

## **Collection of short stories-1**

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## Building Bridges

Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side. They had been sharing machinery, trading a labour and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference which exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on elder brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I am looking for a few days of work", he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"

"Yes!" said the elder brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbour, in fact, it's my younger brother and we don't get along. Last week he dug a wider passage for water into his farm. But he ended up creating a very wide creek in between our farms and I am sure he did it just to annoy me. I want you to build me something so that we don't have to stand and see each other's face from across."

The carpenter said "I think I understand the situation. I will be able to do a job that will please you." The elder brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.

At sunset when the elder brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The elder brother's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. It was not what he had even thought of or imagined. It was a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, beautiful handrails. And to his surprise, his younger brother across the creek was coming to meet him with a big smile and arms wide open to hug him.

"You are really kind and humble my brother! After all I had done and said to you, you still shown that blood relations can never be broken! I am truly sorry for my behaviour", the younger brother said as he hugged his elder brother. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on", the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build!"

## Do not Give Up

One day I decided to quit my job and to end my life. There seemed to be no reason for me to live any longer.

I quit my job, my relationship, my spirituality...everything... I wanted to quit my life.

I went to the deep-woods to have one last talk with god

"God", I asked, "Can you give me one good reason not to quit?".

His answer surprised me...

"Look around", He said. "Do you see the fern and the bamboo?"

"Yes", I replied.

"When I planted the fern and the bamboo seeds, I took very good care of them. I gave them light. I gave them water. The fern quickly grew from the earth. Its brilliant green covered the floor. Yet nothing came from the bamboo seed. But I did not quit on the bamboo. In the second year the Fern grew more vibrant and plentiful.

And again, nothing came from the bamboo seed. But I did not quit on the bamboo." He said.

"In year three there was still nothing from the bamboo seed. But I would not quit.

In year four, again, there was nothing from the bamboo seed. I would not quit." He said.

"Then in the fifth year a tiny sprout emerged from the earth. Compared to the fern it was seemingly small and insignificant...But just 6 months later the bamboo rose to over 100 feet tall.

It had spent the five years growing roots. Those roots made it strong and gave it what it needed to survive. I would not give any of my creations a challenge it could not handle."

He asked me. "Did you know, my child, that all this time you have been struggling, you have actually been growing roots?"

"I would not quit on the bamboo. I will never quit on you."

"Don't compare yourself to others." He said.

"The bamboo had a different Purpose than the fern. Yet they both make the forest beautiful."

"Your time will come", God said to me.

"You will rise high".

"How high should I rise?" I asked.

"How high will the bamboo rise?" He asked in return.

"As high as it can?" I questioned.

"Yes." He said, "Give Me glory by rising as high as you can."

I left the forest and brought back this story. I hope these words can help you see that God will never give up on you..... Never, Never, Never Give up

## **The needs and desires**

Once upon a time, there lived a King who, despite his luxurious lifestyle, was neither happy nor content. One day, the King came upon a servant who was singing happily while he worked. This fascinated the King, why was he, the Supreme Ruler of the Land, unhappy and gloomy, while a lowly servant had so much joy. The King asked the servant, "Why are you so happy?"

The man replied, "Your Majesty, I am nothing but a servant, but my family and I don't need too much, just a roof over our heads and warm food to fill our tummies." The king was not satisfied with that reply. Later in the day, he sought the advice of his most trusted advisor. After hearing the King's woes and the servant's story, the advisor said, "Your Majesty, I believe that the servant has not been made part of The 99 Club."

"The 99 Club? And what exactly is that?" the King inquired. The advisor replied, "Your Majesty, to truly know what The 99 Club is, place 99 Gold coins in a bag and leave it at this servant's doorstep." So the King ordered to do it. When the servant saw the bag, he took it into his house. When he opened the bag, he let out a great shout of joy, So many gold coins! He began to count them. After several counts, he was at last convinced that there were 99 coins. He wondered, "What could've happened to that last gold coin? Surely, no one would leave 99 coins!"

