

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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## Memoirs of an Exile (1957)

Aziz Nesin (1915 – 1995)

### OVERVIEW

Aziz Nesin, whose real name was Mehmet Nusret Nesin, was a satirist and story writer. He graduated from Kuleli Military High School in 1935, from the Military Academy in 1937, and from the Military Science School in 1939. While serving as a first lieutenant, he was discharged from the army in 1944 for misconduct. He began journalism in 1945. He worked at *Yedigün*, *Karagöz*, and *Tan*, and published a magazine called *Cumartesi*. In 1946, he began publishing *Markopaşa* with Sabahattin Ali. He was sentenced to ten months in prison and three months and ten days in exile for writing a pamphlet criticizing the aid that the Truman Doctrine deemed appropriate for countries like Turkey. He was arrested again the following year because of his book, *Azizname*. He was acquitted after being held in custody for four months. In 1950, he was sentenced to one year and four months in prison for translating part of the preface of Georges Politzer's book and publishing it in *Yeni Baştan*. After his release from prison, he opened a bookstore and then a photography studio. In 1954, he began writing humorous articles for *Akbaba* under pseudonyms. He used over a hundred pseudonyms throughout his literary career. He was wrongfully arrested with other leftist friends due to attacks against non-Muslims in Istanbul on September 6-7, 1957. He was released six months later. In 1956, he was chosen first in an international humor competition held in Italy. Aziz Nesin, who later received many other international awards throughout his literary career, began publishing his articles under his own name after this award. In 1957, he founded Düşün Publishing House with Kemal Tahir. He took over the management of the publishing house on his own from 1958 to 1969. He wrote columns for *Yeni Gazete*, *Akşam*, *Tanin*, *Öncü*, *Yeni Tanin*, *Ustura* and *Günaydın*. In 1961, he was arrested for four months because of an article he wrote. In 1972, he founded the Nesin Foundation, which aimed to educate orphans. In 1975, he was elected president of the Turkish Writers' Union and continued in this position until 1989. In 1984, he led the preparation of the Intellectuals' Petition against the military regime. In 1993, he began writing columns for *Aydınlık*. He could get out of the Madımak Hotel which was burned down by a group demanding sharia during the Pir Sultan Abdal festival in Sivas on July 2, 1993, and thirty-seven people lost their lives. This incident was after he announced that he would publish Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in Turkish. In his book, *Memoirs of an Exile*, he recounts his experiences during the three-month and ten-day exile he went through for writing a pamphlet criticizing the aid that the Truman Doctrine deemed appropriate for countries like Turkey.

### CHARACTERS

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Behçet                | Police superintendent                    |
| Halil Lütfi Dördüncü  | Publisher                                |
| Hâşim Işcan           | Politician                               |
| Hâşim Nezihi Okay     | Poet and teacher                         |
| Hikmet Akadam         | Sculptor                                 |
| Kerim Sadi            | Writer                                   |
| Mustafa Uykusuz       | Cartoonist, illustrator                  |
| Necip Fazıl Kısakürek | Writer                                   |
| Sabahattin Ali        | Writer                                   |
| Şazi                  | Aziz Nesin's friend from military school |

### SYNOPSIS

Aziz Nesin is sentenced to ten months in prison and three months in exile in Bursa in 1948 for writing a pamphlet titled "Where Are We Going?" criticizing the Truman Doctrine in *Markopaşa*, which he has been publishing with Sabahattin Ali since 1946, on the grounds that he has acted against the national interests through publication, according to Article 161 of the Turkish Penal Code. As an exile he has very little money because he comes to Bursa from a prison in Istanbul. After determining the police station where he needs to go to sign each morning and evening, he settles into a cheap hotel. Since he is an exile, most of the people he knows avoid being seen with him. He spends his days shivering

in the cold in his hotel room. He also loses some money because of a painter staying at the same hotel. Although a young journalist who publishes a local newspaper in Bursa slanders him in his newspaper in order to keep up with government policies, he visits him at the hotel and provides financial support. Another person who works at a drugstore and is a graduate of the same school as him visits him at the hotel and then rents a room on the upper floor of a two-story house where an old woman lives. The same person rents another room for Kerim Sadi too, another exile in Bursa. Aziz Nesin's former boss Halil Lütfi Dördüncü asks him to collect his debt from the distributor in Bursa in monthly installments on the condition that he pays it back by working for a women's magazine that he plans to publish later. In this way, he finds some support during his exile days. However, most of the people in Bursa do not change their attitude toward him and Kerim Sadi. He is either harmed by the people who want to establish closeness with him or is forced to accept the accusation that he is a member of a secret organization. He misses his wife and two children during these days of isolation and receives a letter from his brother saying that he should come and see what is going on at his house. After a while, he cannot stand it anymore and escapes to Istanbul at night. When he gets home, he is convinced that his family is completely broken.

## EVENTS

### *Aziz Nesin's Note*

In the foreword for the thirteenth edition of the book in 1994, Aziz Nesin criticizes his foreword in the first edition published in 1957. In the first foreword, he writes that the days spent in exile have turned into sweet memories over time and that he laughs whenever he remembers those days. However, when he looks back now, none of his memories make him laugh. In fact, he feels rage because of the pain inflicted on him and his wife, and their two little children. He wants everyone to share his rage. The reason for this change is that he has just found the notes he wrote during his exile in the library of Nesin Foundation.

Every year, Aziz Nesin meets with his old friends from the Military Science School at the Nesin Foundation. In 1987, when they meet again, he takes out the project files he completed as a lieutenant in 1938, partly to show off that he has been able to keep them for 56 years, and shows them to his friends. While he is looking through the files, he comes across an envelope. Inside the envelope are letters he wrote to his wife and friends while he was in exile 39 years ago. He cannot remember how these letters came back to him, but he reads them until the morning and feels the pain he experienced once again.

### *Arrival in Bursa*

Aziz Nesin is the last to get off the bus because his hands are cuffed. All his belongings are wrapped in an old blanket. One of the two gendarmes with him helps him put the blanket on his back. He starts walking with two gendarmes on his right and left. Everywhere is full of naval soldiers, shops hoist flags, and paper lanterns are hung on the windows. Aziz Nesin does not want to get into the crowd, but the two gendarmes do not listen to him. As soon as the band starts playing, they join the parade. Aziz Nesin also walks with them in military formation. As he walks, he steps so wholeheartedly that he feels as if the ground is shaking where he steps. From somewhere, a voice says, "He is coming!" He does not know who "he" is. When he arrives in front of the Community Center, people applaud something. He does not know who is expected, but he learns that the celebration is about the establishment of the Community Centers. However, in a note he makes later, he states that he is not sure about this.

### *Behçet the HOH*

When they arrive at the gendarmerie station, the soldiers tell them that they cannot accept Aziz Nesin because there is not a commander. Aziz Nesin only wants to get rid of his handcuffs. When he asked for the handcuffs to be loosened a little while they were on the ferry, one of the gendarmes tightened them but the other one put them on his feet so he could eat. The commander arrives a little later. Aziz Nesin recognizes him from school; Behçet the HOH.

