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The Human–Nature Relationship in the Mind of Yunus Emre: A Mystical Reading on Amanah Consciousness

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Abstract

This study examines the human–nature relationship in the thoughts of Yunus Emre (d. ca. 1320) and addresses the Qur'anic positioning of humanity as laden with responsibility through the idea of *amanah* (entrustment), while focusing on Yunus Emre's reflections on this concept as both a mystical stance and a moral state. His poems place humanity not as an absolute claim of ownership over the world and other beings, but rather within a relationship based on testimony, decency, and equality. He presents nature not as an object requiring protection or an area needing transformation but as a framework for contemplation and reflection in which the divine order is visible. In this context, humans' established relationship with the world reflects a stance determined not by domination or interference but by a consciousness of limitation and a sense of moderation. By revealing the aspects of his understanding of humanity and nature that overlap with the concept of *amanah* in Islamic thought, this study argues that this overlap should be evaluated not as conceptual equivalence but rather in terms of mystical and moral affinity. This approach aims to demonstrate how Yunus Emre's ideas, while not offering direct solutions to modern environmental debates, provide a historical mystical perspective that allows for a rethinking of the human–nature relationship.

Keywords: Yunus Emre; mysticism; *amanah*; trust; human–nature relationship; stewardship

1. Introduction

The modern era has largely centered on the question of how the relationship between humanity and nature should be constituted in the context of environmental crises, ecological destruction, and sustainability debates. However, one should consider this relationship not only within the context of modern scientific and technological problems but also as a historical, moral, and intellectual issue because questions about humanity's place on Earth are not products of the modern age; they have long been central to religious and philosophical thought in different periods and cultures (Cai and Chen 2024, p. 1). This issue has been addressed within Islamic thought through responsibilities and a limitation consciousness shaped around the concept of *amanah* in particular. This study aims to evaluate the human–nature relationship within Islamic thought's conceptual framework without directly projecting modern environmental ethics concepts onto past contexts.

Scholarship on Islamic environmental ethics and the human–nature relationship has generally approached this relationship through the concepts of *amanah* (trust), responsibility, and balance, framing it not as a domain of domination but as a moral obligation

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(Özdemir 2003, pp. 16–24; Clarke 2003, pp. 39–67). In this context, Seyyed Hossein Nasr emphasizes that the environmental crisis cannot be explained solely by technological development; rather, it is rooted in the disruption of the human–nature relationship and the loss of a sacred understanding of nature (Nasr and Iqbal 2007, pp. 120–48). At the same time, recent scholarship highlights that Sufi conceptions of nature should be understood not only at a textual and symbolic level but also as a domain of lived religious practice and social experience (Gade 2019, p. 204). While these approaches offer important insights, they are largely formulated within the framework of modern environmental debates. This study engages this body of scholarship in a limited and selective manner, aiming instead to examine Yunus Emre's thought within its own historical and Sufi context.

Within this framework, *amanah* emerges as one of the foundational concepts in Islamic thought that defines human existence on Earth. The concept of *amanah* in the Qur'an is related to humanity as being endowed with reason, free will, and responsibility; humanity's position vis à vis existence is defined not through absolute ownership but through a sense of accountability and responsibility (Qur'an, 33:72; Al-Tabarī 1986–1987, pp. 53–57; Al-Rāzi 1934–1962, pp. 234–37; Al-Zamakhshari 1968, pp. 276–77). In the classical tradition of Qur'anic exegesis and jurisprudence, the concept of *amanah* has been addressed alongside the principles of limited ownership, moderation in savings, and competence. Human beings are considered trustees, possessing a temporary and limited power of disposition over a sphere of existence that does not belong to them (Al-Qurtubī 1966–1967, pp. 117–19; Toksarı 1995, p. 81; Aktan 1995, p. 83). However, Sufi thought has deepened this framework, developing a holistic approach that extends the concept of *amanah* not only to the external world but also to humans' souls, free will, and moral attitudes (Arabi 1972–1985, p. 413).

This study focuses on Yunus Emre to show how this contemplation of an *amanah*-centered humanity was embodied in the Anatolian Sufi tradition. Yunus Emre was chosen not because he was a figure embodying "environmental awareness" in the modern sense, but because he developed a discourse that redefined humanity's relationship with the world within the framework of an awareness of moral boundaries, decency, and responsibility. Yunus Emre offers a suitable framework for demonstrating how the idea of *amanah* resonated within the public sphere through his use of a simple, inclusive, and didactic poetic style to address humans' relationships with themselves, other beings, and the world.

Yunus Emre was a Sufi poet who lived in Anatolia from the second half of the 13th century to the early 14th century. Although his birth and death dates are not known with certainty, he is generally accepted to have lived during a period when the Anatolian Seljuk state was weakened and Mongol invasions and political instability were prevalent.[1] This period provides the historical context in which Anatolia's social structure was profoundly shaken and Sufi circles gained importance as sources of religious and moral guidance. Thus, Sufism has functioned not only as a theoretical field of mystical thought but also as a tradition of guidance offering a moral order and a framework of meaning in the face of social disintegration (Turan 1993, pp. 458–650; Karamustafa 2015, pp. 65–81; Ay 2008, pp. 16–26).

The classical literature, especially hagiographical sources, widely attests that Yunus Emre was connected to Haji Bektash Veli and that his Sufi training was shaped by Tapduk Emre (Köprülü 1976, p. 267; Tatcı 2013, pp. 602–3). Although details about his life are limited, he is understood to have traveled to various regions of Anatolia, to have disseminated his poems orally and in writing, and to have appealed to a wide audience through his works written in simple Turkish. The poems attributed to Yunus Emre have been transmitted to the present through *divans* and anthologies compiled in later periods. Yunus Emre's

poems and intellectual legacy continued to influence the Anatolian Sufi tradition in subsequent centuries, with his name recognized and cited as that of a respected Sufi figure in both religious and literary circles (Timurtaş 1972, pp. 13–26; Gölpınarlı 2006, pp. 10–16).

Yunus Emre expressed Sufi thought in his poems using a language and style that the common people could understand, centering his work on the themes of humanity, morality, the heart, and creation (Hacıeminoğlu 1976, pp. 284–85). The simplicity and clarity of the language Yunus Emre used played a decisive role in his poems reaching a wide audience. Philological studies on Yunus Emre's texts show the poet to have consciously preferred simple Turkish words and structures, thus constructing his poetic language at a level the common people could understand (Korkmaz 1973, p. 18; Yılmaz 2022, p. 631). This linguistic choice reveals Yunus Emre to have constructed his conception of humanity in a way that would appeal not to a limited group but to diverse social segments. In this respect, Yunus Emre is considered an important Sufi figure who left a lasting impact on the Anatolian Sufi tradition, in terms of both language as well as thought (Özçelik 2013, p. 66).

Poetry holds a privileged place in the transmission of mystical experience within the Sufi tradition. As Schimmel (1975, pp. 411–25) emphasized, Sufi poetry uses imagery and symbols rather than explaining abstract doctrines to make lived experience visible. In this context, rather than presenting a theoretical Sufi doctrine, Yunus Emre's poetic language uses images drawn from everyday life to express the relationship humanity establishes with existence and the world.

