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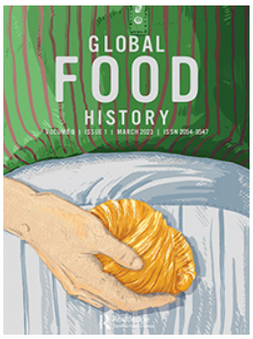

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"Human or Not, Everyone Has Their Own Habits and Tastes": Food, Identity and Difference in Muslim South Asia

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ABSTRACT

That India was experiencing a rise in vigilante-style violence linked to the emotive issues of cow slaughter and meat consumption came to widespread public attention in 2015 with a wave of "beef lynchings." What one ate – beef or not – was being constructed as a fundamental marker of difference between religious communities, and caste groups too. In the communal discourse, protagonists were undifferentiated and immutable: Hindus and Muslims have always been divided, and perhaps inevitably in conflict, because one worships the cow, while the other eats it. As a challenge to this politicized narrative, my article explores how food has been employed as a marker of identity and difference among South Asian Muslims in the modern period. To access more quotidian experience, the main sources are travel narratives, many of which were written by women, who were more occupied with food's preparation and serving. These writings reveal the ways in which food was used at different historical moments and locations to differentiate between, not just Hindus and Muslims, but also colonizer and colonized, men and women, old nobilities, a new middle class and "the poor," and Muslims of different regions and locales. As one woman from Delhi indicated during a debate over ghee aboard a pilgrim ship in the early 1920s: "Human or not, everyone has their own habits and tastes." In other words, food may be a universal human experience, but it is also a means of differentiating self and other that is contingent on history.

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Introduction: Food, Identity and Difference

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Arundhati Roy narrates a scenario that has become all too familiar in India of late. A schoolboy belonging to a family of Chamars, or "skinners" (a label pointing to their caste group's hereditary occupation as tanners), accompanies his father from his village in Haryana to collect the carcass of a cow – dead of natural causes – for its hide to be turned into leather. The local police officer, unable to extract more than his usual "per-cow" cut from the leather-makers, charges them with "cow slaughter." On the festival night of Dussehra, a large crowd of "saffron parakeets" – orange-clad vigilantes associated with violent Hindu nationalism – gathers at the police

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station: the men are extracted from the cell to be beaten to death to a soundtrack of nationalist chants and anthems. The boy Dayanand only survives to take on a new Muslim identity in Delhi by joining "the mob" in its "frenzy:" splashing through puddles of his father's blood "as if it were rainwater."[1] This fictional representation mirrors many real-life incidents that have, since 2015, hit the news under the ghastly label of "beef lynchings."[2] Cow protection was a key election pledge of Narendra Modi's winning Bharatiya Janata Party in 2014 – with its commitment to a populist Hindu nationalism that has polarized the Indian electorate on ethno-religious lines, while promoting economic liberalism and suppressing dissent.[3] The immediate consequence was an abrupt rise in vigilante-style violence linked to the emotive issues of cow slaughter and meat consumption. An analysis of "violence centered on bovine issues" over an eight period (2010–18) demonstrated that, while Dalits and other low-caste groups were key targets – as in Roy's novel – Muslims were, in fact, the main victims of this violence: 51 percent of those attacked belonged to the Muslim minority as did 86 percent of those killed in 63 separate incidents.[4]

Illustrative of this trend was the case of fifteen-year-old Junaid Khan. He was traveling home from New Delhi to Haryana with his brother and two friends when he was stabbed to death on a train in June 2017. Around two hundred people on the railway platform claimed not to have seen the Muslim teenager die. But contemporary reports describe how an altercation over seats deteriorated into a "mob" attack on the four boys vindicated on the basis that "Muslims eat beef."[5] The murdered boy was a student at a madrasa in Mewar, but Eid holidays meant that he had returned to his village, Khandawali, to celebrate with his family. That day, he and his friends had traveled to old Delhi, a primarily Muslim enclave in India's capital, to buy new clothes, shoes, and *ittar*, or perfume, in preparation. Remembering Junaid after the attack, his friends recalled some of his favorite things: cricket, kite-flying, bikes. His best friend, Yasin, also described his favorite food: "While the rest of us ate mutton or chicken, he always wanted soyabean biryani. So every time he came home for Ramzan, his mother would cook him that. And those people taunted him and called him a beef eater."[6] From this incident, one can see how what one eats – beef or not – has come to be constructed as a fundamental marker of difference between religious communities. In this communal discourse, the protagonists are undifferentiated and immutable: Hindus and Muslims have always been divided, and perhaps inevitably in conflict, because one worships the cow, while the other eats it.

As a challenge to this politicized narrative, and the "food fascism" it underpins, this article will explore how food has been employed as a marker of identity and difference among South Asian Muslims in the modern period – a focus that will, perhaps surprisingly, move this discussion away from the communal politics of cows and beef-eating for the most part. Muslims are too often portrayed as the bogeyman of contemporary Hindutva discourse: responsible for disturbing the Hindu status quo through their reprehensible eating practices. A focus on Muslim histories inverts this representation, while also allowing an exploration of how the symbolic meanings attached to food can vary within a nation, community, or cultural grouping over time. Anthropologists and sociologists have highlighted the many ways in which we "consume identity through food," emphasizing how what we eat or drink – and, perhaps even more so, what we do not – plays a key role in constructing and signifying who we are.[7] As Arjun Appadurai observed in his seminal article on "Gastro-Politics in

Hindu South Asia": "Food can be used to mark and create relations of equality, intimacy or solidarity or, instead, to uphold relations signaling rank, distance or segmentation."[8] Food's function as a key cultural sign reinforcing a sense of self and other can become even more pronounced when different ethnic, regional or religious groupings come into contact, either at home or abroad.[9] For historians, a related interest has been to show how cuisines and gastronomy can preserve a "shared sense of community membership" by maintaining historical continuities in the structuring of everyday life.[10]

To access more quotidian experience in this analysis of food, identity, and difference in Muslim South Asia, my main sources here are travel writings by South Asian Muslims. There is a voluminous literature on travel writing, including that *by* – as opposed to *on* – colonial and postcolonial subjects.[11] Standard to these scholarly peregrinations is the claim for travel to be more than the act of moving from point A to point B, or even a figurative journey. "More than a trope," Inderpal Grewal argued in her classic study of *Home and Harem*, "travel is a metaphor that … became an ontological discourse central to the relations between Self and Other, between different forms of alterity, between nationalisms, women, races, and classes."[12] What Mary Louise Pratt first labeled as "contact zones" – "the social spaces where cultures, meet, clash and grapple," not just in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, but in colonial metropoles too – emerge as "discursive spaces" around which "narratives of encounters with difference" are framed and constructed.[13] The personal accounts of travel focused on here are thus particularly effective for interrogating what Gitanjali Shahani calls the "taste of difference:" in other words, how cultural encounters are registered through foods – and, I would add, the methods of consuming them – inscribed with "otherness."[14] As Parama Roy has asserted with such eloquence, the "alimentary tract" functions as a corporeal "boundary" that is as "contested and hotly trafficked" as it is "fiercely policed."[15] Travel and mobility, and the writing about it, thus bring into focus the centrality of appetites and aversions, to borrow Roy's favored formulation, to the making and unmaking of colonialism and postcoloniality, nationalism and globalization.

