

Islam as a Lived Tradition:

Ethical Constellations of Muslim Food Practice in Mumbai

Een verklaring van Islam als een Levende Traditie: Ethische Constellaties van Moslim Voedsel Praktijken in Mumbai

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues for the notion of Islam as a lived tradition as a theoretical and methodological contribution to the anthropology of Islam. The argument departs from the literature on Islam on piety towards a consideration of Muslim practice outside of the mosque and prayer group. Focusing on Muslim food practices in Mumbai it calls attention to the importance of debate, difference and change as integral to the practice of Islam. A key question is to understand how divergent practices of Islam in Mumbai all sustain the claim to the good Muslim life? Through ethnographic investigation of different times and places for the production and consumption of food it shows how Muslims engage in innovative practices through which to lay claim to the good.

Bringing the anthropology of Islam into conversation with the anthropology of ethics the thesis argues for a reconsideration of the way that rules and texts are linked to practice. Following Wittgenstein it suggests that the rules of the Islamic discursive tradition are not boundaries to be crossed, but rather signposts that guide conduct, leaving open room for interpretation and debate. The argument draws attention to the importance of *niyyat* (intention) in the Islamic legal tradition, where the intention of another human being is considered ultimately opaque yet continues to be a source of social interpretation and criticism. Divergent practices may thus remain unresolved as different individuals and groups devise different routes for practice.

The thesis is divided into five ethnographic chapters. The second chapter offers an overview of halal practice in Mumbai. It shows how divergent bases of trust are linked to very different conceptions of how halal should be practiced. In Mumbai the documentary and procedural focus of the newly emerging halal certification industry is perceived as an affront to the inter-personal practice of halal. The third chapter shifts to an ethnography of an inner-city butcher as a node for the production of halal in the city. Here packaged chicken competes for market share with freshly-slaughtered meat. The ethical practices of a Muslim butcher in Mumbai include concealment and imitation as attempts to maintain customer interest and respectability for fresh chicken production. The fourth chapter investigates owner narratives and material practices of two Muslim restaurants in Mumbai. Through

comparison it shows how different subject positions, language and material practice are expressions of Muslim business ethics. The fourth chapter presents an ethnography of the practices entailed in the performance of sacrifice that include human-animal intimacy, bargaining, and boasting through which the notion of sacrifice performed with love and feeling is produced. The final chapter presents the practices of Ramadan in the city to understand the importance of fasting and feasting, celebration and prayer as different routes through which to commemorate the auspicious month.

Each ethnographic chapter illustrates how an Islamic discursive tradition is relevant for understanding Muslim ethical practice. However, texts and rules do not merely define practice but rather act as signposts that guide conduct without precluding the possibility for innovation and reformulation.

CHAPTER ONE: ISLAM AS A LIVED

TRADITION: THE ETHICS OF MUSLIM

FOOD PRACTICES IN MUMBAI

McDonald's fast food outlets had become very popular among the Muslim youth in Mumbai. For many, McDonalds was a cool place to hang out. The food was valued for its cleanliness and consistency. It offered respite from the heavily spiced dishes that the Muslim neighborhoods were famous for. One of the most prominent McDonalds outlets in the city is situated directly across from the Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus train station. Less than a kilometer from the Muslim areas that surround Mohammed Ali road it was an important location for my research. One afternoon I entered into conversation with a Bohri-Muslim couple in their mid to late 20's who were having lunch. The moment I introduced my research on Muslim food practices in the city Shoaib began to allay what he assumed were my concerns about eating there, "It is halal, don't worry." I was curious about his reply since the halal status of McDonalds was an issue of much debate and concern. I pressed him to continue, "this is an international company no? they are all over the world. All of their chicken is in fact halal, everywhere." Having just heard a blanket assertion about the halal status of all McDonald's outlets worldwide, I was intrigued as to how he had arrived at this conclusion. Had he received advice from a friend, family member or religious leader, I wondered. His response was telling, "No nowhere, we just know. Look it is in Muslim countries, right? All over the world, Dubai, Saudi, it is there. And it is halal. So here is the same. They must be halal so that the Muslims will buy." He then proceeded to castigate the ignorance of those who continued to doubt the halal status of McDonalds.

Shoaib's assertion regarding halal was clearly in dialogue with the countless Muslims across the city who either consumed or abstained from McDonalds food. Doubts included rumors about the use

of imported chicken or the refusal to support these perceived agents of American imperialism. For many abstinence was an assertion of taste and belonging as they proclaimed loyalty to 'our (Muslim) food' that was famous across the city. However, there were a significant number of Muslims who considered McDonalds halal and ate the food regularly. The most common argument was that halal in Mumbai was assured through Muslim involvement in the supply of meat and meals. In Mumbai Muslim butchers serviced Muslim restaurants who served 'Muslim food' to Muslim customers. International chain stores like McDonalds presented a new development in the economy of halal food in the city. However, for these customers the experience of halal meat consumption in Mumbai was extended to McDonalds and other fast food outlets.

