



When the Mystics Embrace Love: Comparing the Insights of Yunus Emre and Jacopone da Todi

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Abstract

Many studies on Yunus Emre, a Turkish Sufi and Jacopone da Todi, an Italian Franciscan, focus on their views of mystical love, especially concerning mystical union, however, the term "love" that both use needs more exploration. This study explores the question of whether their views of love have more similarities or differences by comparing the aspects of love, the center of love and its origin, and the end of the journey in love. Through thematic analysis, the results show that both conveyed a similar view about love, its origin, and the union with God as the destination of love. However, although they similarly view love as centered on God, their views of God show differences. Jacopone focuses on Christ as God who embraces pain and suffering, while Yunus is more apophatic in his insight into God. The finding might help the readers to appreciate various spiritual expressions in modern societies and to delve deeper into each of their core faith.

Keywords: Love, suffering, sacrifice, mysticism, poems

A. Introduction

Love is one of the most popular themes used in literature, spirituality, or arts. Yet, people define the word "love" by emphasizing its different aspects and thus cause many discourses. Often people relate love to positive emotional expression or sentiment as the opposite of hatred or apathy. Many Greek philosophers distinguish love as familial love, friendly love, romantic love, self-love, and divine love.¹ Other philosophers for example, from India or China, might have classified love differently as also the modern scholars. This article compares the understanding of love in the mysticism of Yunus Emre, an Anatolian Sufi with Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan friar from Umbria, Italy.

¹ John R Wallace, *Interpreting Love Narratives in East Asian Literature and Film: : The Status of Traditional Worldviews and Values* (Mountain View, California: Berkeleypressbook.pub, 2019), Part 5.



Yunus Emre gains wide recognition in Turkish Sufi circles as they recite or sing hundreds of his poems in the 13th century and afterwards. Today, there is a celebration to honour him on May 25 when people visit his tomb in the corner of Anatolia, Turkey. Comparatively, Jacopone's Laud is referred to among the Franciscan communities every September 15 each year. Today, his works receive recognition beyond the Franciscan Orders or scholars.

Both Yunus Emre (hence: Yunus) and Jacopone da Todi (hence: Jacopone) communicate their insight into spiritual or love journeys in the form of poems. Through such expressions, they hint that God is the initiator of humans' capability to experience love and give love in return. Some scholars in the past point out that Yunus views God as a pantheistic concept and Jacopone's view of God is influenced by his view on Mary's experience as the Mother of Jesus. This study shows that both findings might need corrections.

The works of Yunus Emre as a Sufi mystic receive recognition among the English and German-speaking scholars only after the publication of Mehmed Fuat Köprülü's in 1918 entitled *The First Mystics in Turkish Literature*². Furthermore, substantial studies emerge following the works of Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, a Turkish historian³. Thus, in modern Turkey today, when the nation rediscovers and reevaluates the wealth or their inherited literature, people begin to realize the significance of Yunus Emre's poems. His thoughts and words appear in various media, from novels to daily columns, or even political discussions. A television serial about Yunus Emre, *Journey to the Beloved* spreads internationally in 2019.

Jacopone's background is coloured by his wealthy and respected family in Umbria, Northern Italy. After completing his education, he occupies a prominent position in the legal world. Later, Jacopone da Todi becomes a lay brother of the Spiritual Order of Franciscans. As a lay member of the Order, Jacopone writes more than one hundred forty Lauds that are still popular today.

Interestingly, despite the different social contexts and faith of Yunus Emre, a Muslim, and Jacopone da Todi, a Catholic, those two mystics of the 13th century use similar terms or expressions related to love throughout their works.

Many questions emerge from the past studies but this article examines the poems of Yunus Emre and the Lauds of Jacopone da Todi to answer several questions that centre around love: does the term love in both poems mean the same or is there a significant difference? Is love mainly a human intense emotion? Where does love come from? Who is the center of love? What is the end of the love in their spiritual journey?

² Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, Gary Leiser, and Robert. Dankoff, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group (London, UK: Routledge, 2006).

³ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf* (Istanbul, Turkey: Remzi Kitabevi, 1961).



B. The Methodology

This study is qualitative. Through the thematic analysis of the poems of Yunus Emre (hence: Yunus) and the Lauds of Jacopone da Todi (hence: Jacopone) the method, this article tries to uncover the meaning of love by analyzing its relationship with several terms that repeatedly appears in both works when those mystics share their insight about love. A few metaphors that relate to love will also receive special attention. Therefore, a brief description of each of the mystic poets' social or cultural contexts will be given to give a proper understanding of the terms and metaphors.

To do so, several steps will be taken. First, the article lists some well-known stanzas that consist of love and related terms. Second, the study categorizes the terms to uncover the aspects of love that the mystics emphasize. In both steps, allegories, metaphors, or non-linear expressions that they use to describe "love" also receive serious analyses. Then, the study proposes a conclusion of the differences and similarities between their concepts.

The purpose of this study is to contribute insights for further comparative spirituality research. Readers who live in a religiously pluralistic nation where various spirituality types live and try to give answers to people's quest for love, the meaning of life, or its destination can benefit from the findings. For some people who might stereotype the Islamic faith as more centered primarily on law, the theme of love in Sufism might enrich their understanding of various spectrums in Islam spirituality. Those, who might generalize that most Catholic mystics tend to exclude emotions in their spiritual expression, might learn that authentic passion and emotional, or romantic expressions related to God's love have also a place in their spiritual journey.⁴ Those purposes do not mean to promote religious relativism but more into developing a deeper mutual appreciation and uncovering the uniqueness of their faith.

As a limitation, the article does not delve too much into the meaning of the terms "death" and "journey" in the poems and Lauda as those terms lie outside the main focus of this study. Also, following many past studies in English, this work relies mainly on the English translations of Yunus Emre's works done by Dilaver, Ahmad Sezer, Başkal and Faiz with the works of Gölpınarlı and Mustafa Tatçı as their references. Concerning the source of Jacopone da Todi's works, the classical translation of Jacopone's Lauds by Theodore Beck in Evelyn Underhill's work serves as the main source together with the translation of Elizabeth Hughes and Serge Hughes.⁵

⁴ Zekeriya Başkal, *Yunus Emre, The Sufi Poet in Love* (Clifton, New Jersey: Blue Dome Press, 2010), <https://bluedomepress.com/product/yunus-emre-the-sufi-poet-in-love/>.

⁵ (Hughes and Hughes 1982)



C. Result

1. *Poems as the Object of the Study*

In general, poetic communication was a part of the oral culture. Relating poems to all languages of transcendent, no matter how different from each other, they tend to express embedded views or teachings by using a similar grammar and vocabulary to produce “a sacred rhetoric”⁶. In the case of poetry, the similarities are not only semiotic but also ontological. Many are insights related to common steps of: “Experience of the void, death of the ego, an explosion of the heart”⁷. To understand the meanings of the love of Yunus and Jacopone in their poems, the study needs to describe poems and Lauds mainly their functions in the 13th-century contexts and the reason that the mystics use such art forms.

In the most scholarly edition of Yunus’ works edited by Mustafa Tatçı, there are approximately 415 poems, including his long didactic poem or advice called *Rislatu’n Nushiyya*⁸. Yunus writes in vernacular Turkish with musical accompaniment. The function of his poems is to describe the experiences and struggles of human beings on their journey to God. The dominant voice of the poems is about love and life destination in the union in God’s love.

The development of Christian mysticism is deeply bound to poetics. Jacopone is not the first Christian mystic who uses poems or Lauds (incantation poems) to share his insight.

Concerning the characteristics of Jacopone and his works, various scholars have different views. Novati mentions that Jacopone is a theoretical mystic as shown in his Lauds⁹. D’Ancona¹⁰ states that Jacopone is a minstrel of God which means that he colours his Lauds with simplicity as he follows the path of Saint Francis Later, Mario Casella points out that Jacopone was a pure mystic and represents the rebellious voice of the Franciscan¹¹. Interestingly, in 1961, de Sanctis categorizes Jacopone as an illiterate and ignorant friar with profane poetry, theology, and philosophy¹².

