Journey Through Spiritual Lens

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Abstract: This research is a comparative study of the Journey of Santiago in 'The Alchemist' who is after a personal legend and Christian in 'The Pilgrim's Progress' who sets his journey to attain Salvation. The aim of the study is to understand the similarities and differences of the terms such as Spiritual Quest, Sin, Purpose of Life, Truth and Sin. The growth of the two journeys has been analysed by highlighting the similarities and differences between the two. Such comparison not only helps in better understanding but it also helps to find new insights. Through the observations one states that though material treasure brings happiness but it is momentarily but a journey of trusting God will bring better understanding of the world.

Index Terms: Purpose, Journey, Spiritual quest, Sin, Salvation, Truth, Hope

1. INTRODUCTION

A journey is an on-going transition through life. An 'individual' goes through a journey of mind and spirit. The Alchemist is written by Paulo Coelho. Santiago is the main protagonist of the story who follows his dream in search for a hidden treasure. The journey he undertakes till the Egyptian pyramids and then back to Andalusia in search for the hidden treasure is termed as a 'spiritual journey' by Paulo Coelho. During his journey he meets Melchizedek who tells Santiago of a Personal Legend, described as what a person has always wanted, the entire universe helps a person to achieve. On the other hand Christian from the novel Pilgrim Progress is also on a journey. A Journey when considered in totality seems to be a herculean task. This journey culminated at the realization of connection of divinity with humanity and the reliance of humanity on divinity. Santiago's journey involves exploration of the self which leads to growth and development. Whereas, Christian's journey is a struggle to The Celestial City. Both the journey involves challenges and obstacles which are confronting but things can be learned from those experiences which would allow them to grow emotionally and spiritually. Almost all the novels of Paulo Coelho reflect the theme of spiritual quest. The Alchemist takes the spiritual essence and gives only the fictional answers to the questions of life but the readers are looking for relevant answers. This paper is an attempt to find the answers to the following questions:

- Assess the differences and similarities of spirituality between Santiago and Christian in pilgrim's progress. A spiritual Journey: A story of drawing parallels and connecting the dots.
- The purpose of life: A conceptual and scriptural analysis
- The role of religion and spirituality in the Novel.

Through my research I intend to compare the Journey of Santiago in The Alchemist and Christian's Journey in The Pilgrim's Progress based on the scriptures of the Holy Bible. Primary Text: The Alchemist and The Pilgrim's Progress The Pilgrim's Progress is a paradox. Christian's character depicts the human soul. His journey took him to various risks and hindrances. The spiritual quest he had which led him undergo a roller coaster ride which was filled with danger, turmoil, suspense and happiness. His journey was an anguish struggle towards Salvation. The Spiritual journey of Santiago in, The Alchemist who undertakes a journey in search of a hidden treasure is depicting minor similarities and comparative differences with journey of the Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress based on ideological concepts.

2.1 Review of Literature

The concept of journey is viewed differently in Geography, Theology, Philosophy and Mythology. Soni describes it as, "Journey has a very strong symbolic significance in people's life" (Soni 88). Sonia Soni illustrates that Paul makes the character Santiago follow the five basic principles for a journey which includes "listening to heart, following the omens of the world, comprehending the interconnecting nature of the things in the world and realizing the value of the omens to follow the personal legend is the ultimate thing" (Soni 89). This enabled him in making Santiago's journey more purposeful. He also called Santiago an 'adventurous spirit' who understands that making a decision is only buying of the things. Nuesecha in his article shows the notions of journey in The Alchemist as psychological phenomena in which an individual has experienced spiritual journey. (Nuesecha 198). Santiago is travelling to achieve treasures and hence he seeks high spiritual level. Nuesecha illustrates Alfred Adler's theory and defines fictional fatalism as a subjective experience rather than an object reality. A person cannot be understood without knowing the goal. It explains the consistency of a person striving. Hence, he says that spiritual journey is experienced by Santiago is a coincidence that he experienced by looking for treasures (Nuesecha 201). Dianto in his article explains different phases of journey which gives a brief, clear and interesting overview. He further adds "The call of Adventure signifies that destiny has summoned the hero, Santiago and transferred his spiritual centre of gravity from the pale of his society to an unknown zone" (Dianto 22). Ravi Zacharias a modern day disciple of Jesus Christ supports Christian's Journey through his testimony. He grew up in an Anglican household and admits that he was an atheist until he was 17 until one of the Christian worker brought him the Bible and told his mother to read him John 14:19 which says "Because Jesus lived, you shall live too" which touched him and meant to him as defining paradigm and from that day onwards he said "This may be my hope and a new way of living. Life as defined by the author of life." Hence, his spiritual quest to know the truth began. (Zacharias 121). He understood the seriousness of sin and repented every sin he committed and through the words from The Holy Bible he believed that his sins are forgiven, which is more or less similar to Christian's journey. Stead in his article wrote about Evan John Roberts...
who was a leading figure of 1904-05 of Welsh Revival. He summed up 4 basic principles to attain salvation and the journey include "Confess all known sin, deal with and get rid of anything "doubtful" in your life, be ready to obey the Holy Spirit instantly and confess Christ publically. His spiritual journey opened the eyes of many people in Welsh to the truth that they all turned back from their sins.

