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Leadership tangle continues to dog Dawoodi Bohra community

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The Dawoodi Bohra community's self-proclaimed Syedna Taher Fakhruddin on Monday politely called upon his half-cousin Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin to relinquish his 'false claim' and the top community post (Syedna) in return for mercy.

In a letter to Syedna Saifuddin, the rival Syedna Fakhruddin also made it clear that he would not give up the claim to the religious title (Syedna), for resolving which a legal dispute is pending before Bombay High Court.

"I have filed a Chamber Summons in the Bombay High Court to be substituted as a plaintiff in the suit filed by (the late) Syedna Khuzaima Qutbuddin to continue the fight for truth and righteousness, which are the hallmarks of our faith," Syedna Fakhruddin said in his open letter of July 4, released to the media on Monday.

He pointed out that his father and predecessor, the late Syedna Khuzaima Qutbuddin, had thrown a similar challenge, inviting his half-nephew Syedna Saifuddin to a public debate to establish the truth in the interests of the community, but the overture was ignored.

After the passing away of Syedna Qutbuddin on March 30 in the USA, he had anointed his son Taher Fakhruddin to succeed him and he has now asked Syedna Saifuddin to come forth for a similar public debate.

The present Syedna Saifuddin is the son of the late Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin who passed away in January 2014, while his half-brother, Qutbuddin was his No. 2 as 'Mazoon' in the community which he served for 50 years.

After Syedna Burhanuddin's demise, Mufaddal Saifuddin took over his father's title, while the self-proclaimed Syedna Qutbuddin challenged it in the court, even as the community experienced turmoil.

Syedna Fakhruddin also listed various points in a detailed letter to Syedna Saifuddin to justify his claim to the post, alleged perpetration of falsehoods, starving and abuse of the late Syedna Burhanuddin to claim the title.

"Out of concern for the community, I once again urge you to relinquish your false claim. The doors of repentance remain open for you and the seat of the Dai is a seat of compassion," Syedna Fakhruddin said.

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