⁶ Marta Irene Franceschini, “‘Mysticism, Love and Poetry’ A Comparative Study of Amir Khusrau and Jacopone Da Todi” (Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2012), 19, <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Fmeykhane.altervista.org%2FFRANCESCHINITesi.pdf&clen=665901&chunk=true>.

⁷ P Plouvier, *Poesia e Mistica (Poetry and Mysticism)* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), 11, <https://www.libreriauniversitaria.it/posia-mistica-plouvier-paule-libreria/libro/9788820973322>.

⁸ Mustafa Tatçı, *Yunus Emre Divanı* (Istanbul: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2012), accessed August 30, 2021, <https://www.kitapyurdu.com/kitap/yunus-emre-divani/528420.html>.

⁹ Francesco Novati, *Freschi e Minii Del Dugento: Conferenze e Letture* (Milano: Casa Editrice L.F. Cogliati, 1908), https://archive.org/stream/FreschiEMiniiDelDugento/Freschi_e_minii_del_dugento_djvu.txt.

¹⁰ Alessandro D’Ancona, *Iacopone Da Todi Il Giullare Di Dio Del Secolo XIII* (Todi: Casa ed. Atanor, 1914).

¹¹ Mario Casella, “Iacopone Da Todi,” *Archivum Romanium* 4 (1920): 281–339.

¹² Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia Della Letteratura Italiana. Opere. Ed. Niccolo Gallo* (Milano-Napol: Ricciardi, 1961).



As Giles Meerssemann states, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, any religious lyric poem in the vernacular was called a *Lauda*¹³. The early *Lauda* was probably influenced by the music of the troubadours since it showed similarities in rhythm, melodic style, and especially the notation. The *Lauda* or Lauds spread widely throughout Europe during the 13th and 14th centuries and picked up the vernacular language in each country where it was accepted. Merriam-Webster Dictionary points out that Troubadour is one of a class of lyric poets and poet-musicians often of knightly rank who flourishes from the 11th to the end of the 13th century chiefly in the south of France and the north of Italy and whose major theme is courtly love¹⁴.

Therefore, both mystics use poems and Lauds as they have two objectives. First, respectively they live in Turkey and Italy which at that historical stage maintained the orality or the oral culture. With those art forms, Yunus and Jacopone could connect heart-to-heart with their people, especially since they choose to use vernacular language in poems and Lauds. Such choices indicate their reluctance to reach only the high-class members of the society or the choices might show their unwillingness to classify people based on hierarchy, a normal framework at that time. Thus, as Dilaver summarizes Yunus speaks to everyone in every segment of society including the high class or the intellectuals¹⁵. Second, the poems or Lauds are not meant to fulfil the artistic preferences of both mystics. Deliberately Yunus uses poems as a form to share his insight and experience. Written in one of his poems is a sentence *Yunus Hak tecellisin siir dilinden soylar*¹⁶ which means Yunus speaks of the Truth's manifestation through the language of poetry. The forms also serve to bring people to the awareness of humans' language limitations as each of the mystics repeatedly state in their works. Both indicate that love or God's love could not be described completely by using ordinary language. Such a concept is evident in one of the stanzas of Yunus' poems: "*Suddenly did I see a face; no word was with it. Were I to say its secret, impossible, in a language it cannot be contained*"¹⁷. Furthermore, to achieve the second objective they also use paradox or contradictory words in their expressions to strengthen their message.

2. Analysis of the Characteristics of Love

Love is the most frequent word that appears in Yunus' and Jacopone's works. Numerous poems and Lauds consist of the word alongside other terms or metaphors. This

¹³ Giles Gerard Meerssemann, *Disciplinati e Penitenti n El Duecento, II Movimento Dei Disciplinati Nel Settimo Centenario Dal Suo Inizio* (Perugia, 1260) (Perugia, 1962).

¹⁴ "Troubadour," *Merriam-Webster*, last modified 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/troubadour>.

