

Restful Souls: The Representative Men (Yunus Emre and Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

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Abstract

Yunus Emre, the prominent Turkish poet who left his mark on the 13th century, stands out as the most significant folk poet producing poetry in vernacular Turkish. On the other hand, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American essayist, is recognized as one of the most influential thinkers of the 19th century. Despite living in different centuries, the commonality between these two representative figures is love, more precisely Divine love. This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the intellectual realms of Turkish Sufi poet Yunus Emre and American thinker Emerson through their profound exploration of love. What these poets adopted as a motto was to give everything to love, especially Divine love, and also to love and be loved. Focusing on Yunus Emre's impact on Turkish Islamic culture and Emerson's role in American Transcendentalism, both are examined as representative men of their eras. The article introduces the similarities of Divine love in the teachings and worldviews of these influential thinkers and illustrates their contributions to humanity's cultural and intellectual development. Yunus Emre and Emerson's intellectual legacy forms the primary focus of the article and offers a perspective on how their understanding of love significantly shaped humanity's collective consciousness.

Keywords: Yunus Emre, Ralph Waldo Emerson, mysticism, transcendentalism, divine love

HUZURLU RUHLAR: TEMSİLCİ KİŞİLİKLER (YUNUS EMRE VE RALPH WALDO EMERSON)

Öz

13. yüzyılın etkili Türk şairi Yunus Emre, dönemin Türkçesiyle şiirler veren en önemli halk şairi olarak öne çıkar. Öte yandan, Amerikalı deneme yazarı Ralph Waldo Emerson ise 19. yüzyılda etkili olmuş en önemli düşünürlerden biri olarak kabul edilir. Farklı yüzyıllarda yaşamış olmalarına rağmen, bu iki temsilci kişinin ortak noktası aşktır, daha doğrusu İlahi aşktır. Bu makale, Türk sufi şair Yunus Emre ve Amerikalı düşünür Emerson'ın aşkı derinlemesine keşfini içeren ve entelektüel

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alanlarını kapsayan detaylı bir inceleme sunmaktadır. Bu şairlerin düstur olarak benimsedikleri şey, başta ilahi aşk olmak üzere her şeyi sevgiye vermek, sevmek ve sevmektir. Yunus Emre'nin Türk İslam kültüründeki etkisi ve Emerson'ın Amerikan Transandantalizmdeki rolü üzerinde durularak, her ikisi de kendi dönemlerinde temsilci kişilikler olarak incelenmektedir. Makale, bu etkili düşünürlerin öğretileri ve dünya görüşlerindeki İlahi aşkın benzerliklerini ortaya koyar ve onların insanlığın kültürel ve entelektüel gelişimine katkılarını anlatır. Yunus Emre ve Emerson'ın entelektüel mirası, makalenin temel odak noktasını oluşturur ve onların aşk konusundaki anlayışlarının insanlığın kolektif bilincini nasıl önemli ölçüde şekillendirdiğine dair bir perspektif sunar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yunus Emre, Ralph Waldo Emerson, tasavvuf, transandantalizm, ilahi aşk

INTRODUCTION

In *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*, Leigh Eric Schmidt examines the “New Spirituality” of the 19th century, characterized by a bookish approach to spiritual exploration. To him, the “restless souls”, rather than relying on traditional religious practices, seek spiritual fulfillment through extensive and eclectic reading. This emphasis on individualistic and intellectually driven spirituality challenge established religious boundaries, contributing to the diversification of religious practices in America (2012). As a leader in this movement, Ralph Waldo Emerson's restless soul and thirst for knowledge have left an indelible mark on the landscape of American spirituality. The spiritual journey of Yunus Emre, on the other hand, unfolds through the pursuit of self-knowledge and the steadfast love for God, illuminating the path towards unity and transcendence. Justifiably, Islamic Mysticism and Transcendentalism have remarkable similarities in terms of their spiritual concerns. Both focus on individual experience and reject traditional religious dogma. They investigate the realms of the unseen and seek a deeper connection with the divine essence that permeates all of existence.

