

## The Son of Hadera: From Badme to Sahl

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By Alemseged Tesfay

In 1984 I bought the above mentioned book whose author remained anonymous. However, later I learned that the virtual writer is Alemseged Tesfay, the most prolific and sensitive writer I have encountered in our society. I will prepare some review on the rest of his remarkable literary opus that fascinated me at heart.

To begin with, I am not going to specify in part or whole the contents of this book. However, I would like to discuss the unique writing style of this distinguished author as well as his sharp observation employed in describing his protagonist by the name Wedi Hadera (Ben Hadera). He is a simple peasant whose character and world views cannot be seen apart from an idyllic nature of the peasant society of rural Eritrea. The author like Maxim Gorki or Anthon Chekov who were and still are known as miners of intra-psychic describes the inner feelings of his subject by employing his tone and style of speech. It is this empathy or the ability to feel what others feel makes the author not only A SENSITIVE WRITER, but also a unique among Eritrean novelists. For the most part, this is more crystalized when I saw him on the Eritrean TV while interacting with a group of Eritrean children. Unconsciously, he was using a non-verbal mode of communication or natural Sign Language in conveying his thoughts, and emotional tone. Such integrity as seen in a verbal and non-verbal mode of communication is a potent mechanism of interaction that few authors are likely to possess. As Shakespeare put it: Action is stronger than words; or in other words, action speaks much louder than words and /or it is not what you say, but how you say bothers me most. Similarly, as the old Tigrigna aphorism goes ካብ ፍትሓት ፊቱ. Roughly translated his beaming face is better than his delicious morsel.

In our orally-oriented society, non-verbal mode of communication is shunned be it in public or private world. Most of our writers and singers as well don't express their feelings or words in a dramatic manner. Thus descriptive statements devoid of enriched sentimental words or adverbs including adjectives such as jovial, happy, sad, sullen, depressed, gloomy are like

foods without salt. The ability to use such words depends upon careful observation and emotional intelligence as well.

All in all, Ato Alemseged's literary work is a psychological novel par excellence demanding an in-depth literary appreciation. I hope this brief review on his literary style would illuminate his contribution in the annals of Eritrean literature.

-Haile