

# LIVE YOUR LIFE TO THE FULLEST SAY'S PAULO COELHO

Mrs. Anita S. Arakal (Asst. Teacher)  
Lokmanya Tilak High School

## ABSTRACT

In today's fast moving world, where everyone is busy pursuing materialistic pleasures and gains, man has little time for spiritual pursuits. While man would do every possible thing to rise up on the material ladder, as he is deeply affected by the ways of the world, he fails to realize the importance of developing his spiritual side. The qualities of faith and calmness, inner beauty is sadly lacking in most of us.

It has become very difficult to cope up with the developed world where everyone thinks that Faith is a myth. And man of the world considers a spiritual person as a fool, as someone who does not know the joys of life. The material man thinks that a person who is spiritually inclined cannot lead a normal life.

Each one of us sometime or the other must have fallen in love. And not necessarily obtained the love for the sake of some or the other sacrifice. Sometimes in the name of emotional blackmail or religious sentiments or for the sake of the world. We all have become used to the sacrifice tradition. We do it to attain peace of mind. All of us bury our desires in our hearts deep within and get busy with our life.

Each one of us has full authority to live life to the fullest whether we are spiritual or not. We can overcome whatever conflicts we come across in life, if we make up our mind and have the courage to fight against all odds.

Today as I talk about yet another masterpiece by the Brazilian author Paulo Coelho, I am going to keep love along with material and spiritual life as the central theme in my paper. Being spiritual does not necessarily mean that we cannot enjoy material life. Following and using all the modern trends and technologies also does not mean that we cannot be spiritual. Following spirituality without depriving our desires for material life is one way to follow what our divine wants us to do. To analyze my study I'm using Paulo Coelho's novel "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept."

## INTRODUCTION

By the River Piedra I sat down and Wept is a novel written by the famous author Paulo Coelho, a poignant poetic story reflecting the profundity of life and love. It is a novel which will definitely stir your spirit and emotions, one which will awaken the wonders of your heart and soul, leading you to unbound conclusions and realizations within, one that will let you see in-depth sense of life, and of love; guiding you to the basics of life which are unnoticeably left aside. It is a heartwarming tale rousing your main purpose in life.

As we all know that there lies difference between fiction and reality – the former has to make sense. Dwelling into the cryptic reality, which itself is a vague concept, fiction has to choose precious gems

to stand and guard of its very own purpose. Given the boundaries and possible temptations, fictional sayings often tend to digress and hence go redundant into the literary paraphernalia. The mid way between extremes is the only path to salvation. And the one who knows the limits writes great fiction. One person of such a kind is Paulo Coelho. Touting the need to stand by one's dreams and the true path of one's heart he sounds, sometimes didactic but his writings, always, go beyond inscribing trivial thoughts. His writings have the power to inspire nations as the generation garnishes.

The novel is based on main characters Pilar and her childhood friend whose name has not been mentioned till the end. Pilar is a girl who is around 29 years old and is busy with her normal life, study and job. Like all young girls she dreams of marrying her prince charming. Paulo Coelho helps to evaluate a few things in life through this book. The eternal optimist Paulo Coelho shows us once again the power of love and of God's love in our lives.

The first impression after leafing through few pages of this book I felt the book is the story of an unsuccessful lover who has lost true meaning of life and love. To my surprise the book not only shows us and teaches the true meaning of love and spiritual love. It also shows us the feminine side of God.

The book is a flash back story of Pilar who is doing what the title has stated, weeping by the river Piedra for her lost love. She starts remembering her childhood and how she used to pass her time playing and enjoying life with her best friend by her side always. Suddenly during their teenage years, they both get separated from each other for years. And one fine day Pilar receives a letter from her childhood friend. She starts receiving the letters more frequently sometimes from the same place, sometimes from different places. In one of his letter he even had shown his interest to join the seminary. Pilar at first did not like the idea of his and wrote back to asking him to enjoy his freedom before committing himself to something serious. . One day, she received a letter in which her childhood sweetheart invited her to attend his evangelization assembly in Madrid. Out of curiosity and a burgeoning desire to see him again, Pilar accepts the offer.

