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Christians And Jews in Niyâzî Mısrî's Writings

Prof. Dr. Paul Ballanfat[1]

The key of Niyâzî Mısrî's doctrine, apart from his spiritual training, is Messianism. His understanding of Messianism starts from the problem of evil which he faced concretely, specially in his personal *Journal*, without any restriction, since Messianism cannot be understood out of the general problem of good and bad. Messianism is deeply rooted in Jewish and Christian spirituality and Niyâzî Mısrî is himself including this fact in some way within the frame of his Messianism. However, the way he conceives these two religious communities differs one another, and deserves some attention. Niyâzî Mısrî integrates many Christian elements within his interpretation of Messianism while he gives very few elements regarding the Jews. Nevertheless his doctrine in this matter looks very much like the way Sabbatai Zevi understood his own messianic role, as if there was some kind of presenting Messianism at that time which was largely spread beyond the borders of a peculiar religion. Apart from the description of the characteristics of each of the main prophets, Niyâzî Mısrî gives some teachings regarding the Jews and the Christians as communities. These teachings, of which most is to be found in his Koranic commentary, need to be viewed because they announce some points of his Messianism and play some role in his description of spiritual training. If he has some community of view with the Christians and Sabbataism, he uses the common Muslim pattern concerning both the Jews and the Christians, attributing to each of them several characteristics that permit to build spiritual types that can be used within mystical education and to attribute to Koran hermeneutics essentially a spiritual dimension.

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One of the points that was raised about Niyâzî Mısrî's links with the Jews was that he might have met Sabbataï Zevi who claimed to be the Messiah in 1665[2]. As this article mentions, there could have been several occasions for both men to meet either in Istanbul or in Edirne. But, as a matter of fact, nothing in the sources related to Niyâzî Mısrî mentions any meeting of this kind, despite the fact that, indeed there as some points of connection between Niyâzî Mısrî's understanding of evil, Messiah and Antichrist, and Sabbataï Zevî's doctrine borrowed from Cabbala. Moreover the way Niyâzî Mısrî portrays the Jews in his writings is ambiguous and not really friendly. He sticks to the common theological pattern used by all religious zealots and some mystics assuming the theological figure as it is described in the Muslim sources. When quoting the verse that reminds the rule that was brought to the Jews which stresses on the fact that killing one soul without right is like killing the whole humanity and that keeping the life of one soul is like keeping the life of all humanity, Niyâzî Mısrî indicates that this command was repeated in Koran because "a lot of the sons of Israel, specially after this law had been reaffirmed and reinforced on earth, devoted themselves to killing without any authorization given by law"[3]. Thus the Koranic command comes to restore the command that was forgotten and to stress on the fact that it was not fulfilled. Hence, Niyâzî Mısrî uses this pattern as a way to insist on the special duty of the Muslims to respect the command of showing general mercy and justice to all creatures, so that they keep godfearingness and maintain their own religious identity [4]. However, Niyâzî Mısrî uses the common patterns about the Jews, when making comments on the Koran. When he deals with the verses of *sourate al-Mâ'ida,* specially the verses (V=59-64) that are so severe about the Jews, Niyâzî Mısrî doesn't place them in historical context, or doesn't alter the presentation that is made. Rather he stresses on this presentation so as to use it fully within the frame of spiritual training. The standard theme of the humiliation of the Jews linked with betrayal, inner division and permanent harassment is exploited in order to give a full presentation of what is the goal of spiritual training, and what kind of mystical science is acquired when being faithful to God's command. The verse that states : "*If they had acted accordingly with Torah and Gospel and what had been brought down upon them from their Lord, they would have eaten what is above them and what is under their feet*" (*Koran* V=66) gives the opportunity to Niyâzî Mısrî to speak about two kind of spiritual

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[2] Paul B. Fenton, "Shabatay Sebi and his Muslim Contemporary Muhammad An-Niyazi", in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, Atlanta, 1988, vol. III, pp. 81-88.

[3] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 15a.

