

Juha Appears

There once was a man who had no possessions. One day, he went to the market and thought of a trick to earn some money. He called at the top of his lungs until people gathered around him, then said, “Would you like me to tell you [something]?” And they said, “Yes.” So he replied, “I’ll tell you on the condition that you pay the price I ask beforehand.” They agreed and paid the fee to the man, whose name was Juha. Then he said, “Listen, do you know what I’m about to tell you?” “Yes,” they replied. So he said, “As long as you know what I’m about to tell you, you don’t need me to tell you anything.” And they all went away.

The next market day, Juha repeated the same thing. The people gathered around him and he said to them, “I’ll tell you something important, but first you need to pay me its fair price.” Once they paid him, he asked, “Do you know what I’m about to tell you?” And they said, “Yes.” So he said, “Then you don’t need anyone to tell you anything, since you already know.” Then he left along with everyone else.

The third time (the third market day), the people gathered round as he cried, “Come on, folks, for I’m going to sell you something very precious.” A Jewish man – who was a wealthy merchant – said to him, “I’ll pay you for all of the words you said you would sell last time.” But Juha refused, saying, “You wouldn’t wish for what I’m selling, it’s not for you.” But the Jewish man insisted on buying Juha’s word at any price, and for himself alone. He paid Juha the price he asked for what he was about to say. Juha said, “Since you insist, listen: I attest that there is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet.” The Jewish man grew very angry and said, “That isn’t what I paid for.” Juha replied, “Well that’s what I’m selling, and I told you that it wasn’t for you and you couldn’t pay the price.”

The Jew said, "I'm summoning you to the judge to decide among us." Juha accepted, on the condition that he could first visit his kids and his house. When Juha arrived at his house, he began washing his jellaba. After a little while, there was the Jewish man standing there. He said, "Come on, time to go to the judge." Juha replied, "I'm washing my jellaba right now and I don't have another, so if you want me to go to the judge right now, lend me another jellaba I can wear." So the Jew gave him a jellaba and they went together to the judge, who lived some distance away.

After some time, Juha grew tired, as he was walking, and the Jew was riding an old donkey. Juha said, "How is it fair that I'm walking all this way while you're riding?" The Jew said, "Come on, I'll put you on with me." But Juha said, "No, I'll ride alone because the donkey can't carry us both at once." The Jew agreed and Juha climbed on, and not long after Juha began to ride quickly, looking back at the Jew behind him. He arrived at the judge and before entering he entrusted the donkey to the guard outside.

Juha went inside and complained that a Jewish merchant had drunk a lot of wine, "and accused me and tried to aggress me." The Jew arrived and said, "This man sold me a statement and then changed it on me." Juha said, "Listen, sir. He's always quick to accuse me. He's going to say that this jellaba I'm wearing belongs to him." Sure enough, the Jewish man said, "Yes, that jellaba is mine." Then Juha said, "Listen, sir. He's going to tell you that the donkey I left outside with the guard is his." And the Jewish man said, "Yes, the donkey is mine, not yours." So Juha said, "Don't you see sir, there's no end to it."

The judge threw out the Jewish man and said to Juha, "Paint my house for me and then get out of here." Juha painted his house and then went back to the judge to get paid, but the ruler just insulted him and cursed at him for painting the house. So Juha left and rode the donkey to

the market where he found a merchant and took a lot of goods, then insulted him and cursed at him. The merchant said, “What was that for?” Juha replied, “That’s what the ruler paid me and you have to accept it, unless you want to file a complaint against me.” The merchant filed a complaint. The judge, remembering that he was the one who began this recompense, paid the merchant the price of what Juha had taken in goods.

Juha returned home and, after looking for some jewels, decorated the donkey and hid two in the donkey’s rear end. At the market, his donkey looked like the best one of all. When many merchants gathered wanting to buy it, Juha said, “Look, folks: this donkey produces precious gems. Yes, look at this, this is a little guarantee.” Juha patted the donkey’s rear and a jewel fell out. For further proof, he patted her again and a second jewel fell. The merchants were astounded and each one wanted her for himself. Finally, three rich Jewish merchants bought her, each paying a third of the expensive price.

They decided to share her among themselves. Juha advised them of a condition: the donkey must stay in a glass house and eat and drink very well. She spent the night with the first of the three merchants but cracked the house and didn’t produce a single jewel. In the morning, the second merchant came and gleefully took the donkey, but again she didn’t produce anything. On the morning of the third day, the third merchant came and took the donkey to his house, but still she didn’t produce anything.

He grew angry and went to his friends and said to them, “You wore her out; the donkey doesn’t produce any more jewels. You took everything she gave and she came to me tired.” The other two replied, “No, she never produced anything at all.” So they all agreed to return her to her [previous] owner, Juha. When he saw them, he said, “Come on in and have a cup of tea. Then I will return you your money from the donkey.” They were happy and came in for tea.

Juha went to the kitchen and instructed his wife to help him with a new trick to save him from paying back his friends. Complying, she said, “Here, take the tea, Juha.” He said, “No, you take it.” She refused, telling [falsely] how Juha was always mistreating and disrespecting her. Suddenly, Juha stood and threw her to the ground and appeared to stab her, while actually stabbing a bag of fakeblood. He stared at the blood and then after a moment said, “Come on, stand up,” and she did, obeying without a word.

The merchants were shocked by Juha’s act, and said to him, “We also have women who don’t listen to us and we want to buy this knife to educate them in the same way.” Juha refused to sell it to them until they paid him the price he asked. The first took the knife and ordered his mother to do something for him, but she refused; so he threw her to the ground and stabbed her, then ordered her to stand but she didn’t. He covered up his secret and gave the knife to the next merchant who in turn ordered his wife to do something, but she refused; wanting to correct her, he threw her to the ground and took the knife and stabbed her, then ordered her to get up. But ... he hid his secret and gave the knife to the next one. He in turn stabbed his sister, who told him to do himself what he asked her to do.

When she also didn’t get up, he went to the others to see what had happened; each admitted that he had killed a member of his family. They all agreed to complain to the judge and indeed went to see him. Juha said, “Sir, those Jewish merchants drank too much and blacked out and purchased a knife from me and decided to each kill a member of their family and accuse me.” The judge asked them about it and they said, “Yes, he’s the one who sold us a knife that stabs people and then they rise again. He stabbed his mother and she stood back up.” Juha denied it of course and the judge sentenced the group to prison.