



Memed, My Hawk

Ya?ar Kemal , Edouard Roditi (Translator)

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A tale of high adventure and lyrical celebration, tenderness and violence, generosity and ruthlessness, Memed, My Hawk is the defining achievement of one of the greatest and most beloved of living writers, Yashar Kemal. It is reissued here with a new introduction by the author on the fiftieth anniversary of its first publication.

Memed, a high-spirited, kindhearted boy, grows up in a desperately poor mountain village whose inhabitants are kept in virtual slavery by the local landlord. Determined to escape from the life of toil and humiliation to which he has been born, he flees but is caught, tortured, and nearly killed. When at last he does get away, it is to set up as a roving brigand, celebrated in song, who could be a liberator to his people—unless, like the thistles that cover the mountain slopes of his native region, his character has taken an irremediably harsh and unforgiving form.

Memed, My Hawk Details

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From Reader Review Memed, My Hawk for online ebook

Val says

This book is written in the style of a folk tale: as a series of events and adventures. Within those parameters it works very well, but it is very much a 'show not tell' style and lacking in emotional depth. (You know what people do, but very little about what they feel.)

The descriptions of lives and places are detailed and easy to imagine, even if you have never seen anything of rural Turkey.

The book is worth reading for the way of life it depicts and the story, just don't expect introspection.

Miray B Y says

Ya?ar Kemal'in bu muhte?em eserini çocuklu?umdan beri kütüphanede izleyip yeni okumu? olmam kendi ad?ma büyük bir kay?p. Bu kitap de?il bir efsane, bir 20.yy destan?, Türk insan?n?n kaybetti?i insani de?erlerine bir a??t. Dörtlemeyi bitirmesem de, bu ilk kitap Ya?ar Kemal'in Dünya Edebiyat?na damga vurmas?na yeterli. ?nce Memed'e bunca övgü, ödül, sayg? kesinlikle tam yerinde.

Bob Newman says

Once Upon a Time in Turkey

Down in that fertile part of southern Anatolia called the Chukurova, where crops yielded forty-fold and deer, birds, and beetles thrive, the feudal landlords, who owned entire villages, oppressed the peasants mightily. They took whatever share of the crops they desired and could beat the villagers on any whim, or even drive them from their homes. Justice was an undreamt-of luxury. For rebels, or for those who had incurred the landlords' wrath, the only alternative--besides joining the Army---was to become a bandit in the mountains. The life of a bandit, though, however free, was usually short. Yashar Kemal, who grew up in this area, wrote this novel back in the 1950s; his first major work, which by now has been translated into nearly every major language and has become a modern classic.

Kemal introduces the life and traditions of the inhabitants of the Chukurova, a region unknown in most parts of the world. At least, he gives us a picture of the life they had in the 1920s or `30s. The novel describes the social conditions then existing there, introduces dozens of interesting, colorful characters, and also focusses on the natural environment, which by our times, has mostly disappeared. All this is done through the medium of a fast-moving, action-packed story which could be the script of a film (and may well have been, though I never saw it anywhere). Memed, a slim young man, wishes to marry Hathe, a beautiful village girl. The nasty landlord has other ideas---he wants her to marry his ugly nephew. The young lovers elope into the forest, but are surrounded by the landlord's minions. Memed draws his pistol and shoots the nephew dead, wounding the landlord. Memed winds up as a bandit, Hathe winds up in jail, and the rotten landlord has Memed's mother beaten to death. Her son swears revenge. Nomads, trackers, crazy bandit chiefs, tough peasant women, village farmers, policemen---the number of lifelike characters is endless. Memed not only turns bandit, but he becomes a Robin Hood character, a legend in his own time, who defies the prevailing feudal order and even re-distributes the landlord's fields to the tillers at one point. No wonder they loved him ! Perhaps some of Kemal's later work is deeper psychologically, perhaps his palette of colors got wider, but

MEMED MY HAWK stands out as a great story written in masterful style. It is a novel about justice, a novel that treats basic human emotions in any time or place. It heralded the arrival of a major author on the world scene.

Czarny Pies says

This book merits all the praise that it has received. It provides an outstanding view of life in the Anatolian highlands in the 1920s. The fall of the Ottoman empire at the end of World War I has profoundly affected the social order in Turkey. Many of the old feudal families have lost their holdings. At the same time a class of nouveau riche has emerged and is making every effort to create a new feudalism by wresting the land holdings away from the peasants.