The key characteristics that stand out in Yunus Emre's poems are not limited solely to their appeal to the common people. Indeed, the emphasis on "seventy-two nations" in his poems and the affirmative manner in which this diversity is expressed reveals the inclusive nature of his discourse, while also implying that he considers humanity not as a subject isolated from other beings but as one positioned within the shared horizon of creation (Banarlı 2013, p. 198; Doğan 2013, p. 838). In this respect, Yunus Emre addresses the human–nature relationship indirectly but powerfully, as part of the moral relationship that humanity establishes with existence (Lengieza et al. 2023, pp. 1–2). Nature often appears in his poems as an area that allows humans to understand themselves and their limitations. Within this framework, Yunus Emre's ethical language functions less as doctrinal instruction than as moral orientation, shaping how human beings perceive their place within the created order (Pinkas 2024, pp. 4, 10).

This study approaches the concept of *amanah* not merely as a metaphysical responsibility but as an ethical principle that regulates the relationship human beings establish with the earth.

The primary aim of this study is to elucidate how the human–nature relationship in the thought of Yunus Emre can be established within the framework of *amanah* consciousness. The purpose of this study is not to make Yunus Emre a direct interlocutor in modern environmental debates, but rather to examine Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity within the historical continuity of the concept of *amanah* in Islamic thought, thereby revealing the moral possibilities his discourse offers regarding the human–world relationship. In this context, this study does not focus on concepts related to modern environmental ethics, although they are discussed in the Results section as a limited and cautious basis for comparison.

The scope of this study is structured around three main axes. Firstly, it examines the concept of *amanah* (trust/entrustment/stewardship) in Islamic thought through its Qur'anic foundations and classical interpretations, thereby conceptually defining humanity's position on Earth. Secondly, the study examines Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity, evaluating his ontological approach, understanding of the ideal human being, target audi-

ence, and didactic language. Thirdly, by examining Yunus Emre's relationship with nature through decency, limits, and the common ground of the created order, this study discusses how this approach aligns with the concept of stewardship.

The main limitation of this study is its conscious avoidance of using modern concepts to reinterpret Yunus Emre's thoughts. The article interprets Yunus Emre's poems within the mystical and moral world of his time without being taken out of context. Methodologically, this study adopts a text-centered, conceptual approach that considers the historical context. Analysis is based on selected poems from Yunus Emre's *Dīvan*, examined not through the concepts of modern environmental discourse but within the framework of *amanah*, responsibility, and decency in Islamic thought.[2] This approach aims to minimize the risk of anachronism and to understand Yunus Emre's thought within its own historical context. In this respect, Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity can be read as a moral and experiential articulation of *amanah* consciousness within the Sufi tradition.

In conclusion, this study aims to make a modest contribution to the literature on Islamic thought and mysticism by examining the human–nature relationship in Yunus Emre's philosophy through a mystical framework centered on the concept of *amanah* consciousness. Yunus Emre's discourse is noteworthy not so much for offering direct solutions to the modern human–nature relationship but rather for providing a moral perspective that allows for a rethinking of humanity's position in the world.

2. Humanity, Responsibility, and the Idea of Amanah in Islamic Thought

The concept of *amanah* is a fundamental concept in Islamic thought that designates humanity's place on Earth. It is not limited to its everyday meaning of protecting something that belongs to someone else but rather has a broad conceptual scope that explains human beings' ontological and moral position. In fact, in lexical tradition, the root *amn* is linked to the meanings of "to trust" and "to be safe from fear and anxiety"; in Qur'anic usage, *amn* also strongly evokes connotations of trust, confidence, and security (Al-Isfahanī 2012, p. 99). In the *hadith* literature, the themes of trustworthiness, competence, and responsibility also appear to be maintained through different derivatives of the same root (Toksarı 1995, p. 81).

The most central text regarding the Qur'anic foundations of the concept of *amanah* is *ayah* 72 of *Surah Al-Ahzab* (Qur'an, 33:72). The narrative of this verse, which describes offering *amanah* to the heavens, the Earth, and the mountains, their reluctance to bear it, and the subsequent undertaking of that *amanah* by humanity, has given rise to a wide range of interpretations regarding the nature of *amanah* within the classical *tafsir* tradition. Commentators have explained the concept of *amanah* in various ways: sometimes as religious obligations (*taklif*), sometimes as free will and reason, and sometimes as the human capacity to bear responsibility (Al-Rāzi 1934–1962, vol. XXV, pp. 234–37; Al-Zamakhshari 1968, vol. III, pp. 276–77; Ibn Kathir 1971, vol. VI, pp. 477–81). The common thread running through these interpretations is that *amanah* is viewed not as a *privilege* bestowed upon humanity but rather as a *charge* that makes people responsible. From this perspective, the concept of *amanah* constitutes a foundational principle that links human existence in the world not to a claim of *ownership* but rather to a sense of accountability and responsibility.

The concept of trust is not limited to the *ayah* of *Surah Al-Ahzab* alone. The concepts of *amanah*, reliability, and competence appear in various contexts in the Qur'an. For example, *Surah Āl-Imran* (Qur'an, 3:75) mentions those among the People of the Book who upheld trusts and those who did not, which points to the social and moral dimensions of *amanah*, while *Surah An-Nisa* (Qur'an, 4:58) states the command to "return trusts to their rightful owners." The *tafsirs* of this *ayah* emphasize the relationship *amanah* has with

competence and justice (Al-Qurtubī 1966–1967, vol. V, pp. 255–57; Al-Tabarī 1986–1987, vol. IV, pp. 145–46). Elmalılı's (1979, vol. II, pp. 1370–71, vol. VIII, p. 5360) *tafsir* also interprets *amanah* as a concept encompassing trustworthiness and responsibility, as well as a defining principle at both the individual and societal levels. Evaluations in the Turkish Religious Foundation's (TDV) *Islamic Encyclopedia* also broaden the meaning of *amanah* to include contexts such as confidence, protection, obligation, duty, and rights (Toksarı 1995, p. 81; Aktan 1995, p. 83).

These Qur'anic and interpretive frameworks directly influence the understanding of ownership and possessions in Islamic thought, as the idea that property truly belongs to God limits human claims to the world. Humans cannot claim absolute ownership over existence; their control is temporary, conditional, and bound by *amanah* consciousness. Therefore, *amanah* creates a type of "limitation consciousness" regarding humanity's relationship with the Earth: humans are obligated to protect the space entrusted to them, avoid waste and excess, and act with justice and competence. The *hadith* literature emphasizes observance of *amanah*, honest trade, and reliability in particular, as well as the prohibition of unjust gains, excessive spending, and behaviors that constitute a violation of *amanah* (Al-Bukhāri 2001, pp. 24; Muslim n.d., pp. 107–8, 16; Al-Sijistani n.d.-b, p. 79; Al-Tirmidhī 1937, p. 38). These references show the idea of *amanah* as not merely a theoretical concept but rather a practical principle of responsibility that limits human activity.

