

The Sufi Understanding of Human in The Case of Niyazî-i Mısırî

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa ASKAR*

Introduction

Niyazî-i Mısırî is an outstanding personality whose Divân (Collection of Poetry) has been read by and inspired Turks for centuries. He is a poet and mystic who lived in the 17th century which could be deemed as the Period of Recession of the Ottoman Empire. Niyazî-i Mısırî had a personality which had direct participation in and influence over the political and social events of his time. He made comments on such topics of sufism as the Unity of Being (Vahdet-i Vucûd), love, and human, which were in line with Ibn Arabî, and he, by virtue of his poems, deserves to be dubbed as the most read mystic of Anatolia second to Yunus Emre. Now, before moving on to the mystic views of his, we have the conviction that it would serve the understanding of his ideas to take a look at his biography as well as the religious and intellectual environment he lived in.

I. The Religious and Intellectual Background of Niyazî-i Mısırî

It is known that the dervishes contributed to the army and accompanied the sovereigns in the wars as of the establishment of the Ottoman State.¹ In this context, an affinity is to be spoken of between the State and the Sufis in the Period

* Instructor at Ankara University, Faculty of Divinity. This paper has been presented at the Ninth Annual of the International Association of Sufism held on May 24-27, 2002, Bellevue-Washington DC, USA.

1 O. Lutfi Barkan, "Osmanli Imparatorlugu'nda Bir Iskan ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakiflar ve Temlikler, 1: Istila Devirlerinin Kolonizator Turk Dervisleri ve Zaviyeler", *Vakiflar Dergisi*, vol. II (1942), pp. 282-283; M. Fuad Koprulu, *Osmanli Devletinin Kurulusu*, (TTK Basimevi) Ankara 1988, p. 84.

2 Irfan Gunduz, *Osmanlilarda Devlet-Tekke Munasebetleri*, Istanbul 1989, pp. 18-19.

of Establishment of the Ottoman State.² In the early period, which began with the marriage of Osman Gazi to Sheikh Edebali's daughter,³ and continued until the time when Yildirim Bayezid consented his daughter to marry to Emir Sultan -who also was a mystic himself, we see that there is a very close relationship between the sovereigns and the mystics.

In the early periods of the Ottoman Empire, it is observed that the sovereigns have a special tendency toward mysticism. As we mentioned while giving an account of the scientific structure of the period, mystic schools in the Ilmîyya class started, as of early 15th century, to spread in a strong fashion, and found the opportunity to spread the faiths and rituals of their own tariqas in various regions of the Ottoman State. The Qadiriyya, Khalwatiyya, Bayramiyya, and other tariqas found, thanks to the intellectual tolerance prevailing then in the land, the chance to spread from the second half of the 15th century to the middle of the 16th century.⁴

Taking a look at the Ulema-Sufi relations in the early period, one sees a considerably high level of harmony. Because, the first Ottoman instructor Davud-i Kayserî (d. 751/1350) wrote an annotation for the *Fususul-Hikem* of Ibn Arabî.⁵ Similarly, Mullah Fenarî (d. 843/1431) -the first Official Religious Leader of the Ottoman State- read and taught the mystical *Miftabu'l-Gayb* of Sadreddin-i Konevî (d. 674/1274),⁶ and, at the same time, made use of such tariqas as the Khalwatiyya and the Zayniyya, and adopted the conception of the Unity of Being which has a significant place in the Ottoman intellectual history.⁷

These examples depict that there was no such Ulema-Sufi discrimination in the Period of Establishment of the Ottoman State. Yet, neither the relations between the State and the mystics nor those between the Ulema and the Sufis went unchanged. We see that the balance started, in the years and centuries to come and pass, to falter against the mystics.

Upon arriving in the 17th century, it is seen that the above-explained tolerance was reduced to a great extent, and a class of preachers emerged, who opposed, to an extent more than plausible, the people of mysticism. The fight which had been waged in the previous century with manifests and books turned, in the 17th century, into de facto acts. And this fight would emerge as the *Kadizâdeli-*

3 Z. Velidi Togan, *Umumî Türk Taribine Giriş*, (IUEF Yayınları) İstanbul 1970, p. 370

4 Huseyin Gazi Yurdaydin, "Türkiye'nin Dini Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış", *AUIF Dergisi*, Ankara 1962, vol. IX, p. 114.

