

Juha's Tales

and the Wisdom of the Ancients

Translated by
Younna Mohanna

With an Introduction by
Abanoub Wagdy

Stories
that last
forever

Timeless
Stories,
Timeless
Lessons

A Collection of Juha's Tales

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Introduction

It is my great pleasure to introduce this collection of Juha's tales, a group of simple yet entertaining stories that carry valuable lessons about honesty, wisdom, fairness, greed, human relationships, and the importance of thinking before making judgments. Although these tales are often humorous and accessible to young readers, their underlying messages remain meaningful for readers of all ages.

What makes this book particularly special to me, however, is the young translator behind it. **Youmna Mohanna**, a twelve-year-old girl, undertook the translation of these tales into English under my supervision. At such a young age, Youmna has demonstrated an impressive enthusiasm for language and an admirable ability to engage with the challenges of translation. Her work reflects not only her linguistic potential, but also her patience, curiosity, and determination to learn.

Youmna's achievement becomes even more remarkable when considered alongside the accomplishments of her older sister, **Raghad Mohanna**, who is only fourteen years old. Under my supervision, Raghad has translated two books, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to reading, language, and translation at an age when most young people are only beginning to discover their abilities and interests. The work of both sisters has been a genuinely inspiring experience to witness.

What I particularly admire about Youmna and Raghad is not simply their young age, but the seriousness and dedication with which they approach their work. They are eager to learn, willing to accept guidance, and determined to improve their translations. Their ability to take on substantial literary projects at such an early stage is a testament to their talent, discipline, and love of language.

As their supervisor, I am genuinely proud of both of them. Their achievements demonstrate that talent does not wait for a particular age, and that a young person with curiosity, determination, and the right encouragement can accomplish

remarkable things. I hope that Youmna and Raghad will continue to develop their skills and pursue their passion for translation, reading, and literature.

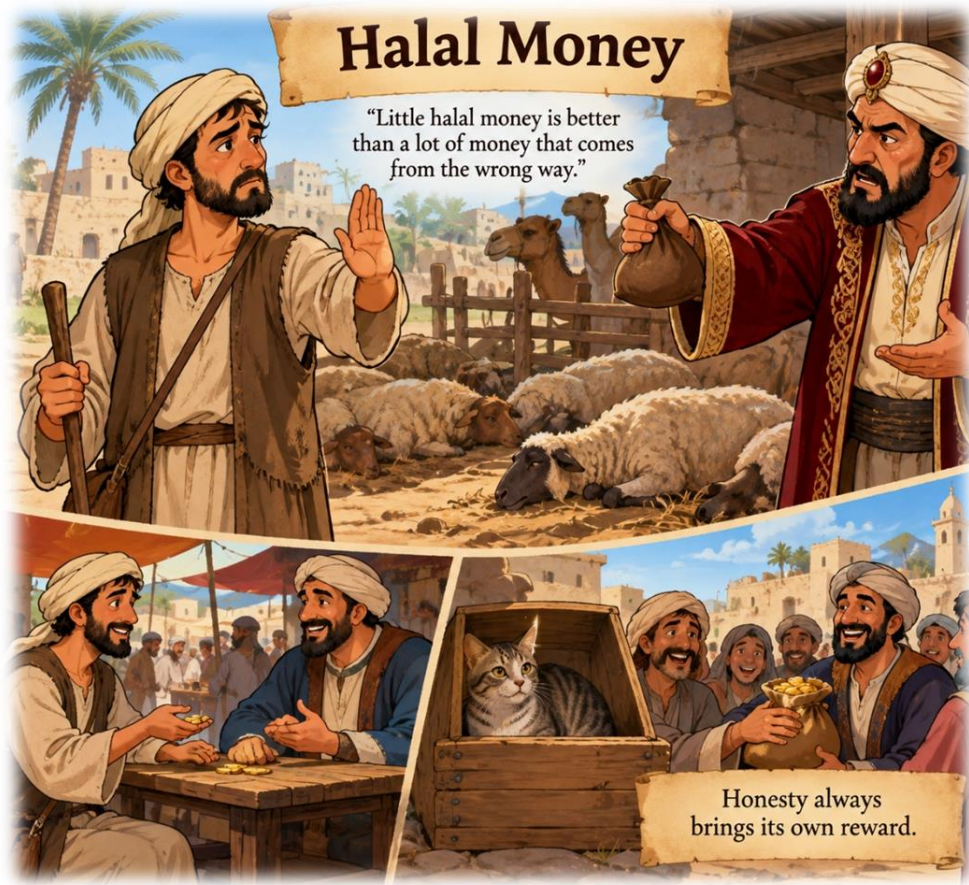
This collection is therefore not only a collection of Juha's humorous and instructive tales; it is also a celebration of the remarkable potential of young translators. I am honored to have supervised Youmna's work on this book and to have witnessed the impressive efforts of both sisters. I sincerely hope that their journey with language and translation is only beginning.

