

Bridge Stories

These stories, illustrations and jokes can be told in many different contexts and are a great way to share about God and the good news with your Muslim friends.

2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Desperate Banker
2. The Cat on Haj
3. The Haj and lotto
4. Hallal meat
5. Oh Adam
6. Ramadan Wife
7. Spot on Clothes
8. Poison in the Water
9. Bad Tooth
10. Heaven
11. Sun & Moon
12. Renault is Worse
13. Where is the Proof?
14. The Flesh
15. Son of a Derb
16. Savior
17. The Guardian
18. Assurance
19. The Obedient Son
20. The Good Thief
21. Child of the King
22. Clean Pork
23. Gendarme
24. The Cow and the Flies
25. A Better Person
26. Fifty Cigarettes
27. The King and Pork
28. The King and his Guests
29. Old, Rich and Selfish
30. The Wooden Bridge
31. Musician got his Wish
32. The 150dh Note
33. The Broken Window
34. How Much Land?
35. The Greatest Love Story

Story 1

The Desperate Banker

There was once a director of a bank, a good man who was married and had one daughter. One day his doctor called him and said, “I have some news for you but be brave because your daughter is very sick. If she doesn’t have an operation she will die. In order to do the operation, you have to go to Switzerland and the operation is going to be a little expensive. It will cost you \$150,000. When the man heard this news, he was very upset and he did not know what to do because he loved her so much. He always went to work but his mind was occupied by his daughter. He was always worried about his daughter and a solution for her because she was his only daughter and he didn’t want to lose her.

One day he came to the bank and went in and went to the vault of the bank. He took \$150,000 and put it in his briefcase and left. In the evening when the employees did the accounting, they discovered that \$150,000 was missing from the vault. They said, “Who has the key to the vault, and who came and went into the vault?” They discovered only the director had been in the vault that day. Finally the police went to his house and when they entered they found him and the money. So they took him from there to prison. And from the prison they took him to the judge.

When he came before the judge he began to tell the story of his life. He said to the judge, “Everyone knows that I am a good man. I pray and fast a lot; I respect my wife and have never beaten her. I help my neighbors if they have any need.” And he began to tell about all his good deeds and how everyone knew his good reputation. But the judge cut him off and said, “Okay, but what did you do yesterday? What’s important to me is what you did yesterday. I don’t want to hear about your good deeds or your good reputation, but what is important to me here in the courthouse, is what you did yesterday, exactly.” “Okay, yesterday I was confused a lot because my daughter is going to die. And because of this, in order to save her, I went and took the money so she can have an operation in Switzerland to save her.

Now, what is the judge going to say? If he is a just judge, without a doubt he'll say to him, "You did wrong, you did a crime, now you're a criminal. Your crime deserves prison." He is not going to say, "Because you did this and this and this which was good, now you can go free." Because he judges with justice. And the judge who judges justly must follow the law. As a result, he will send the man, the director of the bank, to prison.

But we are going to see, how many bad deeds did this man do? We see just one bad deed. And what happened to him? He went to prison and became a criminal. But he was a good man. He did many good deeds. But when we see the judgment that came upon him, it was as though he had never done any good deeds. This man lived a life of goodness. He did no crimes that would cause him to be a criminal. But one day he did this bad deed and became a criminal.

We see from this that we can live well before God, and before others. We can obey what He says and obey His law, but when we commit one sin, or one bad deed, what do we become? We become sinners. But that man that we have seen, this director, how does he pay for his sin. He pays by going to prison, in order to pay the price of his crime. But how do you and I pay for our sins? Are we going to say to God, "Forgive me Lord? Here is the money. But we can't pay for sin with money. But what, if for instance, we go to the hammam and bathe really well and try to scrub our skin really well until it is clean? Will that remove our sin, and make us clean? No. So, the problem of sin is a big problem because it is problem on the inside of people. If you commit a crime you'll go to prison. But if you do a sin what do you need to do? You can't go to prison. We know that for sin we have to pay its price. Because if a just judge on earth doesn't take good deeds into account, your good deeds won't count in heaven either. For the judgment of heaven, of God is more just than the judgment of people on earth. If crime on earth sends you to prison, and that is with just people judging you and they are less (than God), how can I go before God with my sin?

