

SEARCH FOR HIDDEN TREASURE (SELF): A CRITICAL STUDY ON PAULO COELHO'S *THE ALCHEMIST*

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Abstract

Paulo Coelho's 'The Alchemist' is an unforgettable story about the essential wisdom of listening to an individual's heart, mind and above all following one's dreams. Santiago is the protagonist of this novel and he is a shepherd boy who follows his dream. His dream makes him to travel the whole world in search of treasure. Treasure which means not only the things like gold, diamond etc, here Coelho represent the treasure also as 'Self'. King of Salem, Fatima and the gypsy woman are the other important characters in this novel. They are who transfer Santiago to search for his recurrent dream. The novel brings out the importance of courage to act. The success of Santiago lies in 'action' which can be contrasted with Hamlet's 'inaction'. Hamlet is a play based apparently on the inaction of the hero. The Boy listens to the signs in his personal journey of exploration and self-discovery, symbolically reaching for a hidden treasure located near the Pyramids in Egypt.

Key Words: Treasure, Individual, Dream, Self-discovery and Exploration.

Paulo Coelho's 'The Alchemist' is an unforgettable story about the essential wisdom of listening to an individual's heart, mind and above all following one's dreams. Santiago is the protagonist of this novel and he is a shepherd boy who follows his dream. His dream makes him to travel the whole world in search of treasure. Treasure which means not only the things like gold, diamond etc, here Coelho represent the treasure also as 'Self'. Santiago studied Latin, Spanish and Theology and also his father's wish that he want to be a priest. So Santiago compelled to join in Seminary until he is sixteen. Santiago wants to celebrate the world, want to travel the whole world instead of his father's wish as priest. Santiago decides to go away from parents and decide that he want to be a shepherd. Instead of learn from books one can learn many things from surroundings. Santiago considered that his sheep are faithful companions for him.

This paper concentrates on a man's recurrent dream and his quest on dream. Sigmund Freud's id, ego and superego may consider here. Ego and superego guide an individual during the day but id is the primary active part of mind at night. Therefore, dreams are a product of id's expression of inner conflict, when repressed emotions and memories are brought in the form of dreams. And also dreams would convey individual's future in such form. Here, Santiago often has the same dream about the

treasure in the Egypt. He thought that it's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting. In an individual life, he/she wants to share their thought and wants to receive some guidelines from others. Santiago can't understand what that dream expresses to him? His mind can't find the solution for the dream. So he needs interpretation from others. First he went to a gypsy woman but he disappointed by her, she says: "It's a dream in the language of the world. I can interpret it, but the interpretation is very difficult."(A-13) Imagination is the art of creating or reproducing ideally an object which not previously perceived. It is the kind of ability to create such images. Imagination, in the psychologists meaning might be called the consciousness of objects not present to the sense. For example: If one can imagine a star which he do not see; one can imagine a melody which he do not see; one can odour which he do not actually smell. Likewise often and every time Santiago imagined the scene, the merchant's girl became fascinated when he explained that the sheep had to be sheared from back to front. But it does not happen even if he meets the merchant's shop.

Santiago happens to meet an old man Melchizedek, the king of Salem nearby the plaza who disguised to avoid encounters with thieves. Both started conversation about a book which Santiago carries.

The old man reveals all the details about Santiago from his childhood to till now. Santiago stunned by the old man's power and believed him as a king of Salem. Melchizedek explains that people learn everything in their lives that how to lead better life? May be that's why all give up on it so early. He goes on by explaining the people's mechanical way of life in the plaza. The old man wore a breastplate of heavy gold, covered with precious stones. He suddenly takes two stones from the breastplate and gave to Santiago to carry it. It's black and white in colour, black represents 'yes' and white represents 'no' and both are called Urim and Thummim. And it only answers for objective question. The old man makes Santiago comfortable in his journey. Hope is one of the cognitive processes, here; instead of Santiago the old king hoped that desperately he would be successful. He tells, "The God should not have desires, because they don't have destinies".