[4] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 14b.

scien "The divine sciences that is spread over their spirits from the
prese of God other than those that are relative to the nature of action,
firstl ·ough the intermediary of the Prophet or through inspiration
befoı y act", and "The sciences that are acquired by them according to
their itual path, the purification of their inner natures and hard
spiri :raining". He summarizes both sciences as : "Eating from above
them ıeing nourished by the sciences that precede action, and eating
from t is under their feet is being nourished by the sciences that are
inhe from action"[5]. However, the Jews appear to be fixed as a spiritual
patte ıat is not supposed to change so as to fit the point that was made
abou ·stical path, as it appears when Niyâzî Mısrî comes to give an
inter tion to the end of the verse : "Among them is a community that
goes ɔut deviating" (*Koran*, V=66). Niyâzî Mısrî forces the meaning of
the t y interpreting it as "those who had faith in Muhammad", which
desig ; the ones who became Muslim. Despite the fact that Niyâzî
Mısr sses on the common representation of the Jews, he indicates that
the s ıal function of denigrating the Prophet that is linked with the
Jews necessity that goes with prophecy[6] which implies that revelation
shou ɛ brought to everybody without exception, as he states: "O
Mess r! Bring what has been brought down to you from your Lord, all
that ɔeen revealed to you without consideration to whom you tell it
and ɔut fearing denigration"..."because hiding something of it"... "is
like l ɡ all human beings"[7]. Niyâzî Mısrî states that even if the Prophet
bring : revelation to the ones who denigrate him, like those Jews about
whoı recalls the tradition that they accused the Prophet of being a liar,
he is manded to keep on bringing it and to avoid forbidding the Jews
to ac him of lying, while exposing himself to these attacks[8]. While
expla ; *Koran* V=82, Niyâzî Mısrî summarizes what is for him the
chara stics of the Jewish community, to stress on the danger in which
the im should not fall: following passion, closeness to imitation
(*taqli* ıd distance from realization, accusing the prophets of being liars
and ; cing them, spreading hypocrisy and division among the believers,
attril g existence to another than God, thus betraying the idea of unity
of be According to Niyâzî Mısrî, all these are sins in the spiritual path
that aten any believer. It is not limited to a special religious

[5] *Mec* ıl. 37b.
[6] *Mec* ɔl. 120a ; he states also that every soul has a Pharaonic aspiration to persecute the prophets, *Mecâlis*, fol. 117a.
[7] *Mecâlis*, fol. 38b.
[8] *Mecâlis*, fol. 40a.
[9] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.

community[10]. As one can easily see, it forms a pattern through which the term Jew works as a polysemic scheme mixing several motifs, which can be used within the Muslim community as well, and Niyâzî Mısrî will do so in his *Journal*, when speaking about the Ottoman sultans and the people around him hostile to the teachings of Sufism and specially the teachings of ibn 'Arabî[11]. About the difference between the Jews and the Christians that he comments through *Koran* V=82-83, Niyâzî Mısrî argues that the source of all bad tempers is avidity for the world as it will be said below. Then he makes a remark that shows that he doesn't take this qualification as belonging to a specific community but rather as a general pattern. For instance, he states: "This quality (avidity) is despicable for God when applied to the Jews, and what then when it is found among the leaders of this community (the Muslims)"[12], which is an allusion to the religious and political leaders of the Ottomans that he was criticizing very openly, as shows many times his *Journal*.

The stress that Niyâzî Mısrî puts on the qualification of the Jews as enemies of faith is to be considered within the Koranic description of the proximity of the Christians to the believers (*Koran* V=82-83). Both identifications and qualifications work together reflecting one another. The analysis of the Christian friendship is used by Niyâzî Mısrî to bring light to the principal not where Christians and Jews are facing one another and are divided to form a kind of spiritual alternative between which the Muslims are supposed to find an orientation, creating a kind of picture articulating three terms, as it is in the common Muslim understanding of the relations between the three religions, while rebuilding it in another framework. He states that the cause of Christian friendship to the believers is that they have a soft nature, that they easily keep from sin, that they show no avidity for the world, that they show much concern to the science and the acts, and that they have a great preoccupation of the other world. He quotes the Koranic verse so as to remind that among them are monks and priests that are humble and "don't become proud because of God's agreement unlike the Jews"[13]. The not that makes the difference between Christians and Jews is the avidity for the world, which is, according to Niyâzî Mısrî, "the source of all the despicable tempers"[14]. As Niyâzî Mısrî

[10] However, Niyâzî Mısrî includes also some observations related to specific religious communities defined through their rituals. For instance, he says that "the heart is like a mosque adorned with a lot of candles, like the mosque of Jerusalem, of Damascus and Aya Sofia, but the hearts of the people of the world are like churches in which one single candle is enough" *Mecâlis*, fol. 50a.