One day in chemistry class, their teacher Zihni takes Behçet to the board and asks him to write water on the board. Behçet writes "water." When Zihni Bey shouts that he wants him to write in chemistry

language, Behçet looks at him blankly. Zihni gets up and writes H<sub>2</sub>O on the board. Then he asks him to separate it into its roots. When Behçet cannot do this either, he asks him to write "HOH" on the board and read it. Behçet reads it "HOH" like breathing. From that day on, he is known as Behçet the HOH.

When Aziz Nesin sees him, he smiles and takes a step towards him, but he turns his head to the gendarmes and asks, "Who is this?" When one of the gendarmes says that he is an exile, Aziz Nesin says, "Hoh! The weather is so hot!" Behçet signs the paper given by the gendarmes and says, "Take this to the police department!" When Aziz Nesin meets him on the Galata Bridge years later, Behçet hugs him, starts a conversation by complaining about the troubles in the country and says, "We are not human!" Aziz Nesin says, "Who are you?" and walks away.

#### *A Note about Twenty Years Later*

Aziz Nesin is illegally detained on July 4, 1967. The chief interrogator claims that by writing his memoir about Behçet the HOH, he has insulted Turkish gendarmerie officers and humiliated his country because his stories has been translated into foreign languages. Aziz Nesin, however, states that citing one student's ignorance of a chemical formula does not mean accusing all gendarmerie officers of ignorance.

#### *The Chief of Police*

They go to the Police Department. When the chief of police sees Aziz Nesin, he says, "What a shame, such a genius! Are you the one who will save the country?" Aziz Nesin says that he has no such claim. The police chief reaches out to the window, points to the statue of Atatürk in the square and asks, "Where were you when he saved the country?" Aziz Nesin says that he was six years old at the time.

#### *What are you?*

Aziz Nesin says that responsibility in bureaucracy is a ball of fire, and that everyone who is given a responsibility is looking for someone else to throw it at. Indeed, when the chief of police sends him to a police station with a police officer, the police superintendent screams "Aren't there any other police stations?" Since Aziz Nesin is an exile, he has to go to the police station near where he is staying every morning and evening and sign.

When the police superintendent asks where he will be staying, he answers that he doesn't know yet. The police superintendent orders him to go and find a place to stay first. When Aziz Nesin heads to the door, he stops him by saying that he can't go alone. He assigns a police officer. While he is going out with the police officer, the police superintendent calls the police officer inside and says something. Aziz Nesin thinks that he orders the police officer to find a hotel outside his responsibility.

He looks at hotels with the officer. Although he is looking for a cheap hotel, the police officer takes him to expensive hotels. Finally, they find a cheap hotel. He leaves his belongings in the room and returns to the police station with the officer. The police superintendent tells him that the hotel is in the area of another police station. This time the police officer takes him to the police station in the area where the hotel is located.

After seeing him, the police superintendent there shouts, "What should I do with you?" He asks Aziz Nesin if he is a "smuggler," "drug dealer," or "thief." When Aziz Nesin answers no to all of them, he gets angry by asking, "So what are you?" Aziz Nesin cannot say that he is a writer. With his close-shaven head, old trousers similar to pajamas and long coat sweeping the floor, he thinks that if he had anything resembling a writer, there is none left. The police superintendent sends him into the detention cell.

As he takes out a book in the detention cell and starts reading, he hears people whispering "He is reading a book!" A little later, he is brought before the police superintendent again. The police superintendent looks at him carefully and asks what his nationality is. Aziz Nesin says that he is Turkish. The police superintendent asks whether he is a Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Turk or a "pure" Turk. Aziz Nesin says that he is a "pure" Turk. The police superintendent says he cannot understand what he is he says he is a writer.

After a silence, the police superintendent asks him where he will stay. Aziz Nesin says he is planning to stay at a hotel. The police superintendent tells him that he needs to come to the station every day to sign and asks an officer to learn where he is staying. As Aziz Nesin and the officer are leaving the police station, the police superintendent says, "It's a good thing I didn't read too much, otherwise I would have gotten into trouble too." Upon this, a police officer adds, "Too much of everything is too much, sir!"

### *Chasing Şazi*

The hotel where Aziz Nesin is staying charges two and a half liras per night. It is February and they want another lira to light the stove in the room. The twenty-five liras in Aziz Nesin's pocket are spent in a week. He cannot eat anything for two days because he is penniless. He goes out, thinking about whether to drink tea or eat a bagel with the fifteen cents he has. It is snowing heavily outside. He looks at the faces of people hoping to see someone he knows, but people are walking quickly because of the cold.

A little later, he sees his friend from school, Şazi. Their eyes meet, but Şazi suddenly turns around and starts running. Şazi is his friend with whom he would run to see the girls coming to the pier from Kandilli Girls' High School in the evenings. He calls out after him, but Şazi continues running. He turns to a deserted road ahead. Aziz Nesin follows him. After running through many neighborhoods, Şazi goes up the hill, but Aziz Nesin's feet slip and he falls into the snow. He looks at Şazi from where he lies. Şazi waves up the hill and leaves. Aziz Nesin curses, thinking that if he had not been hungry for two days Şazi would not have been able to outrun him. When he gets up, he wants to go to a hot coffeehouse and have some tea, but he realizes that he lost his ten cents.

### *A Painter*

Aziz Nesin returns to the hotel. While he is struggling to climb up the stairs due to hunger, a man of his own age greets him and invites him to his room. Aziz Nesin goes to his room thinking he may order tea or maybe even dinner. It is warm inside. There are oil paintings, paint pots, brushes, empty frames and canvases in the room. The man is a painter, and after introducing himself to Aziz Nesin, he says he is his fan. He takes out a bottle of raki and fills the glass with raki. Aziz Nesin drinks the raki thinking that he will give him some appetizers and at least some roasted chickpeas. But the painter offers him nothing but raki.

The painter constantly talks about how much he loves "fighting" people. He tells that his own father was also a fighting Young Turk. While conveying this, Aziz Nesin notes that "fighting" people are very much loved in Turkey, but no one is willing to fight, and there are also not many people whose fathers are not Young Turks or Unionists.

He doesn't know how many glasses he had, the last thing he remembers is falling to the floor, retching at his room's door. He vomits after entering his room.

### *Three Books*

When the hotel clerk shows the red paper from the post office, Aziz Nesin immediately runs to the post office thinking that someone sent him some money. If his father sent it, he will be very embarrassed, if his wife sent it, he will tell her that he does not need it. When he goes to the post office, the clerk tells him that it is not money but a package. Aziz Nesin receives the package and inside it are three books sent by a friend. At that moment, he is disgusted with books.

