



## **THE THEME OF 'FRIENDSHIP' IN THE BOND'S NOVEL "THE ROOM ON THE ROOF"**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*There is a famous saying all over the world that "A friend in need is a friend indeed." Friendship is a very noble behavior from a humanitarian point of view. It is the most valuable asset in life. It is worshiped by the people as it brings good old memories to the people and makes them happy even in difficult times. It starts from the birth of a human being and continues till death. It is a quality and develops among different people in the society. During friendship people become one and share happiness and sorrow in their life. People not only join in happy times but also help their friends in difficult times. Wedding ceremonies, birthday celebrations, and other large celebrations are examples of large gatherings. The native likes to spend more time with his friend. Where many people who know each other come together to cultivate and celebrate friendship. Writers all over the world have appreciated the concept of friendship in their short stories, poems, and novels.*

*Ruskin Bond who is a writer promotes friendship with the right words. Ruskin was a friend of Bond, who is depicted in his novel "The Room on the Roof". He wrote "The Room on the Roof" while he was only seventeen. For this achievement he was awarded the John Llewellyn Rice Prize in 1957. His dedication towards his friends is reflected which is very good and commendable. In 1957 he was awarded the John Llewellyn Rice Prize for this novel. The paper aims to highlight the theme of 'friendship' in the novel "The Room on the Roof".*

**KEYWORDS:** Friendship, Ruskin Bond, The Room on the Roof.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Around the world, there is a well-known saying that goes, that "A friend in need is a friend indeed." There are several people in an individual's life who leave an imprint on their memory for a lifetime. Friendship is seen as a very noble human behaviour. People worship it because it evokes pleasant memories and makes them joyful even in adverse circumstances. The true friend will always help according to his/her limits whereas other people identifying themselves as friends once will isolate themselves from other's problems. It occurs between two persons in a variety of scenarios. It begins with the birth of a human being and ends with death. In his book "*The meaning of Friendship*," Mark Vernon has categorized friendship into three groups. He spoke:

"He looked around him and saw three broad grouping of relationships people called friendship. The first group are friends primarily because they are useful to each other - like the friendship between an employee and a boss ... they share goodwill because they get something out of the relationship. The second group are friends primarily because some pleasure is enjoyed by being together; it may be the football, the shopping, the gossip... This, though, is not true of the third group. These are people who love each other because of who they are in themselves." (4)

Friendship holds a very special place in the life of people in their childhood and youth. It is a virtue and develops among various people in society. It is evident in society. During friendship, people unite and share happiness and sorrow in their life with each other. People not only participate in good times but also support friends in bad times. Some people have the nature of befriending others as a hobby, while some people have the nature of fulfilling their needs from others. Huge gatherings can be seen in the case of marriage functions, birthday parties etc. where many people, who know each other gather, develop, and



celebrate friendships. Friendship is similar to medicine in that it treats certain problems that cannot be immediately cured but provide relief to the sufferer indirectly. Because of their distinct characteristics, some people become friends who will never be forgotten.

Ruskin Bond is one of the most well-known and well-liked figures in English literature. He is an Indian of British parentage. The majority of his works are composed in simple English that anyone from a tiny Children to a young adult can enjoy. He typically exploits his past experiences in his work, which are mostly reminisce These kinds of literature were quite popular in the eighteenth century. He brings forward friendship in true terms. For Ruskin Bond, friendship is like the symphony of life. He considers his pals to be the true companions of his various stages of life. In the journal titled "*Music of Life: A Quest of Hidden Rudiments in The Writings of Ruskin Bond*," Gourav Agarwal highlights the importance of Ruskin Bond's behaviour towards friendship. He states: "Friends have a special place in his life. He makes friends so easily that a child can do only. In his view, friendship is a medium to spread love and, in his literature, one can find out this never fading commitment running through in his characters." (265) His dedication towards his friends is very good and appreciable. When it comes to writing, he is very close to the people around him. He is a storyteller who tells the stories of those around him. Most of his protagonists in his short stories and novels are surrounded by friends, and this motif is especially prominent in his novels. Ruskin has experienced life with friends which are reflected in the novel *The Room of the Roof*. Ruskin Bond states:

