

Story 870 (1961-62 Tape 72) Narrator: Hasan Özgürbüz

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of Manisa

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The Bektāşi<sup>1</sup> and the Confused Crow

There was a Bektāşi who drank a great amount of rakı,<sup>2</sup> often getting completely drunk from it. One evening after he had been drinking rakı for a while, he decided to go outside and take a short walk. He still had part of a glass of rakı left, and he set this on the windowsill to keep it cool

While he was out walking, a crow flew in through the open window and alighted on the window sill. Seeing there a partial glass of what looked like water, the crow drank it. It was the Bektāşi's rakı, and it very quickly made the crow quite drunk. Flying further into the room, the crow landed on a Cross<sup>3</sup> which was hung on one of the walls. While sitting

<sup>1</sup> A Bektāşi is a member of a dervish order of the same name. In pre-Republican days, the Bektāşi order was powerful both religiously and politically. All such orders were outlawed during the Kemalist Reforms of the 1920's.

<sup>2</sup> Rakı is a powerful liquor with an anise flavor. It is the national liquor of Turkey, and it is manufactured by a government monopoly. Diluted with water, it turns white, and for this reason plus its potency it is called "Lion's Milk."

<sup>3</sup> Bektāşis were unorthodox Moslems. Besides being accused of hedonism, they were also sometimes accused of being

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there, the crow defecated and befouled the Cross. After a few minutes the crow found the window again and flew away.

When the Bektaşî returned from his walk, he wanted to finish the rakı, but he discovered that the glass was now empty. He wondered if someone had entered his house during

absence and drunk the rakı. Looking around the room, he saw bird manure on the Cross, and he concluded that a crow had flown into the room and finished his rakı.

Musing upon this incident, the Bektaşî said, "O crow, if had been a Moslem bird, you would not have drunk my rakı.<sup>4</sup>

did you drink it? If you had been a Christian bird, you would not have defecated on the Cross. Why did you do it?"

tainted with Christianity. The presence of a Cross in a Bektaşî's home suggests this here.

<sup>4</sup> All alcoholic beverages are forbidden by Islamic law.