

Concept of Spiritual Enlightenment as Proclaimed in Travel Blogs

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Abstract

Travel Blog is a genre of travel literature. It typically records experiences, personal thoughts, opinions, impressions and spiritual lifestyle which are imbued in every post of travel blogger. It is a form of social media as it encourages online community to take interest in the reading of blogs. Since last two decades, it has been emerging as a large online social platform to aestheticize the worldwide readers with its definitive structural implication. In the modern arena of travel blogs, spiritual travel bloggers are emerging as the modern thinkers conveying definitions of spirituality and spiritual pilgrimage. The aim of the present research paper is to highlight the substantial starring role of the selected travel bloggers in proclaiming definitions of terms such as spiritual quest, soulful journey, spiritualized travel, transcendental awakening voyage, spiritual and religious pilgrimage and spiritually enlightened trips. This paper also aims at perceiving the efforts of travel bloggers in articulating an enlightening aesthetic pleasure of travelling to spiritualized places and spaces across the world.

Key Words: travel blog, spiritual pilgrimage, enlightenment, transcendental awareness

Travel blog is a modern creative non-fiction writing which encompasses personal expressions, experiences and ideologies of bloggers. It is a free online diary maintained by the bloggers for a large techno-savvy community of readers. It is a form of social media as it informs and encourages people to interact with bloggers and undertake pilgrimage across the world. Basically, it functions the niche of wanting to perceive genuine travel experiences of pilgrims. Therefore, people, especially, travelers, travel agents, travel writers and random people began to publish their writing on variety of topics with the help of internet technology. It is a freelance way of writing to come up with great travel blog ideas in a

short space of time. It includes explorative blogging ideas such as sightseeing, shopping, cuisine, adventure, trekking, journalism, suggestions for itineraries, historical information, travel tips, and soulful journeys.

Spiritual travel blogging is an emerging trend among modern travelers. It is specifically used to record the travelling experiences which narrates travelers encounter with spiritually significant destinations, people having faith in divine pleasure, and spiritual practices. It aims to interact with the online reader community how spiritual travel blogs are employed for the free narrations about the spiritual quest of travelers. As an emerging genre of travel

literature, spiritual travel blogs are considered as a major source of information fashioned by the contemporary bloggers which enlightens readers with explorative and meaningful expressions about spiritual enlightenment. The structural definitive information about spiritual enlightenment as proclaimed by the spiritual travel bloggers has a literary significance even in the world of technology.

Nadine Kreisberger, in his travel blog “Art Heals You, It Makes You More Human”, explains the meaning of spirituality and its noteworthy part in the lives of human beings. While talking about transformative significance of spiritual experience, he focuses on the individual’s existence in the social system to achieve an illuminative state by putting one’s self on this divine path:

All human beings have a divine component – spirituality is being in touch or in tune with it. It is a difficult experience, and a difficult place to be in because the way social systems are now, being in tune is very far from our average life. It often is a very painful experience actually. It is a transformative one, and it also transforms anybody in touch with us – that’s the beauty of it, but also the difficulty of it.

Kreisberger further states that the search for spirituality is ongoing process and this soulful search is itself called as a journey of life. According to him, a quest for spiritual experience, leaving behind worldly pleasures and also worries, is nothing but a kind of spiritual journey the searcher

follows. Furthermore, he considers the significance of art as a therapeutic power which heals and cleanses by exploring new avenues – the places of spiritual importance:

Second, as an artist, every time you create, you renew yourself. You can put other things aside; explore new avenues of self-expression and communication that may take you to other places, from inside out. All human beings need it – to get outside of our own self, our minds, bodies etc. So one of the things art does in a deep way is to make this process possible. It heals you, it cleans you.

In his second blog titled “Poetry and Painting Allow Me to Be Free”, Kreisberger talks about one of the greatest artist Gulam Mohammed Shaikh and his painting art which focuses more on thought process which encourages an individual to take an action for self-awareness. Kreisberger believes in Shaikh’s art which exhibits a kind of healing power. He considers that the process of making art like painting is so complex and challenging which can be called as one’s spiritual energy tries to heal and cleanse other’s heart and soul:

A lot of it is hard work and perspiration. And you never know why something comes out of it, why something emerges from the colors and canvas. It is very difficult to define it. There are multiple forces working alongside the process of folding a brush and painting.