[11] See for instance *Mecmua*, BEEK, Orhan böl. 690, fol. 61a-61b, 66a-66b, 72b.

[12] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.

[13] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.

[14] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.

has st ·that the despicable tempers that are described about the Jews
can be ınd, even more despicable, among the Muslims, he indicates that
the pı d tempers that are found among the Christians are even more
praise ıen found among the Muslims: "This second quality is praised
for G vhen found among the Christians, and what when it is found
amon ; learned ones (*'ulamâ'*) of this community (the Muslims)"[15]. As
Niyâz ısrî built up the scheme of the Jews to use it for spiritual
under ding for the sake of the Muslims, he builds a comparable scheme
of th ıristians that is the opposite of the first, even though the
Christ are accused to make a major fault toward unity of being. This
oppos ı is decisive since Niyâzî Mısrî will use it in his *Journal* in the
frame : of his Messianic doctrine which is the center of all his mystical
teachi However, even if Niyâzî Mısrî opposes Christians and the Jews
and e lish a kind of alternative in which two different attitudes are
facing :h other like in a mirror, when coming to the global under-
standi ıf the nature of religion, he describes both as being innovators
and s ous. When commenting *Koran* VI=159, Niyâzî Mısrî insists on
the fa ıat religion is by nature religion of God, and that it is one. The
histor process of the revelation of Scriptures is the way that permits to
put t ıer oneness of religion and multiple revelations. "God unified
severa igions as the religion of Abraham, the Hanîfiyya" [16]. There is a
proble oncerning both division and claims of unity. First, Niyâzî Mısrî
states .t from Abraham's religion two groups separated: "A group
becam ws, and a group became Christians", adding: "They came out of
their religion, they left it and they were sects becoming diversified
group: ıd they are Christians and Jews". The second point is that while
dividi: he original religion, the unified religion of Abraham, each of
these ps claims his own religion to be the mere religion, the religion of
God: ey separated one from another and established their religion as
the re n of God". This double movement of division and exclusiveness
of rel ı is for Niyâzî Mısrî characteristic of innovation in religion
becau: doesn't put unity where it should be and it denies the rights of
unity eing. Hence, the Christians and the Jews are defined by him, an
asserti hat he attributes to an anonymous source, as being "It was said
that t are the people of innovation". Then discussing innovation he
states : the first innovation was that of the devil who established the
rule (ride and pretending being superior to the other creatures.
Oppo: to this was the first tradition (*sunna*) that was open by "the first
of the phets" (Adam) is humility[17]. It is worth remembering that these

[15] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.
[16] *Mecâlis*, fol. 139a.
[17] *Mecâlis*, fol. 139a.

points should be linked with the spiritual scheme that Niyâzî Mısrî built as the figures of the Jews and the Christians, to see how complex is his understanding of these questions.

While Niyâzî Mısrî repeats the common judgment about the Jews, he states that the revealed books should be treated as holy without removing any word or verse from them. He says: "We know that whosoever rejects one of the Books of God that were revealed to the prophets, or even one verse from the Folios or from the Books, it is as if he had rejected the whole of them"[18]. However he asserts that the advices that are to be found in the Koran are a clearer and more eloquent presentation of the advices that had been made before in all the Holy Scriptures. He repeats twice that "the prescriptive moral advices that are to be found in the four revealed Scriptures are not to be abrogated"[19]. The moral advices are older than the historical revelation of the Koran and thus constitute "the rights of the divine sovereignty (*rubûbiyya*)" "that have been taught to each community in the language of their own prophet"[20]. However, Niyâzî Mısrî makes some spiritual differences between the Scriptures which help him drawing the patterns of the religious communities. While explaining the verse: "*Then We gave Moses the Scripture, complement for those who act good*" (*Koran*, VI=154), Niyâzî Mısrî comments: "To complete the benediction and favor for those who act good...for the ones who act good among the prophets and the faithful ones so as to act according to the law in Islam"[21]. The point is that the Torah has been revealed as a favor, a guidance and a mercy granted for those who desire a complement in their doing good, the prophets and the faithful ones. The root of the Torah is thus to help the seekers of God, "the sons of Israel" who are defined as those who act good, to believe in resurrection and to have faith in the encounter with God. Hence, the root of Torah is good action (*ihsân*). Even if the moral advices are present in all the scriptures, the Scriptures have different virtues. If the Torah is characterized by good action, the Koran has its own specificity, as it is stated in *Koran* VI=155: "*This is a Scripture that we have revealed as a benediction*" which Niyâzî Mısrî comments: "Which means that it contains benediction and a lot of good for those who have faith in it and follow it"[22]. The difference is both in what can be expected from the Scriptures, and in what someone can expect from them because of his aspiration. The Torah is addressed to the sons of Israel because of their acting good, and it gives *ihsân* its specific reward, faith in the encounter with God. The Koran

