Follow Your Heart, Live Your Dreams

Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue,
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.¹

Edgar Harburg

It has been observed that dreams are golden and Time is the thief. If we let the passage of time steal our dreams away from us, there are chances of our life becoming a curse. In the present context, dreams signify what you desire for yourself, what you desire yourself to be and what you desire to do. Hence dreams are considered to be the touchstones of our character that cause the development of our personality and define in a significant way the quality of our life. Hence pursuing the dreams becomes the part of our life mission. Langston Hughes has rightly wrote,

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.²

But there is a lot of difference between cherishing a dream and pursue it in reality. There are people who have a dream but not enough
courage to pursue it. What people are afraid of seems to be the fear of failure that results in their cherishing the dream rather than pursuing it. Some people may choose to postpone the chance of realizing their dreams while some choose to compromise on them. What seems to stop one from fulfilling a dream is oneself. There is a mere need of determination of marching confidently in the direction of the dream in order to live the life as it is imagined. This important lesson is imparted by *The Alchemist* and *The Pilgrimage*.

In the opinion of Paulo Coelho, it's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting. Before a dream is realized, the Soul of the World tests everything that was learned along the way. It does this not because it is evil, but so that we can, in addition to realizing our dreams, master the lessons we have learned as we have moved toward that dream. (TA57)

Coelho’s *The Alchemist* and *The Pilgrimage* are concerned with the journey for the sake of a long cherished dream. The present chapter deals with these two novels. *The Pilgrimage*, the first of Coelho’s fictional works appeared in 1987. In the following year i.e. in 1988 appeared *The Alchemist*. The study begins by exploring *The Alchemist* as a work delineating the quest of a young Spanish boy in search of a treasure. The choice of beginning the study with this novel is decided by the fact that the novel expresses in a complete way the humanity of the novelist’s philosophy and the depth of his search, which eventually paves the way for the better understanding and interpretation of his following works. The novel depicts a transforming journey of the shepherd boy.

*The Pilgrimage* can best be grouped with *The Alchemist* on the basis of two factors; the first, both the works portray a male protagonist
undertaking a spiritual odyssey of quest; an actual physical travel in search of something, and not just spiritual contemplation sitting at one place. The second, these two novels are almost like each other in the sense that the journey becomes more important than the objective; it is a journey during which the protagonist discovers himself.

Furthermore, these novels share a similar thematic base: a journey undertaken by the protagonist in order to realize the dream, which has been considered as a personal legend. But the physically undertaken journey and rediscovery of one’s own is also a common thread running through both the novels. So the goals they pursue are extremely different, what they share with each other is the enriching experience of the journey. The impetus of the journey and its nature, in all the instances, are evidently different. The quest motif in *The Pilgrimage* is the essentiality on the part of the protagonist to undertake the journey, to undergo the trials in order to be eligible for the sword, an emblem of his recognition as a Magus, which is the ultimate dream of the protagonist. In case of *The Alchemist* the quest motif is the dreamed treasure.

Both the novels are the works that are part adventure story and part guide to self-mastery. They teach us the lesson that life is a journey that we should undertake as an adventure. These works also make us believe that at every bend on the road of our life, a mystery is waiting to unfold and that the miracles are an everyday occurrence.

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*The Alchemist: A Story of Touchstone Journey*

*The Alchemist* is considered as an inspiration for those who seek their path in life. It is a story for those who wish to know the way to find the heart’s desire. In this masterpiece, the writer states that one should not
avoid one’s destiny and urges people to follow their dreams. According to Coelho, this search should be the only mission on Earth, as it ultimately leads us to the way to find the God, meaning, happiness, fulfillment and the ultimate purpose of creation. Through this novel he tells how each of us has a specific mission or goal in life, a personal legend, though most of us do not realize it. But most importantly the novel tells that though we do not know what our treasure will be, or where and how we will receive it, if we follow our heart, we will find it. The novel asserts the ability of one’s own to accomplish something seemingly impossible. What one needs is a determination of one’s own mind. According to Swami Vivekananad, such a determination supported with an obsession of that idea is a simple formula of success.

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life- think of it, dream of it, live on idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.  

The novel tells the story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who has a dream and courage to follow it. After listening to “the sign”, Santiago ventures in his personal, Ulyssess- like journey of exploration and self discovery, symbolically searching for a hidden treasure located near the Pyramids in Egypt. The mystery of the whole quest is that it amazingly ends in his own country, in the region of Andalusia in Spain. The surprise ending, in which the boy discovers that his treasure lies not at the pyramids, as his dream had foretold, but back at the abandoned church in Spain where his journey began, has powerful implications about the significance of looking into the roots and foundation of our lives, journeying outward to find the way back home, and trusting our dreams even when it seems they have slipped beyond our reach. In his
journey to unknown and unseen lands, the young Santiago sees the
greatness of the world, and meets all kinds of exciting and crazy people
and knows all down to earth people, and eventually the alchemist.
However, apart from the material treasure which he gets at the end of
the novel, what else he gains is the discovery that ‘treasure lies where
your heart belongs’ and that the treasure was the journey itself; the
discoveries he made and the wisdom he gained. The book is divided into
two parts. The first part portrays how the boy comes to realize his
Personal Legend, and ends by indicating significant growth in the boy.
He has determined to be the main force in controlling his own destiny,
and will not let misfortune distract him from his dream. Part Two ends
with how he finally arrives at the end of his journey, but then realizes
where the treasure actually is.

The whole of Santiago’s journey symbolically puts forth a
philosophy. According to the book, it doesn’t matter whether you’re
searching for buried fortune, love, or the secret of turning lead into gold.
It doesn’t matter if you die trying, never attain your goal. It doesn’t
matter if you don’t find what you are looking, once you get there. What
is significant is what you have brought with you on the way, and what
you have gained along the way; the people you have met, the hardships
you have gone through, the lessons you have learned from your
experiences. In order for the boy to arrive at his treasure, he must first
learn to accept change, to consider its simplicity, to trust his experience
of day to day life over bookish knowledge. He must learn to live in the
present moment, read God’s will in signs and omens, listen to his heart,
and penetrate the Soul of the World and the Universal Language through
which it speaks. In other words, to reach his material treasure Santiago
must undergo a spiritual transformation, a process that parallels the
alchemical transformation of lead into gold. The strength of the book lies in the fact that it skillfully combines the words of wisdom and philosophy, which are finely blended with day to day incidents, thus making the whole journey of Santiago a spiritual odyssey. The title refers not to any alchemist in real but to the boy only because he has learned to transform every opportunity into a success.

*The Alchemist* is an exciting novel that bursts with optimism; it is a kind of novel that tells you that everything is possible as long as you really want it to happen. In order to bring home to this message, Coelho presents many such characters that could never follow their dreams in their lifetime as they put it off due to the fear of failure, lack of courage or lack of a strong impetus. Paulo Coelho shows how easy it is to give up ever attaining one’s dream due to complacency or not wanting to move out of one’s comfort zone.

“People are afraid to pursue their most important dreams, because they feel that they don’t deserve them, or that they’ll be unable to follow them.” (TA124)

Coelho also suggests that those who don’t have the courage to follow their dream are doomed to a life of emptiness, misery and non-fulfillment. Fear of failure seems to be the greatest obstacle to happiness. As one of the characters, an old crystal-seller tragically confesses:

“I am afraid that it would all be a disappointment, so I prefer just to dream about it.” (TA 53)

This is where Coelho really captures the psyche of man, who sacrifices fulfillment to conformity, who knows he can achieve greatness but denies doing so due to the fear of loss and defeat and ends up living a
life of void and regret. It is interesting to see that Coelho presents the 
person who denies following his dreams as a person who denies seeing 
God. However, only a few people choose to follow the road that has 
been made for them, and find God while searching for their destiny and 
their mission on earth. The book frequently reiterates that:

“When you really want something to happen, the whole universe 
conspires so that your wish comes true” (TA 21)

Accordingly at the crucial stage in his journey Santiago meets the right 
person to guide or to push him on in his journey. It is the King of Salem 
who presses the boy into the journey and it is the alchemist who plays 
the role of teacher and sage to the boy in his quest to find the treasure. 
The alchemist helps him see beyond the physical desire of man and go 
much deeper to the elemental core of man’s true desire. He helps him 
see that sometimes choices involve taking a chance. Though one’s 
current position in life may be comfortable and relatively safe, it can fall 
short of his or her dreams.

The novel opens in a part of Spain. We are introduced to a 
shepherd boy named Santiago. The action of the novel sets off with the 
boy, along with his sheep, deciding to spend the night at an abandoned 
church. The church has no roof and an enormous sycamore tree has 
grown up where the sacristy once stood. This opening of the novel is 
very interestingly linked with the end of it. The scene where the novels 
ends is the same one where it has started; but a lot of things happen 
during the opening and the end, the things that would completely 
change the life of the boy and his vision of life. Between this opening 
and the end, many mysteries are solved, many questions are answered, 
and the dream is realized.
Dusk is falling as the boy arrives with his herd at the church. He carries a just finished book which, at night, he uses as a pillow, and desires to start reading a thicker one next time, because it would last longer and make more comfortable pillow. After taking all the precautionary measures for his sheep, he sleeps in the church only to get up when it is still dark. He has been waked up by a dream. He had the same dream a week ago, and once again he is awakened before it ended. He is somewhat disturbed by its repeated occurrence and wants to know its significance.

To dream that are awake and walking through a beautiful landscape denotes good times ahead after a period of difficulty. People who consciously cultivate their psychic ability use special techniques to “wake up” during dreams in order to look into the future. One method is to imagine being in a time machine. The dream move into the future and the psychic receive a premonition of future events.4

These opening pages show him as a perfect shepherd, enjoying his profession. The following lines show how he had got used to his sheep and their schedule.

“He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of his animals also began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep, with whom he had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water. “They are so used to me that they know my schedule,” he muttered. Thinking about that for a moment, he realized that it could be the other way around: that it was he who had become accustomed to their schedule.” (TA 04)
He has become one with his sheep and used to call each by name. He always believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said. So many a times he read them parts of his books that had made an impression on him, or when would tell them of the loneliness or the happiness of a shepherd in the fields. Sometimes he would comment to them on things he had seen in the villages they passed.

Apart from his honesty to his trade and herd, the opening pages of the book reveal Santiago’s inclinations, his non-complacency spirit and his rebellion against parental wish. Santiago’s parents wanted him to become a priest, and thereby a source of pride for the family. They worked hard just to have food and water. The boy had studied Latin, Spanish and theology. But ever since he had been a child, he wanted to know the world, and this was much more important to him than knowing God and learning about man’s sins. One day he summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn’t want to become a priest; that he wanted to travel. His father tried to convince him by giving the example of the people who had come travelling to their village, to see their castle, and returning basically as the same people as they were when they arrived. But the boy answered in revolting spirit that he wanted to see the castles in other towns, to see land of other people, to see how they live. But travelling needs money and hence the boy chooses to be a shepherd, the profession that could allow him to wander from place to place, see the wonders of life, and all these without spending a lot of money. At last, his father helped him, by giving him enough money to buy flock, thus materializing Santiago’s dream of travelling. Though the father seemed to be against his decision, he gave the boy his blessing.
“The boy could see in his father’s gaze a desire to be able, himself, to travel the world- a desire that was still alive, despite his father’s having had to bury it, over dozens of years, under the burden of struggling for water to drink, food to eat, and the same place every night of his life.” (TA 09)

When he remembers that conversation with his father, he feels happy; he had already seen many castles, he owned a jacket, a book that he could trade for another, and a flock of sheep. But what is more important for the boy is that every day he could live out his dream. If he were to tire of the Andalusian fields, he could sell his sheep and go to sea. By the time he had had enough of the sea, he would already have known other cities, and other chances to be happy. As he was looking at the rising sun, Santiago thought that he could not have found God in the seminary.

“Whenever he could, he sought out a new road to travel. He had never been to that ruined church before, in spite of having traveled through those parts many times. The world was huge and inexhaustible; he had only to allow his sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other interesting things.” (TA 10)

But presently Santiago is thinking about the recurring dream and he thinks that it’s the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting.

In *The Alchemist*, dreams stand for not only an outlet into one’s inner desires, but also a form of communication with the Soul of the World. Santiago’s dream of a treasure in Egypt, for instance, tells to him his Personal Legend and sets the entire plot of the Alchemist into motion. The novel seems to propagate the idea that dreams make us foresee the future. The potential of dream to foretell the future is debated in ancient
ages as well. The great philosopher Aristotle was also found arguing the possibility of a dream’s coming true.

Aristotle’s fourth question is: whether it may happen [that one] foresee future things in a dream, or not? And it is clear that [the answer is] yes, even according to [Aristotle] himself. For he says that all [people] judge dreams to contain a certain showing of future things, and this carries conviction, as a statement from experience… The same one [Aristotle] also introduces an argument from the authority of the physicians, who say that it is proper strongly to direct [our] attention to dreams, because these may signify something in future.  

He suddenly remembered that, in the city Tarifa, there is an old woman who interpreted dreams. This recurring dream is the first stage in his quest i. e. a call to adventure. His willingness to interpret his dream is otherwise his readiness to accept the mysterious gift life is willing to offer him.

Santiago visits the old woman to know more about the meaning of his dream. It is his first experience at heart he is frightened of her. The old woman told him that the dreams are the language of God; God speaking him in the language of soul. The boy told her what his dream was. He dreamed that he was in a field with his sheep, when a child appeared and began to play with the animals. And suddenly, the child took him by both hands and transported him to the Egyptian pyramids. Then at the pyramids the child said him: ‘If you come here, you will find a treasure.’ (TA 13) Just as the child was about to show the exact location, he woke up, both times.
Hearing this, the old woman demanded, as fees of her consultation, one tenth of the treasure, if he find it. According to her, Santiago must go to the pyramids in Egypt, because if it was a child who showed it, the treasure might surely exist. But the old woman could not guide him further in how to get to Egypt, and hence he was disappointed with her. At last he decided that he would never again believe in dreams. He reminded himself that he had a number of things he had to take care of. He befools himself for believing in a dream and thus is almost on the verge of leaving it forever and spending the rest of his life as a shepherd.

