

THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN YUNUS EMRE'S THOUGHT

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by

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#### ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to trace the intellectual and spiritual development in Yunus Emre's thought. Man seeks meaning for his life. He constantly tries to affirm his existence which is threatened by death. The resultant anxiety is overcome when man realizes the potentiality of union between his self and the Reality (God). Man is then enabled to eliminate his mundane desires and his fear of death. But the realization also brings about another anxiety in that the potentiality of union makes man aware of the actual separation from God.

In his longing for union man comes to detest his actual existence, which prevents him from union. Both his longing and his detestation find their resolution in terms of death. At this stage of his evolution, since Reality is what is yet to come, death is seen as life. Thus man conquers death and can now be indifferent to it. Man's conviction of his essential unity with God reaches its culmination. His actual existence can no longer confound the union. Consequently he affirms his Self and his existence.

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PREFACE

In spite of the enormous number of writings on Yunus Emre in present day Turkey there are no sufficiently profound and scholarly studies besides the studies of Mehmed Fuad Köprülü and Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. In English, if we exclude the short article of J.K. Birge, and E.J.W. Gibb's treatment of Yunus in his History of Ottoman Poetry, there is nothing important written on Yunus Emre. The most extensive study of Yunus in any foreign language is that of Allessio Bombaci's.

Yet Yunus Emre was the first Turkish poet to be known in Europe as early as the fifteenth century. Bombaci informs us that "a traveller, made prisoner of Muhlbach (Sebes) by the Turks and lived among them twenty years from 1438 to 1458, left a *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequitia Turcorum* which was famous at his time and was edited or translated by Erasmus of Rotterdam, by Martin Luther and by Sebastian Franck. He mentions two hymns by Yunus, written in gothic character."<sup>(1)</sup>

As seen, the studies of Yunus are extremely few. This work is intended as an addition to the literature on Yunus, who deserves

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1 Allessio Bombaci, *Storia della Letteratura Turca*, Milano, 1956, p. 283. These poems were studied from a philological angle at the turn of the century. See: Karl Foy, "Die ältesten osmanischen Transscriptionstexte in gothischen Lettern", *Mittheilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen*, V. IV, Berlin und Stuttgart, 1901, pp. 230-277, and V. V, Berlin, 1902, pp. 233-293.

to be known more widely.

Though Yunus was a sufi, this thesis is not a study of Taşawwuf, nor is it a study of love as such, but of the personal and specific thoughts of Yunus Emre on the concept involved. The utmost care has been taken throughout this work, to confine it to Yunus Emre's own thought. Taşawwuf has been dealt with, but not as such, only when it was felt that an understanding of it would shed more light on Yunusian thinking. We have tried to bring the Yunusian thought into light by studying the key concepts he exploits in his poetry.

Thus, it is hoped that we might shed some light on the relationship between his language and thought which in turn might help us to understand in what way religious thinking and Taşawwuf influenced Turkish. For such a study Yunus Emre's poetry is perhaps the best subject, for he is the first Turkish lyric poet to write in Turkish, and to this day is still considered a master of the Turkish language.

As must be apparent from the text, we have depended upon Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's edition of Yunus Emre's Divan, which is by far the most reliable. This being the case, we have not made any particular attempt to ascertain the authenticity of poems studied. As we have worked on a text printed in modern Turkish characters,

we have adopted no transliteration, but kept to the modern Turkish spelling, even in the case of words that are of Arabic and Persian origin.

The undotted (i) is indicated by (ĩ).



CHAPTER I

On Yunus Emre the Man

Turkey's best-known and most widely-quoted poet is undoubtedly Yunus Emre. No other Turkish poet has been read so long; six centuries after his death he is still a most beloved poet-saint of Turkey, equalled, perhaps, only by Jalal-ad-Din Rumi. Even now, each year on the 25th of May, a celebration takes place in his honour at his tomb, "in a small village, in a quiet corner of Anatolia".<sup>(1)</sup> Thousands of people from all classes, from all over Anatolia, come for this celebration. Interestingly enough, the historical personality of this famous poet is the least known of all the Turkish poets. Despite his popularity with the masses, literary circles in Turkey came to recognize him as a poet only after Köprülü's<sup>(2)</sup> writings on Yunus. Köprülü's article itself attracted little attention; only Rıza Tevfik, the philosopher, wrote an article on him entitled, "Yunus Emre hakkında biraz daha tafsilat"<sup>(3)</sup> ("A few more details on Yunus Emre"). Since the publication of Köprülü's monumental work İlk Mutassavvıflar, 1918, interest in Yunus Emre has grown. However, no substantial work has been produced with the exception of Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's.

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- 1 See: Sufi Huri, "Yunus Emre: In Memoriam", Muslim World, 1959, 49, p.111.
  - 2 Cf. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, "Yunus Emre", Türk Yurdu, 1329, V.4, pp. 612-621.
  - 3 Cf. Fethi Erden, "Yunus Emre Özel Sayısı", Türk Yurdu, Yunus Emre Özel Sayısı, 1965, 319, pp. 4-7.

The common people are not especially curious about the historical details of Yunus Emre's life; they satisfy themselves with legends about him. One of the current legends can be found written in the Vilâyetname of Hacı Bektas Veli, the celebrated saint, and eponym of the most famous Anatolian dervish-order.

We may begin with the legend of Taptuk Emre, who was Yunus Emre's master. Following is an account of him as found in Vilâyetname:

"When Hacı Bektash came to the land of Rum, there was a saint, amongst other saints, who used to be called Emre. He had excelled in sainthood. Hacı Bektash's fame was spread all over the country, so that all the saints of Rum (Rum Erenleri) used to visit him. But Emre never did visit him. Once he was invited, but he declined the invitation. When he was asked why he would not come, Emre said, "We did not see, and did not hear of anybody by the name of Hacı Bektash Hünkâr when the lots were being distributed in the divan (session) of the lovers." They passed this word of Emre to Hacı Bektash-I Veli. Hacı Bektash sent his disciple Sarı İsmail and had Emre summoned. When Emre came into his presence Hacı Bektash said, "You have said that you did not see anybody by the name of Hacı Bektash in the divan of friends when [Nasib] their lot was being distributed. That hand which distributed the lots must have a sign, do you know this also?" Emre said, "Yes, I do; there was a green curtain in that divan, the hand came out of this curtain and gave us our lots. In the palm of that hand was a delicate green mole, I would recognize it even now if I see it." Then Hacı Bektash stretched his hand toward Emre. Emre, as soon as he saw the green mole, said three times, "Tapduk Padişahum = We have found (O) my King." Then his name became Tapduk Emre." (4)

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4 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Ed. Menâkib-i Hacı Bektaş -ı Veli "Vilâyetname", İstanbul, 1958, p.21. Hereafter referred to as Vilâyetname; See also, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, 1936, pp. 69-70. Cf. Also, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, İlk Mutasavvıflar, İstanbul, Matbaâ-i Âmire, 1918, pp. 287-290.

We find an equally interesting story of Tapduk Emre's pupil Yunus in Vilâyetname, where one can find legends about almost any celebrated mystic of Anatolia.

"Hacı Bektash's fame had spread in all directions; disciples and friends used to come from every place. Sema's (mystic dances) and sessions were being held; a life of pleasure was being led (in Hacı Bektash's dergâh). (5) Poor people would come and be rich; those who had a wish would get it (through Hacı Bektash).

There was a village called Sarıköy, north of Sivrihisar. There was a poor farmer, Yunus by name, in this village. It was a year of famine; there was no harvest. He had heard of Hacı Bektash's qualities, and thought that he should go and ask for some help. He loaded his ox-cart with medlars, and came to Karahuyuk. He told Hacı Bektash that he was a poor man and could not reap a harvest and asked for food for his family in return for the fruit. Hünkâr (6) took the medlar and ate it. After a few days Yunus wanted to return to his home. They communicated his desire to Hacı Bektash. He wanted to know if Yunus would prefer "nefes" (breath) (7) to the wheat. Yunus said that he needed wheat, not nefes. They told Hünkâr. He said, "Go and tell him, let me give him one nefes for each of the medlars." Yunus again insisted on wheat. Hacı Bektash offered ten nefes for each seed of the medlars he had brought. Yunus said that nefes did not feed one's stomach; he had a family, so he needed wheat. Thus they gave him wheat, as much as his ox could carry.

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- 5 Dergâh \* Convent of the sufis.
- 6 Literally; a king. That is how Bektashis called their master, Hacı Bektash-i Veli.
- 7 Nefes = Literally a breath, amongst the people of Anatolia the curing breath of a holy man. What is implied in the text is the talent of saint-hood.

On his way to the village Yunus regretted what he had done and turned back to the tekke. (8) They asked why he had come back. Yunus replied, "Let him give me the lot which he endeavored to give." They informed Hacı Bektash; he said that this could not be done anymore for he had given the key of his (Yunus') lot to Taptuk Emre, and he should go to Taptuk and get his lot from him. So Yunus went to Taptuk, taking him the greetings of Hünkâr. Taptuk Emre received him cordially and said, "Your affair has been known to us; serve, work hard, and receive your lot (nasib).

Yunus used to carry wood on his back to Taptuk Emre's tekke. Never did he bring wet or crooked wood to his master's tekke. Once there was an "erenler meclisi" = (session of the saints or lovers) at the tekke. Yunus was present at this session and there was also a famous hymn-singer called "Yunus-î Gûyende". During the meeting Taptuk Emre was overwhelmed with joy and ecstasy so he said to Yunus-î Gûyende, "Sing for us." Yunus-î Gûyende did not answer despite the fact that Taptuk Emre repeated his desire a few times. Then Taptuk addressed Yunus, the woodcutter: "Now it is time we opened the door of that treasure, Hacı Bektash Veli's word came true, we gave you your lot, sing now." Thus Yunus began to sing eloquent hymns "which became a valuable Divan". (9)

About Yunus Emre there are many other legends. Since these legends can give us a clearer idea of how Yunus is known among the people, I feel that it is worthwhile to reproduce them; furthermore, any legend can have behind it some historical truth.

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8 Tekke = a convent for dervishes.

9 See: Vilâyetname, pp. 48-49. Cf. Also, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit. pp. 73-74, and Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit. pp. 290-291. The account I have given does not follow any of the three works precisely, it is rather a summary of the three. The same holds true in Taptuk Emre's case also, Cf. p.2.

"Tapduk Emre used to play sesta [a six stringed instrument]. One day he was playing it when someone was near him. It influenced him and made him ecstatic. Thus he left his occupation and became his disciple.

Yunus served Tapduk thirty years....(10) He always brought straight woods to the tekke. The Dervishes realized that the Shaikh liked him because of his service. They attributed this service to the fact that Yunus was in love with Tapduk's daughter. They allowed Tapduk to overhear this gossip of theirs, hoping that he would dismiss Yunus and so they would be more secure. Tapduk knew Yunus' degree; one day, in order to make them realize and thus solve their problem, he asked Yunus why he always brought straight wood to the tekke. Yunus said, "No crooked thing is becoming to this door, that is why I bring straight wood." "Speak, O my Yunus. Speak", Tapduk said. Upon this magic-breath (nefes) he became a poet.

Though Yunus remained a servant to Tapduk for thirty years, nothing was revealed to him from the esoteric world (Batīn alemi). So he ran away, and went to the country to the mountains, where he eventually came across a cave where seven "eren" (saints) were living. He became friends with them. Each night one of them would pray, and a table full of food would appear because of the blessed praying. When it was Yunus's turn to pray, two tables of food appeared. They asked him for whose intercession he had prayed. Yunus said, "You say (first)." They said, "We asked for the intercession of a man who served at Tapduk Emre's door for thirty years." When Yunus heard this he returned to the tekke in the morning and lay at the threshold of the door. The Shaikh stepped on his face and said, "You would not turn back unless your (spiritual) state is known (to you, would you)?" (11)

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10 Everywhere else we read forty years. Cf. Vilâyetname, p. 49.

11 Abdülbaki Golpınarlı, op.cit. pp. 74-77. For a slightly different version of the last part of the legend and a few less important legends see Sufi Huri, op.cit., pp. 119-121.

Certain parts of those legends can be taken as true if we examine them in the light of known historical data and Yunus Emre's own poetry. The stories demonstrate very clearly that Yunus was connected with Tapduk Emre who was not merely a "legendary master" as A. Bombaci writes. (12) These legends indicate that Yunus had some connection with Hacı Bektash, if not directly, then through his master Tapduk Emre. We also cannot reject outright the possibility that he might have seen Hacı Bektash-i Veli. (13) Gölpınarlı has no doubt that he saw Rumi, Sarı Saltuk, and his khalifa Barak Baba. (14) In one of his poems Yunus speaks, as was customary then, of his silsila (chain of spiritual relationship), and mentions Sarı Saltuk and Barak as follows:

Yunus'a Tapduk'dan oldu hem Barak'dan Saltuk'a  
Bu nasib çün cuş kıldi ben nice pinhan olam.

To Yunus it [nasib] was from Taptuk and from Barak  
to Saltuk.  
Since this lot [nasib] excited[me] how can I remain  
veiled. (15)

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12 Cf. Alessio Bombaci, Storia Della Letteratura Turca, Milano, 1956, p. 275.

13 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit., pp. 53-54.

14 Cf. Ibid, p. 54.

15 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Divanı, V.1, Istanbul, 1943, p. 187. Hereafter referred to as Divan.

As Sarī Saltuk and Barak Baba were Hacı Bektash's khalifas,  
Gölpınarlı links Yunus to Hacı Bektash, and through him to Baba  
İlyas and İshak Baba, <sup>(16)</sup> who played an immensely important part  
in both the political and the religious history of thirteenth-  
century Anatolia. <sup>(17)</sup>

Shaikh Süleyman of Köstendi (d.1819) in his Bahr-alVilāya  
makes Rumi speak as follows: "I always found, before me, this  
great Turkoman (Yunus), in every spiritual stage I ascended." <sup>(18)</sup>  
Köprülü finds the story very significant without attaching any  
historical veracity to it, <sup>(19)</sup> because it asserts a relationship  
between the two great sufis. This story, combined with certain  
verses <sup>(20)</sup> of Yunus in which he mentions Rumi's name, enables us  
to say that they were not only contemporaries, but also knew each  
other.

Historical sources do not give much information about Yunus  
Emre. In the translation of Şaḡaiḡ-i Nuḡmanīya, under the heading  
‘Arif billah Yunus Emre Rahimahu Allāhu we read that he was Tapduk  
Emre's disciple and was from the Sanjak of Bolu, and that he had

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16 Cf. Vilāyetname, pp. 45-48, 81.

