Conclusion

Life is full of mysteries and from the dawn of human history man is in search of these. In his book *The Sacred Quest*, Shand d aramon has rightly pointed out that the present era may not be the age of shining armor and lances, there are ample of chances to embark on quest. Irrespective of era and age, man has always been seen questing for one thing or the other. When he finishes one search he is compelled to embark on the other. The objects of his search range from the ideal, conceptual or abstract things like love, faith, knowledge, power and many others to the physical and concrete things like a promised land, a treasure, money, a person and many such things. The things we do not possess become an obsession and in turn become a mystery that needs to be revealed. Any objective in life has to be pursued with same amount of commitment, courage and strength as was required of those knights of old. These objectives we search for may be somewhere near us or located far away and they require a sacred quest to uncover and behold them. The grail of chivalric quest stories symbolically present the objects mentioned above. These objects or dreams are to be pursued as they are source of happiness and feeling of satisfaction.

When you clearly know what aims you wish to achieve over the course of your life, be material, emotional, physical or spiritual, and you spend your days accomplishing them, you ultimately find eternal joy.¹

Thus an odyssey for the desired objects and their realization gives its pursuer a sense of fulfillment in life.
Dreams work in our life as encouraging catalysts. It happens with many that they are not able to identify their objective or dream in life. In that case one needs to look not only around but within as well in order to recognize these. The road of your dream becomes the road of power. Life which prior to that moment was torture becomes a pleasure. It is the pleasure of searching and the pleasure of an adventure. In this way we are nourishing something that’s very important i.e. our dreams.

Coelho regards that dreaming is very pleasant as long as you are not forced to put your dreams into practice. Complacency makes one stay back home. That way, we avoid all the risks, frustrations and difficulties. But dreams are meant for pursuing. Those who do not attempt to realize their dream are complacent in their life. But this complacency is one day regretted. This happens when we are old. In that state of frustration we always blame other people - preferably our parents, our spouses or our children - for our failure to realize our dreams. The novels of Coelho equally provide the examples of those who had a dream, but dared not to pursue it. They are regarded as failures. The baker in the plaza and the crystal merchant in Tangier in *The Alchemist* are presented in order to illustrate that not attempting the realization of a dream is like a curse.

It has been observed that when we desire something to happen from the bottom of our heart and follow our inner voice, the whole of the universe conspires to make it happen.

Following the inner voice also brings energy and vitality. … Finally, you will be supported by invisible hands. There is no doubt about this. When you follow your heart’s desire, life will support you. When you do your share, God will do his. When you reach out for what you want the
Universe will reach back and, meet you halfway. Take a moment to review your life or the lives of your friends. You will find examples of how the Universe assists us when we are being faithful to the calling of the inner voice.\textsuperscript{2}

This is reiterated in \textit{The Alchemist}. Every element of this universe contributes to enable us realize our dream. The journey becomes full of omens and miracles. What one needs is to believe, recognize and comprehend them. Once we begin to believe in them, they reveal themselves.

It also happens that during our journey we meet a right person at a right time. He/she helps us and functions as our guide in our journey. Guides are requisite of a journey. A true guide, instead of directing us to the right direction, makes us aware of the many ways of reaching the road we need to travel if we are to find our destiny. Once we have found that road the real guide does not help us anymore. Coelho has best illustrated this in almost all of his novels. In \textit{The Alchemist} both Melchizedek and the alchemist guide Santiago up to a point leaving him take his own course and decision. Petrus in \textit{The Pilgrimage} always guides the writer to certain extent and makes him deal the situation by his own. The Magus and the Wicca do the same with Brida so do Esther, Mikhail and Doss in \textit{The Zahir}.

All the novels studied in this context emphasis one more fact that initial hesitation is the major barrier in our spiritual odyssey of quest. The author in \textit{The Pilgrimage} as well as Santiago in \textit{The Alchemist} is initially hesitant to embark on the journey. Though they have a set objective before them, at the outset they are not sure on the feasibility of their dream and their ability to pursue it. But once they are made to set on their journey, step by step they accomplish their goal. Initially, Pilar
is hesitant of accepting her friend’s proposal but once she is made to recognize that love, there comes a stage when she fights for her love. Brida is unable to recognize her hidden talent and thus is afraid that she could not realize her dream of becoming a witch. Wicca and the Magus make her travel through Time and space and help her visit her previous incarnations, thus enable her to rediscover herself.