Santiago reached Africa and he meets a stranger who acts as a good person. He didn't even know the Arabic language but his mind shows that he has hope on finding the treasure. And the stranger promised Santiago

that he will take him to Egypt. He explained that if Santiago would reach Egypt he should cross the Sahara desert. So he asks money from Santiago to buy camel for travel. But the stranger cheated him when Santiago attracted by a beautiful sword in the market shop. He lost his money and he ashamed to cry and hate himself.

Later he want to believe the stones Urim and Thummim and he promised himself that he want to make his own decisions. He often said himself that 'I am an adventurer, looking for treasure.' Santiago helps a candy seller and the seller recognize his hungry and gave some candies.

A crystal merchant who is a Muslim, advised him to work as an assistant in his crystal shop. He thinks that Santiago is the rare piece of luck because when he enters for job in the merchant shop, he received two customers after long years. This situation makes all, to think as like as the merchant thinks. It is a kind of cognitive hope by seeing luck on others. Santiago rejects all his quest for treasure because of lost everything except the two stones. He wished to die and suddenly he accepted the Muslim merchant's words to be an assistant for him. Here, Santiago acts as normal person who wants to die for silly reason. It is applicable for all in the world by give up his/her life for failure. But people who rarely dared to face the failure; they are different from normal person. Suicide is an idea fixed in all minds because they cannot tolerate the failure and pain, etc. Santiago spends a month with the merchant and earns much commission for each crystal those he sales. Santiago gives up his further step for searching for treasure and he decide to get back to Andalusia. He thinks that: "The treasure was now nothing but a painful memory, and he tried to avoid thinking about it."(A-50) Santiago happens to bring lots of profit for the crystal merchant by using his innovative ideas. The merchant thinks that the profits are all did only by Santiago. But here the truth behind the reason is Santiago need money to return his place. It is a kind of thinking for self. Often Santiago remembered his sheep and he often thinks about its teaching.

Confidence, one of the traits of mind which normally an individual is more confident in a particular response (e.g., memory decision and answering for questions), he/she are also more likely to be accurate. Santiago also has more confident in himself that he could conquer the world. But situation makes him to go back to the fields that he knows and to take care of flock. He thinks himself that he is no longer happy with his decision because so far he had worked for his dream but now it becomes unimportant in his life.

Santiago himself thought that 'making a decision was only the beginning of things'. He changed his decision to go in search of treasure. He happened to meet an Englishman who travels to meet an alchemist because he wants to learn the alchemy and the universal language. Santiago and Englishman had a conversation on

omens. Santiago feels, in everyone's life there is a link between each stage. Santiago thought the mysterious chain which links one thing with another in his life. Santiago's main aspect to make his mind refresh is silence. Silence gives a mind relaxation for an individual. According to Deep ecology theory, Santiago became one with the nature because he always impressed by eternal forces like wind, sea, fire etc. Nostalgia is an emotion and it is only a search for ontological security in the past, but also as a mean of taking one's bearings for the road ahead in the uncertainties of the present. Santiago always intertwined with his nostalgic feelings about his flock because from his childhood he learns many things from the sheep. And also about the merchant's daughter who could committed with any other.

Santiago feels that he can sense some sort of fear through air, even though no one said anything. He experienced the language without words i.e., the universal language. Santiago mute himself when he doesn't know the Arabic language. Santiago begins his travel in the caravan and read many books. While reading a book he says, there is an idea which seemed to repeat itself throughout all the books.

In 'The Alchemist', Paulo Coelho presents Santiago as interested only in present and also concentrates only on present because he thought it makes man happy. Santiago admired a girl in the oasis and she named as Fatima. At the first sight itself he began to describe her beauty. When he looked her face, dark eyes and her lips he taught that it poised between laugh and silence. He learned the most important part of the language that the entire world spoke. It's the language that every people on earth can capable of understanding in their heart, and it is 'Love'. The sound of her voice and thought it to be more beautiful than the sound of the wind in the date palms. After love and after surrendered to women no men can easily deviate from her beauty.

