It is usually a tendency to despise people who turned to cinema after a musical career. Mahsun Kirmizigül achieved a peak of popularity in the early 1990s, but by the end of the decade had disappeared from public view. He reappeared in as a film director in 2007 with *Beyaz Melek* (White Angel), and since then has established his reputation. As a singer the point of many of his lyrics was to voice the marginalized concerns of people living in the east of the country; his "Fellowship Song" provides an example. Lyrics such as "We all are fellows, why this anger - Instead of living, why do we fight?" attest to Kirmiziguľs populist instincts.

His latest movie *Five Minarets* in New York (2010) voices similar concerns. It is an action thriller following the exploits of two Turkish police officers (Mustafa Sandal, Kirmizigül), who are sent to New York to bring back Hadji the Dajjal (Haluk Bilginer) who is discovered to be living in New York for 30 years. The Turkish secret police are dispatched to collect the terrorist from the FBI after they make the arrest. While being transported, his friends and family mastermind an escape and hide Hadji. This is the main thrust of the movie and the performance of Haluk Bilginer sustains our attention.

The film's title has been inspired by a popular folk song called "Five Minarets in Bitlis." It does not appear to have much relevance to the plot, except for the fact that Hadji comes from Bitlis. Nonetheless Kirmizigül shows his populist instincts, creating a film with plenty of special effects, coupled with shots of the iconic New York skyline. The film is a big-budget affair, and it is clear that money has been spent on creating the visual look. Whether Turkish cinema should follow the lead of Hollywood in producing this kind of product is questionable: perhaps Turkish cinema should branch out on its own and find its own stories rather than imitating Hollywood blockbuster movies. Kirmiziguľ creates a movie which is devoid of depth, but remains mildly watchable.

Nonetheless it does have its flaws. Kirmizigül creates an eclectic plot whose stories do not seem to cohere. At the beginning of the movie we see an assassination scene, then the action switches to a *dikhr* scene of devotion towards Allah. After that follows an oath-taking ceremony in which nationalists swear to fight against fascism, followed by a sequence where the police infiltrate an Islamic terrorist organization and arrest some members of it while watching a speech of Barack Obama. At this point we

are left unsure as to whether the director asks us to sympathize with the nationalists, the Islamists, or adopt an anti-Western stance. The confusions continue throughout the film: the American police are portrayed as being implacably anti-Islamic, but we do not know whether we should support Hadji or the police. The ending moves from the political to the personal, as Hadji is pursued back to his hometown of Bitlis. If we expect a resolution to all the film's stories, we are sadly disappointed; instead of keeping to one genre to create a coherent story, Kirmizigül tries to create a composition of several different genres and perspectives, but does not bring them together.

Despite these all weaknesses (and the apparently contentious themes it surveys), the movie keeps the audience interested due to the powerful performance of Haluk Bilginer and director Kirmizigül's effort to prove that not all Muslims are terrorists; this is what should awaken an American audience's interest.

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