

3RD DAI AL-MUTLAQ
SYEDNA HATIM BIN IBRAHIM ^{RA}
URUS 16TH MUHARRAM UL HARAAM, HUTAIB, YAMAN

Each and every mumin knows the name of Syedna Hatim; he may not know the names of other Dais, but he knows Syedna Hatim. Every mumin must have attended a Darees of Syedna Hatim, and sought his *vaseela* especially for *barakat* in *rozi*. Syedna Hatim's tomb in Hutayb (in the mountainous Haraz region of Yemen) is a passionately sought place of pilgrimage and is frequently visited by mumeneen today, from all over Yemen, from India, and from other places all over the world. Syedna Hatim had a long 39-year eventful and celebrated reign as Dai. For the people of Yemen and especially Haraz, their faith in the Tayyibi Dawat and the mohabbat of the Dai entrenched in their hearts is a legacy primarily of Syedna Hatim, whose presence is very much alive among them to this day.

Syedna Hatim became the 3rd Dai al-Mutlaq in Yemen after his father the 2nd Dai Syedna Ibrahim al-Hamidi in 557/1162. His ascension to the throne of the Dawat was challenged by a grandson of the first Dai Syedna Zu'ayb, Ahsan b. Mohammad b. Syedna Zu'ayb. This *munafiq* penned a *risalat* in which he wrote despicable falsehoods and accusations against Syedna Hatim, [including the infamous words, "he does not have the character of a mumin let alone a Dai."] We know of this untoward incident because of the existence of a book known as *Risalat Hatimiyya*, written by one of the hudud in refutation of the munafiq's epistle. The incident does not seem to have made a lasting impact on the Dawat though; Syedna Idris Imaduddin, the 19th Dai, whose kitab *Nuzhat ul-Afkar* is the main source for the history of Syedna Hatim and the other Yemeni Dais, does not even mention it.

Syedna Hatim was the first Dai to venture into the Yemeni political field after the Satr of Imam Tayyeb. Following the Satr that occurred 25 years or so before Syedna Hatim's Dai-ship, the early Dais had devoted themselves to the traumatic readjustments necessary for the Dawat us-Satr. The mumineen in Yemen had enjoyed religious freedom under the rule of the Sulayhid state, but after the demise of the Sulayhid Queen Maulatuna Hurrat al-Malika soon after the Satr, the Sulayhid kingdom disintegrated, and the Dais also had to deal with the loss of political patronage. This was a serious factor especially when Zaydi-Shia imams began to wage war against the Ismaili-Shia, killing many mumineen, looting their villages and threatening their very existence. It is in this context that Syedna Hatim became interested in territorial acquisition and military power as a security requisition for the Dawat and mumineen. His noble and charismatic personality, his ilm

and his waaz, had increased the number and fervour of his followers, especially among the Hamdan and Himyar tribal groups. Then the Banu Zuwahi, a long-serving Dawat family, offered their mighty mountain-peak fortress of Kawkaban near San'aa to Syedna Hatim, and he took possession in 561/1166. San'aa, the main city of north Yemen, was at the time under the rule of Sultan Ali b. Hatim al-Yami, also hailing from the Hamdan tribe, and ironically, from a family with a long history of *khidmat* in the Fatemi Dawat. Perceiving in the widespread support for the Dai and his increasing power a threat to his own sovereignty, Sultan Ali proceeded to lay siege to Kawkaban. The siege dragged on for about three years. Just when it seemed inevitable that the Sultan would have to ask for a truce, a trusted associate of the Dai betrayed him. Ahmad al-Hibri accepted a bribe from Sultan Ali, gave him vital information about the Dai's arrangements, and persuaded others in Kawkaban to turn against him.

Syedna Hatim learnt of al-Hibri's treachery and quickly left Kawkaban. He went to Lu'lu'a and Ray'an, two smaller fortresses some distance away. But Sultan Ali pursued him there with his troops, and the Dai's reluctance to cause further strife among the Hamdan qabila prompted him to relinquish his hopes for acquiring territories for the Dawat in the San'aa region. He decided to move to the mountainous Haraz region, where there had been mumineen from the time of the first Sulayhid ruler. Stopping on the way at his son-in-law's fort Bayt Radam, Syedna Hatim then proceeded to Haraz. He went initially to a town called Shi'aaf, where the people had accepted the Majeedi dawat (of Abd ul-Majeed, Imam Amir's cousin who had usurped the imaamat and throne in Misar); Syedna Hatim's personality and preaching won them to the Tayyibi fold. In 569/1193 the Dai occupied the al-Zahra peak, which became his home for several years. Then after conquering the high peak of al-Hutayb in the Shibam mountain range, Syedna Hatim fortified it and built living quarters and a masjid there, and made that his headquarters. In the next few years a series of successful military expeditions gradually brought most of Haraz under the Dai's control. The core of his army was the Ya'aabir qabila, and their chief Amir Sabaa b. Yusuf, the commander of the army, is described as 'the sword and champion of the Dai'.