5 Mustafa Tahrali, *Fısusul-Hikem, Serbi ve Vahdet-i Vucud ile Alakalı Bazı Meseleler*, Article in the Annotation of the Fusus and its Translation), İstanbul 1987, p. 32.

6 Meccî Efendi, *Terceme-i Sakayik*, vol. I, (Matbaa-i Amire) İstanbul 1269, p. 49.

7 Ethem Cebecioglu, *Hacı Bayram-i Veli ve Tasavvuf Anlayışı*, Ankara 1994, pp. 68-70; Mustafa Askar, *Molla Fenarî ve Vahdet-i Vucud Anlayışı*, Ankara 1993, p. 86 and pp. 153-182.

ler Movement⁸ or the *Kadizâdeli-Sivasî Conflict* which would, from then on, last for centuries in the Ottoman intellectual history as led by the preacher class, and busy hundreds, and maybe even thousands, of people.

In every period of the Kadizâdeli-Sivasî conflict, one name from each group emerged to defend own perspectives. While Kadizâdeli Mehmed Efendi was confronted by Sivasî Abdulmecid Efendi, they were followed, to the same extent, by Ustuvanî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1072/1661)⁹ on behalf of the Kadizâdeli Group, and Khalwatî Sheikh Abdulehad Nuri (d. 1061/1651) against him. The Kadizâdeli-Sivasî Conflicts would continue, in its third generation, between Niyazî-i Misrî and Mehmed Vanî Efendi, who himself was a preacher as well.

The State-Sufi and Ulema relations which had gained on a good deal of tension in the 15th century became most accentuated in the 17th century in which Niyazî-i Misrî lived. Along with the political murders of some mystics whom we mentioned while reviewing the political structure of the period, we especially see that it was a most common practice to send sheikhs on exile.

This period was a very unfortunate period for senior ranking sheikhs, in which many mystics, including Niyazî-i Misrî, were sent on exile by the State. It would be prudent, at this point, to remind that this Kadizâdeli-Sivasî conflict which emerged in the 17th century in the Ottoman State took place, most generally, between the Ulema and the Sufis, and the State was obliged, due to the influence of the preachers with Kadizâdeli mentality, to resolve against the Sufis.

Hence, our mystic, Niyazî-i Misrî lived in such an atmosphere in which there was an intensive political and economic regression, and there were too many religious and intellectual conflicts and fights as well. We now intend to present briefly Misrî's life, and then move on to his understanding of human, which was our intended topic.

II. Brief Life History of Niyazî-i Misrî

Notwithstanding the fact that his surname originates from Egypt where he

8 A. Yasar Ocak, "XVII. Yuzyilda Osmanli Imparatorlugunda Dinde Tasfiye (Puritanizm) Tesebuslerine Bir Bakis; Kadizâdeliler Hareketi", *Türk Kültürü Arastirmalari*, Year XVII-XXI, 1-2 (1979-1983), Ankara 1983, p. 208.

9 His real name being Mehmed bin Ahmed bin Mehmed el-Samî, Ustuvanî was born in 1017/1608 in Damascus, and came to Istanbul where he became a preacher. He was called Ustuvani by virtue of his habit of leaning against the columns of Ayasophia while instructing. He actively took part in the Kadizâdeli-Mesayih Conflicts, and was sent, by Kopulu Mehmed Pasa, on exile to Cyprus. After being granted amnesty, he returned to Damascus, which was the place of his birth. He passed away there in 1072/1661. (See Mehmed Sureyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, (Matbaa-i Amire) Istanbul 1313, vol. IV, p. 173; Uzuncarsili, *Osmanli Tarihi*, vol. III, Part I, p. 368 and on).

spent his years of education, he was born in *Malatya* which was one of the prominent settlements in the East of Anatolia.¹⁰ And as for the birth date of Niyazî-i Misrî, he specifies his own birth date by writing "I was born in ten twenty-seven" in his periodical.¹¹ Taking this record as basis, it is possible to deduce that Niyazî-i Misrî was born on March 9, 1618, Friday according to Justinian calendar. Niyazî-i Misrî's father is *Sogancizade Sheikh Ali Celebi en-Naksibendi* of Malatya. As could be guessed by the family structure, Niyazî-i Misrî grew up in a religious family; he attended the children's school for his primary education, where he learned the Holy Koran and other religious knowledge as well as writing.