Some of the dispossessed have formed bands of brigands. These brigands quickly become clients of the large landholders and assist them to increase their holdings by intimidating those peasants who are resisting.

Memed our hero however is a good brigand who sides with the small landowners. For many readers, having a Robin Hood type to cheer for adds considerably to the charm of the book. I find it a somewhat contrived element in what is nonetheless a masterful portrait of a forgotten but important component of Twentieth Century history.

Lilisa says

There's something about Turkish literature that speaks to me, and this book is no exception. Written in Turkish by Yasar Kemal, the book was originally published in 1955 and translated into English and several other languages since then. The novel follows the life of Memed, from his harsh young life in a poor village, losing his father, toiling day and night for the cruel local agha, subsequent attempts at escapes and then transition into a roving brigand, the story touches the heart and speaks to the mind. Yaser Kemal's poetic language and lyrical style create vivid splashes of color as we visualize the countryside, the stretches of thistle, the aroma of marjoram, thyme and oregano and the stench of cows and cow dung. We experience life as it was in the days before World War I, the plundering of villages by brigands and the utter control of villages by aghas who essentially stripped people of practically everything they owned. At the same time we can marvel at the beauty of the land, the traditions of the Turks and the close relationships between comrades. A well-written novel, Memed, My Hawk harkens back to days long gone and conjures up the image of the traditional hero, a hero like days long gone, is no more. A highly recommended read.

Elif says

Görü? sahas? ne kadar dar olursa olsun, insan muhayyilesi geni?tir. De?irmenoluk köyünden ba?ka hiçbir yere ç?kmam?? bir insan?n bile geni? bir hayal dünyas? mevcuttur. Y?ld?zlar?n ötelerine kadar uzanabilir. Hiçbir yer bulamazsa Kafda??n?n arkas?na kadar gider. O da olmazsa, dü?lerinde ya?ad??? yer ba?kala??r. Cennetle?ir. ?imdi, ?u anda dü?ler veryans?n ediyordur uykular?n alt?nda. ?u f?kara, ?u kah?rl? De?irmenoluk köyünde, de?i?mi? dünyalar ya?an?yordur.

?nce Memed...Memed... Zalimler için e?k?ya, köylüler için çelik gibi, y?k?lmaz bir kahraman.

"Bana bak! O?lum ?nce Memed, dedi. Suçsuz adam?, az suçu olan adam?, paras? için adam öldürürsen iki elim yakanda olsun."

Memed, yetim bir çocuktur. Annesini ise ya?ad?klar? köyün a?as? olan Abdi A?a'n?n zulmü sarm??t?r. Abdi A?a ne ?nce Memed'i ne anas?n? ne de köylüyü sevmektedir. Tek derdi tarla,para,otorite,güç. ?nce Memed bir gün art?k Abdi A?a'n?n yapt?klar?na dayanamaz hale gelir. Ve köyü terk eder. Anas? gece gündür a?lar durur. Abdi A?a ise deli olur. Sonra ç?ka gelir, hem anas?n? hem de gönlünün sahibi olan Hatçe'yi de alarak gitmeye karar gelir. Anas? gelmez, Hatçe ise onu b?rakmaz. Ve kaçarlar. Abdi A?a deliye döner çünkü Hatçe'yi kendi ye?eni ile ni?anlam??t?r. Nas?l cüret eder ye?eni Veli'nin ni?anl?s?n? da al?p köyü terk etmeye? Nas?l?! Ve ?nce Memed'in hikayesi burada ba?lar...

?nsanlar? sözleriyle de?il, hareketleriyle ölç!

Bu kitab? herkes okumal?. Herhangi bir ya? grubu fark etmeksizin. Gerçekten bu kitab? okudu?unuzda ?nce Memed'in neden 32 y?l gibi uzun bir sürede yaz?ld??? anl?yorsunuz. Böyle bir eserin üzerine laf etmek ne kadar do?ru bilmiyorum. Sanki okurken her cümlesi her kelimesi hatta her harfi ince ince i?lenmi? gibi. Ve kitapta ?ahane betimlemeler var. Öylesine yüksek kalitede betimlemelere ra?men kitap gerçekten h?zl? ilerliyor ve hikaye sizi sar?yor.