Santiago, in order to reach his goal, is helped and guided by various agencies, at various time. The major role of guide is performed by Melchizedek in the initial stage and the alchemist of the Oasis in the later part of the journey. At this initial stage, he is helped by the Wise Old Man in the form of Melchizedek. He is a Biblical character and had helped Abraham at a crucial stage in his life. His appearance on the scene gives a complete and positive turn to the life of Santiago. He made the boy believe once again in his dream and made him set on his journey, his search for the treasure. The so called King of Salem, Melchizedek was the first to meet Santiago at a crucial stage in his life. Santiago was yet to begin his search. He was somewhat hesitant as well as unwilling to embark on the quest. It was the critical stage in the life of every hero undertaking a quest: the stage of hesitation. An external or internal impetus was needed to kick-start the journey. The boy must be made aware of his capabilities and necessity to initiate his journey; otherwise it would have been nipped in the bud. It was thus a divine plan that Santiago is visited by Melchizedek.
After visiting the dream interpreter, the boy has nearly given up the idea of the dream’s coming true. Disappointed, he was sitting on a bench in the plaza at Tarifa, reading a newly purchased book, when an old man sat down at his side and tried to strike up a conversation. He asked the boy what book he was reading. The boy, irritated with the old man and hoping the man would change the bench handed over the book to him. But he was shocked when the old man mentioned the book to be important as well as irritating; shocked because contrary to his expectation the old man knows how to read, and has already read that book. Remark ing on the book, the old man said:

“It describes people’s inability to choose their own destinies. And it ends up saying that everyone believes the world’s greatest lie……It is this: that at a certain point in our lives, we lose control of what’s happening to us, and our lives become controlled by fate. That’s the world’s greatest lie.” (TA 17)

As if challenged by the statement, Santiago replies that he controlled his destiny and followed his “Personal dream” of becoming a shepherd instead of a priest.

During their conversation, the old man introduces himself as Melchizedek, King of Salem. Santiago has never heard of Salem and thinks the old man to be crazy. He offers a bargain that if Santiago gives him one tenth of his sheep, he will tell him how to find the hidden treasure that has been promised in his dream. Santiago thinks that the old man works with the dream interpreter in a Gypsy scam, because except her, he has not shared with anyone the secret of his dream. But Melchizedek begins to change Santiago’s mind when he tells the names of Santiago’s parents, the seminary he attended, and other things that Santiago hadn’t told to anyone, demonstrating that he has a supernatural
ability. Persuaded that Melchizedek is at least wise, if not an actual king, Santiago feels convinced that he should listen to Melchizedek.

Melchizedek explains the concept of the Personal Legend to Santiago. A ‘Personal Legend’ represents what that person most desires to accomplish in his or her life. Everyone knows their Personal Legend when they are young, but as time slips away; a mysterious force makes them feel that they will never achieve their Personal Legend. He explains this by citing an example of a baker working nearby. Like the boy, the baker even liked to travel. But he chose to be a baker because people considered that profession to be more important than shepherding. Melchizedek is worried that Santiago is about to give up on his own Personal Legend as well. He almost changes the mind of the boy. In regard of the divine role in an individual’s journey he says

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. (TA 28)

During an interview, Coelho made a comment on omens in regard with journey of life in general.

Omens are a language, it’s the alphabet we develop to speak to the world’s soul, or the universe’s, or God’s, whatever name you want to give it. Like any alphabet, it is individual, you only learn it by making mistakes, and that keeps you from globalizing the spiritual quest.⁶

Omens are, in effect, nonwritten or nonprinted signs. They are indicators, or portents, of what is to come. Generally taken as warning about future events, they are seldom considered as signs of a predetermined future, for, with the right action, it is possible to circumvent what is indicated as being potentially threatening. There are both personal omens and general omens. Personal ones give an indication, or warning, to a specific person, which is not necessarily applicable to anyone else… There are thousands upon thousands of these [general omens] to be found around the world… Some deal with events, some with weather, some with health, and so on.7

In *The Alchemist* omens offer Santiago guidance on his journey and reassure him that the Soul of the World has allowed his journey. As Melchizedek explains, omens make up part of the Universal Language of the World, and if Santiago makes use of this language he can always find the meaning in his environment. Melchizedek further tells Santiago that he pays visit to those who are about to quit pursuing their dream. He usually appears as a solution to a problem or an idea, and once appeared as an emerald to a miner. Advice does not come cheap; everything in life has a price. He says he will help Santiago if Santiago hands over one-tenth of his flock.

This meeting with the old man upsets Santiago. He wanders through the city, buys bread from the baker Melchizedek mentioned and stops at a booth selling tickets for the boat to Africa. At the same time an intense wind called the levanter was blowing. Santiago envies the wind’s freedom. At heart he is making some decision. He considers the merchant’s daughter and his sheep as the only steps on the way toward
his Personal Legend. Santiago’s sheep illustrate how material possessions can deter or help a person in his quest to reach his Personal Legend. Santiago’s flock, for instance, provided him with personal satisfaction and material wealth, both of which tempted him to disregard his Personal Legend and remain in Spain. On the other hand, without his flock Santiago would not have had anything to trade with Melchizedek or get instant money by selling them in order to proceed in his Personal Legend. Moreover the strong “levanter” wind appeals him to move freely as well. Once Santiago recognizes his flock as just one step in a quest towards an ultimate goal, as opposed to an end in and of itself, he becomes as free as the wind. At last he decides to pursue his dream, his ‘Personal Legend’. This realization, that one must be free to move and develop without remaining tied down by material possessions, is an important advancement in Santiago’s journey.

And the next day, Santiago finds Melchizedek and as per latter’s demand brings six sheep. He tells Melchizedek that he sold the rest of his sheep the day before. He told that he was surprised when his friend bought all the other sheep immediately. Melchizedek remarked that

"It's called the principle of favorability. When you play cards the first time, you are almost sure to win. Beginner's luck.…

Because there is a force that wants you to realize your destiny; it whets your appetite with a taste of success." (TA 27)

According to Melchizedek, Santiago can find his treasure in Egypt by the pyramids. Initially, Santiago feels annoyed that Melchizedek does not give a more exact location, but then a butterfly appears. Melchizedek explains the butterfly is Santiago’s first omen and opens his cape to reveal a jeweled breastplate. Melchizedek gives Santiago two stones from the breastplate. He says the stones are called Urim and
Thummim and they represent “yes” and “no.” They will help Santiago to read omens.

Before Melchizedek leaves, he tells Santiago the story of a shopkeeper who sends his son to learn the secret of happiness from the wisest man in the world. The boy finds the man in a beautiful castle in the desert. The wise man tells the boy to spend time looking around while balancing a spoonful of oil. When the boy returns, he says he didn’t pay attention to any of the castle’s splendor because he concentrated on the oil. The wise man sends him out again to see the castle, and the boy returns having seen the castle but having also spilled the oil. The wise man tells him he must admire the castle without forgetting the oil.

‘The secret of happiness is to see all the marvels of the world, and never to forget the drops of oil on the spoon.’ (TA 30,31)

Santiago understood the meaning of the story that as a shepherd he may wander the world and see its marvel, he should always need to remember his flock. The old man wishes him well and points him in the right direction of the Pyramids. As Melchizedek watches Santiago’s ship pull out of port towards Africa, he remembers making the same bargain with Abraham that he made with Santiago.

A step further in his quest, Santiago arrives in Tangier, in Morocco. Now it’s a stage of trial in which he has to face certain tests and setbacks. In order to reach his goal, i.e. Pyramids in Egypt, still he has to cover near about 5000 kilometers, travelling through Sahara desert. Till now everything was smooth going and happened as per his wish. But on his arrival in Tangier, destiny begins to test his caliber and strength in adversity. He has to face certain ordeals in order to survive. The unknown people and unknown language of that land make him
nervous. He scorns the people as infidels. He worries that he can’t speak Arabic, reassuring himself only with the money in his pouch.

At a bar in Tangier, a young man of same age as he is addresses him in Spanish. Ensuing friendliness due to language makes him relay on that fellow. Santiago tells him he needs to get to the Pyramids and offers to pay him to serve as a guide. The young man explains that the route across the Sahara desert is dangerous, and Santiago needs to show that he has enough money to make the trip. The boy thought it an odd inquiry. But he believed in Melchizedek, who had said that, when you really want something, the whole universe always conspires to help you. When the boy took his money from his pouch and showed it to the young man, the bar owner speaks angrily to the young man in Arabic, and the young man drags Santiago outside, saying the bar owner is a thief. Santiago gives the young man his money to purchase camels.

The new comer made Santiago believe that they have to buy two camels to cross the desert to reach the Pyramids and he took all of his money. Both come to a crowded marketplace. Though Santiago keeps a close eye on the young man, his attention is somehow distracted when he notices a sword on display in a shop. He contemplates of buying it when he returned from Egypt. Santiago turns around to tell the young man to ask the shopkeeper the price of sword only to realize that the young man has disappeared. He wants to believe that his new friend was simply become separated from him by accident and that he would return. Santiago waits at the marketplace until nightfall for the young man to return but he realizes that he’s been robbed.

This initial shocking experience in Tangier illustrates the fact that moving on from a comfortable situation presents a challenge. As soon as Santiago arrives in Tangier, the port seems uncomfortably foreign,
largely because the people behave differently than in Spain. He dislikes
the place and its people whom he calls infidels. Santiago quickly pays
for these prejudices when he decides to trust the familiar, Spanish-
speaking young man instead of the Arabic-speaking bar owner. On
losing all his wealth, Santiago realizes that he must readjust his
perspective on his surroundings. He laments all of his lost material
possessions and weeps in that unknown place. Though he was two
hours away from his country, he had nothing, not even money to return
and start everything over. Presently his possessions are a book, a jacket,
and the stones Melchizedek gave him. He only remembers his quest
when he feels Urim and Thummim.

"They're called Urim and Thummim, and they can help you to read the
omens."

"Learn to recognize omens, and follow them." (TA 39)

The stones and Melchizedek’s words immediately renews Santiago’s
commitment to his quest. The stones have told him that the old man is
still with him, and that makes him feel more confident. He looks around
at the empty plaza again, feeling less desperate than before. The place is
not a strange one; it was a new one. He encouraged himself by
contemplating that

After all, what he had always wanted was just that: to know new places.
Even if he never got to the Pyramids, he had already traveled farther
than any shepherd he knew. Oh, if they only knew how different things
are just two hours by ship from where they are, he thought. Although his
new world at the moment was just an empty marketplace, he had
already seen it when it was teeming with life, and he would never forget
it. He remembered the sword. It hurt him a bit to think about it, but he
had never seen one like it before. As he mused about these things, he
realized that he had to choose between thinking of himself as the poor victim of a thief and as an adventurer in quest of his treasure. (TA 40)

This was the first setback to Santiago and the first test. Difficulties and adversities make human being more powerful and bring to surface hidden talent. In the same way, undergoing the test only strengthens his determination to continue his quest. Horace had rightly pointed out, “Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which, in prosperous circumstances, would have lain dormant.”

After falling victim to a thief, Santiago weeps and falls asleep in the marketplace. The next day morning, he wakes up by the voices of merchants setting up shop for the day. A candy seller offers Santiago his first sweet. Santiago notices that some merchants speak Spanish and others speak Arabic, but they communicate with each other without words. This makes Santiago perceive what he already experienced. He thought that there must be a language that doesn't depend on words. He already experienced that with his sheep, and now it's happening with people. He determines to learn to understand this language without words, so that he could learn to understand the world. This is going to help him to rescue himself from a trouble in future and prove his capabilities. The language he thought about is the Language of World.

Relaxed and unhurried, he resolves to walk through the narrow streets of Tangier. Only in that way would he be able to read the omens. He knows it would require a lot of patience; but shepherds know all about patience. Once again we see that, in that strange land, he is applying the same lessons he had learned with his sheep.

In order to bring home his message, that God speaks in omens and one must understand and give response to those omens in order to
follow the will of God, Coelho has delineated certain characters who pursue what God has decided for them and also those who deny God’s will. In the earlier part we meet the baker at plaza in Tarifa, who had denied the will of God, in the same way, in this part of the story we meet a merchant who is presented as a contrast to Santiago. At the top of a hilly street, there is a crystal shop of this merchant. For thirty years, his shop has stood on a desolate street and attracts few customers. Business once boomed when Tangier was a busy port, but sales have fallen off ever since nearby Ceuta became a more important town.

By chance, wandering Santiago stops in front of the crystal merchant’s shop. He offers to clean glasses in the shop’s window in exchange for food, but the crystal merchant does not respond. Santiago cleans the glasses anyway. At the same time, two customers enter and buy crystal. When Santiago finishes, the crystal merchant takes him to a café. He explains that Santiago didn’t need to clean, because the Koran orders him to feed the hungry. The crystal merchant considers it as a good omen that customers entered while Santiago was cleaning and hence offers Santiago a job. Santiago offers to clean the entire merchant’s crystal overnight if the merchant pays him money to get to Egypt. The merchant answers that the trip to Egypt is so long and expensive that Santiago couldn’t earn enough for the trip even if he works for a year. Santiago feels disappointed but agrees to take the job.

When Santiago’s joins the shop, the business of crystal merchant grows day by day. After almost a month of work, Santiago feels tired of his new job. The crystal merchant is grouchy and the work is tedious. The job pays decently and Santiago begins to think of working there for a year or so that he could return to Spain and buy a new flock of sheep.
One day, Santiago offers to build a display case for the crystal in order to attract more customers, but the crystal merchant fears people will bump into it and break crystal. He argues that even when business has been good, why Santiago wants more. Santiago merely replies that he wants to follow omens. When the crystal merchant asked why he wanted to go to Pyramids, Santiago replies in vague, without mentioning anything about treasure. In fact, the treasure is now nothing but a painful memory, and he tries to avoid thinking about it. When the boy repeats about the display, the merchant replies that he dislikes much change. And moreover, he says, he lives by the Koran, which teaches to live with few demands. But as he explains these demands he remembers that one of them is a pilgrimage to Mecca. He confides Santiago that traveling to Mecca has long been his dream. Santiago asks why he did not live his dream by going to Mecca. The merchant replies that, if he did, he would no longer have anything to live for and hence he prefers to cherish his dream. But in case of Santiago’s dream he says

You dream about your sheep and the Pyramids, but you're different from me, because you want to realize your dreams. I just want to dream about Mecca. I've already imagined a thousand times crossing the desert, arriving at the Plaza of the Sacred Stone, the seven times I walk around it before allowing myself to touch it. I've already imagined the people who would be at my side, and those in front of me, and the conversations and prayers we would share. But I'm afraid that it would all be a disappointment, so I prefer just to dream about it. (TA 52,53)

In recognition of Santiago’s dream, he agrees to build the display case. The display case brings more customers, thus increasing Santiago’s commission. After hearing a man complaining about the lack of places to drink on the hill, Santiago suggests the crystal merchant to
sell tea in crystal glasses. The crystal merchant hesitates to enter a new business, but after becoming aware of the danger of ignoring blessings, agrees to sell tea. The tea also becomes popular, and the crystal merchant hires more employees as his business increases.

