Once in the past a man went to Yemen to buy some jewelry which he could resell in his own country at a good profit. While he was in Yemen he boarded in the home of a widow who had a beautiful daughter. The man fell in love with this girl and wished to marry her. The girl's widowed mother was very poor, and she was a harlot, a situation which the daughter knew about. It was not very difficult for the man to persuade the woman to give him her daughter in marriage. A wedding was held, and the two became man and wife.

Some time passed after their wedding, and then the man said to his mother-in-law, "Please permit us to leave now and go to my country. After I have bought some jewelry, I will return and we will live happily together." The woman agreed, and the man left for his country.

This is an exemplum and an interpolated story that appeared in a much longer ATON tale, Tale 1041. In order not to lose all track of this moralistic little narrative, we have here given it separate status so that it will be identifiable (and thus made accessible) through the Title Index of ATON and through the ATON catalogue.
allow my wife and me to go to my country. I have a house
back there, and I do not know what condition it may have
fallen into during my absence."

She said, "All right. Have a good trip," and she
saw them off.

Mounting two camels, they set out on the long
journey that lay ahead of them. After they had gone some
distance, they came to a narrow bridge over a river on
their route. The man's camel, which was leading, refused
to cross the bridge. His wife said to him, "If my camel
crosses first, then yours will follow it."

So they changed places, and the woman said to her
camel, "Deh!" ² In that way they crossed the river easily,
and the man was relieved that they had solved their
difficulty. After thinking about it for a few minutes,
however, he asked his wife, "How did you know that my
camel would follow yours across the bridge?"

"That is something you could not have known. My
camel is your camel's mother."

²In giving directions to beasts of burden, Turks
say deh for the English giddap and choosh for the English
whoa.
Story 1824

After she said that, he thought about her remark, then he asked her a question. "Will you follow your mother? I know what she is doing."

His wife said, "If I sucked my mother's bad milk, bad milk will surely affect me, of course, and so I shall follow my mother even if I don't want to do so."

Hearing that, the man changed his mind about his wife and decided to send her back to her mother. As they parted, she said, "If my inheritance is bad, I shall pursue the wrong way. On the other hand, if I sucked my mother's good milk, don't worry about me. Entrust me to and go your way without thinking any further about me."

3Sometimes bad milk refers simply to some supposedly negative heritable trait. In some Turkish tales, however, it has a narrower context. If a nursing mother has adulterous intercourse, her milk is said to be bad milk and will affect in some undesirable way the character of the offspring.