

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Exploration of Inner Quest in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that **Mr. Indra Prasad Adhikari** has prepared this thesis entitled "**Exploration of Inner Quest in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist***" under my guidance and supervision. I, therefore, forward to consider it for final evaluation, acceptance, and approval.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "**Exploration of Inner Quest in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist***"
submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus
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Chapter One

Coelho's Literary Pursuit

General Overview

Santiago, the protagonist of Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist* is an enlightened figure. He is governed by a spiritual and enlightenment philosophy. In this novel we find that the quest for hidden treasure ultimately turns out to be the journey of inner mind where he discovers the real nature of consciousness.

This study attempts to explore how the protagonist is able to meet his mission overcoming the perils and hardships he has to confront on the way of his destination and becomes an enlightened figure.

Life Presented in Works

Paulo Coelho, born in Rio de Janeiro, of Brazil, belongs to a Catholic family. His family, which was upper middle class, neglected Coelho's interest in artistic Career. Coelho's schooling period was not so good because of this clash between his interest and that of his family. Since his childhood he loved to read works of Jorge Luis Borges whom Coelho regarded as his literary *guru*. Borges' inspiration guided him to become a writer.

Coelho was a multi-talented person. His inclination however was towards literature and writing. He was a non-conformist and always a seeker of new things and taste. He was a follower of Marx and Engels during the Guerrilla and Hippie Movement of 1968, which was also known as the revolt against the then military regime of Brazil. He participated in all the progressive movements and was part of the "peace and love generation." It was during this period Coelho confronted a crisis in his way of thinking. All these experiences have connection with his works.

Coelho's life was as varied and unusual as the life of the protagonist of *The*

Alchemist. He had a dream of wish fulfillment. His dream to be a writer met with frustration throughout much of his early adult life, a time in which he worked at various professions, some of them he found materially rewarding but spiritually unfulfilling. In an interview with Laura Sheahen he says, "The only way that you can learn any language is by making mistakes. I made my mistakes, but then I started to connect with the signs that guide me. This silent voice of God leads me to the place where I should be" (n.p).

Coelho also indulged in drugs, hallucinogens, and traveling. However, his father played a crucial role to bring him to proper track and admitted him to Law University of Rio de Janeiro. But Coelho, a lover of art and creative writing, was not happy in Law University. In 1970 he decided that the law school was not for him and started to work in a theater. For two years, he traveled throughout much of South America, North America, Europe and some African countries. Upon his return to Rio de Janeiro, Coelho started a long and fruitful collaboration with popular rock musician Raul Seixas as a lyricist, transforming the Brazilian rock scene. In 1973, Coelho and Seixas joined the Alternative Society, an organization that defended the individual's right to free expression and began publishing a series of comic strips calling for more freedom. He wrote the lyrics for several of Seixas's albums, and together they created the "Kring -Ha" comic strip series. He also wrote lyrics for other popular musicians such as Elis Regina and Rita Lee. The comic strip was considered subversive, and Coelho was arrested in 1974 and put in prison for short time, released and then rearrested and tortured by a group of paramilitaries before gaining his release by claiming to be mentally retarded.

This experience affected him profoundly. Soon after his release, in 1976, Coelho ended his association with Seixas and went to work for a record company. He

started living a normal life and worked as a lyricist and executive in the music industry. He tried his hand at writing but did not start seriously until he had an encounter with a stranger. The man first came to him in a vision, and two months later Coelho met him at a café in Amsterdam. The stranger suggested that Coelho should return to Catholicism and study the benign side of magic. He also encouraged Coelho to walk the road of Santiago de Compostela, the medieval Pilgrim's route. In the same year his writing passion took him away from Brazil to U.K., where he worked as a correspondent for many Brazilian magazines. He also had written his biography including his childhood experiences in a Jesuit school and the hard time he faced. However, this book remained unpublished.

After three failed marriages, Coelho married a painter, Cristina Oticia with whom he is sharing the success of his life as a world famous writer. Oticia led him towards Christianity. His fascination with the spiritual quest dates back to his hippie days when he traveled to many places of the world learning secret societies, oriental religions and mysticism. Coelho became a member of Catholic group called Regnus Agnus Mundi. However, the existence of the group was not verified. His life changed in 1986, when he walked the ancient Road of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain, a journey of more than five hundred miles that led him to a spiritual awakening. To cover the experience of his journey from France to Spain he published his first book *Diary of Magus* which was later renamed as *The Pilgrimage* (1987). It reveals his trip and the emotional changes it brought. The book describes his experiences and discovery that the extraordinary occurs in the lives of ordinary people. *The Alchemist*, first published in 1988 in Brazilian language, gave him international recognition and established as one of the most famous writers of the present world. These ups and downs of his personal life are often presented in the

lives of his fictional characters. In addition to *The Alchemist* such references appear also in the works such as *The Valkyries*, *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept*, *Veronika Decides to Die*, *The Fifth Mountain*, *The Zahir*, *The Devil and Miss Prym*, *Eleven Minutes*, *Manual of the warrior of light*, *Brida*, and *Like the Flowing River*. These books have established him one of the most famous writers of the world.

A Look into Previous Observations

Coelho is successful in connecting fact and magic with religion. While reading his works we feel as if we are reading some religious books giving spiritual message. A recurring concept in his book is the Personal Legend, in which his characters follow their dreams and pursue paths of self-discovery. His stunning novels explore the timeless struggles between good and evil, and bring to our everyday dilemma fresh perspective. They give the readers an incentive to master the fear that prevents them from following their dreams, from truly living. His leading works are in the form of adventure for transcendence, as an effective way to cure the lethargic humanity.

Coelho uses simple, clear language to blend religious and philosophical concept. His writing gives us a sense of conversation. We get the sense as if we are talking to his characters face to face. His writing can be understood more from the words of Eisinger, "This is the reason behind the fame of Coelho which he has achieved by using only those people as characters which he himself has lived" (45).

Coelho's writing has the vivacity to bring images, feelings, memories etc. into the mind of the readers as during the journey Santiago makes in *The Alchemist*. The story, indeed, has the comic charm, dramatic tension and psychological intensity of a fairy tale. It is also full of specific wisdom about becoming self-empowered, overcoming depression, and believing in dreams. Santiago travels from Spain to Morocco in search of worldly success, and eventually to Egypt where a fateful

encounter with an alchemist brings him the self-understanding and spiritual enlightenment.

Coelho tells that finding our soul and destiny is our real obligation. For that we must embark a journey. His dream is that all search for their treasure, find it and then want to be better than they are. If everyone is able to have successful self-transcending experience like Santiago, it will lead to a closer oneness with all things and the journey to spiritual gold will be much closer to reality. Henceforth, it is said that Coelho's works are not merely novels but something more. In addition to the artistic flavor, they provide the readers a life enhancing impact.

Michael J. Kremenik from Kawasaki University of Medical Welfare says, "Coelho's story is a myth of spiritual potentiality using philosophical tenets of alchemy. His belief in alchemy's spiritual power to lead us to our destiny, to what he calls an understanding of the soul of the world, is the driving force of this book" (124).

Santiago's Journey to the Egyptian Pyramids is a spiritual quest. The fact that the dream is in the language of the soul will force Santiago to discover his inward being before he is able to complete his journey. The journey embarked by Santiago is a heroic adventure. The heroes must cross some kind of dangerous path before they succeed. Joseph Campbell in this regard says, "The hero, when following the path of his desire, must keep his mind in control and let it pull him into disaster. He faces death if he is incorrect. This conquest of fear is the courage of his life. He believes the cardinal initial of every heroic adventure is found, in both fearlessness and achievement (qtd. in Kremenik126).

It is true that the hero must take risk of his own life for the benevolence of others. For that he should be ready to sacrifice his life. He is always in favour of truth.

If he follows the truth then only he can get victory or success. Similarly, the hero must avoid the fear, most importantly the fear of failure. Then only the hero is near the achievement.

