation.

Keywords: *quest, destiny, human life, God, fortune.*

1. Introduction

Paulo Coelho’s book “Alchemist” is about various journeys explained through situations about the quest for fulfillment of destiny of the protagonist ‘Santiago.’ It is a book, which reflects the magic and wisdom. This is the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusia shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure as extravagant as any ever found. From his home in Spain, he takes journeys to the market of Tangiers and into the Egyptian desert, where a fateful encounter with the alchemist awaits him. This story teaches about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens sprinkled along life’s path and above all following our dreams. He had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water. They were used to him that they know his schedule, and he would tell them of all the loneliness or the happiness of his life, but the only things that concerned the

sheep were food and water. The sheep were content with just food and water, and, in exchange, they generously gave of their wool, their company, and their meat.

His purpose in life was to travel, and, after two years of walking the Andalusia terrain, he knew all the cities of the region. His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for a simple farm family. They worked hard just to have food and water, like the sheep. Though Santiago studied Latin, Spanish and Theology but ever since he had been a child, he had wanted to know the world. Therefore, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he did not want to become a priest and he wanted to travel. After many persuasions, his father agreed and gave him a pouch that held three ancient Spanish gold coins. The world was vast and inexhaustible; he had only to allow his sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other exciting things.

There was an old woman who interpreted his dreams. She led the boy to a room back to her house; began quietly to pray. It sounded like a Gypsy prayer. People said that Gypsies spent their lives in tricking others. The boy was frightened, and slowly the old woman said;

"You came so that you could learn about your dreams" (1998:13)

Also, dreams are the language of God. When he speaks in our language, I can interpret what he has said. However, if he speaks in the language of the soul, it is only you who can understand. (1998:13)

He was disappointed that one should not believe in dreams and ignored the old woman. The sheep were at the gates of the city, in a stable belonging to a friend. He started to read the book he had bought. On the very first page it described a burial ceremony, it was very difficult to pronounce the names of the people involved in the book, yet he tried to read with concentration. Meanwhile, an old man interrupted his reading and persisted in his attempt to strike up a conversation. The old man told the boy that he was happy as the boy was going in search of destiny.

"For several reasons. But let's say that you have succeeded in discovering your destiny." (1998: 22)

2. Review Method

The soul of the World is nourished by people's happiness and by unhappiness, envy, and jealousy. To realize one's destiny is a person's only real obligation. All things are one. The Old man told the boy that there are many to realize their future and suggested the boy the point of giving up. Sometimes times, he suggested, the life of man appears to be a solution, and at crucial moments, it appears to be very easy. Though the idea of selling his sheep frightened him as he is deeply interested in searching new things so, he decided to find the hidden treasure. The old man told the boy that his treasure in Egypt pyramids. So he decided to follow the path of his destiny in spite of many odds and evens.

"When each day is same as the next, it's because people fail to recognize the good things that happen in their lives every day that the sun rises." (1998: 28)

When the boy visited Africa, he experienced the strangeness at every step. He felt alone and forgot that Arabic was the language. At this point, he realized that he needs to cross the

entire desert to find that hidden treasure for which he needs to have enough money. However, he is in money trouble and deep depression that he was far from home, feeling alone. He was feeling sorry for himself and lamenting the fact that his life could have changed so suddenly and so drastically. He wept God was unfair, and because this was the way God repaid those who believed in dreams.

After taking a blessing from the crystal merchant, he decided like how he conquered this Tangier, in the same way, he would like to conquer the world. He realized that the sheep had taught him something even more important: that there was a language in the world that everyone understood, a language the boy had used throughout the time that he was trying to improve things at the shop. It was the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as a part of the search for something believed in and desired. He was going to miss the place and all the good things he had learned.