Meanwhile, Sufi thought reconstructs the concept of *amanah* within a deeper understanding of existence and morality. In the Sufi tradition, one's relationship with the world is considered not only within the legal boundaries of *halal* [permissible] and *haram* [forbidden] but also through inner qualities such as self-discipline, contentment, moderation, and decency. In this context, *amanah* means that a person bears responsibility not only for the *external world* but also for their own existence and free will. Arabi (1972–1985, vol. VIII, pp. 413, 426–28) grounded the concept of *amanah* on the idea that "Humans are not the true owner of the existence in their hands"; the fact that wealth and resources are *amanat* (plural of *amanah)* creates a moral consciousness that limits human control over them. Thus, the concept of *amanah* transforms into a foundation that breaks down the claim of *entitlement* (allowance/self-ownership) and that produces humility, moderation, and responsibility in humanity's relationship with the world.

In conclusion, the concept of *amanah* offers a powerful conceptual framework in Islamic thought that defines humanity's position on Earth not through ownership but through responsibility and limitation consciousness. This framework allows one to view both the Qur'anic foundations of the human–world relationship and classical interpretations of *tafsir* and *hadith*, as well as its mystical deepening, in unison. The following sections examine Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity and relationship with nature. The foundation of *amanah* established here emphasizes the moral boundaries and obligations found in Yunus Emre's discourse within the historical continuity of the Islamic idea of responsibility.

3. Yunus Emre's Contemplation of Humanity

Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity is based on an ontological understanding that does not view humans solely as physical beings but rather grounds their existence in the relationship between soul and body. According to Yunus Emre, a human being is not limited to a physical body; the body is not a person's essential element but a temporary carrier of the soul in the world. This approach reveals Yunus Emre to have placed the concept of soul at the center of his understanding of humanity. Yunus Emre emphasized how the truth of man lies not in the body but in the spiritual essence that uses the body,

saying, "The soul is a sublime being, the body is its instrument" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan* 2021, 72a/9). He views the body as a means to an end.

Within this ontological framework, the body is not the essence of humans but a temporary tool that makes one's existence in the world possible. Human beings exist in the world through their bodies; however, they cannot be reduced to their bodies. This distinction is frequently encountered in Yunus Emre's poems and is addressed with a strong emphasis on the mortality of humankind. Earth is not a permanent dwelling place for humans; life is a temporary stay. Human beings are *guests* in this world, and their existence is defined not by permanence but by transience. Reminiscent of the idea that this world is a window through which everyone who comes looks and leaves, Yunus Emre's verses ground the ontological position of humanity in the consciousness of transience. Yunus says the following on this subject:

"çalap viribidi bizi var dünyeyi görün diyü

bu dünye ḫod bāḳī degül mülke süleymān neyimiş" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 99a/1–2).

[God sent us to go and see the world; this world is not permanent, what is Solomon apart from this world!]

"şunlar ki çoḳdur mālları gör niçe oldı ḥālleri

ṣoŋ ucı bir gönlek giymış anuŋ da yoḳdur yeŋleri

ḳanı mülke benüm diyen köşk ü serāy begenmeyen

şimdi bir evde yaturlar ṭaşlar olmış üstünleri" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 192b/3–6)

[They were so rich, look at them now; in the end, they wear shirts with no sleeves. Where are those who said their goods are "mine," who did not enjoy their mansions and palaces? Now they lie in graves, their tombs covered with stones.]

"gel şimdi gör bilmeyesin beg ḳanḳıdur ya ḳulları" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 193a/1).

[They were once lords with servants; now look, you cannot tell the lord from the servant.]

In Yunus Emre's philosophy, human beings' ontological value lies not in their mortality but in their awareness of their mortality. Human beings gain meaning as creatures who know they are mortal and convey this consciousness into their lives. In this respect, humans are neither all-powerful subjects nor worthless beings to Yunus Emre. On the contrary, they are positioned as subjects who, within their limited existence, possess meaning and are expected to act with a sense of responsibility. The soul's guest existence in the body simultaneously reveals both the nobility and fragility of humanity; this dual structure forms the ontological basis of Yunus Emre's understanding of humankind.

Yunus Emre's ideal human being defines a person's moral value not through external behaviors or visible displays of piety but through an internal process of transformation. At the center of this contemplation lies the heart, considered the defining space of the relationship a person establishes both with themselves and with other beings. According to Yunus, a person's true worth is measured not by the knowledge they possess or the acts of worship they perform but by the state of their heart. This approach directly aligns with the concept of esoteric maturity, which is frequently emphasized in the Sufi tradition. Yunus Emre's statement, "If you have broken a heart even once, the prayers you offer are not true prayers," clearly and strikingly reveals the moral boundaries of the ideal human being. Yunus reinforces this idea by repeatedly stating, "Even if a person goes on pilgrimage a thousand times and participates in countless holy wars, these things lose much of their meaning if they have hurt someone's feelings even once" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 192a/4–5).

In Sufi thought, the heart is considered a place where divine truth is manifested. Therefore, safeguarding the heart is not just an individual virtue but also the moral foundation of our relationship with existence (Balcı 2022, p. 123; Çelebioğlu 1998, p. 586). In Yunus Emre's poems, breaking someone's heart is presented as one of the gravest moral transgressions. This emphasis also parallels the concept of decency found in early texts of the Sufi tradition. Human perfection begins with not hurting others' feelings, reflecting an inner sensitivity that shapes outward behavior (Öngören 2022, p. 144).

For Yunus Emre, the heart is not a closed space within the human inner world but the essential partner that connects the individual with existence and meaning. The heart is a place of perception where a person is as open to humans and creation as they are to God. In this respect, the heart in Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity is not merely an emotional center but a fundamental faculty that determines a person's moral and ontological orientations. A person is defined by the measure of their heart, which determines the limits of their relationship with existence.

This heart-centered understanding of humanity naturally leads to the concept of love in Yunus Emre's work because he does not regard the heart to be a static state but rather a structure that turns, seeks, and connects. In this context, love is the state of the heart's movement, the most intense and defining form of the heart's relationship with God, humanity, and the universe. In Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity, love emerges as an experience that begins in the heart and encompasses the entirety of human existence.

In this context, love of God is the natural consequence of the relationship established between the heart and humanity for Yunus Emre. A heart turned toward God is also open to humanity and to all of creation. Therefore, divine love is not a withdrawal that disconnects a person from the world, but rather a state of existence that elevates a person to the realm of responsibility, compassion, and morality. Love is a state of ecstasy, as Yunus Emre stated:

"'ışḳdan da'vī ḳılan kişi hiç aŋmaya ḥırṣ u hevā

'ışḳ evine girenlere ayruḳ ne meyl ü ne vefā" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 55b/2–3).

[One should not speak of love with ambition or desire; those who enter the house of love neither incline toward nor are tied to anything else.]

"her kim 'izzetden geçmedi 'āşıḳlıḳ bühtāndur aŋa

geçemez dost döşegine at u ḳatır yaḫūd deve" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 55b/8–9).

[Love is a lie to whoever does not give up their reputation; In the presence of the Beloved by way of thanks, horses, mules, camels, and other worldly possessions have no value.]