[18] *Mecâlis*, fol. 41a.
[19] *Mecâlis*, fol. 136b, 137a.
[20] *Mecâlis*, fol. 137a.
[21] *Mecâlis*, fol. 137b.
[22] *Mecâlis*, fol. 137b.

is addressed "to those who desire a degree in the world in science, act, detachment, mystical knowledge, spiritual state and station, charisma and love, and to those of this community who desire a degree in paradise in the other world"[23]. Moreover, those who have this desire or inclination have naturally an inclination to the Koran, as if it would respond naturally to their nature, or to say it differently, the scripture of the Koran is the fulfillment of the promise that is inscribed in the creation of human nature, which is also an inscription. Niyâzî Mısrî also suggests that those who pretend that they would have been better than the Jews and the Christians if they had received their Scriptures, are lying, and call them misbelievers[24]. According to Niyâzî Mısrî, the Koran is also characterized as guidance, mercy and favor, but "it is more complete and perfect than what was revealed in the preceding two Scriptures", since it is brought with Muhammad "who is a mercy that guides well to make you join God"[25].

When approaching the question of resurrection, Niyâzî Mısrî also recalls, quoting Koran and *hadîth*, that none of the people of the Scripture will die before reckoning Jesus approaching the Day of Judgment[26]. The destiny of all the people of scripture is thus to follow Jesus who will be submitted to Muhammadan law. Niyâzî Mısrî also states that returning to God is open to everybody "even to the Sâbi'în who are the most deviating ones among all the people of deviating passions"[27]. When discussing about the Jews, Niyâzî Mısrî recalls a comment of ibn 'Abbâs about a verse of the Koran in which he tells that some authorities among the Jews came to ask the Prophet: "Muhammad! Don't you attest that you follow the community of Abraham and his religion, that you believe in what is among us of the Torah and that you confess that Torah is a truth coming from God?". The Prophet answers then that it is right, but that the Jews have innovated in their religion and didn't follow it fully. Then they take argument that they follow what they have received from their ancestors and what is in front of them being thus in the right way. Niyâzî Mısrî then states that if they had followed their religion, they should have acted accordingly with the Torah and the Gospel, "because if you had followed them you should have had faith in Muhammad since he is part of what was imparted to you in the Pact"[28]. Hence, Niyâzî Mısrî's understanding of the relation with the Jews relies on the common pattern that the

[23] *Mecâlis*, fol. 137b.
[24] In fact he is generalizing the address made to the polytheists of Mekka, *Mecâlis*, fol. 138a.
[25] *Mecâlis*, fol. 138a.
[26] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd., pp. 184-186.
[27] *Mecâlis*, fol. 41a.
[28] *Mecâlis*, fol. 41b ; Niyâzî Mısrî also states that there are evidences in the Jewish and Christian scripture of Muhammad being prophet, thus stressing on the idea of betrayal, in a long discussion about the proofs of Muhammad prophecy, *Mecâlis*, fol. 66a-67a, 69a.

fulfillment of their own faith would have implied to recognize Muhammad as a prophet, a position which allows him to return back to the banal identification of the Jews as betrayers of their very own faith. Speaking of the teachings that the Muslims have to learn from the Christians' softness and humility, as it is presented in *Koran* V=82-83, Niyâzî Mısrî argues that "humility, taking care of science and actions and restraining from passions is praised by God, and is such that if it is found in the misbeliever it will bring him to faith and to accept the Real, because humility makes human being ascent up to the gardens of heaven"[29]. Hence, he states that the situation of the Christians opens for them the hope that they go from misbelieve to faith, which means that can become Muslims at the end of a natural process inherent to humility. Finally, Niyâzî Mısrî states that the Jews, on the mood of regret, and the Christians, on the mood of hope, are intended to join the Muslim faith and to follow the Muhammadan law, if not immediately, at least at the end of time, when the rise of the Messiah will present it as an evidence.