17 Cf. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, "Anadoluda İslamiyet", in Dar-al-Fünūn  
Macmū‘ası, İstanbul, 1334, 4, pp. 282-311.

18 See: Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, İlk Mutasavvıflar, İstanbul, Matba‘a-i  
‘Amire, 1918, p. 313.

19 Ibid, p. 313.

20 See: Divan, p. 82. There were music and entertainment in Mevlana's  
sohbet (friendly talk); also, see p. 299, Since Mevlānā Hudavendigār  
gave a glance to us, His beautiful sight is the mirror of our heart.



become a possessor of spiritual excellence. (21) It is there  
confirmed that he carried wood in Tapduk Emre's convent. (22)

Bursali Tahir derives his information from Shaqaiq, and says no  
(23)  
more than did his source.

Yunus himself gives us in his Risālah a clue about when he  
lived.

Söze tarih yediyüz yediyidi  
Yunus canı bu yolda fidiyidi.

The date for the word was hundred and seven  
Yunus sacrificed (his) life in this Path. (24)

E.J.W. Gibb inferred from this verse that Yunus lived in the late  
(25)  
thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Thus he disagreed  
with the early biographers "Sa'd-ud-Dīn and 'Ali", who "placed  
them (Tapduk Emre and Yunus Emre) among the shaikhs of Sultan  
(26)  
Yıldırım Bayezīd's time".

Melioransky claimed that 707 A.H. was the date Yunus Emre  
entered the mystic way, i.e., in the service of Tapduk Emre.

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21 See: Tashköprülüzāde Mejdī, Shaqaiq-i Nu'maniya, İstanbul, 1296,  
p. 78.

22 Cf. Ibid, p. 78.

23 See: Mehmed Tahir, "Osmanlı Muellifleri", V.1, İstanbul, 1333,  
p. 192.

24 Divan, p. 41.

25 See: E.J.W. Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry, V.1, London, 1900,  
p. 165.

26 Ibid, p. 165.

Since the Central Asiatic Turks used to join mystic orders at a very young age, he thought Yunus must have done the same. Thus his dating of Yunus Emre differs by almost half a century from that of Gibb's. (27)

Köprülü held the same view as Gibb, (28) and it was shared mutatis mutandis by Gölpınarlı (29) and Burhan Ümit. (30) The accuracy of these conjectures finally has been proven by a discovery of Dr. Adnan Erzi. Dr. Erzi has found a very valuable and reliable document in Beyazid's library. He says that the dates given in this document proved to be correct when he compared (31) them with reliable sources. This document gives us the date of Yunus' death and his age; I quote it here:

Vefat-ı Yunus Emre  
Sene 720 - Müddet-i Ömr 82.

The death of Yunus Emre  
Year 720 - The length of living 82. (32)

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27 Cf. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 293.

28 Cf. Ibid, p. 296,

29 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, 1936, p. 53, note 2.

30 See: Burhan Ümit, Yunus Emre Divanı, İstanbul, 1933, p. 14.

31 See: Adnan Sadık Erzi, "Türkiye Kütüphanelerinden Notlar ve Vesikalar," Belleten 1950. V. XIY, pp. 87-88.

32 Ibid, p. 88.

"According to this record, Yunus Emre was born in H.638/A.D.  
(33) 1240-1241". This is, indeed, as Dr. Erzi points out, a very  
valuable document which enlightens two unknown points in the  
life of the great poet of whose historical personality we know  
(34) very little. Moreover, it confirms Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's  
contention that Yunus must have been a contemporary of Mevlana  
(35) Jalal-ad-Din, Sarı Saltuk, Barak Baba and Balum Sultan.

Another controversial issue concerning Yunus Emre is as to  
where his grave is. There are at least nine tombs of Yunus in  
(36) quite different regions of Anatolia. It seems that some of  
(37) the writers were eager to have his grave in their own regions.  
However, two unbiased scholars, namely Köprülü and Gölpınarlı,  
have held that his tomb is in Sarıkoy, a small village half-way  
(38) between Ankara and Eskişehir.

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33 Ibid, p. 88. In Sadık Erzi's article Yunus Emre's age is shown  
by some mistake as 72. As a result each date differs ten years  
from the ones I have given. Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit., p.72.

34 Ibid, p. 89.

35 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit., p.65.

36 Cf. Ibid, pp. 66-68.

37 See for instance M. Çağatay Uluçay, Saruhan oğulları ve Eserlerine  
dair Vesikalar, V.1, İstanbul, 1940, pp. 52-53, and V.2, 1946,  
pp. 20-21.

38 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit., p. 68.

In a later period, M. Çağatay Uluçay, in excess of zeal, tried to disprove the view of Köprülü and Gölpınarlı, and cited a series of reasons as to why Yunus Emre's grave should be in "Kula",  
(39)  
a small town of "Manisa". But as Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı has shown, very meticulously, all the arguments of Çağatay are shaky  
(40)  
and baseless. The grave Çağatay mentions might belong to another  
(41)  
Yunus or another Emre. Recently, Professor Şehabeddin Tekindağ, who is unwilling to accept any of the views, suggested that Yunus must have grown and died in one of the most ancient cultural centers of Anatolia; for example, in cities like Kayseri and Konya, whose  
(42)  
names occur in his divan. But this is also, like many others, a mere suggestion; it helps only to confuse the issue. Thus, we may most probably consider the tomb in Sarıkoy as Yunus Emre's. We should also remember that such a view conforms with Vilâyetname of Hacı Bektash.

Which Sufistic school Yunus Emre belonged to is another question. We have seen that the Vilâyetname makes him a Bektashi.

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39 See: M. Çağatay Uluçay, op.cit., I, pp. 53-53, I, pp. 20-21.

40 See: Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf, İstanbul, 1961, pp. 79-82.

41 Cf. Ibid, p. 82.

42 Cf. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Yunus Emre hakkında araştırma", Belleten, V.30, Nr. 117, 1966, p. 85.

Birge seems to agree with the Vilâyetname.<sup>(43)</sup> However, since Bektashi-ism, as an order, was established not earlier than the early ninth century A.H.,<sup>(44)</sup> it is virtually impossible for Yunus to have been Bektashi.

Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, in his book Yunus Emre Hayatı, has tried to prove that Yunus was a Bektashi.<sup>(45)</sup> His most important point is that Yunus makes a summary of the Makalat of Hacı Bektash, in which he draws the distinction between four stages, namely Shari'at, Tarikat, Ma'rifet and Hakikat.<sup>(46)</sup> Another reason given for his considering Yunus a Bektashi is that Yunus has written some poems in which he looks down upon the formalities of religion as Bektashis do.<sup>(47)</sup> But the Bektashis were not the only order to treat the ritual prayer lightly.

Although Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı confesses that Yunus also wrote poems propagating all the rituals of Islam, he thinks that they must have been written either in the early years of his initiation or at least for the initiatory sufis.<sup>(48)</sup>

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43 See: J.K. Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, London, 1937, p.54.

44 See: Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 126.

45 See: Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, 1936, pp. 17-28.

46 See: Ibid, p. 19.

47 See: Ibid, pp. 20-21.

48 See: Ibid, p. 21.

If we accept the first of Gölpınarlı's statements, it necessarily follows that his entering into Tapduk Emre's tekke (49) did not make Yunus a bektashi, as he likes to believe.

If we accept the latter argument, that he wrote the poems orthodox in tone for the initiatory sufis, it contradicts a universally accepted attribute of Yunus, namely, his sincerity, (50) to which Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı himself subscribes. It would be really difficult to think that Yunus would write things simply to satisfy or to attract converts. Elsewhere Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, still holding that Yunus was bektashi, writes, "In fact, the poems that show the real Yunus, Yunus' poet=ness, his enthusiasm, are (51) not the ascetic ones but the ecstatic ones." This statement does nothing but confuse the poetic quality with the doctrinal commitment because this would mean that a bektashi poet is a better one than a non-bektashi poet. Such a statment would be absurd in itself. A modern Turkish author, S. Eyüboğlu, implies that Yunus was a bektashi, taking the legends at their face (52) value. Obviously his argument is less valid than that of

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49 See: Ibid, pp. 11-12.

50 See: Ibid, p. 82.

51 See: Ibid, p. 21.

52 Cf. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Yunus Emreye Selam, İstanbul, 1966, p.13.

Gölpınarlı. Anyone who would claim Yunus is a bektashi must establish his relation with 'Ali and the twelve imams, for the bektashis are shī'a and twelvers.

It is true that Yunus mentions 'Ali's name several times  
(53)  
in his Divan but in none of these does he commit himself, doctrinally speaking. Although he liked 'Ali, 'Ali has not become a central figure in his Divan.

We do not have any mention of any of the imams which occur  
(54)  
so frequently in Bektashi poetry. But we do see that Yunus mentions all four Khalifahs with reverence. The following verse is an example:

Omer u Osman Ali Mustafa yarenleri  
Bu dördünün ulusu Ebu-Bekir-i Şiddîkdur.

Omar, Usman and 'Ali (are) companions of Muṣṭafā.  
The best of these four is Ab-u Bakr Şiddik. (55)

It is highly unlikely that Yunus was a bektashi. Nor is it possible to make a hurufi out of him, as did Rıza Tevfik,  
(56)

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53 See: Divan, pp. 213, 261, 115, 208, 285, 300, 247.

54 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Alevi-Bektaşî Nefesleri, İstanbul, 1963.

55 See: Divan, p. 300.

56 Cf. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 364.

observing that in some poems mention of the individual letters was made. Rıza Tevfik does not, I think, account for the fact that the letters obtain their meaning from the context, and not from the doctrine of Fazlu'Ilahi n-Na'imî Hurufî who appeared long (57) after Yunus Emre's death. For example:

Denüze girem garkolam ne elif ne mim ne dal olam.

Let me submerge into the sea, let me be no Alif,  
neither Mim nor Dal. (58)

Here Yunus simply splits the letter of the word adam (man).

The fact is that Yunus was not a member of any sectarian group. However, this does not mean that he was a sunni, a follower of shari'a, as some claim. (59) He was no doubt heretical par excellence in many instances, but it so happens that his heresy does not agree with any sectarian doctrine.

Yunus is known throughout the centuries as Ummî Yunus, or Yunus the Illiterate. Gibb (60) and Köprülü (61) also think that he might have been illiterate. However, Köprülü tried to

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57 Cf. Ibid, pp. 363-364.

58 See: Divan, p. 204.

59 See: Şahabeddin Tekindağ, op.cit., p. 89, and Sezai Karakoç, Yunus Emre, İstanbul, 1965, pp. 15-16.

60 E.J.W. Gibb, op.cit., pp. 165-167.

61 Ibid, pp. 304-306.



understand the concept of illiteracy with reference to sufi ma'rifa and 'ilm, or formal religious training; he is sure that it means that Yunus had not received formal madrassa education. (62)

I feel that both Gibb and Köprülü took the writings of the biographers too literally, hence, I produce the translation of what Aşık Çelebi wrote on Yunus Emre's illiteracy.

"He is illiterate but he read in the "Divine School". He is of the saints and Just Ones, who translated the language of speech into the language of experience. And he is one of the people of the Secret who could show what is in the heart through the unseen language. It is said that when he intended (to learn) to read, his tongue did not turn to finish the letters of spelling, and the mirror of his heart did not become dull with the opaqueness of the curves and lines." (63)

Asik Çelebi's style is too edifying to be taken literally. One might notice that he is trying to emphasize the spiritual aspect of Yunus by resorting to a contrast which happens to be curves and lines of letters. In Shaqaiq one finds the meaning expressed in slightly different language.

"Apparently his tongue did not reach to read, he, like a pen, was short in the performance of the letters of the spelling. But he was skillful in

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62 Ibid, pp. 304-306.

63 Ibid, p. 303, note 4.

letters of divine knowledge of the Divine School. From his words, covering the witty saying, allegory and merits, which he said in the Turkish language in the style of warsaghi [ballad], it is obvious and manifest that he had the perfect knowledge of the secret stories of the Divine, and that he had high rank in the science of unity." (64)

It is dangerous to take the account of Shaqaiq's translator literally. It seems that he is doing so deliberately. His choice of the phrase "Zahir halde" might have a double meaning, in which case he is making a pun. I have translated this phrase as "apparently", whereas, it might well happen that the author used it in the sense understood by the Sufis. That is to say, it is not impossible to take the phrase as the opposite of "batīn". If such an interpretation is permissible, we are justified in thinking that the author is not referring to actual illiteracy. Thus, we feel that both authors, i.e. Aşık Çelebi and Tashköprülüzāde, might be speaking of the illiteracy to distinguish the two types of knowledge with which we shall deal in another chapter.

However, if his poetry is studied carefully it will become evident that Yunus has considerable ilm. At times he used Arabic and Persian words and phrases very appropriately. For example:

Ki birdir dogruya imruz u ferda.

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64 Tashköprülüzāde, op.cit., p. 78.

To the righteous one, today and tomorrow are one. (65)

and:

Aşıkların gönlü gözü maşuk dapa gitmiş olur  
Ben gönlümü kul eyleyem başed ki maşuka irem.

Lovers' heart and eye will have gone toward the beloved.  
Let me render my heart a slave, it may happen that I  
join the beloved. (66)

These examples can be increased, and they at least show us that he knew many Persian words. Köprülü goes as far as to affirm that "Yunus was sufficiently familiar with Persian to enjoy Mevlana's Persian poetry." (67) Whereas Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı is firmly convinced that Yunus knew Persian and read Sadi, for he translated one of Sadi's poems into Turkish. (68) Some of his best lines, almost literal translations from the Qur'ân, bear witness to his mastery of Arabic; a few citations will be given to elucidate this. (69)

Ben bir kitab okudum kalem anı yazmadı  
Mürekkebi eyleyeydüm yitmeye yedi deniz.

I have read a book, the pen could not write it.  
I wanted to make ink, seven seas could not suffice. (70)

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65 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf, İstanbul, 1961, p.91.

66 Ibid, p. 91.

67 Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 307.

68 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op.cit., pp. 96-98.

69 It was Burhan Ümit who first noticed the translations of the Quranic verses. Cf. Burhan Ümit, op.cit., pp. 22-25.

70 Divan, p. 347.



"And the earth, we stretched it out....(51:48) And the mountains as tent-pegs." (Quran 78:7)

If one would judge the Turkish verses, one is utterly taken with their exactness, accuracy, and more importantly, with their poetic beauty which is not at all inferior, if not superior, to the originals. The verdict must be that Yunus was extremely well versed in Arabic. This knowledge of Arabic he presumably could gain only by study in a madrasa. As a matter of fact, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's conjecture is that he studied in Konya. (75)

Still there are the poems of Yunus, in which he confesses that he was ummi. This point will be clarified when we study his understanding of knowledge of what we may call his epistemology, within the overall framework of his thought. For the time being we shall simply refer to what Professor Bombaci says about the so-called illiteracy of Yunus.