Story 2

The Cat on Haj

There was a cat who lived in a house full of mice. This cat always hunted the mice and ate them. One day the cat left and the mice who remained were so happy in the house. No one bothered them and they did as they liked. They ate all the food they liked. They got up and played. No one disturbed or upset them. After a month had passed, the cat suddenly returned. One of the mice saw him. He went to tell the other mice that the cat had come back. But the cat was not like he had been. He wore some clothes and a clean jelaba. He wore prayer slippers and a prayer cap and was carrying a prayer rug and a Qur'an and prayer beads. He was praying. He had become a Haj. The other mice said, "Are you crazy? Do you trust the cat?" "But I saw him with my own eyes. He prays good prayers and he recites the Qur'an. I saw him. Truly he is a haj!" The mice discussed among themselves if he was really a haj. We have to go out there and welcome him and have a party and celebrate with him. Some agreed and some didn't want to and some wanted to. The leader of the mice said, "We are a democracy. We will send just one to bring us news. Who wants to go see the cat and give us news about him. The little mouse said, "I'll go". When he went out he found the cat praying, and he came closer to him. But when the cat saw him from the corner of his eye before the mouse had reached him, he pounced on him. But the mouse was fast and escaped. When he arrived back to the other mice, they said, "What happened?" Is he truly a haj that we can trust? "What can I say? He looks like a Haj but he jumps like a cat."

Story 3

The Haj and lotto

There was a haj with his other hajaj friends, all of whom had beards and he had a beard as well. He always prayed with his friends in the mosque. One day he passed in front of a lotto hanout. He saw some people there and he entered. He didn't want to go in at first. He was embarrassed but at last he went in a bought a lotto card for 10dh. He put it into his pocket and went on his way. He forgot about it. But one day he remembered it. He took the card out as he passed by the lotto hanout. He saw the number there and compared it with the numbers on his card. He discovered that he had won a lot of money, a whole lot. He went and brought a sack and returned to the lotto hanout, entered and gave them his card, got his money, put it in his sack and left. However the time of prayer arrived and he went to the mosque. When he arrived at the mosque he met his friends and felt really ashamed. His friends saw that he was not acting normal so they said, "What's the matter with you?" He said, "I won't hide anything from you. I went by a lotto place, my feet led me astray and I bought a lotto card and it was a winning card." All of them said to him, "How much did you win?" He said, "A lot of money! I even went and brought a sack to put all the money into it. They said, "A lot of money?" He said, "Yes, a lot of money. Now what should I do?" His friends kept shaming him. "Don't you know that lotto is forbidden and what you did is not right? Now you need to bring us that money. He went to his house and began to think. After a little do you know what he did? In the morning they knocked on his door. He threw them his sack and he told them, "The beard that we share, here take it. And they went away.

Story 4

Hallal meat

Imagine you have a large butcher shop. One day you order some meat and a huge truck comes with two tons of hallal meat. It comes and stops in front of your shop; they open the doors of the truck to bring out the meat. But a man comes running down the street and he throws a piece of pork on top of the other meat and shuts the doors of the truck. What will you do with this meat? Will you sell it? It's no longer hallal. Imagine I open up the doors and take out the piece of pork. Can you sell the meat now? Is it hallal? You're telling me, that just one little bit of pork will make all the meat unclean? That's incredible. You know what that reminds me of? I can live a very long, good life, I can fast, pray, I can read the holy book, and I can give a lot to the poor. But when I do even a small sin against God, you know what happens? That's right; it's like that little piece of pork that makes all the hallal meat unclean. My whole body will become unclean. How can I become clean again? Let me tell you about the Messiah and what he said about this.

Story 5

Oh Adam

There was a blacksmith who lived beneath another man. This blacksmith was always hammering on his metal, but with every blow of his hammer he would say, "Oh, Adam." He was saying that Adam was the reason for his problems. The landlord who lived above him got tired not only with all the metal pounding, but with the words that he would say, "Oh Adam, Oh Adam, Oh Adam" with every strike "Oh Adam". One day he invited the man. He said, "Today, you must come up to my place and eat lunch." And that man prepared a table and he put a bowl upside down in the middle of the table. And he said to the blacksmith, "Please, I have some business now, I'll be right back, but please don't touch that bowl. Leave it upside down as it is." The owner left and the man began to wait. But after awhile he began to wonder, "What is under that bowl? He began to think. He wanted to see what was under the bowl. There came a time when he became impatient and picked up the bowl and a mouse came out and ran off. He followed and searched for it. And he crawled underneath the couches, turned over the couches, he did not leave anything in the room unturned. And then the moldar entered and the man was all sweaty. The moldar said, "What are you doing? Do you see now that our problems are not just from Adam?"

Story 6

Ramadan Wife

I heard one time about a man who married a woman. He had just married her. She said to him, "You know I'm a weak woman. Now I am going to really serve you 2 months. I am going to clean the house, not just one time but three times a day. I'll cook for you some wonderful food. Whatever you want, I'll do, so you can really relax. But after this I need to rest. One time I'll cook for you another time I won't. I'll clean the house one day and leave it the next day. I'll go where I like. And some time I'll need to go out and see my girlfriends, and go out with my old boyfriends. As soon as the husband heard this news he said," Look, no discussion, you are divorced." And he divorced her.