Within the sub-genre of travel writing by South Asian Muslims, I center texts by women because they were – historically, if not currently too – more occupied with the preparation and serving of food. In Urdu and Persian alone, Daniel Majchowicz has identified several hundred travelogues from South Asia of which only a tiny percentage were written by women with their gendered preoccupations with food.[16] Still, for our recent project on Muslim women's travel writing before the "jet age," a sizable cache was recovered in Urdu, English, Persian, Punjabi, and Bengali.[17] Reinforcing Barbara Metcalf's representation of the South Asian hajj narrative as a "modern phenomenon,"[18] most of these travel writings appeared after 1870, with a proliferation in the fifty years between 1906 and 1956 – the period I will consider here in order to chart fluctuations from the high colonial period to the immediate postcolonial. The departure points and international destinations varied widely with authors most often leaving Muslim-led princely states or major conurbations for the Middle East, Britain and continental Europe, or, later, the USA. With this timescale, linguistic variety and geographical spread, my sources enable a comparative and gendered approach to the mentalities underpinning food discourses. Though most authors fall into the category of elites in a region of low literacy (especially among women), the cast of characters that

they depict is far more varied in social terms. This observation has special relevance to culinary reminiscences being that food is most often grown, sold, cooked, served, and cleaned away by those projected as "subaltern."[19]

What these travel writings reveal is the ways in which food was used at different historical moments and locations to differentiate, not just between Hindus and Muslims, but also between colonizer and colonized, men and women, old nobilities, a new middle class, and "the poor," and Muslims of different regions and locales. To make this argument, this article takes four themes in turn. The first section, entitled "sharing papadums in Ohio," highlights the way in which food was used to draw a distinction between South Asians as a group – or Indians, as they were denoted in the colonial period – and those in "the West." Of particular interest is how difference was expressed, not just in terms of *what* food was eaten, but also *how* food was eaten – in other words, eating etiquette. Muslim authors upturned civilizational hierarchies promulgated to justify empire through their often quite critical attitudes to British food and eating practices especially.[20] In turn, gastronomy was used to reinforce a sense of Indianness – contrasted with Britishness or Americana – when Muslims traveled to Britain or the USA. The second section, "No ham in hamburgers," moves on to explore how these differences from the colonial overlord and other non-Muslims were sometimes expressed in religious terms – particularly through a dialogue around halal food and meat.[21] Significant here is how this identifiably *Muslim* identity – as apart from an imagined Hindu "other" (though that distinction was never made explicit) – was also mitigated by gender and destination.

And yet food was also used to set *Indian* Muslims apart from *other* Muslims, as we see in my third section, "That stinking Meccan ghee." Unanticipated here was the way in which this forging of a Muslim "other" through food seemed to happen primarily when Indian Muslims traveled on hajj or other forms of pilgrimage to the Middle East – so, the very moment when one might expect a heightened sense of Muslim unity, of belonging to the *umma*, or universal Muslim community.[22] Also noteworthy is how, at high points for pan-Islamism – like the 1910s and 1920s when Indian Muslims were consciously seeking Muslim solidarity through political identifications such as the Khilafat Movement – differences in eating practices could actually disrupt that strategic aim.[23] The emphasis in my fourth section, captured by the title, "Spitting *paan* into the wind," is how, in similar circumstances and contexts, food was also used to distinguish Muslims from different status groups and regions *within* India from each another. Reflecting the redefinition of *sharif*, or noble, status among Indian Muslims from the late nineteenth century, a separation was most often made between "old" and "new" nobilities as defined by birth in contrast to good character, though also an *ashraf* elite and their *ajlaf* "opposite."[24] As I elucidate in the conclusion, Othering was not exclusively a colonial project, even at the height of empire.

Sharing Papadums in Ohio

In this first section, I explore how food was inscribed with a national or ethnic character in particular contexts and circumstances narrated by South Asian Muslim travelers. As Parama Roy underlines, it requires meticulous "scrutiny of the mundane and embodied" to unpick the "nuances of the tropological language of alimentation."[25] And so let me

begin with a close look at Atiya Fyzee, of the renowned Tyabji clan from Bombay, who, over the winter of 1906–7, spent a year studying at a teachers' training college in London. During that time, her *roznamchah*, or diary, was published in serialized form in a women's journal in Urdu, *Tahzib un-niswan* (Women's Culture), and later, in 1921, a book entitled *Zamana-i tahsil* (A Time of Education) also appeared. This source proves of particular use to the food historian for what it reveals in daily entries: that Atiya spent a fair amount of her time in the imperial metropole not studying but going to lunch. Her companions for these meals were various: most often her fellow students at Maria Grey College, her Tyabji relatives in London, and her well-healed schoolfriend Navajbai Tata (who had married into the family of well-known industrialists), but also the maharajas and maharanis of Baroda and Cooch Behar, the journalist Samuel Low, the biographer Emilie Barrington, and the suffragette Sophia Duleep Singh. Whether it was a meal served by an English host or a menu in a restaurant (a favorite was the fashionable Frascati's), Atiya was almost always complimentary – describing the food (only occasionally with any specific detail) as "excellent" (*'umda*) or "delicious" (*laziz*).[26] In general, she was more interested in the people and the décor than what she ate – but she seemed happy enough with English cuisine nevertheless.

On the methods of *producing* food in Britain – whether in terms of horticulture or actual cooking – Atiya was more voluble in her praise. Her observations point to how she had internalized certain assumptions of colonial superiority linked to science and technology. Very soon after arriving in London in October 1906, she wrote of a foodstuff that was worlds away from the cow products with which I started:

> I was stunned seeing the size of the grapes and, when I tasted them, I lost my senses – without seeds and so big and delicious that one was embarrassed to eat a whole grape. It is due to protection and care that fruits gain the quality which they cannot in an ordinary situation. When nature and wisdom come together, a unique thing is born, there is no doubt in this. I had heard endless praise about fruits grown in this way, but eating them was a different kind of pleasure. These were the best specimen.[27]

By celebrating the scientific methods of British growers that led to these bigger, tastier and seed-free grapes – appropriately described not as foodstuff, but as "specimen" (*namune*) – India's presumed backwardness in this sphere was palpable. Atiya's descriptions of the exemplary cooking facilities she experienced during her London sojourn demonstrate how technological advance could be interwoven with a colonial discourse on sanitation to similar effect. To offer just one example from an entry on October 30, 1906: "Food is prepared with such speed, cleanliness and low lost. Cleanliness is to the highest degree – the hand hardly touches anything. Vegetables are cut by a machine. There are special kinds of tools for mixing and stirring them. Everything is done in a new way. There is no doubt that everything is of the highest level."[28]

Reading these excerpts in isolation, one may assume that food horticulture and preparation enabled a rather unflattering comparison to be drawn between Indians and their colonial overlord, typical of the Othering process underpinning Orientalist constructions. Atiya's concluding statement to the last quotation, however, suggests otherwise. As she wrote with a certain confidence: "These people are so conscious of cleanliness. There is no trouble for *them* to observe the cleaning rules of *us* Muslims. To accept English ways in a Muslim manner is a simply, easy, and effortless task."[29] In

other words, if anyone was to be flattered, it was Muslims for having established these standards of cleanliness for food preparation in the first place. Many other female travelers made more stark assessments when it came to hygiene, depicting the food available in the imperial metropole at the height of empire as not just bad, but even capable of making one ill. We may think here of Muhammadi Begum, studying at the University of Oxford in the early 1930s, for whom "digestion issues" were typical, according to her personal diary.[30] For these authors, food and its preparation became a way of distinguishing the colonizing British from the colonized Indians: of constructing a "boundary," in Parama Roy's terms, but in a way that underlined the strengths of their own culture. What was expressed as cultural confidence at the start of the twentieth century blossomed into an explicitly nationalist impulse from the 1920s.