Abanoub Wagdy

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Halal Money



In a small village, there lived a poor man named Hassan. Hassan was a simple man who worked as a shepherd on a rich man's farm, and he received a small wage for his work.

Hassan did not own a big house or a lot of money, but he was known among the villagers for his honesty and trustworthiness. He always used to say:

“Little halal money is better than a lot of money that comes from the wrong way.”

One day, a large number of sheep and camels on the farm became sick. The farm owner tried to find a solution, but he could not treat the animals, so he decided to sell them.

The farm owner called Hassan and said to him:

“Hassan, I have decided to sell the sheep and camels. Therefore, I will not need you anymore, and you have to look for another job.”

Hassan became sad because he depended on this job to support his family.

Then the farm owner said:

“But I can give you a large amount of money if you help me.”

Hassan looked at him and asked:

“How can I help you?”

The man said:

“When the buyer comes, tell him that the animals are healthy and not sick. If you do that, I will give you five hundred pounds instead of your small wage.”

The amount of money was very large for Hassan. He was only receiving five pounds for his work.

Hassan thought for a few moments.

He could take the money and solve many of his problems. He could buy food for his family, perhaps pay some of his debts, and maybe save some of the money for the future.

But he knew the truth.

The animals were sick, and lying about them would make another person lose his money.

Hassan raised his head and said:

“Forgive me, sir, but I cannot lie to the man who will buy the animals.”

The farm owner became angry and said:

“It is an opportunity that will never come again! Why are you refusing?”

Hassan answered calmly:

“Because a lot of money does not make lying right.”

Then he took his small wage, which was five pounds, and left the farm.

Hassan was sad because he had lost his job, but he felt comfortable in his heart.

On his way home, he passed through the village market. There was a merchant sitting with a group of people. The merchant took their money, then traveled to other places, bought goods, sold them, and then returned their money to them with part of the profits.

Some of the villagers gave him large amounts of money.

Hassan approached him and said:

“I want to join you in your business.”

The merchant looked at Hassan and asked:

“How much do you have?”

Hassan took out the few coins he had and said:

“Five pounds.”

The merchant laughed and said:

“Only five pounds? What can I buy with that?”

Hassan said:

“I do not know. Buy anything you can sell.”

At first, the merchant refused, but he agreed after Hassan insisted.

The next day, the merchant traveled to another market. He bought the goods that people had asked him to buy, but he could not find anything suitable for the small amount of money Hassan had given him.

While he was walking through the market, he saw a man carrying a small box. He came closer and discovered that inside the box was a large and strong cat.

The merchant asked the man:

“How much do you want for this cat?”

The man said:

“Five pounds.”

The merchant thought for a while, then bought the cat.

He said to himself:

“I will give it to Hassan when I return.”

On his way back, the merchant passed through another village. The villagers noticed the box he was carrying and asked him what was inside it.

The merchant opened the box, and the cat appeared.

The villagers were happy when they saw it and said:

“Will you sell us this cat?”

The merchant answered:

“Yes, but why do you want it?”

One of them said:

“Rats have spread throughout our village and have started ruining the food and eating the grain. We do not have a strong cat that can get rid of them.”

The merchant asked:

“How much will you pay?”

The man said:

“We will pay five thousand pounds.”