Stephen M. Hart, a cultural critic, expresses his views on *The Alchemist*:

The Alchemist celebrates cultural hybridity. Coelho's eyes are those of the hybrid in which there is no single overriding monofocal vision of reality. Instead, it is a culture of palimpsest in which different cultural surfaces slide over one another. The protagonist is portrayed as standing of the crossroad between various ancient cultures: He simultaneously is intersected by Christian, Hebraic and Arabian Cultures. The forces of different cultures melt into each other. (311)

From the sayings of Hart it is clear that *The Alchemist* is rich in cultural and religious heritages because the protagonist has to tackle with the people of different cultures like Western, Arabian, tribal etc. Indeed, the novel is a compendium of different cultures and Coelho's dexterity has made this book a grand success.

In an interview to *Kirkus Reviews*, a literary magazine, about the role of spirituality in Coelho's books, Coelho says, "Spirituality has nothing to do with whether you believe in God or not – it is an approach to life" (S4). Indeed, it is a monotheistic belief or the belief in spirit and spiritual matters.

The Alchemist has been studied, analyzed and interpreted from different perspectives. We still find many fields about this text which remain unexplored. Exploration of inner quest in Paulo Coelho's Santiago is one of them which I shall explore in the next chapters. Though there are several characters in the story, this present study only highlights the inner self of Santiago, the protagonist of the novel. It does not explore the inner selves of all the characters found in the book. The second

chapter of this thesis will offer an introduction to theoretical modality that relates with spiritualism and notion of enlightenment along with the description of heroic adventure of Santiago. In the same chapter mythical approach to Santiago's quest will be attempted particularly focusing on Northrop Frye's archetypal and mythological criticism and Joseph Campbell's views on mythic hero. The third chapter will offer a detailed analysis of Santiago's pursuit of dreams and search of inner quest. And the last chapter will conclude the thesis describing how Santiago is able to attain the inner quest and get the spiritual enlightenment in spite of the insurmountable obstacles he has to face on the way of his destination.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework: Spiritualism, Enlightenment and Myth

Spiritualism

The spiritual philosophy believes that every man consists of physical and spiritual components. The physical element is the body that disintegrates at death. The spiritual element is what we call the soul or spirit that continues in another form of existence in the spirit-world or heaven even after the death. Everyone has a soul within himself or herself. When a person dies, his physical body dies but his soul or the consciousness does not. This enters into somebody else's body and continues to be here in the earth. When people die they do not take anything with themselves. They leave everything which they achieve in their earthly life. Similarly, the popular Hindu concept of *Maya* says this world is nothing but an illusion. Spirituality may involve perceiving or wishing to perceive afterlife as more important, more complex or more integrated with one's world view; as contrasted with merely sensual.

Spiritualism, concerns with the matter of the spirit, a concept closely tied to religious belief and faith, a transcendent reality and belief in one or more deities. Spiritual matters are thus those matters regarding humankind's ultimate nature and purpose. They deal with a unique relationship to that which is perceived to be beyond time and the space. In spirituality two terms are inseparable - meditation and dedicated service. When people dive deep in meditation with full dedication to the God, they find a real, balanced and practical life. The combination of meditation and dedicated service makes a man perfect. A spiritual person is that who tries to know the truth today to discover the truth tomorrow and to apply the truth the following day in his all activities and goes to the very root of truth. Each individual has his own way of reaching the ultimate truth.

A perceived sense of connection forms a central defining characteristic of spirituality. It has a connection to a metaphysical reality greater than oneself, which may include an emotional experience of religious awe and reverence or the state of Nirvana according to Buddhism. It is a state where we stay out of greed, hatred and illusion. Equally important, Spirituality refers to matters of sanity and psychological health. It has also been understood as organized religion which believes that spirits of the deceased survive bodily and communicate with the living entity usually through a medium. So, it is sometimes understood as communication between dead and alive. Kantibhushan Chakrabarti in his book *Spiritual Life* writes, "The concept of spiritualism is understood as a dead interacting with the living being, an intangible and immaterial 'Spirit' dealing with the living persons, dealing with a 'Spirit' something immortal and separable from the body at death, occult communication with the departed soul" (11). Likewise, Judith A. Boss defines spirituality as, "an inner attitude of reverence or deep respect for the ultimate moral worth or sacredness of oneself and others, independently of a belief in transcendent God or any particular religious or cultural doctrine" (16).

The philosopher of India, Paramhansa Yogananda realizes the absolute unity with spirit. He ignores all prejudices of caste, creed, class, color, sex or race. Physical death for him is only the disappearance of breath and loss of consciousness of flesh. Yogananda sees human life and death as a system. He states:

Superstitious awe of astrology makes one an automation, slavishly dependent on mechanical guidance, which is to say, his past, his transferring and his allegiance from the creation to the creator. The more he realizes his unity with spirit, the less he can be dominated by matter. The soul is ever from, it is deathless. It can not be regimented

by stars. Man is a soul and has a body. When he properly places his sense of identity, he leaves behind all compulsive patterns. (163)

Obviously, we have two kinds of life; the inner life and outer life. The inner life must constantly embrace, guide and inspire the outer life. The outer life is eventually liberated in fullest measure. The inner life constantly receives messages from above, message of infinity, eternity and immortality. When one becomes an advanced seeker, he sees and feels infinite peace and bliss within himself. One need not be God-realized soul to have this experience. All of us have peace, light and bliss in infinite measure in the very depths of our aspiring spiritual hearts.

George Lawton also has a similar type of view. For him, since the death of the person is not the extinction of his soul, he can interact with the living one. In this regard Lawton writes:

The chief business of spiritualism is the transmission of messages from the dead. These people say that spiritualism is a belief regardless of his particular religious creed or lack of it. Fortune telling has no more to do with spiritualism that it has to do with merchandizing, to communicate with loved ones in spirit and to receive the teachings that come from spirit is the purpose of spiritualism. (48)

The oriental concept of spiritualism is the observance of the knowledge about the ultimate truth which is termed as *Adhyatmikata*. The practice of self-restraint, compassion and charity are the keys to the gate of spiritual life. To realize the supreme lord, the person should be successful to realize the networks of the creation.

The Spiritual Quest

The notion of spiritualism is based on the liberation of individual soul from the cycle of birth and death. It is believed that the suffering of human life is caused by

the attachment to things, which are not real but transitory. This view is meant on the belief that body, food, house, and other earthly properties are not true realities of our life. Hinduism says that the suffering comes only when we take these worldly things as more important than the absolute spirituality. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in his book *An Idealist View of Life* says, "The entire life of manifestations and multiplicity is not real in itself and seems to be real only for those who live in ignorance" (16). According to him, this world is imperfect and a man and his deeds are also imperfect. It says that to get rid of this imperfection, one should accept the truth that there is supreme lord who helps him to get redemption. Robert Ernest Hume opines that there is only one thing that is the essence of all things and events, that is, *Brahma*. He says:

Indeed all things and all events are to be regarded as manifestations of one power at the heart of the world. In the language of traditional religion that 'it' may be called the power of prayer (*Brahma*). But philosophically, *Brahma* is to be interpreted as the absolute, infinite, eternal, omnipresent, impersonal, indescribable, neuter being. It may also be designated as spirit (*atman*) a world soul, into which the individual human spirit is also to be merged. (24)

According to Hume, the term *Brahma* is to be understood as spirit or *atman* which is also known as a world soul. It is also infinite, eternal and omnipresent. The individual soul mingles with the world soul and becomes one. It is a matter of a gradual elevation from imperfection to perfection and a state of freedom. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in his famous book *The Science of Self Realization* describes the nature of the soul and says:

The soul is present in the heart of the living entity, and it is the source of all the energies for maintaining the body. The energy of the soul is

spread all over the body, and this is known as consciousness. Since this consciousness spreads the energy of the soul all over the body, one can feel pains and pleasures in any part of the body. The soul is individual, and he is transmigrating from one body to another ... this is called transmigration of the soul. (49)

The same thing is confirmed in *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* where according to Prabhupada, lord Krishna says, "I am seated in everyone's heart and from me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedanta and I am the knower of the Vedas" (646).

According to Vedanta philosophy there is a difference between the super soul and the individual soul and this is explained in *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*, where the Lord says that although he is situated with the living entity in the same body, he is superior due to his transcendental situation. He is directing the living entity by giving knowledge and intelligence from within (591).