There is a large bookstore in Bursa to which he sends the magazines he publishes in Istanbul. He wonders whether he will be able to sell these three books to that bookstore or not, so he goes to the bookstore. Since he cannot find the courage to enter the store, he paces in front of it and looks inside. He finally steps inside with the dream of a plate of beans and some rice. He hears a well-dressed customer tell the bookseller, "It is difficult to earn a living in Turkey, but it is very easy to become rich," and the bookseller replies, "A Jew told me, 'I know what I went through until I earned two thousand liras. But I do not even know how I became rich after that.'"

When he is finally alone with the bookseller, he introduces himself. The bookseller asks if he came to the hot springs or to ski in Uludağ and how many days he plans to stay. Aziz Nesin smiles and says he will stay for three months and ten days and explains that he is an exile. The bookseller sees the three books on the counter and says he is looking for one of them and asks if he can borrow it. Aziz Nesin gives the book to him and leaves the bookstore.

### *The Embarrassed Journalist*

A local newspaper published in Bursa has many insults on its front page about Aziz Nesin. Aziz Nesin bursts into laughter as he reads what is written about him. It is claimed that he has received bundles of money from foreigners. While he is laughing out loud, the door of his room is knocked. It is a young man. He says that he learned about the hotel he is staying at from the bookstore he has just visited and that he is a fan. He is a journalist and publishes a weekly local newspaper. When he tells him the name of the newspaper he publishes, Aziz Nesin is shocked. The newspaper is the one he has just read. When he shows the newspaper, the young man shyly states that they are forced to write like that. He takes some money out of his wallet and leaves it on his bed. Aziz Nesin protests that he has money, but he does not resist for long. After the young journalist leaves, he immediately counts the money. It is ten liras. He immediately has the stove in his room lit.

Aziz Nesin notes that if he were writing a novel instead of his memoirs, he would have the hero of his novel tear that money apart. After exile, he gets close to this journalist and realizes that he is in pain because he is a person who cannot live as he wishes. The young man is an alcoholic, moves from Bursa to Izmir and then dies.

### *Governor Hâşim Işcan*

Aziz Nesin states that Hâşim Işcan contributes to the development of cities where he serves as a governor. While he is a governor in Bursa, he founds the Beautification of Bursa Association. Imports are made under difficult conditions during and after the Second World War. One of the most sought-after and hard-to-find products is tire. Hâşim Işcan buys tires as a governor, sells them at auction through the association, and the association spends the money earned to beautify the city. However, the people of Bursa do not like Hâşim Işcan because he is the governor of the ruling party, The Republican People's Party. Hâşim Işcan, who does whatever the government says, also does not like Aziz Nesin.

Aziz Nesin, after reading the slanders written about him in the newspaper the young journalist publishes, asks him to take the money and leave. Thereupon, the young journalist states that he keeps his newspaper alive thanks to the official advertisements he receives from the governor, which is why he has to write about him like this.

Aziz Nesin is invited to a dinner given by the ambassador in Poland in 1965, seventeen years after his exile in Bursa. Hâşim Işcan is also present at the invitation as the mayor of Istanbul. Throughout the evening, he frequently tells Aziz Nesin, "I know you do not like me" in an apologetic manner. After leaving the governorship, Hâşim Işcan does not leave the party he is affiliated with, but he is resentful of the state. He says that his retirement pension is equal to the price of one of the four legs of a horse. Aziz Nesin asks what he means by this. Hâşim Işcan says that he went to the stud farm in Karacabey, Bursa, asked about the price of a horse, and that it was four times more than his pension, meaning that his pension was equivalent to one of the four legs of the horse.

### *Forty Liras and a Whore*

The painter constantly tells Aziz Nesin that if he can find the money to travel to Ankara, he will send him at least fifty liras from Ankara every month. One night, while waiting for a carriage at the hotel door, he forces him down and gets on the carriage. Aziz Nesin does not actually want to spend time with him, and he is actually aware that he is a swindler, but he still has hope. He asks where they are going in the carriage. The painter winks and says that he will see in a moment.

When Aziz Nesin sees that the horses are going by themselves, he asks the coachman how this is possible. The coachman says that since he always takes customers to the same place at night, the horses have memorized the route by now. The place they have arrived at is behind high walls like a

castle, where the police and gendarmes are waiting in front. After entering the castle gate, the painter enters the first house on the right. He goes upstairs, and Aziz Nesin waits for him among the women. The painter gets off shortly, and this time they enter the house next door. They enter the third house, and he does not like anyone there either. There are three women left in the fourth house.

When the painter wants to spend the night there, Aziz Nesin objects. However, the landlady says that they have to spend the night there because the castle gate closes at twelve at night. Aziz Nesin has taken forty liras from the post office that morning. The painter says that he knows about his forty liras and wants him to pay for both of them with this money. He starts talking about how he will return it to him in large amounts when he goes to Ankara. Aziz Nesin is desperate and pays the forty liras in his pocket in advance, and after the painter takes a woman and leaves, he enters a small room with another woman.

Since his mind is on the forty liras, he gets into bed with the woman to make up for it somehow and makes her tell him her life story so that he can write a novel in the future. The woman tells him that she is from Rhodes, that her mother died when she was four, that her father gave her to a man to protect her from her stepmother, and that the man's son raped her when she was fourteen. Then she goes to sleep snoring. In the morning, Aziz Nesin goes out into the street without waking her.

He waits for the painter to pay him his debt for a few days, but the painter never brings up the subject of money. One day, the hotel clerk informs him that the painter is going to Ankara by bus. Aziz Nesin immediately thinks of asking for his money, but since he is ashamed to do so, he first goes to the bookstore and buys a book as a gift. When he catches the bus, he sees that a woman who visits the painter from time to time is there too. He tells the painter that he bought the book so that he can read it on the way. The painter tells him that he will send him money every month when he goes to Ankara. When Aziz Nesin hears this, he feels that the woman looks at him with disapproval as if the painter sent him the money and he spent it. At that moment, the painter whispers to the woman, "Goodness..." The bus leaves shortly after and the painter leaves. Aziz Nesin never sees him again from that day on. However, since he is thinking about the forty liras he lost, he thinks of making up for this by writing a novel based on the woman's story.

One day, he sits next to some men chatting in the hotel lounge. One of them is talking about a woman who told him her life story. The woman is definitely the person Aziz Nesin spent the night with, but the story told as her story is different. According to this story, the woman was the daughter of a wealthy family, her husband, whom she was forced to marry, turned out to be a gambler and took all her property. Someone else who heard this said that this was not true, that the woman was the victim of a man who deceived him with the promise of marriage. Another said that this was also false, that she was the daughter of an agha, that she was kidnapped and raped by the enemies of the agha. This time, someone else claimed that the woman was married to a civil servant in Istanbul, and that she started this business when her husband went to prison. Finally, the hotel clerk intervened and said that all the women working there look at a man's face and immediately understand which story would upset him, and they make up a story accordingly. Thus, Aziz Nesin's dream of writing a novel inspired by the woman's life is dashed.