¹⁵ Faruk Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems* (Ankara, Turkey: Dilaver Yayincilik, 2021), 37.

¹⁶ Ed. Gölpınarlı, Abdülbâkî, *Yunus Emre Divani* (Istanbul, Turkey: A. Halit Kitabevi, 1943), 129.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

section analyses the relationship between them and uncovers the aspects of love and the meanings that each mystic conveys in their works.

a. Love in Yunus' Poems

The word love as a noun in Turkey is “aşk” which appears in most of Yunus' poems. The word can also mean, passion, crush, amour, gallantry, or adoration. For example, Yunus writes his most well-known stanza “*Aşkın aldı benden beni*” or in English “your love has taken me away from myself.” Although Sezer states that the real stanza should be “*İşkun aldı benden beni*” or, “*Thy love has taken me away from me.*”¹⁸, fundamentally both translations do not show any significant difference in the meaning. In the poem, the phrase “taken away” can also be translated as “wrested away” which has the same meaning. The term love in this poem shows that love is something that has the emotional capability or power to make a person experience its intensity.

The phrase does not stand alone as in another poem, there is a similar expression “your love took me away and made me forget about myself...” which is continued with “Let me burn upon drinking the wine of love by losing myself in the words and eyes of the true friend.”¹⁹ Several other poems mention that “love of his Creator intoxicated him,”²⁰ or “look well, where a lover is there, too beloved will be in ecstasy...”²¹ Those stanzas indicate another characteristic of love. A person in love might no longer be able to control him- or herself.

Another characteristic of love can be uncovered in the following stanzas in various Yunus' poems,

*Your love makes the lovers abandon all the wealth and desires,
detaches the lovers from their own selves, and makes them die before
death*²².

*If I am really in love with you, I should not be afraid of reproach. I
should be able to sacrifice my soul with pleasure*²³.

*If I am really in love with you, I should not be afraid of reproach. I
should be able to sacrifice my soul with pleasure*²⁴.

¹⁸ Ahmed Rusen Sezer, “The Concept of Love in Yunus Emre’s Thought” (McGill University, 1967), 82.

¹⁹ Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 173.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

²¹ Sufa (trans) Faiz, *The City Of The Heart: Yunus Emre’s Verses of Wisdom and Love* (Rockport, MA: Elements Inc., 1992), 33, <https://id.scribd.com/document/425617667/The-City-of-the-Heart-Yunus-Emre-s-Verses-of-Love>.

²² Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 173.

²³ Köprülü, Leiser, and Dankoff, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*.



*The love that clings to soul this is not any Love; Who casts not soul
aside sees not the Loved One's Face²⁵.*

Thus, all those stanzas in various poems point out that for Yunus, love relates to abandonment and sacrifice.

In one of the poems, Yunus even gives a strong expression, "I forgot everything, religion and piety got past me with love, what kind of a sect this love is, it is even deeper than the religion"²⁶. Those poems as examples of many others show that love is something that burns or annihilates and brings nothingness, but also brings happiness or pleasure.

Thus far, for Yunus, the word "love" occurs together frequently with the following terms, abandonment, intoxication, losing selfhood, forget me, annihilation, nothingness, or being burned in love even in his many other poems. The conclusion thus far is that love has an intensity or power beyond a person's capability to control it. Instead, love can control the person. A question emerges, "is it logical that if love is merely an emotional state as such, it will be able to drive a person to enter nothingness or to abandon selfhood for the sake of love itself?"

b. Love in Jacopone's Lauds

In Jacopone's Lauds, many times the term "love" appears. In Laud 67, Jacopone shares his experience with love.

*Tell me, Love, why have You left me in grief and uncertainty?
Is it my vileness that repels You? Let me make amends.
If I reshape myself, will You not come back?
Love, why did You give my heart such sweetness,
Only to strip it then of joy?²⁷*

In that Laud, Jacopone describes his experience that love relates to the sweetness but also grief. Furthermore, love brings confusion. In that Lauds, he poses an unanswerable question, an expression that can be found in other Jacopone poems.