Yunus Emre, by presenting a unique style in Turkish literature, influenced many tekke (dervish lodge) poets and Sufi Literature¹ who came after him. Yunus Emre, who recited his poems with a lover's style and language of the heart, came to this world to make hearts happy (Bilgin, 2007, p. 7). To Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Yunus Emre's approach to poetry differed from that of other renowned poets such as Omar Khayyam, Hafez, Fuzuli, or Karacaoglan. Unlike them, he wrote poetry not solely for the sake of writing. Similar to Rumi (Mawlana) and many other Islamic Sufis before him, he used poetry as a form to convey his thoughts to the people and he did it artistically. As a natural manifestation of

¹ R. Bahar Akarınar and Mustafa Arslan in their book chapter entitled “Tekke-Tasavvuf Edebiyatı” (Sufi Literature) argue this issue. They utter that literary historians have referred to religious and mystical literary works with various names such as “religious literature,” “Islamic literature,” “Sufi literature,” “dervish literature,” “mystical literature,” “dervish and Sufi literature,” “religious-mystical literature,” and “Sufi folk literature.” Sometimes, these works have been classified under the main headings of folk literature, ancient Turkish literature, or divan literature in Turkish literary classifications (p. 345). For more information see Akarınar, R. Bahar and Arslan, Mustafa (2014). “Tekke-Tasavvuf Edebiyatı”, *Türk Halk Edebiyatı El Kitabı* (ed.) M. Öcal Oğuz. Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.

the time and place he lived in, he expressed his ideas by using the concepts of Turkish folk Sufism, which was based on Islamic foundations (Ocak, 1996, p. 115).

Yunus Emre is often considered to transcend the boundaries of any particular Sufi order or school. His poetry and teachings emphasize the idea of universal love and unity, which resonates with people from different backgrounds and beliefs. Similarly, Emerson's resignation from his position as a Unitarian minister allows him to develop his philosophy that is not bound by the specific doctrines or beliefs of any particular religious group. This enables him to become a universal figure whose ideas and writings continue to influence people from different backgrounds and beliefs today.

Yunus Emre and Emerson are passionate advocates for the use and celebration of vernacular language and literature. As stated earlier, both Yunus Emre and Emerson are Representative Men and are recognized for their groundbreaking contributions to humanity with their distinct thoughts. Their influence can be observed in two distinct periods: literature before Yunus Emre and Emerson, and literature after them. Yunus Emre achieved this by composing his works in Turkish, the language of the common people, rather than Persian or Arabic. Similarly, Emerson was a proponent of being American or creating an American style, and having a distinct American literary tradition rather than imitating European literary styles. Emerson bravely declared: "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, and tame" (Emerson, 1950, p. 114). This statement reflects Emerson's belief that American literature should break away from European influences and establish its unique voice.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There have been several scholarly studies on Emerson, which are about the philosophy of Emerson and how this philosophy was shaped by the mystics of the East. Emerson was indeed influenced by Eastern philosophical traditions, particularly through his readings of Hindu scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, as well as through his interactions with texts on Persian and Chinese philosophies. Susan Dunston, for instance, in her article entitled "In the "Light Out of the East": Emerson on Self, Subjectivity, and Creativity" focuses on Emerson's ideas, indicates a personal interpretation or understanding of destiny that is influenced by Emerson's strong connection to Eastern philosophy. "Emerson in Iran" (2019) by Roger Sedarat explores Emerson's connections with Persian mystic poets, particularly Hafez and Sadi, whose works profoundly influenced Emerson's ideas. Sedarat examines Emerson's interpretations of these poets, his commentary on their works, and the compositions inspired by their insights, shedding light on the cross-cultural dialogue and connection between East and West in Emerson's philosophy.

Sufism, in its broadest sense, is a form of Islamic mysticism. Emerging approximately two centuries after the inception of Islam, Islamic mysticism, through the organization of orders and Sufi lodges, has persisted as a mode of thought and way of life throughout the Islamic world for centuries (Yolcu, 2019, p. 386). Mysticism and mystic thought were also the subject matter that Emerson was highly concerned and spent a lot of time understanding this philosophy to ground his influential ideas

which later formed Transcendentalism. The article "Emerson and Mysticism" by Patrick F. Quinn discusses this relationship between Emerson's philosophy and the mystical tradition.