As Santiago stays in Tangier for some more days and earns more money his craving for his dream becomes blunt, and he contemplates of returning to Tarifa and buy twice as many sheep as he originally owned. Two more months pass and Santiago, nearly a year after his arrival in Africa, has become rich as a result of the crystal shop’s success. One morning, Santiago wakes up early and tells the crystal merchant that he wants to return to Tarifa and buy a large flock of sheep. He encourages the crystal merchant to travel to Mecca. The crystal merchant replies that he will not go to Mecca and Santiago will not go to buy sheep again, suggesting that the later is going to Pyramids. Santiago asks how he knows, and the crystal merchant says “maktub (TA 58),” which means “it is written.”

Santiago is almost ready to return to Tarifa. As he packs his luggage, Urim and Thummim fall on the floor, reminding Santiago of Melchizedek. He reflects on how much he has gained by travelling to Tangier and reconsiders going back to home and becoming a shepherd again. But he may never have another chance to get to the Pyramids in Egypt. He contemplates that the trip through the desert to the pyramids offers him a chance to get to know a new place. He further thinks he could always return to his sheep and the option of becoming a shepherd once again is always open.

I know why I want to get back to my flock, he thought. I understand sheep; they're no longer a problem, and they can be good friends. On the other hand, I don't know if the desert can be a friend, and it's in
At last he listens to his heart and decides to continue pursuing his Personal Legend, and visits a supplier for desert caravans.

The Crystal merchant episode offers an opportunity to talk about what one needs to possess in order to pursue a dream; courage, determination, ability to accept the destiny, faith in self and many other. We are presented in the crystal merchant, like the baker, someone who has given up his Personal Legend and has been trapped in an adequate, but unfulfilling, situation. The crystal merchant represents a different path a person may choose in life. He fears pursuing his dream to make a pilgrimage to Mecca because he worries he will have nothing to live for afterward. Santiago tells the crystal merchant that, by ignoring his dreams, he has reduced his perspective, to the point that his day-to-day business has suffered. He also feels comfortable with what he has and does not seek out more. Moreover, he feels scared of any change. He doesn’t even like Tangier becoming a less vibrant port town and even Santiago’s offer to build a show case His belief in omens presents his most redeeming trait. Throughout The Alchemist, characters who believe in omens appear wise and prosper. Unlike materialistic characters, these characters accept the interconnectedness of Personal Legends and The Soul of the World.

The episode also offers to show Santiago in a stage of one more test. Santiago has nearly given up the idea of continuing his quest of Personal Dream. He has decided to return to Tarifa and buy sheep from the money earned with the crystal merchant. But once again it is the King of Salem who rescues him. Santiago apprehends that although the
prospect of returning to the comfort of his sheep tempts him, a much greater goal exists than just a comfortable life. The stones given by the King of Salem provide him an impetus to resume his forward journey.

The crystal merchant and the baker underline the fact that inability to pursue one’s dream may lead to a trapped and stagnant situation. In the next part of the story Coelho parallels Santiago’s quest by presenting the quest of an Englishman. This offers us a chance to compare and contrast the best qualities of student in a quester.

Santiago joins a group traveling to Al-Fayoum oasis. From Al-Fayoum he has to travel further to the Pyramids. It is a journey through the Sahara desert. Even in this journey through the desert, Santiago’s learning spirit exemplifies itself.

I've learned things from the sheep, and I've learned things from crystal, he thought. I can learn something from the desert, too. It seems old and wise.

The desert is so huge, and the horizons so distant, that they make a person feel small, and as if he should remain silent. (TA 70)

The Englishman is also one of the travelers. He is studying alchemy and travelling with the hope to learn more about alchemy from an alchemist residing in the desert’s Al-Fayoum oasis. The legendary alchemist has supposedly discovered the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life. During the journey, Santiago tells the Englishman his story of working for the crystal merchant. The Englishman is unfriendly at first. When the boy shows Urim and Thummim, he tells they are cheap rock crystals. Santiago informs that a king has given them to him. The Englishman doesn’t understand. He informs that he is seeking an alchemist, and Santiago replies that he is heading to Egypt to look for
treasure. During their journey, the Englishman reads constantly whereas Santiago enjoys and tries to learn something new by observing the scenery of the area they are passing through. Englishman represents a highly educated Westerner who, in order to guide him, relies on learning rather than instinct. At one stage in the journey they decide to exchange their attitude; Santiago attempts to read Englishman’s books on alchemy and the latter tries to learn by observing the desert. But soon both became tired of such exchange. Santiago is unable to understand why books make simple things complicated. He leaves Englishman with his books.

As the Englishman speaks very little, Santiago befriends his camel driver. Santiago and the camel driver share their life story with each other. Earlier, the camel driver maintained a successful orchard, had travelled to Mecca, and believed that he could die happily. However, one day an earthquake ruined his land and thus his hope, turning him to be a camel driver. This event taught him not to be afraid of losing material possessions. Though he still had certain doubts about the decision he had made, he was able to understand one thing: making a decision was only the beginning of things. When someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision. The boy understood the camel driver’s view in his own context. He realizes that there is always a mystery hidden in the happenings of future.

When I decided to seek out my treasure, I never imagined that I'd wind up working in a crystal shop, he thought. And joining this caravan may have been my decision, but where it goes is going to be a mystery to me. (TA 65)
One night, when the Englishman is unable to sleep, he walks with Santiago around the encampment. The latter goes into detail of his life story. The Englishman compares Santiago’s success to the governing principle of alchemy, called the Soul of the World. According to him, the term refers to the positive force of the world that works for the betterment of all things, both living and inanimate. Santiago develops an interest and decides to learn more about the Soul of the World. It is the Englishman through whom Santiago is introduced to the concept of the Soul of the World and alchemy. In the same way as in the process of alchemy Santiago needs to purify himself from material concerns and external pressures in order to focus on his Personal Legend. What is significant in the novel is the fact that it compares the refinement of metals and humans.

The analogy between finding the Soul of the World in a metal and finding the Soul of the World through a personal mission to live out one’s Personal Legend becomes more apparent and important as the story continues. 9

The whole caravan reaches Al-Fayoum oasis. The Pyramids are still a long distance away and evidently, he has no purpose to stay at the oasis, but Santiago feels pleased not to travel in fear any longer. The camel driver tells Santiago that they are safe in Al-Fayoum. Warring tribes avoid it because mostly women and children inhabit the place. The caravan leader explains that the group will remain in Al-Fayoum until the war ends, and that they must hand over their arms and stay in tents with locals and fellow travelers.

The halt at the oasis is going to be an important turn his journey as well as his life. At the oasis he is going to get his love in Fatima and meet his teacher in the Alchemist. The alchemist, in turn, has been made
aware by the omens that someone traveling with the caravan will learn from him. He wonders how capable his new apprentice will be.

In fact, Santiago has nothing to do at Al-Fayoum. On the Englishman’s request he helps him in searching the alchemist. Both of them search all day for the alchemist’s tent, but they could not find him out. Santiago enquires an old man about the alchemist, and they are told that even tribal chieftains can’t meet with him. Santiago thinks of asking one more person before giving up. He advances towards a young woman at a well. As soon as he looks at her, he falls deeply in love with her. The girl, whose name is Fatima, explains that the alchemist communicates with desert spirits and lives in the south of Al-Fayoum. The Englishman immediately goes in search of the alchemist and Fatima leaves after getting water. Only Santiago remains there, love-struck.

The next day, hoping to see Fatima again, Santiago returns to the well. He meets the Englishman there. Somehow the Englishman could meet the alchemist and asked him to teach the procedure of turning lead into gold. But the alchemist did not respond positively and asked that he must “go and try.” The Englishman is nervous to receive such a cold response and vague instructions after his long journey. Before he leaves, he expresses his decision to try.

When Fatima arrives at the well, Santiago declares his love for her and proposes to marry her. Santiago tells Fatima about his quest of a treasure in the pyramids. But now he wants to stay in Al-Fayoum with her and considers her to be more important than his treasure. She reminds him that the war will end someday making him leave the oasis. He contemplates of becoming a shepherd again.
The boy looked around him at the date palms. He reminded himself that he had been a shepherd, and that he could be a shepherd again. Fatima was more important than his treasure. (TA 91)

They meet each other daily at the well. One day, Fatima tells Santiago that she has been waiting for him her entire life, but asserts that he should continue on to Egypt to pursue his Personal Legend. She assures him that if they are meant to be together, they will surely meet again.

"You have told me about your dreams, about the old king and your treasure. And you've told me about omens. So now, I fear nothing, because it was those omens that brought you to me. And I am a part of your dream, a part of your destiny, as you call it....The dunes are changed by the wind, but the desert never changes. That's the way it will be with our love for each other.

"Maktub," she said. "If I am really a part of your dream, you'll come back one day." (TA 93)

The love affair between Santiago and Fatima has a greater significance in the novel. It is a stage where Santiago is once again tempted to drift away from his goal. The temptation herein is the love for Fatima. Their affair moves very quickly; the novel does not provide any realistic narrative of their affair. Instead, the author seems to regard Santiago and Fatima’s affair more as a symbolic step in the former’s larger quest for his Personal Legend. Santiago contemplates suspending his quest and stay with Fatima. Even Fatima tries to persuade Santiago to continue his journey, he is still undecided. At this juncture, fate intervenes to rescue him in the form of the alchemist. And it is a vision that makes the alchemist meet Santiago.
After the conversation with Fatima, Santiago goes to look for the Englishman, in order to share with him what Fatima told him. In fact he seeks a solution from him. Santiago discovers that the Englishman has built a furnace. The Englishman explains that he has abandoned his fear of failure and is determined to try the alchemy. Santiago notices a change in him; his eyes seem brighter than they had been when he was reading his books. Herein the author imparts a lesson that the process of learning through doing is the best one; the process which Santiago believes in.

In order to get answers to his questions Santiago moves towards the desert. The author attempts to give us a glimpse of how Santiago is able to identify himself quite easily with the elements of nature. He listened to the wind, and felt the stones beneath his feet. Here and there, he found a shell, and realized that the desert, in remote times, had been a sea. He sat on a stone, and allowed himself to become hypnotized by the horizon. He tried to deal with the concept of love as distinct from possession, and couldn't separate them. But Fatima was a woman of the desert, and, if anything could help him to understand, it was the desert. (TA 94,95)

As Santiago is sitting there, he watches a pair of hawks attacking each other and has a vision of armies riding through the oasis. Santiago recalls Melchizedek’s advice to pay attention to omens, so he tells the camel driver about his vision. The camel driver takes Santiago’s warning seriously because he also believes in omens and that all people can penetrate to the Soul of the World. As he believes that God foretold Santiago the future through that vision, he tells Santiago to notify the local tribal chieftains of impending armies. Santiago is doubtful that the
chieftains will take him seriously, but the camel driver is sure that they would believe in him because they deal with omens.

Omens also serve to demonstrate Santiago’s spiritual growth throughout the story. The omens that Santiago experiences grow in relevance from being small, limited events to important visions that affect many lives. The vision of the hawks and approaching armies that Santiago has in Al-Fayoum, for example, tells Santiago of an assault on the oasis that could lead to the deaths of hundreds. That his omens become more and more important signifies that Santiago is getting closer to understanding the pure Language of the World.¹⁰

The chieftains live in a huge white tent in the middle of the oasis. Santiago goes there and tells a guard that he saw an omen. The guard goes inside the tent and appears with a young Arab dressed in white and gold. Santiago gives details of his vision to the Arab. The Arab asks Santiago to wait and he goes back into the tent. He waits outside until nightfall, when finally the guard invites him inside. One of the chieftains asks Santiago why the desert would speak to him, a newcomer to the desert. Santiago replies that he is new and can see things those accustomed to the desert may not. The chieftains argue in Arabic which Santiago can’t understand.

An old man at the center of the chieftains does not speak until the conversation ends. He recounts the story of Joseph who saved Egypt from famine by interpreting the Pharaoh’s dreams. The old man reiterates that the tribe believes in this tradition and must take messages from the desert seriously.
After his speech, the old man lifts the ban on carrying weapons in the oasis for one day, and orders everyone to lookout for enemies. He declares a reward of a piece of gold for every ten enemies killed, and if Santiago turns out to be wrong, they will kill him.

This incident is an important stage in Santiago’s journey. The vision shows Santiago’s progress in penetrating the Soul of the World. He is developing himself in perceiving the language of world. The incident is more important because his foretelling the future forces the alchemist to meet him.

When Santiago comes out of the chieftains’ tent, a horseman in black carrying a sword knocks Santiago to the ground. The horseman asks Santiago why he defies Allah’s will by reading the flight of the hawks. Santiago replies that he was able to see into the Soul of the World and Allah willed his vision to occur. His action would save all the people of the oasis. The horseman asks the reason of Santiago’s being in the desert. Santiago tells that he is following his Personal Legend. The horseman clarifies that he needed to test Santiago’s courage, and that Santiago must not give up on his goal. The horseman asks the boy to meet him the next day after sunset if he survives the ensuing battle. On asking where he lives, the horseman simply points south before riding away. The author informs us that the horseman is the alchemist.

The following day, two thousand armed men safeguard Al-Fayoum. Five hundred tribesmen arrive in the city pretending to be on a peaceful expedition, but when they reached the white tent in the center of Al-Fayoum they all draw hidden scimitars and rifles and attack. The tent, however, was empty, and because the tribesmen of the oasis were ready, the tribesmen attacked and defeated the invaders, killing everyone but the battalion’s commander. The chieftains ask the
commander why he broke the rule by attacking Al-Fayoum. The commander answers that his men were starving and needed to take the oasis to continue with the war. The chieftains express pity but condemn the commander to death. The chieftains reward Santiago with fifty gold pieces and ask him to become the counselor of their tribe.

That night, Santiago goes to the south of Al-Fayoum to meet the Alchemist. When he reaches a tent that a group of passing Arabs report that genies live in it. Still Santiago stays and waits for the alchemist. He is not yet sure that the person he is waiting for is an alchemist. But he has guessed him to be so. At midnight the alchemist appears on his horse carrying two dead hawks on his shoulder. He signals for Santiago to enter the tent. Inside, Santiago sees no traditional alchemy tools. The alchemist tells Santiago that he asked him to come to his tent because the omens told him that Santiago needs his help. Santiago replies that the Englishman needs his help, but the alchemist remarks that the Englishman has some other things to do first. The alchemist comments that he needs to help direct Santiago to the treasure he seeks.

At this point the alchemist realizes that Santiago is once again complacent and is on the verge of leaving his quest in the middle. Hence he feels it necessary to direct the boy to his treasure. But the boy argues saying:

“I have already found my treasure. I have a camel, I have my money from the crystal shop, and I have fifty gold pieces. In my own country, I would be a rich man.”

"But none of that is from the Pyramids," said the alchemist.

"I also have Fatima. She is a treasure greater than anything else I have won."
"She wasn't found at the Pyramids, either." (TA 110)

The alchemist encourages the boy to set once again on the road of his treasure.