To talk about the inner quest it is pertinent to understand about the spiritual quest. One's journey towards spirituality is his journey of self or soul. When one is dissatisfied with his material success, then his journey for inner quest begins. He does not stop his journey of inner consciousness until he achieves his aim. The ultimate goal is to live from the over self not from the ego. People leave their family, friends, possessions etc. when the time comes to achieve such a goal. Some people are guided by their dreams that they do not think about the mundane pleasure since it is insufficient to fulfill their quest. Buddha had also sacrificed sophisticated life in search of ultimate reality. So, this is not the outer or physical journey but of the self or soul.

For Paul Brunton, spiritual quest is a call to man to seek his true self. In his

book *The Quest*, he writes:

Spiritual quest is the deliberate and conscious dedication to the search for the ultimate truth, freedom or awareness; it is a call to those who want inner nourishment from real source not from fanciful or speculative ones. It calls them away from things, appearances, shows and externals to their inward being, toward reality. And such quest not only begins from heart but also ends there too. (4)

It is cleared from the above expression that who is searching for spiritual life does not give any importance to his egoist self. One's quest for spirituality is his excessive desire to dissolve his or her ego. According to Brunton, spiritual quest is an effort of self-release from inward oppressions. It is also meant as self-deliverance from any kind of emotional obstructions. For him, it is an adventurous journey the man of spirituality should make. It is also a goal for the individual who wants to attain spiritual fulfillment. It is the best way for getting happiness in the words of Brunton. Besides, the avoidance of the inward bondages and the calmness of knowledge are significant factors to embark one's journey to the spiritual quest in the views of Brunton.

Spiritual quest is a continual effort of self - release from inward oppressions and self - deliverance from emotional obstructions. This is an adventure as well as a journey; a work to be done and a study to be made; a blessing which gives hope and a burden of discipline which can not be shirked. Here is a goal for men and women which can bring them the fulfillment of their best purposes, the happiness of being set free from their inward bondages and the calmness of knowledge their own soul.(7)

Since the journey is to discover the 'self,' Hindu thinkers traditionally identify two yogas as paths to realization: *Karma-yoga*, the path of ethical living and cultic ceremonies, *Jana-yoga*, the route of loving devotion and service. Despite personal preferences, it is usually maintained that no one of these ways is better than the other; the most practicing Hindus combine all these aspects. The spiritual quest is a holy journey. So, he who is engaged on it is truly a pilgrim. The person who stands on threshold of this path is about to commence the last and the greatest journey of all. Once it is begun there is no turning back or deserting it. And as on many journeys, difficulties, fatigue, obstacles, delays and allurements may be encountered on the way. In this regard, Brunton says that there will certainly be dangers, pitfalls, oppositions and enmities too. There is no clear way for an individual to accomplish any grand work. Despite such hurdles a true pilgrim moves ahead in his journey. At that time his intuition, reason, experience, and earnestness constitute as his guide. When he happens to face chaos and dangers on the way, there is the possibility of deviation in the purpose of the pilgrim. But a true pilgrim never loses the hope and avoids the journey until he gains the spiritual awakening.

When a man begins his spiritual quest, it is solely by his own strivings that he yokes his initial progress. Obviously, fulfilling the spiritual quest is not a romantic or dramatic adventure but a stern self-discipline. To be a man fully spiritual, one should be completely moral too. Without morality, one can not make his quest for inner consciousness. Brunton, therefore, says that living a moral life is more important than embodying oneself within temples, ashrams and meditation. So, the purification of mind is more important than the mere meditation. It can be accomplished at home or in an ashram, temple or monastery. Detachment from the transitory world is a must for the man who seeks authentic inner peace. This is the essence that the philosophy

of Hinduism assumes.

Spiritual Enlightenment

The terms spiritualism and enlightenment are interrelated. To understand spiritualism it is required to know the basic tenets of enlightenment and vice-versa. Understanding is the most important thing for enlightenment. Without understanding the thing in deep level no one can become an enlightened figure. It is also related with Buddhism as it deals with the greater level of understanding of everything. In this regard, Christmas Humphreys in his book *Buddhism* says, "Buddhism denies the existence in man of an immortal soul. The enlightenment which dwells in life does not belong to one form of life. All that is man's is changing and mortal; the Immortal is not any man's "(80).

Everybody has to suffer in this transitory world like Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, who left his palatial comfort in search of world peace about twenty-five hundred years before. After meditating for years, he became a saint and an enlightened figure and then he started preaching. The term Nirvana is found in Buddhist philosophy and meant for being out of the illusion of self. Nirvana can be achieved only by getting rid of the worldly pleasure and attachment of the material possession.

The act of enlightening is also understood as casting light where there was darkness. Spiritual enlightenment, however, is pretty much what all spiritual studies strive for. It is the hope of any one studying the topics within spirit to come to this state of being. It is not likely that anyone of us will achieve "total" spiritual enlightenment in our lifetimes, but many have and will at least gain spiritual enlightenment.

Enlightenment is a universal subject which is hard to put into a can and give a

label. Mystics, theologians, even religious fundamentalists all have or can get spiritual enlightenment. The bottom line is this, if we learn something deep, profound and true and it sinks into our heart and becomes a part of us, and then we can achieve enlightenment at least to a certain degree. Many people attempt directly to achieve enlightenment through different means like meditation, fasting, prayer etc. Though many people have tried and many may have succeeded in gaining this knowledge, there exists no single definition of spiritual enlightenment. It is up to us, only we can find this path and ultimately we must do it on our own.

M.H. Abrams in his *Glossary of Literary Terms* defines enlightenment as, "A trust in human reason as adequate to solve the crucial problems and to establish the essential norms in life, together with the belief that the application of reason was rapidly dissipating the darkness of superstition, prejudice and barbarity ..." (75).

The Hindu thinkers affirm the reality of life eternal or release from rebirth. When a person attains super consciousness, the soul of the person is unified with the super and becomes one with the eternal spirit. Radhakrishnan says such men discovering their 'self' attain super-consciousness and become eternal. In his famous book *An Idealist View of Life*, he writes, "The awakened man draws back from his mind, life and body and all else that is not his true being and know himself to be one with the eternal spirit which to be one with of all phenomena" (302).

Spiritual enlightenment or awakening is the primary goal of almost all spiritual practices, traditions and religions and for any spiritual seeker. When the person realizes his 'self,' the enlightenment of the person begins.

Mythical Approach: A Window to Literature

Myths are generally regarded as the ancient stories told naturally or written and transferred from one generation to another. They reveal the pre-historic

happenings like the creation of the universe, the initiation of animal life, human beings and so on. The great literary works also contain some kind of myths and become immortalized. In other words, myths are the symbolic projections of people's hopes, values and aspirations. They are collective in nature. Some myths are universal and take their specific shapes from the cultural environments. They are called archetypes. They bind a tribe or a culture together in common psychological and spiritual activities. Quoting the statement of Philip Wheelwright, Wilfred L. Guerin et. al write, " Myth is the expression of a profound sense of togetherness of feeling and of action and of wholeness of living "(160). This statement makes us clear that myths are the collective details of the daily life of the ancient people and the gods and goddesses.

The study of myths is known as mythology. Mythology tends to be speculative and philosophical. It has affinity with religion, cultural history, philosophy and anthropology. The regular patterning of the myths may be found in much complex combinations as genres. Hero archetype is one of them that relates with the archetypes of transformation and redemption. The hero undertakes some long journey during which he or she must perform impossible tasks, battle with monsters, solve unanswerable riddles, encounter with cannibals and overcome complex obstacles in order to save kingdom or sometimes to become satisfied with his or her passion for knowledge of the world. The hero undergoes a series of excruciating ordeals in passing from ignorance and immaturity to experience and spiritual adulthood. Santiago in Coelho's *The Alchemist* too faces the insuperable obstructions to reach to the Pyramids of Egypt. He almost loses his life but never loses his hope in order to change his dream into reality.