About the Christians, Niyâzî Mısrî recalls this event quoted in Koran about the war between the Byzantine, who were Christians, and the Persians, who were idol worshippers. He makes the comparison between the Muslims and the People of the book, stating that the Byzantine victory over the Persians is a fulfillment of God's promise, despite their first defeat, and that it announces Muslims' victory over the Mekkan polytheists. He links it moreover with his affirmation about Hasan and Husayn being prophets understanding it as a promise hidden in the Koranic text, as the Byzantine victory was at first hidden to the eyes of the polytheists because of their first defeat facing the Persians[30]. Even if Niyâzî Mısrî stresses on this identification, he stands on the position that Christian identity consists in asserting the incarnation of Jesus[31]. He devotes some passages to refuting this idea, trying to explain why the Christians interpreted the person of Jesus as being God incarnated, which has an important meaning within spiritual training for the Muslims. The first mention he makes of this question in his commentary of the Koran

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[29] *Mecâlis*, fol. 44a.

[30] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. pp. 190-192 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 121a-122a.

[31] As in the Koranic text, Niyâzî Mısrî attributes the idea of incarnation both to the Jews ('Uzayr) and to the Christians (Jesus) arguing that they have both betrayed their own scriptures which insist on the absolute transcendence of God which doesn't allow such an interpretation, *Mecâlis*, fol. 62a ; later he also ads the Mekkan polytheists ("the polytheists among the Arabs") to both the Jews and the Christians by attributing to them a sort of incarnation because they asserted that "the angels were God's daughters", *Mecâlis*, fol. 113a.

quotes e verse "They have disobeyed those who say that God is the Messia on of Mary" (*Koran* V=72). Niyâzî Mısrî immediately states that this ve intends to warn the Muslims not to make excess in their love for the Pr et. It is worthy mentioning that he also states that the Christians identif God to the Messiah and to his mother. He reminds that the relatio f God to Jesus is the relation of the master to the servant and not the rel on of a father to a son[32]. The whole question is related to the proble of love to the Prophet that is prescribed for the believers, as he notifie The question of incarnation hence is interpreted as a point of educat in spiritual training that defines clearly the limits and the extent of love nd allows giving several advices for the believers. Niyâzî Mısrî says: "' e love that is prescribed to anyone that we have to love has to fit his ca ity without excess and neglect. ... Excess is associating (*shirk*), neglect misbelieve (*kufr*), measure (*iqtisâd*) is faith (*îmân*)"[33]. The quality of love ust be defined according to the capacity of the beloved. For him this is e point where lies the mistake that made the Christians. They misunc stood who was Jesus and what were his sayings. He states first that th didn't understand the level of his speech when he was speaking of Go unity (*tawhîd*), since they weren't aware of divine utterance (*shath*) prophetic speech. According to Niyâzî Mısrî, they don't under- stand process of theophany which cannot be reduced to "enclosure, incarna n and unification"[34]. Hence he states that the Christians have betraye what Jesus commanded them, attributing these words to him: "Sons Israel that are distracted in the wilderness of ignorance and delusic worship God who is free from being encompassed, from incarna n and from being a thing whose essential determinations are absolu nd who is absolute existence, so don't enclose him in me and in any otl than me. Know that He is one (*wâhid*) in the absolute existence, that nc ing apart from Him has existence, no other than Him smelled the perfun f existence, so why do you attribute existence to nothingness, while stence is existence and nothingness is nothingness forever"[35]. Niyâzî ısrî's argument goes as far as the point of unity of being, so that the mi ce that is made about theophany is breaking the understanding of unity c eing and is a fault toward existence itself since it is God. Thus in the spi ıal training, the question of incarnation permits to open the way to the ıching of unity of being and to make it clear. It permits on the other l d, as Niyâzî Mısrî states in the following lines to takes the right

[32] *Mecâl...*, fol. 50b.
[33] *Mecâlis*, fol. 42b-43a.
[34] *Mecâlis*, fol. 43a.
[35] *Mecâlis*, fol. 43a ; let's notice that once again, the warning is dedicated to the Jews who are designed as responsible for the fault of incarnation.

measure of human dignity, both as human and as the hierarchic scale of spiritual perfection that leads up to the Prophet, seal of prophecy. Thus knowledge consists in knowing God as He must be known and creation as it must be known, each of them with its own distinctive attributes: divinity for God and servitude for creatures.

