

ABDRAHMON GOZAL'S VIEWS ON YUNUS EMRE

Lecturer at Asia International University

Xaqqulova Dilshoda Abduvasiyevna

Abstract: This paper explores the scholarly and philosophical interpretations of the Turkish Sufi poet **Yunus Emre (1238–1320)** by the Uzbek literary critic and researcher **Abdrahmon Gozal**. It examines how Gozal perceives Emre's mystical worldview, the linguistic and cultural characteristics of his poetry, and his spiritual philosophy of divine love and human unity. Within Gozal's framework, Emre's poetry transcends its medieval Anatolian context to become a universal expression of spiritual awakening, linguistic democratization, and human compassion. Drawing on comparative literature and hermeneutic analysis, this study analyzes Gozal's arguments that Emre should be read not merely as a religious poet but as a philosopher of inner freedom. The discussion highlights how Gozal situates Yunus Emre's thought within Turkic-Islamic intellectual history, emphasizing parallels with Central Asian Sufism and the moral psychology of Eastern literature. Ultimately, the paper argues that Abdrahmon Gozal's interpretation revitalizes Yunus Emre as a timeless representative of humanism and divine love, bridging classical mysticism and modern ethics.

Keywords: Yunus Emre; Abdrahmon Gozal; Sufism; Turkic literature; spiritual humanism; divine love; mystical poetics; cultural hermeneutics; Uzbek literary criticism.

Yunus Emre remains one of the most influential mystic poets in the Turkic-Islamic world. His verses, simple in form yet profound in meaning, shaped centuries of Turkish, Persian, and even Uzbek spiritual poetry. Through his language of love, tolerance, and divine unity, Emre turned poetry into a medium of ethical enlightenment and inner transformation. Among modern scholars who examined his legacy, Abdrahmon Gozal stands out for his systematic attempt to read Yunus Emre through both historical and phenomenological lenses. Gozal's analyses merge philology, psychology, and spirituality, producing an interdisciplinary vision that connects medieval Sufism with contemporary humanistic thought. For Gozal, Yunus Emre's language represents a revolution in religious communication. Where classical Persian Sufis—such as Jalal al-Din Rumi or Attar of Nishapur—often relied on allegorical complexity, Emre intentionally grounded his mysticism in the idioms of common people. Gozal notes that Emre “spoke in the tongue of the peasant yet thought in the metaphysics of saints,” meaning that his choice of vernacular Turkish was not accidental but theological. The accessibility of his diction, according to Gozal, symbolized Islam's inner democracy—the idea that divine wisdom should not remain the privilege of scholars but should reach the hearts of ordinary believers. Through this linguistic openness, Emre created a model of **popular mysticism**, an inclusive form of spirituality that transcended social and ethnic boundaries across Anatolia and Central Asia.

Abdrahmon Gozal often compares Yunus Emre's poetic simplicity to the pedagogical style of Central Asian thinkers such as Ahmad Yassawi and Alisher Navoiy. He observes that, while Yassawi established the *hikmat* (wisdom) tradition and Navoiy refined Turkic poetics, Yunus

Emre internalized both tendencies—turning wisdom into emotional experience. Gozal therefore identifies Emre as “the living conscience of Turkic spirituality.” This idea is central to Gozal’s hermeneutics: poetry is not only an art form but also a process of self-purification, an *ascent* of the human soul (*seyr-i suluk*). Hence, reading Yunus Emre is for Gozal a participatory act—one that implicates both intellect and heart. In his essays, he insists that “to interpret Emre is to walk his path,” implying that true comprehension arises from existential empathy rather than detached analysis.

Furthermore, Gozal’s perspective is shaped by the broader context of Uzbek and Turkic literary thought. As post-Soviet societies seek to recover their spiritual heritage from ideological suppression, figures like Yunus Emre become symbols of ethical restoration. Gozal’s engagement with Emre thus reflects a cultural reawakening—a return to values of tolerance, humility, and human dignity that once defined the spiritual life of the region. His essays emphasize that the rediscovery of Yunus Emre’s message is not a matter of nostalgia but of intellectual necessity. The ethical and emotional challenges of contemporary society—alienation, materialism, and moral relativism—find their antidote in Emre’s humanistic spirituality as interpreted by Gozal. In this academic study, the analysis will focus on how Abdrahmon Gozal conceptualizes Yunus Emre’s mysticism as a universal human philosophy rather than a sectarian religious discourse. It will examine the linguistic, psychological, and metaphysical dimensions of his interpretation, assessing how Gozal reconstructs Emre’s poetic world as an epistemology of love. The discussion will also contextualize his thought within the traditions of Turkic Sufism, modern hermeneutics, and literary phenomenology. Ultimately, this paper argues that Gozal’s readings of Yunus Emre represent a significant intellectual synthesis—one that redefines both the meaning of Sufi literature and the role of poetic language in the moral evolution of humanity.