The story moves on when Pilar joins her friend in Madrid where he is going to give a lecture to a small group of people She is surprised to know her childhood playmate is a charismatic spiritual leader. Pilar is now very much influenced by her friend's letter and wants to meet him, see him and listen to his voice. She would be meeting him after 12 long years of separation.

Pilar travels for four hours and reaches Madrid to listen to her friends' voice. She anxiously waits for the conference to begin and the time ultimately arrives where he speaks .The voice she remembers is the same but the words and thoughts have changed. Pilar realizes that her adolescent lost love is now a handsome youth who has not only acquired magical powers to heal but also preaches to mend the ways of people and serve God.

Her original itinerary had planned for her to meet him briefly and then return to her life back in Zaragoza but her best friend had other plans and Pilar finds herself spending the next few days rediscovering herself, on a vacation to Saint Savin. While staying in Saint Savin Pilar comes to know that her best friend also loves her. She spends next few days in rediscovering herself, the meaning of life and doing some serious introspection. She also learns of her friend's unwavering faith in "The Virgin", his gift of curing sick people. Pilar also learns that her friend had in fact joined the seminary but had not become a priest because of his undying love for her.

Confused by this sudden opportunity for a new life, she comes to realize that the man she loves is being called upon to choose between her and his spiritual calling. A wonderful travail can be seen between love and a couple's quest for their motives and meaning of life.

Throughout this novel, Pilar actually seems to be in some sort of dream in which she willingly floats from one place to the other with her friend as she searches her own true self. At the same time Pilar comes to know about the other who lives in her for years. She often wonders and worries as a result of the existence of the other that lives inside her. Fighting with her own self and coming out of her own self is the main gist of the book.

Pilar describes all the pain she had been through with lines. Waiting is painful. Forgetting is painful. But not knowing which to do is the worst kind of the suffering. [pg. 108]

How true these lines are. When she was fighting with herself after he proposed, he told her, "I admire you. I admire the battle you are waging with your heart"[pg. 51] and thought her the exercise of the other. When she had done the exercise of the other. She threw the other at the corner; she had to wait for her friend to choose between two kinds of love. He helped her regain faith in herself and divinity. He helped her discover that she had been on an exile thus far and only after expelling the other, she had found herself. He helped her find her lost life. As Paulo Coelho says when Pilar had nothing to lose, she was given everything [life, love, faith]. When she ceased to be who she was [the other] she found herself.

The concept of the other where the author describes about the negative self that resides within us and stop us from behaving in the way we want to and make us behave in the way that we should. The day we decide to ignore the other will be the beginning of a new life which will be ours. Just as Pilar found her true self we all should try and find our true self putting ego and fear aside. We truly can discover ourselves by love and following spiritual values.

We all watch many romantic movies, read novels where the hero woes his girl and wins over her heart. This novel has got the same story line, but how the man wins over her heart is really admirable. He takes her to the place where he always wanted to go along with her. He chooses his destiny with her by his side, at the place where he always wanted to choose between the two kinds of love. The man in this book talks about the other kind of love when he expresses his undying love for her. It is so true the two kinds of love one that Virgin Mary had for her son and the other the couple had among themselves which was never been expressed before.

Paulo Coelho also tells that love and material life can never be an obstacle in one's way to follow dream and destiny. To love is to smile through all the struggles and difficulties together hand in hand. Just like how Pilar crosses the dark tunnel with her hand on her man's shoulder, Life is to be lived together no matter how difficult the path is. When her man tells her that he is ready to give up his plans of future life with spiritual concept and is ready to settle in Zaragoza for the sake of Pilar's love. Pilar is not happy, she became disappointed because she had never dreamed of living a life with him at Zaragoza, She had already made up her mind of living her life with him performing miracles, curing the sick, bearing few stones that people would hurl at him wherever he went to spend the feminine face of the God.

"By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept" is another novel by Coelho that proves that love is not an obstacle to materializing one's dreams but a force urging the lovers to conquer their dreams and thus find God. Paulo Coelho has once again used his successful formula when writing this novel, poetic prose, symbolism, an air of mysticism and his usual "follow your dream spiritually" theme.