2.2 Significance
The significance of the study is that it will first identify the meaning and path of Journey in both the texts. The positive analysis and comparison leads to a better understanding of the concept of 'Spiritual Journey'.

2.3 Methodology
The research methodology used in the work is scriptural, philosophical and conceptual analysis for the understanding of the concept of Journey and comparative examination of The Alchemist and The Pilgrim's Progress based on the theme of Christianity. The research topic employed in the study are: first the progression and the description of the journey, second the interpretation of the term spiritual journey in both the context, and third the Biblical themes involved in the concept of Journey.Spiritual journey in this research study is only considered and analysed based on Christianity and in accordance with The Bible. The essence of Journey based on other religions is not taken into account in this work. The terms used in the study Spiritual quest, truth, salvation, sin comes only under the understanding of Christianity. The modes used in the research paper includes Maslow's hierarchy of needs which is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" in Psychological Review. Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans' innate curiosity which depicts the inquisitiveness of Santiago and Christian in 'The Alchemist and The Pilgrims' Progress respectively and conceptual analysis for the deeper meanings of a Spiritual Journey. Also, Goal setting Theory is used where Santiago and Christian set their aspiration to attain the 'Personal Legend' and Salvation respectively.

2.4 INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS
Santiago in The Alchemist is a young shepherd boy with a recurring dream. He lives in the southern region of Spain. The dream which he sees under the sycamore tree which grows from the ruins of a church. The dream troubled him and he decides to undertake a journey to fulfill his dream and to find the treasure. During the dream he sees a child who is directing him towards the treasure. He consults few people in his journey in order to predict the meaning of the dream which included the local Gypsy woman and the Old man who is supposed to be the King of Salem. Santiago follows his dream to find the hidden treasure. The dream which Santiago sees revealed to him his Personal Legend and sets the entire plot of the Alchemist into motion. During his journey he learns a lot from the people he meets and the work he does. The main character, Santiago, who goes to a faraway country just to pursue his dream, actually reflects the author's character of never giving up and followed his dream which Paulo also could relate to. As a writer despite many difficulties he begins his journey on his road to success. Paulo believes that God has assigned a particular role to each individual and it is his/her duty to perform that role by following his dreams.