"Rest well tonight, as if you were a warrior preparing for combat. Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure. You've got to find the treasure, so that everything you have learned along the way can make sense.” (TA 111)

He tells Santiago to sell his camel and buy a horse. In this suggestion he is similar to the Melchizedek, who compelled the boy to sell his flock and set out for Africa.

As per the advice of the alchemist, the boy, following night, returns to the alchemist’s tent with a horse. In order to test the boy for his competency at getting in touch with the Soul of the World, the alchemist orders Santiago to lead him to where there is life in the desert. Initially Santiago is confused, but he understands what to do when the alchemist tells him that life attracts life. He rides into the desert until his horse slows down. He tells the alchemist life exists where they have stopped, because his horse knows life. The pair looks around among the desert stones and the alchemist finds a cobra.

The alchemist considers Santiago’s success as a sign of Santiago’s ability to understand the Language of the World. Notably, as Santiago gets better at performing these feats, he does not pray or communicate directly with spirits. Instead, he interacts with natural things such as the desert and his horse, emphasizing that the Soul of the World is not an abstract or independent spirit. It exists in every natural thing, and one just needs to develop the right frame of mind to find it. 11
The alchemist shows his readiness to move on with Santiago to the pyramids, but Santiago still reiterates that he doesn’t want to abandon Fatima.

The boy didn't want to talk about the Pyramids. His heart was heavy, and he had been melancholy since the previous night. To continue his search for the treasure meant that he had to abandon Fatima. (TA 113)

The alchemist realizes that the boy is tempted to stay at the oasis and in order to set him once again on the journey, needs to be inspired and made aware of the bad consequences of staying at the oasis. He explains the futility of staying at the oasis. In case of Fatima, the alchemist says that Fatima, being the girl of desert, understands that Santiago needs to complete his Personal Legend. Still the boy asks the alchemist what would happen if he stays back in Al-Fayoum. Looking at his hesitating mood the alchemist draws a distinction between feeling content in the present and feeling a sense of lifelong contentment. The Alchemist delineates a picture of what will happen if Santiago does not pursue his Personal Legend. According to him, his relationship with Fatima will sooner or later deteriorate as she begins to feel he gave up his dream for her and he begins to regret his decision of staying back at the oasis. Gradually he will lose touch with the Soul of the World and ultimately lose his ability to recognize omens. The tribal chieftains would eventually dismiss Santiago as their counselor, and the latter would live the rest of his life in regret. The story of Santiago’s potential future shows that, though Santiago undoubtedly loves Fatima, this love will not sustain him permanently, suggesting that love is of less spiritual importance than one’s Personal Legend. Only by pursuing his Personal Legend will Santiago find permanent satisfaction and avoid regret. The alchemist’s story persuades Santiago to once again resume his quest. He
tells Fatima that he is leaving and convinces her that he still loves her and he will return.

The alchemist and the boy travel for a week through the desert. On the seventh day, the alchemist tells Santiago his journey is coming to an end. Santiago feels frustrated that the alchemist didn’t teach him anything about alchemy. The alchemist says Santiago should have learned through actions. From their conversation, we discover some biographical details of the alchemist, about alchemy in general, and about how a person should follow his Personal Legend. The alchemist came to alchemy by coincidence. He learned alchemy from his grandfather who learned from his own father, and so on. Previously, alchemists only needed the Emerald Tablet which provides the wisdom for a direct passage to the Soul of the World. The following generations complicated alchemy by writing books about it. In their attempt of becoming alchemists they complicated that wisdom. They only sought the treasure of their Personal Legends, *i.e.* gold, without actually living out their Personal Legends. This caused them to lose their ability to practice alchemy. At one point in the journey, the alchemist says that they are two days’ away from the pyramids. Santiago requests the alchemist to share the secret of alchemy before they get separated. To this, the alchemist says that Santiago already knows alchemy because he can penetrate to the Soul of the World. To Santiago’s query that how to specifically turn lead into gold, the alchemist explains that gold represents the most evolved metal, and that successful alchemists understand evolution.

In other words, the practice of alchemy holds no special significance in the book except as a metaphor for a person’s purification in pursuit of his or her Personal Legend….The alchemist’s story tells Santiago that
the process of pursuing his Personal Legend is more important than the particular dream he wants to fulfill, and that he cannot reach his goal through learning. Santiago must do so through action.  

Here we come to know why the alchemist denied to teach alchemy to the Englishman and why he insisted on leading Santiago to his treasure; the Englishman believed in learning through books whereas the latter through actions. The Alchemist has, in other words, accepted the boy as his pupil.

As Santiago and the alchemist continue their journey, the boy learns several important lessons about himself and his abilities. First, the Alchemist tells that each person’s heart emerges from the Soul of the World and hence, Santiago must learn to listen to it properly. Santiago realizes that his heart does not always influence him in positive ways; it expresses fear, yearns for Fatima, and otherwise distracts Santiago from following his Personal Legend. His heart tells, “People are afraid to pursue their most important dreams, because they feel that they don't deserve them, or that they'll be unable to achieve them.” (TA 124)

Santiago tells the alchemist his heart doesn’t want him to continue because it fears it will lose everything. The alchemist replies that no heart suffers while it pursues its dreams, because to pursue a dream is to encounter God. The boy attempts to console his heart thus:

"Every second of the search is an encounter with God," the boy told his heart. "When I have been truly searching for my treasure, every day has been luminous, because I've known that every hour was a part of the dream that I would find it. When I have been truly searching for my treasure, I've discovered things along the way that I never would have seen had I not had the courage to try things that seemed impossible for a shepherd to achieve." (TA 125)
In reply his heart said

Everyone on earth has a treasure that awaits him. We, people's hearts, seldom say much about those treasures, because people no longer want to go in search of them. We speak of them only to children. Later, we simply let life proceed, in its own direction, toward its own fate. But, unfortunately, very few follow the path laid out for them—the path to their destinies, and to happiness. Most people see the world as a threatening place, and, because they do, the world turns out, indeed, to be a threatening place. (TA 125)

The next morning, Santiago tells the alchemist he has come to peace with his heart. As they progress in the journey, the boy develops the skill to interact with his heart.

The next day, three tribesmen come up to Santiago and the alchemist and search the pair for their belongings. They find the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life with the alchemist. They laugh at the alchemist when he tells them about the magical properties of his possessions, and allow the two to continue on. Santiago learns a lesson that people seldom believe a person carrying treasures.

In his mood of confidence the boy says he feels no danger. The alchemist gets angry, saying that Santiago should remember he travels through the desert. There arises an occasion when the boy has to demonstrate that he could apply the skills he has learned so far.

After the alchemist and Santiago cross a mountain range, they encounter a group of tribesmen. During this encounter the alchemist seems to cause trouble deliberately. That evening, hundreds of Arab tribesmen approach Santiago and the alchemist and accuse them of acting as spies. They are taken to a military camp and are questioned.
The alchemist deliberately tells that Santiago is an alchemist, and gives away all of Santiago’s money to the tribe’s chief. He claims that Santiago has the power to destroy their camp and will turn himself into the wind to prove it. The men laugh and challenge Santiago to prove the alchemist’s claim. The alchemist says that after three days Santiago will transform himself into the wind. The alchemist appears to test Santiago, and while Santiago has faced many tests previously during his quest for his Personal Legend, this test is going to be the greatest he has ever faced. Success in this test has also become a question of his survival. Santiago has only three days to face down his fear of failing and to turn himself into the wind. At this point in the story, Santiago doesn’t have any idea how to do this. But as the alchemist has told him, no instruction manual can guide him. He must learn by doing.

During the first day Santiago tells the alchemist that he has no idea how to turn into the wind. He asks why the alchemist doesn’t seem worried, since if Santiago doesn’t turn into the wind, they will both die. To this he replies that he already knows how to turn himself into the wind.

For most of the second day, Santiago sits on a cliff, contemplating. On the third day the chief and his officers visit Santiago to see if he can prove his claim.

What Santiago has learned so far as the Language of the World comes to his help to rescue him from the present situation. Santiago looks out to the desert and it speaks to him. The desert shows its inability and says that Santiago needs to get help from the wind. When Santiago asks the wind for help, a breeze picks up. The wind argues that Santiago differs too much from it, but Santiago contends that he desires
to reach all corners of the world, just like the wind. When the wind asks the boy,

"Who taught you to speak the language of the desert and the wind?"

"My heart," the boy answered (TA 141).

The wind understands but doesn’t know what to do. Santiago attempts to convince the wind that love can empower it to do anything. This makes the wind feels that Santiago demeans it by telling what it already knows how to do. Annoyed, it blows harder, and tells Santiago to talk to the Hand That Wrote All. Santiago readily accepts what it says with the request to create a sandstorm so he can look into the sky without the sun blinding him.

The wind agrees to do so and picks up into a powerful gale. The tribesman asks their chief if they can stop Santiago’s stunt. The chief, however, wants to see Santiago complete his task. Then Santiago speaks to the sun. The sun tells him it knows of love, but Santiago argues it does not. Santiago tries to convince it that all things have their own Personal Legend, and when something realizes its Personal Legend, it must change so it can acquire a new Personal Legend. Alchemists use this process to coax lead into becoming gold. After hearing Santiago’s words, the sun decides to shine more brightly, and the wind blows harder so it can continue to block out the brightness.

In the same way as alchemy, Santiago tells the sun, love transforms the Soul of the World. Then he requests the sun to transform him into the wind. The sun shows its inability and suggests Santiago to speak to the Hand That Wrote All. The wind, which is listening to their conversation, becomes happy to see the limit to the sun’s wisdom and blows harder. Santiago, then, tries to communicate with the Hand That
Wrote All but realizes he should not speak. Instead, he prays without using a word and experiences a rush of love.

The boy reached through to the Soul of the World, and saw that it was a part of the Soul of God. And he saw that the Soul of God was his own soul. And that he, a boy, could perform miracles. (TA 145)

Generations of people thereafter remember called the wind the simum that blew on that day. When the tribesmen looked at where Santiago was standing, they noticed him standing far on the other side of camp. The men were terrified but the alchemist and the chief were pleased. The chief provides them with an escort party on their journey towards pyramid.

On reaching a Coptic monastery, the alchemist tells the escort to go back to their troop. He informs Santiago that they are three hours from the pyramids, and that he must finish the trip alone. The dialogue between them is noteworthy here.

"From here on, you will be alone," the alchemist said. "You are only three hours from the Pyramids."

"Thank you," said the boy. "You taught me the Language of the World."

"I only invoked what you already knew." (TA 146)

At the monastery the alchemist prepares gold from lead and divides it into four parts. He gives one part to the monk, one to Santiago, and keeps one himself. He gives a fourth part to the monk to keep for Santiago, in case he may need in future. Santiago wants to try but the alchemist reminds Santiago that alchemy is not his Personal Legend.

Then onwards Santiago rides off alone. As a full moon rises, Santiago sees the pyramids from atop a dune. He falls to his knees and weeps.
He thanked God for making him believe in his destiny, and for leading him to meet a king, a merchant, an Englishman, and an alchemist. And above all for his having met a woman of the desert who had told him that love would never keep a man from his destiny… The boy told himself that, on the way toward realizing his own destiny, he had learned all he needed to know, and had experienced everything he might have dreamed of. (TA 152,153)

The habit of reading through the omens helps him here. He sees a scarab in the sand and starts digging in that spot but finds nothing. At the same time some refugees from the tribal wars approached him. They forcibly took his gold, and assuming Santiago is digging toward more gold, forced him to keep digging until morning. When Santiago finds nothing, they beat him until he nearly dies. At last he told gasping that in his dream he saw a treasure at the pyramids, which makes the attackers think Santiago is crazy. But before they leave their leader told

“Two years ago, right here on this spot, I had a recurrent dream, too. I dreamed that I should travel to the fields of Spain and look for a ruined church where shepherds and their sheep slept. In my dream, there was a sycamore growing out of the ruins of the sacristy, and I was told that, if I dug at the roots of the sycamore, I would find a hidden treasure. But I'm not so stupid as to cross an entire desert just because of a recurrent dream.” (TA 155)

Santiago stands up smiling, because the leader’s comment has given him the exact location of his treasure; it is the place where he had dreamed the treasure for the second time.

At last we witness return of the hero i. e. Santiago’s homecoming. Apart from his return, Santiago’s discovery his treasure is revealed in a very surprising manner. The author instead of describing the return
journey of Santiago directly informs us his arrival in Spain. The author here seems to reiterate that unending explorations are inherent in Spiritual journey, reminding one of Eliot’s lines from *Four Quarters*,

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.  

Santiago arrives at the same church in Spain, his native Andalusian plains and falls asleep contemplating the strange way God has guided him to the treasure. He wakes up digging and laughing at how God left gold at the monastery through the alchemist to ease his journey back. A voice in the wind says God wanted him to see the pyramids’ beauty. Soon Santiago finds a chest of gold coins and jewels. He removes Urim and Thummim and puts them in the chest. He plans to head to Tarifa and give the gypsy one tenth of his treasure, and as the wind blows he feels Fatima’s kiss on his lips. Santiago declares that he will return to her soon.

In *The Alchemist*, one mystical force connects everything, linking people even to inanimate objects and elements like metal. Moreover, Santiago’s Personal Legend centers on finding not just a metaphorical treasure, but an actual treasure. Although he gives up his wealth (his sheep, specifically) for his quest when he sets out, he does so in hopes of finding even more wealth, just as a base metal becomes a more valuable metal through alchemy. We also see over and over in the book that those willing to pursue their Personal Legends enjoy material success in addition to feeling more satisfied with their lives. This arguably materialistic conceit, in which material wealth and spiritual
purity go hand-in-hand, sets the belief system of The Alchemist apart from many traditional spiritual belief systems.\textsuperscript{14}

If The Alchemist has clear lessons to impart, much of the novel’s appeal comes from the way Coelho dramatizes these lessons. As Santiago journeys across the African desert, he falls in love, meets the alchemist, encounters warring tribesmen, risks his life by promising to turn himself into the wind, and is robbed, beaten, and nearly killed just as he thinks he is about to uncover his treasure. The surprising end, in which the boy learns that his treasure lies not at the pyramids, as his dream had foretold, but back at the abandoned church where his journey began, has powerful implications about the importance of looking into the roots and foundation of our lives, voyaging outward to find the way back home, and trusting our dreams even when it seems they have slipped beyond our reach.

\textit{The Pilgrimage: Journey for a Holy Dream}

The Pilgrimage is the first of Coelho’s imprints as a novelist. Though categorized as a fiction, the work delineates Coelho’s personal experience as a pilgrim. In the novel, he recollects the experiences of his journey across Northern Spain on the way of Saint James in the pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostela; the road travelled by the pilgrims of San Tiago. Coelho shares his experiences and recounts the trials and hindrances that he faced along the path of Santiago.