Paulo Coelho also shows his love for all religions and also clearly states the reason for his love for Christianity [pg. 90] He also says that though we all follow religion, culture and tradition but still we kill our God in various ways. [pg. 138]

In this best-selling novel Paulo Coelho talks about a long- forgotten aspect of God. His feminine side, the so-called “Goddess” The feminine face of Goddess has been, present in every religion on the face of the earth: paganism {Great Mother}, the ancient fertility goddess, the Virgin Mary. This goddess presented as generator of all life, is present in the love of the two main characters. It is as if her presence haunts their relationship. The monk turned Goddess worshipper at first thinks he’s faced with the dilemma of staying with the woman he loves and abandoning the life that fulfills him or venturing on his planned mission to change the world. In the end he discovers that a choice need not be made, to love a woman is to love life itself.

Just like fear of failure prevents some people from achieving their goal, fear of rejection prevented the lovers from expressing their love in “By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept. “The expulsion of this fear is vividly symbolized with the deliberate breaking of a glass at a restaurant. This gesture shows that to surrender to love we must break through our fears and break all the rules.

We all fear the failures that we all face at least once in our life time. Just as our main characters in our novel fought with their own self to remain steady with each other. We all must fight against our odds that come in our way to fulfill our dreams.

The web of words tinged with spirituality and inner conflicts that Paulo Coelho weaved around them is as exciting as the events running parallel to it. More than a love story I feel this book has life and faith. “Our dreams are our own and only we can know the efforts required to keep them alive” seems to be driving fuel of his philosophies. He talks of dreams, love, faith, god, goddess, soul and self and says that everything is connected to the soul of the universe and every act is written by one hand, hence there is nothing called coincidence. Something happens because it was destined to happen in order to fulfill the purpose. He doesn’t discuss love because “love doesn’t need to be discussed. It has its own voice and speaks its own language.” [pg. 77] Rather he intends to unveil the canopy that was erst put on it.

At the end of the novel we come to know that Pilar’s love has succumbed into religion while Pilar has learned how to control and veil her feelings, as she gives way to the former’s passion and self-fulfillment. But as they reached a small village in the French Pyrenees, by the waters of the River Piedra, their relationship will be rechecked and reanalyzed as they will be enlightened with what lies to be some of the biggest questions about life and love. Insights with great importance on life and love are revealed, driving readers to sit back, pause and reflect on reality that’s disclosed by the author. The novel relives the link of humans to their being human, to their quest to self-discovery, to search the real meaning of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I can say that it is only on following the spiritual path that Pilar's friend is able to make the perfect choice since he comes to the realization that spirituality does not mean that one has to give up one's material life. Spirituality teaches us not be affected by trials and tribulations of life when we have anchored ourselves in the supreme LORD. When we have learnt to surrender ourselves to THE ALMIGHTY, we bring into our life wisdom and understanding which is nothing

but the blessings of GOD. It is only when we understand and experience HIM and make Him a part of our life, where we believe that we are one with HIM, that we are made in HIS image, divine abundance flows into our life.

And just when we are ready to give up everything for HIM, HE gives us not only of HIMSELF but all that we have desired and is in need of in our life.

Thus being spiritual does not mean that one has to give up the world and adorn the orange robe, but being spiritual means keeping oneself anchored in GOD even while carrying out all our worldly duties. When we learn to make an offering of each and everything that we do to GOD , when we give HIM of ourselves so that we can serve HIM by serving others , when being in this material world, we can look at all others as our own and work towards alleviating of others sufferings, when we can remain unaffected by the fruits of our actions because we all are doing everything for the LORD and we are doing our best to give our best , then we will have learnt to balance this material life with our spiritual life. And when this happens, we will find there is true inner joy and within us we will find an inner beauty. And so we will see that HEAVEN is within us and GOD RESIDES in us.

## **REFERENCES**

By The River Piedra I Sat Down And Wept by Paulo Coelho.

The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle.

Reviews of readers from the net.