Ben sana bir ?ey ö?retemem o?lum, bütün çarelerini kendin yaratacaks?n.

?nce Memed'i hikayesi kimi zaman size üzecek, kimi zaman gülümsetip kimi zamanda gururland?racak ama en çok içinizi yakacak. Benim can?m? çok yakt? ?nce Memed. ?nce Memed'i köylü ile olan ili?kisi, etraf?ndaki insanlara olan tutumu okunmaya de?er. Hep terk edilen Memed oldu. Hep bir ba??na kald? ama Ya?ar Kemal'in de dedi?i gibi ?nce Memed, içinde ba?kald?rma kurduyla do?mu? bir karakter.

?nsanlar?n üstüne çok varmamal?. Öldürmeli, dövmeli, ama üstlerine çok varmamal?. Donsuz, ç?r?lç?plak, köyüne, evine girmesi bir adama ölümden zor gelir. ??te bunu yapmamal?. ?nsanlarla oynamamal?. Bir yerleri var, bin ince yerleri, i?te oraya de?memeli.

?yi ile kötünün, cesur ile yüreksizin, mertle namerdin hikayesi ve içini özgürlük duygusu kavuran Memed. ?nce Memed. Kitab? bitirince bugüne kadar ne sat?n al?p okumam???m diye kendime sordum. Ke?ke daha erken okusaym???m.

?nsano?lu çi? süt emmi?tir. Her kötülü?ü yapar, her iyili?i yapt??? gibi.

Son söz olarak, ben bu kitab? gerçekten çok sevdim. ?nce Memed'i burada daha daha anlatamam çünkü ?nce Memed anlat?lmaz, okunur.

Konu?an insan, öyle kolay kolay dertten ölmez. Bir insan konu?mad? da içine gömüldü mü, sonu felakettir.

Hakan Aslantürk says

Her ne kadar Ya?ar Kemal bu seriyi pek be?enmese de (bunu bir röportaj?nda söylemi? ve ince memed'i yaln?zca para kazanmak için yazd???n? belirtmi?tir) biz seviyoruz. Dönemini, yöreyi, yöre insan?n? ve kültürünü en iyi anlatan kitaplardan biri. O kadar karakteri ya?amak ve onlar?n ruh halini bu denli ustal?kla

aktarmak için ya ?izofren ya da Ya?ar Kemal olmak gerekirdi san?yorum.

Kitap bilindi?i üzere 4 cilttir. Her cildin arkas?nda ?nce Memed'in, bu bölümde kimi öldürece?i yaz?l? oldu?undan okunmamas?nda fayda vard?r.

Son bir not: kitapta s?kça ad?n? duyaca??n?z Arif Saim Bey, ya?ad??? dönemin Urfa Mebusu, Do?u ?stiklal Mahkemeleri Ba?kan? ve bir zaman Atatürk'e suikastle yarg?lanm?? olan, bugün Adana'da, Urfa'da kimi yerlerin tabelalar?nda ad? bulunan Ali Saip Ursava'?n ta kendisidir. Bu detay? yakalamak oldukça ho? bir sürpriz... TBMM'nin sitesine girerek dönemin meclis tutanaklar?nda ad?na rastlayabilir ve kay?t alt?na al?nan sözlerini de okuyabilirsiniz. Kitapta yer alan di?er karakterleri de dönemin gerçek simalar?yla e?le?tirmeye çal??t?m ama ba?ar?l? olamad?m. Ba?arana ne mutlu...

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Memed, My Hawk (?nce Memed, #1), Ya?ar Kemal

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Pinariki says

?nce Memed ?ahinim!

Ya?ar Kemal'in betimleme gücü ve usta kalemi sayesinde Çukurova'n?n s?ca??n?, Dikenlidüzü'nün insan?n dizlerini parçalayan çak?rdikenlerini, aç gözlü ama 'dindar' (!) Abdi A?a'ya duyulan korkuyla kar???k nefreti, Hatçe'nin sevgisini, Iraz ana'n?n fedakarl???n?, haks?zl???, köylülerin adalet aray???n? ve ?nce Memed'in sava??n? gördüm, tan?k oldum, ya?ad?m.

