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Journey Towards Destiny In Paulo Coelho's "the Alchemist"

S.parvathi Devi

M.A., M.Phil., Ph. D.,Assoc. Prof.
Name of the Organisation working: K L University

Abstract:

Life is a blissful journey to those who believes their destiny and would like to accept and follow it. If you are a dreamer in life you can achieve so many miracles which in fact appear to be a "Herculean task" to the ordinary people who lead their lives in a routine and casual way. Life without hope is futile, according to Coleridge. Through the character of a shepherd boy called Santiago the well known and most successful author, Paulo Coelho tried to teach the concept of destiny in one's life and how to understand and follow it and how to make life most fruitful. If one is persistent in achieving his dreams one can be triumphant by bearing all the brunt of life. Many a person lose their heart in such kind of difficulties.

KEY WORDS –

Destiny, dreams, destination, to bear the brunt

INTRODUCTION –

Life is a happy journey to those who understand the philosophy of it. When one tries to know the destination of human life and who would like to follow it, accept it and enjoy it, it's in deed a fruitful journey. To realize the destiny and follow it is really thrilling and exciting. Reaching to one's goals and dreaming about goals is a wonderful process in life. Santiago, who actually had to become a priest and serve God fascinated towards traveling across the world and know the things that happen in the world? In spite of his father's repeated convincing statements, he decided to travel. Perhaps God might have chosen him to shower his blessings by giving great experience of traveling across the vast and miraculous beauties of the world and by giving vast treasure and adventurous life.

REALIZING ONE'S DESTINY IN LIFE-

Realizing one's destiny happens by a deep observation of what happens in regular life. By some known or unknown people one comes to understand it. But those whoever do not observe things carefully can not understand their destiny. Some don't believe it. Some don't take the risk of dealing with challenging tasks. Those whoever believes those and courageous and enthusiastic enough to follow and pursue those.

HOW SANTIAGO REALIZES HIS DESTINY –

Santiago was indeed a son of poor parents, who struggle to earn their livelihood. They hoped that their son would become a priest which was prestigious to their kind of family. "His parents had wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for a simple farm family." (The Alchemist, p-8) He had studied Latin, Spanish and Theology. But since his childhood he dreamt of traveling across the word,

visiting new places and people. Of course God might have destined to make him so. One day he mustered the courage and told his father about his wish. Then his father made futile efforts to try to convince the boy by saying that it was impossible to afford to it in their kind of families. But the boy persisted to follow his dream. Eventually his father told the boy that in their type of families only shepherds could travel like that. The boy preferred to be a shepherd. Then the father with a disheartened heart gave a pouch that held three ancient Spanish gold coins which he found once in the fields saying that he felt that he wanted them to be apart of his inheritance. And advised him to buy flock and take them to fields and he added that surely he would realize one day that their land and their women are most beautiful in the world. Having got the blessings from his father, the boy left home to far off places with his sheep. Soon he got habituated to rear the sheep, feed them, protect them and shear the wool of those and started living.

The boy had a recurring dream in which a child was playing with his sheep and suddenly took the boy's hands and transported the boy to the Egyptian pyramids and told him that if the boy would go there he would find a hidden treasure and whenever the child was about to show the exact place the boy would wake up. These are the first indications to the boy to know about his destiny.

HOW DID THE BOY COME INTO CONTACT WITH A GIPSY WOMAN AND KING OF SALEM

The more he thought about his dream, the more his interest grew towards knowing about his dream. Then he remembered about an old woman who lived in Tarifa and interpreted dreams. So he went in search of her and met her. She led him to a room which had been at the back side of her house, which was separated from her living room with a curtain of colored beads. She took both of the boy's hands in to hers and began to pray quietly. Santiago feared a lot because he heard about Gipsy women that they spend their lives by tricking people. But he saw in her room an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and felt a bit relieved. The lady, without averting her eyes from his hands, told that his hands are very interesting to read. The boy began to tremble, in spite of his strong determination that he shouldn't reveal his disposition and fear towards the lady. He repented for being coming to her and decided to pay her fee and run away from there. Then the lady told him that his dream was in the language of the soul but not in the people's and added that she could interpret only the latter and she was going to charge him as he consulted her. The boy thought that it had been another trick. The lady told him to go to Egypt and try to get his treasure on a condition that he should have to pay one tenth of the treasure after he found it. She added that it was the simple things in life that were extraordinary and only wise people were able to understand those and since she was not wise she had to learn other things such as reading palms and she asked the boy to leave.

THE BOY'S MEETING WITH THE OLD MAN –

One day when the boy was reading a book an old man interfered by asking for a drink of wine and started the conversation. Even though the former tried to avoid the old man he had been persisting and told him if he could give one tenth of his sheep he would tell him the way how to achieve the treasure. The boy shocked to listen from his about the information he only knew. Then he assumed that the old woman might have told the old man and he was in a plan of depriving his sheep from him. The boy had a strange experience with the old man that the latter wrote the names his parents, the merchant's daughter, whose name even he didn't know and even the things which he had never told to anyone.