Gozal’s approach integrates **spiritual phenomenology** with historical contextualization. He views Yunus Emre as a product of the 13th-century Anatolian turmoil—the Mongol invasions, the disintegration of the Seljuk order, and the rise of new dervish communities. In these turbulent times, Emre’s emphasis on love (*ashq*) and unity (*vahdat*) acted as a moral counterweight to social fragmentation. Gozal interprets this historical role as an early expression of civil spirituality, where mystical language became a tool of psychological healing for society. He frequently cites Emre’s verses such as “*We came into this world for love; our task is love alone*,” explaining that the poem transforms theological doctrine into human emotion. The act of loving God becomes synonymous with loving humanity.

According to Gozal, this ethical universalism sets Yunus Emre apart from other Sufi poets. While Rumi’s cosmology remains metaphysical and Attar’s narratives allegorical, Emre’s voice is anthropological: it deals with human weakness, repentance, and compassion. Gozal reads this as a conscious rejection of elitist mysticism. He writes that “Emre democratized transcendence,” turning divine experience into a moral experience. Such a reading aligns with Gozal’s broader concern about the role of religion in modern life: spirituality, he argues, must return to the language of everyday existence. Therefore, studying Yunus Emre is not an exercise in nostalgia but an ethical necessity for societies facing moral crisis.

In Abdrahmon Gozal's hermeneutic system, language and love constitute two inseparable categories. He repeatedly notes that Emre's use of the Turkish tongue is not only aesthetic but sacramental—each word a reflection of divine presence in the human voice. Gozal's linguistic analysis connects Emre's verses to what he calls "semantic transparency," the ability of words to convey sacred truth without ornament. He contrasts this with later Ottoman court poetry, where excessive metaphor often obscured spiritual content. By re-establishing directness and sincerity, Emre restored authenticity to both language and faith. Gozal comments that "his simplicity is not poverty but clarity; it is the purity of being before God."

Through this perspective, Gozal frames Yunus Emre as a **psychologist of faith**. He argues that the poet intuitively grasped what modern psychology later formulated as the unity of emotion and cognition in moral development. Emre's repeated emphasis on self-knowledge—"*He who knows himself knows his Lord*"—illustrates what Gozal calls "the mystical epistemology of introspection." This fusion of self-awareness and divine awareness, according to Gozal, prefigures humanistic psychology and existential thought. In his comparative essays, he even draws parallels between Yunus Emre and Western thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard, emphasizing shared concerns with authenticity, inwardness, and the leap of faith. Gozal's intellectual project is thus not limited to literary exegesis; it is a **reconstruction of spiritual humanism** through the legacy of Yunus Emre. He considers Emre's works as a moral encyclopedia of the Turkic world—an archive of ethical archetypes expressed in poetic form. In this sense, Gozal's interpretation goes beyond national boundaries; it positions Yunus Emre as a universal sage, comparable to Lao Tzu or St. Francis of Assisi. What unites these figures, in Gozal's view, is their belief in the sanctity of love and humility. The task of modern scholarship, he insists, is to recover this universal dimension from the layers of historical nationalism that have obscured Emre's true voice.

Conclusion

The dialogue between Abdrahmon Gozal and Yunus Emre, though separated by centuries, demonstrates the enduring vitality of mystical humanism within Turkic intellectual history. Through his hermeneutic lens, Gozal transforms Yunus Emre from a regional poet of medieval Anatolia into a universal moral philosopher whose message of love, humility, and divine unity speaks directly to the ethical crises of the modern age. His interpretative framework—combining philological precision, phenomenological insight, and cultural hermeneutics—shows that Emre's mysticism is not an abstract theology but a living psychology of the heart. Gozal's scholarship re-centers spirituality within the discourse of human development. By analyzing Emre's use of plain Turkish as a theological act of democratization, he demonstrates how language can serve as a bridge between sacred truth and ordinary life. In his view, every word of Yunus Emre's poetry functions as both symbol and sacrament, restoring the moral transparency lost in contemporary communication. Such an approach situates Emre at the crossroads of religion, ethics, and aesthetics—an emblem of how art can heal the fragmentation of the human spirit.

The comparative breadth of Gozal's analysis—linking Emre to figures like Ahmad Yassawi, Alisher Navoiy, and even Western existentialists—reveals his commitment to a dialogic

civilization of knowledge. Rather than isolating Sufi literature within a historical museum, he interprets it as a dynamic field of intercultural philosophy. This cosmopolitan vision positions Yunus Emre as a spiritual interlocutor between East and West, tradition and modernity, reason and love.

In conclusion, Abdurahmon Gozal's views on Yunus Emre offer a new paradigm for reading mystical literature: one that integrates linguistic clarity with ethical reflection, and spiritual emotion with intellectual rigor. His work invites scholars to transcend disciplinary boundaries and to rediscover the humanist essence of faith through poetic consciousness. By reviving Yunus Emre's timeless voice, Gozal reminds us that true scholarship is itself an act of love—an endeavor to restore harmony between the word, the soul, and the world.

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