



Who is Goha or “ Juha”?

Goha has been a key fixture of Middle Eastern stories for centuries. He is known by lots of different names, Goha or Joha, Hodja, Mollah, or Nasreddin, and is loved by grown-ups and children alike. Whatever people call him, he appears as an innocent or even stupid fool, but time and time again the fool turns out to be wise and to outwit those who call him a fool. Some people believe he is an imaginary character, while others say he was a real man. There are so many Goha stories, that one can be found to fit almost any occasion. Usually Goha is pictured as an older man, very poor, with a wife, a son and a donkey. If he ever finds some money, he is expected to lose it. But, he remains content, grateful that nothing worse has happened to him.

The pot that died

Goha's neighbour thought that Goha was a bit of a fool, and used to borrow things from Goha and then make excuses for not giving them back. One day Goha borrowed a large pot from a neighbour to cook his dinner. The following day, Goha returned the pot with another small pot inside. The surprised neighbour asked how the small pot got there. "Your pot gave birth to a young one during the night," said Goha, and he then insisted that the young pot and old pot both be returned to the neighbour as they belonged together and it would be cruel to separate them. The delighted neighbour, laughing at Goha's stupidity, took both the pots. A few weeks later Goha asked to borrow the pot again. When days had gone by, and Goha still had not returned the pot, the neighbour came by to ask for it. "May God have mercy on its soul," replied Goha. "Your pot has passed away. On the evening I borrowed it, it fell ill and died." The neighbour yelled: "Died! Since when do kettles die?" "Ever since they've been able to have children," answered Goha.