

## Proverbs and Parables: Unveiling Wisdom in *Candles in the Dark*

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### Abstract

In this article, I have tried to reveal the wisdom stated in the book *Candles in the Dark: A Treasury of the World's Most Inspiring Parables*. Parables have been an inevitable genre used for preaching wisdom. I have purposefully chosen this book for analysis as it deals with the parables from different world religions. One of the aims of literary writing is to reflect upon life in general. Parables are the stories that reflect upon life and provide us with a path to live accordingly. Similarly, proverbs in the parables add to the wisdom extended by the stories. Hence, I have tried to uncover the wisdom in the parables. To do so, I have followed specific steps. I have identified the proverbs in the parables and then described the context. It is necessary to indicate the context of the proverbs to interpret them appropriately. I have divided the proverbs into different chunks to understand them. Then, I correlated them with various aspects like mythological, cultural, traditional, environmental, or religious. Finally, what these proverbs imply through the parables is interpreted to arrive at a universally applicable wisdom.

**Keywords:** *Candles in the Dark*, Folklore, Parables, Proverbs Stories, Wisdom

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### Introduction

The world is full of different cultures and traditions. With differences in cultures and traditions, the way of preaching and advising changes. In the old times, when the written script was not used for communication, people used to express their opinions, and thoughts orally. Therefore, the most prominent proverb scholars acknowledge that the proverbs have been orally transmitted from generation to generation (Mieder 24). People often consulted the preachers or

persons with religious duties for advice. These preachers advised the people through the stories. Different preachers used different styles of storytelling for this purpose. A parable is one of the most used forms of story that contains a moral message to be understood by the listeners. The preachers merely narrate an anecdotal story and leave the listeners to get to the ethical message.

The present paper unveils the wisdom stated in the parables of the different religions in the book *Candles in the Dark: A Treasury of the World's Most Inspiring Parables*. I have explained the specific parable after stating the proverb used in it so that the background of the story is correlated with the proverb. This helps us understand the proverb in the context and point out the moral message. The parables cover wisdom along with the proverbs. It has to be uncovered to make a difference in the society.

### **Unveiling Wisdom in the Proverbs from *Candles in the Dark***

**“On the journey home are the blessings that can last a lifetime” (Outcalt 11).**

The above proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *The Road to Heaven*. The parable tells the story of a man who was weary of the daily routine, his life, and his family, so he decided that he would set himself on a journey to heaven to live a carefree life. Thus, he bid farewell to his family and started walking. He walked straight for three days, and when he felt tired, he stopped for a nap. While taking a rest, he removed his shoes and pointed them in the direction in which he was walking so that when he woke up, he would start his journey in that direction. It so happened that a trickster came there and saw the man sleeping and his shoes were on the road. The trickster picked up the boots and pointed them in the other direction. The man then woke up, put on his shoes, and started his journey in the direction the shoes were pointed. He did not realize that he was walking back to his home. As he walked for some time, he noticed that the place was familiar to him. He said to himself that he must be approaching heaven as it had the same beauty. Later, the man came to a town that seemed very nice to him. He walked further and found familiar people, and when he approached his home, it was identical to the one he had built. He knocked on the door and found a woman and children, very much the same as his family. The man went in and lived there happily ever after. The parable and the proverb indicate that the man was weary of daily routine and wanted to live a carefree life, so he set out on a journey to heaven but somehow, he

returned and lived happily with his family. The proverb is made of “on the journey home”, “are the blessings”, and “that can last a lifetime”. The proverb through the parable suggests that real happiness is in living life with family. The man did not realize that he was going back to his home. He thought that he was approaching heaven, but in reality, it was his home and the real happiness was living with family and friends. Thus, the proverb suggests that absolute pleasure can be found in our lives and nowhere else.

**“The greater need is to appreciate the gifts we have been given” (Outcalt 12).**

The proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *Enough Fish*. The parable is the story of a fisherman who used to go to the river and catch fish. He had eleven family members in his family, and every day, he could catch only eleven fish. Thus, he and other family members could have only one fish for dinner. He was worried that it was impossible to satisfy hunger with only one fish. He also thought about obtaining one extra fish to satisfy his hunger. Though he was not an evil man, a thought came to his mind if anyone of his family members died, he would be able to have an extra fish for dinner. Days after days, he caught only eleven fish, and one day, he was informed that one of his children had died. He was deeply sad but thought he could have two fish for dinner. He went to the river to catch the fish, but he caught only ten fish. Thus, he repented that when he had caught eleven fish, he was happy and now he gets only ten so he had achieved nothing. The proverb in the context of the parable indicates that it was necessary for the fisherman to be happy with whatever he got, but he expected more and became sad as he had lost his child and got the number of fish equal to his family members. Thus, he could neither get an extra fish nor satisfy his hunger. The proverb is made of “greater need”, “appreciate the gifts”, and “given”. The fisherman was not satisfied with the number of fish he caught. He wished for an extra fish to eat, and an evil thought came to mind if someone from the family died, he could enjoy an extra fish. Being dissatisfied, he lost peace of mind and could not satisfy his hunger. Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that one should be satisfied with whatever God gives; otherwise, one must regret the results of greed.

**“Love is the bond that binds a family together”** (Outcalt 13).

The parable *The Reunion* exemplifies the above proverb. It is the tale of a rich man who had only one son. One day, the son left home to be on his own but soon became poor. The news of the son’s condition reached the man, and he set himself on his son’s search. He went looking for his son everywhere but failed to find him. With a sad mind, the man returned home. Many years passed, and the son came near his father’s house. The wealthy father came to know about it, so he sent his servants to bring his son home. As the son walked towards the house, he was surprised and thought that the servants were deceiving him. Thus, he ran away from there. The father sent another servant and told him to offer him money if he came and worked in his house. Thus, the son became a servant in his own home. Gradually, the father made his son in charge of his wealth. Yet the son could not recognize his father. The father was pleased with his son’s faithfulness. When the man was about to die, he gathered all his servants and declared that his son, who had been working in the house, was his real son and he would be the master of this house after his death. At this moment, the son recognized his father and accepted him and his belongings. The parable and the proverb indicate that the father’s love for his son has made them reunite in the end. The son was ignorant of his father and was not ready to return home, but somehow, the father managed to bring his son home. Even though he worked as a servant, the father managed to get him home. The son performed his duties as a faithful servant. In the end, when the father was on his death bed, he told everything, and the son realized who he was. The proverb is made of “love”, “the bond”, and “binds a family together”. The proverb through the parable suggests that love keeps the family members together irrespective of the difficulties. The son was unable to recognize his father, but, in the end, he realized that the man was his father, and they reunited.

**“Generosity, in all its forms, always gives back”** (Outcalt 15).

The proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *A Common Good*. The parable tells the story of a man who became poor and was compelled to earn his living by plowing others’ land. One day he was plowing a farm, and the prophet Elijah appeared and told him that he would offer him seven good years. He asked him if he wanted the seven good years now or later. The man told the prophet that he needed to ask his wife. The prophet agreed and said to him that he would appear later. The man went to his house and told his wife what had happened. The wife advised him to

accept the seven good years now as they were unsure what would happen to them in the future. The next day prophet Elijah appeared and asked the man what he has decided. The man asked Elijah to bless him for seven good years now. Prophet Elijah agreed and told him that he will return and take away everything he was blessed with after seven years, and the prophet disappeared. When the man returned home after work, he found that he has been blessed with great fortune. The man and his wife thanked God for being so generous to them. The wife again advised him that they should also be generous and pitiful towards others so that God will be happy with them later. So, they shared their wealth with others. When the seven good years were over, the prophet Elijah appeared to take whatever he bestowed on them. The man told the prophet that he needed to consult his wife again. Hence, he asked his wife that prophet Elijah is here to take away everything and what they should do now. The wife told the man to ask the prophet to search for a more charitable family than theirs, and if the prophet found one, he could take away the wealth. God noted the words and the generous work of the man and his wife and offered them more wealth. In the context of the above parable, the proverb indicates that the man and his wife showed generosity towards others and received great wealth in return. If they had been selfish and enjoyed the seven years for themselves only, God would not have given them more wealth, but the wife's judgment of sharing the wealth with others proved fruitful as they received more wealth even though the seven good years were over. The proverb is made of "generosity", and "gives back". Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that generous people receive more than they have due to their generosity.

**"What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others"** (Outcalt 18).

The proverb is exemplified through the parable *On Children*. The parable tells an anecdote told by Confucius. He advised the children if they want to do something for their parents, they should do it cautiously. If the parents are unwilling to accept it, the children should accept their decision and not force them to accept it. The children should not scold them for the time and trouble they caused them. The simple anecdotal parable and the proverb indicate that the children have their plans, and the parents may or may not agree. At such a moment, children should not compel their parents to agree with them as they may have their own views. The children should accept their decision. Thus, an ideal family is formed. The proverb is made of "something we do not want to be done to us", and "should not be done by us to others". Thus, the proverb suggests

that when someone does not wish for something to be done to themselves, they should not do such things to others. Others may have their own decisions that we should accept as we may have our choices, and we expect others to accept them. Therefore, the proverb advises us to think from others' points of view and accept the situation.

**“Success marriages are always built on common goals and aspirations”** (Outcalt 19).

The parable of *One Heart, One Mind* uses the above proverb as its moral message. It tells the story of a husband and a wife who once asked Buddha if they had been married for years and they had known each other for a very long time, but there had always been an existence of unhappiness in their relationship. They wanted to know from Buddha if they would be married in the next life. Buddha answered that if they continue to have the same trust, know things in the same way, and have the same wisdom, they will have the same mind in the next birth. The proverb in the parable's context indicates that the couple's reunion depends on the similarity they possess in this life. If they have everything in common in this life, they will have the same mind in the next life. The couple wanted to know if they would be together in the next life as there had been a little unhappiness in their life irrespective of their togetherness for years. The proverb is made of “success marriages”, “built on”, and “common goals and aspirations”. The parable and the proverb suggest that successful relations are built on common aims. If a relationship has a common goal, then it lasts long. The story gives us a moral lesson that unhappiness arises from differences and the success of a marriage depends on the similarity of thoughts and objectives rather than differences. Therefore, if one continues with the existing actions, the future reactions will have the same consequences. It is evident from the present parable that the success of any relationship is based on the similarity of aims and objectives.

**“Imitation, as they say, is the sincerest form of flattery”** (Outcalt 19).

The proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *Great Aspirations*. The story is an anecdotal parable by Confucius. He said if we want to find out the truth about the children's love towards their father, we should observe what a man does when his father is alive and how he behaves when his father is dead. If the son does not change the way he lives and has the same desires even after his father's death, then we can say that he genuinely loves his father. Children

often imitate their parents, but when they grow up, they change. Still, according to Confucius, children who do not change are said to be genuinely affectionate towards their parents. The proverb is made of “imitation”, and “the sincerest form of flattery”. The proverb in the context of the parable indicates that the imitation of the parents done by children is the sincerest actualization of affection. According to Confucius, children who change after the death of their parents do not love their parents. Thus, the proverb suggests that imitation is the honest form of love, but it should be thorough and not superficial.