### *Blanket for Sale*

It is snowing heavily outside. Aziz Nesin has debt to the hotel he is staying at. Since he has no money left, he has not been able to feed himself or light the stove in his room. While thinking about what to do, his brown blanket catches his eye. He takes it and holds it up to the light in front of the window; it is full of holes. He decides to sell it in the flea market. He wraps the blanket in newspapers, ties it with rope and goes outside. He is afraid that someone will see him, as if he were carrying a corpse. It snows so much that the newspapers he has wrapped around the blanket get wet and start to fall apart. He wanders the streets to find the flea market. He is too embarrassed to ask anyone the way. Despite being exhausted from hunger and fatigue, he continues walking. The newspapers eventually fall apart and the blanket is left exposed. As the blanket gets wetter and heavier, Aziz Nesin starts swearing in anger. Moreover, since he does not have a hat on, the melted snow in his hair is running down his neck. When he gives up selling the blanket and returns to the hotel, he encounters a friend, who is a civil servant, at the hotel door who had previously advised him to rent a house and cook and eat at home instead of staying at the hotel and eating at a restaurant. When his friend asks what he has under his arm, he says he has just bought a blanket and goes up to his room. He spreads his wet

blanket on the bed. He is happy that he did not sell his blanket, which has been his companion for years.

### *A Poet from the Democratic Party*

Aziz Nesin cannot ask anyone for a job because he is an exile. He takes the local newspapers published in Bursa and examines them one by one. Most of them are in favor of the government. There is only one opposition newspaper. The person who publishes the newspaper is a poet he has heard of before and publishes the newspaper with the support he receives from the Democratic Party. Aziz Nesin thinks that since the man is a poet, he can explain his situation to him and at least ask him for a job like proofreading. He goes to the address written in the newspaper three times. On the third day, he learns that the man will arrive in the evening.

He buys a cigarette from the tobacconist and goes to the newspaper again in the evening. After the man opens the door, he asks him what he wants. When Aziz Nesin tells him who he is, the man looks him over and pulls him in and says that it is a good thing he came in the evening and not during the day, so no one will see him meet and talk to him. Aziz Nesin does not know what to do. The man says that he always reads his articles and that he also knows that he is an exile in Bursa and asks him not to tell anyone about their meeting.

Aziz Nesin, not knowing what to do, takes out a cigarette and offers it to the man, but he cannot light his cigarette because he forgot to buy matches. The man also cannot light his cigarette because he does not take out a match. The man says that he has a chance of becoming an MP, that he can be more beneficial to the country as an MP, but that it will not be good for him if anyone hears that he is talking to him. Aziz Nesin also confirms what he hears helplessly. The man finally asks him not to come there again and even to ignore him if they run into each other. Aziz Nesin confirms what the man says and leaves.

Later, he learns that this poet was expelled from school because he wrote Nazım Hikmet's poems in his notebook and that he was subjected to various attacks within the Democrat Party on the grounds that he was pro-Soviet. He also notes that he was not elected as an MP. Years after his exile, they become friends and continue to be friends as if nothing like this had ever happened.

### *Coward Teachers*

The teachers at Bursa High School know Aziz Nesin and want to talk to him, but they cannot because they are afraid of being blacklisted. When they see him, they walk away quickly. However, when they meet on deserted streets, they wave and smile from a distance. One of these teachers is Hâşim Nezihi Okay. After he retires, they become friends, but Hâşim Nezihi Okay always feels embarrassed because Aziz Nesin tells his friends about his hesitation to be seen with him in Bursa. He comes to a book signing on July 17, 1990, and never leaves Aziz Nesin's side during the event. Aziz Nesin gets his home address that day, signs his new book and sends it to him.

### *When the National Anthem Becomes the Savior*

Aziz Nesin has two of his gold-plated teeth removed, sells the gold, and uses the money to fill his stomach, but he has nothing left to sell. He sits in the Community Center, reads a lot of books, and warms himself up, but he has been hungry for two days. As he is pacing up and down the snowy road, someone grabs his shoulder. When he turns, he sees an old school friend. His friend immediately takes him to a coffeehouse. They drink tea together. While drinking tea, Aziz Nesin thinks that his friend may take him to a restaurant. He gives short answers while chatting. Because his mind is busy with the beans he might eat in a moment.

When his friend asks what he is doing in Bursa, he tells him that he is in exile. His friend's face changes and later he suddenly leaves, saying that he will come in a moment. Aziz Nesin waits for his friend for about an hour. After a while, another friend comes in saying that he has seen him from outside. He orders a coffee. When he finishes his coffee, he gets up and leaves. Aziz Nesin gets nervous because he does not have any money to pay for tea and coffee.

A little later, he sees a friend passing by and forcibly invites him to the coffeehouse. He orders a coffee for his friend. While his friend is drinking the coffee, he plans to escape with the excuse of going to the bathroom. However, his friend sits for a while and suddenly gets up, saying that he is late. When Aziz Nesin asks him to pay for the coffee, he says that he does not have any money and leaves. While Aziz Nesin is thinking hard about what to do, a man at the table next to him says that he is looking for someone to challenge him at backgammon. Aziz Nesin says, "I am in, if you allow me." When the man asks what they are playing for, he says that he will play for what he wants.

He has never beaten anyone at backgammon until that day. He loses the first round. He loses the second round too. While playing the third round, something unexpected happens. Years ago, a governor had the city band play the National Anthem twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. After the governor leaves office, no one changes this tradition. When the march starts, life stops in the area where the march is heard and everyone stands where they are, waiting for the march to end. They also scold those who do not. Just when he is about to lose the third round, the march suddenly starts playing and everyone stands up. Aziz Nesin takes this as an opportunity and leaves the coffeehouse.

### *Quran Lessons*

For a while, he prints flowers or landscapes on pillowcases to earn money, but the person selling the pillows tells him that only two or three pillows are sold each week and asks him to work less. Moreover, while he used to pay one lira per pillow in advance, he pays fifty cents as he sells the pillows. Thereupon, Aziz Nesin looks for another way to earn money.

He sees a sign in the window of a bookstore that says "English lessons are given" and asks a bookstore owner if he can hang such a sign. The bookstore owner says that he will do more business if he hangs a sign that says "Ottoman Turkish lessons are given" instead of English. Aziz Nesin listens to the bookstore owner and has four students a week later. While he waits for adults who want to read old books, some children show up.

First, a man asks him if he can give Quran lessons. Aziz Nesin says he can. The man tests Aziz Nesin on the Quran. Aziz Nesin passes this test because he is a hafiz. In this way, the number of students increases. He gives lessons in the mornings at a mosque. The children, whose families are happy, recommend him to other families.

But one morning his students do not show up. He later learns the reason from a man at a coffeehouse. When a man asked one of the children's fathers who was teaching his child the Quran, he said "Aziz the Hafiz", and the man explained that "Aziz the Hafiz" was Aziz Nesin. Thus, everyone stopped sending their children to his lessons. The man who tells Aziz Nesin this at the coffeehouse complains that people like Aziz Nesin masquerade as anything without knowing that he is talking to Aziz Nesin.