The novel is a story of Coelho’s journey in search of his dream. It explains the significance of dream and imparts the lesson that dreams are the soul of human life and life without dreams is like, body without soul.
We must never stop dreaming. Dreams provide nourishment for the soul, just as a meal does for the body. (TP 50)

The novel reiterates the philosophy, which Coelho has asserted in *The Alchemist* that simply cherishing dreams without its pursuance and thus killing those dreams is a sin towards God. It regards the lack of time, certainties and peace as three important reasons responsible for killing our dream.

The book is a journal of the soul, recording with honesty the author’s anxiety about leaving his business concerns, his apprehension when commencing the pilgrimage to Santiago. It also asserts that every journey is an attempt to discover oneself. Among all types of journeys pilgrimage is considered as the most sacred one in every religion.

Pilgrimage is perhaps best defined as a departure from a daily life on a journey in search of spiritual well-being. It involves leaving home, making a journey, arriving at a destination that usually has some religious significance, and then returning home. It is sometimes undertaken alone, sometimes with a group. The practice of pilgrimage is a central feature of all the world’s major faiths. For Muslims the requirement to travel to Mecca once in a life time to visit the Ka’ba. …Jews are commanded in the book of Exodus to appear before God three times a year ..the temple in Jerusalem was the focal point for Jewish pilgrims…..Hindus travel especially to sites near rivers, describing pilgrimage as tirtha….Every twelve years there is a special pilgrimage known as the Kumbh Mela to Allahabad. ….Although not obligatory, pilgrimage has long been a significant aspect of Christian life and devotion.15

1. Pilgrimage is a practical and demonstrable way of seeking. It is a sure way of putting beliefs and commitment to the crucible. It digs up the answers from deep within. Whilst physically uncomfortable, it provides spiritual reassurance and comfort. You can walk and talk, in largely uninterrupted measure, with God. Give him an inch, and He will show you the mile. Go the mile and He will remain with you on your life’s journey.

2. A pilgrimage differs from a tour. It is a personal invitation from God, comprised of his offer and dependent upon the pilgrim’s acceptance. A pilgrimage is spiritual journey to which the pilgrim joyfully responds ‘yes’ to God’s invitation.16

At the outset of the journey, Coelho anticipates that “The pilgrimage along the Road to Santiago was going to help me find myself.” (TP 14) Coelho emphasizes the benefits of such a journey including the chance to forget about work, the lesson about how to face one’s fears, the importance of dreaming and the gaining of new perspectives. At the end of the book Coelho says, “I had changed a lot since I had begun to walk the strange Road to Santiago.” (TP 206) This comment of Coelho at the backdrop of the last quoted, points out the outcome of the whole journey.

During the journey, Coelho faced various devilish setbacks that made the journey difficult. However, with the help of his guide's teachings and with his own understanding of things, Coelho discovered himself
fully. He laid out how those uncanny circumstances led him in achieving personal power and profound wisdom. As we find in the subtitle of the novel, the journey of Coelho is a contemporary quest for ancient wisdom. Eventually, the novel becomes Coelho’s quest towards spiritual enlightenment. Paulo Coelho comes across a handful of events that remind him that simplicity holds greater power over all. As his journey continues, he is faced with his worst fear that comes in the shape of a vicious dog. He conquers his fear with unknown powers that manifest in him as if by magic. The purpose of the journey reveals itself as Coelho transforms himself. The book details the many teachings of the pilgrimage from love, simplicity, truth, wisdom, understanding and faith among others. The book turns out to be a mystery revealed as the wisdom of the Tradition in the form of RAM practices is presented in the novel.

The novel opens with a prologue that serves to state clearly the necessity and objective of the journey. It is the night of January 2, 1986, in Itatiaia, high on one of the peaks in the Serra do Mar, close to the formation known as the Agulhas Negras (Black Needles) in Brazil, where Paulo is to be ordained as master of the Order of RAM, an ancient and mysterious Catholic tradition. Paulo is accompanied by his master, his wife, one of his disciples, a local guide, and a representative of the great fraternity that is comprised of esoteric orders from all over the world – the fraternity known as ‘The Tradition.’ Paulo has survived many trials and learned many lessons in order to reach the point of being awarded a new sword: an emblem of his acceptance into the ranks of RAM.

As a procedure of Ordination, Paulo had to dig a hole in order to bury the old sword as he was to receive a new one. While he was doing
so, he remembered how that sword was useful to him and how, during those ten years, he survived many trials and learned many lessons in order to reach the point of being awarded a new sword.

I thought of the many tests I had endured, of all I had learned, and of the strange phenomena I had been able to invoke simply because I had had that ancient and friendly sword with me. Now it was to be devoured by the earth, the iron of its blade and the wood of its hilt returning to nourish the source from which its power had come. (TP 02)

The whole of the atmosphere was very excited there. The Master of Paulo approached him and placed his new sword on the earth that now covered the grave of his ancient one. All of them spread our arms wide, and the Master, invoking his power, created a strange light that surrounded them; it did not illuminate, but it was clearly visible, and it caused the figures of those who were there to take on a color that was different from the yellowish tinge cast by the fire. Then, drawing his own sword, he touched it to Paulo’s shoulders and his forehead as he said,

‘By the power and the love of RAM, I anoint you Master and Knight of the Order, now and for all the days of your life. R for rigor, A for adoration, and M for mercy; R for regnum, A for agmus, and M for mundi. Let not your sword remain for long in its scabbard, lest it rust. And when you draw your sword, it must never be replaced without having performed an act of goodness, opened a new path, or tasted the blood of an enemy.’ (TP 02)

Paulo was also much excited and eager to be a Magus. At heart he was proud of his capabilities, learning and accomplishments on the road of the Tradition. As he was ready to pick the new sword, his Master came forward and stepped on Paulo’s fingers with all his might. Paulo
screamed and let go of the sword. With astonishment he looked at his Master. He was unable to understand why his Master was doing so. The strange light had disappeared, and his face had taken on a phantasmagoric appearance, heightened by the flames of the bonfire. The Master returned his gaze coldly, called to his wife giving the sword to her and speaking a few words that Paulo could not hear. Turning to him, The Master said,

‘Take away your hand; it has deceived you. The road of the Tradition is not for the chosen few. It is everyone’s road. And the power that you think you have is worthless, because it is a power that is shared by all. You should have refused the sword. If you had done so, it would have been given to you, because you would have shown that your heart was pure. But just as I feared, at the supreme moment you stumbled and fell. Because of your avidity, you will now have to seek again for your sword. And because of your pride, you will have to seek it among simple people. Because of your fascination with miracles, you will have to struggle to recapture what was about to be given to you so generously.’ (TP 03)

The master gave the new sword to Paulo’s wife and told her that he’ll get his sword at the right time, on the right day and for that he would have to take the Strange Road to Santiago. This incident makes clear the necessity and objective of the journey.

Now comes the phase of hesitation. As a natural response to the failed incident of Initiation, Paulo falters to undertake the journey and had almost lost his hope to get his sword. For seven months after the failure of his initiation, the protagonist was unable to make any decision about going to Santiago. He admits that he felt an enormous anxiety about the business matters he had to leave behind in Brazil. Though he
had learned all he needed to know about the Road to Santiago in the fifteen days following the incident in the Agulhas Negras, he spent another seven months speculating about the practicality of leave everything behind and make the trip.

And here came his helper, the Good Mother in the form of his wife. One morning his wife said that the time was drawing near and that if he did not make a decision, he might as well forget about the road of the Tradition and the Order of RAM. He had tried to explain to her that his Master had assigned him an impossible task that he couldn’t simply shrug off his livelihood. She smiled and said that his excuse was dumb, that during the entire seven months he had done nothing but asked himself night and day whether or not he should go. All of a sudden his wife held out the two airline tickets and Paulo had no choice in setting off for Road to Santiago.

At last they arrive in Madrid; the spot from where he had to take a journey on his own towards the Road to Santiago. Leaving him alone, his wife departs to entrust the sword where she was told to. This suddenly made him realize that now he was actually in Spain and that there was no going back. In spite of the knowledge that there were many ways in which he could fail, he had taken the first step. He hugged his wife passionately, trying to convey all the love he felt for her at that moment. And while she was still there, he prayed to everything and everyone he believed in, imploring that he be given the strength to return to her with the sword. When his wife left him, he contemplated on the significance of the Road to Santiago. Christians in the first millennium considered three routes to be sacred, each of them offered a series of blessings and indulgences to those who traveled its length. The first led to the tomb of Saint Peter in Rome; its travelers, who were
called wanderers, took the cross as their symbol. The second led to the holy sepulcher of Christ in Jerusalem; those who took this road were called palmists, since they had as their symbol of the palm branches with which Jesus was greeted when he entered the city. There was a third road, which led to the mortal remains of the apposite, Santiago – Saint James in English, Jacques in French, Giacomo in Italian, Jacob in Latin. He was buried at a place on the Iberian Peninsula where, one night, a shepherd had seen a brilliant star above a field. The legend says that not only San Tiago but also the Virgin Mary went there shortly after the death of Christ. Carrying the word of the evangelist and exhorting the people to convert. The site came to be known as Compostela- the star field – and there a city had arisen that drew travelers form every part of the Christian world. These travelers were called pilgrims, and their symbol was the scallop shell.

Paulo presently contemplates about the journey to Santiago in the ancient and modern times and of himself as a pilgrim on that Road.

All I could think of was that in two days I was going to relive, here in the latter part of the twentieth century, something of the great human adventure that had brought Ulysses from Troy, that had been a part of Don Quixote’s experience, that had led Dante and Orpheus into hell, and that had directed Columbus to the Americas: the adventure of traveling toward the unknown.

By the time I returned to my car, I was a bit calmer. Even if I were not able to find my sword, the pilgrimage along the Road to Santiago was going to help me to find myself. (TP 14)

Thus the journey in search of one’s dream begins via personal growth and explorations of one’s own self.
On his arrival in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, Paulo had to meet Mme Lourdes who was going to give him directions for his journey on the Road to Santiago. On meeting Mme Lourdes, Paulo forgot to tell at first an Ancient Word, which served as password that identified him the one belonging to the orders of the Tradition. At first Paulo made her suppose him to be another pilgrim on the Road to Santiago. But when he asked about his guide, both of them realized their mistake. She gave him a hat and a cape on which scallop shells had been sewn, an identification of him to be a pilgrim on the Road to Santiago. Coming near him and placing the palms of her hands on his head she said,

‘May the apostle San Tiago be with you, and may he show you the only thing that you need to discover; may you walk neither too slowly nor too fast but always according to the laws and the requirements of the Road; may you obey the one who is your guide, even though he may issue an order that is homicidal, blasphemous, or senseless. You must swear total obedience to your guide.’ (TP 18)

And Paulo swore so. She told him that his guide might be waiting for him two kilometers away from the city, in the Pyrenees. He left her and began his journey. He felt that he was returning to something primitive, something that had been forgotten by most other human beings, something that he was unable to identify. But it was a strange and powerful feeling, and he decided to quicken the pace and arrive as soon as possible at the place where Mme Lourdes had said his guide would be waiting for him.

After almost forty minutes, at a curve in the road that circled around a gigantic rock, he came upon an old abandoned well. There, sitting on the ground, was a man of about fifty; he had black hair and the look of a gypsy, and he was searching for something in a knapsack.
Thinking him to be his guide, Paulo hurriedly introduced himself and said he might be waiting for him. But the man did not seem to be much interested and was somewhat surprised to see him there. His response to what Paulo said was also surprising. Little disconcerted Paulo told him that it was he to whom he was to guide along the Milky Way in search of his sword. Without giving any importance to what he said the man asked him to decide right now whether he wanted him to do so. As he was about to say yes, he heard a voice from behind him “You don’t have to climb a mountain to find out whether or not it’s high.” It was the password. When Paulo looked behind, he saw a man of about forty, in khaki Bermudas and a white, sweaty T-shirt, staring at the gypsy. He was gray-haired, and his skin was darkened by the sun. In his haste Paulo had forgotten about the password and had thought someone else as his guide. He had forgotten the most elementary rules of self-protection and had thrown myself body and soul into the arms of the first stranger he had met. This was his first mistake. In fact, when Paulo saw him he had a vague impression that he knew him.

‘The ship is safest when it’s in port, but that’s not what ships were built for,’ said he; it was the correct response to the password. When the gypsy left the place, the man introduced him to be Petrus, his guide.

Paulo thought that gypsy to be a devil and shared his thought with Petrus who even acknowledged it and told him that he read in his eyes the name of a devil. According to Petrus, Paulo was going to meet the devil once again somewhere along the Road. For Petrus, the meeting had been a favorable omen, since the devil had revealed himself so early. In the Tradition, the devil is a spirit that is neither good nor evil; he is considered to be the guardian of most of the secrets that are accessible to human beings and to have strength and power over
material things. Since he is a fallen angel, he is identified with the human race, and he is always ready to make deals and exchange favors.

Their discussion now turned to the practices of the Tradition and the miracles performed in it. Paulo frankly admits that he could not understand some of the practices and miracles performed by his Master. He believes that when he gets his sword he would understand these. And here Petrus explains partially why his Master denied the claim on the sword.

‘Because you didn’t understand why he performs his prodigious feats. Because you forgot that the path to knowledge is a path that’s open to everyone, to the common people. During our journey, I’m going to teach you some exercises and some rituals that are known as the practices of RAM. All of us, at some time in our lives, have made use of at least one of them. Every one of these practices, without exception, can be discovered by anyone who is willing to seek them out, with patience and perspicacity, among the lessons that life itself teaches us. The RAM practices are so simple that people like you, who are used to making life too complicated, ascribe little value to them. But it is they that make people capable of achieving anything, absolutely anything, that they desire.’ (TP 24)

According to Petrus the true path to wisdom can be identified by three things. First, it must involve agape; second, it has to have a practical application in life. Otherwise, wisdom becomes a useless thing and deteriorates, like a sword that is never used. And finally, it has to be a path that can be followed by anyone. Like the Road to Santiago. Here Petrus taught him the first of the RAM practices: the Seed exercise which Paulo had to do for seven consecutive days. According to him the exercise would help him to achieve rebirth. Coelho emphasizes that
every journey offers the traveler the chance of rebirth. By rebirth he means what Jung has explained in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. According to Carl Jung, there are five different forms of rebirth; Metempsychosis, Reincarnation, Resurrection, Rebirth and Participation in the process of Transformation. A spiritual journey results in rebirth in the sense of the fourth form described by Jung.

