

# The Alchemist: An Ignition to Enlighten Soul

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**ABSTRACT** - The research paper is an effort to identify the sequence of spiritual messages unveiled by a simple shepherd boy in the folds of the pages of *The Alchemist*. A serene and tranquil person loves to travel the trails of destiny: Designs of Divine Existence. Sometimes a spark is so subtle that one fails to follow omens and faces frustration and failure, finally a frail fellow finds it tough to taste the ultimate truth of life. Love and life, peace and prosperity, heart and soul, material and spiritual, goal and God go parallel rather hand in hand, considering these two cosmic conditions separate is a superficial solution. Human life is a perfect platform to progress from this complex condition to an uncomplicated state of soul where webs of the worldly wisdom vanish to form a fine fabric of the final journey. To move upward one has to accept everything as a superior plan of Almighty and surrender to Supreme. Paulo Coelho's: *The Alchemist* navigates as a guide and ignites one to reach to an ultimate realization: A State of Bliss. It suggests a simple solution to the questions like: Who is He? How are we connected to Him? & where is He? It's a shepherd Santiago's spiritual saga whose becoming starts with unbecoming, losses lead to win and mirage of material matrix of life makes him merge with the Master of masses: God.

**Key words:** Soul, enlighten, life, spiritual, God.

A serene and tranquil person loves to travel the trails of destiny: Designs of Divine Existence. Sometimes a spark is so subtle that one fails to follow omens and faces frustration and failure, finally a frail fellow finds it tough to taste the ultimate truth of life. Love and life, peace and prosperity, heart and soul, material and spiritual, goal and God go parallel rather hand in hand, considering these two cosmic conditions separate is a superficial solution. Human life is a perfect platform to progress from this complex condition to an uncomplicated state of soul where webs of the worldly wisdom vanish to form a fine fabric of the final journey. To move upward one has to accept everything as a superior plan of Almighty and surrender to Supreme.

Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* navigates as a guide and ignites one to reach to an ultimate realization - A State of Bliss. It suggests a simple solution to the questions like: Who is He? How are we connected to Him? & Where is He? It's a shepherd Santiago's spiritual saga whose becoming starts with unbecoming, losses lead to win and mirage of material matrix of life makes him merge with the Master of masses: God. He travels from one place to another like a sage passing each sphere of spiritual journey, following his heart, putting the head aside. Swami Vivekananda rightly said: "The world's wheel within wheel is a terrible mechanism; if we put our hands in it, as soon as we are caught we are gone. We all think that we have done a certain duty, we shall be at rest; but we have done a part of duty; another is already in waiting. We all are being dragged by this mighty, complex world - machine. There are only two ways out of it; one is to give up all concerns with the machine, to let it go and stand

aside, to give up our desires. That is very easy to say but almost impossible to do. I do not know whether in twenty millions of man one can do so that. The other way is to plunge in the world and learn the secret of work, and that is the way of karma - yoga. Do not fly away from wheels of world - machine, but stand inside it and learn the secret of work. Through proper work done inside, it is possible to come out. Through this machinery itself is the way out."(115)

A mind loaded with metaphysical thought, indelible creativity, simplicity & subtlest form of spiritual message surpasses all worldly imagination to bend our thoughts to accept the existence of God. Turning of each page unfolds the unconquerable, comprehensive and vivid description of life which has not been explored yet. Unparallel theme, ideas, plot, and protagonists acting like a puppet in the designs of destiny and finally all merge in 'One'. Reading each writing of Paulo is like a new expedition to level up our existing mind set and sensitize the reader to understand its spiritual sense. According to Alfred Adler's theory (Cloninger, 2009: 103) "a subjective experience rather than an object reality. It gives direction to the individual's striving. Because an individual's fundamental motivation is to move toward this fictional finalism, a person cannot be understood without knowing the unique goal. Once it is understood, it explains the consistency of a person's striving". Quest for superiority is considered to be innate and accumulations since birth are considered to be acquisitions of previous births. A consistent urge to do better where material gains are considered to be the sole cause of satisfaction and superiority, Santiago's desire for treasure to upgrade the level of living. A process of

possession showed him a passage to purity with the learning of universal language to uplift his soul to ultimate.

Paulo said in Manuscript Found in Accra, "Beauty is found in all creation, but the dangerous fact is that, because we all human beings are often cut off from the Divine Energy, we allow ourselves to be influenced by what other people think. We deny our own beauty because others can't and won't recognize it. Instead of accepting ourselves as we are, we try to imitate what we see around us. We try to be what other people think of as 'pretty' and, little by little, our soul fades, our will weakens, and all the potential we had to make the world beautiful place withers away. We forget that the world is what we imagine it to be. We stop being the moonlight and become, instead, the pool of water reflecting it. Tomorrow the water will evaporate in the sun. And all because, one day, someone said: 'You are ugly.' Or: 'She is pretty.' With those three simple words, they stole away all our self – confidence. And we become ugly and embittered." (64- 65) One has to move forward with iron will and strong determination to achieve. Once one sets a target nothing can come in between. The basic theme which moves undercurrent in the book is revealed in the dialogue of the king: "To realize one's destiny is a person's only real obligation. All things are one. And when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it." (21)

The alchemist is the one who can turn any metal into Gold: a precious and desired metal. Paulo takes us to a higher level to the literal meaning of the whole concept; here alchemy is used as a touchstone method to make our life pure and precious by passing through all the tests of Almighty. Our life is a gateway to get liberation from the labyrinth. We keep ourselves engaged in entangles of achievements and the end result is a fruitless finale of futile exercises of baseless bonds of burden only to be shed after death. It's a silent speech for those who aspire highest to guide them and to take them away from glitters to set the subtlest as the goal to beget. In the worlds of Santiago, "I learned the alchemist's secrets in my travels. I have inside me the winds, the deserts, the oceans, the stars, and 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 sands that cover my treasure, and carry the voice of the woman I love." (146)