### *Eating Competition*

One day, Aziz Nesin receives a letter from his brother. In the letter, his brother asks him to come and see the disgrace in his house. After Aziz Nesin reads the letter, he starts to think about what the disgrace in his house is, but since he is an exile, he cannot go anywhere. Moreover, he can barely fill his stomach. He counts the money in his pocket; he does not even have fifty cents. He goes out, inhales the smell of Iskender coming from the kebab shop, buys a bagel and goes to a coffeehouse.

Eating the bagel does not fill his stomach, but increases his appetite. A man at the table next to him claims that he can eat one kilo of filled pastries, twenty eggs and one kilo of halva. They start arguing about this. While they are talking, he imagines himself claiming that he can drink forty glasses of lemonade after eating the pastries and that he will pay them five hundred liras if he cannot eat and drink all of them. While the man next to him is eating the pastries, halva, and eggs, he gets up and walks out.

### *A Friend*

One evening, while spending time in his hotel room, not knowing what to do because of the cold, his door is knocked. The person standing in front of the door is a man about his age. His face is familiar

but he cannot figure out where he knows him from. The man tells him that he always reads his writings and that he learned which hotel he stays at from the bookstore. After talking for a while, they realize that they studied at the same school.

This new friend of Aziz Nesin immediately rents a room for him in an old-style, two-story house of an old woman living on the ground floor. Since Aziz Nesin loves tea, he also buys a teapot, glasses, and a spirit stove for him and gives him some money. He visits him to have some tea while chatting with him. One evening, while they are drinking tea together, they hear a voice on the stairs. It is Aziz Nesin's new friend's wife.

Upon learning that her husband rented a room for Aziz Nesin, she got very angry. She insults him constantly and does not let Aziz Nesin explain himself. She tries to force him out of the room so that she can take her husband and leave. When the man protests, she finally starts to cry, saying, "It's either him or me."

His friend says that his wife is a teacher and should not act like an average person. But Aziz Nesin cannot accuse the woman. Because he sometimes asks, "Am I me?" especially when he reads the things said about him. He thinks that the woman is just trying to protect her husband from trouble.

#### *The Kindness of Halil Lütfi Dördüncü*

Aziz Nesin's friend, Hâluk Yetiş, who runs his errands in Istanbul, explains his situation to Halil Lütfi Dördüncü, who is the stingiest man Aziz Nesin knows. Since Halil Lütfi Dördüncü is preparing to publish a women's magazine called *Hanımeli*, he asks Aziz Nesin to collect the money the distributor in Bursa owes him and pay it back by working for *Hanımeli* after returning from exile. Thus, Aziz Nesin starts to receive one hundred liras from the distributor every month.

#### *Drinking Vodka*

There is another exile who has come to Bursa; Kerim Sadi. Aziz Nesin calls Kerim Sadi, who is older than him, "teacher" or "master." His friend who rents him a room rents another room in the same house for Kerim Sadi as well. Since Kerim Sadi had been exiled before, he left his bed and blanket at an acquaintance's house. When he asks Aziz Nesin to fetch them, he goes to fetch the bed and blanket after dark because he does not want to be seen carrying a bed on his back. He gives him the big room in the house.

When the weather is not too cold, they go out together. There is a place they like; the mountaineering club. The tables are usually full here, but as soon as they enter, the people sitting near them get up from their tables. Nobody wants to be seen with them. They come here on a winter day when the weather is not too cold. Shortly afterwards, two glasses of water and two glasses of vodka are placed on their table, but Aziz Nesin cannot understand what is in the glass because he has never seen vodka before. He tells the waiter several times that they did not order such a thing and that they wanted tea. The waiter states that the drinks were ordered by a woman at another table. When Aziz Nesin asks what the drinks in the glass are, the waiter thinks that he is pretending not to know and sarcastically says that it is vodka.

Aziz Nesin thinks that the woman is making a joke by treating them to vodka because even drinking vodka is considered a sign of leftism at that time and many people are hesitant to drink it in public. Kerim Sadi and he are hesitant and cannot look at the woman. Finally, Aziz Nesin turns his head a little as if looking somewhere else. The young woman is sitting next to two old men. He cannot understand who they are. He does not want to drink something he does not know but does not want to offend the woman as well. So he pours the water and vodka into two separate glasses.

While drinking, Kerim Sadi tells him to turn to the woman and raise his glass. At first, he says he cannot do such thing, but then he picks up the glass he thinks is full of water, turns to the woman, slightly bows his head and finishes the glass. At that moment, his throat and stomach start burning. Kerim Sadi is laughing. He wants to get up and go out immediately. As he walks, he thinks he hears the man next to the woman say to the other, "Look at this guy, he just downed a whole glass of vodka in one go. The real badass is this short guy."

Later, he learns that Kerim Sadi, who he thought didn't know what vodka was like him, had gone to Moscow years ago, had a disagreement with Nâzım Hikmet there and of course knew what vodka was very well. In other words, he understands that Kerim Sadi tricked him into thinking that what he was drinking was water and that he was having fun with his ignorance.

### *Being Unpretentious*

They occasionally meet with Cemal Toprak. Cemal Toprak's father had hosted Hüseyin Hilmi, known as Hilmi the Participant, who was exiled to their town when he was a child, in their house for a long time. Aziz Nesin states that during the Ottoman Empire, exiled people were paid salaries and the people helped the exiled people in this way, and then he says that in his time, exile means suffering.

One day, while Kerim Sadi and Aziz Nesin are sitting in a coffeehouse, Cemal Toprak comes up to them and asks Kerim Sadi who Aziz Nesin is. Kerim Sadi replies that he is Aziz Nesin's son. Cemal Toprak turns to Aziz Nesin and begins to praise his father for how brave he is. When Kerim Sadi finally says that he is not Aziz Nesin's son, he is Aziz Nesin himself, Cemal Toprak looks carefully at Aziz Nesin and does not believe him. Aziz Nesin is a short man, who is poorly dressed.

Aziz Nesin states that his simple look is always disadvantage to him. One day, while working at a printing house, a beautiful woman comes in and asks about Aziz Nesin. After telling the woman that he is Aziz Nesin, the woman tells him that she imagines Aziz Nesin as a tall man in his forties with gray hair on his temples. Aziz Nesin says, "That is how I am." The woman leaves the place dissatisfied.

### *A Gynecologist*

"Gynecologist" is written on the door of a large house. The owner of the house is a man who writes poetry, paints, and plays the violin. His room is filled to the ceiling with books. Since he is a true Ottoman, most of the words he uses are in old Turkish. Therefore, there are not many people he can talk to. When Aziz Nesin goes to see him, he tries to remember the Arabic and Persian words he knows and even looks through a dictionary. In fact, whenever they have no money, they go to this man's house. Even if they cannot eat anything, they at least drink raki.