Yunus does not confine or categorize love into molds. He emphasizes how love should be shown with genuine sincerity while opposing the tendency to settle for superficial forms:

"ben oruç namāziçün süçi içdüm esridüm

tesbīḥ ü seccādeyiçün diŋledüm çeşte ḳopuz" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 96b/10–11).

[I drank the wine of divine love for fasting and prayer and lost myself; I listened to the lute and lyre for *dhikr* and the prayer mat.]

The second fundamental pillar of Yunus Emre's ideal human being is self-criticism. For Yunus Emre, the ego appears as an obstacle that distances one from the truth and leads one to the pretension of pride, greed, and conceit. This approach is consistent with the general view in the Sufi literature that emphasizes the need to discipline the ego (Uludağ 2006, p. 528). However, Yunus Emre does not portray the struggle with ego as an abstract con-

cept; he concretizes it with examples from everyday life. Yunus Emre's poems often express this reckoning in a harsh, direct language. Yunus, who glorifies humility, views the ego as an enemy that must be battled and struggled against (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 123a/2); he does not shy away from self-examination or criticism either, saying

> "Yunus bu sözleri ḳoġul gendüzüŋden elüŋ yuġıl
>
> senden ne gele bir digil çün ḥaḳdan gelür ḫayr u şer" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 68 b/3–4).

[Yunus, put aside these words, detach yourself from your ego; since good and evil come from God, tell me, what can you offer?]

Yunus Emre describes his struggle with his own ego, likening it to fighting enemy soldiers, razing and capturing an enemy fortress, and cleansing it of evil (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 127b/2–3). Without hesitating to express his success in the battle with his ego, he says,

> "ırmaḳ gibi ben çağlaram geh gülerem gel aġlaram
>
> nefsüŋ cigerin ṭoġraram kibr ü kīni yaḳan benem" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 127a/10–127b/1).

[I flow like a river, sometimes I laugh, sometimes I cry; I am the one who abandons what the ego wants, who removes arrogance and spite.]

On this point, Yunus Emre's understanding of morality shows what state a human should be in, rather than offering a normative list of rules. For Yunus, morality is not something learned but a state of being that is lived and internalized. The ideal human is not one who does good for show, but who exists with goodness. In Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity, taming the ego and purifying the heart are not merely elements concerning individual morality. This process represents a transformation in which the human reconstructs the ego and gravitates toward realizing one's place within the order of existence. As indicated by Cook (2017, p. 47), who found Yunus Emre's mysticism to be multifaceted, the self in Yunus Emre's poems is not a fixed essence but rather a structure that takes shape and transforms within the Sufi experience. In this respect, for Yunus Emre, the human appears not only as a moral subject called upon to behave well but also as a Sufi subject who reestablishes one's relationship with existence.

In conclusion, Yunus Emre's ideal human being considers a moral understanding centered on the heart alongside the limiting of the ego. In this contemplation, the human is obligated to establish balance within one's inner world before heading to improve the external world. Protecting the heart and taming the ego are two indispensable elements in Yunus Emre's model of the ideal human, and this model can be considered a powerful representation within the Sufi tradition that centers on humans' moral maturity.

One of the fundamental principles that defines Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity is how the relationship between humans and other beings is defined within the framework of love. The phrase "I love creation/for the sake of the Creator" appears in Yunus Emre's poems not only as a moral admonition but also as a principle expressing the ontological foundation upon which humanity's relationship with existence is based. In this approach, love is not an individual emotion or selective orientation; it is an inclusive attitude stemming from the awareness of having been created. Therefore, love is not a realm directly limited by the human's own choices; it is related to the meaning of the order of existence. Yunus Emre's understanding consciously distances itself from approaches that place humanity at the center of the hierarchy of existence. Even though humans possess a privileged position among all created beings, this position does not lead to the claim of superiority or the right to dominate. Contrarily, humans are considered in unison with other beings on the common ground of their creation.

Yunus Emre uses clear and simple language to express this idea in his poems. He emphasizes how humans' value should be demonstrated by including others, not by excluding them. Yunus Emre's approach implies that the relationship between humans and the world should be shaped by coexistence, not by conflict or dominance. In Yunus Emre's attitude of "loving creation for the sake of the Creator," love transforms directly into a moral form of behavior. Humans are obligated to demonstrate a responsible attitude toward creation not only in thought but also in action. To not look down on anyone is a principle not limited to interpersonal relationships; within Yunus Emre's understanding of existence, this attitude applies to everything that has been created. Thus, love becomes a criterion that determines one's position both on the social and cosmic levels.

This perspective should not be understood as advocating ethical passivity. Rather, Yunus Emre's emphasis on restraint and witnessing reflects a form of moral responsibility grounded in humility and self-limitation. Human beings are not called to withdraw from the world, but to act within it with awareness of their limits and their place within the order of creation. In this sense, the stance articulated here represents not non-action, but a measured and responsible mode of engagement.

Yunus Emre's discourse represents an approach that does not bring humanity face to face with the order of existence but rather invites humanity to grasp the meaning of this order. Love does not allow humans to place themselves at the center of existence; it allows them to understand the limits of their relationship with existence. In this respect, the phrase "I love creation" is not merely a moral appeal in Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity; it is a fundamental existential principle that determines humanity's place in the world.

One of the key factors in understanding Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity is the target audience he intended to address. Yunus Emre's poetic language is not directed towards *madrasa* circles or a limited Sufi group; on the contrary, it displays a Sufi attitude that addresses his words directly to the people, speaking from within everyday life. This choice shows how Yunus Emre's understanding of humanity was aimed not at establishing a theoretical system but at engaging with lived life. In his poems, the human being appears not as a representative of a particular level of knowledge or mystical rank but as a subject being addressed in an existential sense.

Yunus Emre's era and life experiences also nurtured this tendency. In an environment with Anatolia's fragmented political and social structure, Yunus directed his words not to a narrow circle but to people belonging to different faiths and identities. This situation provides an important context that explains the inclusive nature of his contemplation of humanity. The emphasis on "72 nations," which frequently appears in Yunus Emre's poems, expresses a perspective that transcends the external affiliations dividing people. This approach identifies human value not through affiliations but through the shared common denominator of being created beings (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 182b/10–11).

Yunus Emre's universal style of addressing also links humans' moral maturity to certain criteria. According to him, an attitude that divides people based on religion, language, or origin is a sign of straying from the truth.

Yunus Emre's poems reveal that neither knowledge nor religious authority alone is sufficient in Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity. The ideal human gains meaning not through one's knowledge but through one's perspective toward people and the relationships one builds with them. This holistic approach, which frames human connection to both other individuals and the broader created world through the lens of ethical and interpersonal responsibility, resonates with contemporary perspectives that understand the human–nature relationship through the dynamics of interpersonal relationships (Lengieza et al. 2023, p. 2).

One of the most distinctive aspects of Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity is how he expressed it directly using advisory language. For him, advice is not a secondary element but the gateway through which human imagination is opened to action. Yunus Emre was not merely a Sufi who defined or portrayed humanity as an ideal model; he also possessed a powerful pedagogical language aimed at guiding his audience toward this ideal. To him, poetry is more than just an aesthetic means of expression; it is a tool that confronts people with themselves and aims to transform them. For this reason, Yunus Emre's language is often direct, alerting, and jarring.