Türkçe gerçekten zengin bir dil mi? sorusuna verilecek benim yegane yan?t?m Ya?ar Kemal- ?nce Memed

olacaktır bundan böyle.

Jim says

Yashar Kemal is probably the best known author from that most admirable of Middle-Eastern peoples: The Kurds. His Memed, My Hawk is a folk tale of injustice by a cruel landlord turning a young farmer's son to brigandage. At the same time he is a brigand, he is scrupulously justice, especially when dealing with the poor and the innocent.

"Slim Memed," as he is called, is a hero created by an author who doesn't believe in heroes. In his introduction to the New York Review Books edition, Kemal writes:

I have never believed in heroes. Even in those novels in which I focus on revolt I have tried to highlight the fact that those we call heroes are in effect instruments wielded by the people. The people create and protect these instruments and stand or fall together with them.

Still and all, Kemal was to write three more books featuring Slim Memed. For the first one, he was shortlisted for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973. That award was won by the Australian Patrick White. I think it should have gone to Kemal.

Kemal's villain is the landlord Abdi Agha, one of the most craven and beastly characters in all of literature. It is not until the end that Memed shoots three bullets into his chest, killing him; but he had been spiritually dead for years after Memed killed his nephew and wounded him.

Bü?ra says

I'm a native speaker of the language in which this wonderful work of literature is written-Turkish. After reading the comments on the book here, I've started to think of reading it in English too because I've always thought its English translation could not possibly match its original version since cultural elements are a dominant part of the books. I see that I'm wrong, though and I'm glad for it.

I strongly recommend the whole series composed of 4 books, which shows Ya?ar Kemal's extraordinary talent in understanding and describing human nature. The story takes place in Cukurova, Turkey; however, the feelings that the characters are involved in are mostly universal making the book a world classic.

Inderjit Sanghera says

Yashar Kemal is able to evoke the arid, yet effervescent, land of Taurus; from the ebullient sunsets to the incandescent moon-light, to the pellucid mountain slopes and parched plains or the baleful lives of the peasantry who struggle to survive beneath the oppression of feudalism, all of this is conjured up within the poetry of Kemal's prose.

The central character-aside from the protagonist Memed, is the country in which the story is set. Kemal. Desolate, yet beautiful, Kemal captures the deciduous and ethereal sunsets which illuminate the country, transmogrifying everything into a kaleidoscope of different colours, textures and tones, shedding some light on the bleakness of the peasants lives-there is something almost religious about Kemal's evocations of nature, something sacrosanct about the land which the workers toil under the turgid oppression of the landowners-even the prickly thistles are transformed in the sun-light;

"In spring the thistles are an anaemic, pale green. A light breeze can bend them to the earth. By midsummer the first blue veins appear on the stems. Then the branches and the whole stem turn a pale blue. Later this blue grows steadily deeper, till a field, the whole boundless plain, becomes a sea of the finest blue. If a wind blows, towards sunset, the blue thistles ripple like the sea and rustle; just as the sea turns road at sunset, so do the thistles."

At times the novel seems to be bathed in sun-light, as the never-ending brightness of the sun shines upon the land, upon the mountains, the swamps and the brooks, as colours coalesce from purple, to blue, to green and a glaring yellow. In contrast to this is the pale luminescence of the moon-light, as the world becomes a colder and darker place, but with a beauty which is more delicate and ephemeral;if sunlight transforms, then moonlight enhances and draws out the beauty of nature, as the whole world seems to be drowning beneath a sea of melancholy as its torrents are washing over the characters.

The lead character, Memed, acts as a kind of Robin Hood for the local peasants who are struggling under the oppression of the landlords. The primary antagonist in the novel is the cruel land-owner Abdi Agha; whilst the characters are drawn out relatively well, what is more important is what they represent; the powerless peasants, whose fickle cowardice allows Abdi Agha to dominate them, Abdi Agha and other landowners such as Ali Safa Bey, whose greed and avarice are responsible for the poverty of the peasantry and of heroic figures such as Memed, who represents the key with which to unlock the vice of oppression and to free the workers from the shackles of their masters, who constantly seek to coerce and dehumanise them. Although Kemal is clearly sympathetic to the plight of the peasantry he is also critical of their inability to fight back and rely on others, such as Memed, to win back their lands and rights-without the active involvement of the workers. The workers will never free themselves from the tyranny of the land-owners until they themselves also begin to confront the injustice of the system which envelops them and although Kemal feels they were initially over-reliant on others to take back what is theirs, Memed's actions in some ways act as the spark which will eventually set their revolution ablaze, just as the sun is able to transform the thickles into something radiant.