He looked everywhere he could, but that final coin was elusive. Finally, exhausted, he decided that he was going to have to work harder than ever to earn that gold coin and complete his collection. From that day, the servant's life was changed. He was overworked, horribly grumpy, and castigated his family for not helping him make that 100th gold coin. He stopped singing while he worked. Witnessing this drastic transformation, the King was puzzled. When he sought his advisor's help, the advisor said, "Your Majesty, the servant has now officially joined The 99 Club."

He continued, "The 99 Club is a name given to those people who have enough to be happy but are never content, because they're always yearning and striving for that extra 1 telling to themselves, "Let me get that one final thing and then I will be happy for life."

## The Mirror of Matsuyama

In ancient days there lived in a remote part of Japan a man and his wife, and they were blessed with a little girl, who was the pet and idol of her parents. On one occasion the man was called away on business in distant Kyoto. Before he went he told his daughter that if she were good and dutiful to her mother he would bring her back a present she would prize very highly. Then the good man took his departure, mother and daughter watching him go.

At last he returned to his home, and after his wife and child had taken off his large hat and sandals he sat down upon the white mats and opened a bamboo basket, watching the eager gaze of his little child. He took out a wonderful doll and a lacquer box of cakes and put them into her outstretched hands. Once more he dived into his basket, and presented his wife with a metal mirror. Its convex surface shone brightly, while upon its back there was a design of pine trees and storks.

The good man's wife had never seen a mirror before, and on gazing into it she was under the impression that another woman looked out upon her as she gazed with growing wonder. Her husband explained the mystery and bade her take great care of the mirror.

Not long after this happy homecoming and distribution of presents the woman became very ill. Just before she died she called to her little daughter, and said: "Dear child, when I am dead take every care of your father. You will miss me when I have left you. But take this mirror, and when you feel most lonely look into it and you will always see me." Having said these words she passed away.

In due time the man married again, and his wife was not at all kind to her stepdaughter. But the little one, remembering her mother's words, would retire to a corner and eagerly look into the mirror, where it seemed to her that she saw her dear mother's face, not drawn in pain as she had seen it on her deathbed, but young and beautiful.

One day this child's stepmother chanced to see her crouching in a corner over an object she could not quite see, murmuring to herself. This ignorant woman, who detested the child and believed that her stepdaughter detested her in return, fancied that this little one was performing some strange magical art--perhaps making an image and sticking pins into it. Full of these notions, the stepmother went to her husband and told him that his wicked child was doing her best to kill her by witchcraft.

When the master of the house had listened to this extraordinary recital he went straight to his daughter's room. He took her by surprise, and immediately the girl saw him she slipped the mirror into her sleeve. For the first time her doting father

grew angry, and he feared that there was, after all, truth in what his wife had told him, and he repeated her tale forthwith.

When his daughter had heard this unjust accusation she was amazed at her father's words, and she told him that she loved him far too well ever to attempt or wish to kill his wife, who she knew was dear to him.

"What have you hidden in your sleeve?" said her father, only half convinced and still much puzzled.

"The mirror you gave my mother, and which she on her deathbed gave to me. Every time I look into its shining surface I see the face of my dear mother, young and beautiful. When my heart aches--and oh! it has ached so much lately--I take out the mirror, and mother's face, with sweet, kind smile, brings me peace, and helps me to bear hard words and cross looks."

Then the man understood and loved his child the more for her filial piety. Even the girl's stepmother, when she knew what had really taken place, was ashamed and asked forgiveness. And this child, who believed she had seen her mother's face in the mirror, forgave, and trouble forever departed from the home.

## **Lesson of hastening the judgement**

A Father and his Daughter were playing in the park. His young daughter spotted an apple vendor. She asked her father to buy her an apple. Father didn't bring much money with him, but it was enough to purchase two apples. So, he bought two apples and gave his daughter.