The merchant was surprised by the amount, but he agreed to sell it.

Then he returned to his village.

The merchant started giving each person their money and profits.

When it was Hassan’s turn, he gave him five thousand pounds.

Hassan looked at him in surprise and said:

“But I only gave you five pounds! How did it become five thousand?”

The merchant smiled and said:

“This is a long story. But before I tell you, tell me why you gave me only five pounds.”

Hassan told the merchant what had happened on the farm and how the farm owner had offered him five hundred pounds to lie to the buyer, but he refused.

The merchant listened to Hassan and then said:

“Now I understand. You are an honest man. You refused the large amount of money because you did not want to lie. Therefore, I wanted to give you your true share of the profit.”

Hassan was very happy, but he did not forget the lesson he had learned.

He could have received five hundred pounds easily, but he chose only five pounds because it was halal money.

After that, Hassan became even more careful about honesty.

Whenever he faced a difficult situation, he remembered that a person

may lose something when he tells the truth, but he does not lose his self-respect.

Moral:

Do not let your need for money become a reason to lie or treat others unfairly. Little halal money is better than a lot of money that comes from the wrong way.

Juha and the Talking Donkey



Juha was returning to his village one evening. He was carrying a bag of grain on the back of his donkey. While he was walking along the road, he saw a group of men sitting in front of one of the houses, talking and laughing.

When Juha passed by them, one of the men looked at the donkey and said sarcastically:

“Juha, why are you carrying all this grain on your back? Put it on the donkey. Isn’t it the one that carries things?”

All the men laughed.

Juha looked at them calmly and said:

“You are right. I forgot that the donkey cannot carry the grain and bear its weight at the same time!”

The men laughed even more, and they thought that Juha did not understand what they meant.

Then Juha continued on his way.

After a while, he arrived at a place where there was an old well. He got off his donkey and put the bag of grain on the ground. Then he took a cup of water and drank.

While he was resting, one of the men who had been making fun of him came. He was looking for his donkey, which had gotten lost.

The man said:

“Juha, have you seen my donkey?”

Juha answered:

“Yes, I saw it a little while ago.”

The man was happy and said:

“Where is it?”

Juha said:

“It is behind the hill.”

The man ran toward the hill, but he did not find the donkey. He came back angrily and said:

“Why did you tell me it was there?”

Juha answered:

“Because you wanted to know where the donkey was, and you did not ask me if I had seen it talking.”

The man became angry and said:

“You are making fun of me!”

Juha smiled and said:

“And you made fun of me a little while ago because I carried the grain in a way you did not like.”

The man became silent and could not find anything to say.

Then Juha said:

“It is not difficult to laugh at others, but it is harder to put ourselves in their place and think about their feelings.”

The man felt ashamed and said:

“You are right. I am sorry that I made fun of you in front of the people.”

Juha shook his hand and said:

“I forgive you. We all make mistakes, but a wise person is the one who learns from his mistake.”

The man returned to his friends and told them what had happened. From that day on, they no longer made fun of anyone because of their appearance or the way they worked.

As for Juha, he continued on his way with his donkey, smiling and saying:

“It seems that some people need a donkey to teach them a lesson in good manners!”

Moral

Do not make fun of others just because their actions are different from yours. Respect people and think about their feelings before laughing at them.

Juha and the Cooking Pot

Do not let greed make you believe something that cannot be true. The mind needs to think, especially when an offer seems too good to be true.

Juha lived in a small house with his wife. He was known among the people of the village for his intelligence and quick wit, but sometimes he liked to get things easily.

One day, Juha needed a large cooking pot to cook food in. He went to his neighbor and asked him to lend him a pot.

Juha said:

“My neighbor, can you lend me your large cooking pot? I will return it to you tomorrow.”

The neighbor agreed and gave him the pot.

The next day, Juha went to his neighbor's house and returned the pot, but he put a small pot inside it.

The neighbor looked at the small pot in surprise and said:

“What is this?”

Juha answered:

“Congratulations! Your pot has given birth.”

The neighbor laughed and said:

“Do you really believe that pots give birth?”