"The Room on the Roof was based on a journal I kept when I was seventeen, just out of school. When I went to England I turned it into a work of fiction, and after writing two drafts, found a sympathetic publisher in Andre Deutsch (and his partner, Diana Athill). It was not a best seller but it was kindly received by most critics (except for John Wain, who said I wrote 'babu English'), and received the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957. This was an award given to a Commonwealth writer under this for 'an outstanding literary achievement'." (vii)

### **Theme of Friendship in "*The Room of the Roof*"**

Ruskin Bond depicted various circumstances in his novel "The Room on the Roof" in which one buddy aided another friend due of their fondness and good nature. The story depicts his friends' support during his difficult times when he ran away from his house after a fight with his guardian. In the novel, Rusty's pals were all encouraging and supportive of him. There are different kinds of displays of friendship or relationship.

The story revolves around Rusty's life. He, a seventeen-year-old Anglo-Indian, was born in India. Rusty under Mr John Harrison felt very lonely in his home. During his lonely days on the upper room, the creature lizard was his listener. Mr Harrison, Rusty's guardian, does not want Rusty to associate with any Indian underprivileged people. Mr. Harrison who is an Englishman deprived Rusty of his desires to be free and friendly. Mr Harrison said, "*That point is, I have told you never to visit the bazaar. You belong here, to this house, this road, [and] these people. Don't go where you don't belong.*" (31) Rusty did not like Harrison's way of command. He wished to make friends, but due to Mr Harrison's procedures, he was unable to make friends with the youngsters around him, regardless of race. He likes to walk alone and talk to himself. He sees caste discrimination as injustice

Rusty's guardian regards himself as the highest caste in front of the Indian people in the bazaar. He tries to retain his dominance by keeping his distance from them, and he feels like a dominating authority to them. "*Since his parents had died, Rusty had been kept, fed, and paid for, and sent to an expensive school in the hills that was run on 'exclusive European lines.' He had, in a way, been bought by Mr. Harrison. And now he was owned by him.*" (10)

In the novel, after the death of Rusty's parents, Mr Harrison had taken care of Rusty. He gives him everything that a parent would have given him. He wanted Rusty to become an Englishman. The novel shows that Mr Harrison wanted Rusty to protect the dignity of the family by following the protocols of an upper-caste man. When Rusty did not obey the conditions set by Mr Harrison, a kind of hatred grew. He beats Rusty with a Malacca Cane. Rusty was in Mr Harrison's house under his supervision. As a result, he had to obey Mr Harrison. At one point in the novel, the lower caste sweeper boy tried to be polite and converse with Rusty, but Rusty never showed any interest in him. In her book "*Ruskin Bond's World. Thematic influences of Nature, Children and Love in his major works*," Gulnaz Fatma writes "so, Bond's circle of friendship was therefore limited. Among servants, he had friends like the tonga (horse-cart) driver Bansi and the gardener Dukhi. Bansi always gave him free tonga rides" (9).

In the story, Mr Harrison is shown to be a loyal friend to Rusty's deceased parents, who took care of him and ensured that he did not fall behind in his academics. As a result, it is clear that Mr Harrison's responsibilities to Rusty as a symbol of friendship to his parents are motivated by a variety of factors. When Rusty rebelled against his guardian and fled his house to live a life of liberty on his own, the plot of this novel began to take shape. When he was confronted with the harsh reality of the outside world, his buddies came to his aid and helped him maintain his resolve and hard work. "Ranbir was pleased. He said, 'I will be waiting in the jungle behind your house. When you hear the drum-beat in the jungle, then it is me. Then come'" (29).

Friendship brings two people together to form a strong bonding. It is noticed in the novel when Rusty developed a friendship with Somi and Ranbir. He was comfortable sharing his personal life with them. "Rusty felt at ease and began to talk, telling his companions about his school in the hills, the house of his guardian, Mr. Harrison himself, and the supple Malacca cane.