His daughter held one apple each in her two hands. Then a father asked her if she can share one apple with him. Upon hearing this, his daughter quickly took a bite from one apple. And before her father could speak, she also took a bite from the second apple.

A Father was surprised. He wondered what mistake he made raising her daughter that she acted in such a greedy way. His mind was lost in thoughts, that perhaps he is just thinking too much, his daughter is too young to understand about sharing and giving. A smile had disappeared from his face.

And suddenly his daughter with an apple in her one hand said, "Father have this one, this one is much juiciest and sweeter". Her father was speechless. He felt bad about reaching to the judgement so quickly about a small child. But, his smile came back now knowing why his daughter quickly took a bite from each apple.

## **The four smart students**

One night four college students were out partying late night and didn't study for the test which was scheduled for the next day. In the morning, they thought of a plan. They made themselves look dirty with grease and dirt. Then they went to the Dean and said they had gone out to a wedding last night and on their way back the tire of their car burst and they had to push the car all the way back. So they were in no condition to take the test.

The Dean thought for a minute and said they can have the re-test after 3 days. They thanked him and said they will be ready by that time.

On the third day, they appeared before the Dean. The Dean said that as this was a Special Condition Test, all four were required to sit in separate classrooms for the test. They all agreed as they had prepared well in the last 3 days.

The Test consisted of only 2 questions with the total of 100 Points.

1) Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Points)

2) Which tire burst? \_\_\_\_\_ (99 Points)

Options – (a) Front Left (b) Front Right (c) Back Left (d) Back Right

## **The Pundit and his attire**

There was Pundit in the village. He was well-versed in all Scriptures. He knew everything, but, he was poor. He did not have a house. He used to get his meals also with great difficulties. Even his clothes were very much worn out.

So, the Pundit used to beg for his meals. He went from House-to-House begging. “Please give me alms”. On seeing his old clothes many people were thinking that he is mad. So, saying “Go Away” they shut the door. For many days he did not even eat.

Once somehow he obtained new clothes. A rich man gave those clothes to the Pundit. Wearing those new clothes he went for begging as before. To the very first house he went, the householder said, “Sir, please come in. Please have your food in our house”. Saying thus, with great respect, he took the Pundit inside for food.

The Pundit sat down to eat. Varieties of soups, Sweet meals, Vedas, and Sweet foods were served for eating.

Having prayed first, the Pundit took a sweetmeat with his hand and began to feed his new clothes saying, “Eat, eat!”

On seeing that all the householders were surprised and were not able to understand. So, they asked thus, “The clothes do not eat right? The why O, Great Pundit, do you offer food to the clothes?”

Then that Pundit answered thus, “Indeed because of this new clothes you offered me food today. Yesterday itself in this very house you asked me to go away. Since I obtained food due to these clothes, I am grateful to them. This is why I am feeding them.” The householders were a little ashamed.



## Ali Baba and Forty Thieves

Ali Baba, a poor woodcutter, had a rich brother, Kasim, who never shared any of his money with his brother. Instead, he treated Ali Baba, his wife and son badly. One day, as Ali Baba finished cutting logs in the forest, he saw lots of men on horses and he hid.

He climbed up a tree and watched the forty horsemen. The men had saddlebags full of gold and they took them to a big rock. One of the men cried, 'Open, Sesame', and a door in the rock opened and the man entered the cave. The others followed. After a while they came out and the leader cried, 'Close, Sesame'.

When the thieves left, Ali Baba walked to the entrance of the cave. He said the magic words and entered. He was amazed by all the gold, silk, jewels and gold crowns piled up. Feeling it was alright to steal from thieves, Ali Baba decided to take some gold home for himself and his family.