### *Escaping from Exile*

Aziz Nesin finds a countryside café overlooking Bursa. One day, while drinking tea in its garden, thinking about his home and children, he hears the sentence "Either you come here, or have me taken there!" in a song, and his longing for home is reinforced. One evening, while he is at the same café, someone at the next table reads a newspaper article. According to the article, a communist who drew a sickle and a hammer on a toilet wall was caught. While making comments about the article, he tells the story of a hat that is common in those days. Supposedly, in Russia, if a man comes home and sees a foreign man's hat on a hanger, he thinks his wife has a guest and leaves. Aziz Nesin is so disturbed by this story that he immediately gets up and leaves and never goes there again. When he wakes up the next morning, he has only one thing on his mind: Escaping from exile.

The police station, where he goes to sign every morning and evening, even makes him buy the notebook he signs. Sometimes the officers lose this notebook. Aziz Nesin does not go to sign one morning to do a test. When he goes in the evening, he realizes that no one notices that he did not sign in the morning. His colleague, Mustafa Uykusuz, writes him a letter about a man he knows from the military service. This man is a factory worker. Aziz Nesin occasionally goes to this man and gets some money. He gets the money he needs to escape from this man as well. After signing the notebook in the evening, he sets off for Istanbul. He sees his children and wife for the first time in thirteen months because he never wants them to see him in that destitute state. He does not want to wake his children because he is going to leave again. He stays at home for three hours. In these three hours, he realizes that neither his house nor his wife is the same as before. He no longer has a home or a wife.

### *Voyeur*

Aziz Nesin meets a young man known as a storyteller. This young man considers himself a natural writer. When Aziz Nesin asks him what he reads, he says there is no one worth reading. However, he gives Aziz Nesin a story he has written to read. The next day, he asks him how he finds it. When Aziz

Nesin points out that the letters at the beginning of sentences are capitalized, a conjunction is written separately, and that he also uses punctuation marks incorrectly, he objects and says that he writes this way.

Aziz Nesin had no idea about voyeurism until he met this young man. At night, this young man and many people with him climb up electricity poles, walls, and trees and peek into the windows of houses. These men, who spend the nights together, pretend not to know each other during the day. When one of them is caught by the police at night, he tells the officer who asks what he is doing on top of the wall that he is chasing thieves.

There is an old man among them. He is nearsighted so he goes voyeurism with his binoculars. One day, his wife hides his binoculars. His friends take the man around the streets and finally climb up the mulberry tree behind his own house. His daughter and son-in-law are inside. He cannot recognize his daughter and son-in-law because his eyesight is bad, but he recognizes the curtain. He immediately shouts at his daughter to close the curtain.

One evening, the young man invites Aziz Nesin and Kerim Sadi to peeping as well. Aziz Nesin tries to tell the young man how shameful it is, but the young man says that he is doing it to have an insight into the society, and that he will write down everything he has seen later.

One evening, Aziz Nesin and Kerim Sadi go to bed early because of the cold. However, they cannot sleep because they are hungry. A little later, the door is knocked. Aziz Nesin goes down to the garden, opens the garden door and finds this young man in front of him. The young man says he has brought them a cake. He sits for a while. After he leaves, Aziz Nesin and Kerim Sadi start to eat the cake. However, after a while, they realize that they have been poisoned. Aziz Nesin remembers his children, thinking that he is dead. The tears roll down his face. When he wakes up in the morning, he has a bad taste in his mouth, and says that they have gotten used to the poison and will not die anymore.

### *The Night on the Street*

It is one of the last nights of February. Aziz Nesin and Kerim Sadi have eaten their meals and retired to their rooms. Aziz Nesin is reading a book in his room while brewing tea on the stove that was a gift from his friend. It is very cold outside, it has been snowing non-stop all day. When the door is knocked, he goes downstairs. It is his friend who has rented the rooms for them and whom he has not been able to see for a while because of his wife.

After they have tea together, his friend offers taking them to a hammam. Kerim Sadi does not want to go, saying that it will be cold. However, Aziz Nesin wants to go because he has not been able to take a bath since he came to Bursa. He stays in the hammam with his friend until after midnight. When they leave, the snow falls in large flakes. Aziz Nesin says goodbye to his friend and comes home. He knocks on the door of the garden, but Kerim Sadi does not get up. Since the garden wall is very high, it is not possible to climb. When the neighbors start to look out their windows a little later, he runs away helplessly.

He passes by his friend's house but cannot knock on his door because he is afraid of his wife. He cannot go to a hotel because he does not have any money with him. He goes out onto the street and starts walking up and down. After a while, he comes back to the house and knocks on the door. Kerim Sadi does not wake up. This time, he throws stones at his window, but when the neighbors, who are disturbed by the noise, grumble, he gives up and starts walking. He sees an open coffeehouse. However, he does not want to go in because he does not have money for tea. He stops walking in front of the coffeehouse. After a while, he goes home again. He calls out to Kerim Sadi and stones his window, but again he does not get an answer. He starts to worry about his friend's well-being. But he desperately goes back to walking.

He walks the streets until morning. He knocks on the door again at nine. Kerim Sadi opens it this time. When Aziz Nesin asks him if he heard him knocking at the door at night, Kerim Sadi says that he forgot that he went to the hammam and did not open it because he thought it was the police. Although Aziz Nesin initially believes this explanation, when he gets to know Kerim Sadi closely, he realizes that what he said was not true. After all, the police always raid in the morning. Also, why would they be afraid of the police? The reason he didn't get up and open the door was because he was concerned

about his health and didn't want to get up and go out in the cold. Kerim Sadi is someone who does not doubt his own importance and therefore tries to take good care of himself.

#### *About Kerim Sadi*

He meets Kerim Sadi in a military prison. Kerim Sadi is put in a military prison because he escaped from Konya, where he was an exile, and was caught in Istanbul. He is respected by everyone because he is the oldest person in the political ward. Since they cook together, Aziz Nesin contributes ten liras to the money collected, which is the highest amount that can be given. Kerim Sadi does not pay anything because he says he has no money. However, his sister Cazibe brings him the vegetables grown in the garden of his house in Çamlıca every week, and he sells these vegetables to the inmates. He even saves the three cubes of sugar he takes with every cup of tea and sells them to the inmates as well.

When he is exiled to Bursa, they spend time together. However, he does not spend any money during this period. He only buys dinner once. Since his old friend from the medical school, Dr. Neşati, works in Bursa, he sends Aziz Nesin to him from time to time to ask for money. One day, Aziz Nesin takes the money and brings it to him, and he treats him to dinner.