In San'aa, the Dawat was ably managed by the Dai's Mazoon, the *azeem ush-shaan* Syedna Mohammad b. Taher al-Haarsi. Syedna Mohammad b. Taher was extremely learned, and is credited with several kitabs, among them the 2 volume taweel compilation, *Majmu' ut-Tarbiya*, and the *a'laa* haqeeqat kitab *al-Anwaar al-Latifa*; he is also the author of the '*baaweesa ni dua*' and the '*tahajjud duas*'. He coped admirably in the face of difficult circumstances, first under Sultan Ali b. Hatim, and then the threat of the Ayyubid invasion: after Salahuddin al-Ayyubi took control of Egypt, he sent his armies to Yemen, and many mumineen fled in fear of the Ayyubids to Syedna Hatim in Haraz, where the invaders did not venture. While the Sunni Ayyubids did not persecute

the Shia as they had in Egypt, their dominion did pose a serious threat to their religious freedom. Upon Syedna Mohammad b. Taher's demise in 584/ 1188, the Dai appointed in his place the then Mukasir Syedna Ali b. Muhammad b. al-Walid, who later became the fifth Dai. Syedna Hatim entrusted the *ilmi tarbiyat* of his son, Syedna Ali b. Hatim, to his Mazoon Syedna Ali b. Mohammad. Syedna Hatim himself wrote in praise of his Mazoon, that he had no equal among the mumineen in all *fāzaa'il*, virtues – *ilm*, *taqwa*, piety, *nasab*, *jihad* with pen and sword, all the qualifications needed for a Dai. When Syedna Ali b. Mohammad came to know that Syedna Hatim intended to make him his successor, he went to the Dai and requested him to appoint instead his worthy son Ali, and Syedna Hatim did so. Syedna Ali bin Muhammad succeeded Syedna Ali bin Hatim as the 5th Dai al-Mutlaq.

Life for Syedna Hatim and the Yemeni Dais would have been very different than what we are familiar with in India. Living conditions in the mountain peaks were primitive even by medieval standards, with only the most basic necessities. The Hutayb peak where Syedna Hatim spent most of his life is a small rocky area which has a few remains of what may have been living quarters, 'houses', essentially small spaces enclosed by walls of rock. Battles and military engagements were for long periods a constant part of life; a large chunk of the history of the Yemeni Dais consists of continual conflict with Zaydi Shia imams and attempts to preserve territorial, and more importantly religious, autonomy/ integrity. But meticulous and scrupulous attention was paid to the observation / practice of the regular routine activities of the Dawat, the '*majalis mashahid*', the composition and recitation of qasidas, and the augmentation and teaching of the corpus of the *ilme aale mohammad*, in order to preserve and perpetuate the traditional heritage of the Dawat in the Satr. Representatives of the Dai were sent to all parts of Yemen to oversee the Dawat, and close contact and supervision was maintained of the Dawat in India.

The final trek up to the Hutayb peak – now made much smoother and easier – constituted at the time a precarious, rigorous and taxing climb. Syedna Hatim had to negotiate that trek every time for sabaqs: sabaqs which were held in the overhang of rock overlooking a spectacular hillside known as the '*kahf an-na'eem*'. Mumineen from all over Yemen came to Hutayb for sabaqs. It is likely that the Dai would have recited from the collection known as *Majalis Syedna Hatim* during these sabaqs as well; the Dawat library possesses a selection of these *Majalis*. The Dawat does have other kitabs by Syedna Hatim, among them the haqeeqat kitabs *Zahru Bazr al-Haq'iq* and *Tuhfat al-Qulub*, and the classification of Syedna Mu'ayyad Shirazi's *Majalis* named *Majalis al-Hikma*.

Syedna Hatim passed away on Saturday 16 Muharram 596/7 November 1199; his *kunyat* was Abu Tayye', his *laqab* was Muhyiddin. He is also given many other honorary epithets, among them

Hatim ul-Khayraat, Saheb ul-Mo'jezaat (the most famous of his mo'jezas is the *khaak* from his qabar mubarak – taken by a desperately needy mumin mukhlis – becoming dinars, gold coins), and Shamsud-Duat il-Mutlaqeen, 'the Sun among the Dais.' Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin, the 52nd Dai, built a beautiful new mausoleum for Syedna Hatim a few years ago.

“O breeze of Saba, go to the threshold of Syedna Hatim the generous, the sea of magnanimity, the granter of wishes and desires;

“And render my greetings to him, laying your cheek on the dust before him in reverence;

“For he is the sun among the Dais...

{lines from Syedna Taher Saifuddin's famous qasida, *naseem as-saba yammim..*}

Khuda taala apne Syedna Hatim ni ziyarat jaldi naseeb karay. Inshaallah.