When he got home, he showed the gold to his wife. His wife wanted to know how much gold they had. She went to Kasim's house to borrow his wife's scales so she could weigh the gold. She did not want Kasim and his wife to know about the gold, so she said they were weighing meat. Kasim's wife did not believe Ali Baba's wife and wondered where they could have got the money to buy meat.

She tricked Ali Baba's wife by putting honey in the bottom of one of the pans. When Ali Baba's wife returned the scales the next day, a gold coin was stuck to the honey. Kasim's wife knew their secret. When she told Kasim about his brother's gold, he was jealous.

He went to Ali Baba's house and asked his brother where he got it. When Ali Baba saw the gold coin, he told his brother about the cave and the forty thieves. The next morning, Kasim went to the cave with ten donkeys carrying ten huge chests. He got inside by saying the password but he forgot the magic words to get back out.

The thieves found him inside and killed him. When Kasim did not come back, Ali Baba went to look for him. He found his brother's body hanging inside the cave and brought the body home. With the help of Marjaneh, Kasim's servant girl, they gave Kasim a good burial without anybody wondering about the cause of his death.

The thieves found that the body had gone and soon realized that somebody else must know their secret. They set out to look for him in town. They came up with many plans to find the man. However, each time their plans were foiled by the clever Marjaneh. The thieves eventually found the house of the man they were looking for. They did not know his name, Ali Baba.

The leader of the thieves made a plan to kill the man who had stolen from them. He bought twenty donkeys and forty large clay oil jars with loose lids. He loaded the donkeys with two jars each and filled one jar with oil. He told his thirty-nine men to take their swords and daggers and to hide inside the jars. He gave them orders to be ready to jump out and attack the man who stole from them.

The leader filled the fortieth jar with oil. He then went to Ali Baba's house, pretending to be an oil merchant in need of a bed for the night. Ali Baba gave him food and a bed and a stable for his donkeys. The thief left his forty jars in a long row in the courtyard.

Marjaneh discovered his plan and killed all thirty-nine men by pouring boiling oil on them. When the leader came to find why his men were not ready to fight, he saw they were all dead and he ran away. A few weeks later the leader of the thieves went back to the town, disguised as a merchant. He soon became friends with Ali Baba's son, Khaled, who took him home for dinner.

Ali Baba invited him inside, but Marjaneh soon grew suspicious of the man. After dinner, Marjaneh performed a dance with daggers to entertain the guest. As she finished, she raised her dagger and killed the dinner guest. All forty thieves were dead and Ali Baba and his family were safe once and for all. Ali Baba was so impressed with Marjaneh that he offered his son to her for her husband. Khaled happily married Marjaneh and they had a baby. Ali Baba decided to show Khaled the cave with the treasure. Khaled promised that he, too, would show his son the cave when he was old enough. And so Ali Baba and his family were never poor again.

## Always Follow Your Heart

As a child, Monty Roberts was the son of a horse trainer and moved from stable to stable, from ranch to ranch, training horses. The boy's schooling was constantly interrupted. One day, when he was a senior, his teacher asked him to write about what he wanted to be when he grew up. He did not hesitate and wrote a seven page paper about his aim to be an owner of a horse ranch. It was a detailed paper with the location of buildings, stables and even a house plan. Two days later he received his paper back with an F on the front page.

After class he asked his teacher why he received such a low score.

The teacher told him, "This dream is unrealistic for a boy like you, who has no money, no resources and who comes from an itinerant family. There is no possibility that you will reach this goal."

Then the teacher offered him the opportunity to rewrite the paper with a more realistic attitude.

The boy went home and asked his father how he should respond.

His father told him, "This is a very important decision, so you must come to your own conclusion."

After several days, the boy brought the same paper to his teacher. No changes were made.

He told his teacher, "Keep the F and I will keep my dream."

Monty Roberts went on to own a 4000 square foot house in the middle of 200 acre horse ranch. He framed the paper he wrote and hung it over his fireplace.

Always remember to follow your heart and never listen to those who do not believe in your ability to achieve your dreams.