**“True happiness and harmony can be found in our own backyard”** (Outcalt 22).

The parable *The Backyard Marriage* exemplifies the above proverb. The parable tells the story of a family of mice in which a beautiful mouse was born. When the mouse grew older enough to be married, the family became worried about finding a suitable wife for their son. The mouse’s parents thought it was appropriate to ask God about a suitable bride for their son. Hence, the oldest mouse of the family went to God and asked where to find a suitable bride for their beautiful son. God could not tell them where to find a suitable bride. Hence, he told the mouse to ask the wind as the wind is mightier than God. The mouse family thought that the wind family was suitable for the relationship, so they asked God where the wind’s house was. God told them the address and the family members of the mouse went to the family of the wind with the marriage proposal. The wind became happy but told the mouse that he was not the strongest as he could not move the mountain; hence, the family of the mouse should go to the family of the mountain and keep the proposal of the marriage. The wind directed the mouse to the mountain. The mountain became happy with the proposal but told the mouse that he was not the strongest as someone dug deep and made holes in the mountain. The mouse asked the address of such a mighty family. The mountain showed them the house. It was a house of mice where they went with the proposal. The parable is a humorous story with a message reflected in the above proverb that when we search for the best thing in the world, it is often found nearby. The family of the mouse was proud of the beauty of their son. They forgot that the best suit for them is their kind and no one else. The mouse family searched everywhere but, in the end, they reached the family of another mouse only. The proverb is made of “true happiness and harmony”, and “found in our own backyard”. Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that the things we go looking for are nearby most of the time. Therefore,



we should find happiness in our things rather than searching for it somewhere else. The family of the mice searched everywhere, but in the end, they found a suitable bride in another family of mice.

**“Life is not fair” (Outcalt 23).**

The proverb is illustrated through the parable *Marital Riches*. The parable is the tale of a man who went to a rabbi and asked that he had been married for ten years but could not have a child to continue his family lineage, so he wanted to divorce his wife and marry again to have a child. The rabbi was very wise and talented. He asked the man to go and arrange a grand party to celebrate his divorce. The man was ready to do anything to make the rabbi happy, so he went home and organized a great party. At the party, he drank and began feeling dizzy and generous. He told his wife that she could have the most valuable things of her desire, and he would give them to her. The wife asked servants to carry him to her father’s house when the party was over. When the man woke up in the strange room, he asked his wife about it. At that time, she told him that she had chosen him as the most valuable thing in the house as promised by him. Thus, the man was moved by his wife’s answer and went to the rabbi to apologize and ask him to pray for them. The rabbi told the man that he had been praying for them, and nine months later, the man and his wife had the child. The proverb and the parable do not directly correspond to each other. The proverb indicates that life had not been fair to the man as he did not have a child to carry on his family name. As a result, the man wanted to divorce his wife and marry another to have a child. But he came to know about his wife’s love for him and rejected the idea of divorcing his wife. The man could not see his wife’s love for him because he had no child. The proverb is made of “life”, and “not fair”. The parable and the proverb suggest that we often complain about what we do not have and forget to enjoy what we have.

**“Choices are made at an early stage of life tend to shape the rest of our lives”**

(Outcalt 24)

The proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *The Lost and the Found*. The parable is the story of a brother and his sister who lived in a hut. When the brother returned from the farm, his sister told him that some men had come and said they would take her away. The brother ignored



what his sister said, but she told him if she is kidnapped, she will take a sack full of seeds with her and drop them on the way so that he can find her by following the trail of the seeds. He went to the farm the next day, and his sister was kidnapped. The brother returned from the farm and found that his sister was not in the house. He remembered her words and started looking for the trail of seeds. He followed the trail of the seeds for many days. The seeds now grew into trees, and finally, he gave up searching for his sister. He returned home and lived on by eating all the animals in the yard. In the end, when he had nothing to eat, he decided to set out to find his sister. The trail of the seeds grew into giant trees, and the brother followed them. He reached a village where some children were playing. He asked them for some water from their gourd. The children's mother told them that whoever asks for water from their gourd is her brother. They told their mother about the man. As many years passed, the sister could not recognize her brother. The next day the brother threw stones at the birds and told them to fly away like his sister. The children told their mother what the man said, and she recognized that the man was her brother. The mother told her children to bring him home, but the brother refused. She told them to offer him many goats and oxen then he came to her and lived there. The parable and the proverb indicate that the brother tried searching for his sister by following the trail of the seeds, but soon, he gave up. Similarly, he was so confused that he could not believe that the woman calling him was his sister when he grew up. His choice at an early age made him not to believe what the woman was saying. Just as he did not believe his sister's words about her kidnapping, he refused to believe the words of the children. The proverb is made of "choices", "at an early stage of life", and "shape the rest of our lives". The proverb suggests that what we choose at an early stage in life forms our remaining life. The brother decided not to believe his sister, and he did not believe her when they were together again.

**"Better to do battle with a handful of the strong than with an army of the weak"**  
(Outcalt 26)

The proverb finds its place at the end of the parable *The Internal Compass*. The parable tells the story of a grandfather and his granddaughter who earned their living by performing stunts. They went to Buddha to ensure their safety while performing dangerous actions. The grandfather suggested if they take care of each other's safety that nothing would harm them. On the other hand, the granddaughter said that they should ensure their own safety. When Buddha heard both of them,

he advised the grandfather to ensure his safety. Thus, he will be safeguarding his granddaughter; he suggested the granddaughter to be aware of honesty and respect for others around her. The proverb and the parable do not directly correspond to each other. The proverb is made of “better to do battle with”, “the strong than with”, and “an army of the weak”. Though there is no direct relationship between the proverb and the parable, there is an indirect relation between the strong and the awareness, integrity, and respect. Rather than having negligence, dishonesty, and disrespect for others, one can be successful with understanding, integrity, and respect. The proverb indirectly suggested that it is better to fight with the stronger enemy than with the weaker.

**“A benevolent society is one in which all are respected, admired, and given an opportunity to contribute to the good of the whole” (Outcalt 29).**

The parable *The Wise and the Old* makes use of the above proverb. The parable tells the story of a kingdom where all had to leave their older family members on a wasteland. One of the officials rebelled against the custom when the time came to desert his father. He hid his father in a cave. One day representative of God appeared in the king’s dream and asked him to solve a puzzle. If the king failed to find the correct answer, God’s representative would destroy his kingdom. The king tried very hard but could not solve the puzzle. Hence, he declared whoever solves the puzzle would receive a great reward. The official who hid his father in the cave went to his father and asked the answer. The official told the answer to the king, and the answer was correct. This happened several times, and each time, God’s representative came with new and more challenging puzzles, and the official was able to solve them with the help of his father. Finally, the king asked the official the secret to knowing all the answers. The official told the king that all the answers he told were told by his father who was hidden away by him. The king withdrew the law on hearing this and declared that all the old people should be treated with kindness and respect. The proverb in the parable’s context indicates that a society in which all the people are admired, respected, and given an equal opportunity to do good things is a compassionate society. The old people of the kingdom were sent to the wasteland as a result of the law and order of the king, but when the king was in difficulty, the old father of his officer came to his rescue. The king thought that the old people were of no use to his kingdom. Therefore, he ordered to send every old person to the wasteland, but the old father of his officer saved the kingdom. Thus, the king became aware

of the value of equality. The proverb is made of “benevolent society”, “all are respected, admired, and given an opportunity to contribute”, and “the good of the whole”. The proverb suggests that a respectful society always admires, respects, and provides equal opportunity to everyone irrespective of age, gender, and class.

**“Honor your father and mother” (Outcalt 30).**

The proverb is exemplified through the parable *The Blessing of Grandchildren*. The parable is the story of a man who over-trusted his son and gave his entire property to him. As the son received so much wealth, he started ignoring his father to the state that he had to beg and manage his living. The man started living on the streets of the town. The man’s son had a son who was very generous and kind-hearted. He happened to roam around the town’s streets when he came across his grandfather. The man was surprised to see his grandson. The grandson asked him if he could help him in any way. The man told his grandson to go home and bring a blanket to keep himself warm. The grandson immediately went home, took out a blanket from the shelf, and cut it in two halves. His father asked him what he was doing. The grandson told his father that he was cutting the blanket in two halves. One for his grandfather and one for his father. The other part of the blanket would be useful when he becomes old. The man’s son understood his mistake and went to his father and brought him home. The proverb and the parable indicate that the man over-trusted his son and bestowed him with all the property, but the son neglected his duty towards his father and deserted him. The father gave everything to his son, but the son forgot everything his father had done to him and dishonored him by ignoring him. However, the grandson’s act made him realize his mistake. As a result, the man brought his father home. The proverb is made of “honor”, and “father and mother”. Thus, the proverb suggests that we should respect our parents. Otherwise, our children will dishonor us.

**“One man should die than that the whole people be lost” (Outcalt 33).**

The first half of the parable, *The Value of Life*, includes the above proverb. The parable is the story of a fugitive who entered a village to save himself from the soldiers. The soldiers searched the entire village but could not find him. The villagers were very generous and kind towards the fugitive. They accepted him as their own and allowed him to stay with them. One day, the soldiers

searched for the fugitive and were sure that the fugitive was hiding in the village. The villagers did not help the soldiers to find the culprit. Consequently, the soldiers became angry and threatened to burn the village if the fugitive was not found. The villagers became anxious and went to a village priest for help. The priest started reading the scriptures and came to the above proverbial statement. The priest closed the holy book, and told the villagers what he had found in the scripture. The villagers believed in the scriptural advice and informed the soldiers where the fugitive was hiding. Thus, the fugitive was caught by merely scriptural advice. The proverb is made of “it is better”, “one man dies”, and “than that the whole people be lost”. According to the scriptures, one man should die instead of the whole village. Thus, the proverb suggests that it is better to lose one person than others. The parable does not end there but continues, and the following proverb highlights the other part of the story.

**“If you save one life, it is as if you had saved an entire world” (Outcalt 34).**

The parable *The Value of Life* includes the above proverb in the commentary section. Talmud uses the proverb against the story’s background in which a fugitive entered a village to hide from the soldiers. The villagers accepted him without any idea that he was a wanted person, and a strong relationship was built between him and the villagers. One day the soldiers entered the village on the firm assertion that the absconder was in the village, and they threatened to kill the people if they did not hand over the fugitive to them. Everybody went to the village priest and asked for help. He was also caught between two stools. Then he decided to look for guidance in the scriptures. He read the Bible and concluded that losing one man is better than losing all the people. The villagers then told the soldiers the hiding place of the fugitive. They took him with them, and the villagers were happy because they were saved from danger. But the priest was sad and did not join the celebration. In the night, an angel came to the priest and told him that he had handed the Messiah to the soldiers. The priest told the angel that he did not know he was a Messiah. The angel said that instead of wasting time reading scriptures, he should have met him, then he would have come to know about it. The story explains that God’s objectives are not always found in the scriptures. One must be aware of the possibilities beyond the scriptures. The fugitive was a Messiah, but people neglected it in the observance of the religious beliefs and lost the person. Hence, the proverb is used in the commentary. The proverb is made of the elements “saving one

life” and “saving the entire world”. The moral lesson we get from the proverb is that saving one life is equal to saving the entire world. The fugitive was a Messiah for the villagers, but they could not keep him because they thought that further calamity may fall on the village. Therefore, the proverb makes everyone aware of saving a person’s life. Humans are merely the means of God’s actions. Whatever God aspired to do was carried out by humans. Still, sometimes God cannot help the situation, and something different happens. As God sent the Messiah to the village for their prosperity, the village priest was busy reading the scriptures, and God’s Messiah was handed over to the soldiers merely by scriptural advice. The following proverb highlights the same.

**“God has no hands but our hands” (Outcalt 34).**

The above proverb explains that God’s actions are completed through humans. The parable illustrates the act of the villagers. They safeguarded the fugitive, the Messiah of God, but when they were threatened with danger, they went to the village priest and he advised them to hand over the offender to the soldiers. The advice came from the scriptures, and God appeared in the priest’s dream and told him that the fugitive was the Messiah. If the priest had not wasted his time reading the scriptures and visited the culprit, he would have known that he was a Messiah, but it was too late. Thus, the proverb suggests that humans are the means of God’s deeds. It was in the hands of the people to save the Messiah. God operates through humans. It was possible to save the Messiah only if the priest had met him.