In Lauds 79 one of the stanzas expresses it as follows

Infinite love demands again,

²⁴ İlhan Başgöz, *Yunus Emre, Vol 2* (Istanbul, Turkey: Pan Yayincilik, 2020), 225.

²⁵ Faiz, *The City Of The Heart: Yunus Emre's Verses of Wisdom and Love*, 27.

²⁶ Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 143.

²⁷ Serge Hughes and Elizabeth Hughes, *Jacopone Da Todi: The Lauds*, ed. Richard .Ed. Payne (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 264.



*It claims the soul, the heart, the brain,
All time, all being, for its own.
It asks a patient, faithful love,
Enduring through Eternity
A love instinct with highest hopes,
Beyond Heaven's utmost mystery:
A love embracing everything,
And generous in charity,
That on the heart's humility
Hath built her dwelling and her throne²⁸.*

The poem shows that love embraces the soul, heart, and brain. Love is also infinite, but it can dwell in one's heart that has humility in it. Then, his most popular Laud 90 which has more than 25 stanzas explains more his struggles.

*Love, that art Charity,
Why hast Thou hurt me so?
Before I knew its power,
I asked in prayer
For love of Christ, believing it was sweet
I thought to breathe a calm and tranquil air,
On peaceful heights, Where tempests never beat.
Torment I find, instead of sweetness there!
My heart is riven by the dreadful heat
Of these strange things to treat
All words are vain;
By bliss, I am slain,
And yet I live and move²⁹.*

For Jacopone as he expresses again in Laud 90, first, love is a powerful emotional state that includes intense pain and struggles instead of the sweetness that he has expected. Yet, he continues moving on. Second, the presence of love in his heart also causes his willingness to abandon many things including the world and himself. Thus, love and abandonment are closely related.

²⁸ Evelyn Underhill, *Jacopone Da Todi, Poet and Mystic 1228-1306, A Spiritual Biography* (London and Toronto: JM Dents and Sons Ltd, 1919), 451.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 380.



Observing Laud 90, many more are written, “Love has captured me and I know not where I am or what I am doing or saying.” Then, “Crying out its love, the soul drowns in ecstasy!” Further, it also consists of the following stanza, “Love that consumes and binds me tight! Sweet Love, consider my suffering I cannot endure the fire. Love has captured me and I know not where I am.”³⁰ The above-listed stanzas express Jacopone’s experience and insight that love is not only powerful but also intoxicates him. However, again, he expresses the uncertainty of the direction that love brings him into.

From the exploration of those Lauds, it is evident as has been stated before that for Jacopone love is something that has tremendous intensity and power. The impact of love is on the total life of a person who is in love. Among others, love is something that causes the abandonment of one’s selfhood. In Jacopone’s personal life, it is evident that after he became a wandering monk, he was accepted in the Franciscan convent and accepted unfair treatment from his fellow friars.³¹ More than that, love is something that brings also pain and joy, sweetness and bitterness or confusion. Then, love is something that entails uncertainty for a person who is in love. Yet, love can drive a person to renounce the world and self-hood. Many more Lauds of Jacopone echo the same themes as if he shouts to heaven.

The comparison shows that for both mystics, love is a very powerful emotional state that very has the power to change. One whose heart is filled with love will have the willingness to bear all consequences of living with love. Abandonment, confusion, sweetness, joy, pain, sacrifice, or even loss of self-hood are some of the many more consequences of love.

After concluding that for Yunus and Jacopone love has an emotional intensity or power and brings many consequences, at least three questions arise. Why does love possess so much power? Where does love to originate? Also, another question logically emerges: who or what is the centre of such a powerful love?

c. The Center and Origin of Love in Yunus Poems

The term “love” in the above-mentioned poems might indicate the poet’s love for a human being. For example, in one stanza, Yunus writes “*I love you will all my heart.*”³² In another poem it is written, “*I Love You With All My Heart.*” In some poems, the term “Beloved” appears such as “*Once you have loved the One Beloved, no more may sorrow size your host.*”³³ Also, there are phrases similar to this sentence, “*Just like is visible everywhere on every being with its colours, you are also visible in every being wherever I look; you are*

³⁰ Hughes and Hughes, *Jacopone Da Todi: The Lauds*, 260.