## **A Powerful Story**

A man and a young teenage boy checked into a hotel and were shown to their room. The receptionist noted the quiet manner of the guests and the pale appearance of the boy. Later, the man and boy ate dinner in the hotel restaurant.

The staff again noticed that the two guests were very quiet and that the boy seemed disinterested in his food.

After eating, the boy went to his room and the man went to ask the receptionist to see the manager. The receptionist initially asked if there was a problem with the service or the room, and offered to fix things, but the man said that there was no problem of the sort and repeated his request.

When the manager appeared, he took him aside and explained that he was spending the night in the hotel with his fourteen-year-old son, who was seriously ill, probably terminally so. The boy was very soon to undergo therapy, which would cause him to lose his hair. They had come to the hotel to have a break together and also because the boy planned to shave his head, that night, rather than feel that the illness was beating him. The father said that he would be shaving his own head too, in support of his son. He asked that staff be respectful when the two of them came to breakfast with their shaved heads.

The manager assured the father that he would inform all staff and that they would behave appropriately.

The following morning the father and son entered the restaurant for breakfast. There they saw the four male restaurant staff attending to their duties, perfectly normally, all with shaved heads.

No matter what business you are in, you can help people and you can make a difference.

## **An Apple Tree and Our Parents**

Once upon a time there was a huge apple tree. A little boy used to come to play near the tree. He would search for juicy apples. He would play alongside the tree and rest under the shade. The tree was overjoyed after meeting this little bundle of joy. One day, the tree was surprised to see that boy approaching it with a sad face.

"Come on little boy! Play with me," the Tree asked the boy.

"I am no longer a kid to play around tree like you," the boy scowled at the tree. "I need toys. I need money to buy toys of various designs and sizes," the boy told the tree.

"Sorry my dear boy! I do not have money to give you. But you can pick all my apples and sell them. That will give you adequate money to buy toys of your choices," replied the tree in soothing voice.

The boy grabbed all the apples and left happily. He sold the apples and got money. He bought toys of his choices.

Spring bid adieu and autumn came by but there was no sign of the boy. One morning, the tree saw its friend. That little boy had grown up into a big man.

"Come and play with me" the tree said.

"I cannot play. I have family now. We need a house for shelters. Can you help me?" the man replied.

"Sorry! I do not have any house. But you can chop off my branches to build your house," the tree told the man.

The man cut all the branches of the tree and left happily. The tree was glad to see his friend smiling again.

The man returned one evening to the apple tree.

"Come and play with me," the tree asked the man.

"I am getting old. I want to go sailing to relax myself. Can you give me a boat," the man asked the apple tree.

"Use my trunk to build your boat," the tree told the man.  
He cut off the trunk and made a boat out of it.

He went sailing and never showed up for a long time.

The man returned after many years.

"Sorry my boy! But now I do not have anything to offer to you. I have nothing for you anymore. No more apples....No more branches...no more trunks for you to climb on'" the tree said with a pain in its voice.

"No problem....I too do not have any teeth to bite and I am too old to climb trees," the man replied.

"I just need a place to rest after all these days," the man replied.

"Old tree roots are the best place to lean on. Come on and sit down with me and rest," the apple tree replied with a concern in its voice. The old man sat down. The apple tree was glad and smiled with tears.

This is the story of every person. The tree is like our parents. When we were young, we could not have imagined our life without them. But as we grow up, we leave them. No matter what, parents will always be there and give us everything to make us happy.

## **Budhha and the Angry Man**

Do You Still Get Angry? Then you should read this and decide.

One day Buddha was walking through a village. A very angry and rude young man came up and began insulting him, "You have no right teaching, others,' he shouted. "You are as stupid as everyone else. You are nothing but a fake."

Buddha was not upset by these insults. Instead he asked the young man "Tell me, if you buy a gift for someone and that person does not take it to whom does the gift belong?"