As known, it was a common practice for both Ottoman scholars and the preceding Anatolian Seljuk scholars to go to Syria, Egypt, and Iran for their higher education.¹² Complying to this tradition, Niyazî-i Misrî also set out. The first stop of his journey was Diyarbakir. Arriving in Diyarbakir for tuition, Niyazî-i Misrî stayed in this city for one year. From there, he moved on to Mardin, which was a county of the province of Diyarbakir. In both of these two cities, he was taught Logic and Scripture by local scholars. Spending another two years like this, Niyazî-i Misrî arrived in Egypt in 1050/1640 at the age of 23 roughly. As he himself tells us, Niyazî-i Misrî stayed for three years at the Qadirî dervish lodging in the Sheikhûniyya complex, and became affiliated with the sheikh there. Yet, other than receiving mystical education here, he was also taught at the Câmîu'l-Ezher, and preached at the same time.¹³

Then he returned to Anatolia, and stayed for a while in Istanbul, Bursa, and Usak. Afterwards, he lived in Elmali with his sheikh Ummi Sinan for about ten years. Niyazî-i Misrî came to Bursa in early 1072/1661-62.¹⁴ He started his own

10 Ibrahim Rakim, *Vakiât-i Misrî*, Suleymaniye Library, (Izmir Section) See those works on Niyazî-i Misrî's Life and Views on Sufism: Mustafa Askar, *Mohammed Niyazî-i Misrî el-Malatıyavî, His Life, His Works, and His Mystical Views*, Ph. Dissertation, Ankara University, VIII+324 p. This dissertation was published by the Ministry of Culture in Turkey, see Mustafa Askar, *Niyazî-i Misrî ve Tasavvuf Anlayışı*, (Kultur Bakanligi Yayınları) Ankara 1998, 426 p. The following academic work in which Niyazî-i Misrî has been evaluated in terms of literature could also be checked: Kenan Erdogan, *Niyazî-i Misrî, Hayatı, Edebi Kısılıgi ve Divaninin Tenküllî Metni*, Ph.D., Atatürk University, Erzurum 1993, 333 p. Also for his accounts of his own life as quoted from a work of his, penned in the first person, see Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâidü'l İrfan ve Avâidü'l İhsan*, Selimaga Library (Hudayî Section), no. 587, v. 22b (v: page in manuscripts).

11 Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mecmu'a*, BEEK, Orhan Section, no: 690, v. 9a.

12 Hakkî Uzuncarslı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teskilatı*, (TTK Basımevî) Ankara 1988, p. 227.

13 Ibrahim Rakim, *ibid*, v. 3; Mustafa Lutfî, *Tuhfetü'l-Asrî fi Menâkibi'l-Misrî*, (Emîrî Matbaası) Bursa 1309. S. 7; Mehmed Semseddin, *Gulzâr-I Misrî*, pp. 408-409; İsmail Belgî, *Guldeste-I Riyâz-i İrfan*, (Vilayet Matbaası) İstanbul 1302, p. 189; Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ-yi Ebrâr fi Serhi Es-mâr-i Esrâr*, vol. V, v. 74; Bursalî Mehmed Tahîr, *Osmanlı Muellifleri*, p. 29; Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı, "Niyazî-i Misrî", *Sarkıyat Mecmuası*, vol. VII, (IUEF Yayınları) İstanbul 1972, p. 183; Baha Doğramacı, *Niyazî-i Misrî Hayatı ve Eserleri*, (Kadıoğlu Matbaası) Ankara 1988, pp. 1-2.

14 Ibrahim Rakim, *ibid*; *Terceme-i Hâl-i Seyh Mubammed Misrî en-Niyazî*, v. 118a; Belgî, *Gul-*

tekke, and thus sufi activities in Bursa.

He was sent on exile, by Mehmed IV, to the isle of Rhodes in 1083/1672. He returned to Bursa upon the lifting of his punishment. However, he was sent on exile to the isle of Lemnos in 1088/1677. He was allowed to return to Bursa in 1103/1691 after five years. When he visited Edirne with his followers in a military show, and made speeches against the State, he was sent to Lemnos for a second time, and he died there in 1105/1694.