Exemplifying this trend in terms of her response to the food itself was Begum In'am Habibullah. From a *taluqdari*, or landlord, background in the United Provinces, she visited Britain with her husband and young daughter in 1924 to meet her three sons at boarding school in Dorset. Her experience of eating out in London occasioned the following, brutal assessment of English cuisine: "And the food, I think, can't but taste bad to a Hindustani. I can make this conjecture, for when I was in India, I was accustomed to eating English food regularly. But to be honest, since coming here, I've grown to detest it."[31] Her allusion to English food in India points to the regularity with which Indian Muslims of a particular status and association with the colonial regime enjoyed European dishes by the early twentieth century – to the point that the era's Urdu cookbooks often included a section on *angrezi* dishes or were dedicated to them entirely.[32] The omnipresent roast meat and boiled vegetables, described contemptuously as *bhuna ghost* and *ubli hui sabzi*, soon became tiresome, however. Particularly offensive to Begum Habibullah was the way meat was prepared in England. As she explained with obvious disdain: "Most of the time, the food here is only nominally put before a flame. You'll often cut into a piece of meat and watch blood begin to ooze out. The people here declare it 'juicy' and gobble it up."[33] That meat was used by this Indian Muslim woman to differentiate colonizer from colonized certainly muddles contemporary representations of a strictly Hindu-Muslim divide.

Notably, it was not just the style of cooking in England that Begum Habibullah disliked, but also the context of eating it – namely, in a restaurant where she was discomfited by all the other diners staring openly "at the Hindustani party."[34] Eating out as bourgeois "performance" – by which diners were gallery audience to strangers at the next table – had merged with colonial spectacle in a way unconducive to Muslim norms of modesty.[35] Restaurant culture was, in fact, critiqued by a number of Muslim women travelers to Britain in the late colonial era. Perhaps the most comprehensive reflection came from Nazli Begum, a sister of Atiya Fyzee, who visited in 1908 on a royal tour with her husband, the Nawab of Janjira. As she noted of a day out in London with an air of fatigue:

> After strolling about, it was lunchtime, and we ate somewhere. At teatime we had tea somewhere. Sometimes I like this practice but at other times it irks me. How can one enjoy eating and drinking and doing everything in public? In England there is an indiscriminate increase in eating out at hotels and such establishments … There are many in India who must have no idea at all about the lifestyle of the nobles of the city here: eating and

> drinking sumptuously, going to playhouses, and holding parties. They are so busy taking part in festivities and having fun gambling that they don't have a moment's free time.[36]

This passage ended with lip service paid to British imperial dominance; after all, the colonizing British remained "wealthy and flourishing" for all this frivolity. But the undercurrent of disapproval at the way the British ate "at home" (as opposed to in the Indian colonies) could find expression in politics: after too many restaurant dinners in Britain, Begum Habibullah was ready to dedicate herself fully to the nationalist cause in India, even abandoning purdah to do so.[37]

A balance to these articulations of cultural dissatisfaction was the solace taken by those traveling or living abroad in familiar, *desi*, or characteristically South Asian, foods. Clearly, culinary longing contributed to the construction of an explicitly *Indian* identity among these South Asian travelers in the late colonial period. Consider, as example, how Safia Jabir Ali, the wife of a Burma-based businessman from Bombay, reflected on a stop at Port Said, north of the Suez Canal, when traveling by ship to Britain just after the First World War: "We all landed at Port Said and wandered through the little town, saw the quarters where [there are] European shops and the Arab-quarters as well. It was gladdening to meet some Indian friends there, by chance, and to be invited to their home and fed on delicious Indian food."[38] In short, food brought together the "Indian friends," who were thus distinguished from Europeans and Arabs. Safia's cousin, Atiya Fyzee, too, wrote over and over in her London diary about the joy of meeting friends from Bombay and elsewhere – whether Muslim, Hindu, or Parsi – to share "delicious Indian food" (*laziz Hindi khana*).[39] "Imagine," she wrote to her family and community of readers at home in India, "how *dal*, chutney, etc., would taste after eating bland (*phika*) food for so many days. We Indians have such a craving for this kind of food."[40] A now-tacit (if not always appropriate) distinction between the "bland" British palate and a "spicy" Indian cuisine fueled subcontinental identities lived out from meal to meal.[41]

Creating Indian dishes abroad could, however, prove difficult in early twentieth-century Britain. Muhammadi Begum's personal diary from her first year at Oxford in 1934–35 is useful here in underlining the separation engendered by missing ingredients. Unable to find *besan*, or chickpea flour, to make *phulkis* for her husband Jamil's *iftar* meal during the Ramazan fast, she fell back on peasemeal, a roasted yellow pea flour used for Scottish brose and bannock.[42] On another occasion, she hosted a fellow Oxford student, American Charles Brodhead, and his wife, Suzanne, for a meal of *tarkari pulao*, *shami kabab* and *badam kheer*. In Muhammadi Begum's assessment, "The almond kheer was no good. Just almonds, milk and sugar" – presumably, because none of the spices, potentially saffron and cardamom, or other nuts for topping (like cashews and pistachios) were easily available.[43] Her disappointment evoked that of Begum Habibullah upon taking her three English-educated sons for "a Hindustani meal" at London's Trocadero a decade before. The boys were "thrilled" by the "gravy" – which she, typically, thought was "terrible."[44] Much later, the youngest son Isha'at wrote in his own memoirs about how he continued to seek out "sumptuous desi meals" – missing ingredients or not – throughout his sixteen years in Britain. Shared meals in private homes and restaurants (including Shafi's in Gerrard Street) fueled an identification with India among his student friends despite long absence. As he asserted: "We were a most united lot and our friendships were not monopolized by feelings of religion or region."[45]

It is worth noting that certain facets of cuisine drew together Indians of different denominations and social groupings not just in Britain or British territories in the late colonial period. Even after India was granted independence in 1947 with the creation of two new nation-states often at war, food was still used to distinguish South Asians as a group from "Westerners" in particular. A revealing example is a travelogue written by a young woman from Hyderabad, Mehr al-Nisa, who journeyed to Canton, Ohio, in 1953 to undertake a nursing course while her husband gained experience as a urologist in a nearby hospital. She wrote on repeat about taking papadums and mango chutney – to reference this section's title – whenever there may be a gathering of "Indians," whether Muslim, Hindu, or otherwise, apparently from India or Pakistan, in the United States. As she recounted after one such enjoyable evening shared with fellow medical practitioners:

> Everyone liked the papadums we had brought, and the Indian doctors smacked their lips when I fed them my tasty mango pickle. As if we could eat home cooking from our native land and not be left licking our fingers! It was worth seeing the state those gentlemen were in at that moment. We kept on eating chicken curry and suchlike. Here in America, Indians had found a taste that warmed their souls, and memories of home had started filling their hearts until they were beside themselves. Otherwise, what was so special about papadums and mango pickle?[46]

This passage sums up how food – with its deep-seated physicality and entrenched association with "home" – could inspire a unified South Asian, or *desi*, identity in opposition to a colonial or post-colonial "other."

