The Bektaşi's Belated Gesture Toward Ramazan

Once a Bektaşi was drinking an alcoholic beverage during Ramazan. The police caught him profaning the holy month of Ramazan in this way, but inasmuch as he took an oath not to do so again, they released him without punishing him in any way.

As a folk type, the Bektaşi is cynical in attitude and frequently irreverent in behavior. The Bektaşi often drinks alcohol, refuses to fast, scoffs at orthodox Moslem clergymen, and is critical of the Deity. Despite his outrageousness, he is enjoyed, perhaps even admired secretly, by Turkish audiences.

Ramazan is a month during which faithful Moslems fast. Between sunrise and sunset nothing—not even a drop of water—passes their lips. They do, however, break the fast after sunset and eat plentifully during the night. Stores are not open at night, and so most families stock supplies ahead.
After a while, however, the same policeman again observed this Bektaşi drinking alcohol. They said to him, "Oh, friend, you took an oath not to drink any more alcohol. What happened to your oath?"

The Bektaşi responded, "I am a very poor man. I drink whatever I can find to drink, whether it is alcohol or an oath."³

³This is a special kind of fikra known as nükte. A nükte usually ends with a play on words. In the Turkish, one may say take an oath quite literally: ant /'oath/', etmek /do or make/; but just as often one may use the figurative expression ant içmek /drink an oath/.