Yunus Emre's teachings present being a *good human* not as an abstract moral ideal but as a concrete attitude with practical application in daily life. People are urged to avoid harming others, to steer clear of arrogance and self-importance, and to lead a moderate, contented life. For Yunus Emre, advisory language often aims to help people confront their own shortcomings. Yunus speaks in a voice that does not comfort but warns the one being addressed. When a person succumbs to their ego, becomes excessively attached to the world, or looks down on others, they are severely criticized. His critiques also point to the concrete characteristics of a good human. Humans should know themselves. According to Yunus, certain qualities become prominent in those who know themselves. Among these are avoiding stinginess and envy, refraining from gossip, and not being arrogant. The good human should be aware of their social and communal responsibilities and show sensitivity toward their relatives, neighbors, and those around them, such as their parents, treating them with kindness and caring for them. Their rights must be respected. Yunus says the following:

"yaramazdur buḫl u ḥased kibr mübārızdür ġāyet

köküni ḳaz yabāna at fāriġ olur iy ġam-güzer" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 81b/4–5).

[Being stingy and envious are harmful, and self-admiration is very quarrelsome; O afflicted one, cleanse your heart {of these}, cast them out, and keep them away from you.]

In addition, people have responsibilities toward their loved ones, surroundings, and society:

"ataŋ anaŋ ḥaḳḳın yitürdüŋise

yeşil ṭonlar giyesin ṭonanasın" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 154b/3–4).

[If you have repaid your debt to your parents, you will adorn yourself with green clothes {and rise spiritually}.]

"eger ḳonşı ḥaḳı boynuŋdayısa

cehennemden yarın bāḳī ḳalasın" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 154b/5–6).

[If you violate your neighbor's rights, tomorrow you will remain in hell eternal.]

"bir hastaya vardunısa bir içüm su virdünise

yarın anda ḳarşı gele ḥaḳ şarābın içmiş gibi" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 206b/3–4).

[To visit a sick person and give them a drink of water is like having tasted the wine of love in the hereafter.]

"bir miskīni gördüŋise bir eskice virdüŋise

yarın anda saŋa gele ḥaḳ şarābın içmiş gibi" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 206b/5–6).

[If you see a helpless person and give them an old garment, tomorrow {in the hereafter} they will appear before you as if they had tasted divine love.]

As can be seen, Yunus Emre's didactic language does not leave his contemplation of humanity within a theoretical framework; it transforms it into a livable moral understanding. For him, being a good human is not an unattainable ideal; rather, it represents a

responsibility that every human can gradually realize in their own life. This pedagogical approach is one of the most important elements explaining the continuity and impact of Yunus Emre's understanding of humanity.[3]

4. The Relationship Established with Nature in Yunus Emre's Poems

In Yunus Emre's poems, nature is not a passive background from which abstract thoughts are conveyed. When Yunus Emre discusses issues concerning human existence, its relationship with time, and its place in the world, he does not resort to direct conceptual explanations but rather to the concrete entities that humans encounter in daily life. Trees, birds, night, day, wind, and Earth become conveyors of thought in Yunus Emre's poetic language (Demir 2011, p. 206). In this respect, Yunus invites the reader to think through familiar scenes instead of a theoretical narrative.

Yunus Emre's approach to nature is often established through analogies and comparisons. Human life is considered in conjunction with the transformations in nature; the transience of beings is expressed in a way that mirrors humans' mortality. The aging of trees and birds perching on branches and migrating are images frequently used in this narrative. Yunus Emre's verses show nature as a scene accompanying the human condition throughout time. Yunus aims to make people aware of their own condition through this dynamism in nature. Similarly, the transition from night to day is presented not only as a cosmic event but also as a sign demonstrating the continuity of divine order:

"dün gider gündüz gelür gör nicesi uz gelür

pādişāh ḥükmiyile ʿāleme düpdüz gelür"

"ḳaraŋulıḳ sürilür ʿālem münevver olur

ışıdı nūr ḳandili havāya az az gelür"

"bir baḳġıl saġa sola ḳayıḳma degme yola

diŋle ḳuş ününi niçe dürlü saz gelür" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 64b/545).

[Nights pass, days come; look, many things are in such order and have completely enveloped the universe by God's command. Darkness disappears and the world is illuminated; the sun gradually begins to shine. Look around you, don't pay attention to insignificant things; listen to the birds' songs, they have many melodies.]

Nature is not a distracting element in Yunus Emre's poems; on the contrary, it becomes a means of prompting humanity to reflect on their place in the world. The prominence of nature in Yunus Emre's poetic language should be interpreted not so much as a conscious attempt to create a theme about the environment, but more as a narrative strategy that has humanity face its own limitations. For Yunus Emre, nature functions in this context as a space in which humans comprehend the self, their relationship with time, and their mortality. Yunus Emre's intense reliance on concrete imagery of nature transforms it from a mere depicted element into a backdrop that bears witness to human existence and invites humanity to learn from it. The relationship between humanity and nature in Yunus Emre's poems is established neither through complete identity nor through sharp separation. Humanity exists within, lives alongside, and shares the same time and space as nature. However, this association does not imply dominance over nature. In Yunus Emre's language, humans appear as beings who accompany nature but do not obtrude on its boundaries. This approach allows one to consider the relationship between humans and nature within a balanced, measured framework.

Yunus deliberately avoids a perspective that places humanity at the center of nature. In his poems, humans are part of the same order as other beings; nature is not a collection of objects created for humans but an environment in which they live together. This

association does not mean that humans merge or identify with nature. Humans in Yunus Emre's poems are depicted as beings aware of and acting within their own limitations and acting within those limitations. For Yunus Emre, the human–nature relationship is thus established through a constant balance of closeness and distance.

This balance is clearly felt in the nature imagery Yunus Emre uses. Humans observe birds in flight, trees aging, and night turning into day; however, they do not position themselves as subjects who manage or transform these phenomena. Nature is presented not as an area open to human intervention but as a structure that maintains its existence within its own order. Yunus Emre frequently uses the verbs *to look*, *to see*, *to listen*, and *to feel* in his references to nature as linguistic indicators of this detached companionship. The relationship humans need to establish with nature is primarily based on observation, learning from experience, and comprehending the reasons for harmony in nature. Humans should see, hear, and feel that living beings other than humans praise the Creator in an orderly, sincere manner. Yunus Emre says the following:

"her bir çiçek biŋ nāzıla öger ḥaḳı niyāzıla

bu ḳuşlar ḫoş āvāzıla ol pādişāhı ẕikrider" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 68a/1–2).

[Each flower praises God with a thousand supplications and prayers, and birds glorify God with their sweet songs.]

"görmez misin sen aruyı her bir çiçekden bal ider

siŋekile pervānenüŋ yuvasında bal olmaya" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 58a/6–7).

[Don't you see how the bee makes honey from every flower, but no honey is found in the nests of flies and butterflies?]