Through this novel he tells us how each of us has a specific Personal Legend, though most of us do not realize it. Also it portrays how the boy comes to know Personal Legend and his way of interpreting the Omens and it ends with the boy's determination to follow his dream by overcoming the misfortunes and being the main force in controlling his own destiny. The main reason for his search is to find true meanings of life and to attain happiness. Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress presents a universal picture of his life, from the time of the soul's first awakening to the truth of the gospel to the entrance into heaven. The story of Christian, a man living in the City of Destruction is bearing a great burden, which symbolizes the conviction of sin. He knows he must escape the City of Destruction, but he didn't know where to go and one fine day he meets Evangelist, who points him in the right direction. As Christian comes to the cross, the burden falls off his back on its own accord, rolls down a hill, and disappears into a tomb. Both the journeys begins with a dream. Where Santiago on one hand wanted to know about the hidden treasure He is wise enough to analyse the possibility of a dream come true that makes life interesting (Coelho 11) The dream makes him feel something is missing in his life. His heart craves for the essential spiritual needs that he was to fulfill and thus to achieve pure happiness. He decides to leave his house and family to roam alone. In the same way, Christian in order to find the Salvation follows the path of righteousness which eventually helps him to get rid of the burden of Sin that he holds on his back where he similar to Santiago leaves his family and home back to persuade his journey. Hence in one's point of view it has much to do with God's connection with man, or man's intimacy with God. One can also say that it has much to do with man's connection to himself and his faith and the debate with oneself as to choose which path and why. Bunyan presents profound truths and illustrates them in memorable ways. The journey from the certainty of eternal destruction to a condition of spiritual blessedness is one that all believers can relate to. He is on a search for eternal happiness. Both the characters are in search for happiness. Where on one hand, Santiago finds happiness in the accomplishment of the 'Personal Legend' while Christian finds happiness in Salvation he receives when he entered the Celestial City (Heaven). The goal they set before they began their Journey helped them to achieve the happiness they desired for. Through this particular instance it can be well analysed that goal setting theory gets manifested. Santiago realizes his dream and sets his journey by trusting the dream he saw. In his dream he saw a child who guided him to the 'personal legend'. Psychologist consider dream as an expression of the unconscious desires of human psyche. It is the dream that initiates Santiago's discovery of self. Even though he could not exactly define what his dream really conveys, he realizes the need of undertaking a long journey to reach out his own sublime self. He realized its importance and sets his journey by taking advice from the local gypsy who tried to interpret his dream. She encouraged him to believe in his dream. In the same way Christian from The Pilgrim's progress undergoes a sense of realization where he understood the severity of the sin which he carried on his back and the need to get rid of it from himself. This particular example justifies the journey of Santiago and Christian through the Maslow's theory of self-actualization. Santiago encounters quite a few people on his journey. One among them was a young Englishman who was finding the Alchemist.
who is well read and shares his books and knowledge with Santiago. Santiago was very much interested in comprehending the books so he read The Bible, Quran and other philosophical and religious books and came to a conclusion that they confuse things which to his intellect is easy and straightforward. He meets an old man who interpret dreams as the language of God. He tells him that he must go to the Pyramids in Egypt and there he will find the treasure. For this interpretation she asks him to give one tenth of treasure in return. Next, he meets Melchizedek, an old king of Salem and tells Santiago not to let fate govern his life. (Coelho 23) Melchizedek explains whatever the hurdle may be if he genuinely want something, all the universe would conspire in helping him to achieve it (Coelho 23) Melchizedek gives two stones called Urim and Thummim. He advises Santiago to read omens but to make his own decisions and trust himself with this optimism Santiago begins his journey. But on his journey he is looted by a young man. He becomes frustrated. However, he regains his confidence by his positive thinking. He meets a crystal merchant who talks about his dream of pilgrimages to Mecca. But does not want to move to fulfill his dream. He is happy with what he has. Soon he encounters Englishman. Santiago's meeting the Englishman helps him to know all the information of the art of alchemy who encompass the conversion of lead into gold. Santiago's treasure hunt also becomes his spiritual journey as he decides to learn about the soul of the world. He begins to understand the Language of the world in better way and pays attention to little details. Whereas, Christian in his journey meets up with Mr Worldly, Wise man, Faithful, Hopeful, Interpreter, Pliable and Obstinate and so on. Interpreter showed him seven instructive pictures to strengthen his spiritual life. Evangelist who guided him to the Celestial gate since the beginning of his journey. The character 'help' who helped him to get out of the traps of the Slough of Despond