#### *Being a Member of a Secret Organization*

One evening, as Aziz Nesin leaves the police station after signing his notebook, he sees Kerim Sadi waiting with a young man he does not know. He asks who he is with his gestures, and Kerim Sadi raises his shoulder meaning he does not know him either. When the young man sees Aziz Nesin, he starts chatting. As they walk together, Aziz Nesin realizes that the young man thinks they are the secret leaders of a secret organization. Although he says that they have no connection with any organization and that it is enough to look at their condition to understand this, the young man is not convinced. He claims that they are trying not to attract suspicion because they are members of a secret organization.

Since they are in exile, no one wants to talk to them and they do not know what this young man tells other people about them, so they do not tell him that they do not want to spend time with him. The young man visits them every day. He has breakfast with them and stays with them until evening. He constantly tells them that he wants them to trust him and how eager he is to take on a role in the organization. What bothers them about this young man is that they have to share their little food with him. Because the young man thinks they are getting money from a secret organization, he eats everything with appetite.

One day, the door is knocked. A friend of Aziz Nesin from Istanbul sent them fried chicken and some baklava with an acquaintance from Bursa. While they are looking at the chicken and baklava with appetite, the door is knocked. It is the same young man again. While Aziz Nesin is hiding the chicken and baklava in the cupboard, the landlady living downstairs opens the door. The young man notices something strange. He asks what they are hiding from him. Since Aziz Nesin's mind is on the chicken and baklava in the cupboard, he cannot act as usual.

The young man, who is even more suspicious of his condition, sits with them until evening. Unable to stand the hunger any longer, Aziz Nesin finally speaks in a deep tone like the leader of a secret organization, telling them that the organization now trusts him and will give him a task. The young man gets excited. Aziz Nesin gives him an envelope and asks him to leave it in the hollow of a plane tree in the courtyard of a mosque. The young man takes the envelope with great joy and leaves. As soon as he leaves, they immediately take out the chicken and baklava. They find their state so funny that they laugh until the tears run down their eyes.

After they have eaten, the door is knocked. He has come back to tell them that he has completed his mission. Since they want to make do with chicken and baklava for three days, every time the young man comes, Aziz Nesin hands him an envelope and asks him to leave it in the same place. One time, he asks what is written in it. Aziz Nesin says it is a secret, but he insists. Then Aziz Nesin says that an assassination will be carried out. When the young man asks whether İsmet İnönü will be assassinated, he says that he cannot know.

One evening, Aziz Nesin forgets to take the envelope the young man put. So the young man tells him that the envelope he left the day before was not taken, and if he was expecting a reply, perhaps that envelope was the reply, and perhaps he made a mistake by not taking it. They go together and check the hollow of the plane tree. But there is nothing. The young man gets angry at him for not trusting him. Indeed, he has opened the envelope and seen that the paper was blank. Aziz Nesin says that the note was written with secret ink and can only be read with the help of some medicine.

Years pass, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek publishes a newspaper called *Büyük Doğu* [The Great East]. Aziz Nesin also runs a bookstore in Istanbul. There is a Greek pastry chef next to his shop. One morning, this Greek pastry chef comes up to him to show him the newspaper. On the second page, there is an article written by this young man about Aziz Nesin's membership in a secret organization. Aziz Nesin is afraid and does not know what to do. This series of articles lasts for ten days. He expects to be arrested every day, but nothing happens because in those days, the leaders of the Democrat Party are talking about the need to execute İsmet İnönü.

#### *A Meaningless Visit*

Years after returning from exile, someone calls Aziz Nesin on the phone while he is working at *Yön*. The caller is a woman and says that she definitely wants to meet him and needs his help. Her style is so proper that Aziz Nesin states that he can visit her even though he is very busy. He goes to her address. The woman's family migrated from Yugoslavia to Bursa and the woman is the sister of that young man who wants to be a member of the secret organization. She is a nurse. Her husband is a disabled photographer. She does not explain what she wants him to do. Aziz Nesin does not ask either. While listening to her, he realizes how meaningless this visit is and leaves the house before long.

#### *In the Hot Springs*

A junk dealer from the flea market in Bursa, Kerim Sadi, and Aziz Nesin decide to go to the hot springs. Aziz Nesin intends to wash his clothes there. When Kerim Sadi and his junk dealer friend enter the pool, he starts scrubbing his clothes with hot water on the side. After a while, his friends come out of the pool. However, he has only just finished washing the socks and handkerchiefs. His friends go out and start waiting for him, but he continues to scrub the clothes. Although he is warned several times that his friends are waiting for him, he cannot stop himself from doing the laundry. At one point, his vision goes black, and he faints. When he wakes up, his underwear is in his hands. He leaves the hot springs and comes home without getting into the pool and washing. His clothes are also half dirty and wet.

#### *Some Friends*

Aziz Nesin meets a few people in Bursa. One of them is Hikmet Akadam. Despite being a sculptor, he works as a janitor at his father-in-law's factory in Bursa because he cannot make ends meet. Aziz Nesin introduces him to people who help him do his own job. In this way, Hikmet Akadam is also freed from being a janitor. However, he is immediately questioned by the police about what he and Aziz Nesin talk about. Aziz Nesin states that if he really told them what they talked about, the police must think they are crazy.

He meets another person. This person, whose name he does not mention, is a man who spends all of his father's inheritance a year ago and talks about how much he could have helped him if they had met a year ago. He says this so sincerely that Aziz Nesin feels embarrassed as if he had actually taken money from him. They meet in Istanbul a few years later. This time, he tells him that he has squandered another relative's inheritance and how he would have helped him if they had met the previous year.

He also meets a boy in Bursa. He is the child of one of the neighbors. Aziz Nesin looks at him from the window every morning, if he has money in his pocket he goes out, when the boy sees him he runs to him, he takes him to the grocery store and treats him to something. When the boy sees him one morning he comes running to him. However, his father calls him back harshly. Then he beats him. He never talks to that boy again after that day. When he leaves the house the boy looks at him and bows his head helplessly. Aziz Nesin feels sad as if he could not love his own son.

One day while he is trying to read a book in the Community Center library, the children around him start chatting loudly. When Aziz Nesin tells the boy who is making the most noise to be quiet, they start making more noise. Aziz Nesin cannot stand it and goes out. After a while he hears someone running behind him. It is the boy he scolded. He asks, "Are you Aziz Nesin?" When he gets a yes, he apologizes. That day the boy comes home with him. They see each other a few times after that. Aziz Nesin learns that he is a leftist and that he has to drop out of high school and eventually ends up in prison.

### *What Was the Reason for the Exile?*

In 1946, while publishing the magazine *Markopaşa* together with Sabahattin Ali, Sabahattin Ali wants authors to write anonymously. The most widely read newspaper in those years, *Cumhuriyet*, sold thirty thousand copies. The opposition newspaper, Ahmet Emin Yalman's *Vatan*, sold fifty-five thousand copies on the day of election in 1945. *Markopaşa* starts to sell sixty thousand copies a few issues later. The Republican People's Party is in power, and martial law is in effect in Istanbul. The government wants to silence *Markopaşa*, which is in opposition and has so many buyers.