"bir ḳurı aġacıdum yol üzere düşmişidüm" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 152b/3).

[I was a dry tree; I had set out on a journey.]

By saying this and mentioning himself, Yunus Emre compares the emptiness and lack of spirituality in which he has fallen to a withered, unproductive tree.

"iy ḳopuzıla çeşde aṣluŋ nedür ne işde

saŋa su'āl ṣoraram eydivir baŋa üşde

eydür ki aṣlum aġaç ḳoyın kirişi birḳaç

gel 'işretüm diŋle geç 'aḳlı ḳoma beleşde" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 166b/8–11).

[What is the origin of the lute and the lyre, and what are they used for? Answer me. My origin is wood, and my strings are sheep intestines. Come, listen to my words and conversation, don't put your mind aside.]

"yine yiŋi ḥazīneden yiŋi ḫil'at geydi cihān

yine virildi yiŋi cān ot u şecer ṣundı yine

ölmüşidi ot u şecer dirildiler vü bitdiler

müşriklere nükte yiter var eyledi nesli yine" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 171b/4–7).

[The world has donned new clothes again, it has been given new life again, new grass and trees have grown. {The revival of nature} the grass and trees were dead, they sprouted, they came back to life. This point is sufficient for those who associate partners with Allah.]

The relationship between humanity and nature in these verses reflects not the attitude of a governing or exploitative subject but rather the stance of a being who pays attention and seeks to understand. Yunus invites humans to draw closer to nature while also urging them to acknowledge their limits, establishing a relationship that avoids both indifferent

distance and intrusive closeness. In this context, the human–nature relationship is based on moderation, awareness, and a sense of limits, as humans learn to respect the order of nature without attempting to subjugate it. This balance is a central feature of Yunus Emre's contemplation of humanity. At the heart of this relationship lies a strong sense of decency and limitation that defines human existence in the world. For Yunus Emre, decency is not merely a moral principle regulating interpersonal relationships but also the fundamental measure of a person's relationship with existence and, consequently, with nature. Humans exist in the world without claiming ownership, a point Yunus repeatedly emphasizes in his poems.

Yunus Emre exhibits a stance distanced against understandings that places humanity itself at the center and that views the world as a realm open to humanity's own control. For Yunus, the world is not a place where the human nourishes one's ego but a place where one tests their ego. Therefore, the relationship between humans and the world is defined not through desire and intervention but through moderation and distance.

According to Yunus Emre, the relationship between humans and nature should take inspiration from the relationship between nature and God. Nature, created by God, appears before humans as a domain filled with meaning, beauty, and lessons. Humans are created from the earth and will return to it; this awareness of origin and return situates them within a broader order of existence.

For Yunus Emre, existence is not a fragmented or chaotic structure but an interconnected whole shaped by a single divine will. Humans, animals, plants, earth, and sky are all part of this unity, which his poetry conveys not through abstract theory but through the juxtaposition of beings. In contemplating nature, humans are reminded of their own mortality and their temporary presence in the world.

This consciousness of transience requires a humble and measured stance toward nature. Humans are not the agents who determine the order of existence but participants within it. Accordingly, Yunus Emre emphasizes an ethical attitude grounded in decency, which regulates not only interpersonal relations but also the human relationship with all created beings. Respect, restraint, and awareness of limits thus become the defining principles of humanity's engagement with nature.

Yunus Emre avoids a perspective that places humanity at the center of the order of existence. By virtue of being created, humans are not separate from other beings; on the contrary, they exist within the order to which they are subject. The emphasis on earth frequently encountered in Yunus Emre's poems indicates this common origin. Like other beings, the human body is created and bound to the same material foundation:

"isrāfīl ṣūrın ura hep maḫlūḳāt yerden ṭura

derilüben ḥaşre vara ḳāḍī anda sübḥān ola" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 50b/9–61a/1).

[On the day when Israfil will blow the trumpet, when all of creation will rise from their graves and gather on the Plain of Resurrection, the one who will own judgment is Allah, who is free from all imperfections and deficiencies.]

In these verses, earth is not only a symbol of death but also an element representing the common beginning and turning point of living creatures. The bond between humans and nature emerges here not as a moral choice but as a connection inherent in creation itself. Death is for all living things, but there is no need to fear it:

"ölümden ne ḳorḳarsın çünki ḥaḳḳa yararsın

belki ebedí varsın ölmek fāsidler rāyıdur" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 76a/1–2).

[Seeing as death is close to God, why may you fear it; surely you exist forever, dying is the choice of defeatists.]

The natural elements in Yunus Emre's poems do not appear as a standalone theme but exist on the same narrative plane as human life. Scenes such as aging trees, migrating birds, and the transition from night to day are presented in conjunction with human experience, suggesting that created beings gain meaning not independently but within the same order. In this sense, nature is not a passive realm opposed to humanity, but a living domain included in the same creative process.

Yunus Emre thus understands nature not as an area open to human control but as a whole of beings sharing a common foundation of creation. Humans are neither absolute rulers nor passive elements but participants within this order. Accordingly, the human–nature relationship in his poetry is grounded in an idea of ontological unity rather than opposition, emphasizing a shared origin and interdependence among all created beings.

This shared ground of creation also shapes an ethical orientation. Humans come to understand their place in the world by recognizing their connection with other beings, which fosters a balanced and measured attitude toward both themselves and their environment. Rather than presenting nature as an object of domination, Yunus Emre portrays it as a realm with which humans coexist but do not possess.

Another notable aspect is Yunus Emre's use of plants commonly encountered in everyday life. Wheat, barley, grapes, grass, and cane serve as concrete examples through which he reflects on sustenance and self-discipline. In particular, the treatment of wheat and barley within a Sufi context suggests that the human relationship with the world should be guided by moderation and contentment. Yunus thus positions humanity not as a dominating subject but as a responsible being who learns to be content with what nature provides (Uysal 2011, pp. 951–52).

5. Yunus Emre's Amanah Consciousness

For Yunus Emre, *amanah* consciousness is based on an awareness of the divine source of the soul, the sense of responsibility arising from this awareness, and the taming of the ego. The relationship that humans establish with the environment and nature is shaped by remembering the Creator in every created being, turning to Him, and loving creation for the sake of the Creator.

According to Yunus Emre, the locus of divine love is the soul; therefore, "Love of God resides in the soul" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 147b/5–6). He conceives of the soul not as an entity bound by time and space but as an eternal truth that existed before the creation of the universe. Souls, in his view, predate the material world, while the human body comes into existence with it (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 147b/9–10).

Yunus Emre unequivocally attributes the source of the soul to divine will: "The one who gives the soul is God" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 156a/1). While the body, created from earth, is mortal, the soul is eternal and continues its existence beyond the material world (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 184b/7–8). Thus, the soul resides in the body as a temporary guest and departs when its time comes.

This awareness of transience transforms into a moral warning in Yunus Emre's poems. When the soul leaves the body, the human's deeds and sins will remain with it. Therefore, humans should behave carefully while the soul is in the body, avoid sins, not neglect worship, and not delay repentance (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 173a/8–9; 180b/4–5; 181a/1–2). Yunus expresses the separation of the soul from the body with a powerful image: "God is my witness that this soul is a guest in this body; one day the soul will leave the cage of the body like a bird flying away" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 206a/7–8).

