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[www.ad-duha.org](http://www.ad-duha.org)

[support@ad-duha.org](mailto:support@ad-duha.org)

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*Ad-Duha Institute*

Storytime Series | Book 1

# The Lazy Shepherd of Piñata

## Dear little reader,

In this book, a young shepherd named Ahmed learns why it is so important to take care of the responsibilities Allah has blessed us with. As Rasulullah ﷺ taught us in this hadith\*...

*“Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock... The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family, and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband’s home and his children, and she is responsible for them. The servant (or employee) of a man is a guardian of the property of his master (or employer), and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.”*

(Sahih Al-Bukhari & Sahih Muslim)\*\*

\*Rasulullah ﷺ: This is a respectful title meaning ‘The Messenger of Allah (God), may peace be upon him’ that is used to refer to Muhammed, the last prophet of Islaam. A hadith is a saying or story from Rasulullah ﷺ that teaches an important lesson.

\*\* Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim are the two most authentic and widely accepted written collections of hadith in Islaam.



**I**n the mountains of Mexico, there was a festive little town by the name of Piñata. Its welcoming villagers were known for two things, their colorful piñatas<sup>1</sup> and their abundant flocks of strong, healthy sheep.

Now, there lived in the village a wealthy man named, Señor Abdullaahi. Not only did he have the biggest piñata shop around, but he also happened to own the largest and finest flock of sheep, Masha-Allah.<sup>2</sup>

Every morning after Fajr<sup>3</sup>, Señor Abdullaahi's son, Ahmed, was responsible for taking the sheep out to graze on the fresh grasses of the mountain meadows. Then at sunset, he brought them all safely back home.

Meanwhile, his parents and younger brothers ran the shop and tended to the chores at the family's villa.

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<sup>1</sup> Colorful papier-mâché decorations filled with candy (or sometimes money and toys), hung up at parties for children to play with.

<sup>2</sup> Arabic phrase meaning, "It is as Allah (God) wills," said to express thanks for a blessing and protect it from envy.

<sup>3</sup> The dawn prayer performed by Muslims each day. Part of the five daily prayers in Islaam.



On this particular day, as the sun rose higher and higher in the sky behind the mountain peaks, Ahmed sat on a rock barely keeping track of the sheep as they grazed. It had been a long, boring morning.

“I am tired of watching sheep. It’s no fun at all! I wish I could work at the shop making piñatas like my brothers, rather than being here,” said Ahmed, kicking a rock and ripping several leaves from a tree.

He pulled open his lunchbox and looked inside.

“Burritos and extra cheesy nachos with jalapeños,” he said grumpily, “might as well eat now.”

Mama had packed his favorite apples for dessert as well, but even that didn’t make him feel any better. He ate one and saved the other for later.

As you might expect, the heavy meal and the noonday sun made Ahmed feel sleepy. He looked at the flock and said to himself, “It will be okay if I take a short siesta<sup>4</sup>. They never stray, and I will not rest for long.”

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<sup>4</sup> Afternoon nap.





So, he laid his poncho and sombrero<sup>5</sup> neatly on the grass beside him, then leaned back against a tree, under the cool shade, and fell fast asleep. He dreamt peacefully as the hours passed.

When he finally awoke, it was late in the day. He looked around expecting to see the flock grazing as he had left them, but the sheep were gone; every last one!

Horrified, Ahmed ran in all directions calling the sheep desperately, but there wasn't a trace of them anywhere. He searched high and low, near and far.

When he finally stopped to rest and make salaah,<sup>6</sup> the sun was setting, and it was getting dark. Ahmed could think of nothing else to do but go back home and tell his father what had happened. It hurt to think about how disappointed his father would be.

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<sup>5</sup> Large brimmed hat and woolen cape.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabic name for prayer, used to describe any of the five prayers that a Muslim makes each day.



His progress down the mountain was slow and difficult, as he did not have a lantern to light his way, only moonlight.

Suddenly, he heard something clatter on the rocks behind him. He spun around and was overjoyed to see Ebedardo, one of his missing sheep!

“Masha-Allah! What a relief to see you little amigo<sup>7</sup>!” he said as he hugged the sheep. “The rest of them must be nearby. Vamonos<sup>8</sup>, Ebedardo! Show me where the others are!”

But the sheep just began chewing hungrily on the tassel of Ahmed’s poncho. “Fine, I’ll do it myself,” he sighed, as he tugged the tassel away.

They walked back up the mountain trail towards where Ebedardo had come from and saw a light flickering inside an enormous cave. As he got closer, he could hear the bleating of sheep from inside.

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<sup>7</sup> Friend

<sup>8</sup> Let’s go!





Ahmed crept up to the entrance and peered around the corner. He saw a man standing by a huge bonfire wearing a poncho as black as night, with a large sombrero in his hand, and a blood red bandana covering the lower half of his face.

“A desperado bandito<sup>9</sup>!” Ahmed gasped, “A pirate of the Mexican mountains! None but they wear red masks.”

As Ahmed continued to scan the cave, he saw his flock of sheep fenced into a pen in the corner!

He watched the man untie his bandana and hang it along with the sombrero on an iron post next to the fire. Ahmed couldn't help but notice the huge pot hanging nearby.

He felt a cold shiver down his spine. He thought to himself, “This dastardly, devious, desperado bandito is going to cook every one of my poor sheep into tacos, stews, and fajitas!”

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<sup>9</sup> Outlaw bandit



As Ahmed continued to watch, the man started to chop vegetables with a long and extremely sharp knife. While he worked, he said happily to himself,

*“I pirate, I plunder, I pillage,  
Every city, town, farm, and village.  
Now I have stolen all of these sheep,  
Which I have watched and wanted to eat.”*

*“Their lazy little shepherd laid and slept,  
As I plotted, kidnapped, and away I crept.  
Now all these delicious sheep are mine,  
I’ll roast them with spices, sauces, and lime!”*

“Not on my watch, Señor Bandito,” Ahmed whispered to himself, as he summoned his courage and tried to think of a plan. “I didn’t take care of my flock today as I should have, but I will save them, Insha-Allah<sup>10</sup>.”

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<sup>10</sup> Arabic phrase meaning, “*If Allah (God) wills,*” said to express the hope that Allah will help, protect, and bless us to be able to do whatever we plan to do (if it is best).