Whoever believes in dreams they know to interpret dreams, a chieftain of oasis said. And the whole oasis follows their tradition because they believe the desert taught many things to them.

In an interview, Coelho says, there is no need to escape into the imaginary world of the nightingale because happiness could be found in a grain of sand from the desert. Coelho states 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 dreams.' Tribal war creates Santiago as a soldier and it pave a way for him to meet the alchemist. The Alchemist already knows that he is searching by someone so he picked Santiago from the war and get to his tent. The Alchemist becomes friendly to Santiago and he suggests some guidelines for Santiago. Here, it shows that the Alchemist who is a soul mate and also known the language of wind. Santiago confused that where is the life in this desert? The only answer of Alchemist is "Life attracts life".

Santiago's mind often thinks that everything is written in the Soul of the world, and there it will stay forever and his love too. As a companion the Alchemist shows all the inward talent of Santiago while in search of treasure. Alchemy is a study of changing copper into gold and Santiago expects the Alchemist to teach him. But he says that there is only way to learn anything through the action. An individual need to know everything in the life, then he or she should learned through their destiny.

In Spain there is a proverb which is remembered by Santiago: It said that the darkest hour of the night came just before the dawn. Alchemist gives the world in a different sense, men begun to reject simple things and tradition and to write tracts, interpretations, and philosophical studies. They also began to feel that they knew a better way than others had. But still the simple things in life were hanging in the corner of the world. Alchemist shows his analysis on world in a different sense and its shows his perception quality. Trust is not a behavior, nor is it a one-off decision. It is an underlying psychological state, which is informed by both an individual's emotions and cognitive processes. Santiago afraid of tribal wars which happened in the oasis and both started travel for in search of treasures.

In a situation both get into under the custody of an elder chief of the desert. Alchemist wants to prove Santiago's talent to himself so he said to the chief as Santiago is an alchemist. So far the tribal believe on Simum, who talks to wind. They ask Santiago wants to be one with the wind. Santiago tried himself to turn into the wind but he can't. Without Alchemist's motivation Santiago can't proves himself that he can turn into the wind. Santiago mind changed and be one with wind by the help of desert and sun. Now Santiago is one with nature like desert, sun and wind. Due to eternal force of nature he proved himself as an alchemist he asks wind to blow storm. Alchemist philosophically says that when an individual in love, he or she can do anything in creation and there's no need at all to understand what's happening. Because everything happens to within them, and even men can turn themselves into the wind as long as the wind helps. Alchemist leaves and Santiago moved towards the pyramids in Egypt. He climbed the pyramid and started to dig for treasure but he can't. Without losing hope upon himself he struggles to

dig the sand. In the moonlight Santiago saw a group of person and they found gold in his bag. They started to attack him but he didn't say that he is digging for treasure. Suddenly he remembered the words of an alchemist: "What good is money to you if you're going to die? It's not often that money can save someone's life." Santiago explains about his recurrent dream and he came here to find the treasure. This phrase is apt for everyone in this contemporary society. This thought to be sow in every one's mind.

They laugh upon Santiago for his hope on treasure. He gets a guideline from one of the man in group. He says he too have recurrent dreams about treasure on a ruined church which surrounds by sycamore in Spain. Santiago's mind filled with joy and he found the treasure where it is? He reached the church where he lived once with his sheep. He starts to dig the place and he got the treasure and says: "It's true; life really is generous to those who pursue their destiny." (A-160). He can find a kind of kiss touch of Fatima through the wind and without spending a minute he started travel to see Fatima. The novel brings out the importance of courage to act. The success of Santiago lies in 'action' which can be contrasted with Hamlet's 'inaction'. Hamlet is a play based apparently on the inaction of the hero. The important part of the action in Hamlet appears to be the hero's inaction, his brooding and contemplation of the problems of life. In brass contrast stands Santiago, a boy who has a dream and the courage to follow it. The

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