and few other characters that guided or tempted him to choose the wrong paths Mr Worldly Wise man being one of them. He is representing as human soul in the novel who starts the journey with an agitation in mind. He runs away from the City of Destruction in a spiritual quest of Eternal life. The text of Pilgrim's Progress has significance because the story has its own moral values which are not difficult for the readers to interpret or understand and hence the moral of the story is that by means of faith, hope and firm determination a man gain Salvation of his soul provided he repents of all his sin. It draws parallel to the journey of Santiago as he too faced troubles and suffering in his journey but kept on moving towards his treasure to attain it. He too was tempted on his way to leave his passion on to his ordinary lifestyle when he met Fatima, whom he founded in the Oasis and also when he was earning a decent amount with the Crystal Merchant but few people he met on his way persuaded him to follow his dream. Santiago left his family, sacrificed his flocks, left the place where he stayed and even Fatima whom he fell in love with during his journey in order to pursue his dream. In the same way Christian too left his wife and children behind, he sacrificed all the luxuries of life to the path which is full of miseries and difficulties to attain the Eternal Glory. Hence the second aspect of Maslow's theory of social belonging is incorporated. Also both the characters did not worry about their physical needs when they set forth their journey which included their safety, health, personal requirement like food and shelter. Hence satisfying Maslow's theory for physiological requirements and safety needs. Santiago is a boy who wishes to abandon his whole life in order to travel and find the meanings of life. His probing to find the answers to the questions led him to take the journey. During his journey he encounters an old man whom he seeks advice to find happiness. The local gypsy too encouraged him with his dream. Christian from Pilgrim's Progress too abandons his family and all the luxuries he had in order to attain Salvation. Evangelist showed him the path of salvation. He showed up often in the novel and encouraged him and guided him throughout. He also exhibited him the importance of staying on the narrow road. He corrected Christian when he was mistaken by the worldly wise man. He emphasized on Sin and he represented the symbols for forgiveness and love. Though both the protagonists meet several people on their way, some of them motivated them and few discouraged them. They were even tempted to go back to their own old ways. But both of them did not lose their way. They were determined to carry forward and finish their race. Santiago embarked on his spiritual quest and so did Christian. Santiago finds his treasure not in the pyramids in Egypt but near the same place where he saw the dream and after he discovers the treasure and when he came to know that it was always nearby, he learns that a spiritual journey is not about turning into a new person but analysing the person which is within you. Also apart from the personal legend he attained more, he accomplished knowledge which he received in his journey. He learnt things which he wouldn’t have got to know if he stayed at his place looking after the flock. Christian's journey dealt with the awareness of sin, the spiritual queries and temptations, some guidance and misguidance, deeper understanding of trusting God and strengthening of faith and ultimately led to eternal glory. The time he lived with his family and friends he knew one thing that the purpose of life is to live a holy life on earth so as to attain salvation and prepare and repent so as to find eternal life. Rick Warren the author of Purpose driven Life tells that the purpose of life can only be found in God and His living word. The Bible emphasizes that " self-help is no help at all and self-sacrifice is the way you can find yourself" He further adds that the purpose of life, origin, morality, truths can be known through a deeper relationship with God and studying the word which Christian rightly followed unlike Santiago.

4 CONCLUSION

A ‘Spiritual Journey’ is reflected in many religions especially in Christianity. So a journey is to progress spiritually; with such an optimistic analysis of Spiritual Journey with respect to Christianity we gain new and deeper insights into the similar ideologies on the basis of the progression of the journey, Reasons behind undertaking a journey, Objective or goal, Obstacles or stepping stones in gain at the end of a journey. Thus we can find that even though there are ideological differences in both the texts in respect to the spiritual journey the terminology used is the same. There are several differences between the Christian's spiritual journey in The Pilgrim's Progress and the journey described in The Alchemist, though both the books deals with a journey with respect to Christianity. Paulo through his book The alchemist portrays a journey where says that people can choose their own path in their journey and that all paths would ultimately lead to the same destination and that his journey would lead to harmony with the universe. But The Bible says that there is only one path that is Christ (John 14:6). The Bible teaches that the universe is at war (Ephesians 6:12) and part of the journey
included fighting for other souls, walking in faith and live for the eternal world which The Lord has promised. (1 Timothy 6:12). A Spiritual Journey is to accomplish trust in God and to create a connection with the divinity will ameliorate the understanding of the world and develop adulation towards ‘the divine being’.

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REFERENCES