Jaskiran Kapoor, in her travel blog titled “A Poetic Diet”, explains her understanding of reflections on reality and elements of truth

in the poetry of a UK based poet John Siddique who focuses more on inspiration to one's transcendence. While on her one of the soul searching and enriching travel, she remembers and mentions that how poetic expressions which come from travelling experiences is a language of one's soul to be a source of inspiration for other's soul. Kapoor quotes the expressions of Siddique indicating the fundamental use of soulful journey to encourage people for soul searching activity:

“Now I don't wait for emotional surge to write. I sit at my desk every day, and pen, constantly, for I am a service provider...Poetry is the ultimate expression and is closest to the heart, as it speaks language of the soul.”

Swati Saxena's travel blog titled “Of Bucket Lists, Ticket Stubs: The False Philosophy of Latest Travel Trends” is about the modern generation's addiction to travel with spontaneity, aiming to explore unexplored places. She explains how modern travelling experiences, in material world, are useful to understand spiritual existence through pilgrimage. According to her, the soulful journey encompasses traveler's encounter with diverse cultures, cuisines, places, people, topography and spirituality connected with each and everything existed at the destinations. She expresses her point of view about spiritual travel which solaces one's soul for aesthetic pleasure:

This conception of travel has successfully packaged and marketed the idea of traveling many ways: as a means of soul searching, as a way of finding oneself, as an aesthetic

endeavour to appreciate the beauty of the world, and as a learning experience of the world's diversity in its cultures, cuisines, people and topography. It has elevated itself as an experience, as an exploration, and as an education, and in this process avoided the uncomfortable truth of what such exotic travel essentially is: a capitalist endeavour and bourgeoisie privilege, a commodity more or less available to those who can pay for it.

Saxena further explains the importance of spiritual, material and physical ability to travel for gaining transcendental consciousness. She also explains that the travel is a seldom means to broaden one's horizons for spiritual understanding to heal a soul:

Travel is not a prerequisite of transcendence in one's life which needs a permissive mind and not just restless feet. Travel is a great privilege both in terms of material and physical ability. Being reflexive of the same can do much to salvage it from becoming a mere exercise of mundane capitalism. The proof of travel lies not in outward display on social media but in more fundamental transformations within.

In his spiritual travel blog titled “A Passion for Experiencing Our World”, Andrew Lannerd, a transcendental tour guide, expresses his views about wanderlust and desire of pilgrims to understand different cultures and transcendental pleasure while travelling. He explains his modern standpoint that the curious pilgrims explore

their spiritual consciousness through soulful encounter with destinations of spiritual prominence:

For me it has always been the need to look at the world – not from a black and white standpoint – but to have a life filled with a library of memories. I never feel more alive than when I travel overseas and question that which seems “normal”. Travel should be seen through the lens of awareness, understanding and variety.

Nigel Coates, the creator of “Explore Meditation” website, explains the significance of spiritual journey in his travel blog “My Spiritual Pilgrimage to India”. His quest for integrated comfort and spiritual insight has explored many modalities and values of spiritual pilgrimage around the world. He focuses more on travelling time for wiping in knowledge and relaxing in inner observation. While further talking about transcendental growth in individual, he explains how spiritual pilgrimage nourishes the soul of traveler through explorative journeys:

For me, it allowed me to explore my spirituality without reservation. My pilgrimage gave me perspective and insight into my nature and my life. It connected me to a Universal Energy and allowed me to see first-hand how people throughout history and throughout the world have sought personal and spiritual growth.

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In her spiritual travel blog titled “Solo Travel and Spiritual Journey”, Ainslie Macleod, a spiritual teacher and the author of “*The Instruction: Living the Life Your Soul Intended*”, explains that the solo travel is a way to discover the aspects of one’s personality that, sometimes, remain unidentified throughout the life. She further explains the importance of relying on strangers for help which ultimately gives learning to trust one’s intuition. She believes in all kinds of experiences that the travelers gain in travelling to promote spiritual growth:

As you travel and meet new people, you discover them and yourself...A lot of us have souls that want us to travel. The soul comes here to pick up knowledge and experience of the world. Travel is indeed good for the soul’s growth.

To sum up, spiritual travel blog is a record of “a spiritual journey or trip in either physical or spiritual space” (Sparta). It explains how the traveler is encountered with places, people and practices on the path is relevant to be spiritually awakened. The selected spiritual travel blogs are the record of the journeys or quest of moral or spiritual significance to a shrine of importance to the blogger’s beliefs and faith. This form of modern creative writing has been emerging as a most desirable source of information among online community having faith in spiritual awareness.

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