³¹ Underhill, *Jacopone Da Todi, Poet and Mystic 1228-1306, A Spiritual Biography*, 75.

³² Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 143.

³³ Faiz, *The City Of The Heart: Yunus Emre’s Verses of Wisdom and Love*, 105.

everywhere.” What do the terms “You, Him, or the Beloved” mean? The question can be answered by the following stanzas of various poems of Yunus.

*Who, in the pre-Creation feast of friends the Face of Friendship
saw, He is the Lover’s soul: of Him, you may seek tidings of His Love³⁴.*

*God, give me such a love that I forget about myself; such a love that
I lose myself³⁵*

*God has given and will give love to the one whom he says mine So
the one who has a bit of love Has also had the existence of God³⁶*

Those poems indicate that the words “love” appear together with the terms “Your Love”, “the Friend”, “His”, and “God.” Further occurrences of the words “Friends, Master, or Truth” together with “love” indicate that Yunus understands love as the Divine love, not merely human intense emotion or affection between human beings.

Furthermore, two of his poems consist of terms like eternal, predestines, and creation.

*The lover assumes that he lives what he desires to;
but even that desire comes with a state,
the Almighty One determines and predestines the states of all of
us.....*

*God predestines those experienced with love.
All the states of the lovers are predestined by the Beloved³⁷.*

In those stanzas, there is another aspect of love that Yunus emphasizes. The poem signifies the role of God as the Almighty who predestines, and initiates love to be experienced by human beings. God is the One who initiates love for human beings. Thus, someone can experience or have love in the soul because love originates from the Almighty who wants to give it to human beings.

The Almighty does not only create love to be experienced but also enables human beings to experience such love. The experience is related to a person’s understanding of the meaning of life and that everything and everyone is created out of the oneness of God’s essence. Such understanding also appears in Yunus’ other poem “You already know,

³⁴ Ibid., 72.

³⁵ Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 249.

³⁶ Demet Küçük and Havva Aslan, *Selected Poems of The Divan of Yunus Emre*, 1st ed. (Istanbul, Turkey: Profil Yayıncılık. Kindle Edition., 2008), 15–16.

³⁷ Dilaver, *Yunus Emre: His Life, Perspective, and Poems*, 175.



everyone will come to pass; you already know, no one stays here forever, those who understand the true meaning of this will drink the juice of love.”³⁸ The word “meaning” and “juice of love” indicates that to experience love, as a prerequisite a person should learn to understand the true meaning of life. Thus, God enables human beings to find the meaning of their existence that God wants humans to come to an understanding of oneness with the Creator.

To sum up, Yunus shares his insight that love exists since the beginning of time. God is the creator of love. God’s essence also exists in human beings and other creations. Once the person realizes it and understands the meaning of life, the experience of Divine starts. The ability to do so is embedded in humans’ essence as God designed as such, as the Almighty wants to be known and loved by human beings.

d. The Center and Origin of Love in Jacopone’s Lauds

Compared to Yunus’ poem, who is the centre of love as described in the works of Jacopone? Where does love come from? In Lauds 80, Jacopone speaks about love as if he has a dialogue with someone,

*The love about which you inquire.
We know in many forms.
Yet if you do not speak of your beloved
We know not how to answer you*³⁹.

Thus, the poem points out that love is centred on “the beloved” not on oneself or the person who is in love. Then, the self-hood of the person can become a hindrance to genuine love. Furthermore, in Lauds 83, there is a unique verse.

*O sweet Love, You who have killed Your Beloved,
I beg of You, let me die of Love!
Love, You who led Your Lover
To such a hard death, why have You done this?*⁴⁰

The stanza has a verse that might provide an answer to the earlier question about the subject or object of love. The verse is “You did not spare Him whom You loved so dearly.” Who is the One that Jacopone speaks about? In the poem, the verse has a continuation in the

³⁸ Ibid., 157.