The fourth form concerns rebirth in the strict sense; that is to say, rebirth within the span of individual life. … Rebirth may be renewal without any change of being, inasmuch as the personality which is renewed is not changed in its essential nature, but only its functions, or parts of the personality, are subjected to healing, strengthening, or improvement.¹⁷

Petrus told him the significance of the exercise by reminding him how difficult it was for him to make the decision to drop everything and walk the Road to Santiago in search of a sword. But it was difficult only because he was a prisoner of the past. He had been defeated before, and he was afraid that it could happen again. He had already achieved things, and was afraid that he might lose them. But at the same time, something stronger than any of that prevailed: the desire to find the sword which made him take the risk. Paulo admitted that but Petrus told him that the exercise little by little would free him from the burdens that he had created in his life. The exercise made him consider himself a seed that was sprouting step by step; a kind of rebirth.

…today I had been a seed and had been reborn. I had discovered that although the earth and my sleep were full of comfort, the life ‘up there’ was much more beautiful. And I could always be reborn, as many times
as I wanted, until my arms were long enough to embrace the earth from which I had come. (TP 29)

As a requisite of a quest story, the hero is helped along the road by a guide. Here, in this journey this role is performed by Petrus. He was obligated by the Tradition to guide someone along the Road to Santiago in order to pay his dues to the Order. He was to teach Paulo the RAM practices and exercises; practices that almost anyone can discover for themselves only if they are willing to seek them out. Following the exercises, Petrus says, will help people achieve absolutely anything they desire. When they had walked for three days in the Pyrenees, little by little, Petrus began to reveal some things about his private life; he was Italian and that he worked in industrial design. Paulo asked him whether he was worried about the many things like his work he had been forced to abandon in order to guide a pilgrim in search of his sword. On which, instead of answering straight, he responded that he was not guiding Paulo to his sword. It was solely and exclusively his own job to find it. He was there to lead him along the Road to Santiago and to teach the RAM practices. How the latter applies these to his search for the sword was absolutely his own problem.

The book presents journey, any journey, as an act of rebirth. While explaining the significance of journey, Petrus makes an important comment as follows,

When you travel, you experience, in a very practical way, the act of rebirth. You confront completely new situations, the day passes more slowly, and on most journeys you don’t even understand the language the people speak. So you are like a child just out of the womb. You begin to be more accessible to others because they may be able to help you in difficult situations. And you accept any small favor from the gods
with great delight, as if it were an episode you would remember for the rest of your life. At the same time, since all things are new, you see only the beauty in them, and you feel happy to be alive. (TP 32)

Further he suggested not to lose sight of the objective and not to forget that still he had to learn a great deal before he found his sword. Petrus told Paulo his observation that he was so concerned about finding his sword that he forgot the most important thing: he had to get there. Looking only for Santiago he didn’t see that they passed by certain places four or five times, approaching them from different angles. This followed an important suggestion from Petrus.

When you are moving toward an objective, it is very important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road enriches us as we walk its length. And it is the same thing when you have an objective in your life. It will turn out to be better or worse depending on the route you choose to reach it and the way you negotiate that route. That’s why the second RAM practice is so important; it extracts from what we are used to seeing every day the secrets that because of our routine, we never see. (TP 36)

Then Petrus taught him the Speed Exercise. The exercise suggested walking for twenty minutes at half the speed at which we normally walk and paying attention to the details, people, and surroundings. The best time to do this is after lunch. The exercise, according to Petrus, changes the way we do routine things allowing a new person to grow inside of us.

At the outset of the pilgrimage, Paulo thought it merely as a journey to gain his sword, which would confirm his Initiation in the Tradition. He was not yet aware of the use of that sword and his situation was like a traveler on a journey for an objective without any
knowledge of its significance. The role of Petrus was to make Paulo aware of the significance his pilgrimage, the importance of his sword and ultimately his own life. As a guide, he performs his role very perfectly. Instead of giving a free hand knowledge of everything, Petrus let’s Paulo experience the things of his own so that he should learn the lesson forever. The experience of repeated wanderings through the Pyrenees taught Paulo the lesson that though the objective of the journey was significant, the concentration on the journey itself was equally important. As the title of autobiography of Leonard Woolf states, “The journey, not the arrival, matters”, Paulo had to recognize the significance of the journey before it’s too late. A similar reference can be taken from Henry Miller’s book *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* wherein he comments that,

One’s destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things.

The Speed Exercise helps a pilgrimage to know the world better once again and find one’s own self.

When both of them reached the Collegiate Church, Petrus introduced him to Father Jordi. Father asked Paulo for his scallop shells which were his identity as a pilgrim. He made the shells glow and said, ‘Wherever your treasure is, there will be your heart.’ He further uttered, ‘And wherever your heart is, there will be the cradle of the Second Coming of Christ; like these shells, the pilgrim is only an outer layer. When that layer, which is a stratum of life, is broken, life appears, and that life is comprised of agape.’ (TP 43)

Father Jordi talked of the second coming of Christ as if it were to happen now. It made no sense to Paulo. In fact he was referring to
Paulo’s own rebirth at the end of the journey. The Father had also suggested him to rely on his own self so that he should wander for six days in the Pyrenees; moreover he would enjoy the pilgrimage. Later, Petrus explained what Father Jordi meant when he quoted Christ in regard with the treasure. According to Petrus, Father was referring to the importance of love and good works.

At the outset of the pilgrimage, Paulo was much worried about his business back at home and anxious about the outcome of the journey. But little by little he developed interest in the journey and began to enjoy it. At one place, when Paulo completed his speed exercise, Petrus asked him about his work and it was only then that he realized that he hadn’t thought about it for some time. His worries about business and about the things he had left undone had practically disappeared. Now he thought of those things only at night, and even then he didn’t give them much importance. In fact he was happy to be there, walking the Road to Santiago. He told Petrus how he was feeling. What Petrus remarks at this point becomes very significant and noteworthy comment on importance of dreams in human life.

The journey, which prior to this was torture because all you wanted to do was get there, is now beginning to become a pleasure. It is the pleasure of searching and the pleasure of an adventure. You are nourishing something that’s very important – your dreams. (TP 50)

Then Petrus asked Paulo to concentrate on the tower of a church in the distant and then began to tell Paulo the significance of dream in human life.

We must never stop dreaming. Dreams provide nourishment for the soul, just as a meal does for the body. Many times in our lives we see
our dreams shattered and our desires frustrated, but we have to continue dreaming. If we don’t, our soul dies, and agape cannot reach it. (TP 50)

Petrus considered nourishing and attempting to realize our dreams as a kind of good fight with ourselves. It’s a fight because as we grow up we consider our dreams were childish, or too difficult to realize. We kill our dreams because we are afraid to fight the good fight. According to Petrus the first symptom of the process of killing our dreams is the assumption of lack of time. But he further points out that the busiest people in the world always find time enough to do everything. Those who do nothing are always tired and pay no attention to the little amount of work they are required to do. They complain constantly that the day is too short. The truth is, they are afraid to fight the good fight. The second symptom of the death of our dreams lies in our certainties. Because we don’t want to see life as a grand adventure, we begin to think of ourselves as wise, fair and correct in asking so little of life.

The third and the last symptom of the passing of our dreams is peace. According to Petrus life becomes a Sunday afternoon; we ask for nothing grand, and we cease to demand anything more than we are willing to give. In that state, we think of ourselves as being mature; we put aside the fantasies of our youth, and we seek personal and professional achievement. We are surprised when people our age say that they still want this or that out of life.

As Petrus was explaining the significance of dreams, the tower of church at which Paulo was concentrating, appeared to him like an angel. The illusion stayed for a while and Petrus asked him to believe in the illusion. What Petrus wanted to suggest through his explanation of dreams was the necessity on the part of everyone to deal with life with
the spirit of a good fighter. In short he states the predicament of human being,

We always know which is the best road to follow, but we follow only the road that we have become accustomed to. The only way we can rescue our dreams is by being generous with ourselves. Any attempt to inflict self punishment – no matter how subtle it may be – should be dealt with rigorously. In order to know when we are being cruel to ourselves, we have to transform any attempt at causing spiritual pain – such as guilt, remorse, indecision, and cowardice – into physical pain. By transforming a spiritual pain into a physical one, we can learn what harm it can cause us. (TP 53)

Then Petrus taught Paulo the Cruelty Exercise. The exercise is to be performed every time a thought comes to mind that makes one feel bad about oneself, for example the feelings like jealousy, self-pity, envy, hatred and so on. When such bad thought comes in the mind, dig the nail of our index finger into the cuticle of the thumb of the same hand until it becomes quite painful. Concentrate on the pain: it is a physical reflection of the suffering we are going through spiritually. Ease the pressure only when the cruel thought has gone.

The journey with Petrus was becoming an enriching experience for Paulo. Sometimes, when he was not willing to continue walking during afternoon, his guide’s persistence on walking taught him an important lesson: doing things one is not willing to do or facing the situations for which he was not at all responsible. The Cruelty Exercise, in spite of having made his thumb raw, was helping him. It had helped him to see how his mind could betray him, pushing him into situations he wanted no part of and into feelings that were no help to him. Petrus taught Paulo the next ritual named the Messenger ritual, with the help of which
anyone could invoke their personal messenger which would help one to solve personal problems with regard to the material world. They had discussions on various topics such as life of Jesus among people, the role of personal messenger, angels, devils, the rituals of the Tradition, and many others. Paulo frankly admitted that it was difficult for him to accept such a practical application of the mysteries of the Tradition.

During the journey Paulo and Petrus were passing through a town. Fifty years ago, a gypsy was burned in that city. He was accused of sorcery and of blaspheming the sacred host. It was believed that the curse of the gypsy was still there. Before the gypsy died, he said that the youngest child in the village was going to receive and incorporate his devils. And when that child became old and died, the devil would pass on to another child, and so on, for all the centuries to come. Petrus insisted on visiting the person who had inherited the curse. The owner of the bar, where they were sitting, walked along with them to the outskirts of the town, and pointed to a house set off by itself at the side of the Road.

Petrus and Paulo knocked the door of the house. A woman along with a big black dog was living in there. The woman was quite irritated to see the strangers when she opened the door. When Petrus introduced himself as a pilgrim and asked for hot water to make tea, she allowed them to come in. But as Petrus turned the discussion to the curse, the woman, with lot of irritation, asked them to leave the place. At the same time the eyes of her dog seemed to light up, as if he had understood what had been said. The dog sensed the woman’s sudden mood change. He remained still but alert. From the time they entered the house, the dog was constantly looking at Paulo. When Petrus mentioned about the curse, the woman was visibly uncomfortable with them there and clearly
regretted having opened the door. She noticed that Paulo was staring fixedly at the dog and hence she called him to her. The animal obeyed, but when he reached her side, he turned to look again at Paulo. He realized that he was not just looking at the dog. As soon as they had come in, the animal had hypnotized him and had kept his eyes fastened on him. The dog was staring at him and making Paulo do as he wanted. Suddenly he realized that something inside him had been aroused, something that Petrus had not taught him but that nevertheless began to manifest itself. He felt an uncontrollable desire to say strange words, the meaning of which he didn’t even know. He thought that Petrus had put something in the tea. Everything began to blur, and he heard only very faintly the woman repeat to Petrus that they had to leave. Paulo was in a state of euphoria, and decided to speak the strange words that were coming to his mind.

All I could see in the room was the dog. When I began to say those strange words, the dog started to growl. He understood what I was saying. I became more excited and continued to speak, louder and louder. The dog rose and bared his teeth. He was no longer the docile animal I had seen on arrival but something awful and threatening that could attack me at any moment. I knew that the words were protecting me, and I began to speak even louder, focusing all of my energies on the dog. I felt that I had a different power within me and that it could keep the animal from attacking me. (TP 78)

Suddenly, the dog howled and leapt on Paulo. He raised his arm to protect his face, shouted something, and waited to see what the impact would be. The dog had thrown himself upon Paulo with all his strength and he fell onto the couch. For a few moments, their eyes were locked on each other’s; in the next second, the dog ran from the house. The
incident made Paulo cry hysterically. He thought of his family, his wife, and his friends. At the same time the incident aroused an enormous feeling of love and an absurd happiness. All of a sudden he understood everything about the dog. Living along with the cursed woman for a long time, the dog had also incorporated the Devil. And it was Paulo’s second encounter with it, as the first being in the form of gypsy at the outset of the journey.

Petrus attempts to explain the whole incident to Paulo. According to him,

‘Yesterday, when I sensed the urgency in your messenger, I knew that a battle along the Road to Santiago was about to begin. You are here to find your sword and learn the RAM practices. But every time a guide leads a pilgrim, there is at least one situation that goes beyond the control of both of them. It represents a kind of practical test of what is being taught. In your case, this was the encounter with the dog. (TP 81)

Paulo mainly wanted to understand the two things: the feelings of love and happiness after having evicted the dog and the strange language he had spoken. To the first of his query Petrus answered that the sensation of happiness occurred because of Paulo’s action was suffused with agape, a higher form of love. It is a love that consumes the one who loves. Paulo remarked that he had had that type of sensation even before, but it was brief. It happened after a professional triumph or a win. But he resisted those feelings because he was frightened it’s intensity.

In regard with the strange language Paulo had spoken, even Petrus was surprised, because, according to it was a divine grace, but not a practice of the road to Santiago. In fact it was one of the RAM practices for the road to Rome. It was called the gift of tongues, and is related to direct
communication with the Holy Ghost. But, any way, Petrus regarded it as a good omen for their journey. At the end of their conversation that day, Petrus warned Paulo about meeting the dog once again.

In many religions and folklore, dogs are often seen as messengers of the Devil or sometimes even the Devil himself, particularly if they are dark in colour. Some folk believe that black dogs are witches in temporary disguise while others consider them as ghosts of the departed. There is another theory that black dogs are souls of the condemned, forced to take that form as punishment for their crimes. The Black Dog performs an important role in *The Pilgrimage*. He is an incarnation of devil, whose appearance on the scene brings to surface the fear of death in Paulo. As a requisite of his journey he has to get rid of this fear.

Before they sleep he taught Paulo the Water Exercise which, according to him, would enhance his intuitions. The exercise would teach Paulo to combine the RAM practices with his own intuitions and which in turn would help him to understand the better idea of what he was going to do with his sword. Furthermore that RAM practice would teach him the secret language of his own mind, which would be very useful to him for the rest of life.

When Paulo performed Water Exercise, he felt that his mind had stopped working almost completely. At the same time, he also felt that down deep within him a force was being born and becoming ready to manifest itself.

Most of the pilgrimage was through the country side and Paulo was used to the silence and freedom of the area. The journey was revealing Paulo his own self.
I was feeling very calm, and I was more and more aware of the importance of the Road to Santiago in my life and of the question of what I was going to do after the pilgrimage had ended. The area we walked through was like a desert, the meals were seldom very good, and the long days on the Road were exhausting, but I was living my dream. (TP 89)

As Paulo proceeds in the journey his progress as a quester is slow but sure. At the outset of the novel, he was shown almost near his objective, his sword and his eventual Ordination. But his master had realized his incapability to deal with the power to be bestowed ultimately on him. At the same time he had realized the necessity on the part of Paulo to learn and master various skills and practices of the Order.