To talk about the mythological approach to literary analysis, Northrop Frye's

contribution should not be ignored. With brilliant audacity Frye identifies myth with literature, asserting that myth is "a structural organizing principle of literary form". (qtd. in Guerin et.al 166). In his famous book *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye indicates the correspondent genres for the four seasons. He identifies the myths of spring to comedy, summer to romance, fall to tragedy, and winter to irony. Frye states, "Mythology as a whole provides a kind of diagram or blueprint of what literature as a whole is all about, an imaginative survey of the human situation from the beginning to the end, from the height to depth, of what is imaginatively conceivable" (qtd. in Guerin et. al 166).

Myth critics are interested more in prehistory and the biographies of the gods. They even probe for the inner spirit which gives that forms its vitality and its permanent appeal. Myth criticism has some kind of affinity with the tendencies towards the cultic and the occult. Sophocles's *Oedipus* is an excellent example of the fusion of myth and literature. Sophocles produced a great play, but the plot of the drama was not his invention. It was a well-known mythic narrative long before he immortalized it as a tragic drama.

Talking about hero's quest Joseph Campbell says in *A Journey of a Thousand Faces*:

The hero's quest is a double quest that often requires a journey home not only to the place from whence the hero departed but to a state of being or consciousness that was within the hero's heart all along. To put it simply, the hero's journey outward into the world of action and events eventually requires a journey inward – if the hero is to grow and ultimately necessitates a journey homeward – if the hero is to understand his or her grail or boon and is to share it with the culture at

large. (84)

From the above mentioned remarks of Campbell it is simply understood that the hero does the double levels of journey simultaneously. The physical journey of the hero eventually turns out to be the journey of inner self. Campbell also shows the symbiotic relationship between myths and dreams in the following lines:

Myths and dreams come from the same place ... from realizations of some kind that have then to find expression in symbolic form, a dream is personal experience of that deep dark ground that is the support of our conscious lives, and a myth is the society's dream. The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth. (126)

It is obvious from the above lines of Campbell that dreams are the personal experiences of the people and if such dreams become common for all the individuals in the society they become myths.

In fact, heroism does not require living up to an image of the hero as superman or superwoman. The heroic journey does not need to become something greater than the ordinary person. It merely requires absolute fidelity to one's own authentic path. In this regard Carol S. Pearson, a myth critic, defines hero and his nature:

Heroes – in myth, literature and real life – take journeys, confront dragons and discover the treasure of their true selves. Although they may feel very alone during the quest, at its end their reward is a sense of community: with themselves, with other people, and with the earth. Every time they confront a dragon. Every time they choose life over non life and move deeper into the ongoing discovery of who they are, they bring a new life to themselves and to their culture. (3)

When an individual is dissatisfied with his family system, organization, his

community or even just the way he is living his own life, he begins his adventure. As he goes on a quest to find greater vitality and aliveness for himself, he also seeks answers that contribute to a collective transformation. Anyway, the hero's task has always been to give a new life to an ailing culture. In defining the mythic hero, Virginia Cox remarks:

The mythic hero typically encounters a force in the world that threatens to bring destruction or imprisonment. No matter what form the antagonist assumes, it represents an aspect of the hero's own psyche that must be overcome in order for the hero to gain a free, whole and joyful life. (45)

It is the false idea that being heroic means one has to suffer and struggle to prevail. The fact is that most of the people experience difficulty whether or not they claim the heroic potential within them. Moreover, if an individual avoids journey, he or she may feel bored and empty. It is not so much that we take our journeys in order to attain happiness. The reality is that when we follow our real bliss, the journeys will be our treasures.

The mythic hero adventure comes from an ancient tradition but still it has a spiritual relevance in modern world. Spirituality seems to be in crisis today. To some extent the materialistic thought is responsible for it. So, people are looking for revival of the ancient tradition that was full of spirituality.

In fact, heroic adventures have some sorts of dangerous paths that must be taken by the heroes before they succeed. Santiago can also be called a mythic hero though he is interested in revealing his inner self. He tries to understand his own nature through the help of this journey. Like the ancient mythic heroes he faces a numbers of obstacles during his journey towards Egyptian Pyramids. In the coming

chapters Santiago's journey will be compared to the journey of Hanuman, the monkey King of *Ramayana* and Santiago's pursuit of dreams and quest for the hidden treasure will be discussed applying the conceptual framework within textual analysis.

Chapter Three

Santiago's Quest and the Archetypes

The Pursuit of Dreams

Coelho's *The Alchemist* is the story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who is content to wander through the Spanish fields and towns with his faithful flock of sheep. When a recurring dream about finding his treasure at the Pyramids of Egypt frequents, he decides to avoid his complacency. Trying to understand his mysterious dream, Santiago encounters a wise old man who calls himself Melchizedek, the King of Salem, who sets the boy off on a quest to discover his own destiny what Coelho calls the Personal Legend.

Traveling through Andalusia as a shepherd boy Santiago happens to have the same dream again; a dream in which a child comes, plays with his sheep and leads him towards Egyptian Pyramids where he is assured to get the treasure of life. Santiago's dream can be taken as an inspiration to find his destiny in his life. Very few people have the chance to know about such destiny of life which is also taken as the legend of their life. This destiny of life is known to them as in the forms of dream or symbol or instincts like that. Santiago is one of such few who becomes successful in understanding his heart's murmur. The dream eventually leads him to a path of spiritual enlightenment.

As Santiago remembers an old woman in Tarifa who was famous for interpreting dreams, he decides to meet her for the same purpose. The Gypsy woman tells Santiago, "Dreams are the language of God. When he speaks in our language, I can interpret what he has said. But if he speaks in the language of the soul, it is only you who can understand "(12). In fact, Santiago is the only one who can understand it and therefore the sole interpreter of his dream. The Gypsy woman only tells Santiago

to go to the Egyptian Pyramids. She doesn't know the dream's meaning. The journey forces Santiago to undergo a transformation of consciousness in order to reach this source of life, an understanding of his soul.

For Coelho, dream is the sacred language of God to people. His protagonist also takes it seriously. He does not give much interest to his dream on its first occurrence. But he decides to get his dream interpreted when it occurs frequently. It is also believed that souls roam near the buried bodies under the pyramids. Santiago's dream about the Pyramids is a symbol for him to start a spiritual journey. The Gypsy woman in Tarifa demands one tenth of his treasure when he gets it. This makes Santiago laugh out of happiness and asks her to interpret the dream willingly. But he gets disappointed when the old woman does not tell him the way to go there. She says, "And this is my interpretation; you must go to the Pyramids in Egypt. I have never heard of them, but if it was a child who showed them to you, they exist. There you will find a treasure that will make you a rich man" (14).

According to Coelho, when the people are young, they know what their personal legend is, and at that point in their lives everything is clear and possible. However, as time goes on, a mysterious force seems to blind us of achieving this goal. The same thing is told by Melchizedek to Santiago, "And when you want something, the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it" (21). Through Santiago and his attempts at reaching his personal legend we can be reminded of our own personal legends and become more aware of everything around us.

Santiago is such a character who is never enticed with the material possession not merely guided by his temptation towards the treasure buried under it. After the reoccurrence of the same dream he is inspired to find out the treasure of his life that is the ultimate reality. And to know all about this one should live the life of spiritual

perfection which is possible only after attaining the super consciousness. Therefore, he is determined to follow his dream and get the treasure of life.

When a person wants or desires something with strong passion, everything seems to go perfectly according to plan. This always may not be true in our life. There may appear some kind of obstructions, hindrances or pitfalls. However, if one is consistent in his dream he can eventually get the achievement like Santiago.

Santiago's thirst to find out the treasure of life is further motivated when he meets Melchizedek, who appears as a grace of God for the boy. He knows everything about Santiago. Pointing out the book which Santiago is reading, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, says, "It describes people's inability to choose their own destinies and it ends up saying that everyone believes the world's greatest lie; that at a certain point in our lives we lose control of what's happening to us our lives become controlled by fate" (17).

Melchizedek says that dreams are not silly or selfish desires that should be ignored. Instead, they serve as the primary means by which people can get in touch with the mystical force that connects everything in the universe. He convinces Santiago that his nagging desire to visit the pyramids is actually a calling, and he sets Santiago on his journey of spiritual discovery. It is Melchizedek who teaches the boy about Personal Legends and their importance to anyone who wants to live a complete life.

Santiago's meeting with Melchizedek is the determining aspect in finding the destiny of his life. Melchizedek is sent by God to guide and instruct Santiago properly to make him realize his dream. Being a teacher, he further supports the boy in continuing his journey to find the treasure he dreams. He suggests that Santiago should follow the omens. God has prepared a path for everyone to follow saying this,

he provides him two stones Urim and Thummim, black meaning yes, white meaning no, to read the omens if any difficulty appears in his way. These stones are the guidance for the boy to follow his dream properly. Melchizedek finally instructs the boy and says, "Don't forget that everything you deal with is only one thing and nothing else. Don't forget the language of omens. And above all don't forget to follow your destiny through to its conclusion" (29).

Avoidance of Material Prosperity

Learning real life lessons and finding the place on the earth through inner quest appears to be one of the most important things in life. Despite many hurdles and hindrances, the protagonist of the novel continues his journey up to the Egyptian Pyramids to find the hidden treasure that ultimately winds up learning to find one's own treasure. Throughout the novel Santiago is governed by his spiritual quest not by material possessions.

During the journey of Santiago from Spain to Egypt, he is robbed, beaten to death, sometime bankrupt and gets a lot of suffering because of tribal wars. He encounters different kinds of people during his journey. Some of them became the guide and teachers for him. Melchizedek, though he claims for one tenth of Santiago's sheep, becomes a spiritual *guru* for him. It is true that if Santiago is guided by his capitalistic notion, he will certainly bargain with the Gypsy woman and the Old Man in providing them the one tenth of his property. As he is motivated by spiritual perfection, his journey of inner consciousness is successful.

After getting directions from Melchizedek about the two stones, Santiago vows to go to the Egyptian pyramids at any rate. At that time he does not know that he will be enlightened after reaching there. He is ready to sell his sheep too. He gathers courage and self-confidence at the time of fear and difficulty. He thinks that

he has left his father, mother and his home town just for the passion to know the world and he is confident that things will go in the similar way if he leaves his sheep as well. Santiago is not only passionate for traveling but also impatient to get his dream come true. He believes that getting the treasure of life is not only earning a simple livelihood, rather it is the awakening of the "self" as well.

Santiago has a strong desire for spiritual enlightenment. His spirituality is further intensified when he meets Melchizedek and gives him six sheep as payment for his guidance. Melchizedek interprets it as the principle of favorability or the beginner's luck. It is because he says, "There is a force that wants you to realize your destiny; it whets your appetite with a taste of success" (27). The surprising incidents taking place one after another motivate Santiago to believe in his dream. Now sacrificing his love for the family and the sheep, he becomes determined to go towards Egyptian pyramids to find out the ultimate reality of life. In Buddhism too sacrificing love is one of the steps considered crucial in finding out the treasure of life.

Having gained some good lessons by Melchizedek and the camel driver, Santiago marches ahead to the African desert where he meets a girl named Fatima and falls on love. Though the human love frustrates and disappoints, Fatima's love paves the way to reach him to goal and ultimately becomes the divine love. Fatima too becomes an important part of his life who tells him one day that she wants him to continue on his quest to find his treasure. She will wait proudly for him implies Fatima's belief on true love. As he leaves Fatima, he meets the Alchemist, who presents a challenge to the boy. The Alchemist tells Santiago to find life in the desert. He further says that only those who can find life in the emptiness can find treasure of life. He tells Santiago to listen to his heart in order to understand the world. He says

so because the heart that came from the soul of the world speaks the truth. His inner soul compels him to follow his dream and get the treasure of life. It can be guessed that if he wanted to be a rich person, he would not disagree with his father and would be a priest which was a prestigious occupation in his society.

Through the difficulties he reaches to Egyptian Pyramids and discovers that the treasure of life lies in spiritual awakening. He is cheated and looted by different people in various places. He is cheated by a stranger in Tangier, he is again robbed by the Arab Militant and finally looted at the Pyramids by the three men. He loses the material possession he has earned in his life but he never loses the hope.

Santiago's journey towards the Egyptian Pyramids is analogous to the adventure of Hanuman in a Hindu scripture named *Ramayana*. The monkey king Hanuman was a true devotee of the great king Rama. The battle between Rama and his supporters began against the Demon king of Lanka, Ravana when Sita, the wife of Rama, was kidnapped by Ravana. As the battle went on, the soldiers from both sides became wounded. Rama, Lakshmana and the monkey army got injured severely because of the discharge of *Brahmastra* by Indrajit, the son of Ravan. Jambuvan, the eldest soldier who had lost his eyes in war commanded Hanuman to fetch the four kinds of medicinal herbs immediately which glow in the darkness and can be found on Mount Brindachal in the Himalayas. Then Hanuman rose in the sky like an arrow and reached to Mount Brindachal and started looking for the herbs. Because of the conspiracy of Indrajit, he could not find the herbs. In a fit of anger, Hanuman lifted the peak of the mountain. At the very smell of the herbs Rama, Lakshmana and the fallen monkeys were cured. Hanuman then took back the mountain to the Himalayas in proper place and returned to Lanka. So, Hanuman is treated as a grand hero in the epic *Ramayana*. Like Hanuman, Santiago is determined in his mission to find the

buried treasure. These both journeys are the perennial journeys for the heroic quest; a parallelism of archetype and fictional journey.

Eventually, Santiago comes back to the abandoned church in Spain and finds a chest full of Spanish gold coins. He keeps his promise that he has to go to Tarifa to provide the Gypsy woman the one-tenth of his treasure. However, his treasure of life turns out to be his discovery of the 'self,' which is the perfect form of spiritualism and enlightenment. Now he is on his way of getting enlightenment avoiding all the worldly pleasure. This is again a reworking of archetypal healing of the soul.

Santiago's Inner Quest

The Alchemist is a wonderful fable about finding one's destiny. Most of the people think of seeking out their destiny, what they want to accomplish during their life time, at an early or perhaps at a later nostalgic point in their lives. But for some reason or other people never make the attempt. But Santiago finds the courage to go after his destiny.

Born in a lower middle class family, Santiago is not happy with his father's decision to make him a priest; rather he has passion for travelling through the world and knowing it better. His father tries to persuade him saying that traveling is meaningless but preaching is a prestigious profession. He also gives example of people who visit many lands and return getting nothing. The father states, "They come in search of new things but when they leave they are basically the same people when they arrived" (8). We find a spiritual meaning hidden in this saying. Santiago's father indeed says that many people come to this earth empty handed and when they die they go empty handed. However, Santiago is persistent in his passion and the dream, and opposes his father's logic about traveling. He says, "I want to know the world and this is much more important to me than knowing god and learning about man's sins" (8).

From this saying we clearly understand that Santiago is determined to have a heroic adventure.

We can take the example of Lord Buddha to understand about the passion for knowledge. There is a reciprocal relationship between the quest for knowledge about the ultimate reality of world and spiritualism. The Buddha also revolted against his father. He ignored all worldly pleasures and left the palace to find out the causes of unhappiness of human beings in the transitory world. He sacrificed everything, left the royal palace; his would be throne, his beautiful wife, lovely son and all comforts that he had enjoyed as a prince. This was done all for the sake of knowledge. In the same way, Santiago also leaves his home, family and opts for the life of shepherd in order to travel and know the world. For him the life of shepherd is far better than the high position in the church. Denouncing his father's will, Santiago becomes a shepherd just to know the ultimate reality of the world.

The journey undertaken by Santiago is, undoubtedly, a heroic journey. The perilous journey, the people he meets along the path and the trials he must pass in order to succeed act as Santiago's spiritual awakening. He discovers his own nature and also the nature of the world. Basic aspects of the hero's journey are used to tell this very spiritual story about finding out who we are and what our destiny is. When the journey begins Santiago is a naive shepherd boy without a clear vision of who he is. By the end he is no longer a boy but a universal hero we must admire.