"He was not illiterate...He proclaims himself ignorant, as Muhammad used to do (perhaps in another sense). But the profession of ignorance is in reality the affirmation of supreme knowledge...In reality Yunus possessed much knowledge of the religious culture, and in particular the mystic doctrines and use of Arabo-Persian prosody as well as the Turkish syllabic meter...From his

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75 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

poetry a wide knowledge of Rumi's writings is clearly seen, and the recollection of the story of Laylā and Majnūn and of Farhad and Shirin, would testify to the knowledge of Nizāmī." (76)

There have been some discussions of Yunus's awareness of his being a poet. We must clarify this point also. Under the influence of the early sources, Köprülü says;

"In fact, Yunus who was an ardent mystic, not occupying himself with art or artistic thoughts, sang only of his emotions, needs and inspirations. The only external factor that motivated him, in this effect, (i.e. his writing poetry) like all the mystics, was the idea of being useful by enlightening the people. But the fact that he did not bother with technique and paid no heed to the smoothness of language and rhyme is not an obstacle to his being an artist, indeed a great artist...That is to say, that Yunus was unaware of his artistry does not prevent us from considering him a great artist." (77)

Birge has implied the same thing as he wrote:

"It appears certain that Yunus had no intention of writing a Divan, or formal collection of poems. He simply composed songs, which quickly became popular, and in later years faithful followers gathered these together in a collection." (78)

But a more careful reading of Emre's Divan shows that he refers to himself as a poet and he does speak of his Divan and of his poetry.

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76 Allessio Bombaci, op.cit., p. 280.

77 Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 368.

78 J.K. Birge, "Yunus Emre, Turkey's Great Poet of the People", MacDonald Presentation, Princeton, 1933, pp. 43-60.

Aşık Yunus bu sözi muhal diye söylemez  
Mani yüzün gösterir bu şairler kocası.

Yunus the lover does not say this word as absurd  
This father of poets shows the face of meaning. (79)

Yunus Hak tecellisin şiir dilinden söyler.

Yunus speaks of the Truth's manifestation through  
the language of poetry. (80)

Yunus oldıysa adum pes ne aceb  
Okuyalar bu benim divanımlı.

If my name is Yunus, this does not matter,  
Let them read my divan. (81)

After reading the above lines we cannot doubt that Yunus was fully aware of his being a poet and that his poetry as his life-work concerned him like any poet. Furthermore, he claims to be a master in arranging words; the following verse could be, on the part of Yunus, a personal refutation of M.F. Köprülü.

Yunus bu sözleri çatar sanki yağlı bala katar  
Halka mataların satar yüki gevherdür tuz değil.

Yunus stacks these words as if he adds the butter  
to the honey.  
He sells his goods to the people; his load is gems,  
not salt. (82)

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79 Divan, p. 135.

80 Ibid, p. 129.

81 Ibid, p. 401.

82 Ibid, p. 180.

In contrast to Köprülü, Burhan Ümit wrote; "I could point out hundreds, perhaps thousands of verses on which hours, days, perhaps even weeks have been spent, and if one single word (83) is changed the whole effect and music disappear." But he does not give any example which can be found easily in Yunus Emre's Divan; I shall quote a few of them.

The following lines are from one of his most popular poems:

İşkun aldî benden beni bana seni gerek seni  
Ben yanaram düni günü bana seni gerek seni.

Eğer beni öldüreler külüm göke savurular  
Toprağım anda çağıra bana seni gerek seni.

Thy love hath taken me from me; Thou, Thou  
art needed by me.  
Day and night do I burn; Thou, Thou art needed  
by me.

Were they to slay me, let them winnow my ashes  
into the heavens.  
There let my dust cry, "Thou, Thou art needed  
by me." (84)

If we replace any of the words here, the value of the line, its music, rhythm, beauty and even its meaning will be lost. Particularly

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83 Burhan Ümit, op. cit., p. 31.

84 Divan, p. 132. For another rendering of these lines, see Burhan Toprak, "Yunus Emre", transl. F. MacCallum, Moslem World, 1946, 36, p. 164.



in the second part: "Bana seni gerek seni" is a product of the highest craftsmanship; the grammatical structure is distorted, yet the whole phrase is agreeable. The order of the wording and the choice of each word gives an immensely appealing music and a natural fluency. It is only natural that this poem has had hymns composed to it, and was used in the "Yunus Emre Oratoryo" several times by the modern composer Ahmed Adnan Saygun. (85)

The following verse, so far as the craftsmanship is concerned, is unparalleled even in the Divan literature.

Aşık oldum şoy ay yüze nisar oldum bal ağıza  
Nazar kıldım kara göze siyah olup kaşa geldüm.

I fell in love with this moon-face; Lavishly I am  
scattered on the honeymouth.  
I glanced at the black eye; being black I landed on  
the eyebrow. (86)

As has been seen, he can display artistry while expressing his pantheistic outlook, very skillfully, without slipping into banalities like other poets of Ottoman Divan literature. In fact, one tends to think that Yunus could not be compared with any other

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85 Cf. Ahmet Adnan Saygun: Yunus Emre (Soli, Koro ve Orkestra için) Oratoryo 3 Bolum Op. 26, Ankara, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946, p. 17.

86 Divan, p. 213.

Turkish poet, as A. Hamdi Tanpınar has indirectly suggested.

"Fuzuli is one of our greatest poets. If we exclude Yunus - such a distinction is necessary because Yunus is a door opening on the present day from a past 600 years old - only poets like Nesimi, Necati Bey, Baki, Nefi, Nedim and Şeyh Galib, who were really able to open new areas within the strict rules and trilingual idiom of the old poetry, could be compared with him (i.e. Fuzuli)." (87)

That Yunus is never to grow obsolete, as implied by Tanpınar, was foreseen and proudly proclaimed by himself in a beautiful line:

Her dem yeni doğarız bizden kim usanasi.

Each moment we are born anew, who could be  
satiated with us. (88)

It is interesting that this most powerful poet and "most significant figure of mysticism of Anatolia", (89) did not found a Tariqa. Köprülü's comment on this is that Yunus did not display the intellectual ability or spiritual influence to found a Tarīqa. (90)

Köprülü's comment enraged Burhan Ümit, who has a sentimental involvement with Yunus. For Burhan Ümit, the reason Yunus did not

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87 A. Hamdi Tanpınar, "Fuzuliye dair", Fuzuli ve Leyla ve Mecnun, İstanbul, 1959, p. 18.

88 Divan, n. 136.

89 Allessio Bombaci, op. cit., p. 263.

90 Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op. cit., p. 372.

found a Ṭarīqa lies in Yunus Emre's greatness, and in his  
believing in the hollowness of everything. (91) I suggest  
that if Yunus, who was a not-altogether-satisfied member of a  
Ṭarīqa, did not found any, it is because he did not believe in  
the efficacy of Ṭarīqas. He believed in the ability of a free  
individual to find the truth. A careful analysis of his poetry  
discloses that he thinks the individual must search for himself  
in his self. It is most probable that he did not fail, but  
rather refused to establish a Tariqa after he became a shaikh,  
and this would I think, accord with his non-believing in the  
formalities. Ṭarīqa, as an institution, could not possibly  
have had much appeal for the Yunus of the poems. Beside many  
verses in which he praises dervishhood, there are others in which  
he declares that the title means nothing to him; it seems that  
he was still struggling with himself, even after he acquired  
education in the Ṭarīqa.

Derviş adın idindüm derviş tonın tonandum  
Yola baktum utandum hep işüm yanlış benüm.

I assumed the title of dervishhood, I am decked  
with the attire of the dervish.  
I looked at the road (examined myself), I was  
ashamed, all I did is wrong. (92)

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91 See: Burhan Ümit, op.cit., p. 33.

92 Divan, p. 217.

However, Yunus in another sense, in a more profound sense, did found a Tarīqa because he influenced almost every Turkish sufi who came after him. Bektashi literature has been influenced immensely by him, so much so that Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı adduces this as one of the reasons that Yunus must have been a bektashi. Many of the mystic poets of later ages used his name to achieve popularity. Apart from this we can observe his direct influence on such great mystic poets as Hatai (Shan Ismail), Kaygusuz Abdal, Said Emre, Hacı Bayram Veli, Niyazi Misri, etc.

It seems that there is not a single point concerning Yunus Emre on which there is a universal agreement. Even his name did not escape the fate of being subject to controversy. The late Osman Ergin claimed that the real name of Yunus was Said Emre. According to O. Ergin, Said Emre was a bektashi who later renounced his bektashi-ism, and thereafter he assumed the name Yunus Emre. O. Ergin bases his argument on the stylistic, linguistic resemblances between the poetry of the two poets, and on the fact that a few poems appear in one manuscript as Yunus Emre's, and in another as Said Emre's. (93) A. Gölpınarlı asserts that Said Emre

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93 Cf. Osman Ergin, "Yunus'un Asıl Adı", Milli Mecmua, V.12, 129, 1931, İstanbul, pp. 219-220.

was another poet <sup>(94)</sup> who was much influenced by Yunus Emre. <sup>(95)</sup>  
Therefore, any kind of parallel between the works of the two  
poets would be understandable.

Raif Yelkenci and Sadettin Nüzhet also claimed that  
Yunus Emre and Aşık Paşa are the same person, <sup>(96)</sup> but these  
claims have no real basis and can be dismissed easily.

After having said what we know of Yunus historically, we  
can venture to study his thought and poetry. By so doing I  
think we can shed more light on the personality of Yunus Emre.

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94 For the poems of Said Emre see A. Gölpınarlı, op.cit., pp. 280-294.

95 Cf. Ibid, pp. 204-207.

96 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus ile Aşık Paşa, İstanbul, 1941,  
pp. 3-9.

## CHAPTER II

The Nature of Yunus Emre's Language or Paradox

In reading the poetry of Yunus, one is struck by the tension offered between opposites. His divan is, so to speak, a gathering-place of opposites and oddities. Almost every concept or problem he approaches produces a polarization, or semantically speaking, forms a semantic field within which one finds two concepts negating each other, or one concept being divided into two contradictory terms because the poet uses the word in such a manner that the term itself becomes self-contradictory. This quality makes Yunus a poet of "the paradoxical", paradox being the vehicle through which he tried to remove the duality he observed in the existence into which he had come in order to attain unity (birlik-tevhid - vahdet).

Benim bunda kararum yok ben bunda gitmeğe geldim  
Denşirüben ikiliğim birliğe yetmeğe geldim.

I have no intention (of staying) in this world,  
I have come here in order to go.  
Changing my duality, I came in order to arrive at  
one-ness. (1)

Judging from a line of his, we might well consider that Yunus invented, or at least tried to invent, a new language to express the Unity he felt:

Yunus dilin yumuşdurur bu tevhidi ayitmağa.

Yunus has washed his tongue in order to say this Unity. (2)

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1 Divan, p.212.

2 Ibid, p. 45.

This line is almost a warning to the reader to the effect that the language he is going to confront in Yunus Emre's divan is not an ordinary one.

In this chapter then, my aim will be simply to point out the paradoxes as they occur in his poetry, without attempt at this point, at analysis.

By paradox we mean a statement which strikes us immediately with its illogicality and oddity. We do not mean falsity of the statement by its illogicality, but the contradictory substance inherent in the statement itself. We by no means mean an illogical statement which comes into being by a mistake or by an ill-reasoning. A statement is paradoxical when uttered deliberately, knowing that it is against the conventional and reasonable opinions.

It is generally held that language is a medium of communication,<sup>(3)</sup> "and as such it has to maintain some minimum standards of intelligibility, clarity and consistency. Language too has a logic of its own,<sup>(4)</sup> in the everyday sense of the term." In spite of their deficiencies, Aristotelian "laws of thought" are still the principles to follow when wanting to be clear and intelligible in uttering a proposition. At this point in our study we shall be examining some Yunusian verses

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3 Cf. Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy In A New Key, New York, 1961, p. 99. See also Stephen Ullmann, The Principles of Semantics, London, 1959, p. 14.

4 Ibid, pp. 14-15.



through the "laws of thought", therefore it is appropriate to mention them here.

1. The law of identity - A is A. Everything is what it is. Every square is square.
2. The law of contradiction - A is not (not A). Nothing is what it is not. Square is not not-square.
3. The law of excluded middle - A is either B or not-B. Everything is either square or not-square; this we can also reformulate as follows; nothing is both square and not-square.

Yunus Emre's poetry, not following these rules, would give strict followers of logic the impression that his poetry is nonsensical. They would simply be shocked reading the following lines, in which Yunus equated two opposite concepts.

Saki ol camî getür kim içüben mest olalum  
Bizi işk ile fena kıl ki nice hest olalum.

O wine-offerer bring that cup [of wine] that  
drinking we be drunk,  
Annihilate us with love that we be existent. (5)

Fena, a borrowed word from Arabic, means "non-existence" or "nothingness" in Turkish; it is translated into Turkish as yokluk and yok olma. Hest, a borrowed word from Persian, means "existent" or "exist"; the Turkish translation would be var. One should notice that the two words are antonyms; their contrariness is categorical. If we examine

Yunus Emre's line carefully we shall see that he becomes existent when he becomes non-existent; this means that "existent is non-existence". Thus, he nullifies the law of contradiction, for as is known, A is not (not-A), whereas, Yunusian proposition would read A is (not-A). It would seem that Yunus has a sense of existence which is not only different from that of ours, but also opposed to ours. However, for the sake of confirming ourselves, we should see one more example which is pertinent to the field of existence. This time he uses the pure Turkish words var (existent) and yok (non-existent).

Ne sermayem ola ne var ne yokvem.

I have no capital, neither am I existent nor am  
I non-existent. (6)

In this line also there is an obvious illogicality. This time Yunus Emre confounds the law of excluded middle. That is to say, in order to conform to this principle Yunus should have affirmed either his existence or his non-existence, as we know that A is B or (not-B). There is an opposition between the first line and the second one, which we have just discussed. In the first example we established that Yunus is both existent and non-existent; in the latter he is neither existent nor non-existent. One would tend to think that there is also an inner contradiction in the Divan of Yunus.

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6 Ibid, p. 189.

Let us now consider Yunus' concept of life. A. Gölpınarlı was correct in writing that "Yunus, in Turkish literature, is the poet who wrote about death, perhaps more than any other poet." (7)

One is also justified in asserting that he wrote about life more than any other Turkish poet because of the sheer fact that he wrote on death, for "we feel, in this theme of death, the pulsation of love for life." (8) It is natural that we should expect Yunus to deal with life in the same way he deals with existence for they are closely related concepts. Yunus offers us an extremely realistic description of death which can fill the reader with fear and despair because of its destructive power. Graveyards evoke in Yunus a sense of utter desolation at the thought of the individual who once was young and had desires.