Brianne Keith in her article "Thoreau's Mysticism" talks about Emerson's "transparent eyeball" and goes on to say that: "the mystic seeks communion with the divine, with truth, with the whole." Emerson's mysticism, she says, is "a nature mysticism," which is "achieved through the union with the natural world" (2012, p. 8). Within the tradition of mysticism, there exist mystics who abandon the material world in their quest for a spiritual journey towards God. They seek intimacy with the divine, purification of the soul, inner transformation, and the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. Like Emerson, some mystics believe in the pursuit of deeper spiritual connections. They seek to unveil the hidden truths and wisdom within themselves, often embracing nature. Yunus Emre, on the other hand, as a mystic, also seeks self-knowledge, understanding his place in the world, and his relationship with the divine. This journey involves introspection, self-discovery, and personal growth. Both Yunus Emre and Emerson, despite their different cultural backgrounds and spiritual beliefs, share a common pursuit of self-knowledge. In essence, self-knowledge serves as a foundation for personal growth and spiritual development.

As cited by Robert D. Richardson Jr., John Mason articulates that self-knowledge "is that acquaintance with ourselves, which shows us what we are, and do and ought to be, and do, in order to live comfortably and usefully here, and happily hereafter. The means urged is self-examination, the purpose self-government and self-fruition" (1995, p. 22). In this context, self-knowledge, as articulated by John Mason, is crucial for personal growth and spiritual development. By examining oneself, individuals can identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement. This self-awareness enables them to make informed decisions and take actions that align with their values, ultimately leading to a more comfortable, useful, and happy life both in the present and in the hereafter. The process of self-examination fosters self-government, as individuals learn to control their desires and emotions. Self-fruition, or realizing one's full potential, is the ultimate goal, as it allows individuals to contribute positively to society and find deeper meaning in their spiritual journey.

Emerson says: "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string," (1903a, p. 47) and Al-Ghazzali articulates that "when the heart is free from worldly lusts, from the animosities of society and from the distraction occasioned by the senses, the vision of God is possible" (1873, p. 25). These statements find resonance in Yunus Emre's verse, "The night and the day, the planets, the words inscribed on the Holy Tablets, the hill that Moses climbed, the Temple, and Israfil's trumpet, we observed in the body. Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Quran— what these books have to say, we found in the body" (Helminski and Algan, 1989, p. 20). They all reflect the universal human quest for self-awareness, inner peace, and spiritual enlightenment. Within this framework, the next chapter focuses more on Divine love and active soul.

DIVINE LOVE

According to Emerson's assertion in his book *The Representative Men*, the world is supported by the honesty and integrity of decent men more specifically: "The world is upheld by the veracity of good men: they make the earth wholesome" (1850, 9). Then he adds: "Our religion is the love and cherishing of these patrons. The gods of fable are the shining moments of great men. We run all our vessels into one mould. Our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mahometism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind" (1850, 10-11). Despite the diversity of religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam), Emerson suggests that they ultimately converge on common principles rooted in human experience and understanding. In another statement in 1850 (p. 32), his expression "the best discovery the discoverer makes for himself" implies that the most significant findings arise from active individuals with engaged souls who actively participate in personal exploration and experience. Understanding Emerson begins with the line from his essay "The American Scholar": "The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul" (1904a, 90). It is possible to say that this maxim is central to all of Emerson's work. For, in any sentence, in any paragraph, or in any utterance, or in any action, the active soul "sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates" (Emerson, 1904a, 90). However, how does one understand what Emerson means when he argues that the only thing valuable is the active soul? The answer lies in the word *soul*, even in the words *active soul*. An *active soul* could refer to a person with a purpose, a passion, and a drive, who actively engages with the world around them instead of merely existing. Thus, the cultivation of an active soul requires self-knowledge. The pursuit of self-knowledge serves as the central theme in Yunus Emre's poems as well, reflecting its profound purpose of seeking a deeper understanding of God. These consecutive lines provide direct advice to the reader:

What is the meaning of knowledge?
It is for a person to know God.
If you read without understanding,
It is just like wasted time and labor (Gölpınarlı, 2015, 306).²³

In accordance with the stanza above, the act of reading alone is not sufficient to convey meaning; what truly matters is a person's genuine understanding of God. If you merely read without comprehending, then your effort is pointless. Yunus Emre's lines highlight the insignificance of superficially engaging with religious texts without grasping their true meaning. A similar message is conveyed by Emerson thus:

If thou durst my words compare
With what thou thinkest in my soul's free youth,
Then take this fact unto thy soul,-----
God dwells in thee (Cameron, 1989, 102).

² Okumaktan ma'nâ ne, kişi Hak'kı bilmektir,
Çün okudun bilmezsin, hâ bir kuru ekmektir.

³ All the translations in this study have been done by the writer. The original text was in two lines; however, for clarity, we have put them into four lines. Similar adaptations are evident throughout the study.

In this statement, Emerson suggests that if the reader dares to compare his words with what they believe he truly feels in his youthful spirit, they will discover a profound truth: God resides within them. Emerson is implying that divine presence is not limited to external sources but can be found within each individual. Yunus Emre shares a more esoteric poem:

I am both the esoteric and the exoteric.

I am both the beginning and the end.

I am both His, and He is within me.

He is both the Generous and the Sovereign lord of mine (Gölpınarlı, 2015, 264).⁴

The line “I am both the beginning and the end.” with its esoteric meaning suggests a timeless and eternal nature, implying that Yunus Emre’s existence transcends temporal boundaries. These lines overall convey a sense of unity, covering both the mystical and the apparent, the beginning and the end, the divine presence within oneself, and the qualities of generosity and love.

In his essay “Self-Reliance,” Emerson defines *self-knowledge* as the key to unlocking the vast ocean of knowledge, which knows no bounds and is the pathway to comprehending our ideas, thoughts, and humanity. Emerson wrote: “To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius” (Emerson, 1950, 145). He encourages people to speak from the depths of their hearts and trust in themselves. Emerson also stresses the importance of integrity in one’s mind, stating that “Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world” (Emerson, 1950, 148). This idea is in harmony with the sentiment expressed in the Latin phrase “Ne te quaesiveris extra” (Emerson, 1950, 145), which means not to seek outside oneself but to rely on one’s inner resources and intuition. According to Emerson, when a person is able to fully express their soul through their actions, they become a source of inspiration and reverence to others. The intellect becomes genius, the will becomes virtue, and the affection becomes love. In “The Over-Soul” he states:

All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A man is the façade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love (1841, 224).

Emerson in another essay “Intellect” suggests that while water dissolves certain elements and fire dissolves air, it is the intellect that has the power to dissolve even the most subtle aspects of

⁴ Hem bâtnım, hem zâhirim, hem evvelim, hem âhirim,
Hem ben oyum, hem o benim, hem o Kerim ü hân benim.

nature. He further states that true self-reliance comes from relying on the intellect, which is the simple power that precedes all action and creation (1903a, 235,344). Yunus Emre, on the other hand, believes that understanding the truth is critical and that the journey to uncover this truth involves both the mind and the heart which are related to intellect and love. In the spiritual sense, the heart is the center of all thoughts, and Yunus Emre considers that the heart is the abode of God. He declares:

Lover's heart is God's throne,
 God accepts it as his own
 Whoever breaks that heart
 His two worlds shall be torn apart (Gölpınarlı, 2015, 130).⁵

Love has always been a priority for Yunus Emre. According to him, everything originates from love. However, Yunus Emre does not disregard intellect. To him:

Intellect is the just and noble person,
 It is his role to bring relief to the distressed (2013, 53).⁶

Yunus Emre encapsulates the profound essence of the intellect. It presents intellect not as a mere tool or capability, but as a moral agent with a higher purpose. This perspective highlights the inherent goodness and compassion within the intellect, suggesting that its true function lies in serving others and alleviating their suffering. Furthermore, Emerson's assertion that "the intellect is a whole and requires integrity in every work" (1903a, 338) underscores the importance of maintaining a holistic approach in all intellectual endeavors. These quotes complement each other, shedding light on the ethical demands of the intellect, and calling upon us to use our intellectual capacities for the betterment of humanity and the pursuit of truth. Yunus Emre believes that when the mind and heart work in harmony, and intellect is guided by the heart's wisdom, no force can harm the person. He claims:

If intellect is in charge and heart is at rest,
 If they work together, no enemy can harm me (Tökel, 2019, 4).⁷

In addition to the claim of Yunus Emre, Emerson suggests that "vigilance" is the primary power for an individual to awaken their intellectual capabilities fully. In his essay "Intellect," he writes: "Neither by detachment, neither by aggregation, is the integrity of the intellect transmitted to its works, but by a vigilance which brings the intellect in its greatness and best state to operate every moment" (1903a, 340). Through vigilance, the intellect attains its utmost potential. By maintaining a state of constant awareness and engagement, the intellect becomes a powerful force that shapes profound works.

As aforementioned, mind and heart go together; yet we need love to ignite both of them. Yunus Emre asserts that he requires love to find the absolute Truth. He says: "Your love has taken me away

⁵ Gönül Çalab'ın tahtı, Çalab gönüle bahtı,
 İki cihan bedbahtı kim gönül yıkar ise.

⁶ Akıl, adaletli aziz kişidir,
 Bunalana medet onun işidir.

⁷ Eger 'akıl başdayısa gönülde ol tuşdayısa
 İkisi bir işdeyse düşman bana kâr eylemez

from me; You're the one I need, you're the one I crave" (Gölpınarlı, 2015, 198).⁸ Yunus Emre's powerful words highlight the transformative nature of love and its ability to lead one towards the Truth. In one of Emerson's poems from his youth and early manhood titled "Self-Reliance," he prays to God and makes a solemn promise:

HENCEFORTH, please God, forever I forego
The yoke of men's opinions. I will be
Light-hearted as a bird, and live with God.
I find him in the bottom of my heart,
I hear continually his voice therein (1918, 394).

In these lines, Emerson expresses his determination to free himself from the burden of relying on the opinions of others. He seeks to live a life unburdened by external judgments, striving to be as carefree as a bird. Instead, Emerson aims to cultivate a direct connection with God, finding an ongoing spiritual dialogue and guidance. Yunus Emre believes that the true pilgrimage to God cannot be made by physically visiting holy places, but by visiting the heart:

Yunus Emre says: Oh Preacher, if need be,
Perform the pilgrimage a thousand times.
But if you ask me, the best of all
Is to enter into a single heart (Tatçı, 2008, 517)⁹

While external symbols like the Kaaba hold significance, internal symbols like the heart, in the poems of Yunus Emre, are considered even more valuable. Human beings can only connect with God through internal spiritual pursuit. This is why the heart is even more valuable than the Kaaba. Yunus Emre's statement that "the heart is above the Kaaba" is in line with this tradition and emphasizes the value of the internal world.

Heart or Kaaba which is better? Tell me! Oh, you sane!
The heart is above the Kaaba, cause God resides in the heart (Tatçı, 2008, 208).¹⁰

Emerson, in his "An Address" at Harvard Divinity School, expresses his concerns about the state of the Church, stating that "the Church seems to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct." (1950, 76). However, he proposes a remedy; one that he believes resides within the very foundation of our grievances with the Church. He urges his audience to look to the Soul as the source, and utters "in the soul then let the redemption be sought." Rather than relying solely on the Church, like the example of the Kaaba given by Yunus Emre, Emerson also emphasizes the need to seek spiritual restoration (1950, 80). We believe that the heart and the soul are inherently interconnected. Thus, human beings, according to Yunus Emre, came to this world to build hearts, create inner purity, and strengthen spiritual ties. He discusses the purpose of his mission:

⁸ Aşkın aldı benden beni
Bana seni gerek seni

⁹ Yunus Emre dir hoca gerekse var bin hacca
Hepisinden iyice bir gönüle girmekdür

¹⁰ Gönül mü yig Ka'be mi yig eyit bana ey aklı iren
Gönül yigdur zirâ ki Hak gönülde tutar turağı

I didn't come to create any problems,
 I'm only here to love.
 A Heart makes a good home for the Friend.
 I've come to build some hearts (Tatçı, 2008, 314).¹¹

This sentiment is echoed by Emerson in his essay "Worship," where he states "God builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions" (1903b, 204). Emerson's poem Gnothi Seauton contains similar powerful lines:

Then take this fact unto thy soul,-----
 God dwells in thee.
 It is no metaphor nor parable,
 It is unknown to thousands, and to thee;
 Yet there is God" (Cameron, 1989, 102).

