

rule in his side's favour in the ongoing religious succession dispute. He was speaking to the press on Friday – in a rare public appearance – outlining his vision for the community and commenting on the dispute.

When Mohammad Burhanuddin, the 52nd Dai al Mutlaq (the title of the religious leader of the Bohras) died in January 2014, his son Mufaddal Saifuddin claimed the title. His supporters say that he was publicly anointed as successor by his father.

However, the half-brother of the 52nd Dai, Khuzaima Qutbuddin, filed a suit in the Bombay High Court in March 2014, claiming that he had been privately anointed successor by the 52nd Dai in 1965, and asking that he be declared the 53rd Dai and that Mr. Saifuddin be restrained from taking actions as the leader.

Last year, Mr. Qutbuddin passed away. His son, Taher Fakhruddin, claims that his father anointed him successor before he died, and

community will not remain divided and all will join together and become a beacon of light for every society in every country.”

Mr. Fakhruddin reiterated his stand on *khafz* – the practice of female circumcision, usually on young girls, that has increasingly been opposed by activists – saying it was up to adult women to choose for themselves. He said that Sharia law prescribed the practice “for the betterment of women” but that it was up to women “to decide to do so” in adulthood if they wished. When asked what steps he had taken since publicly opposing the practice, he said he had referred to the issue in his communications and directives. “I have done what I needed to do.”

Asked about the issue of triple talaq, which is pending before the Supreme Court, he said it was complex: “It is difficult but it can be resolved, and in doing so the rights of women should be considered at the fore-