Sabahın sinliye vardum gördüm cümle ölmüş yatur  
Her biri biçare olup ömrün yavu kılmış yatur  
Vardum bunların katına bakdum ecel heybetüne  
Nice yiğit muraduna ırmeyüben ölmüş yatur  
Yemiş kuş kurt bunı keler nicelerin bağrın deler  
Şol ufacık naresteler gül gibici solmuş yatur.

Morn I went to the cemetery, saw that all lie down dead  
Each one being helpless, losing his life, lies down.  
I went to their side and beheld the fearsomeness of death  
O, how many youths, not attaining their desire, lie dead.  
Birds, worms have eaten this one, and newts are piercing  
the heart of many.  
These little unbloomed ones, as roses, lie down faded. (9)

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7 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf, İstanbul, 1961, p. 139.

8 Ibid, p. 145.

9 Divan, p. 304.

He is concerned not only with the fate of human beings, but also with that of other beings in nature who are not, Yunus holds, indifferent to their own fate either:

İy işk eri aç gözünü yir yüzüne kılğıl nazar  
Gör bu latif çiçekleri bezenüp uş geldi geçer  
Bular böyle bezenüben boynun Hakk'a sunuban  
Bir sor anı bunlara sen kancarudur azm-i sefer  
Her bir çiçek bir naz ile öğer Hakk'ı niyaz ile  
Her murg hoş avaz ile ol padişahi zikrider  
Öğer anun kadurluğun her bir işe hazırlığın  
İlla ömür kasırlığın anıcağiz rengi döner  
Rengi döner günden güne toprağa dökülür gine.

O knight of love! Open your eyes, have a glance  
at the world  
See these fine flowers, here ornamented they came,  
they will pass away  
So ornamented, offering their neck to the Truth [God].  
Just ask them where is the journey to  
Each flower praises the Truth [God] with blandishment  
Each bird, with a pleasant voice, makes mention of that King  
[God]  
Praising His omnipotence, His omnipresence,  
But when recalling life's shortness her color turns [pale]  
From day to day does her color turn [pale], again she falls  
to the earth. (10)

If he would so reflect about the death of plants and animals, it is obvious that his sensitivity regarding the human death would be much more intense:

Bu dünyada bir nesneye yanar içim göynür özüm  
Yiğid iken ölenlere gök ekini biçmiş gibi.

For [only] one thing in this world does my heart burn,  
my soul scorches,  
For those who die while young, as they reap the green  
crop. (11)

It is but natural that the destructive nature of death should frighten  
Yunus, for he also will die like anybody else.

Hiç bilmezem kezek kimin aramızda gezer ölüm  
Halkı bostan edinmiştir dilediğin üzer ölüm.

Death is walking amongst us, whose turn it is I  
know not at all.  
Death picks up whomever he wants, for he has made the  
world a garden [to himself]. (12)

Death seems to be exceedingly real, so much so, that in its middle  
he considers the life terminated.

Ahır birgün ölürsün ölüm vardır bilirsin  
Kamulardan ayrılıp varup sinde yattın tut  
Her bir nefes kim gelir kiseden ömr eksilir  
Çün kise ortalandı sen onu düketdün tut.

You will die one day in the end, Death exists you know.  
Assume then you lie in the grave separated from all  
With each breath that comes from the purse, life decreases  
When the purse is half, assume you exhausted it. (13)

Not infrequently he expresses his fear of death and of the day of  
judgement.

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11 Ibid, p. 129.

12 Ibid, p. 216

13 Ibid, p. 335

İy yarenler iy kardeşler korkarım ben ölem diyü  
Öldüğüme kayırmazam ittüğümü bulam diyü.

O comrades, O brethren, I fear that I am to die.  
Not so much am I worried of dying as I am to find  
what I have done. (14)

Anmanışın sen şol günü cümle kişi hayran ola  
Nidesini bilimeye bihud-u sergerdan ola  
İsrafil surinî ura hep mahlukat yirden dura  
Derilöben haşre vara kadı anda subhan ola  
Zebanilar çeke duta ilete tamuya ata  
Deri yana süngek düte şulukdem bir figan ola.

Do you not recall that day when all are astounded  
Not knowing what to do, all become selfless and giddy.  
Israfil beats his trumpet; all creatures rise from the  
earth.  
Resurrected they go to the assembly, God is the judge  
there.  
Demons pull, catch, lead and throw [men] into hell.  
Skin burns, bone smokes, that moment becomes a cry. (15)

His stand regarding death and the hereafter is not always the same.  
There are passages in his divan where we are confronted with a Yunus  
who is bold vis-a-vis death and even aspirant of it:

Dosttan haber geldi bana durayım andan varayun  
Kurbanlığa bu canumu vereyim andan varayun.

Münker ü Nekir geliser yer gök ün ile dolısar  
Ben bunlara cevabun vereyim andan varayun.

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14 Ibid, p. 338.

15 Ibid, p. 52.

From the friend news came to me, let me get up,  
then go,  
Let me give this life of mine as sacrifice, then go.  
(16)  
When Munker and Nekir come, when heavens and earth  
are filled with cries  
Let me give them their answer and then go. (17)

Apart from this psychological contradiction - it is psychological because it concerns his attitude - we can also see a philosophical contradiction concerning the reality of death. Yunus at times vehemently rejects the reality of death. In a beautiful poem he declares his immortality.

Kon ölüm endişesin aşık Ölmez bakidir  
Ölmek senin değildir çün nurun ilahidir  
Ölmekten ne korkarsun korkma ebedi varsun.

Give up the idea of death, Lover dies not; he is eternal.  
To die is not of you, for your light (essence) is divine.  
Why fear of dying? Fear not; you exist eternally. (18)

In the following verse his immortality is asserted symbolically in a rather dramatic way, and strikingly reminds us of Deli Dumrul's attempt.  
(19)

Ne kişidür Azrail ki kâsdide canuma.  
Ben onun kendi kastın kendüye zindan eyleyem.

Who is Azrail that he aims at my life?  
I make his aim a prison to himself. (20)

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16 The angels that are supposed to question the deceased in the grave.

17 Divan, p. 190.

18 Ibid, p. 307.

19 Deli Dumrul (i.e. Dumrul the Mad), is one of the heroes in Dede Korkut, who fights Azrail for his life.

20 Divan, p. 202.

As we have seen, notwithstanding his changing attitude vis-à-vis death or life, Yunus has a deep concern with both of them, be it a positive or a negative concern. This concern is not always there; he can display an utter indifference to death and to life as well.

Speaking of his death Yunus says:

Bir garib ölmüş diyeler üç günden sonra duyalar  
Soğuk su ile yuvalar şöyle garib bencileyin.

Let them say a stranger has died, let them hear  
after three days.

Let them wash me with cold water (which is) a  
stranger like myself. (21)

We notice that Yunus affirms both concepts, i.e. death and life; he also negates them. Finally, he sees them as one and the same thing.

Cansuz gel bu kapuya baki dirlik bulasın.

Come to this door lifeless that you may find an  
everlasting life. (22)

In this line he holds that lifelessness is identical with life; it  
(23)  
also reminds us of the one mentioned earlier.

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21 Ibid, p. 257. For a different rendering of this verse see J. K. Birge, "Yunus Emre, Turkey's Great Poet of the People", The MacDonald Presentation Volume, Princeton, New Jersey, 1933, p. 51.

22 Divan, p. 248.

23 See above, page 31



Ölmeklik dirlik ola ölümsüz dirlik bula.

Let dying be living, let him find an immortal life. (24)

These lines also defy any kind of logical understanding. Here we  
(25)  
again see, as before a statement of the type A is not-A.

As is seen from the foregoing survey, Yunus changes the meaning of each concept further. This causes some other confusion, namely, confusion of Imān and Kufr, or faith and unbelief. The concepts of Imān (faith) and Kufr (unbelief), which are diametrically opposed to each other in Islamic theology, are treated by Yunus in an equal manner at times. They both stand as an obstacle on the way to God.

Küfr ile iman dahi hicab imiş bu yolda.

Unbelief and faith are also veils on this way  
[that leads to God]. (26)

Therefore, he teaches that they both should be done away with.

İlm-u ameli bırak küfrü iman oda yak.

Leave the knowledge and deed, burn both unbelief and  
faith in fire! (27)

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24 Divan, p. 249.

25 See above, pp. 31-32.

26 Divan, p. 163.

27 Ibid, p. 162.

And when he makes a distinction between them, he sometimes upholds the unbelief.

Safalaştık küfr ile iman yağmaya verdik.

With unbelief we became pure; the faith we threw  
away for plunder. (28)

The confusion of faith and unbelief reaches its peak in a poem - one of the most beautiful Yunus wrote - scarcely paralleled in all Turkish literature so far as my knowledge goes. I believe the poem owes its beauty to the paradoxical essence and form, to which, I am afraid, no translation can do justice.

Unuttum din dinayet kaldı benden  
Bu ne mezhebdirur dinden içeri  
Dinin terkidenin küfürdür işi  
Bu ne küfürdür imandan içeri.

I have forgotten the religion, the religiousity  
[they] remained away from me.  
O what a sect is this, within the religion?  
Whoever left his religion, unbelief is his affair.  
O what an unbelief is this, within the belief! (29)

He also says that unbelief is belief, as he said death was life, and non-existence was existence.

Küfrü iman olanların ayıblaman güldüğünü.

Those whose disbelief is belief, blame not for their  
laughter. (30)

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28 Ibid, p. 163.

29 Ibid, p. 122.

30 Ibid, p. 101.

As we have discussed the concepts of existence and life, and their antonyms, the frame of reference was, in most cases, Yunus Emre himself, that is to say, the man, the self. That would mean that all the paradoxes and contradictions which we have observed apply to Yunus Emre's understanding of the self.

In regard to the Sufistic philosophy, whose main aim is to reach God, he seems to advise two different and rather contradictory teachings, in which the ego is the key concept.

Ayđ Ayđ kamusun ne kan-u ne ma'densün  
Suret-i pür manisün padişahı sende bul  
Gel imdi hicabun aç senden ırıl sana kaç  
Sende bulasın miraç sana gelür cümle yol.

O say, say all (that) thou art neither metal -  
nor mineral.  
Thou art the form of pure meaning, find the King  
in thee.  
Come now reveal thy veil; part from thee, flee to thee,  
Mayest thou find the mirac (ascension) in thee, to  
thee come all the roads. (31)

Sana gel sen seni sende bulagör  
Sana bak sendeki kimdir gör imdi.

Come thou to thee, find thee in thee  
Look to thee, now see who is in thee. (32)

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31 Ibid, p. 181.

32 Ibid, p. 119.

Ben bunda seyrider iken aceb sırı irdüm ahi  
Bir siz dahi sizde görün dostı bende gördüm ahi  
Bende baktım bende gördüm benüm ile ben olanı  
Bu surete can vireni kimdügünü bildim ahi  
Nitekim ben beni buldum bu oldu kim hakkı gördüm.

O brother, I attained the marvellous secret while I  
was here wandering.  
See once more you in you, The Beloved I saw in me, O  
brother.  
I searched in me, I saw in me the one who has with me  
become me.  
I knew who is the one who gave life to this form, O  
brother.  
When I found me this happened: I saw the Truth. (33)

Yunus imdi sen senden ayrı değülsün candan  
Sen sende bulmaz isen kanda bulasun anı.

Now Yunus you are not parted from you, from soul  
If not in thee, where else would you find Him (God). (34)

In these quotations the concept which Yunus Emre has stressed the most is the concept of "ego", as the words Ben (I) and Sen (thou) suggest. The idea of ego is, here, the main preoccupation of our poet. One thing should attract our attention, and that is the positive value of the concept concerned.

In what follows I shall point out several verses in which the concept "ego" is still the central theme, but it is viewed negatively.

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33 Ibid, p. 117.

34 Ibid, p. 109.

Şen seni elden bırak dost yüzüne sensiz bak  
İşit işit key işit dost katına sensiz git  
Dosta gidene ondin kenâsüz sefer gerek  
Sen seni aradan al cism ü suret cansuz kal.

Leave thee out of hand, thouless behold the face of  
the Friend.  
Attend, attend, attend well, thouless go to the Friend's  
court.  
He who sets out for the Friend needs a voyage without ego.  
Take thee away from media, [take away] the body and form  
[also], remain lifeless. (35)

And again in another poem he says:

Ben benliğümden geçdüm gözüm hicabın açtım  
Dost vaslına iriştım gûmanım yağma olsun  
Benden benliğim gitti hep mülkümü dost tuttu.

I did away with my I-ness (thus) I opened the veil  
of my eye(s).  
I reached the Friend, let my doubts be sacked.  
My I-ness moved out of me and all my existence the  
Friend invaded. (36)

This negative understanding of ego culminates in the following verses.

İlahi bir işk vir bana kandaluğum bilmeyeyim  
Yavu kılâyım ben beni isteyiben bulmayayın.

Al gider benden benliği doldur içime senliği  
Dirliğünde öldür beni varup anda ölmeyeyin.

O Lord, grant me a love so that I do not know my where-ness.  
Let me lose me, let me not find me though I want.

Take, erase the I-ness from me; fill my interior with  
thou-ness  
Kill me in my life, let me not die going there. (37)

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35 Ibid, p. 162.

36 Ibid, p. 259.

37 Ibid, p. 257.

There are two opposing understandings of the concept of ego here. In the latter examples I have quoted, the ego has a negative value, for it prevents the mystic from reaching God; whereas, in the former ones, the mystic finds the Beloved in and through the ego. The main objective is the same in both categories of poems, namely, union with God. It is a paradox, however, that one and the same thing should lead as well as hinder one from attaining a fixed aim. Therefore, I hold that Yunus meant different things. In our next chapter, when we analyse the concept of ego, we hope to clarify the nature of both egos and their relation to the pair - concepts of life and death, belief and unbelief.