In these lines, Emerson encourages the reader to look within and recognize the presence of the divine. He underlines that this is not a mere *metaphor* or *parable*, but a true reality that is often unknown. By recognizing the presence of God within oneself, one can gain a deeper understanding of their nature and purpose, and live a more fulfilling life. These lines reflect Emerson's belief in the importance of spiritual introspection. In parallel with Emerson, in one of his poems, Yunus Emre deals with the same spiritual concern:

God permeates the whole wide world,
 Yet His truth is revealed to none.
 You better seek Him in yourself,
 You and He aren't apart-you're one (Köprülü, 1976, 316).¹²

These lines echo Emerson's message that God is present within oneself and can be found through self-examination and self-knowledge. Yunus Emre suggests that those who seek God only in external religious practices may miss the true essence of spirituality and that the key to understanding the divine is to know oneself. Both Emerson and Yunus Emre emphasize the importance of looking within oneself to find the divine. To Emerson, the solution is not so difficult:

Give up to thy soul-----
 Let it have its way-----
 It is, I tell thee, God himself,
 The selfsame One that rules the Whole (Cameron, 1989, 102).

Emerson's profound words convey a clear message: yield to your soul and allow it to lead. For within it resides the essence of God, the governing force of the universe. Embracing your inner divinity enables harmony with the higher purpose and grants fulfillment through spiritual connection.

Arthur Versluis thinks that the classical transcendental concepts encompass truth, goodness, and beauty. The Transcendentalists embraced this belief and embarked on a journey of exploration,

¹¹ Ben gelmedim da'vi için benüm işüm seviy için
 Dostun evi gönüllerdür gönüller yapmağa geldüm

¹² Hak cihana doludur, kimseler Hakk'ı bilmez.
 Kendinden istesen ol senden ayrı olmaz.

actively delving into the nature of truth, goodness, and beauty through their writings and conversations (2019, 517). However, this paper argues that the concept of love encompasses and goes beyond all of these concepts. According to both poets, love is an essential component of integrity. Emerson in his essay "Love"¹³ suggests that by observing the beauty in others and separating the divine traits from the impurities of the world "the lover ascends to the highest beauty and attains the love and knowledge of the Divine." Emerson notes that this idea is not new, but was taught throughout history (Emerson, 1903a, 182-183). In a similar vein, Yunus Emre believes that an individual could attain the Truth by carrying the love of God within. He expresses:

If you don't sacrifice your soul on the path of love, are you a true lover?
If you don't press hard for union with the Friend, are you a true lover (Tatçı, 2008, 420)?¹⁴

He emphasizes the necessity of dedication in the pursuit of love, for true lovers are those who wholeheartedly commit themselves to the path and relentlessly strive for union with the Friend. Another poem reads:

Hear, Oh! dear friends, love is like the sun,
A heart without love is nothing but a stone (Tatçı, 2008, 332).¹⁵

This poem beautifully captures the essence of love by likening it to the sun. The poem serves as a reminder that love is not merely an emotion, but a vital force that illuminates and gives meaning to existence. Emerson, too, advocates for the supremacy of love, urging the reader to leave behind all else and devote themselves entirely to its pursuit.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavor, — (Emerson, 1856, 142).