In the journey of spirituality, like Santiago, we may find some teachers on the way. These teachers help make our journey easy and comfortable. Brunton says, "The spiritual journey must proceed by the guidance of his own intuitive feeling together with the pointers given by outer circumstances as they appear in any form" (136). He further says that these teachers are thought to be a divine guidance. They inspire the

people towards achieving the ultimate goal of life. In *The Alchemist* the King appears as the teacher of Santiago in the form of divine grace. Clarifying his existence in the form of teacher, Melchizedek says, "Not always in this, but I always appear in one form or another. Sometimes I appear in the form of a solution, or a good idea. At other times at a crucial moment, I make it easier for things to happen. There are other things I do, too, but most of the time people don't realize I have done them" (22). In this way, the King tries to persuade Santiago to complete his journey thereby discovering his 'self'. He also laments that most of the time people ignore his advice in such crucial moment of life. He says, "The soul of the world is nourished by people's happiness. And when you want something the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it" (21). Here, Melchizedek as a guide motivates Santiago to find out the treasure of life, consequently turning him to the enlightened one.

The disappointment of the boy is eliminated because the King shows the green signal of life and says everything is possible and clear. If he wanted to get Egyptian Pyramids, he definitely gets. But one has to realize destiny because it paves the way to one to attain his/her quest. According to Melchizedek, the subject of unhappiness is the people's indulgence into the petty desires. Therefore, all of us must have the mission on the earth to get truth by avoiding the excessive desire for material prosperity. This lesson corresponds to the Buddhist preaching.

Melchizedek insists that all people know their Personal Legends when they are young. But, the Personal Legends become clear to people only in later life. He also tells Santiago the story of baker. The baker's story illustrates that society works as an enemy of Personal Legend. When the baker adopts society's traditional expectation of success, he forgets his true Personal Legend. The King also suggests Santiago to ask an objective question in a difficult situation for making decision and take out one

stone from the two, Urim or Thummim. He reminds the boy to understand that "The secret of happiness is to see all the marvels of the world and never forget the drops of oil on the spoon" (31).

We know the journey of Santiago towards Egyptian Pyramids is not only the journey happening in the outside world but it is a journey within his mind as well. According to the philosophy of spiritualism the journeys of spiritual world are often interrupted within the pilgrimage about accomplishing the task, that is achieving the real purpose of life. Brunton opines, "The Personal Legend may face dangers and pit falls here which can deviate the purpose of the pilgrims" (5). In this novel too the protagonist of the novel faces such dangers while on the way towards discovering his 'self'. When Santiago reaches a place in Africa called Tangiers, he faces difficulty because of the lack of common language. Neither the African people nor Santiago can understand the language of each other. Consequently, he is cheated by a person.

While Santiago is on the way of his destination, he is looted by a Spanish-speaking man at a teashop in Tangiers. As he finds the stranger with his native tongue, he talks to him about the way to reach the Egyptian Pyramids ignorantly sharing his secret to the new man. The owner of the teashop tries hard from Santiago being cheated. He becomes unable to save Santiago because the new comer who really is a thief tells Santiago that the shopkeeper wants to steal his money. He makes the things clear by saying, "Tangier is not like the rest of Africa. This is a port and every port has its thieves" (35). Believing in his talk, Santiago gives him the pouch of money. Unfortunately, the man runs away with the money when Santiago is looking at an attractive sword in the market. Nothing is left except his dream, two stones and a jacket. He then laments that he was happier with his sheep in Spain than meeting with such fate. Santiago says:

When I had my sheep, I was happy, and I made those around me happy. People saw me coming and welcomed me. But now I am sad and alone. I am going to become bitter and distrustful of people because one person betrayed me. I am going to hate those who have found their treasure because I never found mine. And I am going to hold on to what little I have, because I am too insignificant to conquer the world. (37)

Now he regrets for believing in dream as a common man. He doubts that he is sure to acquire his dream into reality. Doubt can hamper the journey of a pilgrim when he is searching for spiritual perfection in his life. It may cause deviation in the purpose of pilgrim. Santiago also doubts whether his dream will change into reality. Such doubt is similar to the archetypal hindrances the heroic travellers often come across with.

After being cheated, Santiago resolves to work in Tangier and save his money until he can go back to Andalusia and buy back his sheep. He soon finds a job with a crystal merchant as a dishwasher. He works there with great faith and honesty and within a year has enough money to go home. While working with the merchant, he tells him about his journey. The crystal merchant, like Santiago's father, at first has given up his own dream but later pushes Santiago to seek out his treasure. The merchant acts as the archetypal savior who comes in the middle to energize the heroes.

During his almost eleven months stay with the crystal merchant, they talk about their business and life in the desert. According to crystal merchant, most of the people in the world have indulged into self-desires. If the persons eliminate such desires and negative thoughts from their minds, the peace and brotherhood will prevail in the world. It is also a way to realize the self. The merchant also tells his

mission to visit Mecca. He says, "The prophet gave us the Koran and left us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. The most important is to believe only in the true God. The others are to pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, be charitable to the poor and finally a pilgrimage (51). The crystal merchant has deep belief on the prophet. He expresses the devotion and commitment to the prophet which are also ways to quench the spiritual thirst. He also tells Santiago that he wants to visit Mecca but it is too far than Egyptian Pyramids, Thus, the crystal Merchant's staunch faith on God indicates his way of attaining truth.

Santiago resumes his journey through the help of the two stones provided by Melchizedek. They remind him of the King and of his need to follow his dream. Here again, with the help of his counselor, Santiago gathers the strength to go forward once again. Santiago still needs Melchizedek's help but a psychological evolution slowly takes place within him even at that time. He moves from a position of immaturity to the courage of self-responsibility. Like a determined hero, he prepares for more difficult trials ahead. Only when he can pass a test without the help of a counselor, he achieves full spiritual maturity and the courage of self-responsibility that comes with it.

Santiago is persistent in his quest even after being cheated since he has left everything for the sake of the fulfillment of his dream. Feeling the hard blow of the wind, he seems to be jealous of it. The boy wishes to get freedom in life like the wind. Coelho writes, "The boy felt jealous of the freedom of the wind, and saw that he could have the same freedom. There was nothing to hold him back except himself. The sheep, the merchant's daughter, and the fields of Andalusia were only steps along the way to his destiny" (27).

Santiago takes the help of a caravan that is moving toward the oasis to pass

the African desert. He is optimistic that after crossing the desert he will get the treasure. While joining the caravan, he also happens to meet an Englishman who is searching an alchemist who lives in the oasis of Al-Fayoum. He is going to meet the Alchemist to know the universal language. At the same time the caravan leader also instructs the people in the caravan that desert is not easy to pass and that disobedience to the leader's command can lead to death. Santiago becomes friendly with the camel driver. In one of the conversations with the camel driver he teaches the boy moral lesson and says, " We are afraid of losing what we have, whether it is our own life or our possessions and property. But this fear evaporates when we understand that our life stories and the history of the world were written by the same hand" (73).

The threat of death and the tribal war become major obstacles in the journey of Santiago. The camel driver helps in holding the patience of the people in his caravan. Santiago's inner journey within his mind becomes much stronger when the camel driver suggests him to live in the present. He further says, "To die tomorrow was no worse than dying on any other day. Everyday was there to be lived or to mark one's departure from this world" (103). Thus, the camel driver also becomes a teacher or guide for Santiago in exploring the inner self.

Santiago approaches a woman who comes to the well to carry drinking water. The Alchemist also lives there but she does not know the man. She also suggests that it would be better not to converse with women who are dressed in black because it is restricted to speak with a married woman by a stranger in the tribal culture. When Santiago approaches a girl, who is not in black dress, to ask whereabouts of the Alchemist, he knows that he is standing in front of his twin soul. After the appearance of his twin soul Fatima, he knows that the only language which the whole world can understand is the language of love. They develop intimacy. The girl not only reveals

her name as Fatima but also tells its meaning, that is, prophet's daughter. The boy asks her about the particular mysterious man they are looking for. Fatima confirms, "That's the man who knows all the secrets of the world" (90) and further clarifies that he lives in the south. Then the Englishman who is seeking for the Alchemist leaves for south to search him.