No Ham in Hamburgers

If the previous section emphasized the national and the ethnic, this one turns to how culinary distinctions between British colonizer and Indian colonized, "Westerner" and "desi," were sometimes expressed in Muslim writings in explicitly religious terms. Among the travelogues underpinning this article's analysis are a set of hajj narratives, of which a distinguishing feature is their account of just how much food was carried by pilgrims on their journey.[47] The earliest by an Indian ruler was Nawab Sikandar Begum of Bhopal's *Tarikh-i safar-i Makkah*, written during her hajj in 1863–64 and published in English translation (as *A Pilgrimage to Mecca*) in 1870. This wealthy pilgrim experienced incalculable trials and tribulations attributed to tax collectors in Jeddah, primarily because she carried so much luggage, including vast stores of food and the means to prepare it. As she put in: "merely a year's supply of grain . . . , also cooking vessels . . . "[48] A less regal female hajji, Rahil Begum Shervaniya, recalled in her *Zad al-sabil* (Provisions for the Journey), penned 1923 but published in 1929, how she was quizzed by fellow female passengers on the extent of her cooking supplies and food stores. When she admitted to little of the former and none of the latter, it caused real agitation among her fellow travelers. One spoke up: "We alone have four canisters [*pipas* of ghee, or clarified butter] with us, plus two sacks of wheat flour, a sack of rice, a sack of *dal*, spices and seasonings, and so on."[49]

The reason for Indian travelers carrying so many goods (then as now) may be pecuniary or a matter of taste, but, in women's own narratives, it was often justified on religious grounds. For Muslim travelers in the interwar period, a real concern seemed to

be that the food provided may not be halal, or permissible according to Islamic law, especially if one was traveling on a British, continental European, or American ship. There are many examples in surviving travel writing of how these fears of contravening food prohibitions accentuated divisions between Muslims and Europeans, whether passengers or crew – though the rare evidence from Indian seafarers (or lascars), many of whom were Muslim too, suggests they had less choice about what they ate than elite travelers.[50] Begum Habibullah, introduced in the previous section, wrote of being so unsure of what food was halal or haram that she only dared eat boiled vegetables from Bombay to Marseilles.[51] Rahil Begum, in contrast, recounted how the mother of another first-class passenger sought to "adopt" her as part of her own family, often sending cooked chicken or fruit from the room opposite as an invitation to stop taking meals provided by the ship in favor of eating with her instead. The older lady's generosity, it turned out, was predicated on her fear of what the ship's provisions may contain. As Rahil Begum summarized: "I might – God forbid – be eating non-halal meat."[52] The centrality of these concerns was underscored by other travelers who secured passage on Indian-owned ships instead – and, in turn, wrote very positively about their worry-free experience of eating in the ship's dining facilities.[53]

More generally, there was a conspicuous dialogue on meat in these travel narratives, underscoring the importance of this foodstuff to authors' constructions of a definably Muslim identity from the high colonial period at least. Elsewhere, Razak Khan has emphasized meat's centrality as a "marker of hospitality" in Rohilla culture with "crucial symbolic emotional value" – but, here, it had a contrary function as a "marker of difference."[54] Best exemplifying this trend, though certainly not exclusively, were the travel writings of Nishat al-Nisa Begum, better known as Begum Hasrat Mohani on account of her marriage to a prominent anti-colonial activist. On hajj with her husband for the third successive year in 1935–36, she wrote a long letter from Baghdad to their daughter in India in which she described the different ingredients available in the local markets. After fruit and vegetables, sweets, dairy, bread, and legumes, she turned with relish to meat products, noting with a clear sense of wonder: "There are liver kebabs, and more . . . . There's also lots of beef available. And buffalo too . . . . There's also meat from sheep and goats, both of which are expensive nowadays. Fat can be easily had for eight annas a ser."[55] Her attentiveness to meat's availability and affordability sets this Muslim author apart from an imagined Hindu "other" at home in India. The obtainability of beef especially must have brought clarity to being a Muslim in a Muslim country, particularly after cow protection movements had swept across north and central India from the 1870s to accentuate beef-eating as taboo, if not illicit.[56]

What is curious, however, is that, for those women traveling in Europe or the United States (as opposed to the Middle East) in roughly the same period, meat-eating was not actually equated with Muslims, but most often Europeans and Americans. I noted already in the previous section how Begum In'am Habibullah, visiting Britain in the early 1920s, was highly critical of the local cuisine on account of the prevalence of, in her view, undercooked meat. An analogous complaint came from Atiya Fyzee on board the P&O ship *Moldavia* that took her from Bombay to Marseille *en route* to London a few years earlier in September 1906. Just a few days into the journey, she proclaimed: "I am fed up with this [menu]." While the meat on offer was "full of fat and most excellent" – with chickens, quails and pigeons "so big" that she was "amazed at seeing just one part" –

the dearth of vegetables put her off. As she explained: "since I am not fond of meat and there are no vegetables cooked there, it is truly difficult for me. If only I had brought some *achar* [pickle] with me! [Then] it would have been enjoyable."[57] These type of responses point to meat-eating as a gendered historical practice associated with ideals of masculinity in many parts of India with women, including in Muslim communities, less likely – in the early twentieth century, as now – to consume meat as regularly.[58]

The historical location most often linked to meat as a cheap and plentiful foodstuff by these Muslim female travelers was the postwar United States. Pioneering Pakistani journalist Zaib-un-nissa Hamidullah offers a case in point. In the early 1950s, she spent two months traveling coast-to-coast by car with her husband as part of a Foreign Leader Exchange Program hosted by the US Department of State. Her quotidian account, first a weekly column in *The Times of Karachi* and later a book, was saturated with food memories: from informal meals in American homes to supermarket shopping and roadside diners. Capturing Begum Hamidullah's imagination early on was the quintessential '50s experience of visiting a Drive-in restaurant. Having explained the unique arrangement of ordering, eating, and paying "without even once getting out of the car," she turned enthusiastically to the food: "I had a *hamburger* and how delicious it was!" Attentive to the food injunctions of her Pakistani audience, she quickly followed up with an explanation that prompted this section's title: "Now a *hamburger*, in case you're feeling suspicious, is a piece of beef between two pieces of bun with a lot of tomato sauce and pickle sprinkled on it."[59] Without any actual reference to forbidden pork, she pronounced her Muslim identity, so crucial to Pakistani state-building then as now.