The poem emphasizes the significance of complete surrender and sacrifice in the realm of love. With the following stanza, Yunus Emre conveys a more universal message:

Let us unite and be friends,
Let us make life easier,
Let us love and be loved,
The earth shall be left to no one (Uysal, 2022, p. 9).¹⁶

¹³ This essay begins with the following verse from the Qur'an: "I was as a gem concealed; Me my burning ray revealed." This verse does not exist in the Quran, but there is a similar hadith of Prophet Muhammad "I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known, so I created the creation that I may be known." However, the verse could be a reference to a verse from the Quran, specifically Surah Qaf (50:16), which states: "And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein."

¹⁴ Canını ışık yoluna vermeyen aşık mıdır?
Cehd eyleyüp ol dostu ırmeyen aşık mıdır?

¹⁵ İşidün ey yârenler ışık bir güneşe benzer
İşki olmayan gönül misal-i taşu benzer

¹⁶ Gelin tanış olalım
İşu kolay kılalım
Sevelim sevelim
Dünya kimseye kalmaz

This poem calls for unity, love, and a shared commitment to taking care of one another, emphasizing the significance of harmony and solidarity within society. Yunus Emre believes that *love* is the ultimate form of maturity. He expresses this belief through his extensive writings about love, which he considers to be the very essence and purpose of existence, even the universe's creation. For him, *love* is the fundamental substance that underlies all of reality. At the pinnacle of love lies "Love for God,"¹⁷ which is deemed to be of the utmost value. Yunus Emre's numerous poems, sayings, and conversations all revolve around his central theme of "Divine Love" (Benazus, 2022, 226).

"Eros" and "Give All to Love" by Emerson also explore the theme of love. In "Eros," Emerson writes, "The sense of the world is short, Long and various the report,— To love and be beloved" (Emerson, 1856, 150). These lines suggest that in the grand scheme of things, the world is transitory and ephemeral, but the experience of loving and being loved endures. Similarly, in "Give All to Love," Emerson advises, "Give all to love; Obey thy heart" (1856, 141). These lines encourage people to follow their hearts and give everything to love. Both poems draw attention to the importance of love and the power it holds in our lives.

"What is Love, and why is it the chief good, but because it is an overpowering enthusiasm?" asks Emerson in "The Method of Nature," and he articulates that it is "never self-possessed or prudent, it is all abandonment." He adds that "A certain admirable wisdom" is also possible through "abandonment" meaning that "the individual is no longer his own foolish master" (1904a, 217). In "Circles," Emerson further explores this idea of abandonment: "The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory, and to do something without knowing how or why; in short, to draw a new circle. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful: it is by abandonment" (1903a, 321-322).

Emerson proposes that by abandoning our preconceived notions, embracing the unknown, and approaching life with enthusiasm, we can unlock the potential for personal growth, great achievements, and a fulfilling existence. Abandonment is also a common theme in the life and poetry of Yunus Emre: however, there are different levels of it. Mustafa Tatcı suggests that to reach the station of *fakr*¹⁸, one must go through the levels of *terk* (abandonment). There are four levels of *terk*: *Terk-i Dünya* (abandonment of worldly desires), *Terk-i Ukba* (abandonment of concerns for the future), *Terk-i Hesti* (abandonment of the self), and *Terk-i Terk* (abandonment of abandonment itself). Yunus Emre conveys the concept of *Terk-i Dünya* in the following two lines:

The abandonment of worldly desires starts with worship.
If you are a believer, then have faith in it (Tatcı, 2008, 407-408).¹⁹

¹⁷ The word Çalap in Yunus Emre's poems has been translated into English as God. However, all of these are terms used for Allah. In this context, "Love for God" means "Love for Allah."

¹⁸ A spiritual state of detachment from worldly possessions and desires.

¹⁹ İbâdetler başıdır terk-i dünyâ.
Eğer mü'min isen ana inanasın.

Yunus Emre's message to all is simple: trust in the power of worship to guide you on your spiritual journey. Through devotion, one will detach from material pursuits, cultivate humility and gratitude, and find solace and purpose. However the end will inevitably come for each of us. Yunus Emre also offers a cure for this reality. So, listen closely, for the solution lies within:

They recite salawat upon the death of a Lover,
But the lovers do not die; only animals perish (Tatçı, 2008, 518).²⁰

These lines carry a mystical and metaphorical meaning. Yunus Emre emphasizes that true lovers, symbolizing those who are deeply connected to God, do not experience death in the same way as physical beings. Instead, they transcend the cycle of life and death, continuing to exist spiritually. The distinction is made between the mortal bodies of individuals and the eternal essence of the souls of the lovers. Emerson encapsulates the essence of these lines, affirming that true excellence, aligned with the eternal presence of God, remains everlasting:

Saying, *What is excellent,*
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again (1856, 248-249).