Juha said:

“Why not? The pot was with me, and then it became with a small pot. It is her daughter.”

The neighbor was happy with the small pot and took it without asking many questions.

After a few days, Juha needed a bigger pot, so he went back to his neighbor and said:

“Can you lend me your large pot again?”

The neighbor quickly agreed because he hoped that the pot would return with another small pot.

Juha took the pot, and the days passed.

The neighbor waited one day, then two days, then three days, but Juha did not return.

He went to him and said:

“Juha, where is my pot?”

Juha sighed and said:

“May God have mercy on your pot.”

The neighbor shouted:

“What are you saying?”

Juha said:

“It died.”

The neighbor looked at him in surprise and said:

“How can a pot die?”

Juha answered:

“If you believed that it could give birth, why don’t you believe that it can die?”

The neighbor understood that he had fallen into the trap of his greed.

He said sadly:

“I believed you when you said that the pot had given birth because I was happy to get an extra pot. I did not think about the truth.”

Juha smiled and said:

“And that is the problem. When we hear something that agrees with our wishes, we may forget to ask ourselves: Is it really true?”

The neighbor returned home thinking about Juha’s words.

From that day on, he became more careful and no longer believed everything he heard just because he wished it were true.

Moral

Do not let greed make you believe something that cannot be true. The mind needs to think, especially when an offer seems too good to be true.

Juha and the Judge



One day, Juha went to the market to buy some food. While he was walking, he saw a man selling bread.

Juha bought a hot loaf of bread and then sat near a shop that sold meat. The smell of the grilled meat was very delicious, so Juha sat there enjoying its smell while eating his bread.

The shopkeeper noticed Juha and became angry. He said:

“Juha! Why are you sitting here eating your bread and enjoying the smell of my food?”

Juha looked at him and said:

“I didn’t take anything from you. I only ate my own bread.”

The man said:

“But the smell of my food made you enjoy food without paying for it.
You must pay me.”

Juha laughed and said:

“You want me to pay for the smell?”

The man said:

“Yes, it is my right.”

Juha refused to pay, so the man took him to the judge.

The judge listened to the man, then looked at Juha and said:

“Did you eat any of this man’s food?”

Juha answered:

“No, sir. I only ate my bread and smelled the food.”

The judge said:

“Then pay him for the smell.”

Juha thought for a moment, then took some coins from his pocket.
He held the coins and shook them in front of the judge.

The judge said:

“What are you doing?”

Juha answered:

“I am paying him for the smell with the sound of the money.”

The judge laughed and understood that Juha meant that a smell
could not be bought with money.

Then the judge said to the shopkeeper:

“You have received what you asked for. You heard the sound of the money, just as Juha enjoyed the smell of your food.”

The man left the judge’s place feeling ashamed, while Juha returned to the market laughing.

From that day on, the villagers remembered this story whenever someone tried to get money for something they had no right to sell.

Moral:

Do not ask people to pay for something they did not take from you, and do not try to take advantage of others because of greed.

Juha and the Baker



Juha loved buying fresh bread from the village bakery. There was a baker who was well known among the people for his delicious bread.

One day, Juha entered the bakery and said:

“Give me a hot loaf of bread.”

The baker gave him the loaf, and Juha took a bite of it.

Then he stopped and said:

“This bread is very delicious! Can I have another loaf?”

The baker gave him a second loaf.

Juha ate part of it, then said:

“This one is delicious too. Give me a third one.”

The baker began to feel annoyed, but he gave him a third loaf.

After Juha had eaten, he looked at the baker and said:

“How much do the three loaves cost?”

The baker said:

“Three dinars.”

Juha took out only two dinars.

The baker said:

“I told you three dinars!”

Juha replied:

“But I only have two dinars.”

The baker became angry and said:

“Then why did you ask for three loaves?”

Juha smiled and said:

“Because I was hungry.”

The baker said:

“Being hungry does not make the bread free.”

Juha replied:

“And I never said it was free. I will pay you what I have.”

The baker refused and began arguing with Juha in front of the people.

Some villagers gathered around them.

One of them said:

“Juha, give him the third dinar and finish the matter.”