³⁹ Hughes and Hughes, *Jacopone Da Todi: The Lauds*, 35.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 240.



following “*Love is fixed to the cross—The cross has taken Him and will not let Him go. I run and cling to that cross.*”⁴¹ Thus, for Jacopone, Jesus Christ is the centre of his love.

What is the origin of such love? In Laud 89, “*Un arbore e da Dio plantato*” (the Tree of Divine Love), Jacopone also creates the following stanza.

*There is a tree planted by God which we call Love.
You there, you I see up in its branches—
Show me where I can begin to climb,
That I might leave this darkness behind.
I climb so slowly that if I stop to speak to you
A puff of wind will blow me down.
I have a long way to go;
Indeed, there’s a hard struggle ahead⁴²*

In that stanza, love is planted by God. Thus, God is the creator of love and enables people to journey in love, a process that he explains by using the metaphor of climbing a tree. The meaning is clear. The word love that Jacopone refers to is the love of God. Love is then something directed or centred on the person who loves but on God.

It is more apparent in the stanzas of one of Jacopone’s last lauds.

*Love, Love-Jesus, I have reached the port,
Love, Love-Jesus, you have brought me here,
Love, Love-Jesus, comfort me,
Love, Love-Jesus, you have enflamed me so much,
Love, Love-Jesus, consider my needs,
Allow me to stay, love, in your embrace,
With thee transformed in true charity,
In the supreme truth of transformed love⁴³.*

Furthermore, Jacopone’s love centres on the love of Jesus who brought him to God. The love of God is unique and for Jacopone, it is insanity that God loves people so intensely and sacrifices as much as he expressed in Laud 73 entitled *O derrata, guarda al prezo*.

*For since God's wisdom, though so great,
In all intoxicate with love,
Shall mine not be inebriated?*

⁴¹ Ibid., 241.

⁴² Ibid., 253–255.

⁴³ “Politically-Committed Writing and Mystical Lyricism in Jacopone Da Todi: Plange La Ecclesia on JSTOR,” accessed August 28, 2021, https://remote-lib.ui.ac.id:2065/stable/23474966?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.



And so, be like my Lord above?

No greater honour can I prove.

Then sharing His insanity⁴⁴.

Thus, for both Yunus and Jacopone, similarly, love begins with God's love. God enables humans to realize and receive it and then, respond by giving love to God. Yet, for Jacopone, he concludes further that the love of God as God's gift is a unique action of the Almighty. He even calls it insanity, something that for human logic does not make sense. The term insanity is used as Jacopone could not fathom the depth and intensity of such a love that God wishes to sacrifice, endure pains and even death, and allow human beings to enter the Divine union. Thus, love is more than just an emotional state but is related to the essence of God. Table 6 describes the similarities and differences between those two works.

After comparing various aspects of love, those two mystics point out that experiencing love is something that human beings might have as God's gift. However, the receivers should have to undergo a process or journey that is full of struggle until they arrive at the destination. Yunus and Jacopone might have differences in their views concerning the process, but the destination is similar as other mystics approve, which is the union with the Divine.

In such a destination both emphasizes the disappearance of the human entity as it immerses in God. Both Yunus and Jacopone seem to depict the union as a romantic or erotic union between a bride and a bridegroom more often as the destination of the love journey. Those who give such a conclusion point out that for both a spiritual journey in love could happen because God gives humans the capability to know and relate to the Creator as God in love. (Risala quoted by Sezer 1967, 58). The starting point of the journey for Yunus was the awareness of the meaning of life and that God is the One who created the universe and mankind (Sezer 1967, 62) in oneness with God's essence. For Jacopone, only God can create the turning point experience for a human being to enter the journey in love. At the end of the journey, humans will unite with God as a water drop enters the sea.

D. Conclusion

Based on the above explorations and the results, the summary of the similarities and differences related to love as the goal of the study can be listed as follows.

To convey or share their experiences, questions, struggles, and insights,

1. Each of the mystics found a poem or lauds to put into words all their experiences and insights related to love. Love is very powerful. Yet, many times, for both the sweetness and pain seemed inseparable from love.