Now the pilgrimage has, so far, taught Paulo some of the essential lessons but he had not yet learned or understood what he was going to do with his sword. He was still with the view that the sword will bring him the power and the wisdom of the tradition. But Petrus had, more than once, asked him to realize the real purpose of the sword.

You need to have a better idea of what it is that you are going to do with your sword; this has to be clearer to you before we can find it. (TP 82)

At the same time Petrus observed that Paulo was attempting to apply whatever he had taught him during the pilgrimage.

As a guide Petrus was performing very important role in developing the overall personality of Paulo. The latter himself acknowledged the change that occurred in him during the pilgrimage so far.

I had changed a great deal since I had met Petrus for the first time near Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Brazil and the business deals that I had been
worried about had practically vanished from my mind. The only important thing for me now was my objective.

A few weeks earlier – during the first days of the pilgrimage – I had been afraid that I would never complete it. When we had passed through Roncesvalles, I had been very disillusioned about everything to do with the journey. I had wanted to get to Santiago immediately, recover my sword, and get back to fighting what Petrus called the good fight. (TP 102-03)

One day Paulo had a chance to speculate about Petrus’s role as a guide. In a marriage ceremony when the latter was so drunk that Paulo had to help him back to the hotel.

On the way, I took stock of my situation. Here I was, guiding my guide. I realized that at no time during the entire journey had Petrus made any effort to appear wiser, holier, or in any way better than I. All he had done was to transmit to me his experience with the RAM practices. Beyond that, he had made a point of showing that he was just like anyone else – that he experienced eros, philos, and agape.

This realization made me feel stronger. Petrus was just another pilgrim on the Road to Santiago. (TP 99)

During the pilgrimage they came in a city Logrono, where they participated in a marriage ceremony the ceremony gave rise to the discussion on kinds of love. According to Petrus there are three types of love: eros, philos, and agape. A feeling of love that exists between two people is called eros and most particularly it refers to conjugal relations. On the other hand philos is love in the form of friendship. He further remarked that “When the flame of eros stops burning, it is philos that
keeps a couple together.” (TP 98) Even though Paulo requested him to explain agape, he declined to talk about it at present.

One afternoon, they were fishing after having walked for the whole morning though, no fish had yet perished on the hook, Petrus didn’t care about that at all. He explained to Paulo that it was a good idea always to do something relaxing prior to making an important decision in life. Here Paulo brings the discussion on agape where this was discontinued in the marriage ceremony. Petrus was of view that when eros turns itself into philos, people think love as worthless. He remarked that it is philos that leads people to the highest form of love, agape.

That evening Petrus and Paulo reached a hermitage, where, according to the former, was present one of the two manifestations of agape. This form of agape means total love and whoever knows and experiences it, learns that nothing else in the world is important but only love. The individual, who had been seized by the love that consumes, went out into deserts or to isolated places, because the love they felt was so great that it transformed them. Even Paulo and his whole world, according to Petrus, would change once he learned agape.

‘You have learned how to be reborn, how to stop being cruel to yourself, and how to communicate with your messenger. But everything you do from now on and every good result that you take with you from the Road to Santiago will make sense only when you have also experienced the love that consumes.’ (TP 106)

Enthusiasm is the other form of agape, a form which could be experienced by any common human being. For the ancient people, enthusiasm meant trance or ecstasy – a connection with God. It normally manifests itself with all of its force during first years of our
As we grow up, we lose our enthusiasm because of the small and unavoidable defeats we suffer during our involvement in mundane things. We blame the world for our boredom and for our losses, and we forget that it were we ourselves who allowed this enchanting power to diminish – the manifestation of agape in the form of enthusiasm.

The Road to Santiago was set with many adventures, and the pilgrims had to face these in order to experience life in all aspects. Each experience gave rise to speculations which in turn enhanced their endurance, the depth of knowledge, patience and sagacity. So far Paulo had practiced more than half of the RAM practices and had experienced rebirth, cruelty, significance of love, and many more things. Still he had to perform many important RAM practices.

After the dog expulsion episode at the woman’s house, Petrus had warned Paulo of the dog’s revisiting. But the latter had nearly forgotten that. Unexpectedly the devil reappeared to face him. As they were in hurry one day to reach Santo Domingo, Petrus sensed the presence of the same black dog. He asked Paulo to stop and deal with it. When Paulo turned around, he saw the dog which was looking fixedly at him. Something inside him told him that if he averted his eyes from the dog, it would surely attack him.

I wondered why the animal had followed me for such a great distance and what it was that he wanted; after all, I was just a pilgrim in quest of my sword, and I had neither the desire nor the patience for problems with people or animals. I tried to say this to him with my eyes – remembering the monks at the convent who communicated through their eyes – but the dog did not move. He continued to stare at me, without emotion, but he appeared ready to attack should I become
distracted or show fear. Fear! I could sense that my fear had vanished. I thought the situation too stupid for fear. (TP 117)

But Paulo, at that time, was saved by a nun. For the time being the dog left the place and disappeared from view. Noticing the condition of Paulo, Petrus remarked that his fear of the dog had hurt him much more than the dog itself. He further remarked that the life on the Road to Santiago was filled with certain things that were beyond control of a pilgrim. Petrus explained the dog’s chasing them so far, as follows.

When you chased away that woman’s dog, you did not place him anywhere. You didn’t hurl the spirits into a drove of pigs that was thrown over a precipice, as Jesus did. You simply chased the dog away. Now his force wanders along behind you, without a destination. Before finding your sword, you are going to have to decide whether you want to be enslaved by that force or whether you will dominate it. (TP 119)

He further remarked that had Paulo been afraid of, the dog would have certainly attacked him and have won the fight. According to him that duel with the dog would end only with the victory for either of them. Petrus was sure that the dog would reappear and the next time Paulo must try to take the fight through to the end. And if he didn’t, the presence of the dog would worry him for the rest of his life.

At the backdrop of the dog episode, Petrus, in the evening of that day, taught Paulo one of the significant exercises, ‘The Burial Alive Exercise’. He regarded this exercise as confront to an unreal enemy i.e. death. In his considerations human beings, though they are well aware that they would die one day or the other, they always try to hide this certainty from themselves. They neglect the fact that death itself motivates them to do the best things in their lives, giving true meaning
to the life itself. As death is inevitable it should be considered our constant companion.

After assuring Paulo that the spot where he was going to do that exercise was absolutely safe, Petrus gave him the instructions for the exercise and moved ahead to a hotel. Paulo decided to do away with the exercise as darkness had fallen. He laid himself down on the ground. He heard the strange sounds from the surrounding, sounds of all kinds. In the beginning he was scared but at last he decided not to get up unless he completed the exercise.

He imagined himself dead, being coffined and buried deep down into the earth. He thought of his family members and imagined them weeping.

There I was, powerless to move a muscle, screaming for help, while the others were involved in their lives, worrying about what they were going to do that night, admiring statues and buildings that I would never see again. I began to feel how unfair it was to have to be buried while others continued to live. I would have felt better if there had been a catastrophe and all of us had been in the same boat, heading for the same abyss toward which they were carrying me now. Help! I tried to cry out. I’m still alive. I haven’t died. My mind is still functioning! (TP 129)

He experienced what could happen to a person after death.

The footsteps fade, nobody hears my screams, and I am alone in the darkness; the air is heavy, and the smell of the flowers is driving me crazy. Suddenly, I hear a sound. It’s the worms, coming to eat me alive. I try with all my strength to move the parts of my body, but I am inert. The worms begin to climb over my body. They are sticky and cold.
They creep over my face and crawl into my shorts. One of them enters through my anus, and another begins to sneak into a nostril. Help! I’m being eaten alive, and nobody can hear me; nobody says a word to me. The worm that entered my nostril has reached my throat. (TP 130)

During this exercise he remembered his failed attempts to do what he desired to do in life, and how he postponed those things to do at a later time. At last when he ended the exercise by imagining himself to be out of the coffin, his body was trembling from head to foot and he was bathed in perspiration. After a while a great sense of calm came over him. The experience made him consider death as his friend and counselor.

Starting then, he was going to be of more help to me than Petrus’s guiding hand and advice. He was not going to allow me to put off until tomorrow what I should be enjoying today. He was not going to let me flee from life’s battles, and he was going to help me fight the good fight. Never again, ever, was I going to feel ridiculous about doing anything. Because he was there, saying that when he took me in hand to travel with me to other worlds, I should leave behind the greatest sin of all: regret. With the certainty of his presence and the gentleness of his face, I was sure that I was going to be able to drink from the fountain of life.

I decided to sleep right there. The darkness had never been so reassuring. (TP 131)

One day they reached an immense waterfall; it was nearly fifty feet high. Petrus decided to climb the falls, through the water. Paulo thought it as an absolutely impossible task and hence was unwilling to do it. But Petrus left no alternative for him. As a guide he nullified his freedom to make decision. He decided to climb the waterfall before him and Paulo had to follow him. Petrus told him that whatever he had learned up to
then would make sense only if it was applied to real life. He reminded him that on the Road to Santiago and in life itself, wisdom has value only if it helps us to overcome some obstacle. In that regard Petrus made an important remark. ‘A hammer would make no sense in the world if there were not nails to be driven. And even given the existence of nails, the hammer would be useless if it only thought, “I can drive those nails with two blows.” The hammer has to act, to put itself into the hands of the carpenter and to be used in its proper function.’ (TP 143) According to him the waterfall was the place where Paulo would put into practice everything he had learned so far. He further said that the waterfall would teach Paulo how to be a Master because, due to veil of the cascade he would not be able to see Petrus, and hence he had to decide his own way of climbing it.

Saying so, he disappeared behind the waterfall and was visible to Paulo only when he reached the top. Now it was Paulo’s turn. Though he was hesitant, he had no alternative. Slowly but surely he accomplished the task. On reaching the top he was completely exhausted. Petrus was waiting for him there. He asked Paulo to breathe slowly. When he did so, he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep. On waking up, Petrus taught him the RAM Breathing Exercise, with the help of which he could draw energy from everything around. On repeating the exercise he felt better.

At one place, Petrus made Paulo aware of the significance of all RAM exercises that he had taught the latter so far. According to him all the Exercises he had taught make sense only if the latter was satisfied with himself. He further asserted that one must nourish a concrete desire to do battle against everything that is unsatisfying in one’s everyday life. On the road of life people always run into problems that are hard to
solve. In these problems one requires to choose between one way and another. ‘The only way to make the right decision is to know what the wrong decision is. You have to examine the other path, without fear and without being morbid, and then decide.’ (TP 158) It was then that Petrus taught him the Shadows Exercise. With the help of the exercise, one may realize what the correct solution to a problem would be. Presently the problem Paulo was facing was that of the sword and with the Shadows Exercise he attempted to reach a probable solution to it. As per his guess he would find his sword most probably in a church.

A little later, Paulo observed that Petrus was in much hurry. He was not even speaking to him. He was very tense and preoccupied. Paulo had seen Petrus in a bad mood many times, but he could not remember having seen him so tense, except once; when they had met the dog for the first time. Then Paulo looked to his left and there he was: the ferocious dog that had thrown him to the ground. Petrus had promised to help him if they ran into him again so he turned to his guide, but he had disappeared. It meant Paulo had to deal with the dog on his own.

Before I could find my sword, I had to meet with the Enemy and either vanquish him or be defeated by him. I had no choice but to go up against him. If I fled now, I would be falling into a trap. It might be that the dog would not appear again, but I would travel the Road to Santiago de Compostela gripped by fear and apprehension. Ever afterward, I would dream about the dog, fearing his reappearance at any minute and living with dread for the rest of my life. (TP 163)

Then there was a fight between him and the dog. It was the dog who dominated the fight first. He made Paulo fell to the ground, had bitten off some flesh from his leg and had assaulted on his face. Paulo
attempted to save himself with the help of a stone but he could not. The Dog had also bitten his hand and with his sharp claws he began to tear his clothing and his arm. A little later Paulo realized that he could not win the fight with the dog unless he transformed himself into a dog itself. Even his messenger told him to confront the world with the same weapons that were used to challenge one. Hence he began to feel himself to be a dog: he bared his teeth and sounded a low growl which made the dog afraid of him. He grabbed one of the dog’s legs. He attached the dog with his teeth and nail, trying to bite the dog in the throat.

I threw myself on top of the animal and pressed him to the ground. He fought to free himself from the weight of my body, and he clawed at my skin, but I too was biting and scratching. I could sense that if he got out from under me, he would run away, and I did not want that to happen ever again. Today I was going to beat him. The animal began to show fear in his eyes. Now I was the dog, and he seemed to have been transformed into a man. My old fear was operating in him now. It was so strong that he was able to work his way out from under me, but I corralled him in the basement of one of the abandoned houses. (TP 166)

Ultimately Paulo won the fight against the devil. The fight with dog, according to Petrus, was of much significance to him. It was an edifying milestone in his journey in search of the sword. But, according to Petrus, Paulo had failed in the most critical sense; he was not able to know the right moment for the encounter. Though Petrus had to hurry along to meet the dog at the right place, Paulo was only concerned with his sword. ‘What good is a sword if you don’t know where you are going to run into your enemy?’ (TP 172) Petrus reminded him that he
had defeated Legion without his sword. What Petrus wanted to make him aware was a secret which was a part of his search and which he had not yet learned. Unless Paulo found that secret, his search would be unrewarding. Once again Paulo realized that Petrus insisted on reminding him that he was just a simple pilgrim and that there was something else he needed in order to find what he was looking for.

The incident shows that Petrus as a guide never forget his own role. Every time Paulo began to feel that he was getting close to his objective, Petrus insisted on reminding him that he was just a simple pilgrim and that there was always something else he needed in order to find what he was looking for. He made Paulo aware that much before actual fight with Legion, Petrus had already come to know that Legion was about to arrive. That was possible for him by listening. The sound began many days before, but according to Petrus, Paulo was not listening.

‘Everything is contained in sounds – the past, the present, and the future. The person who does not know how to listen will never hear the advice that life offers us all the time. And only the person who listens to the sounds of the moment is able to make the right decisions.’ (TP 176)

And then Petrus explained him the Listening Exercise.