One evening, while Aziz Nesin is working, a young man comes to the magazine. He wants to talk to him alone and tells Aziz Nesin that he is a reserve officer and that it is known that he writes the articles in *Markopaşa* and that he will be arrested soon. Aziz Nesin thanks him for the information, but he does not care so much about this conversation that he does not even investigate who the young man really is.

At the end of World War II, the Truman Doctrine has just been issued in the name of the American president. Aziz Nesin prepares a brochure titled "Where Are We Going?" criticizing the Marshall Plan. The text is typeset by hand. After one side of the brochure is printed, the police raid the printing house. Aziz Nesin is taken to the office of the chief of police, who is Ahmet Demir. Inside, a well-dressed man asks him why he wrote this brochure. He explains that he has seen a headline in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper saying "America's borders pass through Turkey" and that this headline offended his national honor and that is why he wrote it. When the well-dressed man suggests discussing this subject, he states that they cannot discuss it because they are not under equal conditions and that he is there as a defendant. Thereupon, the man shouts, "Shall we be Russian dogs?" Aziz Nesin responds, "Let's not be a dog first." The man shouts, "Take him away."

In the meantime, Sabahattin Ali is arrested and placed in prison. One day, Aziz Nesin is taken to the martial law court. While the military prosecutor is interrogating him, the military judge suddenly starts swearing at Sabahattin Ali. Aziz Nesin learns the reason for this swearing a little later. The judge says that Sabahattin Ali sent him a greeting card (for the holiday or New Year). Aziz Nesin cannot make sense of this. When the judge asks, "What does sending me a greeting card mean?" he says, "I don't know, what does it mean?" The judge replies, "When the Russians invade Turkey, your name is on the list of those to be hanged."

A few days later, Aziz Nesin is placed in prison in Harbiye. They try to find an article of law to show him guilty and eventually they use article 161. This article is related to "acting against national interests through publication." Aziz Nesin argues that it takes time to understand whether an idea or action is against or appropriate for national interest. According to the law, at least two people must read the text for the crime to be committed. They question Sacit Öget, the manager of the Stad Printing House who printed the brochure. Sacit Öget says that if he were to read everything printed at his workplace, not even one book a month could be printed. They question another customer who printed a sports magazine at the same place. He also states that he did not read the brochure but that he knew it would be printed and that he had warned Sacit Öget that printing a brochure written by a man like Aziz Nesin could be dangerous.

They question the typesetter who typeset the brochure and the machine operator who printed the brochure. The typesetter explains that he typesets the letters one by one, so he forgets the previous word when he typesets a word. The machine operator who printed the brochure also says that if he read every book he printed, he would become a professor. Thereupon, Sabahattin Ali is brought in with his hands cuffed. He and the administrative manager, Hâluk Yetiş, state that they read the brochure. While Aziz Nesin is waiting at the courthouse, he asks Sabahattin Ali why he sent a greeting

card to such a man. Sabahattin Ali says he did not send a greeting card to anyone. At the end of the trial, he is sentenced to ten months in prison and three months in exile. Aziz Nesin appeals. The Supreme Court upholds the decision. Article 161 of the Turkish Penal Code is deemed undemocratic and abolished on March 27, 1962. However, Aziz Nesin continues to have a criminal record.

### *Letters*

During his exile days, Aziz Nesin frequently corresponds with his colleague, Hâluk Yetiş. In most of these letters, he asks Hâluk Yetiş to regularly give money to his family in Istanbul, to inform him about his family's current situation, and to send him his clothes. The intensity of the isolation he describes in his memoirs is clearly seen in the anxious language in these letters he writes one after another.

### THEMES

#### POLITICS

**Conflict** When Aziz Nesin writes an article criticizing the Marshall Plan, he is arrested before his article is published. As he is arrested, he tells a well-dressed government official who wants to argue with him about the issue that they cannot argue because they are not on equal terms. He is eventually sentenced to both prison and exile.

#### PSYCHOLOGY

**Exclusion** Aziz Nesin starts journalism because he was discharged from the army. When he arrives in Bursa he encounters many people he knows from military school. The first of these is Behçet, the chief of police. Behçet pretends not to recognize him. On a snowy day when he is barely walking due to hunger, he runs into another friend, Şazi. However, Şazi runs away from him. Later, after a friend he runs into learns that he is an exile, he leaves him alone at the coffeehouse. The poet, who publishes a local newspaper, asks him not to even greet him when they see each other in public. Similarly, people greet him on quiet streets ignore him in crowds.

**Otherness** When he tries to teach old Turkish because it is impossible to find a job, he starts giving Quran lessons as a hafiz at the request of families who want him to teach their children how to read the Quran. However, one day, none of his students show up. A child's father has learned who he really is. He learns this from a man who complains about men like Aziz Nesin in a coffeehouse. Indeed, the local newspapers in Bursa write such things about him that even he doubts himself from time to time.

**Shame** He does not know what to do because he has no money and is hungry. He goes to a bookstore with the intention of selling the three books his friend sent to him, but he has a hard time waking in because he is embarrassed. Finally, he gets in but cannot explain his state and has to give one of the books as a gift and leave. He hesitates to share his helplessness with someone who knows him as a writer. One day, when he is desperate due to hunger and cold, he intends to sell the only thing he has, his blanket. However, he cannot find the flea market he is looking for under the heavy snowfall and as the newspapers he wraps his blanket in get wet and fall apart, he is very afraid that someone will understand that he has to sell his blanket to fill his stomach. When he returns to the hotel, a friend of him asks about the blanket and he answers that he has just bought a new blanket.

**Suffering** He is very curious about his wife and children, whom he has not seen since the day he was imprisoned in Istanbul. When he hears men talk about how leftist men do not feel disturbed when they see their wives with other men at a country coffeehouse he frequently visits, he cannot stand it. And he comes to Istanbul. Thus, he sees that he has already lost his family.

#### ETHICS

**Solidarity** Despite many of Aziz Nesin's friends who exclude him, someone graduated from the same school helps him. He rents him a room in a house where an old woman lives alone and visits him frequently. He even takes him to a hammam. During his stay in Bursa, his colleague Hâluk Yetiş takes care of his family in Istanbul. For this reason, he frequently corresponds with him. Halil Lütfü

Dördüncü, who is known for his stinginess, tells him to collect payment on his behalf from someone who owes him, on the condition that he work to pay it back later.

## FLAWS

**Meekness** Aziz Nesin, who is targeted by state institutions due to his ideas and has become a disobedient political character, is an extremely gentle person in personal relations. The painter at the hotel spends Aziz Nesin's money for his own pleasures. However, Aziz Nesin knows deep down that the painter will not pay this money back, but he does not stop hoping for it. He cannot ask him for his money. He shows the same meekness to Kerim Sadi. Kerim Sadi does not open the door for him on that snowy night and tricks him into believing what he drinks is water although it is vodka. But Aziz Nesin does not question his inconsiderate behaviors.