III. Certain Mystical Views of Niyazî-i Misrî on Human

In the mystical discipline, the human is a miniature model of the universe. The universe is the macro-cosmos (al-Âlemu'l-Kabîr), and, being a miniature model of it, human is the micro-cosmos (al-Âlemu's-Sagîr). In addition, the Holy Koran describes human as the "Divine Breath" blown by Allah into the mould that is the body. Because Allah said, "*When I fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit.*"¹⁵ Thus, human has been created of an integrity of the soul and the body. According to the Holy Koran, while human was created of mud on the one hand, it is also an important being that has a divine edge to itself on the other hand. Famous mystic Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rumî (d. 672/1273) also tells, in the first eighteen pairs of lines of his *Mashnawî*, this aspect of human. As known, these lines are as follows:¹⁶

*Bisnev în ney cun sikayet mî kuned
Ez cudâyihâ hikâyet mî koned*

"Listen to what the *ney* (reed) is telling about, it is complaining about separations." Here, the allegory of the *ney* stands for the Human. That is to say, the Human was created in essence in the world of the spirits, and then came to the world after being put in this body. The Human constantly misses and longs for the heavenly dimensions, which is his actual homeland. And similarly, the *ney* cries for it was cut when a cane, and longs for its actual homeland. We also find in Yûnus Emre (d. 721/1321) the theme that the essence of Human was created before its bodily existence. He said in a poem of his:¹⁷

deste, p. 189; Harirîzâde, *Tibyânü Vesâilî'l Hakâik fî Beyâni Selâsili't-Tarâik*, vol. III, Suleymaniyê Library (Ibrahim Efendi Section), v. 131a; B. Mehmed Tahir, *ibid*, p. 29; Kamil Kepecioglu, *Bursa Kültüğü*, vol. III, Library of Ancient Works of Bursa, General Books, no. 4519, p. 451; Dogramaci, *ibid*, p. 7; Franz Babinger, "Niyazî", *El*, vol. VIII, Leiden 1993, p. 65; Golpınarlı, "Niyazî", *IA*, p. 305.

15 al-Hijr, verse 29; Sad, verse 72.

16 See. Tahiru'l Mavlawi, *Serb-i Mesnevî*, (Samil Yayinlari) Istanbul, p. 49.

17 See. Yûnus Emre, *Butun Sürleri*, Prepared by Cahit Oztelli, (Milliyet Yayinlari) Istanbul 1971, p. 124.

*Adem yaratılmadan
Cân kaliba girmeden
Şeytan lanet olmadan
Ars idi seyrân bana*

*Dabî yer gök yog idi
Cumle soz mensub idi
Asiklar tapar idi
O bî-nîsan Subhana*

Yûnus Emre has also underlined the existence of human before his body. In accentuating that existence has a divine edge to it, he has stated that human comes before the universe from the spiritual point of view. Yet, the precedence of Human to the universe is not a bodily precedence. The human comes before the universe in consciousness.¹⁸

Niyazî-i Misrî also evaluates, in compliance with this approach of the mystical discipline of thought, the human as a small being in terms of looks, yet a great and high being when approached spiritually. Misrî thinks of the human and the human body as a vast city established at the crossroad where caravans constantly pass.¹⁹ The caravans enter from one of these roads, and exit from another. Every human is small in terms of physical characteristics, yet big in meaning. The seven skies, the seven grounds, the *kursî*, the *levh*, the heaven, and the hell enter that city of body several times in a day, wander around in that city, and leave it on the other side. Yet, few are those who can feel this. The Human is very much similar to a big city. In the center of it is a great throne occupied by the high sultan. The sultan sitting on this throne is the order of Allah. The soul is His property, the heart is His treasure, and the Wit and the *fehim* (deeper understanding) are His scales and weights.²⁰

