

Story 777 (1970 Tape 14)

Narrator: Dayım Üftadeoğlu,
descendant of Saint
Üftade

Location: Bursa, Bursa Province

Date: July 1970

Üftade, Founder of the Cevleti Order

I am Dayım Üftadeoğlu, a citizen of Bursa for almost years now. I am giving this talk to you on behalf of Reverence the Pîr Üftade,¹ whose original name was Mehmet Muhiddin. Üftade was his pseudonym. Üftade, a Persian word, can mean, literally, loved of God; it can mean magnetic; and it also signifies non-existence and humility.

His Reverence was born in Bursa in 1489. He became a student of Hazır Dede, who was also called Mugap Dede or Mugat Dede. Mugap means love. He was originally a shepherd from Karacabey, and when Hacı Bayram Veli was in Bursa to visit Emir Sultan, son-in-law of Yıldırım Beyezit,² he appointed Hazır Dede Caliph of the Halveti Order. His Reverence Üftade received his degree from Hazır Dede and

¹ pîr means saint, especially a saint who is a founder of an order or group.

² The reference here probably should be Beyezit II (1447-1513) rather than Beyezit I (Yıldırım [Lightning] Beyezit --1337-1403).

Story 777

became the founder of the Celveti Order, which was a more open [non-secretive] order than the Halveti Order [of Dervishes].

His Reverence settled on the slopes of Uludağ [Mountain] and built there first a small mosque and then a small hut next to it. Later he had a dance hall³ built in front of the mosque. His twelve children, who were all sheikhs⁴ and his grandchildren extended the building program, and today these buildings are in the Üftade Quarter of Bursa.

There are four places in the Üftade Quarter which are considered sacred. One is the House of Suffering, where dervishes mortified the flesh, and where they counted 1,001 beads, and for each bead recited the (1,001 names)⁵ of God. This is a two-story building now filled with His Reverence's personal belongings. This place is now open to visits from the public

³The Mehlevi were not the only dervishes who used ritualistic dance. Here the Celveti clearly practiced such dancing. Some Bektashi groups did also, their sema (religious dance) surviving among the Alevi.

⁴Sheikh here is used to mean the head of a religious order or suborder.

⁵The 1,001 names of Allah in Islam are not really names but epithets that indicate the qualities of Allah.

Story 777

The second sacred place is his Fountain, which was built for the glorification⁶ of His Reverence by Aziz Mahmud, his student and also a kadı⁷ of Bursa.

The third sacred place is the mimber⁸ of the mosque. It is considered to be a good act for every Muslim to pray at the foot of this mimber.

The fourth sacred place is the Kubbeli Oda /domed room⁷ where, it is said, His Reverence used to fly through the ~~air~~ air during the sacred dance and the Zikir /dervish service⁷. This place is also under our protection today, and every part of it is being carefully preserved. The domed room is small, and it is believed that during the Zikir, when His Reverence rose into the air,

near his second mosque here in the city. His children, grandchildren, and other close relatives are also buried there. This mausoleum is now being visited by thousands

⁶The actual word used here by the informant was not glorification but illumination.

⁷A kadı was a Muslim judge of Ottoman times who dispensed seriat (Islamic) justice.

⁸The mimber (also minber) is the pulpit in a mosque from which the Friday noon sermons were preached. A steep stairway leads up to it.

Story 777

from Turkey and abroad. Among the saints of Bursa, His Reverence Emir Sultan draws the greatest number of visitors to his tomb, and the second greatest number are drawn to the tomb of His Reverence Üftade.

In memory of Üftade a Koran course was established in 1958, and since then it has trained thousands of religious persons [mosque attendants]. The second Üftade mosque, which I mentioned before, was referred in 1960 to the Society for the Preservation of Old Buildings. They reconstructed this mosque, and it was reopened for worship in 1970. As the far-removed great grandson of Üftade, I here express my gratitude to these gentlemen for what they have done.

The legends about Üftade, which are quite famous collected in a book called Menakib.⁹ Üftade had a unique position among the seven prominent saints of Bursa. His student Aziz Mahmud refers to Üftade in one of his eulogies with these lines:

[15th-century poetry, very difficult.]

To sum it up, we can say that he is the healer of all the suffering lovers of the Divine.

⁹ Menakib may mean eulogy, legend, epic deed, or life of a saint.