When coming to the problem of relationship with the non-Muslims, as quoted in Koran V=51: "You who believe, don't take as affiliated the Jews and the Christians, they are affiliated one to another. Whosoever among you will take them as affiliated will be one of them", Niyâzî Mısrî tries to overcome the apparent interdiction that is raised for the Muslims[36]. He starts interpreting this way: "My brother! don't take as a friend one who is opposed to your way (dîn), moreover, don't take as friend one whose speech, act and state don't attract you higher than your speech, your act and your state"[37]. Niyâzî Mısrî describes the way that companionship works and gives some basis principles for it. First, "what attracts someone to companionship is the existence of a species sometimes through general specifications and sometimes through particular specifications". The general type is "like the inclination of human beings to one another", and the particular type is "like the inclination of a spiritual group (milla) to one another", and even more particular is "like inclination of the people of obedience one to another, and inclination of the people of disobedience to one another". Niyâzî Mısrî understands the question within the frame of spiritual education. He states that when someone meets another, he should rely on his own soul, and try to understand why he has inclination to this person, and measure it according to the balance of law. The basic idea is that meeting someone gives a good perception of one's own soul, because everyone is a mirror for everyone. Looking at someone permits thus to become aware of one's own state. However, Niyâzî Mısrî stresses on the fact that being affiliated with someone reveals the existence of a common species, or at least leads the person to become like the ones that he is affiliated to. This is why he reaffirms the validity of the Koranic verse : "My brother, be careful with being friend with the Jews, the Christians, the people of corruption, the people of innovation, the antinomists and all the groups that are walking out of the right path"[38]. But meanwhile, he insists on the necessity to avoid seeing the others as inferior to him, or even as bad people, saying: "But take care of purifying your soul, abstain from admiring your own acts and from thinking that you are greater than those servants of God, because you don't know if your acts are purified from ostentation, you don't what will be your final destiny and theirs. About the

[36] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 29b sq.
[37] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 29b.
[38] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 30a.

Muha ıdan path, Abû Yazîd said: "So long as the servant thinks that there ɔrse than him among the creatures, he is filled with pride. He was asked Vhen is the servant humble ? He replied: When he doesn't attribı o his soul a station and a state"....Shiblî said: My humiliation empti ıe humiliation of the Jews"[39]. The point that Niyâzî Mısrî makes limits meaning of the verse. He takes it out of the limits of law to consic t only through the problem of mystical education. It becomes then ɛ lvice for the one who is following a spiritual training looking for soul ı ication. The verse, as interpreted by Niyâzî Mısrî, becomes a spiritı dvice for the dervishes. Purification requires to stay away from any s ual species that would stop the processing of the path. But morec purification needs that the mystic sees not himself as already purifi nd requires from him that he sees all the creatures of God as servar ɔllowing the way God allotted to them, of which the end is not knowı ıis question should be read in connexion with ibn 'Arabî's Fusûs al-hik . The quotation of Shiblî, which is also to be found in Niyâzî Mısrî' ırnal[41], is important since it stresses on the humiliation of the mysti ich is worse than that of the Jews. This humiliation is recalled by Niyâz srî in his Mecâlis when he comments on the verses (V=59-64)[42], stressi ın the Koranic affirmations attributing to the Jews humiliation, powei ıess, guilt, sin and so on. He relies on the common religious and social erstanding of the situation of the Jews, to transpose it on the spiritı ıumiliation which is, for him, a basic point in the spiritual traini ıll these terrible qualifications that are attributed to the Jews in the K are then attributed on the spiritual level to the Muslim mystic who s to assume these specificities in order to reach his own resurr ın, since as Niyâzî Mısrî recalls quoting the Koranic verse (V=6 this will last until resurrection"[43]. We could add that, as for the Christ Byzantines who are designated by the Mekkan polytheists, as it was sa reviously about the war between Byzantines and Persians, to be simila the Muslims, for Niyâzî Mısrî, the mystic should assume the humil n of the Jews in order to reach total spiritual poverty and purity of sou ence, there is no wonder if Niyâzî Mısrî in a letter calls himself

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[39] *Mecâ* ıs. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 30b.