He told that the boy had already known his destiny and he had to follow it by following omens which were left by God.

"In order to find the treasure, you will have to follow the omens. God has prepared a path for everyone to follow. You just have to read the omens that he left for you." (p-30)

THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY –

From the words of the old woman as well as old man it is understood that a mysterious or one may call it a spiritual power that guides people to understand and recognize their destiny and helps to achieve it. When the boy told the old man that when he decided to sell away his sheep, he immediately found that one of his friend came forward and liked to buy them by saying that he had always dreamed of becoming a shepherd and added that it was a good omen. The old man advised him to make independent decisions and left him.

"Because there is a force that wants you to realize your destiny. It whets your appetite with a taste of success." (p-30)

The old man, said to be the King of Salem, with all precious stones hidden under his jacket, meeting a shepherd boy, instructing him to do what he had to do and helping him by giving two precious

stones, namely Urim and Thummim – the entire activity appears to be philosophical. God already decides man's destiny and leads him to realize and follow. Only the fortunate ones follow it, accept destiny and achieve their dreams. And one more thing here which is very important is, God chose only certain people only those who are Good, polite, courageous to assign certain great tasks. When He loves someone extremely, He chose only those to assign noble tasks. It appears to be that the God loved Santiago. God observed his interest and enthusiasm towards travelling across the world and his inquisitiveness to know about various places and things in the world. Being a boy who belonged to a very ordinary family, he desired to know a lot. God might have pleased by His passion and sanctioned him his wish.

JOURNEY TOWARDS HIS DESTINY-

Following the words of the king he travelled towards Egypt. He travelled from Tarifa to Tangier. When he looked from atop of an old fort in Tarifa he had glimpse of Africa. From there he had to travel to Egyptian pyramids. On the way towards it he met many a man and studied the world intensely. He met a crystal merchant, an English man, an alchemist and so many desert tribes.

HIS DEALING WITH CRYSTAL MERCHANT –

The boy found a crystal merchant on a mountain and helped him to keep the glasses outside his shop and cleaned them with his jacket which would be of no use to him further. As the glassware was shining, there was a good sale in his shop that day. The merchant was happy with his piece of work and invited him to meal. He worked for the merchant for nearly a year and pretty amount money with which he could buy sixty sheep could be very happy to return to his place. He was proud of himself for being able to become rich enough to buy as many as sixty sheep even though he was robbed of his entire money on his immediate arrival to tangier, one of the place in Africa. He applied his intelligence to promote the sales of glass merchant and improved his business. He took departure from him and set off his journey towards his destiny. He fell in confusion and wanted to go back. Then he touched Urim and Thummim then he felt as if a great strength and will of the old king had transmitted to him. Then he thought whenever he wished to go back he could go to it but not to Egypt. Difficulties teach people so many things. He understood why wanted to go back to Tarifa was he understood the sheep well and they wouldn't be a problem to him where as he did not know about pyramids and the difficulties he would have to face.

After that he travelled much to reach pyramids. He met an alchemist and he advised to follow the omens. And traveled along with the alchemist for so many things and learned a lot from him. He learnt how to deal with the people even though he didn't know the language of those and learn t to speak with the wind and other things in Nature.

HOW DID HE DISCOVER HIS TREASURE ULTIMATELY –

as boy had been digging at the pyramids desperately, one of the tribal people noticed it and demanded the boy for money. Then he told that he came there to find his treasure so that he was digging. Then they laughed at the boy and one of them told that long back he also had a recurring dream in which he had been informed that in the fields of Spain in a ruined church there was a growing sycamore and if he dug there, he would find a treasure. The boy's heart was filled with extreme joy and he traveled back to his original place and began to dig at the base of the sycamore. Half an hour later he found that his shovel had been obstructed by something. And one hour later a chest of gold coins appeared in front of him to offer a boon to his dispirited and fatigued soul. There were also precious stones, gold masks adorned with red and white feathers and stone statues embedded with jewels. He was extremely rejoiced to find the treasure not exactly for finding it but for following his destiny and for experiencing it to become true. Then he kept Urim and Thummim in that treasure as a reminder of the old king and he thought of the old Gypsy woman who helped him to realize his destination. Then he thought that Gypsy women were smart since they moved around so much. He remembered about presenting the share of Gypsy woman for helping him.

CONCLUSION –

“When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it” The words of Melchizedek, the old king, became true. After bearing the brunt of life, having achieved the treasure which had been a recurrent dream to the boy, with the instructions of the Gipsy woman and Old man, the king of Salem, he felt wonderfully happy and thought philosophically that life is generous to those who pursue their destiny. He felt the kiss of Fatima, his lover whom he met in the desert and smiled and decided to go to her.

Journey towards destiny in Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist"



Hence a boy from a poor family, who had to struggle a lot even for basic amenities, chose to become a shepherd to fulfill his dream of traveling and thereby accidentally came to know about his destiny and followed in settled in life. The world presented him with a great treasure and a beautiful woman to marry. Thus life is a fantastic gift to those who follow their destiny.

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