

Story #286 (Tape #45, 1961-62)

Narrator: Unidentified friend of
Ömer Uysal

Location: Adana [provincial capital],
Adana Province

Date: February 1962

Bekri Mustafa as Ferryman

Once during his life Bekri Mustafa was a ferryman on the Bosporus. He took people back and forth from Istanbul to the ^aAntolian side, and he always served rakı to his passengers during the crossing.

One day Sultan Murad and his vezir went traveling in disguise, as they often did, and they decided to ride across the Bosporus in Bekri Mustafa's boat. They agreed on a price and then Bekri started rowing toward Kadıköy. After he had rowed for a few minutes, he took in his oars and got out a bottle of rakı and three glasses. The Sultan said, "It is against Moslem law to drink rakı, but if you must drink it, we shall not."
Al celul

"Yes, you must," said Bekri Mustafa. "In my boat everyone drinks rakı when I do. If they do not, then I refuse to row them back to shore."

So the sultan and the vezir had no choice. They had to drink several glasses of rakı, for Bekri stopped every few minutes as he rowed his boat. When they finally reached Kadıköy and they were climbing out of the boat, the sultan said to his companion, "Now you can tell Bekri Mustafa that I am the sultan and you are my vezir."

When Bekri Mustafa heard this, he laughed loudly and said, "What? I have been drinking rakı for forty years and I was never able to be either

sultan or vezir. If you should drink with me on this return trip, you will think one of you is Allah and the other the Prophet!"