⁴⁴ Underhill, *Jacopone Da Todi, Poet and Mystic 1228-1306, A Spiritual Biography*, 79.



2. Union with God for Yunus Emre and Jacopone da Todi could be similar. The union is neither communion between God's essence and one's identity nor absorption of one's essence or selfhood in the love of God. It means either human identity is annihilated in the union that self-hood disappears, or the identity still exists but is renewed in such union.
3. Concerning God as the centre of love for Yunus, God is the source of love as God gives love to humans. When a human focuses his or her life on love, the person manifests God. Furthermore, in his poems, God takes the initiative to connect God's love to human beings, a fact that makes Yunus call God's love an arrow. Similar to Yunus, for Jacopone, love was given by God. God dwells inside a human's heart that has love at its core. Thus, love was also a guiding force for Jacopone⁴⁵.

Besides the above similarities, the difference between both mystics in their views concerning love also exists. The root of the differences relates to their view or experience of God.

1. Concerning the view of God as the source of love, Yunus does not erase an image of a transcendent and monotheistic God. Yet, Yunus speaks out for "*dignitas hominis*" or an image of human beings not as an outcast, but as an extension of God's reality and love. Unlike the dogma, he shares his insight that humans are not only God's creation but also God's reflection. Compared to Yunus, Jacopone's view is more dualistic by rejecting the world and human essence. His satire and rage seemed to point out human sinfulness, including the arrogance of some Franciscans at his time.
2. Yunus might enter intimacy with God through love, but he seemed to emphasize God's unspoken mystery. He is more an apophatic rather than a cataphatic mystic. For the cataphatic, God is believed as the One who revealed the Divine plan, characters, or essence to human beings.⁴⁶ Therefore, different from Yunus, Jacopone could cling to the personified or anthropomorphic God that his faith had taught him. In each stage of his journey through inner pain, enlightenment, and union, he could relate each of the experiences to the suffering, death, and resurrection or victory of Christ.
3. Last but most important for Jacopone, God's love is beyond human understanding as God incarnated in Christ wishes to sacrifice and endures pains in manifesting the Divine Love for human sake. Furthermore, as love is the essence of God's nature, Jacopone views God incarnated to manifest the Almighty's love in Jesus Christ. Thus, Jacopone's relationship

⁴⁵ Chohre Rassekh, "Mystical Poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi and Jacopone Da Todi: A Comparison" (The University of British Columbia, 1987), 14.

⁴⁶ Jiani Fan, "Images of Mind, Images of God: Mirror as Metaphor in Chinese Buddhism and Early Mysticism," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* (2018).



with Jesus is like a lover and a Beloved. Christ was not a symbol, but the reality that Jacopone falls in love and senses His deep pains in the process of redeeming human beings or bringing humans to a love relationship with God⁴⁷.

The relevance and contribution of the study are as follows. First, the study points out the richness of forms that might convey the depth of the spiritual life of people from different religious or social, and cultural contexts. The fact can expand many believers' perspectives of spirituality or challenge people to delve deeper into the essence of their core spiritual life. Second, if the tumultuous uncertainties in 13th till 14th century Turkey and Italy are like the present dynamics of many nations, the poetic expressions of spiritual insight might serve many people today more effectively as they might be struggling with a spiritual yearning that many current religious symbols, expressions, and forms might need creative modification to fulfil it. Third, if many Christians view that the Muslims centre more on laws and doctrines in their religion, such a view can be modified with the proof that in Islam, in the core teaching of the Islamic faith, love also has a central position.

The richness of the poems of Yunus Emre and Lauds of Jacopone da Todi might need further study. One of the questions that might need an answer is related to differences in the meaning of human self-hood in their view, the spiritual journey stages, and the meaning of death as the concepts that appear several times in Yunus Emre's works and Jacopone da Todi's Lauds.

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⁴⁷ Rassekh, "Mystical Poetry of Jalaluddin Rumi and Jacopone Da Todi: A Comparison," 12.



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