These contradictory statements, having been said at different times, might make one think that after all it might be that the author has changed as time went on, as Burhan Ümit suggests, (40) and it does not necessarily follow that Yunus Emre's thinking, or for that matter, his language, is contradictory and paradoxical. Burhan Ümit tries to remove the contradiction through the change Yunus underwent, but this does not explain the individual statements that are self-contradictory. We are not against the idea of an

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40 Cf. Burhan Ümit, Yunus Emre Divanı, İstanbul, 1933, pp. 53-56.

evolution in Yunus Emre's thought, but the evolution as Burhan Umit understands it. We shall discuss this matter more fully in its proper place. Let it suffice to say that Yunus himself was aware of the fact that he was offending the laws of thought. He knew that the kind of reality he saw, or experienced, could not be grasped intellectually. Therefore, when this reality is translated into language, it is paradoxical. He complains that he is misunderstood because he has a different language which no one knows:

Ben söylerem ben dinlerim kimse dilüm bilmez  
benüm  
Benüm dilim kuş dilidir benüm ilüm dost ilüdür.

I say, I listen, nobody ever knows my language.  
My language is that of the bird, my homeland is  
that of the Beloved. (41)

It is, in my opinion, this paradoxical dialectic of Yunus that enables him to secure a pantheistic "Weltanschauung". The negation of a given concept and its reconciliation with the opposite concept, in each instance, follows the same parallel. He retains, I think, a kind of consistency; this is however, far from saying that Yunus Emre's thought, as a whole, is systematic. As will be clear later on, the reconciling principle between the opposites is the concept

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41 Divan, p. 218.

of Love, which is not a logical force. In the following chapters of this work I shall be trying to solve this problem, however, not with the intention of refuting Yunus, not justifying him, for he is a poet - and it is difficult to refute a poet, much less a saint - but with the purpose of bringing his experience as a poet, as a mystic, and as an individual into focus, and by trying to expose the significance of his poetry for himself and for us as well. In other words, we shall search for a better understanding of Yunus, if that is possible. Thus, this paper is an attempt to unveil the meaning of this paradox, of this bird-language, because Yunus himself said that his poetry had a meaning, though it was closed to the hypocrite.

Yunus bir söz söylemiş hiç bir söze benzemez  
Münafıklar elinden örttü mani yüzünü.

Yunus said a word which resembles no word.  
The meaning veiled her face because of the hypocrite. (42)

When commenting on the poem from which the above couplet is taken, Niyazi Misri said, "This poem is the oddest of all, since none (43) appeared like it; it is peculiar only to Yunus Emre."

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42 Ibid, p. 132.

43 Muhammad Niyazi Misri, "Serhi Gazeli Yunus Emre", Yunus Emre Divanı, V.3, ed. Burhan Toprak, İstanbul, 1934, p. 204.



### CHAPTER III

#### The Structure of Yunus Emre's Thought In General

"The sufistic conception of Yunus", wrote Köprülü, "like the rest of the poet-mystics of Anatolia of that time, is taken directly from "Jalāl-ad-Dīn Rūmī" or is of the same nature with his [Rumi's]."<sup>(1)</sup> This statement seems to have received a universal acceptance<sup>(2)</sup> with the exception of Burhan Ümit who vehemently rejects one side of Köprülü's statement which reads, "taken directly from Jalāl-al-Dīn"; yet he, also, agrees with the rest.<sup>(3)</sup> That there is an influence of Rūmī is undeniable, but I believe that Yunus is not just an imitator of Rumi as<sup>(4)</sup> Alessio Bombaci implies. If the parallels were proofs to that effect, then we are at a complete loss, because two of the most important poems of Yunus Emre are almost the summary of the<sup>(5)</sup> Maqālāt of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli, and in his Divan we also find a translation of one of Sādi's ghazals.<sup>(6)</sup> All we could say is that Yunus was open to any influence and Rūmī's influence was perhaps more preponderant than the other.

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1 Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzade, op. cit., p. 341.

2 Cf. also Gibb, op.cit., p. 169, and Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, p. 92.

3 See Burhan Ümit, op. cit., p. 59.

4 See Alessio Bombaci, op. cit., p. 269.

5 Cf. Divan, pp. 80-82, 134-135.

6 Cf. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf, İstanbul, 1961, pp. 96-98.

Be that as it may, we now are turning to Yunus himself, as our chief interest is his own work and thought—not the historical origins of it, nor a comparative study with anyone, since at the time when Yunus was writing throughout the muslim world sufism was already elaborated. This fact makes one believe that Yunus Emre's poetry does not attempt at interpretation, but rather responds to an interpreted world. However, this I believe, is reversed in what I call his "mature poetry", where he partly does the interpreting and then responds to the interpretation. And here he becomes extremely original so as to refute any claim that Yunus belonged to this or that category of the sufis.

Yunus Emre's language, it must have been noticed, is an extremely personal one; one does not see a technical language in his poetry. It is true that there are, in his Divan, some technical terms of taṣawwuf, but this never becomes a characteristic of the Divan. However, in a prose passage of his Risāla we find an exception. Here not only the language is technical but also there is a systematic and brief exposition of Yunus Emre's thought. This passage also has the title "Fī taʿrīf-ilʿakl" or "On the definition of the intellect".

Akl Padşahun kadimliği pertevindendür. Akl dahi üç dürlüdü. Biri Akl-i maaşdur, dünya tertiblerin bildirür. Biri de Akl-i maaddur, ahiret ahvalin bildirür. Biri de Akl-i kullîdür. Allah-ü Taâlâ marifetin bildirür. İman, Padşahun hidayeti nurındandır. İman da üç dürlüdü. Biri İlm-el yakindür ve biri Ayn-el yakindür, ve biri Hakk-al yakindür. Amma ol iman kim İlm-el yakindür akılda yirlüdü ve ol iman ki Ayn-el yakindür, gönülde yirlüdü ve ol iman ki Hakk-al yakindür, canla yirlüdü. Canla olan iman canla bile gider.

Intellect is of the light of the King's [God] being eternal, and intellect is of three kinds. One is the intellect of living. It makes (us) know the settings of the world. One is the intellect of Final Abode; it makes (us) know the conditions of the hereafter. And the other, Universal intellect, makes (us) know the gnosis (marifet) of God the Most High. Faith is of the light of King's guidance. Faith is also of three kinds. One is the knowledge of the certainty ('ilm al-yaqīn), and one is the vision of certainty ('ayn al-yaqīn) and one is the truth of certainty (ḥaqq al-yaqīn). As for that faith which is 'ilm-al-yaqīn, it is situated in the intellect and that faith which is 'ayn-al yaqīn is situated in the heart (gönül) and that faith which is ḥaqq-al yaqīn is situated in the soul (can). The faith which is with soul goes with soul. (7)

There is a parallel between the two sections on "intellect" and "faith", but not an exact one. The intellect that occurs in the latter section is not qualified; it seems that here Yunus used the word in a very broad sense, perhaps in order to stress

the contrast between intellect as such and heart and soul.

It is evident that "faith" is an epistemological term; to be more specific, it is the object of cognition. Here Yunus recognizes, besides the intellect, two other cognitive faculties; heart (gönlü) and soul (can). 'İlm-al yaqîn is demonstrative, 'ayn-al yaqîn involves vision, and haqq-al yaqîn is becoming.<sup>(8)</sup> These three types of knowledge are called in Turkish "bilmek" or knowing, "bulmak" - discovering or finding,<sup>(9)</sup> and "olmak" or becoming.

In his Divan Yunus used 'ayn-al yaqîn only twice and each time with the verb "görmek", i.e. to see. Haqq-al yaqîn, which occurs in the Divan only once, is used with the verb "olmak", i.e. to be or to become.

'Ayn-al yakîn gören aşık gözün ırmez dost yüzünden.

The lover who sees 'ayn-al yaqîn removes not his eyes  
from the Friend's face. (10)

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8 Ibn Khaldûn and Qushayrî differ with my interpretation of 'ayn-al yaqîn and haqq-al yaqîn. They both hold 'ayn-al yaqîn as inspiration, and haqq-al yaqîn as direct seeing. See: Ibn Haldun, Şifa'u s-Sa'il Litehzibi l - Mesa'il, Önsöz ve Notlarla Neşreden. Muhammed B. Tawit At-Tanjî, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, XXII, İstanbul, 1958, p. 95. Cf. also Abû al-Qâsim 'Abdal Karîm b. Hawâzin al-Qushayrî, Al-Risâlat, [Cairo], 1948, p. 44. Professor Corbin's interpretation agrees with that of ours. See Henry Corbin, Avicenna and the Visionary Recital, Transl. by W.R. Trask, Tennessee, 1960, p. 324, n. 9.

9 Cf. Abdûlbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Divanı, V.3, İstanbul, 1948, p. 647-648.

10 Divan, p. 244.

Ayn-el yakīn görüpdür Yunus mecnun oluptur  
Bir ile bir oluptur hakkal yakīn içinde.

'Ayn-al yaqīn has seen Yunus, has become possessed  
He has become one with the one in haqq-al yaqīn. (11)

Here Yunus himself clarifies for us that 'ayn-al yaqīn and haqq-al yaqīn are to be obtained through direct experience. They are quite different from 'ilm-al yaqīn. We must not fail to point out the difference between 'ayn-al yaqīn and haqq-al yaqīn. Haqq-al yaqīn is far superior to 'ayn-al yaqīn; it has no limitations, and that is where its value lies. At the level of 'ayn-al yaqīn there is the vision of the reality but not the union which is the goal of sufism.

To sum up one might say that Yunus Emre accepts three epistemological loci; "intellect", "heart" and "soul", with different epistemological functions: knowing, seeing and becoming, respectively.

The passage which we have quoted from the Risāla becomes of most importance if we recall that this is the only work of Yunus' whose date of composition is known. When he wrote the Risāla Yunus was sixty-nine years old. In it we find the position of a mature Yunus. Therefore, to analyse the concept of can (soul)

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11 Ibid, p. 79.

would shed light on the intellectual development of the Anatolian bard.

First, we should establish the meaning of the word can in its different shades. Can is a Persian word, its most basic meaning being the "life" and "soul", "an individual", thus, it denotes the Self. Another word which Yunus uses very frequently denoting Self is "nefs". The Self denoted by the word "nefs" has a totally negative quality; it is rebellious, arrogant, and it is the source of hypocrisy and polytheism.

Tekebbür nefsdürür sultan bilmez  
.....Kadimden nefsdür sultana asi.  
Bir urgandır heman onun bahası  
Bu nefis oğları tokuz kişidir  
Nifak-u şirk anların işidir.

Arrogance [that] is self (nefs), knows not the King.  
Eternally rebellious toward the King is the self  
His worth is only a rope. (12)

These sons of self (nefs) are nine persons  
Hypocrisy and polytheism are their task. (13)

Nefs, for Yunus, means the carnal self and lust. Man acquires this self perhaps with the first wordly thing he tastes upon his birth. In this respect Yunus almost anticipates Freud.

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12 i.e. What he deserves it to be hung.

13 "Risāla", Divan, p. 11.

Ata belinden bir zaman anasına düştü gönül  
Ağzuma emcek virdiler nefis kabzına düştü gönül.

From the father's loins once fell the heart into  
its mother  
They gave breast to my mouth, the heart fell into  
nefs' grip. (14)

The man who asserts himself as nefs is bound to be evil.

Hayırdan şerri çok sever işleme ye, becid iver  
Nefsinün dilegün kovar nefis evine düştü gönül.

More than the good she likes evil [and] hastens  
to commit [the evil].  
She pursues the desire of her nefs; the heart fell  
into nefs home. (15)

All the verses cited suggest that Yunus is speaking of the self within the realms of morality. With the self designated by nefs it is not possible to be a moral being. Therefore, he teaches that the nefs should be done away with, for it is an enemy.

Nefsün düşmandurur öldür nefis heriçe ölse gerek.

Your nefs is the enemy, kill [it], nefs must always  
be dead. (16)

Man's existential self-affirmation is always threatened by death. This threat creates an anxiety in Yunus; relatively in terms of death and absolutely in terms of fate. This feeling

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14 Divan, p. 175.

15 Ibid, p. 175.

16 Ibid, p. 160.



is expressed in a beautiful way in his celebrated munacat or supplications.

Terezi korsın hevasat dartmağa  
Kasd idersin beni oda atmağa  
Terezi ana gerek bakkal ola  
Ya bazergan tacir u attar ola.

Sen basirin hud bilirsin halimi  
Pes ne hacet dartasın amalumı  
Geçmedi mi intikamın öldürüp  
Çürüdüp gözümə toprak doldurup.

You set up a scale to weigh the evil deeds  
You design to cast me into the fire  
The scale is necessary for him who is a grocer  
Or for them who are merchants, traders, spicers.

You are all-seeing, you know my ways  
Then what need is there to weigh my deeds  
Did you not quench your vengeance by killing (me)  
Making me rot and filling my eyes with dust? (17)

Gibb interpreted this poem as an attack on "certain points in the conception of God prevalent among the more ignorant or fanatical of the orthodox." (18) Ritter sees it as one of the (19) examples of a sufi's strife with God, employing foolishness.

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17 Ibid, p. 354. For another rendering see E.J.W. Gibb, op.cit., p.174-175.

18 Ibid, p. 173.

19 Cf. Helmut Ritter, "Muslim Mystics Strife With God", in Oriens, V. 5, Leiden, 1952, p. 14.

I feel that this poem reflects a certain stage in Yunus Emre's intellectual and spiritual evolution. Obviously, when he wrote the poem he was still thinking in terms of reason. From that state there is a sudden transition to the state of experience, says Yunus.

Nagehan gördüm bir yüz yokdur anunla hiç söz  
Sırrın der isem olmaz sığmaz lisan içinde  
Çünkü gördüm yüzünü ana verdim özümü  
Beni benden iletti kaldım hayran içinde.

Suddenly did I see a face; no word was with it.  
Were I to say its secret, impossible, in language  
it cannot be contained.  
When I saw His face, to Him I gave myself.  
He led me away from me; I stayed in perplexity. (20)

The vision of God has a tremendous effect on the sufi, but he does not tell us how this experience comes about. He claims it is ineffable.

Yunus bu sırr-ı Hakdurur bu dile gelmek yokdurur  
Bilmesi bunun zevkdurur akl ile fehmi ermez ana.

Yunus this is the mystery of the Truth, this cannot  
come to the tongue (word)  
To know this is like tasting (zevk), intellect and  
reason do not attain it. (21)

One would, considering his earlier classifications of different yaqīns, think that this vision corresponds to 'ayn-al yaqīn.

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20 Divan, p. 79.

21 Ibid, p. 97.

However, there is a slight discrepancy in that he had located  
(22)  
'ayn-al yaqīn in the heart (gönül), whereas he speaks constantly  
of can gozu or soul's eye which contrasts with the physical eye.

Çalap kendi nurını gözümə tuş eyledi  
Can gözü anı gördi dil andan haber verdi.

The Lord made His light meet My eye  
Soul's (can) eye saw it; the tongue gave news of it. (23)

This new faculty of sight is contrasted with the ordinary sense of  
sight; that is, with that which is physical.