**“Truth is rarely transparent” (Outcalt 36).**

The commentary section of the parable *A Good Harvest* uses the above proverb. It is a parable of Jesus, and often the followers of Jesus could not understand the meaning of his parables. At the end of the parable, they used to ask what it meant. The parable is about a farmer who scattered seeds. Some seeds fell on the path, and the birds ate them. Others fell on the rocky place, and they grew but could not survive as the soil was very hard. Some seeds fell between the thorns, and the thorns choked the seeds, and they withered. Others fell on the good soil and grew well. The parable is metaphorical, and Jesus had to explain this to his disciples. When people took the stories literally, Jesus explained that he was teaching them indirectly. The proverb is made of “truth”, and “rarely transparent”. Thus, the proverb suggested that truth is not always

straightforward. The way of Jesus's teaching was indirect, and, in this manner, he taught his disciples the worldly wisdom.

**“The best questions are always those that defy easy answers, enticing us to seek rather than sit” (Outcalt 39).**

The proverb finds its place at the end of the commentary on the parable *The Best Questions*. The parable is about the monk's tale who advised the people in question. The monk gave only questions who came to him to seek wisdom. This way was quite helpful to others. One day priest Theophane went to the monk and told him that he was going for group meditation and asked if he could give him a question to think about. The monk told him to think over what they needed. The priest went disappointed and returned after a few hours and made it clear to the monk that he was here to meditate on his own spiritual life and not to reflect on his priestliness. Now he needed a question to think over. The monk gave him a question with a slight change as to what they needed actually. The proverb highlights the quality of questions. The proverb is made of “best questions”, “that defy easy answers”, and “enticing to seek rather than sit”. The monk always advised others through questions to think over. The monk offered a simple question at first as to what they needed, but when the priest was not satisfied with the question, he gave another question as to what they needed actually, which made the priest ponder over it very profoundly. Thus, the proverb suggests that the best questions resist easy answers but prompt the search for an answer.

**“Truth, in and of itself, is never enough” (Outcalt 40).**

The commentary section of the parable *A Piece of Truth* uses the above proverb. The parable tells the story of Mara, the Buddhist god of ignorance and evil. Once Mara was travelling with his supporters when he saw a man walking deep in meditation. Suddenly, the man found an object on the ground, and he picked it up. The supporters asked Mara what the man had found. Mara answered that the man had found a piece of truth. The supporters asked Mara if it makes any difference when people find a piece of truth. On hearing this, Mara answered negatively and said that the man would soon make a belief out of it. The parable and the proverb indicate that the man has found a piece of truth, but the man will make a belief out of it, and it will never be sufficient for him. Truth is the ultimate aim of all religions, but as soon as we make a particular belief out of

it, the value of the truth diminishes. Thus, Mara was sure that the truth would be of no use to the man as he would make a belief out of it. The proverb is made of “truth”, and “never enough”. The proverb suggests that truth must not be accompanied by belief, dogma, or ritual. On the other hand, it should be attached with love and consideration, which are accurate measures of religion.

**“Do not judge another person until you have walked a day in his moccasins”**

(Outcalt 44).

The proverb is illustrated through the parable *The Religious Fanatic*. The parable tells the story of a religious converted person who was well known for being a religious fanatic. He used to be very angry with the skeptics. A wise teacher asked him why he was so obsessive about his religion. The man answered that he had served the evil so far, but now he serves the god and his aim is to oppose the wrong beliefs of other people. He demonstrates how other religions are false. The teacher argued if he had put himself in those people’s position and thought from their point of view. The man agreed and told the teacher that he had studied the false beliefs to support his arguments. Thus, the arguments between them grew, and the teacher outburst at the man. The teacher scolded the man to the point that the man retreated and told the teacher to stop the argument. In the end, the teacher explained to the man that it is not enough to be in someone’s place but to feel what the person feels. Then only he can be an honest servant of the truth. The parable reflects on the proverb through the story of the religious converted man. The proverb indicates that the man attacked other faiths to prove his faith superior to others. Thus, he neglected what other people felt. The proverb points out that the man needed to feel what others felt when he attacked them. The proverb is made of “do not judge another person”, and “until you have walked a day in his moccasins”. The proverb suggests that we should not judge a person until we experience what others feel. Therefore, a person needs to be in others’ shoes to feel their experience. The proverb metaphorically advises being in someone’s place.

**“Distractions abound” (Outcalt 51).**

The proverb is exemplified through the parable *The Man Who Walked on Water*. The parable is the story of a man who wanted to walk on the water. A wise man wrote the name of God on a leaf and tied the leaf inside the man’s sash. However, the wise man warned him that if he lost



faith, he would drown. The man walked on the entire sea and did not drown. He wondered what the wise man had tied inside his sash when he was away from the shore. He untied his clothes and saw the leaf with God's name on it and wondered if it was just the name of God. At that moment a doubt entered his mind and he drowned. The proverb and the parable indicate that belief is nothing but focus. The moment we experience disbelief, we move away from our target. The man walked on water for some time, but curiosity made him look at what the wise man hid inside his sash. When he saw the name of God on a leaf, he was distracted from his aim. Thus, distractions cause significant losses. The proverb is made of "distractions", and "abound". Many distractions cause a loss of concentration. Therefore, the proverb suggests that distractions are bound to happen, but one need not give up on distraction and continue walking towards our aim. As exemplified in the parable, we should not get distracted merely by unimportant things.

**"A kind word turns away wrath" (Outcalt 55).**

The proverb finds its place in the commentary section of the parable *A Kind Word*. The parable tells the story of two men who lived together for many years without any argument. One day, one of them asked the other to argue just like other people. The other person said that he did not know how an argument starts. The first person explained how an argument begins by holding a brick in his hand and placing it between them. They decided to claim the brick to themselves. The first man claimed the brick to himself. The other claimed it to himself, and later the first man agreed that the brick belonged to the other man, and they ended up not arguing. The proverb indicates that the two men did not have any argument, and when they tried, they failed due to the kind words of the first man. The parable indicates that fierce disagreement is useless and provides a decent alternative like harmony, negotiation, and compromise. Thus, kind words end any of the debates. The proverb is made of "kind word", and "turns away wrath". The proverb suggests through the parable that kind words often end disagreement, arguments, and fights.

**"Every cloud can have a silver lining" (Outcalt 57).**

The proverb is used as an explanatory commentary on the parable *The Last-Minute Pardon*. The parable is the story of a man who asked his wife to braid his hair into four parts. He sat under a tree and invited people to guess what each part represented. He also asked everyone to come

with a calf, and whoever guesses all the details correctly shall have the calves as a prize. The man told his wife what each part represented. Many people came to guess what those parts were but failed. The government officers became suspicious of the man as he was doing nothing. They decided to hang him if someone guessed the details correctly. One day, the man's nephew talked with his wife, inquiring about his uncle's plan. The wife could not keep the secret and told the nephew what the parts represented. The nephew went to his uncle and asked if he could guess the parts. As soon as the nephew guessed all the parts correctly, the officers came and took the man away to be hanged. Before he was suspended, he asked to meet his wife, who behaved like a stranger. He went to his barn and cried when his dog came near and protected him from the government officers. The officers then took him away when he met his half-brother, who asked for his fine robe in return for his tattered robe, which was of no use to him as he was to be hanged. At last, when the man was about to be hanged, his brother-in-law came and told the officers to leave his brother-in-law and hang him instead. Then the officers gathered together and asked the man why he played such a stupid puzzle. Then the man explained his motive. He wanted to show that his wife was a stranger just as his wife behaved. The dog is a loyal friend as his dog protected him. The half-brother is a stranger, as his half-brother proved. At last, the brother-in-law is a loyal friend as his brother-in-law came to his rescue. The officers understood the man's motive and released him. The above proverb indicates that he was saved even though the man was in danger. He faced the dangerous situation of being hanged, but he proved his innocence. The proverb is made of "every cloud", and "can have a silver lining". The proverb means that even though the cloud overshadowed the sun, the clouds will disappear and the sun will shine again. Similarly, the man was in danger but he came out of it. Thus, the proverb suggests that every difficult situation does not continue for longer time. The following proverb indicates the same message.

**"The wise person always has hope of prevailing over his or her oppressors"**

(Outcalt 58).

The proverb indicates that the man is a wise person who is about to be hanged by the soldiers. To overcome his difficulty, he explained why he played the puzzle. The man wanted to show that the wife is a stranger, the dog is a loyal friend, the half-brother is a stranger, and the brother-in-law is a loyal friend. Thus, he asked his wife to braid his hair representing the above.

No one could guess the puzzle, but his wife told his nephew the answers to his mystery, and the soldiers, as decided, came to take him away to hang. He was in danger, but he explained his motive, and the soldiers released him in the end. The proverb is made of “wise person”, “has hope”, “prevailing over”, and “his or her oppressors”. Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that a wise person can come over any situation with his wisdom.

**“Two heads are better than one” (Outcalt 61).**

The commentary section of the parable *The Journey of Togetherness* uses the above proverb. The parable tells the story of a man who went into the forest for hunting, but he lost his way out. He tried to find the way out of the woods but wandered here and there. Finally, he saw a man approaching. With the hope to find a way out of the forest, the man asked the approaching man if he knew the way out of this forest. The man answered that he was also searching for a way out of the woods and knew that the way he came from does not go out of the forest, so he appealed that they both should find the way out. The proverb is made of “two heads”, and “better than one”. The proverb and the parable indicate that the man was lost and could not come out of the forest. He wandered alone but could not get out. He saw another man searching for a way out; hence, they decided to help each other find the way out. Thus, it suggested that it is better to have someone solve a problem than to find the solution alone. The man could not find a way out alone, but as soon as another man came who knew that the way he was coming from did not go out, they became sure that the other way may lead them out of the forest. Thus, the proverb suggests that it is better to have someone solve a problem rather than solve it alone because a lonely person may not find the solution to a problem. Together, people can solve any problem.

**“When there is unity, there is power” (Outcalt 62).**

The proverb finds its place in the commentary section of the parable *Bound Together*. The parable is a story of a father and his four sons. The father decided to teach a lesson to his four sons. He collected four sticks and tied them together, then he called his sons and told them to break the bundle of sticks. His four sons tried, but none could break the bundle with all their might. At last, the father untied the bundle and gave each son a stick; then, he asked them to break the stick. They broke the sticks quickly. The father advised them that no one can harm them when they are

together, but they can easily be harmed when they are separated. The proverb is made of “unity”, and “power”. The proverb and the parable indicate that no one could break the sticks when they were together. Similarly, the father tried to demonstrate that unity is strength. When the sticks were separated, they could easily be broken; thus, anyone can easily harm them when become separate. Thus, the proverb highlights the importance of unity and suggests that unity is strength and separation is weakness.

**“God watches over beggars and fools” (Outcalt 64).**

The commentary on the parable *The Rabbi's Daughters* includes the above proverb. The parable tells the story of a rabbi and his three daughters. The family was impoverished, and the three daughters shared only one dress. When one of them went to the town wearing the dress, the others stayed at home. The rabbi prayed to god to reduce their sufferings as they had only crusts of bread to eat, and the old rooster was not enough to be made a meal out of. One day a holy man came to the rabbi's house and asked for some food to eat; the rabbi told his daughters to catch the rooster and take it to the butcher to feed the holy man with it. The youngest daughter put on the dress and went to the market with the rooster in her hand. However, the rooster flew away from her hands. She ran after it and somehow managed to catch it, but her dress got torn from top to bottom. She was worried about going into the town and taking the rooster to the butcher. At that moment, she lost her enthusiasm and sat weeping by a tree. While she was weeping, she saw something glittering. She heard about the hidden treasures in the stories but never believed. When she dug, she found treasure. Meanwhile, the father and the holy man waited for the younger daughter to come. She went to her home with the treasure she found, but the father scolded her as he thought she had stolen it, but the holy man stopped him and told him that she had not stolen it, but God had listened to his prayers and bestowed him the treasure. The proverb and the parable indicate that faithful prayers result in God's blessings. The rabbi and his family were very poor, and he prayed the God to end their sufferings. The youngest daughter found a treasure, and their poverty ended. The proverb is made of “God watches over”, and “beggars and fools”. The proverb does not indicate that the rabbi is a beggar or a fool but focuses on God's provision of necessary things. In the context of the parable, God is the provider of the treasures. Thus, the proverb suggests that God provides everyone with essential things.