That Stinking Meccan Ghee

We have seen in the previous two sections how food acted as a marker of identity and difference that distinguished Muslim authors from the colonial overlord and other non-Muslims – but it was also a means of "segmentation," in Appadurai's description, that set *Indian* Muslims apart from *other* Muslims. Travelogues about hajj or other Middle Eastern travel are especially useful here in framing the historical contexts in which this alternative alimentary "dividing line" was drawn: not between "the *medina*" and the "settlers' town" as in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, but between one medina and another.[60] In highlighting this distinction, I do not mean to suggest that some Muslim travelers from India did not enjoy the experience of trying new foods abroad: I have indicated already how female authors commented enthusiastically and often on the range, size, taste and price of fruit and vegetables especially. Even Nawab Sikandar Begum of Bhopal, who was highly critical of most things she observed in the Hijaz in the early 1860s, was moved to a favorable comparison: "Fruits and vegetables of all seasonal types, particularly melons and cucumbers and pomegranates, are … much better and more flavorful than fruit in Hindustan."[61] Other tastes and dishes were appreciated too. Visiting Iran with her husband in 1934 for the millennium celebrations of the poet Ferdawsi's birth, Sughra Sabzwari documented subtle variations in how fruits were cut or presented, but, generally, she was very upbeat about the "delicious and tasty" food she was served in family homes. Before leaving, she went so far as to purchase a samovar and a "famous sweet dish *gaz*" to take back to Calcutta.[62]

Just at the moments when one might expect a sense of Muslim unity or solidarity, however, food often became cause for division. I think here of hajj and other forms of Middle Eastern pilgrimage associated in contemporary and historical literature with pilgrims being enveloped by a strong sense of belonging to the *umma*, or universal Muslim community.[63] Complicating this perception are many women's accounts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – with Nawab Sikandar's *Tarikh-i safar-i Makkah* offering an early and extreme example. Among the innumerable cultural practices that this royal author found objectionable in 1860s Arabia were cooking and eating arrangements – or, as she saw it, the absence of them. First of all, there was the household layout: the kitchen, water storage, bedrooms, sitting room and toilet were all connected to one another such that, when relaxing or sleeping, one was constantly annoyed by "kitchen smoke" (and, for that matter, "bathroom odors"). Then, there were the desert inhabitants, or Bedouins, who, in Sikandar's estimation, did not know how to cook at all, favoring "honey, dates and ghee" instead. As she put it with customary bluntness: "They eat their meals raw and are unable to discern good taste from bad."[64] It is perhaps no wonder that, as her trip progressed, disagreements with the Sherif of Mecca over eating protocols became so heated that a special intermediary had to be employed to stop threats to her life!

The food in hotels, or lack of it, proved another matter of complaint for Indian Muslims visiting different Middle Eastern locations in the early twentieth century. We may return here to Nazli Begum who herself returned to Istanbul – the city of her birth, though she was raised in Bombay – in 1908, obviously expecting to feel at home there after several months in Europe. With her princely husband, she stayed in the Palace Hotel in Pera, frequented by other Indian travelers too and described as "the best hotel here." Her disappointment was palpable: "It is so dirty and old … not to speak of the food!"[65] Uncleanliness was an Orientalist trope, but, ultimately, it was the inedible fare that pushed her to the brink: "fed up with the food," she was thankful to be leaving a few days later. A year or so later, another author, Begum Sarbuland Jang, was similarly disillusioned in a Damascus hotel while traveling with her husband, then Chief Justice of Hyderabad. Inspired by a pan-Islamic ideal that underplayed ethnic or regional differences between Muslims, the couple were drawn to an "Arab hotel" by its "sweet name:" *Madina Munavvara*, or "Radiant Medina."[66] Sadly, being owned by "people of the faith" did not stop it being "filthy" – and, to top it all off, "food, tea, and coffee were not available" either.[67] Dirty accommodation and poor sustenance converged in these alternative constructions of the Orient separating Muslim from Muslim.

If the culinary gaps between Indian and Arab Muslims were only implicit in the passages so far, they emerged far more sharply in Rahil Begum Shervaniya's pilgrimage narrative from the early 1920s. Of particular note here are those passages in which food was used to distinguish between the Indian Muslims aboard a hajj ship and the Meccan Muslims they were going to visit – the latter of whom occupied the holiest site of Islam and yet, in a reversal of historic notions of "center" and "periphery" within the Islamic world, were not considered superior or even equal to their South Asian coreligionists.[68] The following exchange between Rahil Begum and a fellow female passenger, inspiring this section's title, is worth quoting at some length for the intensity of sentiment:

> I asked her what sort of disaster she was expecting that she would bring so many supplies with her. She replied, "Sister! We wouldn't be able to bear eating Mecca *sharif's* stinking ghee for a single day. . .. We'd rather eat boiled food than their ghee. Even if we have to go without food for four days, we won't put that ghee into our mouths."
>
> To which I replied: "Well, then you yourself should take my canister of ghee. I will eat that sticky, rotten ghee instead."
>
> She said, "The wheat there is so bad that it clogs up your intestines," and proceeded to trash every single grain in Mecca *sharif*. There were about twelve women there, each of whom took a turn to sing the highest praises of the items that they had brought with them, and to try and scare me by impressing upon me my impending suffering.[69]

We see that Rahil Begum herself, from a prominent and accomplished family associated with the Islamic modernism of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his Muhammad Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, did not place herself above eating the "rotten" victuals of the Arab "other," but, in doing so, she was clearly in the minority. Still, she recognized the mutuality of Muslim Othering. As she noted of an Arab family aboard her ship, identified only as "traders from Bahrain": "I can't claim to know [if they have brought many foodstuffs with them] since they seem to have some type of disgust for Indians … I pass in front of their cabins often enough, but aside from finding that they are avid eaters, I haven't been able to learn much else about them."[70]

As the final line here indicates, a division was made between Indian and Arab Muslims, not only in terms of the *quality* of food consumed, but also in terms of the *amount*. South Asian Muslim society had seen a reworking of understandings of status in the nineteenth century as a new middle-class encompassed those benefiting from colonial education and economy. In the straightened circumstances of British rule, frugality and prudence came to be celebrated as defining features of elite, or *sharif*, standing.[71] Reflecting this historical shift, Arab over-consumption was singled out by many colonial Indian travelers as an affront to cultural values underpinning their privilege. As Rahil Begum continued with her description of the Bahraini traders: "Every day they slaughter a sheep and, *mashallah*, every day they eat the whole thing … I do not exaggerate when I tell you that they have two cooks who prepare food twenty-four hours a day, and, *mashallah*, they use the largest cooking vessels imaginable. They've definitely outdone the Indians."[72] Nawab Sikandar Begum reworked Orientalist tropes to join the refrain too: "The people [of Arabia] take a great quantity of food, as much as 5 or 6 lbs. in weight in the course of the day, but the diet is very gross; and their [eating] habits are dirty."[73] In doing so, this princely reformer sought to resuscitate the reputation of her class in the face of colonial and Muslim discourses that equated the old nobility with decadence and a new elite with cleanliness and restraint.