18 I. Agah Cubukcu, *Yûnus Emre ve Felsefesi*, Ankara 1992, pp. 6-7.

19 We see that some mystics and Islamic philosophers before Niyazî-i Misrî have also used the allegory of city while dealing with human. Especially, Fahreddîn er-Razî provides detailed information by likening the human body to a city, and the heart to the sovereign ruling that city. (See Fahreddîn er-Razî, *el-Metâlibü'l-Âliye*, vol. VII, ed. Ahmed Hicazî es-Seka, (Dârü'l Kitâbi'l-Arabî), Beirut 1987, pp. 286-288). Again, famous Sufi Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rumî when providing information human in his *Fîbi Mâ Fîb*, likens Human to a city where everything exists. (See Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rumî, *Fîbi Mâ Fîb*, Prepared by Selcuk Eraydin, (Iz Yayinlari) Istanbul 1994, pp. 168-172). Yûnus Emre likens human to a city with the following lines of his:

*Bu vücûdum sebrine her dem giresim gelur
Icindeki sultanın her dem giresim gelur*

(See Mustafa Tatci, *Yûnus Emre Divanı, Tenkitli Metin-II*, (Publications of the Ministry of Culture) Ankara 1990, p. 63. Similarly, Hacı Bayram-î Velî (d. 833/1430) expresses in the following lines of his:

*Calabim bir sar yaratmis iki ciban âresinde
Bakıcak didar gorinur ol sârin kenâresinde*

that Allah created human between the two worlds, and created the heart both in the worldly sense and also with the unfolding and ascending quality. (See Fuat Bayramoglu, *Hacı Bayram Velî, Yasami, Boyu, Vakfi*, (Publications of the Turkish Authority of History) Ankara 1983, p. 231; Ethem Cebecioglu, *Hacı Bayram Velî*, (Publications of the Ministry of Culture) Ankara 1991, p. 142)

20 See Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâidü'l İrfân ve Avâidü'l İhsân*, Selimaga Library (Hudayi Section), no. 587, v. 40b.

According to Misrî, this city has four gates. These are: the Eyes, the Ears, the Tongue, and the Hands. All creatures enter this city from one of these gates and leave through another. All that entered the city cannot evade passing before the Wit. The *fehim* chooses, on the basis of value, scale, and weight, the good and bad ones out of these. Those it likes, it lets loose; and those it does not like, it releases. Some of these caravans enter through the Gate of Eye, and leaves through the Gate of Hands. That is to say, it enters through seeing, and leaves as an act, a deed, or an art or craft. Some enter through the Gate of Ear, and leave through the Gate of Tongue. That is to say, it enters through hearing, and leaves in the form of words. The Wit takes pictures of those passing before it, and gives these pictures to the Imagination. The Imagination is the owner of the book of wit. And the Wit retains those of the picture that it likes, and releases those that it does not like.²¹

According to Misrî, there is no difference between the *mu'min* (believer) and the *munafiq* (hypocrite) in the entry of the caravans into the City of Body through seeing and hearing. Yet, there are many difference between these two with respect to the fashion of taking the arriving capital, and investing it in words and acts. The *mu'min* takes through the eyes and the ears those things that are good before Allah; he does good, and talks good. And yet, the *munafiq* takes through the eyes and the ears those things that are bad; he does bad, and he talks bad. He is indeed like a plant that sports many branches, and has thorns on each branch.²²

The *mu'min* is not attracted by those other than what strengthen his belief, improve his knowledge and insight, and render his acts sincere. And the *munafiq* does not support those other than what strengthen his discord, improve his Satanic quality and ungrounded doubts, and lessen his heart's peace.²³ Here, Misrî, underlining the fact that the state of the human soul -gained on according to the status of belief- constantly seeks its own food and the qualities that would strengthen its current state, provides an original interpretation with respect to mystic psychology.

According to Misrî, human is like a mirror before which everything passes. The images of certain things look straight and proportional, while others look distorted. Or, the human beings are like good and barren soils, as stated in the words of Allah. This is as it is likened in the following verse: "From the land that is clean and good, by the will of its cherisher, springs produce after its kind: But from the land that is bad, springs up nothing but that is scanty."²⁴ Good soil rehabilitates the seed in two, three stages even if the seed is bad, and similarly, bad

21 Niyazi-i Misrî, *Mevâid*, v. 41a.

22 *Ibid*, v. 41b.

23 *Ibid*, v. 42a.

24 Araf, verse 58.

soil deteriorates the seed in two, three stages even if it was healthy. Human heart is also like this in listening to true words.²⁵ In this context, Misrî likens the human heart, through the employment of a metaphoric expression, to the mirror and the soil. By also taking into account the name of Will of Allah, Misrî underlines that human acquires positive and negative demeanors through the effects it receives with his own will from the outer world.