**“It is always wise to think of others first, especially when danger is present”**

(Outcalt 89).

The proverb is used in the commentary on the parable *Two Friends and a Bear*. The parable is the story of two friends walking through a jungle. Suddenly, a bear appeared, and one of them ran quickly to the tree and climbed on it while the other realized that he was left behind. The other friend laid down immediately as if he were dead. The bear came near and sniffed him. Believing him dead, the bear went away. The friend who hid among the tree branches climbed down the tree and asked the other friend what the bear said. The other friend told him that the bear advised him not to travel with the person who runs away in the presence of danger. The proverb is made of “it is wise”, “to think of others”, and “when the danger is present”. The parable and the proverb indicate that the friend who hid in the tree did not think of the other person when there was danger. On the other hand, he should have thought about his companion, but he thought of his safety only. Thus, the proverb suggests prioritizing the safety of others in times of difficulty proves the integrity of a person as a human.

**“One good turn deserves another”** (Outcalt 92).

The proverb is used in the commentary section below the parable *The Ant and the Pigeon*. It exemplifies the story of an ant and a pigeon. The ant in the parable went to a stream to drink water and was swept away. The pigeon saw the ant drowning and quickly plucked a leaf from the tree and threw it near the ant into the water. The ant climbed the leaf and managed to reach the ground. Thus, the ant’s life was saved. One day a hunter came into the forest to catch the pigeons. He was about to shoot the pigeon when the ant saw and stung him. The hunter missed the aim, and the pigeon flew away. Thus, the ant saved the pigeon’s life in return. The proverb indicates that the pigeon saved the ant from drowning. In return, the ant saved the pigeon’s life. The proverb is made of “one good turn”, and “deserves another”. The pigeon’s act of saving the ant’s life was good, and it deserved a good return which the ant performed by saving the pigeon’s life. Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that one should not forget the other’s favours. If we are helped in difficult times, we should also help others in their difficult times.

**“Those who can’t accept friendly advice make poor neighbors” (Outcalt 93).**

The parable *Friendly Advice* exemplifies the above proverb. It is the story of a man who became angry very quickly. Minor misunderstandings, trivial worries, and even friendly advices made him very angry. One day, his two friends talked about him in front of his house. One of them said that he is a decent person until he is impatient. The other agreed with the first and said he is very kind-hearted, but he becomes angry about trivial issues. The man overheard both of them and ran behind them with rage. The proverb exactly pointed out the essence of the story as the man could not be a good neighbour because he became angry quickly. He could not accept the friendly advice of his friends and ran after them angrily. The proverb is made of “those who can’t accept friendly advice”, and “make poor neighbors”. The proverb through the parable suggests that a person who is not friendly with others cannot be a good neighbour. Accepting good advice makes one a good friend and a good neighbour.

**“There are greater measures of friendship than rules and laws” (Outcalt 93).**

The proverb finds its place in the commentary section of the parable *The Burden by the River*. The parable tells the story of two monks walking along a fast-flowing river. They saw a beautiful young woman struggling to cross the river on her own. Therefore, one of the monks picked up the woman and took her to the other side of the river. After a few days, the other monk asked the first monk if he had forgotten that they should not touch a woman. The first monk told the other monk that he had left the woman on the other side of the river, but his companion was still carrying her in his thoughts. The proverb and the parable indicate that the monk helped the woman beyond the rules of his faith as he knew that the limit of friendship goes beyond the rules and laws of his faith. The essence of help was of greater value than the rules. Thus, the monk believed in helping the needy woman. The proverb is made of “greater measures of friendship”, and “than rules and laws”. The proverb suggests that we should not abide by the rules and laws when a needy person requires a helping hand.

**“Friendship is more valuable than gold”** (Outcalt 95).

**“Make new friends, but keep the old; One is silver, the other gold”** (Outcalt 96).

The above proverbs are used in the commentary section of the parable *The Greatest Treasure*. The parable tells the story of a man who promised all his ten children that he would give each of them one hundred gold coins from his property. He was a wealthy person when he made the promise, but as he became older, his wealth decreased. When he was on his deathbed, he called all his children and gave a hundred gold coins to the first nine children. He asked all the nine children to leave the room and told his tenth child, a daughter, that he could not keep his promise as he had only twenty gold coins. The daughter argued that he should have split the gold coins into equal amounts, but he said he wanted to fulfill his promise to most of his children. Besides the twenty gold coins, the man offered his daughter the best ten friends who have been very helpful to him in his life. He told her to treat them well, and he died. The other nine children spent their gold coins as per their wish, but the daughter grew desperate day by day. She remembered her father's last words and decided to invite all his friends to dinner. She made sure that everyone was satisfied. The friends observed that only the daughter had treated them well out of all the children. They decided to repay her. Each of them gave her a hundred gold coins. Thus, the proverbs indicate that the man's friends proved that friendship is more valuable. The first proverb is made of “friendship”, and “valuable than gold”. The second proverb is made of “make new friends”, “but keep old”, “one is silver”, and “other is gold”. The first proverb compares friendship with gold, and the other proverb points out the importance of old friends. Both the proverbs explain the value of friendship. Thus, the proverbs suggest that friendship is more important than riches.

**“One man's meat is another man's poison”** (Outcalt 97).

The proverb is used at the end of the commentary section on the parable *The Difference between a Ditch and a Mound*. The parable tells the story of two farmers whose farms were very near to one another. One farmer had a ditch in the middle of his farm, and the other had a mound. The farmer who was having a ditch on the farm longed for a mound, and the farmer with a mound on the farm longed to have a ditch. One day when both the farmers were travelling along the road and the farmer having a ditch on the farm requested to sell his mound to him. The farmer with the mound happily told him that he should have asked for it long before. Thus, both of them fulfilled



their wishes. The proverb indicates the same thing as both longed for each other's things. The farmer with a mound wanted a ditch, and the other farmer wished for a mound. The proverb is made of "one man's meat", and "another's poison". Thus, the proverb suggests that something we think is useless is useful to someone else. Hence, mutual sacrifice helps to fulfill each other's needs.

**"Tough times never last. But tough people do" (Outcalt 98).**

The proverb finds its place in the explanatory section on the parable *Bearing the Burden*. The parable tells the story of a wise man and his disciples who decided to stay in a town. A wicked person spread rumours about them, and they could not earn their living. Many people abused them to the limit that one of the disciples suggested living in another town. The wise man asked if the people in the other city behaved in the same manner, then what they should do. The disciples answered that they should find another town. The wise man told them there would be no end to this; it is better to stay in the town. There are challenging and ordinary situations, sufferings, and happiness, and the harassment will stop as they come. The proverb through the parable indicates that the wise man suggested to his disciples that a difficult situation they are facing will not go on for a long time. It will end soon. Therefore, more robust are those who face difficult situations. The proverb is made of "tough times", "never last", and "tough people do". The proverb suggests that difficult and everyday situations are two sides of the same coin. As a difficult situation comes, they pass on easily, and this goes on. In such situations, only the strongest people last forever.

**"No one is truly free who does not possess a pure heart" (Outcalt 102).**

**"From the heart comes all manner of evil" (Outcalt 102).**

The proverbs are used in the explanatory section of the parable *Matters of the Heart*. The parable tells the story of a famous rabbi who questioned his followers about what a person should strive for in life. His followers answered an excellent eye, a good friend, a good neighbour, and sound wisdom, but in the end rabbi, Eliezer responded that one should strive for a good heart. The master of the rabbi said that of all the answers, Eliezer's response is more profound as all other answers are included in his reply. Then, he asked another question about what a person should avoid in life. All the fellow rabbis answered an evil eye, an evil friend, an evil neighbour, and a

borrower who does not return, but rabbi Eliezer responded that one should avoid an evil heart. Again, rabbi Eliezer's answer surpassed all other answers. The proverbs are generated out of the parable, just like the one who possesses a bad heart is not free, and the heart is the source of evil matter. The first proverb is made of "no one is truly free", and "who does not possess a pure heart". The second proverb is made of "From the heart", and "comes all manner of evil". In the context of the parable, the proverbs suggest that a person with a pure heart is free. The heart is the source of evil matter. Therefore, a person should strive to have a good heart and avoid having an evil heart.

**"Some live to work; others work to live" (Outcalt 104).**

The proverb finds its place in the commentary section of the parable *The Poor Artist*. The parable's story is about a poor artist who left his house to try his fortune. After three years, he thought of returning home with the three hundred pieces of gold. On the way home, the artist saw a temple where a grand spiritual ceremony was performed. He was impressed by the grandeur that he thought he was always thinking of making wealth but forgot that real happiness is not in wealth. Thus, he donated all his wealth to the temple. When he reached home, his wife asked what he had earned in the three years. The artist told his wife that he had earned three hundred pieces of gold, but he donated them to the monks in the temple. On hearing this, the wife became angry and took the matter to court. The judge asked the artist why he did it. The artist answered that when he came to the temple, he felt that true wealth is not in the gold but in the mind; therefore, he planted a seed of goodness just as farmers grow seeds in the soil then he felt true freedom. The judge and others were impressed by the artist's answer, and they began helping him to their possible capacity. Thus, the artist and his wife lived a happy life. The proverb indicates that the artist lived to work, and his wife and others were working to live. The artist found true happiness in performing his duties while his wife searched for happiness in worldly things. The proverb is made of "some", "live to work", "others", and "work to live". Thus, the proverb suggests that people searching for true happiness live to work, and people searching for happiness in materialistic things work to live. People who live to work become happy with what they do, but people who work to live always remain dissatisfied even after achieving everything in their lives.

**“Never judge by appearance”** (Outcalt 106).

The proverb finds its place in the parable *A Life of Leisure*. The parable is a story of a young donkey who complained to his father about the injustice they face as they worked diligently on the farm and the pigs spent leisure time. They got more food and became fatter day by day, and the donkeys got hardly any food to hide their ribs. The father donkey advised him that it was just one side of the fact he saw. In reality, when the pigs become fat, the master takes them to kill. Therefore, they enjoyed true freedom as they were not taken to be killed. The proverb indicates that the young donkey judged their life with the pig’s lives only on appearances. He was not aware that the master of the farm kept the pigs feeding to kill them for his food. The proverb is made of “never judge”, and “by appearance”. Thus, the proverb and the parable suggest that appearance is sometimes deceptive, just as the master’s act deceives the young donkey.

**“It is always best to follow our ethics and beliefs”** (Outcalt 107).

The comments section on the parable *The Mystery of the Palm Wine* uses the above proverb. The parable tells the story of a chief of a tribe who invited all the village men to a feast. He told them that the food would be served, but all had to bring a jug full of palm wine. A poor man living in the tribe did not have wine, so he thought he would take a jug full of water as it may not make any difference in the lot. Thus, he went to the festival, and the head of the tribe ordered his servants to distribute wine. When the people raised their glasses to drink the wine, all were surprised that they were drinking water as everyone thought that their share of water would not make any difference to the lot. Therefore, everyone brought water. The proverb indicates that the villagers did not follow their ethics as everyone brought water with them, thinking that their share of water would not make any difference in a lot of the wine. Those who could get the wine also brought water, which indicated unethical behaviour. As a result, all had to drink only water. Thus, they received what they brought. The proverb is made of “follow”, and “our ethics and beliefs”. The proverb suggests that persons who follow ethics receive the best of things, and those who do not follow ethics get what they deserve.