The initial couplet of the poem "Threnody" suggests that anything truly excellent or of high quality is enduring and permanent, just as God's existence is eternal. The second couplet implies that while human hearts may turn to dust, the love that resides within them continues to exist even after death. Emerson suggests the possibility of being reunited with loved ones in some form or another. The perspectives of both poets converge on the concept that genuine excellence and love endure beyond the transience of human existence, offering the potential for reunion and transcendence.

As understood from the previous paragraphs, both Yunus Emre and Emerson, share common themes of self-reliance and love. As Representative Men, they offer profound insights into the nature of love and the pursuit of spiritual transformation. Both poets emphasize the significance of heightened awareness and a deep connection with the divine. Their works inspire individuals to love, cultivate self-awareness, and trust in their abilities.

CONCLUSION

Knowing and loving are two of the many characteristics that are important in Sufism. We can say that these features are also valid for Emerson. It is important how deeply Yunus Emre and Emerson dealt with the universal value of love, based on their common points of knowing and loving. On the other hand, it turns out that to love, one must first know. What we mean by knowing is to know oneself. If a person knows himself, he will know the universe, he will know the world, he will know God and then he will love all the creatures. To put it differently, the individual who possesses knowledge also carries love, and conversely, the one who loves gains knowledge.

²⁰ Âşık öldi diyü sala virürler
Ölen hayvân durur 'âşıklar ölmez.

As Arthur Versluis puts it, truth, goodness, and beauty are classical transcendental concepts that have been explored extensively by philosophers and scholars throughout history; yet the concept of love goes beyond all of these concepts. Love is not just a feeling, but a transformative force that can lead to the attainment of the divine and the ultimate goal of existence. As a result, knowing requires loving, loving requires knowing and both require self-knowledge because as Rumi says: "O votary of Love, turn thy face towards thine own face: thou hast no kinsman but thyself" (1934, 269).

Both Yunus Emre and Emerson, as Representative men, advocate for the importance of love, tolerance, and understanding among different religions and spiritual practices. Yunus Emre, who said "The heart cannot be purified with water", emphasizes that the purification of the heart is possible only by walking the "path of unity." Mustafa Tatcı thinks that the term "heart" here refers to nothing but the "inner self". From this perspective, if a person has set out to know the truth, this can be achieved through the "knowledge or perception of truth." (2008, p. 299). Their teachings highlight the universal significance of love and inner purification. They also have the quest for spiritual understanding and unity among diverse faiths.

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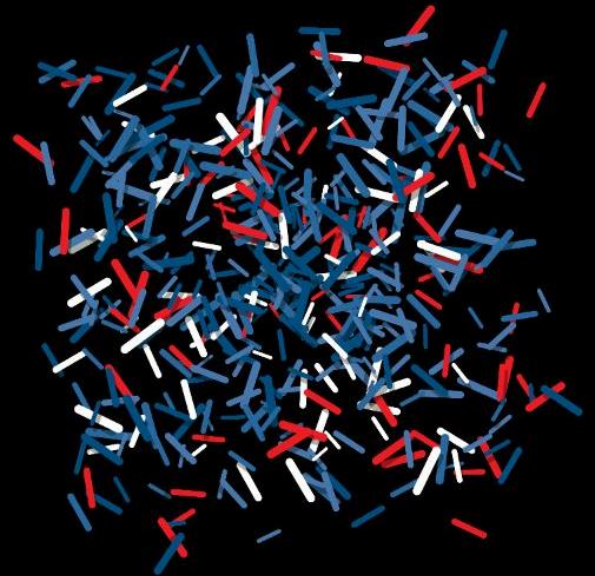



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Dr. Yusuf Topaloğlu




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