The novel depicts the journey of Santiago: A shepherd boy from Andalusia in search of fortune who believed his recurring dream to be a prophetic indication interpreted as a prophecy to discover a hidden treasure somewhere in Egyptian pyramids. The boy followed the advice of fortune – teller and started the journey where he met the king of Salem and got a precious idea of Beginner's Luck and many others in connection to the desired destiny. Santiago sold his sheep to travel to the desired place

pyramids, but the one who was supposed to take him to the place robbed him and took the money which he made by selling sheep and as a result he had to go a long way to reach the same level. "At that point in their lives, everything is clear and everything is possible. They are not afraid of dream and yearn for everything they would like to see happen to them in their lives. But, as time passes, a mysterious force begins to convince them that it will be impossible for them to realize their destiny. (...) But he wanted to know what the mysterious force was (...). It's a force the force that appears to be negative, but actually shows you how to realize your destiny. It prepares your spirit and your will, because there one great truth on this planet: whoever you are, or whatever is that you do, when you really want something, it's because that desire originated in the soul of the universe. It's your mission on the earth (20- 21).

The wrong sequence of events eventually helps one to think at a broader front and make one stronger to proceed further. He also worked at a crystal shop to make required arrangements to continue his journey. Then he meets an Englishman in search of an alchemist and Fatima: An Arabian girl and the lady love or a driving force to make him complete the journey. Santiago has learnt the language of the world to pursue his dream, "But the sheep had taught him something even more important: that there was universal language in the world that everyone understand, a language the boy had used throughout the time that he was trying to improve things at the shop. It was the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as part of a search for something believed in and desired. Tangier was no longer a strange city and he felt that, just as he conquered this place, he could conquer the world." (62) The realization of self was made possible with experiences and after his most awaited meeting with the wise alchemist. He passes through different difficult landmarks of his like a risky journey of moving through the warring tribe's territory, while at the digging of the sight of pyramids he was robbed but that also proved positive to make him realize at the final stage to go back to the same ruined church for treasure from where he started. It completes the vicious circle of life to make one realize the hardest of reality of life, i.e. one has to come back from where one started once. When one move in the circle each curve and angle make different shape and bend us to bow before each circumstance and prove itself as an important landmark of the journey of life. Manuscript Found in Accra "Everything that is spiritual manifests itself in visible form, and everything that is visible is transformed into spiritual energy." (99)

Each and every word is loaded with meanings to interpret and symbolizes many things in the novel. Symbols signify the series of hints given to readers to think beyond and to grab the message passing under the surface superficial. The Alchemist is flooded with varied symbols suggesting a

sense of spirituality running underneath. Let's start with Alchemist, "This is why alchemy exists," the boy said. "So that everyone will search his treasure, find it, and then want to be better than he was in his former life. Lead will play its role until the world has no further need for lead; and then lead will have to turn itself into gold. That's what alchemists do. They show that, when we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too." (150) Cobra symbolizes fear, danger, angst and strength. Crystal Glassware: a reflection of transparency and clarity within, something very delicate, fragile, rare and costly to possess. Desert is always considered to be a limitless landscape full of hardships, adventure, uncertainties, mirage and magical power: ready to serve as a boon or bane.

Dreams are designs of destiny guide to gain more. Gold: an expensive metal worthy to ride on the mind of beholder, dreamer's desire and a gimmick of a gambler eager to put everything at stake. Hawk and horse are animal figures to be used as symbol of passion, power and a tamable ill force. Oasis is a kind of blessing in disguise where man moves blindfolded, can easily mingle with mirage: a catharsis in a journey. Omens can be considered as messages of God to the blessed one. Pyramids are ancient pillars of prosperity or landmarks usually ransacked in history for hidden treasures and gold. Sheep symbolizes an innocent creature completely dependent upon master craving to meet the basic necessity of life, living an exemplary selfless life. Shepherds are the people full of worldly wisdom and knowledge, one who can converse with nature. Thieves can be tagged as negative energies and stand as obstacles in lust of fortune. Water paves way to newness, purity and a symbol of power in the desert. Wells are a source of energy, deep love and union. All symbols unite together to unify one with Ultimate.

"Ask a flower in the field: 'Do you feel useful? After all, you do nothing but produce the same flowers over and over.'

And flower will answer: 'I am beautiful, and beauty is my reason of living.'

Ask the river: 'Do you feel useful, given that all you do is to keep flowing in same direction?'

And the river will answer: 'I'm not trying to be useful. I'm trying to be a river.'

Nothing in the world is useless in the eyes of God. Not a leaf from a tree falls, not a hair from your head, not even an insect dies because it was of no use. Everything has a reason to exist. (...)

Don't try to be useful. Try to be yourself: that is enough, and that makes all the difference.

Walk neither faster nor slower than your own soul, because it is your soul that will teach you the usefulness of each step you take." Manuscript Found in Accra (45 -46)

It can be concluded from deep study of Santiago's saga that each soul searches a subtle solution to get an ignition to envision an enlightenment, his decision to follow the dream proves to be a turning point in his life to put him on 'the road to be taken'. The experiences of life enforces him to entangle with Infinite. Santiago's soul gives glimpses of his die hard spirit depicted by Paulo with profound profusion with the help of plot, protagonist and symbols.

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