Burak A says

<http://yazantasurinchi.blogspot.com/2...>

Herkesin ismini cismini ezbere bildi?i bir kitap ?nce Memed. Konusunu anlatmaya giri?meyece?im bu sepeble. Fazlas?yla ge kald?m okumak iin, nihayetinde de okudum. Hepimiz biliriz Memed'in hikayesini üstünkörü, üstüne üstlük ben kitab?n sonunu da biliyordum. Yine de bu durum kitab? okurken ald???m zevki hiçbir ?ekilde baltalamad?. Nedeni hikayenin ba?tan sona ok kuvvetli olmas?. Karakterleriyle, olaylar?yla ?nce Memed'in kurgu oldu?una inanmak bir hayli zor. Avucunun ii gibi bildi?i belli olan ukurova köyleri ve halklar?n? öyle güzel anlat?yor ki Ya?ar Kemal, bütün o tecrübeyi, ya?anm???l?klar? aktarabiliyor. Yaln?z Memed de?il, yan karakterler de ustal?kla yarat?lm???; Topal Ali'sinden Cabbar'?na, Hürü Anas'ndan Iraz'?na, hepsi iin "Evet, bu karakteri ben tan?mam m???" dedim. Romanlar gerek de?ildir fakat gere?i

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Michael says

This modern classic was first published in 1955. The tale is of a boy Ince Memed growing up in a rural village on central Anatolia who escapes the tyranny of a brutal local landlord by becoming a bandit hiding out in the rough country of the Taurus mountains. We experience him developing into a legend with overtones of Robin Hood and facing moral challenges to the good heart we can't help rooting for, all the while fearing an end in a shootout like Bonnie and Clyde. The story is told with a sublime lyrical rendering

of this place and people where Kemal grew up in a family of Kurdish immigrants. He captures the beauty so well of this arid high plains in the mountain foothills. The rhythms of village life among the subsistence farmers and herders of the region are portrayed so vividly with all the senses--sight, sound, touch, and smell. Every action feels larger than life, reaching for a new mythology to give meaning to the human struggle.

We first encounter Memed at about 12 running away over a ridgeline to seek refuge with a farmer at a neighboring village. He tells of his life as a virtual slave to Abdi Agha, who owns all the land of five villages and cruelly lords it over its residents:

For two years I've plowed his fields. The thistles devour me. They bite me. Those thistles tear at your legs like a mad dog. That's the sort of field I plowed. Every day Abdi Agha beat me, beat me to death. ... My father was dead and Abdi Agha took what little we had away from us. If my mother complained, he beat her cruelly and would beat me too. Once he tied me to a tree and left me there in the middle of the plain, far from the village. I stayed tied to the tree for two days, till Mother came and freed me. But for her the wolves would have torn me to pieces.

He is captured and returned to work and punishment, but the dream of escape is awakened, and he bides his time. But Agha takes the majority of their grain crop for his own, and it is only through the charity of an old bandit living anonymously in their region that they avoid starvation. At 16, he falls in love with a sweet, industrious village girl, Hache. Their love becomes part of legend that will develop about Memed after he becomes a bandit:

Every night, whatever happened, they would meet. If not, neither of them could sleep at all. Hache's mother once caught them and punished her daughter. It was no use. ...She put lock after lock on her door; Hache found a way around every obstacle. She knitted stockings and kerchiefs for Memed and invented songs over them, expressing love, desire, and jealousy in the colors of her embroidery and in the notes of her songs that are still sung throughout the Taurus. People who saw her stockings were thrilled, and those who hear or sing her songs still feel a thrill like the freshness of spring when everything is green.

People who see Memed in this period sometimes become aware of the rebellion lurking in his spirit:

All his life and energy, his hate, love, courage, and anxiety were concentrated in his big eyes. Every now and then a tiny spark would light them up and then die, a sharp, piercing spark, to be feared like the spark that flickers briefly in the eye of a tiger ready to pounce and tear its prey. Where does this spark come from? Perhaps one is born with it. More likely it is born of torment, pain, anxiety. It had come to stay in Memed's eyes in the past year, though the light of wonder and pleasure had always glistened in his childish gaze before.