Spitting *Paan* into the Wind

The distinctions drawn between a new middle-class and an old nobility in colonial South Asia were not just relevant to how food was employed to differentiate Indian Muslims from other Muslims; it also applied to Muslims *within* South Asia. In short, alimentation was as important to underpinning certain demarcations of social status *among* South Asian Muslims from the late nineteenth century as it was national, communal, and ethnic

identities. I pointed already to how Rahil Begum Shervaniya, belonging to a family lauded for its associations with Aligarh reformism, sought to distinguish her modernist ways from those of an old nobility. Hence, her passage on Mecca's "stinking ghee," quoted in the previous section, concluded with an oblique reference to the disparities between her (the narrator) and the women about whom she was writing (the narrated). Her satirical style is evident in how she captured their exchange:

> "You are elegant and refined women from the city of Delhi, so how can a village-person like me, who is accustomed to eating whatever comes to hand, possibly be the equal of you?"
>
> One particularly boastful woman replied, "It's true, sister, we would sooner go hungry than eat badly."[74]

She went on to explain that others aboard ship "surpassed even this group" in terms of the volume and variety of their food stores, with many bringing live sheep, goats, and "baskets full of chickens" to be slaughtered on the deck each morning. "Worst of all," according to Rahil Begum, were the large baskets of *paan*, some containing as many as "five or six thousand leaves each": "their size according to the status of their owner."[75]

Her spirited account highlights how food's abundance – the ability to travel with half a farmyard and a crop of *paan* – operated as a status symbol or, in Appadurai's words, a "sign of rank" for these South Asian Muslim travelers. At the same time, we see how Rahil Begum sought to distinguish herself, as a "new" *sharif* woman, from the other elites with whom she traveled in first-class accommodation. That there was a false modesty in portraying herself as a "village-person" in comparison with these "elegant and refined" Delhi-types is clear when she is writing *about* them, rather than narrating what she said *to* them. Then, they do not appear "refined and elegant" at all, but quite the opposite. This distinction is perhaps most clear in another passage on *paan* captured for this section's title:

> And then there are our respected sisters, who chew *paan* and spit its juices out. Oftentimes, they spit against the wind, such that the juice is carried back into the room in a thousand different drops. Sometimes it lands on the face of a European, sometimes it ruins another's clothes … Alas, I am compelled to write that these ignorant pilgrims are more suited to rickety cargo ships where horses and goats are given the same treatment, and where they would be so thrown about that they wouldn't be able to raise their heads.[76]

In the course of a few lines, "our respected sisters" – who we may fairly conjecture belonged not to the new *sharif*, but the old – were transformed into "ignorant pilgrims." For their gross eating habits – gross in terms of extravagance and gross in terms bad manners – they were put in their place in an evolving social hierarchy.

These travel accounts also made a dietary distinction between elites and those deemed below them in the social hierarchy – in other words, between the *ashraf* and the *ajlaf*. Many authors referred to an (unnamed) manservant or lady's maid who was included in their traveling party, but little indication was given as to what they consumed – other than that it was *different* to that prepared for their employer.[77] Still, we get a clear sense of how food was used to reinforce a complex hierarchy among South Asian Muslims. Consider Rahil Begum's description of the arrangements made for her own staff while aboard the hajj ship from Bombay to Jeddah in 1923. Unwilling for her servants to "eat from the ship's meals

for the poor," she paid an additional rupee per person per day for "proper arrangements."[78] Subsequently, her servants were given, not the food she and her family ate themselves from the ship's kitchen (much to the consternation of her older neighbor who, as noted above, feared it was not halal), but the meals that the ship's cooks prepared for themselves. Advertising her attentiveness to her staff's alimentary wellbeing offered another means for Rahil Begum to flaunt her modernist *sharif* credentials. The different first-class passengers, their servants and "the poor" were all Muslims about to don the robe of *ihram* – the seamless, white garb worn by pilgrims to Mecca to erase socio-economic distinctions as they entered a sacred state – and yet their food practices and attitudes betrayed the fine discrepancies made between them.

Rahil Begum was keen to perform the benevolent employer when it came to feeding her own servants, but she remained scathing of other "poor passengers" whom she depicted as aggressive, dishonest and "all around ill-natured." Their battles to be the first to access drinking water from the ship's pump – even when there were "no limits on its usage" – inspired a quotation from the poet, Altaf Hussain "Hali":

> *Fights on the riverbank, as people come and go*
> *Some fighting to drink, others to give water [to their flocks]*[79]

Her citation of this reformist poet gains additional significance if we consider his close association with the Aligarh modernism that buttressed a new *sharif* identity from the late nineteenth century. Scholars have shown how founder Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his disciples left aside their privileged status as sayyids, indicating lineage to the Prophet Muhammad, to galvanize the "more comprehensive" *sharif* identity on the basis it was considered the more "politically-relevant category to act as an all-India Muslim leadership."[80] It is perhaps ironic, then, that, even as Rahil Begum's ruminations on food and water revealed and reinforced socio-economic identities among South Asian Muslims, so they uncovered regional differentiations too. Garnering the most virulent response were those with the most different food cultures – as in her invocation directed at those from Bihar and Bengal: "May God never ask us to travel with them [again]!"[81]

The importance of food to regional identity construction among South Asian Muslims in the interwar period emerged most strongly in another pilgrimage account written by Lahori educator and journalist, Fatima Begum, who, notably, was later to surface as a principal activist in the Pakistan Movement. During her 1934 hajj, she was involved in a ship-wide "commotion," partially over that food stuff already established as contentious, namely, ghee. In her published diary, she began by explaining how she was approached by "several gentlemen" to sign a petition that would carry their three-fold complaints to the ship's captain:

> (1) The contractor doesn't give hot water for tea, and he demands two paisas per kettle of water.
> (2) In the food we receive, vegetable oil is used instead of ghee, which makes us and our children sick.
> (3) The food is neither good nor abundant. This should be remedied.[82]

Fatima Begum must have been sympathetic to these grievances because, in her own account, she offered to intervene on behalf of the other passengers with the contractors. Their response she recorded as "reasonable:" Hot water could not be given out freely

because of the constant demand on staff, but a samovar and fuel could be supplied for the passengers' own use. As for the controversial ghee, the contractors protested: "We use pure ghee. There's not so much as a trace of vegetable ghee or oil." They rejected the final objection too, noting, "so much food is served that people eat half and throw the rest in the ocean."[83] The passengers retorted that the food on offer was so "unappetizing" that it was only good for throwing in the ocean!

Especially relevant in Fatima Begum's account to this section's theme of alimentary divides *between* South Asian Muslims are her subsequent reflections on the disagreement. They underscore how regional tastes coalesced as markers of difference as more Indians traveled together on cheaper and faster continental and intercontinental transportation from the late nineteenth century.[84] As she mused: "I don't understand why people [aboard this hajj ship] constantly fight about food, even though the food isn't so bad. Bengalis, Madrasis, people from U.P. [the Upper Provinces], Punjabis, Sindhis, frontiers people, Bukharis – they can't all enjoy the same kind of food."[85] Her observations will ring true with anyone familiar with South Asia today where the food eaten in one region or another may simply be unrecognizable as "Indian" to someone from another state or locality. Lizzie Collingham captures the regional stereotypes when she notes common quips that revolve around "sickly sweet" Gujarati fare, Bengali dishes that "reek" of mustard oil and "unbearably hot" Telugu dishes, as well as the rice/bread divide.[86] Notable in Fatima Begum's writing, too, is how these regional preferences intersected with economy. While the "people from Bukhara and the frontier" wanted a mutton kabab every day, others were happy "chewing on a few chickpeas" or "mak[ing] do with dry roti."[87] Why, she asked, should they all pay a flat rate of sixteen rupees for the pleasure? In the end, this maritime conflict was resolved with an inducement of just one more tandoori *roti* per head.