[40] *Fusû ıikam*, Beyrouth, 1400/1980, (*Fass hikma ahadiyya fî kalima Hûdiyya*) pp. 106-114.

[41] Niyâzî Mısrî quotes Shiblî's statement adding that his own humiliation has emptied Shiblî's one, *Mecmua*, BEEK, Orhan böl. 690, fol. 35a.

[42] *Mecâlis*, fol. 35b sq.

[43] *Mecâlis*, fol. 36b.

as a signature: "Sent by the priests and the rabbis, of the Christians and the Jews, the Mısrî of the time, the announcer of the presence of Jesus"[44].

On a more general level, Niyâzî Mısrî stresses on the necessity to keep justice to every one, specially to the ones who are not friendly. He says: "Show more justice to the enemy than to the friend, because it is closer to God than godfearingness (*taqwâ*), which means that justice is closer to God than godfearingness"[45]. He insists on the fact that it is God's command to show mercy and compassion to all creatures of God, without any exception, even if they are enemies. In his view the justice, mercy and compassion shown to the others, "even the enemies of God", is the condition that permits to show justice to "the friends of God" (*awliyâ' Allâh*), because justice is an unconditioned command of God that cannot be fulfilled if it is not absolute, if it is restricted by any condition. It is sufficient in itself, so that, in one sense, it is the root of all moral commands, since they form the rights of God's sovereignty as it was said previously. Niyâzî Mısrî can then recall the famous Koranic verse (V=32) quoting the Talmudic teaching: "(the one who kills one soul...) it is as if he had killed the whole people", indicating that the individual (*fard*), as a pure possibility of being the place of manifestation of the Real (*Haqq*) and as the lieutenant of God is to be considered as the totality of creation. Thus, the capacity of being the place of manifestation of the Real (*Haqq*) appears to define a right (*haqq*) through which takes place the manifestation of life and death as the total command that regulates creation and existence. The unconditional dimension attached to God's divinity has to be manifested in the unconditional ethical duty through which the Real manifests Himself as the Real who establishes this manifestation as the unconditional right of the Real.

This general command is linked with Niyâzî Mısrî's idea that sainthood is the goal that should be aimed by all Muslims, and human beings since they have been creating for mystical knowledge as he states, because the true "greatest struggle" consists in joining the other world. Since the saints don't take revenge for the persecutions and attacks of which they are the victims, but substitute forgivingness and return (*tawba*) to the system of revenge, Niyâzî Mısrî advocates that general Muslim ethics should be based on this attitude. Moreover, the summit of perfection that was attained in the person of the Prophet, consists in substituting the attributes of the All-merciful to the attributes of primal nature[46]. It is also linked with the idea that the persecution that show the

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[44] Mustafa Tatçı showed me this text which will be included in his *Celvetî Şeyhi Üsküdarlı Selâmî Alî Efendi ve Tarîkat-nâmesi.*

[45] *Mecâlis*, ms. Hacı Mahmûd Efendi 1758, fol. 14b.

[46] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 101.

enemie /ard the saint is the way that increases the light of sainthood in
the sai hus taking revenge, or fighting against persecution is not really
approp d to what is going on in the process of persecution. The only
proper ude toward evil is returning to God (*tawba*) and showing mercy,
which ıs giving life its total right within the country of heart[47], or
accom ng the right of God's self manifestation within the individual of
the sai

Ar y vision dated 1067/1656, Niyâzî Mısrî recalls in his *Mawâ'id*
al-'irfâ es testimony of his understanding of all human beings fate
under ight of unity of being. It shows to what extent he is under-
standi man condition as part of Real manifestation through which all
the co n legal categories collapse, and through which ethics challenge
the est ument of social law. He starts indicating that he was meditating
on the ple, stating that the majority of them are "corrupted, sinners
and in s", "far from God". He was thus seeing a contradiction between
their (tion and God's mercy which is supposed to encompass all
beings. âzî Mısrî at that point has a vision of a young man who
instruc n on the way to access to this secret, and to learn who is near
or far f God. Then he sees that the ones he thought to be closer to God
are in far from him because of some disdain they have about the
others, he sees that the ones he thought they were far from God are
closer se of some virtue they have in their heart. He says : "I saw that
the str t cause of remoteness is pride and celebrity, that the strongest
causes roximity are humility and discretion, and that proximity and
remote are not but a relation and a representation deprived of
being" nen, he has another experience through which he comes to
realize all the creatures are close to God. He says : "My sight went
back t e creatures and I saw that they are all close to God, and
moreo at "God is closer to them than their jugular vein" [49] because of
the me Ie has to them" [50].