Now if a man fasts only the month of Ramadan, is God going to close his eyes to all the things he has done in his life? Just look at what the man did with his wife. Was the 2 months of her work enough for the husband to close his eyes to the other 10 months of the year? Look at what the man did to his wife, who served him 2 months, not just a month. She worked for him night and day, so that she could do what she wanted for 10 months. And it ended in divorce. And in the same way, God is going to say to you,"Go away, you are not mine."

Story 7

Spot on Clothes

There was a man who was invited to a wedding. This man wore his best clothes to the wedding. And he went out. He was on his way to the wedding, and there was a puddle of water. A big truck drove through the puddle and splashed muddy water onto this man and all of his beautiful clothes got dirty. He realized he couldn't go to the wedding in those clothes. So what did he do? He went back home. He put on clothes but not like those first ones. They were clean but not new like the other ones that got dirty, but nice. So he got dressed. He was going back and saw some children playing with tomatoes. One boy threw a tomato at him. That tomato made a big stain on his jelaba. He saw that he couldn't go to the wedding in that jelaba with the stain on it. So he went back to his house again and put on a jelaba he still had at home. He looked at it in the dark and did not see a stain. So he put on the jelaba and left. He went until he came to a street light. He saw his jelaba had an oil stain. It wasn't big but the oil stain showed. He realized he couldn't go to the wedding with that stain. So he went back and did not go the wedding. That is how we are. We don't see our own sins, only our big sins. But because God is light, those things we do not see will appear. That which we say to ourselves is nothing, but to God is something huge. It's like that, if the man couldn't go to the wedding because of a small oil stain on his jelaba, how can we... is it possible for us to enter the Kingdom of God with sin in our lives? And we know that sin will not come out with soap or Tide. You can wash your jelaba with Tide or bleach and a lot of water and you can get the stain out. But sin lives in the heart. It's impossible to get the sin out of your heart. Only God can remove our sin.

Story 8

Poison in the Water

(Imagine sitting with cups of coffee and glasses of water.)

Imagine we're sitting and this coffee is poison. If I put two drops of the poison in this water, just two drops and mixed them. You can't see the poison in the water. If I gave this to you, could you take a drink of the water? Why do you say no, why not? Because you'll get sick and die. Now, look at this coffee which is all poison. Can you drink it, if it is all poison? Why do you say no? Because you know if you drink that coffee you will die. You can see it, it's completely black, all poison.

Now, imagine this water represents a man who is righteous, somebody who hardly ever does any bad deeds. This man always prays and fasts, who walks a straight path in his life. That sin is like poison. When that sin gets into your life you can often look righteous on the outside, but on the inside, you have this dark, black heart. Look at this cup of coffee. This person, is completely sinful. He is known for his bad sins. He is like someone who murders, who steals, who is a hypocrite, who never prays or fasts. But look over here, this righteous person over here, even he has a little sin in his life, like those little drops in the water. Can you drink this water? You can't drink it. How can you get rid of the poison from that water? The poison, is there, all mixed in, even if you can't see it. Unless there is some miracle, you can't take the poison from the water. Here we can clearly see the poison but here we can't the poison but its there. And we are just like that. Sin will take us to hell. Like the poison that does not appear in the water, you could say it is its master. How do we separate from the poison, how can we remove the poison from our lives? That is, how can we remove the sin from our lives. Can we throw it out? No, it's impossible. We are in need of a miracle from God. The Bible tells us how we can get rid of sin. Have you ever read this?

Story 9

Bad Tooth

A lot of people have problems with their teeth. Sometimes, if you let a bad tooth go, there comes a time when it gets worse and worse. It gives you a lot of pain. It won't let you sleep. Sometimes you take a little medicine to try and reduce the pain. You buy some pills or some medicine or an herb in order to relieve the pain. But even if it stops the pain for a little while, it always comes back. And we are just like that. Sometimes we sin and then want to do some good works to ease our conscience that we have done well. We try and try and try to silence our conscience. But we always think about the sin we have committed. Okay, we have done what we have done but the sin is still there on the inside and we cannot remove it. Now the one who has the toothache, what does he have to do in order to rest? He has to go to go to the dentist and open his mouth and the dentist will see the bad tooth and will extract it. When he takes out the bad tooth, a feeling of peace and rest returns to him. Complete rest. We are just like that with sin. Because no one can remove our sin except God. Because sin is in the heart and we can't get it out. Nothing we do like prayer or worship. Worship and prayer are like medicine that we put on a bad tooth. The only remedy is the dentist. And we have to open our mouths so the dentist can put his hand in and remove the tooth. We are just like that with God. We have to go God, open our hearts and allow Him to remove the sin in our hearts. So we can rest and He throws it far away. At that time we will be at peace when we open our hearts to God and allow Him to remove our sin. He is able to and willing to remove our sin. Open your heart to Jesus, because he, as John the Baptist said, "This is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." If you open your heart to Jesus, he can heal you from your sins and give you rest.