The man was surprised to be asked such a strange question and answered, "It would belong to me. Because I bought the gift."

The Buddha smiled and said, "That is correct. And it is exactly the same with your anger. If you become angry with me and I do not get insulted, then the anger falls back on you. You are then the only one who becomes unhappy, not me. All you have done is hurt yourself. If you want to stop hurting yourself, you must get rid of your anger and become loving instead. When you hate others, you yourself become unhappy. But when you love others, everyone is happy."

## **A blank question paper**

One day a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They waited anxiously at their desks for the test to begin. The professor handed out the question paper with the text facing down as usual. Once he handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page and begin. To everyone's surprise, there were no questions, just a black dot in the center of the page.

The professor seeing the expression on everyone's face, told them the following, "I want you to write what you see there." The confused students got started on the inexplicable task. At the end of the class, the professor took all the answer papers and started reading each one of them aloud in front of all the students. All of them with no exceptions described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet etc.

After all had been read, the classroom was silent. The professor began to explain, "I am not going to grade on you this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot and the same happens in our lives. We have a white paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots. Our life is a gift given to us by God with love and care. We always have reasons to celebrate, nature renewing itself every day, our friends around us, the job that provides our livelihood, the miracles we see every day."

"However, we insist on focusing only on the dark spots, the health issues that bother us, the lack of money, the complicated relationship with a family member, the disappointment with a friends etc. The dark spots are very small compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our minds. Take

your eyes away from the black spots in your life. Enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you. Be happy and live a life positively!”

## **The weight of soil**

There was a very clever and cunning landlord who owned lots of land in a whole village. He cunningly loaned small amount of money when needy came to him for a help. Taking a benefit of those who were not well-educated, he kept adding on interest to the principal amount. The amount for repayment of the loan would raise up so much that people couldn't pay back and end up surrendering their land to the landlord.

Now, his eyes were on a land owned by an old lady near his house. She was all alone, no other family. She would plant her own crop and fulfil her needs. The landlord was not able to figure out how to lure her into giving up her land to him. He then bribed a government official in village and forged papers of ownership on his name. He along with a government official visited old lady and served her a notice to hand over the land to him.

Old lady was shocked to know this and pleaded that she has been living here her whole life and this land has been owned by her ancestors, her loved ones are buried here and she inherited it, how can someone claim this now? She approached local court, but the landlord had bribed everyone and had presented forged ownership papers. Thus, the court delivered the judgment in the landlord's favour.

Dejected old lady then prepared to vacate the land while the landlord and his associates stood there waiting for her to leave. While leaving, filled with tears old lady approached the landlord and said, “Sir, you have taken everything from me today, my entire life was spent here, but now I am leaving. The land here is where I played, grew up with my family and this soil is very dear to me.” She added further, “we all are made of soil, and so anyone can have an affection towards it. Allow me to carry a basket filled with this soil to keep with me, with that by my side I will always have an aroma of this place till I die peacefully.”

The landlord smirked thinking since he had gained ownership of her entire land without paying her, might as well let her have it a basket of soil, so she can leave quietly. He said, “Fine. You can fill up your basket.”

The old lady started filling up her basket with soil. She overfilled it and was struggling to lift the basket to carry over her head. She then told the landlord, “Sir, will you please lend a hand to put the basket over my head?” The landlord came forward to help and said, “Oh you poor old lady, didn't you think before you

overfilled this basket? You are struggling to lift this basket filled with soil then how can you carry this with you?"

With tears in her eyes, old lady said, "oh sir, this entire land was my own, spent my whole life here, yet I am struggling to carry a single basket of soil from here while I am still breathing. I won't be able to carry it with me even when I die. You sir, have so much of other's land. How will you carry it all with you?"

The landlord stood stunned hearing this. He realized his mistake and fell on the old lady's feet asking for forgiveness. He requested her to live here happily and returned her land.