Suret gözü degül bu göz dedigüm.  
Bu baş gözü degül ol can gözüdür.  
Kimin canı var ise anı görür.

What I call the eye is not the eye of form (body),  
It is not this head-eye; it is the eye of the soul  
(can).  
Whoever has soul (can) can see Him. (24)

There are many implications of experiencing the Divine Vision.  
First, only after the vision is love possible.

Gözi görmez kişi sevgüden ĩrak  
Kani dost kandasın sen gözün aç bak  
Göremeden gözün n'anlaya gönül  
- Kabul itmezse göz neyleye gönül  
Kamu sevgi dadın evvel göz alur  
Gözi görmez kişinin sevgüsü yok  
Suret gözi değil bu göz didüğüm.

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22 See above, page 50

23 Divan p. 120.

24 Ibid, "Risāla", p. 38.

He whose eye(s) do not see is far from love  
Where is the Friend; where are you? Open your eyes,  
look.  
What would the heart know before the eye sees  
What would the heart do if the eye does not receive.  
First the eye receives the taste of all love  
He whose eye does not see has no love  
That which I call eye is not the eye of the body. (25)

Secondly, there is the changing of mood which made him complain:

Sensin bize bizden yakın görünmezsın hicab nedür.  
Çün aybı yok görklü yüzün üzerinde nikab nedür.  
T'is Thou who's closer to us than we, (yet) Thou art  
not seen, (this shyness what is (it)?  
If Thy beauteous face has no fault: (this) veil on it,  
what is (it)? (26)

More importantly, the Shari'ah ceases to have any meaning.

Dost yüzünü göricek şirk yağmalandı  
Anın için kapıda kaldı şariat.

When the face of the Beloved is seen, polytheism  
(Şirk) is spoilt  
Therefore, outside the door remained the Shari'ah. (27)

We should follow the consequences of the Shari'ah's falling from favour.  
Yunus puts the Shari'ah in contrast to the Truth; for him the followers  
of the Shari'ah are infidels. Yunus Emre's favourite images for  
Truth and Shari'ah are sea and ship respectively.

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25 Ibid, pp. 37-38.

26 Ibid, p. 305.

27 Ibid, p. 332.

Hakikat bir denizdir şeriattir gemisi  
Çoklar girdi gemiye denize dalmadılar.  
Dört kitabı şerhiden hakikatta asidür  
Zira tefsir okuyub manisin bilmediler.

The Truth is a sea, Şeriat is its ship.  
Many came to the ship, [but] they did not submerge  
into the sea.  
In truth the commentator of four books is a rebel  
For reading the exegesis they did not understand  
its meaning. (28)

For:

Cümle yaradılışa birlik ile bakmayan  
Halka müderris ise hakikatde asidür.  
.....Hakikatin Kafiri Şer'in evliyasıdır.

He who does not see the whole creation in one-ness  
is (a) rebel even if he is (a) teacher to the people.  
.....The infidel (kafir) of the Truth (hakikat) is the  
saint (evliya) of Sharī'ah. (29)

These lines, I believe, provide sufficient proof for Yunus Emre's  
opposition to the people of the Sharī'ah, and for his theory of  
wahdet-i wujūd. After having tried to establish that Yunus is an  
upholder of wahdet-i wujūd, we shall now deal with the concept  
of self in terms of vision of God.

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28 Ibid, p. 293.

29 Ibid, p. 305.

Yunus uses a number of Turkish words to designate the self: Ben (I), Benlik (I-ness), Kendi (self), Kendilik (selfhood). As we shall see, Yunus eliminates the self designated by the above mentioned words, because this self too, like nefs, is an obstacle on the way to the Supreme Being. This does not mean that the two selves, i.e., Ben and Nefs, are one and the same thing. We have demonstrated already that nefs belonged to the ethical realm. The self we are now talking about is in the realm of ontology. The existence of Ben necessitates the existence of its grammatical counter-part, another self, namely Sen; this confounds the Unity, bringing about duality. In order to prevent the duality one does away with the Ben.

Sen-ü ben olucağız iş ikilikte kalur  
Calistuk ik'aradan sen ben yağmaya verdik.

If you and I are, the affair remains [still] in duality.  
We worked out from both sides, we gave the I, the you  
to plunder. (30)

He thinks to say "I" is simply due to the defect of the sight,  
which makes one see double.

Senin ben demekliğin manide usul degül  
Bir kapı kullarına şaşı bakmak yol degül.

That you say "I", in essence, is not proper.  
To squint at servants of one door is not proper. (31)

The difference between nefs and benlik becomes even clearer when our poet speaks about the way of their removal. In the removal of benlik we find a sense of sacrifice; it is clean, it can be an offering to God.

Her dem yüzüm yire uram Allahuma şükür kılam  
Ben benliğüm dosta virem ne davi destan ola.

Each moment I put my face to the earth, thanks to my  
God.  
Let me give my I-ness to the friend, may it not  
be a matter of fable. (32)

But nefs (self) is never given to God; Yunus kills it, through his poetic imagery, as one kills a monster.

Tartmış kudret kılıcın çalmış nefsin boynunu  
Nefsünü depelemiş elleri kan içinde.

Having drawn the sword of power he has stricken self's  
neck  
He has finished off his self; his hands are in blood. (33)

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31 Ibid, p. 179.

32 Ibid, p. 46

33 Ibid, p. 78.

Another way of removing the I (Ben) is to transform it into God (or Beloved), change its essence, or fill it with the Beloved.

Al gider benden ben iği doldur içime senliği.

Take from "me" the I-ness, fill me with Thou-ness. (34)

We see an evolution in the nature of the concept "I", which represents an evolution on the part of the mystic toward becoming God.

Yunus Emre's pantheism (wahdet-i wujūd) comes into being at the level of ḥaqā al yaqīn. To quote Allessio Bombaci, Yunus holds that "God is present in nature, in man, in the past and in the present, in good and evil. At the moment of creation and destruction which is eternally repeated...God makes from nature man and renders man to nature: the distinction between the two is annulled in the Divine Unity." (35)

As is seen in the following verse, God is in the man's soul:

Bu tilsīmī bağlayan cümle dilde söyleyen  
Yire göke sığmayan girmiş bu can içinde.

(The one who) caused this magic-spell, who speaks  
in every tongue  
Who cannot be contained in the earth and heaven  
got in this soul (can). (36)

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34 Ibid, p. 259.

35 Allessio Bombaci, op. cit. p.273.

36 Divan, p. 77



Thus the self-transformation we have been tracing, which had looked like a self-mortification, assumed a new form which is nothing but immortality.

Cansız gel bu kapıya baki dirlik bulasın.

Lifeless, come to this gate (so that) you  
find eternal life. (37)

Now let us try to see the relation of the self to his epistemology. That the object of knowledge to a sufi must be God is obvious.

Yunus, like many other sufis, holds that God created the world in order that He be known:

Yaratdın cümle milleti bi şek seni bilmeğ için.

You created all the people, no doubt, in order  
to know You. (38)

This line suggests the well-known hadith which the sufis generally uphold.

Kuntu kanzan makhfiyan fa aḥbabtu an u'rafa  
fakhalaqtu al-khalqa liu'rafa.

I was a Hidden Treasure, therefore was I fain  
to (be) known, and so I created creation in order  
that I should be known. (39)

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37 Divan, p. 248.

38 Ibid, p. 260.

39 I followed Gibb's version of translation. Cf. E.J.W. Gibb, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

How do we know God? According to Yunus Emre we can know God by knowing ourselves - self knowledge is the only knowledge for Yunus Emre.

İlim, İlim bilmektir ilim kendin bilmektir  
Sen kendini bilmezsen bu nice okumaktır.  
Okumaktan mani ne kişi hakkı bilmektir.

Knowledge! Knowledge is to know, knowledge is to  
know your Self  
If you do not know your own self, what a reading  
(study) is this.  
What purport of reading is that the man should  
know the Truth. (40)

The above lines, undoubtedly, equate self knowledge with the knowledge of God, which if formulated in a well-known tradition as "Man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu" (Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord).

The problem of the self is perhaps the most elusive, abstruse, and subtle problem of philosophy. Socrates, dismissing fables and stories as being beyond his interest, stated the vital importance of the problem .

" I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says: to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous, and therefore I bid farewell to all this; the common opinion is enough for me. For, I was saying, I want to know not about this, but about myself. Am I a monster more complicated

and swollen with passion than Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler sort, possessing, by divine grace, a nature devoid of pride." (41)

But how do we know ourselves? How do we arrive at the self-consciousness. Professor Toshihiko Izutsu suggests:

"All the exterior things surrounding us are for us "things" which we look at only from outside. We cannot penetrate into their interior and experience from inside the Divine life pulsating within them. Only into the interior of ourselves are we able to penetrate by our self-consciousness and experience from inside the Divine activity which is going on there. (42)

Psychologically it has been established, by Ibn Sina and Descartes, that the self cannot be perceived by any of the sense organs or even by the intellect. It is only the self itself that (43) can perceive the self. Yunus Emre comes to know the self more or less in the way suggested by the above mentioned thinkers. According to Yunus, to detach ones self from the sensible world is a necessity to concentrate on the Divine Reality, and for that matter, on the self. Knowledge, so far as it concerns itself

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- 41 See: Plato, "Phaedrus", The Dialogues of Plato, translated into English with analysis and introduction by Jowett, V.3, Oxford, 1953, p. 136.
- 42 See: Toshihiko Izutsu, Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism, Tokyo, 1966, p. 33.
- 43 Cf. [Ibn Sīnā], Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text), Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā', edited by F. Rāḥmān, London, 1960, pp. 16, 218. See also Rene Descartes, Discourses on Method, translated by Arthur Wollaston, London, 1962, pp. 108-III.

with the outer world, is an obstacle to know God. Sufis generally believe that "knowledge is the greatest curtain (44) against God." For Yunus Emre too, the knowledge is a curtain that stands between the man and his God.

İlim had göz hicabıdır dünya ahret hesabıdır.

Knowledge is the eye's curtain; it is [just] the calculation of the world and the hereafter. (45)

It is because of this that Yunus calls himself ignorant.

Bicare Yunus ne bile ne kara okudu ne ak.

What could Yunus the helpless know, he read  
neither black nor white. (46)

But in the same poem from which the above line is taken, our poet contrasts the knowledge which he disowns with a superior one.

Ey çok kitablar okuyan çünkü tutarsın bana dak  
Okur isen sırrı iyan gel işkdan olu bir varak.

O you who read so many books , since you backbite  
me

If you can read the mystery clearly, come [then],  
read a lesson [from the book] of love. (47)

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44 This statement is attributed to 'Ali. See Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, 1936, p. 86.

45 Divan, p. 305.

46 Ibid, p. 164.

47 Ibid, p. 163-164.

That kind of understanding of knowledge required that knowledge should be eliminated; that is the recommendation of Yunus to those who want to become mystics.

Kim dervişlik ister ise diyem ana nitmek gerek  
Şerbeti elünden koyub ağuyı nuş itmek gerek  
Gelmek gerek terbiyete cümle bildikelerin koya  
Terkeyleve suretini bildiğin unutmak gerek.

Whoever searches for dervish-hood, let me tell him what  
to do,  
Putting aside the Sharbat (48) he should drink poison.  
He should be disciplined, should abandon all that he knows.  
Let him abandon his form, he should forget what he knows. (49)

The lines just quoted signify what is called (Tark) abandonment and (sulūk) entering the mystic pathway (Tarīqa). In a way, Tarīqa is the process in which the self can become can. Yunus preaches:

Can olgıl can içinde kalma guman içinde  
İstediğin bulasın vakum zaman içinde  
Ruku sucuda kalma ameline dayanma  
İlm-ü amel gark olur naz-i niyaz içinde.  
Canlar canın bulasın sen dahi can olasın.

Be Soul (can) within the Soul (can) stay not in doubt  
That you may attain your aim soon.  
Dwell not in leaning and prostration, (50) rely not upon  
your deed.  
Knowledge and deed disappear in naz and niyaz. (51)  
May you find Soul of souls, may you too be soul (can). (52)

48 I do not find it convenient to translate Şerbet which comes from the Arabic Sharaba - to drink. The English corresponding word would be roughly "soft drink". It is in Anatolia any kind of sweet cooling drink, a pleasant drink.

49 Divan, p. 159.

50 He is referring to the movements of the Muslim prayer.

51 In plain Turkish naz means coquetry, niyaz means imploring. The German "liebsspiel" (love-play) would be an equivalent.

52 Divan, p. 79.

Yunus in the last line, hints at the possibility of a self's becoming Can; elsewhere he says that he himself achieved this:

Canlar canını buldum bu canımı yağma olsun

I found the Soul of the souls, let this soul of mine  
be spoilt. (53)

I believe that at this stage of his evolution, Yunus Emre's phase of wahdat i wujūd appears, and now Yunus overcomes all his previous worries.

Nitekim ben beni bildim yakin bilkim Hakkı buldum  
Korkum anı buluncaydı şimdi korkudan  
Ben kimseden korkumizam ya bir zerre kayurmazam  
Ben imdi kimden korkayın korkduğum ile bir oldum

When I cognized me, know in certitude that I found  
the Truth  
My fear was until I found Him. I, now, am redeemed  
from the fear.  
I fear no one, nor did I worry at all  
Whom should I fear now? I became one with whom I  
had feared. (54)

Eyyub ile derde esir iniledüm çekdüm ceza  
Belkis ile taht üzere mühr-i Süleymandayıldım  
Yunus ile balık beni çekti deme yutdı bile  
Zekeriyya ile kaçtım Nuh ile tufandayıldım  
Ismail'e çaldım bıçak bıçak bana kâr etmedi  
Hak beni azad eyledi koç ile kurbandayıldım.

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53 Ibid p. 259

54 Ibid p. 210



Gah inem esfellere Şeytan ile şer'ler düzem  
Gah çıkam arş üstüne seyran olam gevlan olam  
.....Gah duzahda benem fir'avn ile Hamanile  
Gah cennetde varam gilman olam Ridvan olam  
Gah bir gazi olam efreng ile cenk eyleyem  
Gah dönem efreng olam nisyan ile isyan olam.

Let me sometimes descend with Satan and arrange  
evil (things)  
Let me sometimes ascend above the throne, gaze and wander  
Sometimes I am in Hell with Pharoah and Haman  
I, sometimes, am in Heaven being Gilman being paradise  
Let me, sometimes be a ghāzī and wage war against the  
French  
Sometimes, turning back, let me be the French, let me  
be a rebel through oblivion. (57)

This confusion of all, or this oneness of all in his language  
is furthered in the following verse:

Hak bir göntül verdi bana ha dimeden hayran olur  
Bir dem gelür şadi olur birdem gelür giryan olur.  
.....Bir dem div olur ya peri viraneler olur yeri  
Bir dem uçar Belkis ile sultan-i-ins-ü can olur  
Bir dem varur mescidlere yüz sürer anda yirlere  
Birdem varır deyre girer incil okur ruhban olur  
Birdem gelir isi gibi olusleri diri kilur.