In this context, Yunus Emre emphasizes that the soul needs not only protection but also purification. Purifying the soul is possible by turning towards beauty, goodness, and truth and by taming the ego. To the extent that a person can free their soul from the yoke of

possessions and wealth, they begin to look at existence from a different perspective and to comprehend the idea of eternity. This state of comprehension keeps the human away from empty harmful pursuits in the world; it directs one toward goodness, truth, and reality. According to Yunus Emre, humans' arrival in the world is not accidental; ultimately, the true purpose of humans is to know themselves and, through this knowledge, to know God.

In this context, Yunus Emre's understanding of the soul forms the ontological basis of *amanah* consciousness. The soul, a divine breath given to man by God, is an *amanah* temporarily carried in the body. Therefore, humans are responsible not only for their body but also for the soul entrusted to them. According to Yunus, the eternal nature of the soul and its temporary stay in the body are the fundamental principles determining human behavior in the world. Worship, morality, and taming the ego mean preserving and fulfilling this *amanah*. A person fulfills their *amanah* to the extent that they purify their soul and live a life in accordance with divine will. For Yunus Emre, *amanah* thus ceases to be an abstract concept; it becomes a living consciousness that guides human existence, morality, and the relationship established with the world. This emphasis requires humans to consider their existence in the world not through a relationship of ownership but through a sense of responsibility.

In Islamic thought, the concept of *amanah* is often considered the opposite of betrayal and has both moral and ontological implications. In Sufi thought in particular, *amanah* occupies a central place in the relationship a person establishes with existence and with God. Respect for *amanah* has been accepted as a fundamental principle both individually and socially; it is also considered among the essential qualities prophets must possess (Al-Isfahanī 2012, pp. 99–101). In this context, betraying an *amanah* is unthinkable; what has been entrusted must be treated with care, respect, and the awareness that it is an *amanah*. This sensitivity is also reflected in cultural expressions. Turkish proverbs, for instance, frame *amanah* as a not only worldly but also spiritual responsibility, emphasizing trust and moral accountability in everyday life. This idea also appears in later Islamic political thought, where governance was framed as an *amanah* entrusted by God (Devellioğlu 2008, p. 217).

Focusing on *ayah* 72 of *Surah Al-Ahzab* (Qur'an, 33:72), Muslim commentators, especially Sufi authors, have interpreted the concept of *amanah* through different conceptual lenses. These interpretations associate *amanah* with notions such as the tranquility of the heart (El-Hakim 2005, p. 171), reunion (Rāsim Efendi 2008, p. 225), and responsibility rooted in love (Yılmaz 2008, p. 269). This diversity shows that *amanah* is understood not merely as a legal or moral obligation but as a multifaceted reality encompassing human existence.

Amanah consciousness is also emphasized in the *hadith* literature. The *hadith*, stating "When a man speaks, let him be careful; for it is an *amanah*" (Al-Sijistani n.d.-a, p. 37; Al-Tirmidhī 1937, p. 39), indicates that even speech is considered an *amanah*.

In this context, Imam Ghazali grounds the concept of *amanah* in the human heart and in human existence itself. According to him, "having a heart" (i.e., being human) is sufficient for bearing *amanah*, as all humans possess the capacity to carry it. He also states that human life itself is entrusted by God as a pure *amanah*, which is taken back when the soul leaves the body. This perspective reflects a worldview in which human life, from beginning to end, is encompassed by *amanah* consciousness (Tosyalıoğlu 2010, p. 30).

The concept of the soul as an *amanah* is central to Yunus Emre's moral understanding. A person who defiles their soul and submits it to the yoke of wealth, possessions, and worldly ambitions has betrayed the *amanah* placed in them. Conversely, the person who purifies their soul, disciplines their ego, and turns towards beauty progresses on the path of fulfilling the *amanah* placed in them. In Yunus Emre's poems, this style allows

one to look at existence from a different perspective, perceiving the world as temporary while understanding the hereafter as the truth. In this context, because worldly life is a limited period given for purifying the soul and properly fulfilling the *amanah* placed in it, humans should not waste this time but should constantly strive to be servants of God, as He desires.[4]

In this context, the concept of *amanah* for Yunus Emre is not an abstract concept; it is a dynamic area of responsibility that shapes human life. The desire to return to the eternal source of the soul becomes the fundamental motivation that keeps humans away from sin, directs them towards worship, and leads them to live a moral life. For Yunus Emre, *amanah* is therefore not merely a burden to be carried; it appears as a consciousness and existential awakening that calls humanity to truth.

On this point, *amanah* consciousness for Yunus Emre ceases to be an explanation of the nature of the soul; it transforms into a measure of the relationship a person establishes with the world. The knowledge that the soul belongs to God makes the human distanced from their ego, wealth, power, and even their own body. In Yunus Emre's poems, this distance is not deprivation; on the contrary, it is liberation. This is because, instead of claiming ownership of something they know does not belong to them, people tend to protect it. Thus, the sense of responsibility becomes an element of moral balancing that determines humans' relationship both with themselves and the world around them.

For Yunus, *amanah* in this context is not merely a responsibility aimed at individual salvation; it also shapes humans' attitudes toward nature, other beings, and society. Humans who know the *amanah* of the soul view the world not as a property to be consumed but as a space that must be protected. This approach forms the basis for the frequent descriptions of nature and the empathy established with non-human beings in Yunus Emre's poems. Thus, the concept of stewardship becomes central to Yunus Emre's holistic contemplation of the relationship humanity establishes between nature and the divine order.

Death is depicted in Yunus Emre's poems as the moment when the soul, given as an *amanah* to the human, returns to its true owner. This return is described as a shocking inevitable encounter. The poet expresses that one day, God will send the angel of death, Azrael, who will come and appear to the human, causing one's complexion to turn pale. This is the moment when the *amanah* is reclaimed, and the owner of the *amanah* is God:

"eyde saŋa emāneti issi diler ṭapşurayın

ala senden emāneti ide senüŋle cengini

emāneti senden ala gevdeŋi ḳuruyuş ṣala

vebāller boynuŋda ḳala nefsüŋ ura gülbengini" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 180b/2–4).

Yunus Emre's poems reflect humanity's resistance and neglect of its responsibility toward *amanah* consciousness. Yunus points out the inadequacy of superficial knowledge about the nature of the soul and emphasizes the need to consult those who know the truth on this matter:

"iŋileyin eydürisem gör boynuŋda borç ḳalmasun

ḳaḳır buşar söger baŋa eydür iy ḥaḳḳı görmez" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 96a/3–4).

"bilenlere ṣormaḳ gerek bu tendeki cān neyimiş

cān ḫod ḥaḳḳuŋ ḳudretidür ṭamardaġı ḳan neyimiş" (*Yunus Emre Dīvan*, 98b/5–6).