Story 10

Sun & Moon

This is a story that can be told to people who often say that Jesus is just one of the prophets or we have Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, so why don't you follow Islam.

A prophet is born like the moon – he increases in size and gets bigger and bigger but then one day he gets older and grows smaller and smaller and then he dies . Then God will bring another prophet, like another moon. And like the prophets before that, they will rise like another moon. There comes a day when they are full and shine like a full moon but later they die. A prophet comes and gives his message then dies. But if you look up in the sky, you see the sun. I tell you, it is the same sun you have all over the world -that you have in Europe, the same sun you have in Asia, in America. It is the same sun, it does not change. Have you ever seen the sun decrease in size or light? So, the sun is always the same. Do you know what Jesus said? Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” Jesus is like the sun that shines. He is a sun that shines on all people. Every race, every people. He will never change, be replaced or die. Look up in the sky during the day. Can you see the moon? No. When the sun is shining who still needs the moon to shine for the sun has come and the moon has disappeared.

Story 11

Renault is Worse

If someone says to you, that the Bible has been changed you can respond and say, “He who one owns a Peugeot always says a Renault is bad.”

Story 12

Heaven

If someone asks you, “How long have you lived in this Arab land? Do you prefer living here or in your home country?” A good answer would be, “As long as it’s God’s will for me to live here, I like this land best. But if God wants me to live in my home country, I’m sure I’ll like that a lot. But you need to know one thing; neither this land nor my home country is my real country. I’m just a traveler in this world. Just passing. I’m going to my true home.”

Story 13

Where is the Proof?

If someone says to you, “The Bible has been corrupted or changed.” You can say, “I am from (some country). Imagine that a friend told me that all the people in this country are thieves? How would I know if that is true or a lie? What if he just says this and I believe him? I would actually have to come here and test the truth until I knew it. I have lived here in this land many years and I know that all the people are thieves. This is the same with the Bible. If you want to know the Bible, you have to read it. Then you will know whether it has been changed or not. You have to go and read it.

Story 14

The Flesh

As a believer in God you know that every man has three enemies. These three enemies are the pride of the world, the devil and our heart or our flesh. Which of those three do you think is the hardest to conquer? Is it the world, the devil, or our hearts? Without a doubt, it is our hearts. Our flesh. You know it is the heart that causes our eyes to look at evil things that we want. It is our heart that causes our hands to take things and to steal. It is our heart that makes our mouth say lies and say things we shouldn't say and listen to things that we should not hear. It is our heart that sends our feet into our neighbor's house. The heart is our biggest enemy. There is no way that we can wash, cleanse or clean our own hearts. We cannot conquer our hearts. But there is someone who is able. Let me tell you about Him.

Story 15

Son of a Derb

People say, it is not possible for the Messiah to be the Son of God, it is impossible. I say, look, here in this land there are a lot of people who say, "That is a son of the neighborhood." Does the neighborhood give him birth? Of course the neighborhood does not give him birth. He is called a son of the neighborhood because he is from that neighborhood. In this way, the Messiah is the Son of God, not because God gave him birth but because he is from God. He is from Heaven. He came to earth but He has returned to Heaven.

Story 16

Savior

When people ask, and they will, "What do you think of Mohammad? Why don't you follow Mohammad? As Muslims, we follow Moses, Jesus and Mohammad." You can say Mohammad did lots of good things. He brought the Arabs to worship one god and removed from them multiple gods and idols. He called himself a prophet but he never claimed, "I am the Savior." He was one who prophesied to people. But Jesus Christ said, "I am the Savior of the world" and he said he would save people from sin. Mohammad showed men God's way because he told them not to sin. But Jesus Christ claimed to be the only way to God. And also he said he was the first and the last. He is the beginning and the end. He is the alpha and the omega. There would be no one who would come after him. That is why I follow the Messiah.