Al the way one should behave with the others, Niyâzî Mısrî
indicat at there are four ways of behaving: "A group is the one of those
who d d to whom did good to them. This comes from the temper of
the do Some do bad to those did bad to them, and this comes from
the te of the dogs and wild beasts. Some hurt those who do them

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[47] See tance the understanding of the heart as a country, *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süley teş, Istanbul, sd. p. 94 ; see also for instance, among the mentions of the counti o-where, and the country of the spirit, K. Erdoğan, *Niyâzî-i Mısrî Dîvânı*, Ankar 8, poem n° 197.

[48] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 42 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 18a.

[49] *Koran*, L=16.

[50] *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, fol. 18a-19b.

good, and this comes from the temper of the snake. Some do good to those who treat them badly, and this is due to the tempers of the prophets, of the messengers, of the saints and of the pious ones"[51]. The way Niyâzî Mısrî describes these four groups is clear enough to advocate the statement that one should make his best to fit the conditions of the fourth group, which is the way of ethics, and moreover of sainthood. In the same passage, he goes on indicating that one should act so as to keep the rights of human beings. The way to fulfill this goal is to see everything through God's light, so that "you see light in the darkness, a remedy in the poison, friends in the enemies, gentleness in severity and a unique face and one mere beauty in those multiple and diverse apparent mirrors". Apart from the question of behaving toward the others, those that a religious man could think of being his enemies because they have another faith, Niyâzî Mısrî brings the question of ethics inside the metaphysics of unity of being. If the goal is to reach God's unity so as to realize the true affirmation of God's unity (*tevhîd*), this can only be achieved through ethics, because ethics is the way those doctrinal points come to life and the way through which one can realize in his own self the command of incorporating God's qualities. Niyâzî Mısrî summarizes it in a beautiful way in some verses he quotes in the same passage: "I saw the trace of the universe as a whole image/In this image a beauty I saw/The whole universe is like the place of manifestation of the Real/For this I saw everything as perfection"[52]. This is why he adds that there some kind of ethical and spiritual duty to turn more toward the bad ones, which goes back to Niyâzî Mısrî's interpretation of evil and Messianism, a point that cannot be treated here. He says that when unity is realized appears in the individual a balance between the bad ones and the good ones, which corresponds to the witnessing of the world within the individual: "Then appears the balance inside yourself of the mixture between the worst ones and the best ones, and even you give more importance to the mixture of the worst ones so that they attack you and that you can endure their attack. At the same time, you treat them good, because the action of the beloved toward the lover is more delicious with majesty than with beauty...In this glance, angels' glance vanishes because of their shame"[53]. The last point that Niyâzî Mısrî raises is very important. He tries to advocate that reckoning the balance of good and evil and exposing oneself to evil within oneself is

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[51] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 44 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 20b.

[52] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 44 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 21a.

[53] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 45 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 21a.

the cc ion to reaching the inner dimension of mercy which needs to give it l place and right (*haqq*) to majesty in the affair of love. Hence, fulfilli he duty of keeping the rights of the others within oneself is parad lly reckoning divine unity in the realm of God (*Haqq*). The angels : Niyâzî Mısrî describes at the end of this passage are none other than t ıner angelic powers that are linked with the accomplishment of their : ous duties and ask for their reward for doing so. Entering the love ı onship implies to endure God's majesty within the ethical frame . Niyâzî Mısrî accordingly states in the beginning of his *Mawâ'id al-'irfâ* at "with the return from his sin, the crescent of the light of his faith, action and his total sincerity raises, so that this light and certitu grows as much as God wants and saves human being from darkn[54]. It is the condition for overcoming the angelic inner powers that r in the spiritual accomplishment of the mystic. This is why they vanish en mercy is accomplished as a true reality within oneself, when unity ally achieved in the spiritual training, since the light through which whole creation is seen as a whole perfection, as the Real (*Haqq*), is not t Muhammadan light which was sent as the mercy to the univer vhich are suspended to it.

[54] *Irfan sofraları*, transl. Süleyman Ateş, Istanbul, sd. p. 25 ; *Mawâ'id al-'irfân*, ms. Hüdâyî 587, fol. 7a.