**“The best decisions are those that honor others and bring dignity to our reputation”**  
(Outcalt 107).

The above proverb is used in the commentary section of the same parable. The people brought water to the feast, and everyone came to know that all of them had got only water. Thus, everyone’s reputation was at stake. The chief of the tribe and others realized what everyone thought, thus bringing embarrassment to them. The proverb is made of “best decisions”, “that honor others”, “bring dignity to”, and “our reputation”. Thus, the proverb suggests that if everyone thought of their reputation and brought wine as asked by the chief, everyone would have been saved from the feeling of embarrassment. Therefore, everyone’s decision would have saved their dignity. Everyone took it for granted that others would bring wine, and this decision degraded their dignity. Thus, the proverb throws light on our responsibility as dignified citizens of society.

**“The wise are those who seek wisdom, and the fool is one who thinks wisdom has already been obtained”** (Outcalt 112).

**“God gives wisdom to the wise, and not to fools”** (Outcalt 112).

The proverbs are used in an anonymous Jewish parable that tells the story of a noblewoman who went to a rabbi and asked why the proverb says God gives wisdom to the wise and does not provide insight to fools. The rabbi asked her a simple question if she had jewellery and if two people came to her to take the jewellery, one was rich and the other poor, whom she would give her jewellery. The woman answered that she would give her jewellery to the rich. The rabbi asked the reason for providing the jewellery to the rich. The woman explained that the rich would pay for it if it were lost. The rabbi pointed out precisely that it is the same case with wisdom that God gives wisdom to the wise and not to the fools. The proverbs indicate that wise people always look for wisdom, but fools think they already have wisdom. Therefore, God offers wisdom to the wise and not to the fools. The first proverb is made of “wise”, “seek wisdom”, “fool thinks”, and “wisdom has already been obtained”. The second is made of “God gives wisdom”, “to the wise”, and “not to fools”. The first proverb is used before the parable, suggesting that wise people are humble enough to acquire wisdom, and the fool thinks they are wise. The parable exemplified the next proverb as the noblewoman became ready to give her jewellery to the rich person on the proposition that s/he would be able to pay for the jewellery if lost and the poor would not be able

to do that. The rabbit pointed out the essence of her judgment in the form of a proverb as the rich would be able to pay for the lost jewellery in the same manner a wise offers wisdom to others. Just like the poor cannot pay for the lost jewellery, the fool cannot give wisdom to others. Therefore, the proverbs suggest that a wise person always looks for wisdom, and the fool takes it for granted that he/she is intelligent. Similarly, God gives wisdom to those who can provide it to others.

**“Haste makes waste”** (Outcalt 116).

**“Shortcuts typically lead to ruin and despair”** (Outcalt 116).

The above proverbs find their place in the commentary section on the parable *A Solid Foundation*. The parable tells the story of a rich but silly person who was very jealous of his neighbour’s three-story building. He wanted to build precisely the same building. Therefore, he hired a carpenter and told him to build the building. The carpenter started his work and laid down the foundation to build the first floor, then the second floor, and then the third floor. The man saw this and told the carpenter that he was not concerned with the foundation or the second floor. He told him to build the third floor rather than wasting time building the first and the second floor. Thus, both the proverbs indicate the foolishness of the man as he was in such a great hurry that he told the carpenter to build the third floor. The man wanted the carpenter not to waste time building the first and the second floor. With the man’s demand, the carpenter was unable to build the house in a lifetime. Thus, creating the replica of the building remains incomplete because of the shortcut and hasty demand of the man. The first proverb is made of “haste”, and “waste”. The second proverb is made of “shortcuts”, “lead to”, and “ruin and despair”. The proverb and the parable suggest that work done in haste is always a waste. Shortcuts never succeed.

**“Bickering rarely settles disputes”** (Outcalt 119).

The proverb is exemplified through the parable *Box, a Cane, and a Pair of Shoes*. The parable is the story of two demons fighting for a box, a cane, and a pair of shoes. A man passing by overheard their argument and asked them why they were fighting for trivial things. They answered that the box might contain something they needed like food, clothes, or wealth. With the help of the cane, they can overpower their enemies, and with a pair of shoes, they can walk in the air. The man told them that making an argument will not solve the matter. He asked them to stay

away and allow him to think over the solution to divide these things among them. When the demons were far away, the man picked up the box and the cane, put on the shoes, and went away. The proverb indicates that the two demons were arguing over things, and it did not end. The man intervened and took away everything. Thus, the demons were left with nothing. Therefore, the proverb and the exemplifying parable point out that the issue between the demons was not solved only by an argument. The proverb is made of “bickering”, and “rarely settles disputes”. Thus, the proverb exemplifies that those ideas that lead to more arguments remain unresolved. It also suggests that controversies should be resolved by discussion and not by more arguments.

**“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” (Outcalt 120).**

The proverb finds its place in the parable *Two Wise Stories from Avianus*. The parable tells the story of a fisherman who once caught a tiny fish. The fish told him to throw him back in the water as he is little and will not fulfill his hunger. The fish said he could catch him and have a decent meal when it grew. The fisherman listened to the fish and quoted the above proverb. The fish did not understand the proverb, so it asked what the birds had to do with it as it is not a bird. The fisherman did not listen to the fish and took him home to cook. The proverb indicates that the fisherman had caught only the small fish, and if he let it go, he might not have anything to eat for dinner; hence, he thought it is better to have the little fish now than to have big fish in the future. The proverb symbolically referred to the fish in hand and fish in the pond. The proverb is made of “a bird in hand”, “worth”, and “two in the bush”. Thus, the proverb suggests that it is better to enjoy what you have than to think of what you will enjoy in the future. There is no guarantee that something exactly will happen in the future.

**“It is not wise to assume unnecessary burdens in life” (Outcalt 123).**

The proverb is used in the explanatory comments on the parable *The Essence of Time*. The parable tells the story of a man going on a long journey. During his journey, he came to a river and saw that the other side was better for a walk; therefore, he decided to cross the river. He made a raft with grass and hollow wood pieces. When he reached the other side of the river, he thought that he had wasted his time building the raft and that it is better to carry it. Thus, the proverb and the parable indicate that the man had taken up the unnecessary burden of the raft in his journey.

The raft was made to solve his temporary problem. Even if he gets to another river to cross, it is not wise to carry the raft to another river. The proverb is made of “not wise”, “to assume”, and “unnecessary burden”. The proverb thus, suggests that we should not take an unnecessary burden on our shoulders if it is not necessary. The undue burden makes us slow in reaching the place of our desire. It makes the journey troublesome. Therefore, it is foolish to take over the needless responsibility of both things and thoughts.

**“Watch out for those who plot to gain advantage through trickery and self-promotion”** (Outcalt 124).

The proverb is used in the commentary section of the parable *One Wise Meatball*. It is the meatball story that met a Coyote down the road. The Coyote was very shrewd. He requested the meatball to let him have its bite as he was starving. The meatball gave him a bit and went ahead. However, the Coyote went ahead and waited for the meatball. This went on for some time, and the meatball said that he was the same Coyote who had been requesting a bite. Thus, Coyote’s plan was disclosed. The proverb is made of “watch out”, “who plot to gain advantage”, and “through trickery and self-promotion”. The Coyote plotted against the meatball to gain the advantage. He used a trick to mislead the meatball by telling him that he was hungry. Thus, the proverb suggests that we should be aware of the tricksters who plot against us and take undue advantage.

**“The appearance of beggars can be deceiving”** (Outcalt 124).

**“There is more to a beggar than meets the eye”** (Outcalt 124).

The proverb is used in the explanatory section of the parable entitled *One Wise Meatball*. The parable tells the story of a meatball rolling down the road and arriving beside a Coyote. The Coyote said to the meatball that he had been hungry for many days. The meatball offered him a bite and rolled down the road, but Coyote ran faster and sat beside the road. The meatball came to the Coyote again. The Coyote told the meatball that he was hungry. The meatball offered a bite again. The third time the same thing happened, and the meatball observed meat stuck in Coyote’s teeth. The meatball told Coyote that he was the same Coyote that ate a bite a few moments ago. The Coyote felt that he was caught and ran away. The core elements of the proverbs are “the appearances”, “of beggars”, and “can be deceiving” and “more to a beggar” and “than meets the



eye”. The two proverbs indicate that the Coyote’s appearance was deceptive as he lied to the meatball that he was hungry. There was something more than the Coyote had told the meatball. The parable, through these proverbs, suggests that a shrewd person always has something more than what he shows. The meatball offered bites to the Coyote in the story, but he took advantage of the meatball’s generous behaviour. The parable teaches us a moral lesson that opportunist like the Coyote always wants to make the most out of others. Thus, the proverb advises that we should be cautious as what we see may not always be true. Therefore, we should be alert against everyone who tries to take advantage of our generous behaviour.

**“All that is possessed can be lost. All that is lost can be found” (Outcalt 126).**

The proverb is used in the commentary section of the parable *The Visitation*. The parable is the story of a man who dreamed of good wealth only. One day a beautiful woman came to his house. He asked her who she was, and she told him that she was the goddess of wealth. The man was pleased to have her in his house. He treated her very decently and dreamed of having good wealth. The next day another ugly woman knocked on the door. He asked her who she was. She told him that she was the goddess of poverty. The man tried to drive her away, but she did not go. She told the man that she is the sister of the goddess of wealth. Wherever the goddess of wealth goes, she follows. Both the goddesses are inseparable. Yet, the man drove her away and went into the house. He found that the goddess of wealth was not in the house. Through the parable, the proverb indicates that the man had the goddess of wealth in his house, but he drove away the goddess of poverty, and the goddess of wealth also went. Thus, he lost the opportunity to earn wealth. The proverb is made of “all”, “possessed can be lost”, “all”, and “lost can be found”. Thus, the proverb suggests that what we have can be lost, and what we do not have can be found.

**“It is impossible to achieve two goals at the same time” (Outcalt 127).**

The proverb is used in the commentary section on the parable *A Honey Pot of Wisdom*. The parable tells the story of the fool boiling honey in an empty pot. His friend stopped by, and the fool wanted to offer him the honey as a refreshment, but it was hot. He did not want to take the pot away from the fire, and at the same time, he fanned the pot so that honey in the pot cooled down. The proverb pointed out that the fool wanted to offer cool honey to his friend, and at the same

time, he did not want to take the pot away from the fire. For honey to be cooled, the pot had to be taken away from the fire, but the fool was trying to do both things simultaneously, which was not possible. The proverb is made of “it is impossible”, “to achieve”, “two goals”, and “at the same time”. Thus, the proverb suggests that one cannot achieve two things simultaneously. In the context of the parable, the fool was trying to accomplish two interdependent things. To achieve one thing, the other has to be stopped. Thus, the proverb advises us to focus only on one thing at a time. If we try to do many things at the same time, none will be done successfully.

**“It is never wise to devise a plan without considering the ramifications and the steps one will need to take to achieve the goal” (Outcalt 128).**

The proverb exemplifies the parable *The Fox and the Vineyard*. The parable tells the story of a fox who came to a vineyard surrounded by a fence. He wanted to get into the vineyard and eat the grapes, but he could not find a space to get into the vineyard. However, there was a small gap in the fence. The fox tried to get into the vineyard through the gap, but he was too fat to get through the gap. Hence, he had to fast for three days to be lean enough to get through the gap. After three days, he got into the vineyard and ate the grapes till his belly was full. He could not get out through the gap as he was fat again when he tried to get through the gap. Thus, he had to remain hungry for three days to get through the gap. In the end, he got out of the vineyard and expressed his disgust by saying that the grapes were good, but it was of no use as he had to be hungry for three days to get in and get out. The proverb indicates that the fox had planned to get into the vineyard, but he did not think about how to get out. Thus, he had to suffer a lot due to his imperfect plan. The proverb is made of “never devise a plan”, “without considering the ramifications”, “for the steps”, and “to achieve the goal”. Hence, the proverb and the parable suggest that it is useless to plan without considering the remedy to the unprecedented events while achieving the aim.