Story 17

The Guardian

A good illustration when people ask you or say that the Bible has been changed. You can say, “What does a guardian do? At night the guardian of cars watches to make sure that no thieves come or steal cars that he is watching. Imagine there was a guardian in a neighborhood and everyone had Fiats Uno’s for him to watch. But among all these cars there was a brand new Mercedes that came from Germany – new plates and everything. Whose car do you think that guardian is going to pay more attention to? Without a doubt, he will pay more attention to that Mercedes because it is worth so much and has a high price. In the same way, God protects His holy word. If the Torah and the Psalms and the Gospel are the word of God then of course he is going to insure that nothing happens to them, that they are not in any way changed nor does anyone alter them. For they are His word that everyone needs to know with truth and without any errors. For it is the word of God, not just the word of anyone. The word of God, no one can change it. Because God protects it. If not, God is going to be a weak God when man can play with His word. That does not make sense. The Word of God is important, for it comes from God. God is the one who protects His word. There is no one who can falsify or change His word.

Story 18

Assurance

There are two types of people. There are people who hope that God will one day forgive them of their sins because they have really tried to follow their religion. And there are those who rejoice that God has forgiven them their sins already because someone else paid the price for their sins in their place. Do you know who those people are? Let me tell you.

Story 19

The Obedient Son

Imagine you have two sons and you tell your older son, “I want you to play very nicely with your younger brother.” After an hour or so, you hear the boys playing happily – laughing and having a great time. But at the end of that hour you hear screaming and crying and you run into the room and there is your oldest son beating his younger brother. You grab your oldest son and say, “What are you doing?” Your son looks up at you and laughs and says, “Oh, Daddy, are you not happy with me. For 59 minutes I have loved my brother and hugged and played nicely with my younger brother giving him everything he wanted. It’s only in this last minute that I started beating him and kicking him.” What would you say to your son?

Story 20

The Good Thief

Someone is caught by the police and put into jail because he is a thief. They bring him before the judge and the judge feels sorry for him and says, "Look I'm going to give you 30 days in order for you not to do anything bad. (probation). If you can keep a good reputation without stealing, I will give you your freedom." He gets out of jail. And for the next month he has to meet now and again with the police but basically, he's free to do whatever he wants. But the month has 31 days and on the 31st day, the police hear about a robbery in a bank and they go to check on it. They begin to search and they find it is that same thief who the judge said, "I'll give you 30 days of freedom." And the thief comes before the judge and the judge says, "How could you do this? For 30 days you didn't need to steal, you were free. But the man looked up at the judge and says, "But Judge! There are 31 days in this month. I did well for 30 days. I was a model of a perfect citizen. It's only this very last day after the 30 days had passed that I went to the bank to steal the money. Don't you think I'm a model citizen for 30 days without committing any crime?" What do you think the judge is going to say about this?

Story 21

Child of the King

What would happen if you went to the king and asked him for lots of money and houses and expensive cars, if you had a chance to talk to him? Without doubt he would say, "You are crazy." And he would call his guards to take you away. But what if someone else came up to the king and asked him for many things. What if someone came up to him and said, "Daddy, can you give me this or that?" The king will reply, "Yes, of course, my boy. All that I have is yours." So, it is very important to be a child of God, for otherwise there is no reason for God to wait on or listen to him.

Story 22

Gendarme

You might say to me, I don't need the Torah, Psalms or the Injil. That which I need is the Qur'an which has everything. Now, when a gendarme stops me, I am going to say to him, "You don't need to see the insurance or Visite Technique or the Tax. All you need to see is the Carte Gris."

Story 23

Clean Pork

There were two friends, one a Christian and one a Muslim. One day the Christian wanted to invite the Muslim, so he came to him and said, "I would like you to have lunch with me and I will make you a pork tagine." The Muslim, said, "No, don't make that tagine and don't invite me over. I don't eat pork!" He said, "Don't worry, I will cut up the pork and I'll wash it really, really well with water. He replied, "Even if you wash it with water I can't eat it." He said, "Look, I'll wash it with bleach, and clean it with bleach a lot, a lot, a lot until it is clean. He said, "Even if you clean it with bleach; you do whatever you want with it, I still can't eat pork."

That is just what our sin is like. Nothing can take our sin away. Just like you can't eat pork for it is forbidden, it's like this for us with sin. There is nothing that can take sin away even the good deeds we do. The good deeds we do are like that water, like that bleach we use to clean pork, but they do not change the meat. Just like that nothing can take away our sin except Jesus who takes it away by his blood.