God has given me a heart who (can be so suddenly  
surprised  
A moment comes she is happy, in another she is in  
tears.  
At times she becomes a demon or a fairy, ruins become  
shelter to her  
At times, flying with Sheba, she becomes the king  
of man and of soul  
At times goes to the mosques, puts the face on the  
ground there  
At times goes, enters the church, reads the gospel,  
becomes a priest  
At times she comes, like Jesus, enlivens the dead. (58)

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57 Ibid, pp. 185-186.

58 Ibid, pp. 284-285.



This poem, and its alike, which are so markedly pantheistic to my mind, "have been composed before Yunus's complete conversion", says Burhan Ümit, and he goes on to argue "how could we possibly juxtapose these (poems) with the ghazels [which he wrote] after he became a real Muslim, a saint, a dervish. These discourses are, undoubtedly, the product of a period of his youth. There is absolutely no relation between the Yunus who, going to church and reading the bible, assumed the mentality of a priest, and the Yunus who said "Let my life be an offer for your sake, O Muhammad, whose name is beautiful, who himself is beautiful".

This is sheer misunderstanding; even the poem where he says that he goes to church includes the fact that he also goes to mosque, thus the verse quoted by Burhan Ümit does not contradict the previous poem. What Yunus is doing here is equating the opposites which is one aspect of wahdat-i wujūd. To understand Yunus Emre's development as E. Ümit does is nothing less than attributing regression to Yunus. But this poem belongs not to his early years but to the mature ones. It is in his mature years that Yunus breaks with the formalities of the established religion. He boldly says this:

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59 Burhan Ümit, op. cit., p. 53-54.

Ben oruç namaz için suci içdüm esrüdüm  
Tesbih seccade için dimlerem seste kopuz.

I, instead of fasting (and) praying, drank wine  
and became intoxicated  
Instead of prayer bead (and) carnet I listen to  
seste and kopuz. (60)

As for his mentioning the church and priest, this has nothing to  
do with not knowing his mood as Burhan Ümit says. (61) On the  
contrary, he is sure of himself, and as an upholder of vahdet-i  
vuğud he can approve any religion.

Kimse dinine bir hilaf dimezüz  
Din tamam olıcak doğar mahabbet

We speak of nobody's religion as the other  
When the religion is complete, love is born. (62)

The meaning of the actual existence also changes for Yunus Emre by the mere fact that everything is God. Thus, the world ceases to be something to do away with, but turns into a positive quality. For it is in the world, in this existence that we meet the Divine Reality. In other words, the world also is a subject of transformation in Yunusian philosophy. In the following poems, the last interpretation of "world" is to be seen; this is, if I may so term, Yunus Emre's return to reality, though with a new mentality.

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60 Divan, p. 347

61 Cf. Burhan Ümit, op. cit., p.53.

62 Divan p. 333

Ma'ni ivine talduk vucud seyrüni kılduk  
İki cihan seyrini cümle vucudda bulduk.

.....  
Musi ağduğu Tur'î yohsa Beytul ma'murî  
İsrafil çalan surî cümle vucudda bulduk  
Tevrat ile İncili Furkan ile Zeburî  
Bunlardagî beyanî cümle vucudda bulduk  
Yunus'in sözleri hak cümlemiz didük saddak  
Kand istersen anda Hak cümle vucudda bulduk.

We've submerged into the home of (spiritual) meaning  
(thus) we've wandered in the being  
We've found the wandering of two worlds in all the being

.....  
The Sinai which Moses climbed, and the celestial mansion (63)  
The horn İsrafil played we've found in all the being  
Torah and Gospel, Criterion (Kur'ân) and Psalms,  
The revelation in these we've found in all the being.  
Words of Yunus are true, we all said "assent".  
Wherever you want there is the Truth we've found in all  
the being. (64)

Indeed the being is the place where we can be aware of God.

Without the existence the existence of God would mean nothing; this  
idea is reflected in the following expressedly.

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63 This line and the rest have been translated into English by Birge. It seems that he was depending on another manuscript which is more defective. Our rendering differs from his in a few points, an important one being the rendering of "cümle vucudda". Birge translates this as "everywhere", and I as "in all the being". Vucud, a loan Arabic word, definitely means "being" or "existence" in Turkish and as such it may include the concept of space, therefore, it is, I believe, inadequate to translate "cümle vucudda" as "everywhere". Yunus introduced the word in the first line "Ma'ni ivine talduk vucud seyrini kılduk" and then goes on to use the word in the same meaning. Birge did not translate the poem from the beginning. If he had, it would be impossible to correspond the word "vucud" with "place" or "space". Cf. J. Kingsley Birge, Yunus Emre, Turkey's Great Poet of the People, The MacDonald Presentation Volume, Princeton, 1933, p. 50.

64 Divan, p. 166.

Vucuda gelmeyince kimse Hakk'ı bilmedi  
Bu vucuddan gösterdi dost bize didarını.

Before coming into existence nobody knew the Truth  
It was through this existence that the Friend showed  
us His face. (65)

This verse is an important one in that it marks the turning point in Yunus Emre's poetry. It is through this understanding that a pure ascetic who has been abandoning the world, the self and the entire being, now returns to them all with an immense joy. In the words of Alessio Bombaci he "sends forth hymns of joy: the beatitude is of this world" (66) in one of his finest poems:

Bu dem yüzüm silre duram her dem ayum yeni doğar  
Her dem bayramdurur bana benim yayum kişum yeni bahar  
Benim ayum ışığına bulutlar gölge kılmaya  
Hiç gidilmez doluluğu nuri yirden göğe açar.  
....Ben ayumu yirde gördüm ne isterem gökyüzünde  
Benüm yüzüm yirde gerek bana rahmet yirden yağar.

This moment I put my face on the earth, my moon is  
born anew each moment  
Each moment is feast for me, my summer (and) winter  
are spring.  
On the light of my moon clouds cannot make shade  
Never is her fullness removed, from the earth to heaven  
ascends her light.  
I've seen my moon on the earth, what should I search for  
in the sky  
My face should be on the earth, blessings rain upon me  
from the earth. (67)

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65 Ibid, p. 113

66 Alessio Bombaci, op. cit., p. 274.

67 Divan, pp. 286-287.

Thus we see that the existence is neither evil nor illusory as an ascetic (zāhid) would hold. Indeed one cannot find God through asceticism; Yunus tried it, among many other ways, in vain:

Zühd ile çok istedik hiç müyesser olmadı.

We've searched (for Him) too much through asceticism  
(zuhd), never was realized. (68)

In this respect Yunus would have agreed fully with Martin Buber who wrote, in his well-known book I and Thou, that "Men do not find God if they stay in the world. They do not find Him if they leave the world." (69)

We have tried to show that Yunus Emre's thinking revolves around the concept of self. He is deeply concerned with man's destiny. He affirms the human existence in the highest sense possible. In our next chapter, we shall deal with the concept of love, trying to see its relation to other important Yunusian concepts.

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68 Ibid, p. 163

69 Martin Buber, I and Thou, translated by Ronald Gregor Smith, New York, 1958 p. 79.

## CHAPTER IV

### Yunus Emre's Concept of Love

The previous chapter has already brought to our notice that God, the most important concept in any religious thought, is referred to as the beloved. Yunus, whose main concern is the self, at one point qualified himself as follows:

İki kiři söyleřür Yunus i görsem diyü  
Biri aydur ben gördüm bir aşık kocaimiş

Two persons talk, saying "Would that I see Yunus  
One [of them] says, "I saw, he is [only] an eminent  
lover. (1)

Yunus tells us in this verse that man, at any rate he himself essentially is a lover. If my interpretation is correct, a study of the concept of love, as found in Yunus' poetry, should clarify the concept of self, further. Yunus expresses his philosophy of wahdat-i wujūd most powerfully and beautifully in terms of love.

Aşık oldum şoy ay yüze nizar oldum bal ağıza  
Nazar kıldım kara göze siyah olur kaşa geldim (2)

The unity of the lover and the beloved is very strongly expressed here. The beautiful beloved has a honey mouth, (3) but it is a honey mouth because the lover is there; the beloved has dark black eye-brows, but it is so because lover, somehow manifested

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1. Divan P. 330

2. This verse has already come to our notice, therefor I am not giving any translation. See above Chapter I, p. 26.

3. This expression might not sound good in English, but for the Turkish way of thinking it is very elegant.

himself in the color black and then came to the eye-brow.

Considering this verse, I do not think it would altogether be misleading to say that there might be a close connection between the idea of love and wahdat-i wujūd. At first glance, one might think that it would be out of place to talk about the Love within a pantheistic system in which there is no sense of discrimination between anything at all. Because love pre-supposes, in its most simple understanding, the existence of a second agent except perhaps in a narcissistic sense. How, then, Yunus could speak of love which is an action from one agent, ‘āshiq (the lover), to the other, ma’ shūq (the beloved) and yet remain a pantheist is the problem we face. The problem is there by itself as Yunus Emre is well known because of his pantheism and as a lover of God, and this writer's claim to the effect that Emre's pantheism is closely related to his concept of Love makes the situation, so to speak, even more problematic. To bring this relation into the light itself, we hope, will give us a sufficient understanding of the concept of love and conversely the study of the concept itself will shed enough light upon the alleged relation.

The word ‘ishq (love), together with its derivations ‘āshiq (lover), and ma’ shūq (beloved) is Yunus Emre's favourite word.

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At times he might use the Turkish equivalent "sevi" for 'ishq' and more often than these "sevmek" (to love). Occasionally, we might come across the word "mahabbat" (love), but not so frequently.

By the time Yunus was writing, there existed an elaborated love literature in the Muslim world. The story of Laylā and Majnūn had already been made into a big poem by Nizāmī of Ganja in H.585/A.D.

(4)  
1188. The fact that Yunus Emre mentions Laylā and Majnūn together with Husrav and Shirin (5) another love story by Nizāmī, suggests that Yunus had read and was well aware of what had been said before him. The behaviour of the lover, Majnūn, in the story to which Nizāmī gave a mystical spirit, fits beautifully to the idea of self-abandonment of Yunus Emre. In his poetry the lover leaves everything, even his faith and life.

Leyli'yile Mecnun isi acebtur halka  
Abdurrazzak terkitdi işk için imanını  
Zemane vefalari cefa gelür Yunus'a  
Bir doğru yar bulıcak fidi kılur canını.

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- 4 Agah Sırrı Levend, Arap Fars ve Türk Edebiyatlarında Leyla ve Mecnun Hikayesi, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959, p. 370.
- 5 Divan, p. 112.

To the [common] people the affair of Layla and  
Majnūn is strange  
'Abd al-Razzāq (6) left his faith because of the  
love.  
Transient fidelities come as torments to Yunus  
He would sacrifice his life when he finds a right  
beloved. (7)

As is seen, Yunus Emre approves of leaving the religion aside if the reason is love. It should also be noticed that 'Abd al-Razzāq's love is a wordly one. It seems that Yunus is referring to the psychological influence of love upon the individuals; that is to say, to being preoccupied with nothing but the loved object, whatever that object may be.

In one of his ghazels which he might have written for a wordly creature, he depicts beautifully that love and/or the beloved take the lover away from everything. Since the poems of this nature are rare in the Divan, I am quoting it in its entirety.

Bir kez yüzünü gören ömrünce unutmaya  
Tesbihi sen olasun ayruk din tutmaya  
Taat iden zahide nazarun irer ise  
Unuda tesbihini mihraba secde'tmeye  
Ağzuna şeker alıp gözü sana tuşolan  
Unuda şekerini çiğneyiben yutmaya  
Ben seni sevdiğime baha dilerler ise  
İki cihan mülkini virüp baha yetmeye  
İki cihan toptolu bağı hostan olursa

---

6 'Abd al-Razzāq is the hero of a love story in 'Attār's Mantıq al-Tayr whose affair has been translated into Turkish before Yunus Emre. Cf. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op.cit., p. 263, note 1. See also Helmut Ritter, op. cit., p. 387.

7 Divan, p. 112.

Senin kokundan yahşi gül-ü reyhan bitmeye  
Sekiz uçmak hurisi bezenüp gelür ise  
Senin sevinden artuk gönüm kabul etmeye  
Gül-ü reyhan kokusu aşık ile maşukdur  
Aşıkın maşukası hiç önünden gitmeye  
İsrafil sur urıcak mahluk yine turıcak  
Senün üntünden artuk kulağum işitmeye  
Zühre gökten inüben sazın nevaht iderse  
İşretim sen olasun gözüm senden gitmeye  
Niderler hanumanı sensüz can-u cihanı  
Yığsin iki cihandan kimse guman tutmaya  
Yunus seni seveli beşaret oldu canı  
Her dem yeni dirlikde ömrini eskitmeye.

Mayest he who seest thine face all his life-time,  
forget not  
Thou be his prayer bead, let him another religion  
hold not  
Should thy glance reach a worshipping ascetic  
Let him forget to glorify God, let him at the altar  
fall not  
If he whose eyes meet thee while taking candy in his  
mouth  
Let him forget his candy, let him swallow not  
If they offer a price for my loving thee, though the  
wealth of the two worlds is given let the price suffice  
not  
If the two worlds be vineyard and garden  
Let roses and marjorams better than thine fragrance  
grown not  
If the Hüris of eight paradises come all decked  
Let me [anything] other than thy love accent not  
Fragrance of roses and marjorams are the lover and the  
beloved  
Let the beloved of the lover from his present away  
ever go not  
When Isrâfîl beats the drum and the creation resurrects  
Let my ear(s) [anything] other than thy voice hear not  
If Venus descending from heaven plays her guitar  
Let my merriment be thee, let my eyes away from thee  
go not

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Thus, I believe it becomes clear that Yunus uses for the same concept, love that is, two words, one an Arabic word and the other Turkish. As some verbs in Turkish can have two kinds of verbal nouns, sevmek is one of them; we find another word for love from the verb sevmek, namely, sevi. A single quotation from Yunus Emre's poetry will bear witness to this effect.

Ben gelmedim daviyiçün benim işüm seviyiçün  
Gönüller dost eviyiçün gönüller yapmaya geldim.