The story was listened to with some amusement: apparently Rusty's life had been very dull to date, and Somi and Ranbir pitied him for it." (27) His friends listened to him, felt sorry for him, and consoled him with their words. This happens amongst friends when they share their joys and sorrows. People's hearts are lifted when they share their sadness.

The tale depicts an occurrence in which Ranbir, Rusty's friend, would provide a drum beating symbol and Rusty would accompany him to the bazaar to play Holi. Holi is a cultural celebration in India where everyone puts colour on each other and enjoys themselves. Mr Harrison, on the other hand, had a British attitude and would never want Rusty to be in the company of Indian children playing the Holi game. As a result, Rusty planned to play pranks on his guardian and escape into the jungle through the backside window. Rusty disobeys his Guardian once more and goes out to play Holi with his mates. He ignores all the rules and joins Ranbir to honour his vow to celebrate Holi with him. "For one day, Ranbir and his friends forgot their homes and their work and the problem of the next meal, and danced down the roads, out of the town and into the forest. And, for one day, Rusty forgot his guardian and the missionary's wife and the supple Malacca cane, and ran with the others through the town and into the forest." (41) He is so engrossed in the joy of Holi with his pals that he is unconcerned about his guardian's Malacca cane or his royal title.

In one episode, one of Rusty's buddies in the bazaar, Suri, was always causing difficulty for people with his petty mischiefs. When Suri's friends learn about his weakness of being terrified of being colored, they want to make amends with him for the issues he has caused others. This is a good type of animosity in which neither party harms the other but makes a mockery of the situation.

The day of revolt dawned when Rusty disobeyed his Guardian and assaulted him in return after his Guardian whacked him in the face with the Malacca cane. "He made his escape from the bedroom window. From the gate he could see the missionary's wife silhouetted against the drawing room light. He laughed out loud. The woman swiveled round and came forward a few steps. And Rusty laughed again and began running down the road to the bazaar." (47) Rusty could no longer stay in his residence after his uprising against his guardian. Despite the unknown future that lay ahead of him, he had opted to break the chain of command and live a life of independence on his own. He had no other means of subsistence, but the need for independence was so strong within him that he only felt the satisfaction of freedom today. He had no plans for the future and was hurrying towards the market, which had fulfilled his independence dream and given him plenty of satisfaction in the time he spent with his companions.

On the first night of his inherited exile, when he had to face the rain, cold, and lack of shelter, Rusty realised the challenge. He began to confront this stage of his life. His choice has left him apprehensive about his future. On the night he left the house, he had a fleeting idea of returning and pleading with his guardian for forgiveness. But something had shattered inside his heart, and he had acquired a loathing for his guardian, Mr Harrison. "I'll stay with you only until I find a job, [any] kind of job, there must be something" (56). His buddies helped him get work as an English tutor. Rusty was certain that he had made the correct decision by leaving his house and making his own mark in this culture because of the confidence that his buddies provided him. He is a highly self-respecting young man who does not want to be a burden on his buddies for an extended period of time. He aspired to be self-sufficient and to make a living.

In the novel *The Room on the Roof*, Rusty's friends were unique and everyone put an impression on his mind in such a way that their absence created a sad feeling in him. In the story, one such friendship shown is between Rusty and Somi. She (Somi) is a character who finds delight in assisting others and establishing new acquaintances, and she approaches Rusty to assist him in getting a lift in his cycle. He belonged to a middle-class family in India. He was just concerned with assisting Rusty and putting him in a comfortable posture. He was uninterested in receiving anything in exchange for the favour he wanted to perform for Rusty, who was basically impoverished when he came to Somi and announced that he had deserted his residence.