Santiago at first thinks the war as a curse in his journey but after meeting Fatima he thinks it as a blessing. He says, " I have crossed the desert in search of a treasure that is somewhere near the Pyramids, and the war seemed a curse. But now it's a blessing, because it brought me to you" (91). So, here too, God sends Fatima as a guide in Santiago's spiritual journey. She wishes him to complete his journey. Fatima further convinces him saying that it is those omens that brought him to her. Fatima says, "You have told me about your dreams, about the old king and your treasure. And you've told me about omens. So now I fear nothing because it was those omens that brought you to me. And I am a part of your dream, a part of your destiny, as you call it...if I am really a part of your dream, you'll come back one day" (93). As Fatima talks about the destiny, it reminds Santiago about the Englishman who had said fear of failure keeps man away from their destiny.

When Santiago is wondering about the meeting with Fatima, he sees two hawks flying in the sky that were attacking each other. At that time he gets the image of armed people in his mind. He can interpret because he understands the language of the world. Santiago says, "I am learning the language of the world, and everything in the world is beginning to make sense to me ... even the flight of the hawks" (95). Then he moves to the chieftain of the oasis to talk about his understanding of the language of the world. He also wins a bet with chieftain and gets fifty gold coins. At the same time, the Alchemist as a stranger comes to meet the boy and checks the boy's

ability, and after being convinced he calls the boy to meet him the next day. Then the boy moves towards the south where the Alchemist had called him. After reaching there, Santiago tells him that his real mission is to change his dream into reality. He also says that he is stopped there because of the tribal wars. The Alchemist as the boy's spiritual guide says, "When a Person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream" (109). The boy finds similarity between the saying of the old King and the Alchemist. The Alchemist too forces the boy to get his dream into reality. He himself leads Santiago towards the Pyramids. Finally, convinced by the Alchemist, the boy reaches to his final destination.

The Alchemist at his first meeting with the boy tests the courage of Santiago. He wants to find out whether he is capable of achieving his treasure or not. But Santiago is always ready for death for the betterment of the people in the oasis. He knows the immortality of soul after meeting his twin soul Fatima. He opines that the love is older than humanity and it evokes the soul of everyone in the world. Without such love, one's dream would have no meaning. Though love is considered as an obstruction to attain inner quest, it shows the way to a person to observe the world with equality.

The Alchemist and Santiago start their journey and get engaged in talking about the language of the soul. The Alchemist is further convinced when Santiago becomes able to find life in the desert when he is asked. The Alchemist says, "Listen to your heart. It knows all things, because it came from the soul of the world, and it will one day return there" (122). In an answer to the boy's question about the reason in listening to our hearts, the Alchemist further says, " Because wherever your heart is that is where you'll find your treasure" (123).

During the next three days, the two travellers pass by a number of armed

tribesmen and see others on the horizon. The boy's heart begins to speak of fear. The heart of the boy also says that his heart is a traitor. The heart of the boy follows his request and every time Santiago wanders away from his dream. Santiago also says him that his heart is afraid that it may suffer. The Alchemist then replies, "Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself. And that no heart has ever suffered when it goes in search of its dream, because every second of the search is a second's encounter with God and with eternity" (124).

Santiago is now on the verge of attaining the super-consciousness. We must know the fact that Santiago's heart is united with the soul of the world. While on the way Santiago is instructed once again by the Alchemist:

Before a dream is realized, the soul of the world tests everything that was learned along the way. It does this not because it is evil, but so that we can, in addition to realizing our dreams, master the lesson we've learned as we've moved toward that dream. That's the point at which most people give up. It's the point at which, as we say in the language of the desert. One dies of thirst just when the palm trees have appeared on the horizon. (126)

The Alchemist answers all the questions and further claims that the boy is an alchemist and he can convert himself into wind if he likes. The tribesmen and the Alchemist want to see him being transcendent into wind. Santiago needs three days to do so. He reaches to the soul of the world and becomes one with the ultimate entity. After this, Santiago turns himself into the wind. Coelho writes, "The boy reached through to the soul of the world and saw that it was a part of the soul of the God. And he saw that the soul of God was his own soul. And that he, a boy, could perform miracles" (145).

As Santiago comes closer to his destination, he becomes more serious about his journey. The Alchemist says that the job of the Alchemist is to bring spiritual perfection which is the way to get redemption. Santiago's readiness to turn into the wind implies the transformation of death into the soul of God. The boy gets such a persuasion of the Alchemist and gets his best to follow it up. Santiago says, "I have inside me the winds, the deserts, the oceans, the stars, everything created in the universe. We were all made by the same hand, and we have the same soul. I want to be like you, able to reach every corner of the world, cross the seas, blow away the sands that cover my treasure" (140).

This is the remark of Santiago when he communicates with the wind. The candid communication of Santiago with the sun is equally interesting. He further says that many more things are connected with soul of people. Now people are showing their strength by neglecting their destiny which has resulted chaos, disorder and unrest in today's world. If the people only run after the material possession, the whole world falls into the ditch of worse. In contrary to it, the people step ahead to realize the true selves. The future of the people get blossom into the spiritual garden. That's why, the dire need of today is to bring the changes into the mind of the people through the inner quest.

The Alchemist allows the boy to get Egyptian Pyramids because it is only three hours away from the very place. Santiago simply needs to hear his heart that tells him where the treasure lies. He falls to his knees and weeps thanking God for making him realize his destiny and for leading him to meet the King, a crystal merchant, an Englishman, and the Alchemist. As Santiago weeps a drop of tear falls which he finds as the symbol of God. All of a sudden, three people appear in front of him and ask the reason for digging. As he is terrified he does not tell anything. When

they start beating him severely he tells his dream to the people. He remembers the saying of the Alchemist "What good is money to you if you're going to die? It's not often that money can save someone's life"(154). After telling his dream the leader of the group discourages Santiago to dig:

You are not going to die. You'll live and you'll learn that a man shouldn't be so stupid. Two years ago right here on this spot, I had a recurrent dream, too. I dreamed that I should travel to the fields of Spain and look for a ruined church where shepherds and their sheep slept. In my dream there was a sycamore growing out of the ruins of the sacristy, and I was told that if I dug at the roots of the sycamore, I would find a hidden treasure. But I'm not so stupid as to cross an entire desert just because of a recurrent dream. (155)

Santiago is always persistent in his dream. He does not leave his task unnoticed. Through the difficulties he reaches to Egyptian Pyramids and discovers that the treasure of life lies in spiritual awakening. He is cheated and looted by different people in various places. He is cheated by a stranger in Tangier, he is again looted by the Arab militant and finally looted by the three men. He loses the material possession he has earned in his life but never loses the hope to get the treasure of life. Eventually, he comes back to the abandoned church in Spain and finds a chest full of Spanish gold coins. He keeps his promise that he has to go to Tarifa to provide the Gypsy woman the one-tenth of his treasure. However, his treasure of life turns out to be his discovery of the 'self,' which is the perfect form of spiritualism and enlightenment. Now he becomes an enlightened figure.

Coelho's use of pastoral imagery is highly elegant and admirable too. Though the tradition of using sheep and their companionship with the shepherd dates back to

the Spensarian age, the portrait of shepherd life in this book is exceedingly fascinating. In this regard Frye in his book *Anatomy of Criticism* says:

The conventional honors accorded to the sheep in the animal world provide us with the central archetype of pastoral imagery, as well as with such metaphors as "pastor" and "flock" in religion. The metaphor of the King as the shepherd of his people goes back to ancient Egypt. Perhaps the use of this particular convention is due to the fact, being stupid, affectionate, gregarious, and easily stampeded; the societies formed by sheep are most like human ones. (143)

In the above cited statement Frye says that the use of sheep and their honours given by the artists in their works of art is stereotypical. Whatsoever it is, they are equally significant to convey the sense of imagery to the readers. The conventional use of metaphors like "pastor" and "flock" also relate with religions. In ancient Egyptian mythology the King was used as the shepherd and the people sheep. Therefore, the flocks made by the sheep are like the human societies.