Conclusion: "Human or Not, Everyone Has Their Own Habits and Tastes"

To conclude, let me return an author oft-quoted in this essay thanks to the engaging, astute and often acerbic quality of her narrative. An ellipsis in an above passage on "Mecca *sharif*'s stinking ghee" hides how Rahil Begum Shervaniya used dialogue with other female hajjis to point to a key observation about food, identity, and difference. Faced with the other woman's intransigence, Rahil Begum asked: "Why? Aren't the residents of Mecca human too?" Their answer was definitive: "Human or not, everyone has their own habits and tastes."[88] This one sentence has been captured for my article's title because it points to food's most basic quality – that it is, in Becuț and Puerto's words, "a universal primary physiological necessity for all sentient beings."[89] In short, we all need food to live and so it should underscore our shared humanity. And yet, despite this – or perhaps more rightly because of it – food becomes a main mode by which we articulate our identity, as individuals and as social groups. Hence, the French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's aphorism is quoted so regularly: "Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai qui tu es." *Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who are.*[90] Food preparation, consumption and etiquette combine to construct and communicate belonging to a social group affirmed as different to other groups – defined by class, kinship, nation, ethnicity and/or religion – in a rank order.[91]

These sociological insights are applied in this article to show how South Asian Muslims used food in the colonial period and just after to construct notions of self and other – with travel narratives by women able to capture those moments when these distinctions came into the sharpest relief. The historian's offering is to highlight how concepts of identity and difference shifted by time as well as place. In the imperial metropole at the height of the empire, what and how food was eaten set colonized Indian apart from colonizing British, reinforcing a *desi* identity that persisted into postcolonial contexts. Meat consumption, on the other hand, could activate religious discourses around halal food that reinforced Muslim sensibilities, even as these were moderated by gender and destination. Eating practices could also disrupt identification with a global Muslim community at those very moments when one might expect it to be strongest: on hajj or when pan-Islamism was heightened. In those specifically Muslim contexts, the quality and amount of food consumed by individuals or groups, along with the cleanliness of the environment in which it was prepared, worked to fracture the *umma* by nationality, social status and region. A three-fold division between old nobilities, a new middle class, and "the poor," emerging in South Asian Muslim society from the nineteenth century, coalesced around symbolic meanings attached to food.

Thinkers associated with structuralism and poststructuralism have highlighted the way in which humans understand the world in relational terms, using dichotomous oppositions with shifting meanings to decode the world around them. In colonial and postcolonial contexts, these oppositions are interpreted to feed into a discourse of difference, or "Othering": us/them, civilized/savage, rational/superstitious, advanced/backwards, human/animal, white/black.[92] That South Asian Muslims engaged with these Orientalist constructs as they traveled the world in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries is self-evident from their writings. Their accounts of different food cultures, practices, and experiences, however, indicate that they often reinterpreted or reapplied these binaries. Far from internalizing a sense of "native" inferiority, in Fanon's terms, these authors used food to assert the value of their own cultural and religious practices against those conceptualized as "superior:" the British colonizer, Arab Muslims, those of noble birth.[93] In doing so, they reworked established hierarchies of race, religion and class, offering alternative constructions of "the West" and "the Orient" alike.

These historical conclusions have important implications for how communal differences linked to food are constructed in India today, with all their bloody consequences. Far from fixed or fundamental, the Hindu-Muslim divide over the holy cow has been one of many culinary markers of identity and difference for South Asian Muslims in the modern period – not inconsequential, but also not exclusive. Just as past binaries reflected and illuminated a historical moment, so this one does our own: as a time when a politicized narrative around cow protection authorizes and emboldens violence against India's Muslim minority. To understand the "currency" of cow protection in contemporary India, Shabnam Tejani argues we must also look to history: to a colonial state that created a "platform" for expressing religious offense through a "noninterference" policy that enabled a "cultural politics of hurt."[94] By treating social conflict as a collective expression of emotion, community identities were reified in such a way that a rhetoric justifying murderous violence could be replicated through time. Yet, even in the age of Hindutva, resistance can still find expression through food cultures.[95]

Food's significance to politics and the structuring everyday life, then, is not just a story of historical continuities or rigid boundaries, but also one of fluidity, rupture, and change.

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Notes

1. Roy, *Ministry*, 90–93.
2. See, as example, "India 'Beef' Lynching."
3. On the rise of "ethnic democracy" under the BJP, see Jaffrelot, *Modi's India*.
4. Doniger, "Hinduism and Its Complicated History."
5. "Muslims on India train assaulted."
6. Lakhani, "A Boy Called Junaid."
7. The quotation is borrowed from the title of a blog post: "Eating Yourself."
8. Appadurai, "Gastro-Politics," 494–511.

9. See, as example, Xu, *Eating Identities*.
10. For a summary of this historiography, see Becuț and Puerto, "Food History and Identity," 1–4.
11. Of particular relevance to my context here is Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels*; Majchrowicz, *The World in Words*; and Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Travelers*.
12. Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 4.
13. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 34; Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 4.
14. Shahani, *Taste of Difference*, 1–2, 5.
15. Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 24.
16. Majchrowicz, "Travel, Travel Writing," 40.
17. The main output from this project is: Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries of Travel Writing by Muslim Women*. As ours was a large, collaborative project, I am very pleased to acknowledge that I am drawing on primary source extracts prepared for individual chapters by Daniel Majchrowicz, David Boyk, Sunil Sharma, Asiya Alam, and myself. I will cite original language sources used by the project, but all translations come from the book unless stated otherwise. Additional materials are available on the project website, Accessing Muslim Lives [https://www.accessingmuslimlives.org].
18. Metcalf, "The Pilgrimage Remembered," 85–107.
19. Lambert-Hurley, *Elusive Lives*, 6–7.
20. On the civilizing mission in South Asia, see Fischer-Tiné and Mann, *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission*.
21. For an introduction to halal food, highlighting how these traditions have been reinterpreted through history, see Armanios and Ergene, *Halal Food*.
22. As Michael Pearson puts it (in a resolute fashion certainly complicated by my own evidence), "Islamic cultural unity and solidarity, a tangible sense of being an *umma*, were very largely created by the *hajj*." Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 62.
23. On this movement, see Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*.
24. On these transformations, see Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Class*. On the centrality of autobiographical writing (in which I include travel writing) to this process, see Lambert-Hurley, *Elusive Lives*, especially 63, 93–94.
25. Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 24–25.
26. Atiya Fyzee, *Zamana-i Tahsil*, entries for March 9, 1907 and June 6, 1907. For the translation, see Lambert-Hurley and Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys*, 178, 195. Her most frequent descriptor for food was *laziz* (delicious or tasty), used as many as 20 times in her narrative.
27. Ibid., 146.
28. Ibid., 149. Also see ibid., 183. In a recent piece on the "intimacies of touch" in Indian cooking, Farah Yameen has pointed to how Atiya Fyzee's celebration of "touch-independent cooking" in an English kitchen revealed her class aspirations. Yameen, "Where the hand is.."
29. Lambert-Hurley and Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys*, 149. Italics added.
30. Muhammadi Begum, "Personal Diary," entry for February 17, 1935. Some extracts are translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 30. Others are available online at: https://accessingmuslimlives.org/uncategorized/personal-diary-1935/. Very recently, a translation of the whole diary has been published as *A Long Way from Hyderabad*.
31. Begum In'am Habibullah, *Ta'ssurat-i Safar-i Yurap*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 28; quote on 331.
32. An example is Sultan Jahan Begum, *Matbakh-i King George*. I am working on these cookbooks for a separate paper entitled: "Puddings in Lahore, 'Kabobs' in Edinburgh: Food in Translation to and from Muslim South Asia."
33. Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, 331.
34. Ibid.
35. On the link between restaurants and the "middle class desire for conspicuous consumption," see Rich, *Bourgeois Consumption*.
36. Nazli Begum, *Sair-i Yurap*, entry for 20 June, 1909, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 39; quote on 434.