Story 24

The Cow and the Flies

There was a cow that was surrounded by flies a lot. She got tired of wagging her tail, stamping her feet, hitting her head, but the flies would never leave her. She would close her eyes, shake her head so they would go away from her but nothing worked. The flies kept gathering around her and would annoy and bite her day after day. That's how the cow spends her days until eventually she dies. It's like that for us too. Because there are evil words and bad and wicked thoughts that come to us from all sides. They bother us and upset us and we want to be rid of them and we do not know how. We truly feel that our minds are in a bad situation for we can't separate ourselves from these bad thoughts. Like the cow that tries to stamp her feet, flap her tail, hit her head and shut her eyes, but that does not get rid of the flies, because they always go and return and gather all around her again. Just like this we try to get away from these bad and evil thoughts that oppress us and that God does not like. We try to say our prayers, we try to fast, we try to read and recite, we try to give alms, but even after all this time we still feel these thoughts oppressing us. We cannot get away from them. That's how we spend our days until eventually we die. But the flies, the mosquitoes, don't actually come out of the cow until she's dead, but us, the thoughts we have come from within. The flies and the mosquitoes cannot enter the mouth of the cow while she is living, until she dies, then they can get in. But that is not the way it is with our lives. The evil and bad thoughts are planted inside our hearts. It is like that with those thoughts that come from inside. Sometimes these bad thoughts come out from our mouths. Who will separate us from these thoughts? That which comes out of our mouths comes from our hearts.

Story 25

A Better Person

Here is an irrigation channel. When the water flows from the spring, the water is clean and sweet and good. But as the water keeps flowing down the channel as it goes on, you find a lot of dirt. And it becomes dirty. Animals and children play in it and it gets full of mud. And you see as the water gets further from the spring, it gets dirtier and dirtier and dirtier until it reaches the fields and plains where they irrigate with it. That is what people are like. When a person is born his thoughts are pretty clean but as he gets older he is filled with lots of sins and thoughts, things that are forbidden and evil, and those things increase. The older he gets the more his sins increase. So his whole life becomes full of sin and rotten with sin. Truly there are some people who know how to hide their sin. People say, "He appears good", but this is not the truth. On the inside there is sin. There are other people whose sin is very clear and people see it and where they will end up is clear. But we know that these two people are sinners. The person who can hide their sin and the one who cannot hide their sin, before God all is shown. As people we only see on the outside and judge on the outside, but God sees the outside and the inside. The sins of some are clear and they are taken to judges and we can see the consequence they are taken to.

Story 26

Fifty Cigarettes

There was a man who smoked a lot. He smoked two and a half packs a day. His clothes and his hands and his body were full of the smell of cigarettes. When he would go home, his wife complained to him about the stench she could smell. So one day he went to the hammam to wash himself. He changed his clothes and put on clothes that were washed and clean. And he returned home. The smell of cigarettes was removed from him. But it wasn't that simple. For on the outside the man looked fine, his body was clean, his clothes were clean, but what was he like on the inside? As the proverb says, "Decorated on the outside, but how are you on the inside?" We know that the cigarette had poisoned his life. His body was full of the effects of cigarettes. His lungs were full of the pollution and tar from the cigarettes. So the cigarette is going to kill him. So cleaning the outside is not enough, we also need the inside to be cleaned. But who can clean the inside of this man, how can he clean his insides?

And people are like that. When we look at this story we can see that it is just like that with people and sin. It is not the outer washing that will clean us from sin. Even if we do ablutions and ritual cleansing, but the heart always remains polluted and dirty. Because sin and evil live in the heart. Who can take out the evil and sin from our hearts? There is no one. We have no power to take away our sins, and that which is within us, we can't change ourselves. For we are weak and not straight. For this there is only one solution. And He is God who can transform us from the inside. Because the Bible says, in Psalm 24:3-4 says "Who can ascend the hill of the Lord? And who can enter the holy place where God dwells? The answer is," He who has pure and clean hands and a clean heart"

Story 27

The King and Pork

Once there was a king who was a very wise man, and he would not eat anything forbidden. He did not eat pork. He had a new cook in his palace who prepared his meals every day. One day this cook desired to please the king. He made him a tagine. He put in all kinds of meat. He put in some beef and some lamb, and even put in a little bit of pork. Then he added spices and vegetables, and stirred it all together. The tagine began to give off a wonderful aroma. When the king came and smelled the aroma he liked it a lot. Then when the tagine came to the king it was a wonderful tagine he liked it so much. The king asked, 'How did you make this tagine? He said," A little beef, a little lamb, and a little pork.' Then the king got angry and could not control himself. He said, "You wretch and unbeliever!" 'Did you suppose that the lamb and the beef would purify the pork? On the contrary, that little bit of pig meat has corrupted the whole thing. It has ruined the whole tagine!' Then he turned to his servants and told them, 'Tie up this pagan. Cut off his head and throw him and his tagine in the dark pit! That's what will happen to anyone of us before God bringing into his presence mixed deeds. Good deeds and bad deeds. And what will God say to us? He'll say, 'You wretched people, go to hell! Because you have brought corruption before me! You deserve to go to hell.' And I am going to tell you that good deeds will never fix bad deeds, because evil deeds will corrupt the good deeds and the whole person. It is like the proverb, "One bad fish spoils the whole barrel." And our deeds are like that. Even if I do lots of good deeds and an evil deed, the evil deed will corrupt the good deeds.