According to Niyazî-i Misrî, such relations as mutual visits and friendship increase the love for each other, since all humans are created of a single being. Yet, this should not stop us from loathing some people for Allah. Such people should be invited to believe and to perform prayers. According to Misrî, when we look through the eyes of the Angels, we see humans as beings who cause disorder and draw blood on the Earth.²⁶ Here, Misrî knows the truth of human in a very profound way, and states that social relations are bound to increase the love between people. On the other hand, sets forth important criteria for the correct recognition of human by claiming that it would be appropriate to view the human as mere mankind, and not as angels.

Niyazî-i Misrî psychologically analyzes mankind in his own perspective as well. According to him, humans, by nature, do not see their flaws and acknowledge their mistakes. They are jealous of both the little and the much. They want people to have pity for them, yet they do not have pity for others. They do not forgive mistakes and forgetting, and they punish. Especially gossip and calumny set brothers apart and away within the tariqa. Talking to such people is deemed as a loss from the religious point of view. Getting away from such people is preferable for protecting one's religion. They smile if they are pleased, and they get filled with hatred when they are angry. They talk behind your back with their eye-brows and eyes. And they do their best in hating and gossiping about even their closest friends.²⁷

Misrî makes the following advice on getting to know human: "*Do not trust in the love of a person whom you have not met for a while in a house, whom you do not know very well, and have not tried well. Try him when he is away from you, or close to you as a friend, and in richness and in poverty. Either travel or trade with the person you will make friends with. If you are pleased with this person after all these trials, announce him father if he is older than you, son if he is younger, or brother if he is your peer.*"²⁸ According to Misrî, the stances that people adopt can be divided into four as follows:

25 Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâid*, v. 42a.

26 *Ibid*, *Mevâid*, v. 19b.

27 *Ibid*, *Mevâid*, v. 20a.

28 *Ibid*, *Mevâid*, v. 20b.

1. Some do good to those who do good.
2. Some do bad to those who do bad. These people are like fierce animals.
3. Some do bad to those who do good. These are like snakes.
4. Some do good to those who do bad. This is the moral of prophets, saints, and the good.²⁹

Misrî explains the happiness of human: According to him, human finds happiness in what he finds joy in and what gives him peace and comfort. Things want to achieve the purpose of their creation. Because they are a part of it. In the same way that pieces want to reach the whole, everything wants reach its whole, and become lost in that whole. The eyes find joy in looking at beautiful things; the ears find joy in hearing beautiful sounds and musical modes; and the heart finds joy in achieving the things that it was, in the first place, created for; namely, the heart feeds on knowing.³⁰

Niyazî-i Misrî puts it that the happiness of human lies in knowing and getting to know Allah. Because this is the last stage of the joys and the peace. According to Misrî, the lowest of the joys is knowing the arts. Nevertheless, this is more than the joy children find in playing. Learning disciplines is more joyous when compared to this. And the tariqa disciplines are more joyous than shariah disciplines. Yet, knowing the discipline of Truth is sweeter than all. The Truth is: attaining the secrets of Allah, while knowing and covering the Unity of Acts, the Unity of Attributes, and the Unity of Essence (Zât). And, knowing Allah (Marifetullah) is the last stage of zavk (joy) and peace. This is the food of the heart; namely, of the sovereign. The Murid (Disciple) should know that the way that will lead to the zavk of the sovereign crosses the river of waiving from the joy of the other senses. The maturing of each organ and sense is possible through the maturing of what it has been created for. And, that is Marifetullah. And, it is possible through uniting Allah in all of His acts, attributes, and Essence.³¹ As we see here, Niyazî-i Misrî makes a specific definition of happiness, and by categorizing the immaterial joys the human spirit is capable of achieving, puts believing in Allah at the top of these joys.