37. Begum In'am Habibullah, *Ta'ssurat-i Safar-i Yurap*, 316.
38. "Address by Mrs Safia Jabir Ali," extracted in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 40; quote on 445.
39. In fact, of the 20 references to "delicious" or "tasty" (*laziz*) food in her diary, 11 evoke *desi* meals.
40. Atiya Fyzee, *Zamana-i Tahsil*, entry for September 5, 1906, translated in Lambert-Hurley and Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys*, 114.
41. On the vesting of Englishness with blandness and Indianness with spice, see Shahani, *Tasting Difference*, 5.
42. Muhammadi Begum, "Personal Diary," entry for January 2, 1935, translated at: https://accessingmuslimlives.org/women/personal-diary-1935/.
43. Muhammadi Begum, "Personal Diary," entry for July 30, 1935, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 30; quote on 351. Cashews and pistachios gained popularity in Britain from the 1920s, but shipments only grew in the 1940s and after.
44. Begum In'am Habibullah, *Ta'ssurat-i Safar-i Yurap*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 28; quote on 328. It is notable that, in the original printing, "gravy" is written as گری [g-r-y], raising questions (as the letter *gaf* is closely related to *kaf*) if she intended the loaded English word *curry*. In two available versions, however, یو [a-v] has been inserted by hand before the *ye* – perhaps even by the author as one at least was a gifted copy – suggesting a transliteration of "gravy," not "curry," was meant. My thanks to Daniel Majchrowicz and Muneeza Shamsie for deliberating the matter.
45. Isha'at Habibullah, "Memories." This passage appears in part II of Muneeza Shamsie's "family culinary history:" Shamsie, "Kakori Kababs, Pickles and Heritage."
46. Mehr al-Nisa, *Hamara Safar*, translated at: https://accessingmuslimlives.org/travel/mehr/. Other sections (including on papadums and mango chutney) are available in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 32.
47. These hajj narratives are collected in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, part I on "Travel as Pilgrimage."
48. Sikandar Begum, *Tarikh-i Safar-i Makkah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 2; quote on 60.
49. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 132.
50. On lascar diets, see Balachandran, *Globalizing Labour?*, especially ch. 3. Dada Amir Haidar Khan, one of the few lascars to author an autobiography, notes how specific arrangements were made on British ships, but he had little choice but to eat "non-Muslim killed or cooked meat" when working on an American ship: "I was confronted with eating what the others ate or starving." Gardezi, *Chains to Lose*, 147.
51. Begum In'am Habibullah, *Ta'ssurat-i Safar-i Yurap*, 10ff.
52. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 131.
53. "Address by Mrs Safia Jabir Ali."
54. Khan, "Meat Eaters."
55. Nafis Ahmad Siddiqi, *Begum Hasrat Mohani*, the fifth letter dated February 11, 1936, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 14; quote on 182.
56. There is ample literature on the history of these cow protection movements. See, as example, Yang, "Sacred Symbol," 576–96; and Pandey, "Rallying Around the Cow," 60–129.
57. Atiya Fyzee, *Zamana-i Tahsil*, entry for September 5, 1906, translated in Lambert-Hurley and Sharma, *Atiya's Journeys*, 114.
58. For contemporary data, see Natrajan and Jacob, "'Provincializing Vegetarianism,'" 59–60.
59. Zeb-un-nissa Hamidullah, *Sixty Days in America*, 25. There are other extracts in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 33.

60. Roy, *Alimentary Tracts*, 24.
61. Sikandar Begum, *Tarikh-i Safar-i Makkah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 2; quote on 66.
62. S.K. Sughra, "Safarnamah-i Iran," 111–115, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 42; quote on 469.
63. See fn.17.
64. Sikandar Begum, *Tarikh-i Safar-i Makkah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 2; quotes on 61–62.
65. Nazli, *Sair-i Yurap*, entry for August 31, 1908, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 39; quote on 436.
66. On this author's pan-Islamic ideals: Majchrowicz, "Learning Arabic."
67. Begum Nawab Sarbuland Jang, *Dunya ʿAurat ki Nazar men*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 8.
68. Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, ch. 3.
69. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 132. Careful readers will recognize that this quotation follows on directly from that recorded in the previous section about the magnitude of food supplies carried by Indian hajjis.
70. Ibid., 133.
71. On these shifts, see Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes*.
72. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 133.
73. Nawab Sikandar Begum, *A Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 170.
74. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 132–33.
75. Ibid., 133.
76. Ibid., 130.
77. See, as example, Nazli Begum, *Sair-i Yurap*, entry for April 25, 1908.
78. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated at: https://accessingmuslimlives.org/travel/rahil/.
79. Ibid.
80. Gautier and Levesque, "Historicizing Sayyid-ness," 383–93.
81. Ibid.
82. Fatima Begum, *Hajj-i Baitullah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 12; quote on 162.
83. Ibid.
84. On these transformations enabled by technological innovations, see Gelvin and Green, *Global Muslims*. On how technology impacted experiences of the hajj in particular, see Green, "The Hajj," 193–226.
85. Fatima Begum, *Hajj-i Baitullah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 12; quote on 162.
86. Collingham, *Curry*, 3–4.
87. Fatima Begum, *Hajj-i Baitullah*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 12; quote on 162.
88. Rahil Begum Shervaniya, *Zad al-Sabil*, translated in Lambert-Hurley, Majchrowicz, and Sharma, *Three Centuries*, ch. 9; quote on 132.
89. Becuț and Puerto, "Introduction," 2.
90. Quoted in ibid.
91. I draw here on a number of classic texts by sociologists, including Halbwachs, *Esquisse*; Bourdieu, *La Distinction*; and Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*.
92. My thanks is due here to my colleague Esme Cleall. It was her lecture on "Creating the Other" for our co-taught module on "Decolonising History" that inspired me to engage with the historiography here. A key text is, of course, Said's *Orientalism*.
93. I refer again to Fanon's ground-breaking, *The Wretched of the Earth*, first published in 1961.

94. Tejani, "Cow Protection," *Emotions*, 136–157.
95. An overarching aim of the "Forgotten Food" project out of which this special issue emerges is to mediate difference between religious groups by fostering awareness of historic recipes linked to Muslim culinary heritage in India. See Chambers, *Desi Delicacies*; and the "Forgotten Food" column in Scroll.in: https://scroll.in/topic/56278/forgotten-food.

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