What you put into the oven is exactly what you'll take out of it! "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has broken the whole law.

Story 28

The King and his Guests

Once there was a king who wanted to have a feast and he invited some people in order to choose from among those who would sit close to him at the feast. And when they came to the palace, these people appeared good. In respect they lowered their eyes to the ground. They bowed before the king and they could not raise their eyes even to the servant girls who were in the palace. All their words were respectful. In the reception hall they honored and respected the king, with no exceptions. All these people ate and drank and left. This king was smart and he called his servants and told them, "Inquire on my behalf about those people who came to me, and were polite. How do they treat their neighbors? How do they buy and sell in the market, and how do they live their lives? The king's servants went and enquired and asked. They discovered that those men mistreated their wives. They beat them. They argued with them. They yelled at them. And in the market they cheated. They bought and sold deceptively. They said bad words about people. And we see it is like that with God. The great king is God. He is the king of kings.

People go to the mosque, they fast, and they do many good deeds to please God. But the truth is their hearts are full of evil. They pray and they worry about someone else and they remember their accounts and how they are going to cheat them. Then they say to themselves, "Look, I can trick God with my words and that which I plan to do is pleasing to God." But God sees the truth about people. He sees the heart of people, the essence of them, not the outside. He sees their true essence.

Story 29

Old, Rich and Selfish

Once there was a man who was very rich. He had a big house and many fields. He spent his whole life accumulating wealth. He bought and sold and was always looking for riches. He thought about nothing except what would be to his own advantage. He had no time to consider the poor or the needy or the sick or anyone. He was always busy only with money and how much he could gain. He always wanted to get more and more and more. That's how he accumulated a huge fortune when he got old. But he kept getting older. There came a time when he was very old that he began to think and he said to himself, "There is nothing left but death. What I am I going to do with God. But I have an idea. I will repent and start going to the mosque. I will begin giving alms to the poor and to the needy and the sick and will help them. And so he began to do these good deeds for a year. After that year he died. And now what is God going to say to him on the Day of Judgment? And you know that eternity is life eternal and hell is also eternal. Will God now say to him, "Do you yourself think, I will give you eternal life for one year of good deeds?" You spent 60 years in selfishness and evil. And now you want to buy eternity with a year of good deeds. That cannot be."

Story 30

The Wooden Bridge

Every year people make wooden bridges in order to cross the river. But every year the flood carries the bridges away and they go away. Again they come and redo the same bridge. Yet again rain and floods destroy everything. It is like that with the things we do in our lives in regard to the end. The things we do, are like wooden bridges which are quickly put up and quickly destroyed. Someone might say, "I do my duties, I rise to my duties, I fast, and do many good deeds in order to draw near to God." It is possible the deeds done were good. But they only last for a short time. We cannot say they will last for eternity. We are weak and we need a strong bridge that can take us to heaven that can take us with full assurance when we go to God. All our works and good deeds are like that wooden bridge that we build and then the flood comes and destroys everything. And this is what our good deeds are like in the end. The last day is a very hard day. We need a bridge, we are in need of a bridge of assurance that is strong and we can be sure of. That can truly bring us to God and bring us with assurance on the day of judgment before God.

Story 31

Musician got his Wish

There was a musician who arrived one day at the king's palace and found the gate keeper and wanted to go in to the king and play music for him. The door-keeper sent him away saying, "We've got plenty of musicians. Go away." He went away sadly and sat in the forest in order to rest. After a little he took his instrument and he began to sing and play a very sad song. A prince came by and he was very gentle and nice. He was touched by the music and went to the musician and took him with him to the palace. And so they came to the door keeper and he did not stop either of them. And so they entered the palace in order for the musician to play in the palace. The musician got his wish. The palace that was closed to him before, where he could not enter, now, when he was with the prince, no one could stop him. And so he arrived at the palace and played his music just as he had wished. His wish was fulfilled. "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, he is Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5).