Similarly, the friendliness of Santiago with his sheep is exemplary. They become the friends as well as the guardians for the boy. They also are the properties of the boy in the perilous journey towards the Egyptian Pyramids. In a sense they are the counterpart of his achievement. They have a kind of contribution in helping for their master's spiritual awakening. It is true that without the physical journey one can not have the inner journey. The job of shepherding was only appropriate job for Santiago. He had the great passion for knowledge. So he had chosen the life of a shepherd instead of his father's nagging desire to make him a high priest. In this way,

the boy becomes able to explore his inner self that ultimately leads him towards spiritual enlightenment. The journey of Santiago towards Egyptian Pyramids eventually turns to be the journey of the soul.

Chapter Five

Enlightenment through Inner Quest

The Alchemist is profoundly spiritual without being preachy in any way.

Anyone who reads it is impressed that this is a spiritual metaphor, and an extended parable about searching for our heart's true desire, the gold that lies buried within our own souls. The novel is found to be a wonderful tale on pursuing one's dream.

Santiago pursues his dream of finding his treasure by listening to his heart and following it. He is constantly tested along the way, yet he continues to listen to the voice of his heart. He learns about love along the way and helps others to face their fears as well. It is true that when we love, we always strive to become better than we are.

The Alchemist is an enlightening story about a shepherd's spiritual journey to find his treasure. He encounters helpful guides as well as insurmountable obstacles along the way. As he ends his journey reaching the Egyptian Pyramids, he finds out that the treasure is the journey itself and journey within. The journey seems to be the journey of outer quest but actually, it is the journey of inner quest where the protagonist discards the material possession, social status and is far away from self-centered behavior. The surprise ending, in which the boy learns that his treasure lies not at the Pyramids as his dream had foretold but back at the abandoned church where his journey began, has powerful implications about the importance of looking into the roots and foundation of our lives, trusting our dream even when it seems that they have slipped beyond our reach.

Santiago's spiritual sense starts from the very beginning of the novel when he desires to know the world in depth. He has a great passion for the knowledge of the world. Therefore, he chooses the life of a shepherd instead of preaching in the church.

He is haunted by a dream in which he is assured to get his treasure and wants to interpret his dream meeting with a Gypsy woman in Tarifa, who demands one tenth of his treasure. Then he meets an old man who proclaims himself the King of Salem and inspires him to go to the Egyptian Pyramids giving two valuable stones to read the omens. Santiago is then determined to go to get the treasure and travels from a comfortable lifestyle of a shepherd to the Arabian Desert where he faces several obstacles to meet a great Alchemist. The Alchemist is said to be able to turn lead into gold and turn fair weather into storms. Along the journey to meet the Alchemist, Santiago stumbles upon many self-realizations and self-actualization to make him able to the next Alchemist. His journey proves that to understand the world is the actualization of the self.

The major characters in this book are extracted from Biblical or some other mythical sources. First, it is important to note that Santiago's name is chosen deliberately alluding to the patron saint of Spain. His journey takes him to the heart of Arabian culture, through Morocco toward the Pyramids of Egypt. The first person he meets is a mysterious individual who turns out to be a high priest of the Old Testament because he possesses the Urim and Thummim, that is, the divinatory devices contained within the breastplate of judgment worn by the high priest. Similarly, the first meeting of Santiago with the old man, the King of Salem is equally relevant here. Santiago's confusion about that man increases when he finally asks him one tenth of his sheep so that he could reveal the way to find out his hidden treasure. Coelho has used the name of Melchizedek in his story alluding from the book of Genesis of the *Old Testament*. The meaning of the fraction one tenth comes from the story of Abraham in the book of Genesis. Abraham goes to war against the King of Elam. He is victorious and upon his return is met by Melchizedek, King of Salem.

Melchizedek offers Abraham bread and wine and blesses him. Abraham in return gives Melchizedek one tenth of his war booty. Santiago too, like Abraham, goes to war against the tribal groups and gets triumph because of his magical behaviour and dexterity in dealing with the tribesmen. As the payment for the interpretation for his dream he provides gypsy woman one tenth of his property after returning from Pyramids. Thus, looking Santiago from the mythical point of view he can be called a spiritual hero who is always in quest of inner peace.

It seems here relevant to talk about the archetypal images and symbols. *The Alchemist* is full of archetypes and symbols. The wise old man represents as the savior, redeemer, or spiritual *guru*. He works as the purification of the spiritual principle, representing knowledge, reflection, insight wisdom and intuition and some moral qualities such as goodwill and readiness to help. In this story too, Melchizedek, a wise old man becomes a spiritual teacher for Santiago and also works as the important person in Santiago's life.

The Gypsy woman in Tarifa represents as the archetypal good Mother. The Good Mother is basically associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, fertility, growth, abundance etc. Though she becomes mysterious for Santiago at first, she must be treated as a dominant character who helped the boy for his spiritual awakening.

Similarly, Fatima, the soul mate of Santiago appears as the Sophia figure, the princess or 'beautiful lady.' She accompanies Santiago to his mission of spiritual fulfillment. She is not indulged in sexual attachment. Rather she provides him spiritual love and waits for his arrival for years.

In addition with mythical characters, some objects and incidents in the journey deserve high importance. The protagonist has to cross the entire desert for getting his

treasure. The desert tests the capability of a person and becomes a friend of the traveller. It symbolizes spiritual aridity, death, nihilism, and hopelessness. Santiago also meets tribesmen who were fighting each other. However, the desert becomes a companion for the boy.

Different persons appear as the teachers of Santiago during his journey. The King of Salem, the crystal merchant, Fatima and finally the Alchemist work as the source of inspiration to Santiago for realizing his destiny. During the journey difficulties, fatigues, and hurdles appear one after another to give him physical as well as psychological suffering. In Tangiers, for instance, he is cheated by a stranger. He loses everything except his dream that frustrates him. Nevertheless, he works in the crystal merchant's shop to collect money for completing the remaining journey. He thinks of going back to Andalusia to be a shepherd again but the crystal merchant inspires him to go to seek his treasure and changes his mind. He joins caravan in desert and heads towards achieving his goal. The tribal war that stops the caravan in oasis becomes an archetypal curse as well as blessing for him. There he meets Fatima who becomes his twin soul. Fatima also inspires him to complete the journey. Though his journey seems to end here, he undergoes an inner journey. He prevents the possible war in oasis by reading the omens. He is able to understand the wordless language which Coelho calls the language of soul.

Like a mythical hero, Santiago risks his life even in the oasis with the tribesmen. He can convert himself into the wind, i.e. a reference to archetypal metamorphosis. He does so because he is not afraid of death. For him, the decay of the physical body does not bring any harm since the soul is immortal. He is able to perform miracles after he reaches into the soul of the world. After reaching Egyptian Pyramid, he starts digging in one place in accordance with his dream but he is beaten

by three people there. These people represent as the archetypal enemy. He realizes the true treasure of life after the remarkable expression of the leader. The real treasure of life lies in the spiritual awakening or the enlightenment.

The Alchemist becomes an important spiritual *guru* for Santiago. He teaches the boy many things but two lessons are externally important for Santiago. He admits to the first set of tribesmen that he carries two legendary treasures: the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. This is done in order to show Santiago that most people do not believe someone who possesses great treasures. The third encounter of Santiago and the Alchemist with the tribesmen only ends when the boy claims that he has the power to destroy their camp and turn himself into the wind.

As Santiago doesn't give up his goal to attain hidden treasure in spite of several hurdles and hardships, we learn that we have to do the same as Santiago has done. Like Santiago, we all dream and want to hear someone tell us that our dreams will come true. But we must be as patient and as dedicated as Santiago is during his journey. It teaches us a moral lesson that when a man is confident to achieve his inner desire he can succeed to achieve it by respecting his heart. The book, thus, has a life enhancing impact on the readers. Coelho shows how an ordinary wandering shepherd boy can do probably the impossible, when he realizes what he needs to, and encourages us to find our own dreams. Thus, the novel is fabricated with the archetypal meanings of mythology regarding spirituality, heroism, and enlightenment.

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