**“Too much talk at the wrong time or with the wrong people can prove disastrous” (Outcalt 130).**

The proverb finds its place in the commentary section on the parable *The Talking Skull*. The parable tells the story of a hunter who went into a jungle for hunting and found a human skull. He asked the skull what brought it to the forest. The skull replied that talking brought it to the

woods. The hunter was overwhelmed to find that the skull was talking. He went to the king and told him that he had found a human skull that talked. The king wondered if the hunter was lying. He asked all of his wise men, but no one affirmed that such skull existed. The king ordered a guard to go with the hunter and see if the skull talks, and if the hunter is telling the truth, bring the skull to him, and if he is lying, then kill the hunter on the spot. The guard and the hunter went into the forest, and the hunter asked the skull what brought it there. The skull did not speak. The guard killed the hunter. After the guard went away, the skull asked the hunter what brought him there; the hunter answered that talking brought him there. The proverb indicates that the skull talked to the hunter, and the hunter informed the king, but the skull did not speak when the king's guard came to confirm the news. Thus, the hunter was proved wrong and was killed. The hunter should not have talked about the talking skull to anyone, but his enthusiasm put him in danger. The skull did not speak in front of the guard, and the hunter lost his life. When the guard went away, the skull spoke. Thus, the hunter was the wrong person whom the skull talked to, and the guard went away was the wrong time when the skull talked. The proverb is made of "too much talk", "wrong time", "wrong people", and "prove disastrous". The proverb and the parable suggest that talking at the wrong time and to the wrong person is not advantageous. Additionally, talking to the wrong person at the wrong time may have a disastrous effect on the person speaking or listening. Therefore, it advises not to talk to the wrong person at the wrong time.

**"Perhaps a fool can have more luck" (Outcalt 145).**

The proverb is used in the parable *A Better Life*. The parable tells the story of a couple who had two sons. One was clever, and the other was a fool. The clever son made the couple very proud of his intelligence. The foolish son sat in the house, ate the food, and did nothing. When both grew, the clever son saw what sacrifices his parents had made for them. Their home was the meanest. They hardly had things of enjoyment. With all this around the house, the clever boy decided to go out of the house and make some fortune for the family. He set himself on a journey, and his parents gave him all they had. On the journey, the son came across a filthy dog. The dog asked him to clean him up, and he would reward him, but the clever son rejected him. Later, he saw a well that was in bad condition. He was about to leave the well, the well asked him to clean it up, and it will repay him, but as usual, he ignored it. Further, he came across a pear tree which was withered. The

tree asked him to water it and cover its roots with soil, but he rejected it. Then he came to a town where he asked an innkeeper to give him a job for a year, and he could pay him whatever he thinks the best at the end of the year. The boy worked for an entire year, and when the time came to get his wages from the innkeeper, he asked him to choose whatever he wanted from his stable as his wages. The boy chose the best horse, wagon, and big chests and started his journey to home. While returning home, he came across the same pear tree that bloomed with the finest pears, but the tree did not allow him to take a single pear from the tree. Further, he was thirsty and saw the same well, which was in excellent condition, but the well did not allow him to drink water. In the end, he saw the same dog with a diamond collar around his neck. He tried to get the collar, but the dog did not allow him. When he came home, he went into the house and told his parents that he had come with all the fortune. It was a late night, but everyone, including neighbours, came to see what he had earned. They emptied the wagon and took everything in the house, and as the day broke, everything turned into a ruin. Thus, all the neighbours laughed at the family. The family felt embarrassed, and the foolish son could not stand the embarrassment, so he decided to go out to make a fortune. The parents laughed at him, but he insisted, and they allowed him by saying the above proverb. The proverb indicates that their clever son could not earn much fortune and they doubted what their foolish son can earn, but they could not stop him; hence, they thought he could perhaps be luckier than their clever son to earn a good fortune. The proverb is made of “a fool”, “can have”, and “more luck”. In the context of the parable, the proverb suggests that it is not true that clever people consistently earn a fortune. A fool can be fortunate to have luck. The story does not end here. It further proves that the foolish son was fortunate to earn the fortune. The following proverb is used for the next half of the story.

**“Life is rarely fair, and often the best of life comes to those who have the most luck, rather than the most brains” (Outcalt 149).**

The comments section on the parable *A Better Life* uses the above proverb. In the first half of the parable, the clever son of the family failed to earn a fortune for the family. The foolish son of the family decided to set himself on the journey out in the world to try his luck. The parents laughed as their clever son could do much and doubted what the foolish son can do. They refused him, but he insisted. At last, his parents bid him farewell. Similar things happened to the foolish

son. Unlike his clever brother, he came across a dirty dog. He cleaned and combed the dog. Then, he came to a tarnished well that he cleaned, unlike his clever brother. At last, he went to a withered tree to which he poured water. Then he went to the same innkeeper and worked there for a year. As he completed a year of work, he asked the innkeeper for his wages. The innkeeper asked him to take whatever he wanted from the stable. The foolish son thought that the innkeeper had been very generous to him, so taking good things would not be good, so he took the oldest of the horse, the meanest of the wagon, and a broken chest. Thus, he started his return journey to his home. On the way, he came to a tree full of golden pears. He asked the tree if he could pluck some pears as he was starving. The tree recognized him as he was the person who watered it. Therefore, the tree allowed him to take some pears. Then, he came to the same dirty well, but now it was spotless. The foolish son asked it if he could drink some water. The well knew him as he was the one who cleaned it. The well allowed him to drink the water and awarded him the silver cup. At last, he came across the dog whom he washed and combed. The dog came to him and told him to take the diamond collar from his neck. Thus, the foolish son made his fortune. His parents did not believe that their foolish son earned so much fortune. The proverb indicates that life was not fair as the foolish son made a fortune and the clever failed to do so. The stupid son had been lucky, and the clever son was unlucky. The proverb is made of “life is rarely fair”, “best of life”, “comes to those”, “who have”, “most luck”, and “than most brains”. Thus, the proverb suggests that sometimes a clever person cannot have the most luck compared to a foolish person.

**“Change begins within” (Outcalt 150).**

The proverb finds its place in the comment section of the parable *In Retrospect*. The parable tells the story of a famous rabbi sitting with his followers. He told his followers that he was so enthusiastic that he wanted to change everyone when he was young, so he prayed to God to give him the sense and strength to change everyone. When he was in his mid-life, he looked back in his life and found that he had changed no one. Thus, he prayed to God again to give him the power to change others, but he could not do so. Now, he is old, and his prayer has changed. He prays to God that he should get the power to change himself. The proverb and the parable thus indicate that the rabbi needed the strength to change the world, but he could not change it; in the end, he understood

that change begins from within. The proverb is made of “change”, “begins”, and “within”. Thus, the proverb suggests that any change we want to see in the world should begin with ourselves.

**“Greed and impatience lead to wasted opportunities” (Outcalt 151).**

The proverb is used in the comment section of the parable *The Last of the Golden Eggs*. The parable is the story of a farmer who had a hen that laid golden eggs. The farmer believed that the hen would be full of gold, so he killed the hen and saw that her insides were the same as that of other hens. Thus, he lost whatever profit he would have earned from the golden eggs of the hen. The parable and the proverb indicate that the farmer became greedy and impatient about accumulating wealth too early. In haste, he killed the hen without giving it a second thought and ended up in nothing. The proverb is made of “greed and impatience”, “lead to”, and “wasted opportunities”. The farmer decided to kill the hen to earn more gold, but it turned out to be a wasted decision. Thus, the proverb suggests that one should not take any decision that takes one to wasted opportunities. The following proverb also points out the essence of the parable in a different way.

**“The wise person is one who waits patiently for results, and takes the profit as it comes” (Outcalt 151).**

The parable and the proverb indicate that the farmer was not wise as he did not wait patiently to have the golden eggs laid by the hen. As mentioned in the earlier proverb, he was greedy and impatient to be rich quickly. Hence, he killed the hen. According to this proverb, a wise person waits patiently to achieve the desired result and enjoys the results. A fool is eager to achieve results in shortcut ways leading to loss. The proverb is made of “wise person”, “waits patiently”, “takes profit”, and “as it comes”. Thus, the proverb advises not to be a foolish person who impatiently cuts off the ways to earn profit. It informs us that great rewards are the result of great patience.

**“The highest achievements in life can only be obtained through perseverance, sacrifice, or great effort” (Outcalt 151).**

The proverb is exemplified in the comment section on the parable *A Greater Reward*. The parable tells two different stories to give advice through two different proverbs. The first story is

about a diver who went to the sea to get some pearls. As he dived deep into the sea, he experienced a strong current. He got a wound on his body. He saw a shark looking to attack him. However, the diver faced these difficulties and finally came out with a beautiful pearl. The parable and the proverb indicate that the diver experienced many adverse conditions in the sea as there was a strong water current and a shark was looking to attack him, yet he could find a beautiful pearl. The diver could get the pearl due to perseverance, sacrifice, and great effort. He was determined to get the pearl. He put his life in danger, but he found a rarely beautiful pearl with his outstanding efforts. The proverb is made of “highest achievements”, “obtained”, and “through perseverance, sacrifice, or great effort”. Thus, the proverb advises that if we want to achieve something great in our life, we need to be persistent, we need to sacrifice something in our lives, and we have to put in the extra effort. The following proverb is exemplified through the other story under the same parable.

**“If we desire to reach a lofty goal, we will achieve it only after much pain and sacrifice”** (Outcalt 152).

The story of a hermit who wished to climb the highest mountain. He threw his body against the swords to train himself for the climb. He used to walk through the fire and suffered great pain. At last, when he climbed the high mountain, he experienced a cool breeze on the top of the mountain. The parable and the proverb specify that the hermit wanted to climb a high mountain, but it was not easy as he had to undergo painful training to achieve his aim. The proverb is made of “lofty goal”, “can be achieved”, and “after much pain and sacrifice”. Thus, the proverb advises that acquiring a very high aim in life is not always easy. The person has to bear great pain and sacrifice many things. In the end, the achievement of the aim is worth it. Therefore, there is always a painful story of sacrifice behind a person’s success.

**“Just because something is doable does not mean that it should be done”** (Outcalt 158).

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *Come Together*. The parable tells the story of four persons. Three among them were very good at books, and the fourth was wiser than the three. One day, all four persons meet, and the three learned persons regretted that their learning is of no use if they do not apply it in real life. Hence, they decided to go out of their town to make a fortune with the help of their learning. The fourth person asked them if the



world had been different than what they had read in the books. The three scholars boasted that they would show him that their knowledge is more extraordinary than any wisdom. As soon as they left their town, they came across a forest. They decided to cross the forest. While going through the forest, they found a skeleton of a lion. The first scholar told the others that he had learned how to assemble animal skeletons and apply his knowledge to this skeleton. The second scholar said that he had studied how to make tissues and flesh of the animal. The third scholar said that he had studied how to put life into a body. The fourth person told them he did not know of this, but he could only bow to their knowledge. All three scholars tried to apply their knowledge when the fourth person reminded them that if they become successful in their work, the lion will be alive and kill all of them. The third scholar reprimanded him that the knowledge without application is a waste, so he should stop irritating them and watch quietly. The fourth person did not wait for them to complete and climbed a tall tree and watched from a safe distance. No sooner did they complete their work than the lion came to life and saw three persons standing near and killed them. The parable and the proverb indicate that the three scholars were overconfident to apply their knowledge in real life. Still, they were unaware of the situation in which they were using their knowledge. They only thought that they could apply their knowledge. The fourth person knew that it should not be done at the risk of life because something is possible. The three scholars in the parable knew what their action would lead to, but they were so proud of their knowledge that they forgot the impending danger. The proverb is made of “just because”, “something is doable”, and “should be done”. The proverb advises us that when there is a danger, we should not proceed. Just because we are capable of doing something does not mean that we should do it without thinking of the dangerous outcomes of our actions. A wise person is the one who knows that every effort has an equal and opposite reaction.