As for the position of human in this world, Niyazî-i Misrî also thinks that human is abroad in this world. That is to say, the actual and original homeland of

29 Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâid*, v. 20b. Late Ottoman mystic Kusadali Ibrahim Halvetî (d. 1262/1845) expresses, in verse, the states of the humans according to their good or bad deeds as follows:

Iyilige iyilik yapmak her kişi kâri

Kotuluge iyilik er kişi kâri

Iyilige kotuluk ser kişi kâri

(See Y. Nuri Ozturk, *Kusadali Ibrahim Halvetî Hayati, Düşünceleri, Mektuplari*, (Fatih Yayinlari) Istanbul 1982, p. 98.)

30 Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâid*, v. 10b.

31 *Ibid*, v. 10b-11a.

human is the dimension of Allah where his spirit came from. Namely, it is not possible for human to achieve absolute happiness while in this world. Misrî expresses this case as follows in a poem of his included in his Divân:³²

*Gel ey gurbet diyarında esir olup, kalan insan
Gel ey dünya barabında yatıp, gafil olan insan
Gozun ac, perdeyi kaldur, duracak yer mi gor dünya
Katı Mecnûn durur buna gonul virip duran insan
Kafeste tûtiye sukker virurler bic karar itmez
Acep nicun karar ider bu zindana giren insan*

In this poem of his, Misrî tells that human is a foreigner in this world, that this world is not the homeland of human, and that the parrot in the cage will not be content nor happy no matter how much sugar one feeds to it. Niyazî-i Misrî explains the world and the people of the world as follows with another example: According to him, the world is a vast house. Allah built this house, and arranged a garden right in the middle of it, and planted all kinds of beneficial and harmful trees in that garden. And the people who enter this garden are grouped under three headings. One group enter the garden, eat from all beneficial things in there, and they leave the garden with booties of their liking and affording. Another group enter the garden, they eat delicious appetizing fruits and at times eat harmful fruits out of appetite as well, and then, they run to the doctor at once. The doctors cure them, and they, too, leave the garden with booties of their liking and affording. And there is one last group of people who enter the garden, and eat whatever they find in the garden without questioning whether they are beneficial or harmful. They are, therefore, destroyed and left in despair. They do not heed such warnings as "That is harmful, do not eat it!" and "I have the cure to your problem" of those inviting people. These three groups of people always exist in this garden.³³

Misrî himself interprets this allegory as follows: "In this garden, the most beneficial of all the trees is the tree of Unity. And the most harmful of the trees are the trees of kufr, shirk, and discord. They are followed by the trees of vanity, enmity, and jealousy. The beautiful tree is the Word of Unity or the perfect man. And the most beneficial of those things in the garden is field of orders and voluntary deeds. And the most harmful of those are the prohibitions. And the antidote is repentance. The doctors and the inviting people in the garden are prophets, guides, saints, and advisors."³⁴ As we understand, Misrî likens the world to

32 *Dîvân-i Niyazî*, İstanbul 1300/1883, p. 56; Kenan Erdogan, *Niyazî-i Misrî Dîvânî*, (Akçag Yayınları) Ankara 1998, p. 158.

33 Niyazî-i Misrî, *Mevâid*, v. 35b-36a.

34 *İbid*, *Mevâid*, v. 36b.

a gardens with beneficial and harmful trees, and depicts it as a place where one should take all necessary booties and leave.

Conclusion

Belonging to the Ottoman mystics of the 17th century, Niyazî-i Misrî both had an intellectual and political influence on his era, and also came to be adored by the Turks in Anatolia by virtue of the poems and hymns he wrote. Especially his Divân, which congregates his poems, was read very commonly by the tariqa members in whole Anatolia, and came to be known as the handbook of tariqas. While the lyrics of the hymns sung today in Turkish Radio and Television channels belong firstly to Yûnus Emre, Niyazî-i Misrî is definitely the second most common. Furthermore, in consideration of his place in the history of Sufism with respect to mystical thinking, it is possible to dub Niyazî-i Misrî as the Ibn Arabî of the Ottoman Period, and as Yûnus Emre the Second by virtue of his poems. Niyazî-i Misrî was not only a mystic poet, but also a mystic who, by establishing the tariqa of Misrîyya –which was named after him, nurtured hundreds of caliphs and *murids* for centuries in the *tekkes* which were the ideal places of education in Anatolia and in the Balkan Region.

In brief, Niyazî-i Misrî shall continue to exist as one of the supra-temporal voices by virtue of both the works he penned -especially his Divân which congregates his poems, and the impact and contribution he has made to the Sufi culture.