Petrus and Paulo resumed their journey. At every thirty meters on the road were placed many crosses. They stopped in front of one that was toppled over. Looking at the cross Petrus ordered Paulo to raise it with his thoughts. Paulo sat down on the ground in a yoga position. He was certain that after everything he had accomplished with the dog and with the waterfall, he was going to be able to do this, too. He fixated on the cross. He imagined himself leaving his body, grasping the cross, and raising it using his astral body. On the road of the Tradition, he had
already performed some of these small ‘miracles.’ He had been able to shatter glasses and porcelain statues and to move objects along the surface of a table. It was an easy magic trick, and even though it did not signify any great power, it was useful in winning over nonbelievers. He had never tried it, though, with an object the size and weight of the cross.

For half an hour he tried everything he could. He used astral displacement and suggestion. He remembered the power his Master had over the force of gravity, and he tried to repeat the words that his Master always used on such occasions. Nothing happened. He was concentrating completely, but the cross did not budge. Petrus finally shook him to bring him out of trance and ordered to put the cross upright with his hands. Paulo was startled because his arms and hands were still wrapped in bandages as a result of the dog’s attack. Without saying anything, he showed Petrus his bandages. But Petrus continued to look coldly at him, not changing his expression in the least. He expected Paulo to obey him. At last when Paulo was still hesitant, Petrus said, ‘Do it, or the Road to Santiago ends right here!’ (TP 180) He left no alternative for Paulo.

Paulo went to the cross and tried to judge the feasibility of the task. He realized that even if his hands had been in good shape, he would have had a very difficult time trying to lift it, and knew that with his hands bound as they were, the task would be almost impossible. But he was going to comply. He was going to die in the attempt, if that was necessary; he was going to sweat blood, as Jesus had when he had had to carry the same kind of burden. After lot of efforts he could dislodge the cross from its place so that he could dig the earth under it in order to
restore it upright. But he could not dig a lot of earth. He described his condition thus.

I stood up, wiping the sweat from my face, and began to think. I didn’t have enough strength to move the cross to another place. I couldn’t start again from the beginning because my left hand, now that I had stopped, felt dead. This was worse than pain, and it really scared me. I looked at my fingers, and I was able to move them, but instinct told me that I shouldn’t punish the hand anymore. (TP 183)

He took help of the Shadows Exercise to find out the right answer to the problem. At last he found a solution to it; he decided to raise the earth surrounding the cross.

He collected the stones nearby and placed them around the hole; this made the ground higher and the hole deeper. Now he just had to get the cross into the hole. He realized that one of his hands was numb, and the other was giving him a great deal of pain. His arms were wrapped in bandages. But his back was all right. He decided to lift the cross with help of his back. With the hand that was numb, he raised the cross a fraction and slid underneath it. A profoundly religious feeling took possession of him.

I remembered that another person had carried the cross on his shoulders and that his damaged hands had not been able to free themselves from the wood or the pain as mine could. (TP 184)

At last the cross was upright. This fulfilled the implicit purpose of Petrus. The incident of keeping the cross upright made Paulo experience what Jesus had experienced at the time of crucifixion. That cross on his back made him think that his search for wisdom was going to be the death of him.
On the following day they went to a railway station and sat there to have a discussion. His guide informed him that the Road to Santiago was about to end. Petrus seemed to be more serious than usual and his tone of voice surprised him. Instead of commenting anything else on the meaning of the previous day’s experience of the cross, he just tells only one thing in regard with his order to Paulo to keep the cross upright.

People who consider themselves to be wise are often indecisive when command is called for and rebellious when they are called upon to obey. They are ashamed to give orders and consider it dishonorable to receive them. Don’t ever be that way. (TP 188)

He further commented that Paulo’s learning period did not end yesterday. He still has to find his sword and learn its secret. Petrus really sounded saddened. Paulo realized that throughout all the time they had spent together, he had always expressed doubt regarding what Petrus was teaching him. He was not a strong, humble Castaneda receiving his teachings from Don Juan; he was an arrogant and fractious man in his approach to the simple RAM practices. He wanted to say this to Petrus, but knew that it was too late.

Then Petrus asked Paulo to close his eyes and told him that he was working on a project when he received a message from his Master that someone had gone all the way to the end of the road of the Tradition and had not received his sword. Petrus was supposed to guide that fellow along the Road to Santiago. The task was like paying the dues for himself being guided once. This information really surprised Paulo because he had thought that Petrus had been a guide dozens of times. Petrus further remarked that once Paulo discovers the secret and find his sword, he would also discover the face of RAM and he would have power. According to him if Paulo desires to achieve total wisdom, he
will have to walk the other three roads, including the secret one. He was
telling all this to him because they were going to see each other only
one more time. When Paulo heard these words he was very upset. Petrus
was about to leave and he would meet him only for the last time on the
following day at a ritual of honor in the Tradition. He told Paulo

If you succeed in finding your sword, you will have to teach the Road to
someone else. And only when that happens – when you accept your role
as a Master – will you learn all the answers you have in your heart. Each
of us knows the answers, even before someone tells us what they are.
Life teaches us lessons every minute, and the secret is to accept that
only in our daily lives can we show ourselves to be as wise as Solomon
and as powerful as Alexander the Great. But we become aware of this
only when we are forced to teach others and to participate in adventures
as extravagant as this one has been. (TP 192)

Then Petrus taught him the last RAM exercise, the Dance exercise
which Paulo was supposed to perform at the ritual on the following day.
He also suggested Paulo to write something or creating a ballet based in
his experience of the journey on the Road. At last Petrus, the guide left
him alone on his onward journey. Paulo was supposed to find his sword
on his own.

Next day, there was just a note left in Paulo’s room: 7:00 p.m. –
CASTLE OF THE TEMPLARS. When he reached the mentioned place
at the appointed time, he met seven other people with almost same
purpose. The waiting went on, and they fell to talking about the reasons
they were there. It was then that Paulo learned that the Road to Santiago
was used by a number of different orders; most of them part of the
Tradition. The people who were there had already been through many
tests and initiations of the kind that he had gone through long ago in
Brazil. Only the other one who was an Australian and Paulo were expecting to be conferred the highest degree of the first Road. Even without knowing the details, he could see that the process the Australian had gone through was completely different from the RAM practices.

At about 8:45 a gong rang. They followed the sound to the ancient chapel of the castle. The chapel was illuminated only by torches. Where there had once been an altar could be seen seven figures garbed in the secular costumes of the Templars: a hood and steel helmet, a coat of mail, a sword, and a shield. Even with the faint illumination provided by the torches, Paulo could see that one of the Knights was Petrus. The Knight who appeared to be the oldest ordered them to approach their Master and look into the eyes of him. He also ordered to take off their clothes and receive new vestments. Paulo went to Petrus and looked deeply into his eyes. He was in a kind of trance and seemed not to recognize him. But Paulo could see in his eyes certain sadness, the same sadness that his voice had conveyed on the previous night. Then the ritual in the Tradition started there. All of them – pilgrims and Masters- began to recite the sacred names. After a while they participated in the Dance Exercise. They were dancing on an internal tune which made them enter into a trance. In the trance Paulo saw the face of RAM.

When that ritual was over, the Australian was called forward for the ritual of the initiation of a Templar. His Master came to him and he gave him his sword. The Australian became a Master now. All the remaining pilgrims, including Paulo, left the place there after. The ritual took place near about the whole of the night. An immense loneliness invaded Paulo’s soul.

I was envious of the Australian, who had recovered his sword and had reached the end of his quest. Now I was alone, with no one to guide me;
the Tradition – in a distant country in South America – had expelled me without showing me the road back. And I had to continue to walk the Strange Road to Santiago, which was now coming to an end, without knowing the secret of my sword or how to find it. (TP 203)

All alone after the ritual at the Palace, Paulo was upset on his not being called to the altar and not getting his sword. The sole purpose of the journey, finding the sword, seemed to him still in distance. Now he was concerned only with going to Santiago de Compestela as quickly as possible and putting an end to that crazy adventure. He had almost lost the hope to get his sword. The sadness that he saw in the eyes of his guide, was still torturing him and a sense of guilt had overpowered him. He felt that Petrus might have felt humiliated in the presence of others because, as a guide he had not been capable of leading Paulo to his goal.

He meditated on everything that had happened to him since his meeting with Mme Lourdes. His speculations on his journey undertaken so far, made him realize the changes that occurred in him. There was no doubt that he had changed a lot since he had begun to walk the Strange Road to Santiago. With all the experiences and learning he was ready to fight the good fight and turn his life into a series of triumphs.

I thought about the relentless effort Petrus had made to help me understand that contrary to what we had always been taught, results were what counted. One’s efforts are salutary and indispensable, but without results, they amount to nothing. And now the only result that I demanded of myself, the only reward for everything I had been through, was to find my sword. That had not happened yet, and Santiago was only a few days away. (TP 207)
He remembered what Petrus had taught him and this aroused in him a hope of finding his sword. He realized that he had to persevere for a little longer, to continue searching until the end, without being fearful of defeat, to keep alive the hope of finding his sword and understanding its secret. With the hope to get his sword he accepted the offer of a little girl and then of a man to visit two churches a distance away from the Road. But the visitation was of no use; instead it was mere waste of his precious time. He invoked his messenger; that too did not help him.

At one point, he was once again speculating about what he had achieved in his pilgrimage so far. He questioned himself what if he did not find the sword. But he realized that the Pilgrimage and the company of Petrus had taught him many important things, which he would not have learnt by staying back in Brazil.

I had learned the RAM practices, I had gotten to know my messenger, fought with the dog, and seen my death, I told myself, trying to convince myself that the Road to Santiago was what was important to me. The sword was only an outcome. I would like to find it, but I would like even more to know what to do with it. Because I would have to use it in some practical way, just as I used the exercises Petrus had taught me. (TP 213)

And all of a sudden he stopped speculating because the clarity regarding the secret of his sword had exploded in his mind. Paulo wished that if Petrus were there so that he could tell him what he had been waiting to hear from the former. It was the only thing that he had really wanted Paulo to understand. It was stated thus;

When we want something, we have to have a clear purpose in mind for the thing that we want. The only reason for seeking a reward is to know
what to do with that reward. And this was the secret of my sword. (TP 213)

As Paulo was sure that he would never meet Petrus again, hence he wrote a note on a paper and placed it under a stone; symbolically he was delivering to Petrus his knowledge of the secret of his sword. His mission with Petrus had been accomplished.

Now, as was alone, he was his own master. His journey was now in the stage of climax. In order to make the journey more bearable, he began to talk to everything along the road: tree trunks, puddles, fallen leaves, and beautiful vines. Then he began to climb the only remaining mountain: El Cebrero. As he began to ascend, the clouds began to lower and he entered into a fog, wherein he had to struggle to see the yellow markers made purposely on the stones and trees along the Road. He continued walking in the fog for a long time. There was an internal voice that was telling him that he should keep on walking. After a while the fog grew less and less dense.

Suddenly, as if by magic, the fog lifted completely and there before him at the top of El Cebrero, was across. He felt a strong desire to pray there. Though he knew that it would divert him from the Road and consume his time, he decided to climb to the peak and pray at the foot of the cross. When he reached the peak and was standing in front of the cross, a lamb, climbing the mountain, stopped between him and the cross. All at once he felt exhausted by all that time spent on tests, battles, lessons and the whole pilgrimage. He began to sob there. At last he started to pray in front of the cross, and the lamb was still there. And the words that came from his mouth were the expression of his gratitude to the God for bringing him on the Road to Santiago.
Because of my pride in wisdom, you made me walk the Road that every person can walk, and discover what everyone else already knows if they have paid the slightest attention to life. You made me see that the search for happiness is a personal search and not a model we can pass on to others. Before finding my sword, I had to discover its secret – and the secret was so simple; it was to know what to do with it. With it and with the happiness that it would represent to me. I have walked so many miles to discover things I already knew, things that all of us know but that are so hard to accept. (TP 220)

He wept with the sense of gratitude for his Master and even for Petrus who taught him to realize his dream and its secret.

As he ended his prayer, the lamb began to walk away. Paulo followed him because he knew that the lamb would lead him to a nearby hamlet, wherein he thought he could get shelter for that night. The lamb led him to a chapel of that hamlet. On reaching the chapel, he was surprised to see his Master standing before him: with the sword in his hands. The Master came forward, unsheathed the sword and told Paulo to grasp its hilt with him. He pointed the blade upward and said the sacred Psalm of those who travel far to achieve victory.

\[
\text{A thousand fall at your side, and ten thousand to your right,}
\]

\[
\text{but you will not be touched.}
\]

\[
\text{No evil will befall you, no curse will fall upon your tent;}
\]

\[
\text{your angels will be given orders regarding you,}
\]

\[
\text{to protect you along your every way. (TP 223)}
\]

By touching the blade of the sword to Paulo’s shoulders, he said

\[
\text{Trample the lion and the serpent,}
\]
The lion cub and the dragon will make shoes for your feet. (TP 223)

As he finished saying this, it began to rain. Paulo remembered the dry fields, and was joyful that they were being showered upon that night. He thought of almost everything he had passed by on the Road. He considered himself worthy of his sword because he knew what to do with it. The Water of Life fell from the sky and caused the blade of the sword to glisten.

The novel ends on the note of success and rebirth that apart from Coelho’s success indicates his rebirth after successful accomplishment of his goal. It was a rebirth in the real sense for him as it changed his whole life thereafter. Apart from realizing the dream of his Sword, it’s secrete and Power, Coelho also gained mastery on essentials of Ancient wisdom, thus accomplishing his spiritual odyssey of quest.

The analysis of *The Alchemist* and *The Pilgrimage* demonstrates the significance of dreams in everyone’s life. Life which is a flow of uncertainties may be lived with utmost possibilities of certainties only with the help of pursuance of a specific dream. Dreams are important because they help us to accept and make sense out of a universe that itself is ultimately unexplainable. But quest for a dream leads us to certainty. Dreams, which are full of hope and excitement, are the signs of life. They are motivating and inspiring. Without a dream one becomes complacent and lazy. They give us the ability to go beyond everyday things and move towards something meaningful and special. Without dreams life is empty and boring.
Some dreams are unrealistic, some dreams are obtainable, and some can just get us through a mundane existence. They are responsible for all creative outlets in our life.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

If great people of history had ignored their dreams and simply lived their life, the world would have been devoid of present progress, enlightenment and technology. Similarly, if we ignore our dreams, then we will live a less enlightened and unhappy life. If Santiago had been complacent, had neglected the signs of his dream and did not heed to the advice of King of Salem and the Alchemist, he would not have learnt the Language of World, could not get connected with the Soul of the World and see the wonders of the world apart from getting his treasure. The same might have happened with Coelho. His dream of becoming a Magus would have remained remote to him, had he remained involved in the practicalities of his daily life and did not pay attention to his wife’s appeal to undertake nearly 750 KM pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The pursuance of dream in context of both the protagonists leaves them with enriching and everlasting experiences that life offers to them. Their successful quests for dreams leave the dimensions of their life changed thereafter, of course, positively.
Chapter II

References:


16. *ibid.* p. 17