**“When one has an inner strength and character, physical appearance is soon forgotten” (Outcalt 159).**

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *The Way of Forgetfulness*. The short parable tells the story of a hunchback who was an eloquent speaker. He amused the prince with his way of dancing and hand movements. The prince liked the hunchback man so much that he forgot that he was a prince and behaved like an ordinary man. The proverb

and the parable showed that the hunchback man had the inner strength and character which overcame his physical deformity. Even the prince became very fond of his way of dancing and hand movements. The hunchback man hid his physical deformity through his eloquent speech, dance, and hand movement. The proverb is made of “an inner strength and character”, “enable physical appearance”, and “forgotten”. Thus, the proverb suggests that physical appearance is not essential when we have inner strength and character. Many people have physical deformities, but they overcome them by exhibiting their internal talent and skill. The following proverb highlights another aspect of the same parable.

**“When people do not forget what to forget, but forget what not to forget, this is truly forgetting” (Outcalt 159).**

The hunchback made the prince happy with his dance and hand tricks. The prince was so attracted to the hunchback man’s performance that he forgot that he was a prince and that the man dancing was a hunchback man. Thus, the proverb points out that the prince did not remember that the man is a hunchback and forgot that he is a prince. The prince forgot this and behaved like an ordinary man. The proverb is made of “people do not forget”, “what to forget”, “but forget”, “what not to forget”, and “this is truly forgetting”. The proverb suggests that people should forget things that are meant to be overlooked and should remember the things that are meant not to be ignored then it does not become forgetting.

**“The only enduring gifts are the ones we give to others” (Outcalt 169).**

The proverb finds its place in the parable *Sand Castles*. The parable tells the story of children building their sandcastle on the seashore. Everyone made their castle and told others not to touch their castle. However, one child ran over the sandcastle made by another, and others beat him as he broke the rule. Thus, the children played till the sun was setting. As the sun was setting, children thought of going home and forgot about protecting their castle. Some even broke their castle. When everyone went home, the tide came and washed away all the castles in the evening. The parable and the proverb indicate that the children fought with the child who broke the castle, and it was an everlasting memory that others gave him. The proverb is made of “enduring gifts”, and “we give to others”. The proverb and the parable symbolically suggest that humans behave

like children. We have possessiveness over our belongings, and we do not tolerate any harm. The way we behave with others while living is essential as we do not know what happens to our belongings after our death. Thus, our behaviour is a lifelong gift to others.

**“Who says that two heads are better than one?” (Outcalt 170).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *Heads and Tails*. The parable tells two different stories to exemplify the proverb. The first story is about a bird having two heads. One head of the bird saw that the other head was eating delicious fruit. It became jealous of the head eating the fruit and punished it by consuming poison. Thus, the bird died. Another story is about a snake whose head and tail constantly quarrelled on the issue of who leads. The head argued that the nature of being a head is that it leads, and the tail asserted that it should lead. Thus, their fight did not end. The tail tied itself to a tree and did not allow the head to lead. The head pulled with all might, the tail released the knot, and the snake fell into the fire. The stories in the parable indicate that jealousy leads to destruction. In the first story, one head was jealous of another head, and in the second story, the snake’s tail was jealous of the head. Thus, their jealousy led to their death. The proverb applies to both stories. In the first story, the bird had two heads, but one became jealous of the other, and the bird died. In the second story, the snake’s tail argued with the head to be the head, and the story ended with the snake’s death. The proverb is made of “who says”, “two heads”, and “better than one”. Thus, the proverb suggests that it is better not to be jealous of others. The proverb advises that it is always difficult to follow more than one leader. Hence, only one leader is better to follow than two.

**“We become what we think about” (Outcalt 172).**

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *How to Capture the Wind*. The parable tells the story of a follower who went to Father Poeman. He said that evil and awkward thoughts kept coming into his mind. He asked him how he could keep them away. Father Poeman took him outside and asked him to capture the wind with the help of his robe. The follower told Father Poeman that it is impossible. Father Poeman explained to him that it is similar to catching the wind. As it is impossible to capture the wind, it is also impossible to stop evil thoughts from coming into mind. We need to stand firm against them is the only way to keep them away.

The proverb indicates that the follower could not control the evil thoughts of his mind. As a result, he was afraid of becoming a bad person. Hence, he sought Father Poeman to give him the solution. The proverb is made of “we become”, and “what we think about”. Thus, the proverb suggests that we become similar to the thoughts that come to our minds. Therefore, we should be aware that the thought process makes our character and we should control our thoughts.

**“Two looked out from the prison bars, One saw mud, the other stars” (Outcalt 177).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *What the Caged Bird Knows*. The parable is the story of a caged bird. One day another bird flew near the cage and exclaimed to the caged bird that he is very fortunate to have a servant who brings him food regularly. The caged bird said that it is the only benefit he enjoyed. Otherwise, the outsiders cannot see the bars around. The parable and the proverb do not directly correspond to each other, but both highlight the matter of perspective. The point of view is significant in life. The caged bird enjoyed the food brought by the servant but could not enjoy the freedom, and the free bird enjoyed the freedom but found it very hard to search for the food. Thus, the perspectives of both the birds are different. The proverb is made of “two looked”, “one saw mud”, and “the other stars”. The parable directs the attention to the old proverb, which suggests when two people saw out of prison, one saw mud and became happy to be inside, and the other saw outside and saw stars and became sad about being in prison. Thus, the proverb indicates that everything depends on the point of view of a person. It also suggests that one should always look at the brighter side. A positive attitude provides the power to find solutions to the problems in life.

**“The virtue of sacrifice is one that many aspire to, but it is most difficult to achieve” (Outcalt 186).**

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *Service*. The parable is the story of a Sufi who told his disciples that there are jewels scattered all around and why they are not collecting them. The disciples started looking for gems everywhere, but they could not see one. Then the disciples asked the Sufi where the jewels are. The Sufi answered service to others is what he was talking about. Thus, the Sufi advised his disciples that service to others is service to God. The proverb is made of “virtue of sacrifice”, “many aspire to”, and “but most difficult to

achieve”. The proverb and the parable suggest that everyone wants to go closer to God, but it is not always easy. To be close to God, one requires to deliver service. The Sufi advised his disciples to serve others, and then they will be able to go closer to God. He compared jewels with service, and the disciples are not collecting the jewels means they are not serving others. Thus, the proverb suggests that one must serve others to go closer to God.

**“True authority rests in virtue rather than position” (Outcalt 190).**

The proverb is exemplified in the comment section on the parable *A Time of Power*. The parable is the story of king Yao who told his heir Shun that he would attack the three neighbouring nations. He also confessed that he felt uncomfortable in the position of a ruler. Shun understood what king Yao said and told him that the rulers of these three nations are animals then why did he feel uncomfortable. Once ten suns illuminated the earth, but virtue was superior to the suns. Thus, Shun pointed out that position does not matter compared to virtue. The proverb indicates that king Yao was concerned with his position, but he had virtue. His heir reminded him that position does not matter. Only virtue is the ultimate thing. The proverb is made of “true authority”, “rests in virtue”, and “than in position”. Thus, the proverb suggests that virtue is far superior to a person’s position. If a person is virtuous, his position does not matter. Man with great virtue is always valued in any position. Virtue enables a person to achieve a particular position.

**“Be yourself” (Outcalt 193).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *The Donkey’s Disguise*. The parable is the story of a man who had a donkey. The man employed the donkey for challenging work; thus, the donkey became worn out. The man left the donkey to graze in the neighbour’s field and recover. The man put a panther’s skin over the donkey so that people stay away from him. The people saw the donkey in the panther’s skin and stayed away from him, assuming it was a big cat. Unfortunately, the landowner went to his land wearing a grey coat, saw the panther in his field, and ran away. When the donkey saw the man running, he mistook it for another donkey and ran after him. The man ran even faster. Naturally, the donkey brayed, and the landowner understood that the animal is a donkey. He took out his bow and arrow and shot the donkey dead. The parable and the proverb indicate that the donkey was hidden under the panther’s skin; hence, he was

mistaken to be a panther. Until he brayed, everyone kept a safe distance from him. Thus, his true identity was not revealed. When he brayed, his identity was disclosed, and the landowner killed him. The proverb is made of “be”, and “yourself”. Thus, it suggests that one should represent in actual appearance. Appearances are often deceptive. Therefore, one should not hide the identity.

**“The best friends are those who can give us what we need without our having to ask for it” (Outcalt 199).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *Spitting on the Rabbi*. The parable tells the story of a rabbi who preached in a synagogue every day. A woman moved by his words stayed late into the temple for a longer time. This went on for several days, and her husband asked her where she was after the synagogue was over. She told him that she was meditating in the temple, but he did not believe her. One day her husband demanded that she must spit on the rabbi’s face. She was a true devotee and was not ready to do it. The husband left home in anger. She told her two closest friends about what happened between her and her husband. Her friends went to the rabbi and told him everything. One day, the rabbi asked the woman and her friends to come and pray for him as his eyes were suffering. The woman started praying for him, and he turned to the woman and told her that his eyes would recover if an appropriate person spits in his eyes seven times. So, he asked her to spit in his eyes seven times. Thus, unwillingly she spat, and the rabbi told her to tell her husband that she spat on the rabbi’s face seven times. When others in the synagogue heard this, they expressed their outrage as the rabbi had stained his image, but the rabbi told them that his reputation is not more important than the relationship of a husband and wife. Thus, the parable and the proverb indicate that the rabbi has performed the role of a true friend as he saved the woman’s marital life. Her two friends also proved her real friends as they immediately consulted the rabbi. The rabbi quickly agreed to fulfill the demand of the woman’s husband to save her marital life. The proverb is made of “best friends”, “those who can give us”, “what we need”, and “without our asking for it”. Thus, the proverb advises that real friends do not ask what we need. They sense it and fulfill our needs before we ask for them. Hence, the proverb and the parable point out the quality of a true friend.

**“If things are bad now—they could always be worse”** (Outcalt 201).

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *God Is Good*. The parable tells the story of two travellers. One among them was a believer of God, and the other was a non-believer. They took with them a donkey, a lantern, and a rooster. The man who believed in God always said that God is good every time. The non-believer told him to wait and know how good God is. They decided to take a night halt when they came to a town. They searched for an inn, but all the inns were full, so they decided to rest under a tree. The non-believer asked if God was good to them. The believer said yes, and we will soon know about it. When they were about to sleep, there was a terrible roar of a lion. The lion came from the bushes, and they climbed on a tree. The lion attacked the donkey and took it into the forest. The non-believer asked if God was good. The other person said yes as the lion took the donkey and not one of them. When they were about to get down from the tree, they heard the cry of the rooster. They saw that a panther attacked the rooster and ate it. The non-believer asked if God was still good. The believer said yes because if the rooster had not cried, the panther would have attacked them instead. Finally, they experienced a strong current of wind that blew out the lantern, and there was only darkness. The non-believer asked if God was really good. The believer kept quiet. The following day, when they got down from the tree and went to the village searching for food, they heard that the robbers had come and robbed the entire village last night. The believer said to the non-believer that it was good that they did not stay in an inn; otherwise, they would have been robbed. The wind destroying the lamp was also good as the robbers did not come to rob them. The believer asked the non-believer if he could say God is not good. The parable indicates that the travellers' situations were good for them; otherwise, their conditions differed. The proverb is made of “if things are bad”, and “they could be worse”. Thus, the proverb advises that the situation at present is not always bad, but it could be worse. The proverb suggests that one should look at the brighter side of the situation.