"When someone makes a decision, he is diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision." (1998: 71)

When he decided to seek his treasure, he never imagined that he would wind up working in a crystal shop, though. Also, joining this caravan may have been my decision, but where it goes is going to be a mystery to me –he said. He decided to continue reading the bookbut meanwhile, Englishman interrupted him like the as old man. Both were talking about their destinies, and the boy was getting to know that he was in search of an alchemist who knows the universal language (alchemy). Alchemy is a serious discipline. The soul of the world allowed them to understand anything on the face of the earth.

The boy thought about the crystal merchant. He had said that it was a good thing for the boy to clean the crystal pieces so that he could free himself from negative thoughts. And he was becoming more and more convinced that alchemy could be learned in one's daily life. Also, he learned that the world has a soul and that whoever understands that soul can also understand the language of things. And many alchemists realized their destinies.

"If good things are coming, they will be a pleasant surprise; If bad things are, and you know in advance, you will suffer greatly before they even occur." (1998: 107)

Meanwhile, a war of tribesmen takes place, where a stranger saved many lives of people. The boy was surprised when the stranger was speaking of things that very few people knew about. The words, which were being said by him, remind the boy of the old man. The boy understood that he had met the Alchemist because he was the one who understands the language of the soul of the world.

The other day when the boy met the alchemist, to his surprise, he noticed that alchemist knew pretty well that he is going to him and him as in search of treasure and he was in love with the woman of the desert. The boy was astonished after listening to him. The alchemist appreciated him for being the right track. The alchemist added,

"When a person desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream." (1998:120)

The wise men understood that this natural world is only an image and a copy of paradise. The alchemist suggested the boy -"Always keep listening to your heart. Even if you pretend not to have heard what it tells you, it will always be there inside you, repeating to you what you are thinking about life and the world. You will never be able to escape from your heart. So it's better to listen to what it has to say."

"The fear of suffering is worse than suffering itself. (1998:137)

People are afraid to pursue their most important dreams because they feel that they do not deserve them, or that they will be unable to achieve them. We, their hearts, become fearful just thinking of loved ones who go away forever, or of moments that could have been good but weren't, or of treasures that might have found but were forever hidden in the sands. Because, when these things happen, we suffer terribly.

The words of alchemist had a lot of impact on the boy; he decided to follow his heart. He and his heart became good friends, and neither was capable now of betraying the other. When his heart spoke to him, it was to provide a stimulus to the boy and to give him strength, because the days of silence there in the desert were wearisome.

Now he is just three hours from the pyramids. The boy rode along through the desert for several hours, listening avidly to what his heart has to say. The boy told himself that, on the

way towards realizing his destiny, he had learned all he needed to know, and had experienced everything he might have dreamed of. He reminded himself that no project is completed until its objective has been achieved.

The boy started to dig the place for several days. But he found nothing. As he was attempting to pull out the rocks he encountered, he heard footsteps. Several figures approached him. He was bruised and bleeding, his clothing was torn to shreds, and he felt that death was near. Still, he began to dig at the base of the sycamore. Half an hour later, his shovel hit something solid. An hour later, he had before him a chest of Spanish gold coins. There were also precious stones, gold masks adorned with red and white feathers, and stone statues embedded with jewels.

3. Conclusion:

The experiences of the boy reveal that life is generous to those who pursue their destiny. And it gives us the inspiration to follow our dreams by seeing the world through our own eyes and not someone else's. Coelho's writing is beautifully poetic, but his message is what counts. His books have had a life-enhancing impact on millions of people. The mystic quality in the unique adventures of the boy, Santiago, may bring not only him but others who read this excellent book closer to recognizing and reaching their inner destinies. This fable is a roseate amalgam of spiritual quest, existential puzzle, lovely sensitivity and profound strength.

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Author Profile:

M. Laxmi Manogna is a student of B. Tech First year (ECE). Right from her childhood, she is very much interested in reading fiction and poetry. As a passion, she developed a kind of interest in writing with what she observed through her reading the books. She is recipient of many prizes at Essay writing and other competitions. She used to write regular right ups to news journals on various occasions.