Story 32

The 150dh Note

Show me a 100 D. note. Look, if I took this 100 D. from you, and wrote 150 on it, would you give me 150 D. for it. I don't think so. Why not? Because intelligent people know that even if you write 150 D. on the paper, it is not worth 150 D., it is still only worth 100 D., still 100 D. Now, here is a piece of plain paper and I'll write 150 D. on it. Will you give me 150 D. for it? No... why not? Because you know that it is just writing, not money. Do you think the Jews or the Christians are crazy? Would they accept a book that was not genuine or was changed? Now can someone change all the 100 D. notes that there are? If I counterfeited one 100 D., would that mean that all 100 D. bills in this country had become 150 D.. I don't think so. How many books are there in the world? Could anyone change every copy of the Tawrat or the Injil in the whole world? I don't think so. And like that, we see that this idea of corruption is not possible.

Story 33

The Broken Window

In a village there was a good magistrate (*qadi*) who judged justly. And there was a boy who was playing and hunting birds. He threw a rock which hit the window of the magistrate's house and it broke the window. At that moment they brought the boy who broke the window. The magistrate came and the boy was trembling all over and fell at the feet of the magistrate. He said, "O Sir, I didn't mean to break your window. I threw my rock and the wind was strong and the rock curved and hit the window. I was just hunting birds. But the magistrate said to him, "How will you fix the window?" The boy answered, "I am ready to give to the poor. I'll do whatever you like. Just forgive me. But the magistrate said, "But how will you fix the window?" Then he said, "Sir, I don't have any money to repair your window. At that time the magistrate began to consider. "Do you have any family? The boy answered him, "Yes, I have one uncle." He said, "Go and call him." Later the man came to the magistrate. He told him, "Your brother's son broke a window and now he has a punishment if he does not repair the window." So, what did he do? The uncle of the boy was a good man. He brought the money and paid for the price of the window to fix it. And so the boy went away in peace. And so it is with us and God. God sent one to pay for us the sin we have committed, so that our record before God will be clean and for there to be peace with God. And this is the Savior. Our Savior is Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might cover our sin and in order to wash away our sins so that our punishment will not remain.

Story 34

How Much Land?

There was a farmer who wanted to buy land. He just bought. Any land he heard was for sell he bought. It didn't satisfy him just buying land. He was always bothering the other farmers, because he always wanted to buy their land and they didn't want to sell their land to him. One day he heard that the governor(wali) wanted to sell some land. The farmer went to the governor and discovered that the news was true. The governor said, "For just a small amount of money, I will sell you all the land that you can select before the sunset. From the morning, sunrise until sunset. So, you have to go and mark the ground from sunrise to sunset. Choose the fields you like. You have to take a shovel with you to mark the fields you want me to sell to you.

But, before the sun goes down you have to be back here." That man left very happy. The next day at sunrise he took his tools and began to run and search for good land and he continued marking it. He kept going and going and going marking and choosing and choosing and choosing land. Until the time he saw the sun was close to setting. And there was no time left to continue because he would not get back in time. So then he was going to return but he saw that the sun was going to set before he got back. So he started to run and run and run. But when he arrived at the village, he fell and fainted and died. Later they took him in order to bury him. And they buried in a small plot, the spot where the man fell. And that was the land that was left to him. Two meters and a hand and 4 fingers in width.

Story 35

The Greatest Love Story

Once upon a time there was a good king whose citizens were good people. And they all lived in peace, they helped each other, there was peace and love between them. The king respected them very much for they lived a wonderful life. But one day a man discovered that something had been taken from him. He went to the king and said, "I don't know who, if a foreigner or a local took my things." But at that time there was no law. The king said, "We have not made a law about stealing, we never imagined that such a problem would happen. However, now we are going to make a law. Whoever steals will have his hand cut off."

Some days went by and then one day an angry farmer came to the king and said, "Oh King, two of my donkeys have been stolen." The king sent his soldiers to search for the donkeys that the farmer was missing. The donkeys that had been stolen. They searched every part of the country without success. They did not find the 2 donkeys that were gone. But one day a soldier came and said, "I was passing and I noticed two donkeys inside the courtyard of the palace. When the king heard this news, he was very angry, because he discovered that his son was the one who had found the donkeys and taken and stolen them from the man. He brought them to the palace without telling anyone. Now, what must the king do? He knows the law that he wrote with his own hand. The king loved his son. But the hand of the king's son must be cut off; for this was the law the king had made for stealing. But then he decided to be faithful to the judgment that he had made, but not upon his son, but upon himself. So he gave his hand to be cut off in place of his son's.

Well, who are the real characters in the story? The son, he represents us, rebellious, deserving death for we are law breakers and sinners. The king is God who in Jesus Christ forgives our sin because he died in order to pay for our punishment. For the wages of sin is death. He accepted to take that death in our place in order to save us, so we could live with him forever.