"Friends hold a significant place in the life of an adolescent. They are a ray of hope. Rusty was provided food and a place to sleep in the night by Somi, an Indian boy of his own age. He felt very comfortable in the house of Somi. "In Somi's 'middle class Indian house,' Rusty felt 'safe and happy.' There was a feeling of bond and trust. There was no feeling of obligation from either side. He says 'in true friendship, there is no formalities and no obligation'." (74)

Instead of being concerned, Somi stated that he will offer all assistance and housing to Rusty until he finds work or settles down. Somi's family is likewise kind and supportive of Rusty. Characters such as Somi form connections based on their preferences and are unconcerned by societal structures. As a result, Rusty had the same sentiments as Somi and his other buddies who assisted others in their time of need.

Friendship may occasionally blossom into love. Attraction and manifestation at a tender age makes it tough to settle on a connection such as friendship, love, sister, brother, and so on between two distinct genders. friendship is a type of unlawful connection. The novel depicts Rusty's fascination with Meena. She is married and has a child. "Meena and Rusty stood by the window in silence, hand in hand. Rusty was prepared to stand there, holding hands forever. Meena felt a sisterly affection for him, but he was stumbling into love" (85). Meena too shows interest in Rusty.



Some characters become friends quickly and change the course of life. Ranbir drives away the dullness in a person and brings the cheerful side in the front. Ranbir changed the character of Rusty from an isolated kid to a friendly person who had gathered the confidence of sharing his situations with others. In the influence of friends like Ranbir and Somi, Rusty was all total a new person who had confidence in himself and had broken all the barrier of caste.

Friendship blossoms when individuals care for and support one another. Sometimes people like the character of another person because of their personality, looks, or speaking manner, for example. This is noticed in the character of 'Kishen' who was a very lazy kind of person. Rusty constructed a fondness for him as a result of his open-hearted conduct. Kishen both condemns and praises people in front of the camera. He does not possess a dual personality. He communicates the feelings he feels frankly and without fear. He takes benefit of Rusty's predicament in the narrative and hires him as his guide. He looked up to him as his elder brother and followed him as a disciple. In his adolescence, he displayed juvenile behaviours. 'Kishen' individuals are drawn to others and form bonds of friendship with one another. Rusty was his instructor and Kishen's guide.

Rusty and Kishen also formed a bond in which they relied on one other to fulfil their desires. Kishen for his freedom in studying, and Rusty for his livelihood as Kishen's instructor. Rusty also stood by Kishen and cared after him as if he were a protector. This need for one other created a deep kinship between them, despite their opposing ideals. Within a few days, Kishen had become confidence in himself and was now hiding Rusty from the outside world. Kishen's life might have been further ruined if Rusty hadn't come to his aid. If Kishen had been a horrible person, he would have refused to join Rusty to an uncertain existence in Dehra, but his loyalty to Rusty demonstrates the power of companionship, which can bring a person in hard circumstances into a pleasant and fulfilling one. This occurred to Rusty, where his friends like Somi, Ranbir, and others assisted him in providing a wonderful life throughout his difficult times. Rusty now has the same opportunity to free Kishen from the confines of the harmful habit.

At the end of the novel, it is revealed that Rusty abandons his goal to travel to England in order to live with his buddy Kishen, look after him, and create a future in this country, India. They decided to return to the room on the roof in Dehra and start their lives there.

## CONCLUSION

The topic of friendship reflects the writer's good side, since most of his works conclude on a happy note. Friendship will always exist in our universe and will help individuals in society. There has never been an alternative to real friendship, and there will never be one in the future. Friendship is the most important thing in people's lives. When Rusty left his residence, his buddies were a huge source of encouragement, allowing him to move forward his career with confidence. Friendship is an amalgamation of delight and rage. It's similar to a familial bond formed by two strangers who meet and create an entirely fresh connection on their own. The bonding of friendship between Rusty, Somi, Ranbir and Kishen is unbreakable and each of them cares for the other irrespective of wherever they are. In the novel "*The Room on the Roof*", The character Rusty, Somi, Ranbir, Meena, Kishen, and Mr Harrison set an example of friendship.

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