Every journey involves obstacle, tests and ordeals, which the hero on quest is supposed to overcome. These are planted in the journey so skillfully by the divine that they bring to surface the unrecognized and hidden talent of the quester. This is called a road of trials. Every quester has to pass through this phase. Gautam Buddha’s spiritual odyssey for understanding the reasons of human misery and ultimately the mysteries of human life passed through the stages of tests and ordeals resulting in his Enlightenment. Ordeals and tests surely lead one to the desired destination. All the questers in the novels under study had been through the road of trial, successfully passing the tests and ordeals: Santiago had to face a set back at Tangier in the form of cheating and robbery, the author had to deal with the devil in the form of the black dog and had to climb a deadly waterfall, Brida had to recognize her past incarnation, Athena had rebelled against the society, the narrator of *The Zahir* suffer and bear the pains of rejection whereas Pilar had to fight with the divine.

The successful battle with the ordeals and tests make them emerge as triumphant quester. The whole of this odyssey of quest brings to surface the latent energy and unrecognized talent. Such journeys effect the transformation of the quester. In other words an odyssey teaches us to be reborn. The importance of rebirth is emphasized in almost all the novels studied so far; the author’s rebirth in *The Pilgrimage*, The
narrator of *The Zahir* changes his name and forgets his personal history giving a rebirth to himself, Athena propagates the news of her death, which signifies her rebirth, and Pilar also experiences rebirth when she undertakes journey with her childhood friend.

*The Pilgrimage* offers a good description of this act of rebirth. Almost all the quests enable us experience, in a very practical way, the rebirth. We confront completely new situations, the day passes more slowly, and on most journeys we don’t even understand the language the people speak. In such situations we are like a child just out of the womb. We begin to be more accessible to others because they may be able to help us in difficult situations. And we accept any small favor from the gods with great delight, as if it is an episode we should remember for the rest of your life. At the same time, since all things are new, we see only the beauty in them, and feel happy to be alive. That’s why a spiritual odyssey in the form of Holy Pilgrimage is one of the most objective ways of achieving insight.

Every odyssey has roads that are more illuminating and important to the destination. The road is considered to be more important because it effects the traveler’s Spiritual and mental growth. It enables a transformation of the quester. Every journey or odyssey results in giving an experience that may enhance the spiritual awakening of the traveler may it be a quester, pilgrim, wanderer or any other. Any journey is more enriching an experience than the destination, because it offers time for contemplations, speculations and introspection thus bringing about a positive transformation in the traveler’s personality. There might be many reasons for undertaking a journey but a spiritual odyssey may serve benefits like emotional resiliency, ability to see things in a different light, better life balance, increased energy, inner peace, built in
support to bring about desired changes in life and many other fruitful things. Such a transformation is resultant of a spiritual odyssey.

The pilgrim progresses spiritually as he or she advances geographically. The key factor is knowledge, which increases with the passage of time during the journey. The study establishes the fact that human being has not ceased to wander in search of their dreams. Such an odyssey not only benefits the quester materially, but improves his level of knowledge and wisdom also. Though it may be undertaken on physical level its impact is also seen on spiritual level.

The most important result of a spiritual odyssey of quest is that it brings about the self discovery of the quester wherein one can meet one’s own real Self. This odyssey may enable one to get in touch with lost feelings and buried memories. We can access and reassess our inner self, explore our habitual patterns and assumptions which may strengthen our bond with ourselves. Such a self-discovering journey may help us improve ourselves by clarifying and redeveloping our thoughts. A resultant self-growth may be accomplished by this. The journey experience enables us develop new perspectives on life by facilitating us gaining insight into the view points of other. A traveler is likely to acquire a wider range and better developed personal voice.

It has also been found that an end of every journey is a beginning of a new one.

References: