

Do You Believe In Magic?



On a recent trip to speak in St. John's Newfoundland I brought along a copy of Paulo Coelho's book, *The Alchemist*. I pulled out my copy and started to read. The woman beside me smiled, pulled out her copy, and we both thought it was an amusing coincidence. The last woman to board was sitting on the aisle seat of our row. Flustered, but finally settled having followed the endless instructions buckling up, storing

devices in all the right places, shutting off other devices, etc, she pulled out her own copy of, you guessed in, *The Alchemist*. Tic Tac Toe, three in a row. What are the chances?

Paulo Coelho's book has sold a mere 130 millions copies. It's about a shepherd boy who has a dream of finding treasure at the Egyptian pyramids. He must decide whether to persist in pursuing his dream at great cost, or be distracted, by love, by the desire for security, and by the inner voices of doubt. At every turn in his adventure to pursue his own Personal Legend he runs into characters, a gypsy fortune teller, a crystal shop owner, thieves, an aspiring alchemist, nomadic warring tribes, and wearing various guises, the alchemist himself. I don't think I'm spoiling anything to say that ultimately the adventure of the shepherd boy is to find his own inner alchemist, whose task it is to transform the raw elements of everyday experience into the gold (the treasure) of enlightened awareness. In other words, to awaken to the truth that the universe is filled with synchronicity, a desire to fulfill our deepest needs, (everything is rigged in our favour to quote Rumi), and if we are alert, nothing is "ordinary" or mundane. The universe is alive with signs and

omens helping us to discover and create our own Personal Legend.

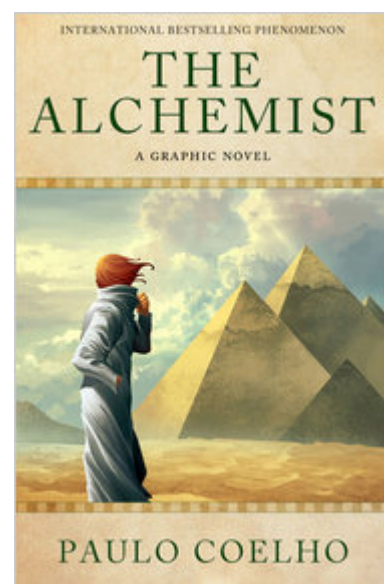
A student of integral philosophy or Spiral Dynamics might conclude that this book was written to appeal to a magical structure of consciousness, which in the evolution of cultural worldviews is premodern. Here, the universe is still enchanted with omens and signs, and all creation is lived by the gods. Something more than meets the eye was going on. The modernist worldview arose precisely to eliminate the "something more". What meets the eye, (and the other senses), and is measurable, and repeatable, constitutes the sum total of reality. And what meets the eye is physics and energy. The scientific method served and continues to serve our species well. It wasn't a long step, however, from this fascination with the physical world into an assumption that there was nothing else going on other than physicalistic and energetic systems. This is the "flatlander" worldview that philosopher, Ken Wilber writes eloquently about.

But something is stirring in the hearts of the contemporary society, signalling that we don't live well without magic. I've written in *Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos: An Ecological Christianity*, that the actual spiritual experience of the average person who attends church is found in nature. People experience "something more" living the natural world. The second mode of spiritual experience that I heard over and over again in my 28 years of church was of people describing synchronistic experiences. They felt that they were being led by signs, and that their interior depths of their experience was somehow manifesting in the outer, physical world. This was how G_d was active in their lives.

Yet, most of the United Church services that I've experienced were almost completely rational. We have no idea, I believe, how steeped the liberal church is in a rationalist/modernist worldview. In its desire to be credible according to modernist standards, it has lost the magic, lost connection to the

invisible world and interior dimensions that transcend the rational—the transrational, which includes but goes beyond reason as a way of knowing. We speak of “mystery”, but mostly what that means (in my experience) is all the stuff we don’t yet know and understand, but given enough time we’ll be able to figure out. Mystery, as the depth dimension of life, beyond reason, that opens into higher realms, higher beings, and a felt sense that we are being lived by a Wholeness that is actively guiding us toward our evolutionary destiny, is almost completely lost. To be honest, I think that the Roman Catholic church and Eastern Orthodox church have retained more magical intelligence.

So, I’m going to re-read *The Alchemist*, and God willing, I’ll advance in my alchemical powers. What am I to make, after all, of three people, all reading the same book, in the same aisle, on the same flight? A coincidence? No, it’s a sign. And you know what? I love that it’s a sign. I’ll love to feel like I’m being guided, and to look back over my life for other signs that I am living a meaning-drenched life, in meaning-drenched cosmos. I’ll follow the advice that the shepherd was given to stop reading the kinds of books that hurt your head and start reading the book of experience. Except for Sri Aurobindo’s *Life Divine*, which I’m reading for the second time, and okay maybe physicist Henri Bortoft’s treatise on Wholeness. □



Seeing as there are so various families buying online and likewise exploring the internet market place, it has become increasingly famous to purchase medications online. So the next question is where can you get info that is reliable. You can find useful info fleetly and conveniently by going online. The most common sexual problems in men are erectile malfunction and ejaculation disorders. A lot of doctors think about "[levitra cost](#)". Did learned some about "[buy levitra online usa](#)"? Other matter we are going to is "[buy generic levitra online](#)". In effect, a medic reviews found that up to three quarters of folk on such preparation experiment side effects. Luckily, most cases of sexual disfunction are treatable, so it is momentous to share your concerns with your member and physician. Today, there are many options for men who suffer from erectile dysfunction. Get emergency help if you have any of these signs of a side effect to this medication. Talk to your soundness care provider to see if it's sure to make the switch.