Yunus frequently expresses the responsibilities that the soul should feel towards what has been entrusted to it within the main framework of taming the ego. In this context, the concept of *amanah* in Yunus Emre's poems becomes visible primarily through the idea of a person relinquishing their claim to ownership, knowing their limits, and regulating their

relationship with the world. Humans are encouraged to view the world not as a property to be used at will but as a space that will continue to exist even after they are gone.

In Yunus Emre's poems, moderation is one of the fundamental determinants of the relationship between humanity and the world. For Yunus, moderation is not merely a moral virtue; it is a fundamental principle that regulates human existence in the world. In Yunus Emre's poetic language, immoderation is often associated with the ego. Humans who prioritize their own desires tend to shape the world according to their own wishes; this disrupts the balance they have established both with themselves and with their environment.

Yunus Emre clearly states that the ego drags humans away into a deceptive focus. Worldly desires and the pursuit of possessions are among the main factors that distance people from the truth. In this context, Yunus views contentment not as deprivation but as an attitude that liberates humans. It limits a person's attachment to the world and distances them from any claim of ownership. Meanwhile, ambition binds humans to the world and makes them subject to their desires. Yunus Emre's critique of the ego thus directly shapes the human relationship with the world, revealing how the ego fosters the tendency to treat it as a realm to be consumed and controlled.

In Yunus Emre's poems, the emphasis on moderation and contentment is not limited to the human inner world but is also reflected in the relationship with the external world. A moderate person is not demanding of the world but remains cautious. This cautious stance is grounded in the awareness of transience that Yunus frequently emphasizes. The world is not a place to satisfy ambitions, but one in which humans remember their limitations.

Yunus Emre's critique of the self forms an important foundation that aligns with the concept of *amanah*. As humans focus on ego, they come to see the world as their own property; however, when they restrain it, their relationship with the world becomes more balanced and responsible. Thus, moderation and contentment emerge as fundamental moral principles shaping the human attitude toward the world.

6. Conclusions

Yunus Emre does not systematically employ the concept of *amanah* in a technical or juridical sense; rather, he reflects it as a form of consciousness that defines humanity's position and responsibility in the world. In his poetry, the world is not presented as a domain of human ownership or absolute control, but as a temporary space in which humans exist as responsible yet limited beings. This awareness of limitation, frequently expressed through the themes of temporariness, moderation, and restraint, constitutes the underlying structure of what may be described as *amanah* consciousness.

Although Yunus Emre does not articulate this responsibility through a systematic doctrine, his mystical perspective generates a mode of relating to the world that aligns with the ethical implications of *amanah*. Humans are positioned neither as dominant agents nor as detached observers, but rather as witnesses within a divinely ordered existence, emphasizing understanding over intervention and situating humanity within a relational and morally bounded framework.

This study shows that Yunus Emre's approach to the human–nature relationship cannot be fully explained through modern environmental or ecological frameworks. However, it can be meaningfully interpreted in relation to the concept of *amanah*, not as a direct conceptual equivalence but as a moral and ontological affinity. In this sense, Yunus Emre's thoughts do not offer direct solutions to contemporary environmental problems; rather, they provide a historically grounded perspective that invites the reconsideration of humanity's place within the order of existence.

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Notes

[1] Limited historical data exist regarding Yunus Emre, and differing opinions are found in the literature regarding the existence of more than one Yunus figure. Rather than delving into biographical debates in detail, this study focuses on the discourse that consistently emerges in the poems attributed to Yunus Emre. For a comprehensive overview of Yunus Emre's life, education, and death, as well as historical information and differing viewpoints on these matters, see the first section of the *Divan of Yunus Emre* prepared by Mustafa Tatcı (pp. 27–163) and the entry on "Yunus Emre" in the Turkish Religious Affairs Foundation's Encyclopedia of Islam (vol. 43, pp. 606–6). Yunus Emre's influence continues to be felt in the present day. For instance, in Sufi funeral ceremonies, hymns (*ilahi*) composed from Yunus Emre's poems are still performed as an integral part of the ritual (see Demirci 2025; Şimşek 2022). Moreover, due to Yunus Emre's emphasis on human dignity, universal ethics, and intercultural understanding, the year 2021 was designated by UNESCO as the Year of Yunus Emre (Republic of Türkiye. 2021. Presidential Circular No. 2021/1 on the Year of Yunus Emre and the Turkish Language. Resmī Gazete (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye), 29 January 2021).

[2] Yunus Emre has two known works. His work in the genre of religious guidance literature, *Risālat al-Nushiyya*, is a didactic text that deals with the moral maturation process of the individual. The work explores fundamental moral concepts such as the struggle between soul and ego, pride and humility, anger and patience, jealousy and generosity, and gossip and truthfulness. By exploring these concepts through contrasts, Yunus Emre invites humanity to self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, and a virtuous life. Yunus created this work for those devoted to Sufism (see Yunus 2021). What truly made Yunus Emre famous are the poems included in his *Divan* (collection of poems). The poet achieved this well-deserved fame by expressing Sufi teachings in a language understandable to the common people and with powerful lyricism. A significant portion of the poems in the *Divan* were set to music; they were sung in Sufi lodges, in daily life, and in homes and were passed down from generation to generation, thus spreading Yunus Emre's thought to a wide social context. The manuscripts of the *Divan of Yunus Emre*, compiled approximately two centuries after his death, show slight differences in textual structure and content. Research shows some of these manuscripts to be texts that had been compiled by different people at different times and places, with others being copies that had been transcribed from these compilations. Among the main scholarly works on the textual criticism and publication of the *Divan* are those by Gölpınarlı (2006), Timurtaş (1972), Mustafa Tatcı (2020), Uysal (2011), and Vasfi Babacan (2017). By comparing the editions of Yunus Emre's *Divan*, Erdoğan Boz published this manuscript in his study, which he prepared based on the Fatih Manuscript [*Yunus Emre Dīvan* [*Divan of Yunus Emre*], edited by Erdoğan Boz]. Our study also uses this edition as the primary text for the *Divan of Yunus Emre*.

[3] Although the Sufi tradition is often approached as a form of mysticism centered on love and intuition, contemporary scholarship demonstrates that Sufi thought has historically exhibited a structure that integrates moral, epistemological, and social dimensions. Knysh's analyses of the historical development of Sufism indicate that Sufism cannot be reduced to individual experience alone; rather, it constitutes a field of thought and practice that regulates the relationships human beings establish with themselves, with society, and with the order of existence (Knysh 2010, pp. 156–61). Within this framework, Yunus Emre's conception of the human being and the world can be situated not merely as a poetic discourse but as an integral component of the historical Sufi tradition.

[4] Although the concept of *amanah*/entrustment is not articulated explicitly or in a systematic manner in the poetry of Yunus Emre, his understanding of the human being is framed through an awareness of servanthood and responsibility in relation to the world. Renard's treatment of servanthood in the Sufi tradition as a fundamental principle that defines the human being's moral responsibility toward existence makes it possible to interpret Yunus Emre's conception of the human within this framework. Within this context, Yunus' emphasis on moderation, contentment, and the critique of the ego (nafs) may be understood as expressions of a worldview in which the human being is positioned not as a possessor of the world but as a responsible trustee accountable for his relationship with it (Renard 2008, pp. 119–52).

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