**“Justice is what we seek. Law is what we get”** (Outcalt 211).

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *The Case of the Revolving Lawsuit*. The parable is the story of a thief trying to get into a house through the window, but the window broke, and the thief fell and broke his leg. The thief took the owner of the house to court. The house owner asked the judge not to sue him because the carpenter made the window. The



court summoned the carpenter. The carpenter asked the judge not to sue him, as the builder designed the window. The court called the builder. The builder asked the judge not to sue him because when he created the window, a beautiful woman distracted his attention. The judge summoned the woman. The woman asked the judge not to sue her as it was not her fault because she was wearing a beautiful dress which the dyer dyed. The judge thought that finally, the matter was about to be closed as soon as they knew who the dyer of the dress was. When the dyer of the dress was summoned, the person who came before the court happened to be none other than the husband of the woman and the thief himself. This funny parable indicates that the thief who went to the court for justice, faced the law. He blamed the house owner for his broken leg, and thus, the blame was transferred from one person to another, and finally, the thief was blamed as he dyed his wife's dress beautifully, which distracted the builder who designed a faulty window. The carpenter made the window with the defective design and put it on the house. The proverb is made of "justice", "we seek", "law", and "we get". Thus, the proverb and the parable advise us that we get the law when we go looking for justice.

**"Happiness is a state of mind" (Outcalt 218).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Luggage*. The parable tells the story of a rich man sitting in a sad mood. A rabbi came to him and asked what was wrong. The man said to him that he was not happy with life. Being rich, he could do whatever he wanted, but nothing excited him in life. There was nothing in life that he thought was worth pursuing. At that time, the rabbi grabbed his suitcase and ran away. The man followed him, but the rabbi outran him. The rabbi stopped at a distance waiting for the man to come. When the man arrived, he immediately grabbed his suitcase and checked his belongings. When he found everything safe, he became happy. The proverb indicates that a few moments ago, the man was sad, and as soon as he found his belongings safe, he became delighted. It becomes clear from the incident that happiness is a condition of the mind. The proverb is made of "happiness", and "a state of mind". Thus, the proverb advises that we should try to be happy from within. The following proverb depicts a different aspect of the same parable.

**“If life has grown weary and dull, shake things up a little”** (Outcalt 218).

The above proverb is taken from the comment section on the parable *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Luggage*. It is the story of a sad man whom a priest met. The priest asked the man why he was sad. The man told him that he had lost interest in life. He had much wealth and could travel wherever he wanted, but he had lost excitement in life. He found nothing worth pursuing. The priest caught hold of the man’s suitcase and ran away. The man followed the priest, but he outran him and stood very far from him. When the man came near the priest, gasping for breath, he seized his suitcase and found his belongings safe. He became happy. The proverb is made of the elements “weary and dull life” and “shaking of things”. The proverb suggests that though life seemed dull, there are things for which one still lives. The man in the story found nothing worthy of pursuing, yet he followed the priest for his suitcase. Therefore, the proverb tells us that even though we experience worthlessness, there are excellent things in life for which we live on. We need to shake things a little before knowing the essential things in life.

**“A dose of humor wouldn’t hurt either”** (Outcalt 219).

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *Stinking of Zen*. The parable tells the story of a disciple who went to his dying master and asked him if there was anything else he needed to know. The dying master answered him that there was nothing that he needed to know but only one thing. The disciple asked what it was. The master told him that he stank like Zen. The parable is humorous as we do not expect humour at the time of someone’s death, but the parable is evident of humour. The proverb indicates that the master was dying, yet he thought that a little humour did not make any difference at his death. The master accepted his death as death is ultimate, and no one escapes. Being aware that we are going to die, the master created humour. It shows the maturity of the master. The proverb is made of “a dose of humour”, and “would not hurt”. Thus, the proverb advises that one has to be happy every time.

**“Never believe an absurd remark”** (Outcalt 220).

**“Do not grieve over the past”** (Outcalt 220).

The proverbs are used in the parable *Foul Advice*. The parable tells the story of a man who caught a bird in a trap. As the man went to catch the bird, the bird said that it would give him three

bits of wisdom if he let it go. The first bit will be given when the bird is in the man's hand. The second will be given when the bird is on the roof, and the third will be offered when the bird is on the branch of the tree. The man was interested in the bird's wisdom, so he let it free. The bird sat on his hand and advised him not to believe an absurd remark. The second wisdom the bird gave was not to grieve over the past. The bird continued and told the man that there were many pearls in its body, but he set it free; he could not get it. The man started regretting. The bird reminded him of his advice not to regret the past and not to believe an absurd remark about how there can be many pearls in its body. The man asked the bird about the third piece of advice. The bird told him to make good use of the first two. The proverbs are pieces of advice given by the bird to the man. The bird advised the man not to believe an impossible thing and not regret the past. The first proverb is made of "never believe, and "an absurd remark" and the second proverb is made of "do not grieve", and "over the past". Thus, these proverbs give us the same advice the bird gave to the man in the parable.

**"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" (Outcalt 221).**

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *The Starving Donkey*. The parable tells the story of a man who always tried to save money no matter what happened. He had a donkey employed for his work. He saw that the donkey ate more. Therefore, he started reducing his food. As the food got reduced, the donkey starved, and one day the donkey died. The man told his neighbour that he would have made the donkey live without eating. The proverb indicates that the man tried to save money, but saving money cost him his donkey. The proverb is made of "an ounce of prevention", and "worth a pound of cure". The man was running behind saving money, but his crazy desire was dangerous enough to cost him his donkey. The proverb rightly points out that one should not choose the more difficult way to walk than the worth of the destination. The following two proverbs also exhibit other pieces of advice that can be extended.

**"And when it comes to cutting corners, some corners cannot be cut" (Outcalt 221).**

The man was crazy about saving money; hence, he reduced the donkey's food, resulting in the donkey's death. The man regretted that he failed to make the donkey live without food. The proverb and the parable indicate that the man expected too much from the donkey. The man forgot

that everything has a limit, and crossing the boundary is not helpful. In the context of the parable, the proverb suggests that there is a limit to everything, including saving money. The man tried to save money from the donkey's food, which seemed too much expectation. The proverb is made of "when it comes to cutting corners", and "some corners cannot be cut". It means that some things are not possible beyond a specific limit. Another proverb is used in the same parable. It highlights a different aspect.

**"It's best to leave some things as they are"** (Outcalt 221).

The proverb illustrates the parable *The Starving Donkey*. There was a thrifty man who was always looking for a chance to save money. He observed that his donkey ate more, so he reduced its food a little daily. He kept on reducing the donkey's food every day. As a result, the donkey died of hunger. He told his neighbour that if the donkey had not died, he would have successfully made the donkey live without eating. But the man suffered a loss in an attempt to save something. The proverbial elements in the proverb are "the best thing", "to leave something", and "as they are". The proverb teaches us the moral that it is a bad idea to expect too much out of something. The man in the parable failed to understand that some things need to be left as they are. If we try to make changes that do not change, we may suffer a significant loss. Therefore, the moral of the proverb is that some things should remain unaltered.

**"Of making many books there is no end, and much study makes a person weary"** (Outcalt 222).

The proverb finds its place in the comment section on the parable *The Trouble with Books*. The parable is the story of Ibn Yusuf, who complained that many people kept coming to him with a book asking him his opinion, interpretation and some even came to him with a book they expected him to read. He was tired of this, so; he asked a doctor for a remedy. The doctor gave him a book and told him to give this to the person when someone came to him. Inside the book, a sentence advised that the time spent by the person reading this sentence could be utilized for something better. Thus, the parable indicated that Ibn Yusuf was troubled and wanted to get rid of people coming to him with their books. The proverb suggests that the books kept coming to Yusuf as there was no end to making the books, and too much of reading the books made Yusuf weary,

so he wanted to get rid of them. The proverb is made of “making many books”, “there is no end”, “much study”, and “makes a person weary”. Thus, the proverb suggests that knowledge is abundant, but people become weary of too much study.

**“Those who know themselves cannot be swayed by the hurtful comments of others”**  
(Outcalt 223).

The proverb is used in the comment section on the parable *What a Fool Believes*. The parable tells the story of a fool person who went to a rabbi and said he knew that he was a fool, but he did not know what to do about it. The rabbi told him that he was not a fool if he knew that he was a fool. The fool again asked him why people still call him a fool. The rabbi thought about it and then told him that he is a fool if he believed what people say about him. The parable and the proverb indicate that the fool knew that he was not a fool but believed what people said about him. Thus, he was influenced by what others said about him even though he knew who he was. The proverb is made of “those who know themselves”, “cannot be swayed”, and “by the hurtful comments of others”. Thus, the proverb advises that we should not value what others say about us when we know who we are. When we consider what others say about us, we degrade ourselves.

**“Focus is a key element in life”** (Outcalt 224).

**“Too many distractions can often lead to failure”** (Outcalt 224).

The above proverbs find their place in the comment section on the parable *The Tale of a Loincloth*. The parable tells the story of a poor ascetic who went to the river to clean his loincloth. The loincloth was the only thing that belonged to him. After he hung the loincloth for drying, he saw that the birds had made holes into it. Then he decided to go into the village and beg for the loincloth. Someone told him that he needed a cat to protect his loincloth, so he begged for a cat. He received a cat, but he had to beg for milk to feed the cat. He was again advised to beg for a cow for milk. Thus, he got a cow. Now he had to beg for grass to feed the cow. He was again advised to have a farm to grow the grass. Thus, he got a farm as well. He had to look for some workers to tend the land to grow the grass. Therefore, he became a farmer, married, and had children. After an extended period, his master came to the village and enquired about the ascetic. Someone sent him to the new residence of the ascetic. When the master knocked on the door, the ascetic opened

the door and saw that his master had come to him. He immediately reached down to the master's feet, begging his mercy as everything began from the loincloth. The first proverb indicates that the poor ascetic lost focus of his life. He had only a loincloth, but he went on gathering worldly things to take care of the loincloth. The ascetic should aim at the devotion to God and sacrifice of belongings, but the ascetic forgot the prime aim and thus indulged in worldly things. The proverb is made of "focus", and "a key element in life". Therefore, the proverb advises us not to let other things distract our attention. Focus is an important part of our life, and if we lose our concentration, we lose our aim.

The next proverb on the same parable points out the reason for failure on the part of the ascetic as he indulged himself in many things. Initially, it was only the loincloth, but he acquired many other things to take care of a single belonging. Thus, the ascetic was diverted from his prime duty of devotion to God. The worldly things distracted his attention from his prime motive, and therefore he failed as an ascetic in front of his master. The proverb is made of "many distractions", and "lead to failure". Thus, the proverb advises that we should deal with only one thing at a time; otherwise, tending to many things simultaneously leads to failure.

## Conclusion

I have examined the proverbs in the book *Candles in the Dark*. While studying the proverbs, I observed that they are infused in the comment section at the end of the parables in Todd Outcalt's book *Candles in the Dark*. The context for the exemplified proverbs in the respective parables is explained to understand the background. The parable and the related proverb clearly show the matching elements in them. The words in some proverbs are different than the relative context of the parables, yet the proverbs correspond to the circumstances of the parables.

Thus, it becomes clear from the above analysis that parables also give life lessons through the proverbs. It is not the case with parables where reading a proverb enables us to reach the parable's message. The proverbs in parables are small contextual components where the context of the proverb has to be understood around the entire parable yet limited to a specific context. Even though, wise men like rabbis, prophets, and priests used the parables to teach their followers. It has been one of the effective ways to teach wisdom through the parables. The reading of the parables and the corresponding proverbs makes us think ethically while living our lives.

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