Once Memed makes his escape, he comes to be part of a new tribe of sorts and has to negotiate a tough path among many bloodthirsty and lawless men. While some of their leaders are cruel and murderous, he eventually inspires others toward a less brutal ethos and hope of liberating his home region from Agha's oppression. His girlfriend is imprisoned for helping him escape, and the dream of freeing her and living a normal life dwells deep in his heart. As larger and larger police contingents pursue him in his mountain hideout, his plans must become even bolder to achieve his aims. Good deeds rendered to others along his life journey are paid back in propitious ways.

I love how it slowly dawns on Memed that life is better elsewhere in the larger world. Not only might there be places free from tyrant landlords and with easier farming of loamy, well-watered fields free of thistles, there are cities beyond his imagination. A man he encounters puts this vision in his mind:

There's a city there, Adana, all of clear glass. It sparkles day and night, just like the sun. You walk in the alleys between the houses, they call them streets, and it's all glass. It's as clean as can be. Trains come and go. On the sea, ships as big as villages go to the other end of the world. Everything shimes like the sun,

bathed in light. If you look at it just once, you can't take your eyes away. If it's money you want, it pours like a flood in the Chukurova. All you've got to do is work.

In Kemal's introduction, he explains his fascination with people who are destined to become rebels committed to a cause:

I have never believed in heroes. Even in those novels in which I focus on revolt I have tried to highlight the fact that those we call heroes are in effect instruments wielded by the people. The people create and protect those instruments and stand or fall together with them. ...That is because there is a germ of revolt within every human being, just as there is a creative power, and it is this feeling of revolt that produces the "committed person."

What I understood was that when people find themselves cornered, when they feel the pain of death in their heart, they tend to create a world of myth in which they try to take refuge. By creating myths, by conjuring up worlds of dreams, one can withstand the great suffering of the world and attain love, friendship, beauty, and, even perhaps, immortality.

I was greatly moved by this mini-epic with Homeric overtones. I thank Goodreads friend Baran for recommending this book and look forward to continued exploration of readings in Turkish literature and history.

Khashayar Mohammadi says

Wayyyyyyyyyyy longer than it needed to be! and it was only book 1 of 4!!!! by the 200 page mark I already gave up on the narrative. It is of important historical significance, especially to Kurdish people, BUT for someone estranged with the geography and the political climate, it drags on without any apparent purpose.

Yakup says

Bir dava bu kadar m? do?al temalar ile anlat?l?r...?

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I already had this checked out from the library for my ongoing reading of Turkish literature when I came across a mention of the author in *The Great Railway Bazaar* by Paul Theroux. I've had a great many reading coincidences lately!

It isn't surprising that this book was originally published in serial form. It has the distinct feel of sections, with repetition that would have been unnecessary if it had originally been one volume. Those repetitions were tiring to this reader, and I have the same beef with this novel as I do with many epic fantasies - too much time spent following the hero as he tromps around the hills, chasing down his foes or running from his enemies. And then when you consider that this is merely the first book of the Ince Memed series, this could spiral into the repetition of quests and heroes that I'm just not personally much of a fan of. It will be perfect for some readers.

Still, I'm glad I read it. I felt like the author gives vivid descriptions of the landscape of the eastern part of the country, and gives insight into the period of transition before World War I in how villages and farms were run. This isn't the first novel I've read from or about Turkey with large groups of people living on the run!

Scott Burton says

One of my criteria for rating a piece of fiction is this: Would I, or have I read it more than once. No matter how good, I almost never watch a movie more than once. But some books, I come back to over and over. This is such a book. I have read it several times. For me it is always entertaining and moving. Set in Turkey, and written by a Noble Prize nominee, it is a kind of Robin Hood saga.

I tell all my students that if they wish to understand the prophetic passion for social justice that is to be found in the Old Testament, read Memed, My Halk. One is constantly outraged by the too real injustice suffered by Memed and the uncommon heroism of Memed as he fights and rises above it.

The translation from Turkish is excellent. This little known book deserves to be better known. Its author deserves to be more widely read.