Juha said:

“If I had a third dinar, I would give it to him.”

Then he pointed to the baker and said:

“But I want to ask him a question.”

The baker said:

“Ask.”

Juha said:

“If I give you two dinars, can I take two loaves?”

The baker said:

“Yes.”

Juha said:

“Then I will return one loaf to you.”

Juha returned one of the loaves to the baker.

Then he said:

“Now I have two loaves, and you have two dinars. No one has lost anything.”

The villagers laughed, but the baker was not convinced.

He said:

“What about the loaf you ate?”

Juha replied:

“I already ate it, and this is its real price: two dinars.”

Then he gave him the two dinars and left.

The baker stood there thinking about Juha’s words.

The next day, a man came to the bakery and bought a large number of loaves, but he tried to pay less than their price.

The baker remembered what had happened with Juha and said to the man:

“Food has a price, work has a price, and it is fair for everyone to receive what they deserve.”

From that day on, the baker became more careful about fairness in buying and selling.

Moral:

Everyone has the right to receive fair payment for their work, and we should respect the rights of others.

Juha, His Son, and the Donkey

Juha lived in a small village with his son. One day, they decided to go to the market to sell some things and buy what they needed.

They had a donkey with them to help carry their belongings.

At the beginning of the journey, Juha rode the donkey while his son walked beside him.

After a while, they passed a group of people. One of them looked at Juha and said:

“What a cruel father! He is riding the donkey and leaving his young son to walk on his feet.”

Juha felt embarrassed. So he got off the donkey and said to his son:

“You ride, my son, and I will walk beside you.”

The son rode the donkey, and Juha walked beside him.

After a while, they met another group of people. One of them said:

“Look at this son! He is riding the donkey and leaving his old father to walk on the road.”

The son felt ashamed and got off the donkey.

Juha said:

“Okay, we will both ride.”

Juha and his son rode on the donkey’s back and continued their journey.

But when they reached another village, they heard a man saying:

“How cruel these two men are! Don’t they feel sorry for the donkey? They are putting all this weight on its back!”

Juha looked at his son and did not know what to do.

He said:

“It seems that people will not like anything we do.”

So both of them got off the donkey and decided to walk beside it.

When they got close to the market, they saw a group of people laughing.

One of them said:

“Look at these two fools! They have a strong donkey, yet they are walking on their feet!”

Juha stopped, looked at his son, and laughed.

He said:

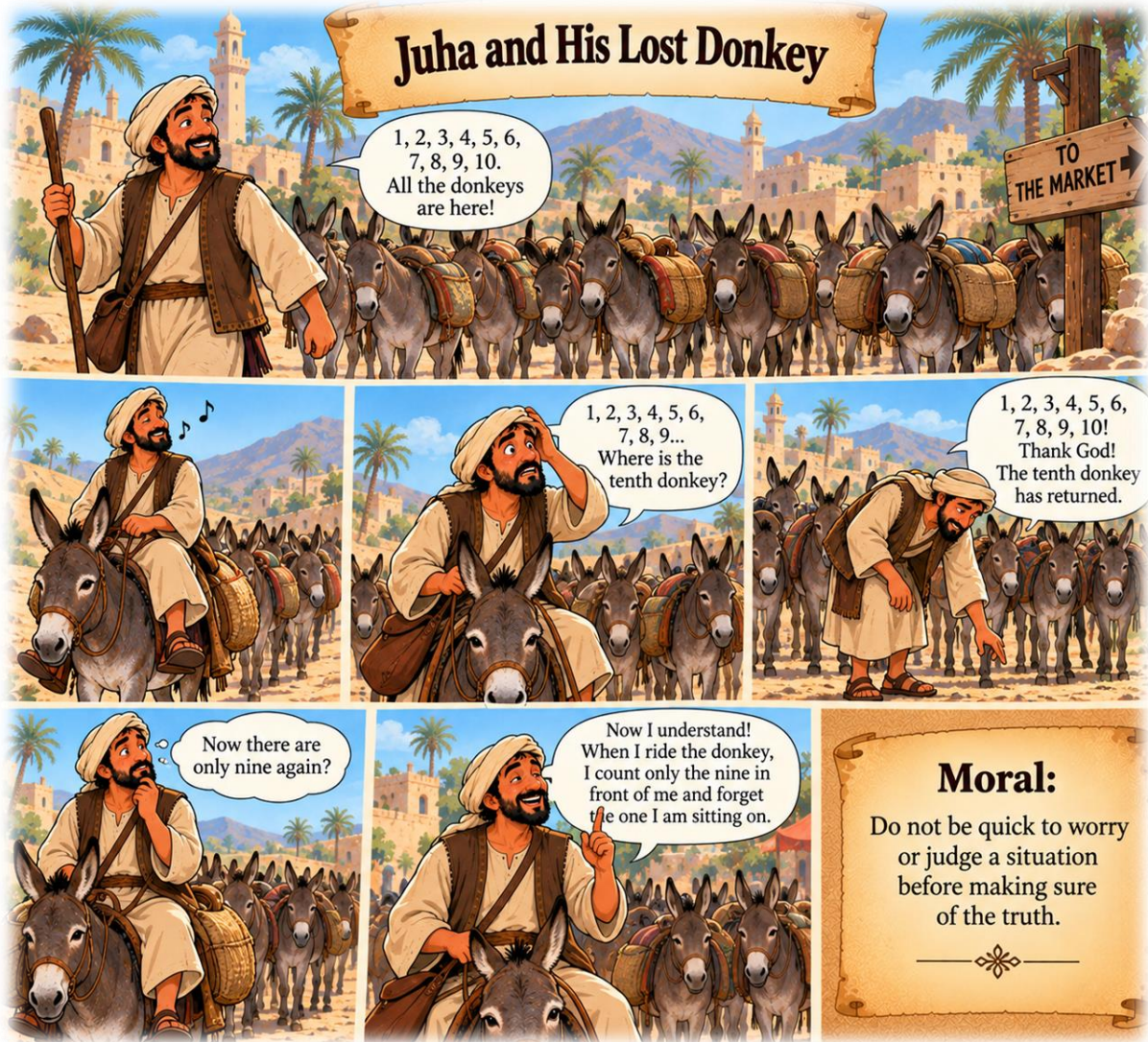
“Now I understand the lesson. If we try to please everyone, we will not know what to do.”

Juha and his son continued their journey and decided to do what they thought was right, without changing their decisions every time they heard people's opinions.

Moral:

A person cannot please everyone. Therefore, they should listen to useful advice and then do what they believe is right.

Juha and His Lost Donkey



Juha worked in a small village. One day, he was asked to lead a group of donkeys to the market.

There were ten donkeys.

Juha began walking while leading the donkeys in front of him. After a short distance, he stopped and counted them to make sure they were all with him.

He said:

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. All the donkeys are here.”

He continued walking.

After a long time, Juha felt tired, so he rode one of the donkeys.

After walking for a while, he wanted to make sure of the number of donkeys again.

He began counting:

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine...”

Juha suddenly stopped.

He said in fear:

“Oh my! Where is the tenth donkey? I have lost one!”

He quickly got off the donkey he was riding and began counting the donkeys again.

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten!”

Juha breathed a sigh of relief and said:

“Thank God! The tenth donkey has returned.”

Then he rode the donkey again and continued on his way.

A few minutes later, he became worried again.

He said:

“I will count the donkeys again.”

He counted them while sitting on the donkey’s back.

He found only nine donkeys again!

He got off the donkey and counted them, and he found ten.

He rode the donkey and found nine.

He got off and found ten.

Juha repeated this several times until he became confused.

Finally, he said:

“Now I understand! When I ride the donkey, I count the nine donkeys in front of me and forget the donkey I am sitting on. When I get off, I count all ten donkeys.”

Then he thought for a moment and said:

“So, it is better for me to walk on my feet and keep the tenth donkey than to ride it and think that I have lost it!”

And so Juha continued his journey, walking behind the donkeys, until he reached the market without losing any donkey.

Moral:

Do not be quick to worry or judge a situation before making sure of the truth.