I came not for a cause, my task is for love (sevi)  
The hearts are for the home of the beloved, [so] I come  
to content the heart. (1)

So much for the words that correspond the concept of love. Now, coming back to the above-quoted poem which is secular in nature; we notice that love in Yunus Emre's understanding is an exclusive quality, that is to say, for the lover, everything, save the beloved, ceases to exist. Consequently any desire for any kind of object is now focused on the beloved, the beloved is the only desideratum.

In one of his most well-known ghazel's Yunus stresses that point with passion and beauty:

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10 Ibid, p. 212.

Işkun aldı benden beni bana seni gerek seni  
Ben yararlanırm dünü günü bana seni gerek seni  
Ne varluğa sevinirim ne yokluğa yerinirim  
Işkun ile avunurum bana seni gerek seni  
Sofilere sohbet gerek zahidlere cennet gerek (11)  
Mecnunlara Leyla gerek bana seni gerek seni  
Cennet cennet dedikleri birkaç köşkle birkaç huri  
İsteyene ver sen anı bana seni gerek seni  
Eger beni öldüreler külüm göke savurular  
Toprağım anda çağıra bana seni gerek seni. (12)

Thy love has taken me from me, thee, I need thee  
I flame day and night, thee, I need thee  
Neither I rejoice for wealth nor do I lament because  
of poverty (13)  
I console myself with thee, thee, I need thee  
Sufis need friendly talk, ascetics need paradise  
Majnuns need Layla, thee, I need thee  
What they called paradise is a few villas and Houris  
Give them to those wanting, thee, I need thee.  
Were they to kill me let them scatter my ashes to the  
sky  
My soul will cry there, "Thee, I need thee." (14)

The significance of the poem is that it corresponds to what is called Tark (abandonment) in Taşawwuf; the fact that it is caused by passionate love makes it understandable and justifiable, if not inevitable. Oushayrî describes this state as follows:  
"Love is the effacement of the lover's attributes and the establishment of the beloved's essence" (15) and Hujwiri comments,  
"...since the Beloved is subsistent (bâqî) and the love requires that the lover should make the subsistence of the Beloved absolute

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- 11 Abdûlbaki Gölpinarlı reads "ahilere ahret", see *Divan*, n. 132. I followed the Nuri Osmaniye copy, see *Divan*, p. 154.  
12 This couplet is not included in Abdûlbaki. I followed Burhan Ümit; see Burhan Ümit, op.cit., p. 253.  
13 This verse is translated by Sofi Huri, for her rendering see, Sofi Huri, op. cit., n. 12.  
14 *Divan*, p. 132.  
15 Ali b. 'Uthman al Jullabi Al Hujwiri. The Kashf al-Mahjûb, trans. by Reynold A. Nicholson, Leyden, 1911, n. 311.

by negating himself, and he cannot negate his own attributes  
(16)  
except by affirming the essence of the Beloved".

Separation here does not simply mean a state, it means  
that a separation actually took place because Yunus Emre's  
oneness with God is in fact pre-eternal, as for creation, it  
also means a separation.

Bu cihana ben gelmedin sultan-î cihandayîdum  
Sözi gerçek hükmi revan ol hükmi-i sultandayîdum  
Halayik bunda gelmedin gökler melaik dolmadın  
Bu mülke bünyad olmadın mulkî yaradandayîdum.

Before coming to this world I was in the Sultan of  
the world  
I was in the judgement of that Sultan whose word is  
true and whose will prevails,  
Before the creation came here, before the heavens were  
filled with angels  
Before this universe was built I was in the one who  
created the universe. (17)

In his divan that kind of poem can be increased to a very great  
extent, each one suggesting the separation from the original,  
one strikingly reminiscent of the opening lines of Mathnawi of  
Rumi. (18)

İy kopuz ile ceste aslun nedürür işde  
Sana sual soraram aydiver bana işde  
Aydur aslumdur ağaç koyun kirişi birkaç  
Gel işrettim dinle geç aklî koma beleşte  
Aydurlar bana haram ben uğrılık degülem  
çünkü aslım mîsmîldur ne var imiş kirişte.

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16 Divan, p. 311

17 Ibid, pp. 206-207.

18 Cf. Mathnawi, V.II transl. by Reynold A. Nicholson, London, 1926,  
p. 5. "Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of  
separation.

O kopuz and cesto what is your origin  
I ask you (a) question, tell me now.  
Says, "My origin is wood and a little sheep string.  
Come and listen to my orgy, do not occupy the mind  
with nothing  
They speak of me as unclean, never was I a thief  
Since my origin is clean (19) what is wrong with  
the string." (20)

It appears certain that this awareness of the separation from the original, or the awareness of the oneness in the past, which is called, in sufism, "original relationship" (al-munasabah (21) al-qadimah) invites the sufi back to reunion.

It is but natural that this conception of being renders this world, and everything on it, into a mere illusion and thus causes the sufi to abandon it in its totality.

Ben bu mülke garib geldüm ben bu ilden bizerem  
Bu dutsaklık Tuzagın demi geldi üzerem.

I came to this world (as a) stranger, I am tired of  
this land  
The time has come that I break this trap of enslavement (22)

The search for God, longing for union with Him when referred to on an emotional level, is what Yunus calls love. His conception

19 I followed the basic meaning of the word "Mismil" (clean). Later it meant to slaughter an animal in the proper way as to make its consumption permissible from the standpoint of religious law.

20 Divan, p. 82

21 Cf. Ritter, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

22 Divan, p. 200.



of love is closely related to his pantheism, if not identical. It has been customary to make a distinction between two kinds of love in the sufistic tradition: one called 'ashq-i majâzî (typal love or allegoric love) the other 'ashq-i haqîqî (the real love), the latter being the Divine love. Typal love is also justified as it is considered the bridge to the Real. (23) Needless to say, love of Yunus would be devoted to God alone; as he sees everything as God that would be an imperative.

Self negation, in Yunus Emre, manifests itself in the most concrete way when he deals with life and the antinomy death. There seems to be an intrinsic relationship between love and death that could be claimed to be almost universal. The relationship lies in the fact that lover wants to possess the beloved eternally which is not possible because of death. Therefore, it seems that to have the death and the beloved together has become a remedy for this impossibility. For instance, "I have", writes Keats, "two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could take possession of them both in the same moment." (24) Rilkean inter-

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23 See Gibb, op. cit., pp. 20-21; Cf. also Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, op. cit., p. 347.

24 Martin D'Arcy, The Heart and Mind of Love, New York, 1956 p. 33

pretation of Orpheus' death reminds of union with Eurydice as he says: "Sei immer tot in Eurudike" i.e. be ever dead in Eurydice. The tragic ends of so many famous love stories such as Layla and Majnun, Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Iseult might well have the same meaning. What de Rougemont wrote, interpreting in terms of Eros, the love between Tristan and Iseult, holds true for many forms of love and especially, I believe, for mystical love. "For the lovers have never had but one desire - the desire for death." (25) Death out of love has been literally practised by the members of the Banu Odhri tribe. In a forged hadith the idea of death associated with love seems to have been propagated: He who loves and remains chaste and keeps it secret and dies, verily he dies as a martyr.

In Yunus Emre's poetry also love is associated with death. When he talks of love we do not see, anymore, the Yunus who is terrified by the sheer idea of death. Although at the beginning he seems to resent God because of the killing of Halloj.

Çün Mansur gördi ol benem dedi  
Oda yaktılar işitdün anı  
Oda yandırdır. Külün savurdun  
Oyle mi gerek seni seveni.

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25 Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, translated by Montgomery Belgion, New York, 1956, p. 46.

Since Mansur saw he said, "He I am"  
They burned [him] in the fire Thou heard that  
You burnt in the fire [and] dispersed [him] his  
ashes (in the air).  
Should you thus [treat] him who loved you. (26)

But he does not stick to the idea expressed in these lines.

It is the lover who sacrifices himself like the nightingale:

Bülbül güle karsi otup can budağa astı yine.

Nightingale, having sung against the rose, has again  
hung the soul on the shoot (27)

He devises a new interpretation whereby the lover has a compensation  
in death:

Bu ışık içinde ölenin kan bahası didar olur.

Blood-price is the face [of the beloved] for the  
one who dies through this love. (28)

This line is obviously based on a hadith qudsi which reads: "man  
aḥabbani qatalahu wa man qatalahu fa anā diyatuhu", i.e. (29)

I kill who I love, I am the blood of the one I kill. It is through  
this new interpretation that the fear of death is overcome. Further  
death becomes an imperative as it is a means to see the Supreme Being.  
Now he seeks death willingly:

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26 Divan, p. 109.

27 Ibid, p. 86.

28 Ibid, p. 302.

29 Nicholson, Mathnawi, commentary IV 2963.

Anı ol kişi görür ol ecelsizin ölür  
Bu nasibi ol alur anlar ki cana kalmaz.  
.....Yunus canunı terkit bildiklerini terkit  
Fera olmayan suret şahuna vasıl olmaz

[Only] that person, who dies without ajal sees Him [God] (30)  
[Only] those who do not remain for life receive this  
lot  
.....Yunus, abandon your life, abandon all you know  
[for] the form which becomes not annihilated cannot  
reach its King. (31)

If the death is absorption in the Supreme Being then it necessarily follows that it ought to be fulfilled. For death is, in any case, inevitable. Therefore, one would think that there is no need for worrying. Such is not the case with Yunus. Firstly, he feels, as is reflected in the above poem, that a natural death does not secure the waşl i.e. joining the beloved. Secondly, so long as he is alive the lover feels separated from the Beloved. This sense of separation causes the pain which has become the theme of his finest ghazals:

Ben yitirem yana yana işk boyadı beni kana  
Ne akilem ne divane gel gör beni işk neyledi.

Geh eserem yeller gibi geh tozaram yollar gibi  
Geh akaram sular gibi gel gör beni işk neyledi.

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30 I left the word ajal untranslated for the sake of convenience. The word, coming into Turkish from Arabic, means appointed time for death by God. Thus, it signifies a natural death in Turkish and is opposed to the death which comes through an accident or murder which the Turks term as (ecelsiz ölüm).

31 Divan, p. 399.

Mecnun oluban yürürem o yarî düşde görürüm  
Uyanıp melul oluram gel gör beni işk neyledi.

Miskin Yunus biçareyim baştan ayağa yareyim  
Dost ilünden avareyim gel gör beni işk neyledi.

Aflamed I am wandering, with blood has love stained  
me  
Neither I am sane nor am I insane, come, see what  
Love has made out of me.  
Now I blow as wind, now I dust like roads  
Now I flow as floods; come, see what love has made  
out of me.  
I wander being Majnun, that Beloved I see in the dream  
Having awakened I become melancholic; come, see what  
love has made out of me.  
I, Yunus the poor, am hopeless, from top to toe wound  
I am  
I am exiled from the Friend's home; come, see what  
love has made out of me. (32)

Still, what is more important is that the feeling of separation  
confounds the unity or oneness. The death is nothing but life  
in sublime sense. In this sense what Yunus strives for is not  
the death but life rather, immortality which he achieves  
paradoxically through death:

Ol can kaçan öliser sen ana can olasın  
Ölmüş gönül dirile anda ki sen olasın.

Ölmeklik dirlik ola ölümsüz dirlik bula  
Başlu gönül unula merhemi sen olasın.

When that life (can) dies Thou mayest be life to it  
The dead heart, in which Thou art, is revived  
Let the dying be life, let it be (an) immortal life  
Let the wounded heart be cured, Thou mayest be its  
medicine. (33)

At this stage, we notice that Yunus grants the lover immortality,  
-- his definition of man would read: Man is a loving animal:

Aşık öldü diye sala verirler  
Ölen hayvan olur aşıklar ölmez.

They announce that Lover died  
He who dies is animal, Lovers die not. (34)

Now the life without love is nothing but an illusion. The  
commonly spread sufistic doctrine of life's being unreal is  
understood by Yunus with this modification. Life (dirlik) he sees  
in two things: In unity (birlik) and in love. He says:

Bu cihana gelmedin ma'şuk ile bir idin  
Ol dem ki birlik idi nitesi dirlik idi.

Before coming to this world I was one (bir)  
with the beloved  
That moment which was oneness (birlik) its  
quality was life (dirlik). (35)

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33 Ibid, p. 249.

34 Ibid, p. 341.

35 Ibid, p. 211.

Death is simply the non-existence of love; he says:

Son menzilin ölmekdürür duymadınsa ıřktan eser.

Your last stage is to die if you did not feel  
anything of the love. (36)

and:

Senin ıřkın deniz ben bir balıcak  
Balık sudan çıka heman ölidür.

Thy love is a sea, I [am] a small fish  
As soon as the fish comes out of the water, it  
is dead. (37)

The attributes of love, as seen by Yunus, strikingly resemble  
that of God. The following verse would remind us of sūrat-al-

Iklās:

İřk anadan doğmadı kimseve kul olmadı  
Hükmüne kıldı esir cümle biliř-ü yadı.

Love is not born from a mother, did not become  
slave to anybody  
[But] rendered all friends and strangers slave to his  
rule (38)

Love, like God, will remain forever; it is undestroyable.

Yir gök oynar ırılmaz yeller eser deprenmez.

Earth and heaven move, it [love] does not, the winds  
blow, it [love] is not shaken. (39)

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36 Ibid, p. 280.

37 Ibid, p. 284.

38 Ibid, p. 106.

39 Ibid, p. 106.





it bears ethical and social values apart from the theological ones if any. For the true love he understands as follows:

Hakkı gerçek sevenlere cümle alem kardeş gelir.

To true lovers of the Truth [God] all the world  
comes like a brother (41)

Love of God necessitates love for the fellowman.

Maşuka neyi sevse lazımdır sevmek anı  
Sen gerçek aşık isen dostun dostuna dost ol.  
....Yetmiş iki millete kurban ol aşık isen.

Whatever the Beloved loves one should love that  
If you are a true lover be friend to the Friend of  
the Friend.  
Sacrifice yourself for the sake of seventy-two  
religions. (42)

A modern philosopher joins Yunus in this kind of understanding of love. "Love", wrote Martin Buber, "is responsibility of an I for a Thou. In this lies the likeness - impossible in a feeling whatsoever - of all who love, from the smallest to the greatest and from the blessedly protected man, whose life is rounded in that of a loved being, ..... and who ventures to bring himself to the dreadful point - to love all men." (43)

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41 Ibid, p. 301.

42 Ibid, p. 165.

43 Martin Buber, op. cit. p.15.

Yunus Emre's concept of love can be summed up in the following verse which again could be understood in parallel lines with Buber's concept of love:

Yaradılmışı severiz Yaradandan ötürü.

We love the created because of the Creator. (44)

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44 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Yunus Emre Hayatı, İstanbul, 1936, p. 79.

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