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## Al-Tayyibiyya

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Al-Tayyibiyya, is a branch of the Isma'ilis which split off from the rest of the Musta'li Isma'ilis soon after the death in 524 AH / 1130 CE of the Fatimid caliph al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah, recognised as the *twentieth imam* of the Musta'li Isma'ilis. The official Musta'li da'wa organisation in Cairo recognised al-Amir's cousin and successor on the Fatimid throne, al-Hafiz, and the later Fatimids as the rightful *imams*. However, some Musta'li groups in Egypt and Syria as well as the majority in Yemen acknowledged the rights of al-Amir's infant son al-Tayyib to the *imamate*, rejecting the claims of al-Hafiz and the Musta'li Hafizi da'wa. These Musta'li Isma'ilis were initially known as al-Amiriyya, but later, after the establishment of the independent Tayyibi *da'wa* in Yemen, became designated as al-Tayyibiyya.

In Yemen, which remained the chief stronghold of Tayyibi Isma'ilis for several centuries, the cause of al-Tayyib was originally championed by al-Malika al-Sayyida al-Hurra, the effective ruler of Sulayhid Yemen, who like her predecessors in the Isma'ili Sulayhid dynasty had acknowledged the suzerainty of the Fatimids. The queen al-Sayyida had earlier sided with the Musta'li camp in the Nizari-Musta'li schism. By the final years of al-Amir's rule, however, al-Sayyida had drifted apart from the Fatimid regime; and the Hafizi-Tayyibi schism in Musta'li Isma'ilism provided the opportunity for al-Sayyida to assert her independence. The Sulayhid queen now became the official leader of the Tayyibi community in Yemen, severing her ties with Cairo. Al-Sayyida's decision was fully endorsed by the da'i al-Dhu'ayb b. Musa al-Wadi'i, the then administrative head of the Musta'li Isma'ili *da'wa* in Yemen. Due to close relations between Sulayhid Yemen and Gujarat, the Tayyibi cause was also upheld in western India, which was eventually to account for the bulk of the Musta'li Tayyibi Isma'ilis, known there as Bohras.

Nothing is known about the fate of al-Tayyib, who seems to have been murdered in his infancy. However, it is the belief of the Tayyibis that al-Tayyib survived and went into concealment, and that the Tayyibi *imamate* subsequently continued secretly in his progeny, during the current period of *satr* initiated by al-Tayyib's own concealment. At any rate, until her death in 532 AH / 1138 CE, al-Sayyida made every effort to consolidate the *da'wa* on behalf of al-Tayyib. It was soon after 526 AH / 1132 CE that al-Sayyida declared al-Dhu'ayb as da'i al-mutlaq, or the *da'i* with absolute authority empowered to conduct the *da'wa* activities on behalf of the



hidden Tayyibi *imam*. This marked the foundation of the independent Tayyibi *da'wa* (*al-da'wa al-Tayyibiyya*) in Yemen. Having earlier broken her relations with the Fatimid state, she had now also made the Tayyibi *da'wa* independent of the Sulayhid state, which ensured the survival of the Tayyibi Isma'ilis after the downfalls of both the Fatimid and Sulayhid states.

On al-Dhu'ayb's death in 546 AH / 1151 CE, Ibrahim b. al-Husayn Hamidi succeeded to the leadership of the Tayyibi *da'wa* as the second *da'i mutlaq*. Ibrahim (d. 557 AH / 1162 CE) introduced the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* into the religious literature of the Tayyibi community in Yemen, and also formulated a new synthesis in the doctrinal domain, combining the Fatimid *da'i* Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani's cosmological system based on ten separate intellects as expounded in his *Rahat al-'aql* with mythical elements. Ibrahim al-Hamidi's major work, *Kitab Kanz al-walad* (ed. M. Ghalib, Wiesbaden, 1971), provided the basis of the distinctive Tayyibi gnostic *haqa'iq* system and was used as a model for later Tayyibi writings on the subject. The Tayyibi *haqa'iq* found their fullest description in the *Zahr al-ma'ani* (ed. M. Ghalib, Beirut, 1991) of Idris 'Imad al-Din (d. 872 AH / 1468 CE), the foremost Tayyibi historian and the community's nineteenth *da'i mutlaq*. In both Yemen and India, the Tayyibis have preserved a good portion of the Isma'ili religious literature produced during the Fatimid and later times.

In Yemen, Haraz remained the traditional stronghold of the Tayyibi *da'wa*. In general, the Tayyibis of Yemen maintained peaceful relations with the Ayyubids, Rasulids and Tahirids, but their hostile relations with the *Zaydis* were often marked with open warfare. Meanwhile, the growth of the Tayyibi community of western India was closely supervised by the *da'i mutlaq* in Yemen who regularly appointed the heads of the Tayyibi Bohra community there. Large numbers of Hindus converted to Tayyibi Isma'ilism especially in Cambay, Patan, Sidhpur and, later, in Ahmadabad, where the headquarters of the Indian *da'wa* were established. In 946 AH / 1539 CE, the position of *da'i mutlaq* passed to an Indian, and in 974 AH / 1567 CE the twenty-fifth *da'i* Jalal b. Hasan transferred the central headquarters of the Tayyibi *da'wa* from Yemen to Gujarat. On the death of Daud b. 'Ajabshah, the twenty-sixth *da'i*, in 999 AH / 1591 CE (or less probably in 997 AH / 1589 CE), his succession was disputed, causing the Daudi-Sulaymani schism in the Tayyibi community. The great majority of the Tayyibi Bohras, comprising the bulk of the Tayyibi community, acknowledged Daud Burhan Din b. Kutbshah (d. 1021 AH / 1612 CE) as their twenty-seventh *da'i*; henceforth they became known as *Daudis*. A small group of the Yemeni Tayyibis, too, supported the Daudi cause. On the other hand, a minority, consisting of the bulk of the Yemeni Tayyibis and a small group of Tayyibi Bohras, upheld the succession of Sulayman b. Hasan (d. 1005/1597), the deputy of Daud b. 'Ajabshah in Yemen. These Tayyibis became designated as Sulaymanis. Henceforth, the Daudis and Sulaymanis followed different lines of *da'is*. In both cases, the office of *da'i mutlaq* soon became hereditary, each *da'i* designating his successor by the rule of the *nass*.

The forty-second Daudi *da'i* Yusuf Najm al-Din (1200-1213 AH / 1785-1798 CE), transferred the headquarters of the Daudi *da'wa* to Surat, where the famous seminary known as the Sayfi Dars was founded by his brother and successor 'Abd 'Ali Sayf al-Din (1213-1232 AH / 1798-



1817 CE). The administrative headquarters of the Daudi *da'wa* were established in Bombay, at the Badri Mahal, in the time of the fifty-first *da'i*, Sayyidna Tahir Sayf al-Din (1333-1385 AH / 1915-1965 CE), the father of the present *da'i* Sayyidna Muhammad Burhan Din. In India, several groups split off at various times from the Daudi Bohra community. The total size of the Daudi community is currently estimated at around 800,000. Since 1088 AH / 1677 CE, the position of the *da'i mutlaq* of the Sulaymani Tayyibis has remained in the Makrami family of the Banu Yam, with minor interruptions. After being expelled from Haraz in 1289 AH / 1872 CE by the Ottomans, the Sulaymani *da'is* established their headquarters in Najran, in north-eastern Yemen, now in Saudi Arabia. There have been no schisms in the Sulaymani community, currently numbering to about 50,000 persons who live mainly in the northern areas of Yemen. There are only a few thousand Sulaymani Bohras in India.

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