Shoaib's practice of halal seemed in accord with the latter position. However, upon closer inspection we see that it was in fact based on a completely different register of argumentation. Rather than relying on the Mumbai meat industry he drew on the authority of his experience in Saudi Arabia and Dubai which he combined with knowledge of the standardization of global fast food chains and an assessment of market demand. Combining these insights Shuaib was producing halal in Mumbai and encouraging me to follow suit. The same was true of the other positions on McDonalds prevalent in the city. None was based on empirical information regarding the supply of meat to McDonalds, nor the technicalities of Islamic legal discourse, yet each arrived at conclusions and practices regarding halal. Debating halal, it was clear that the Muslims with whom I conducted research were not merely uninterested or carelessly transgressing the Islamic imperative to consume halal. Shoaib was aware and committed to the importance of halal even as he extended his practice into new contexts. Rather as this thesis will argue, the diversity of opinions and practices, the implicit debate, and the commitment to practice Islam point towards the salience of a lived tradition. I develop the notion of a lived tradition as a theoretical lens through which to view how ordinary Muslims engage in ethical reflection, deliberation and judgments through which to produce new and sometimes idiosyncratic expressions of Islam.

This thesis explores the ethics of a lived tradition through an ethnography of Muslim practices of producing, preparing, trading, consuming and abstaining from food. The focus on Muslim food practices means that a central theme is the practice of halal slaughter and meat consumption. However, in Islamic law and ethics halal (meaning permissible) also refers to rules and advice that includes trade, food, slaughter, sexual practices, dress and family relations. My focus includes a consideration of the business practices and trading networks through which Muslim food is produced, traded and consumed. I also consider the annual festivals of sacrifice and fasting in the Islamic calendar during which practices of producing, donating, sharing and consuming food are emphasized. The ethnography presented illuminate the practices, materials, reasons, debates and deliberations by Muslims through their food practices in Mumbai towards an understanding of Islam as lived tradition.

The findings and arguments presented in this thesis are based upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Mumbai between December of 2012 and October of 2014. During that period, I spent a total of 10 months in Mumbai and 3 months in Lucknow, attending an intensive AIIS (American Institute of Indian Studies) Urdu language program. Spread over a period of two years the intermittent fieldwork allowed for attention to the observation of change as well as for repeat visits to annual festivals. During fieldwork, I focused on the various locations and contexts where Muslim food practices are most salient. This led me to a consideration of the networks through which trust in halal in Mumbai is established and assured and to consider how halal certification is introducing an alternative practice of halal in Mumbai. Other fieldwork sites include an inner-city butcher shop and Muslim restaurants as nodes in the network through which halal meat and meals are provided to consumers. My interest in Muslim food practices drew me to consider the two major festivals of the Islamic calendar. Both the Id-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice) and Ramadan (month of fasting) are in crucial ways connected to the theme of food through slaughter, abstinence and feasting. Each of these sites provided a material context for the exploration of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai.

FROM BOMBAY TO MUMBAI: THE SHIFTING PLACE OF MUSLIMS IN THE CITY

Muslims have been integral to the formation of Mumbai. Arriving initially as traders and laborers they were important actors in the early construction of the city. In recent decades they have borne the brunt of an increasingly violent brand of Hindu nationalism and regional Maratha nativism. This has been inscribed upon the city through acts of violence as well as the changing of the name of the city from Bombay to Mumbai. This section will provide a brief overview of the development of the city and the place of Muslim's therein before proceeding to situate the ethnographic location of my fieldwork within the city.

During the 19th century Bombay emerged as the preeminent trading port of the British empire, a "travel hub of the west Indian Ocean" as well as a "primary city of Islam" that rivalled Istanbul, Alexandria and Beirut in terms of "demographic and cosmopolitan expansion" (Green 2011, 3). An early Persian text of 1816 noted the diversity of Muslims from various regions of India as well as Iran, Baghdad and Kabul (Green 2011, 4). A century later the police commissioner of Bombay, S.M. Edwardes, again noted the cosmopolitanism of the city that included Muslims from Africa as well as those of Malay origin (Green 2011, 5). Amongst this diverse group of Muslims were those from various castes and classes that included religious leaders and laborers as well as traders of various origins (Edwardes 1912, 77). Prominent were the Gujarati trading communities of Memons, Bohras and Khojas as well as Konkani Muslims from the Konkan coast, south of Bombay, who established the first mosque in 1802 (Green 2011, 6). The profusion of Muslims in Bombay produced a dense topography of Islam in the city that included an array of mosques, madrasas and shrines as well as the services and ideas of holy men, trained religious leaders (ulama) and reformists (Green 2011, 17). At the turn of the century Muslims comprised around twenty percent of the city's population (Chandavarkar 1994, 32).

Bombay was renowned for its urban cosmopolitanism (Prakash 2010). Green notes the appeal of Sufi shrines as sites for the provision of "miraculous services" across the religious divide (Green 2011, 17). The visible presence of Islam in Bombay was evident in the significance of the Muharram festival that commemorated the death of the grandson of the Prophet, attracting Muslims of various sectarian persuasions as well as Hindus (Green 2011, 55), (Kidambi 2007, 122-26).

However, Bombay was also an important location for the emergence of anti-colonial nationalist politics and was thus drawn into communal conflicts from elsewhere. In North India the late 19th century establishment of the Arya Samaj and the initiation of the cow-protection movement had set the scene for a “violent encounter” between Muslims and Hindu’s (van der Veer 1994, 92). The 1893 Baqr-Id (qurbani) riots in the Bhojpuri regions of the country had repercussions in Bombay, where the affected Muslim communities took revenge against Hindus in the city (Pandey 1983, 126). At this stage the violence was as much imbricated in the spatial logics of the native town and the tussle for neighborhood control, as communal sentiment (Masselos 1993). Into the 20th century the population of Bombay continued to expand through migration from various parts of India. Bombay was the commercial and industrial hub of the country. The most populous groups of migrants were from inland Maharashtra, Gujarat, South India and the Northern areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (Gupta 1982, 49). In the pre-Independence period Muslims remained important actors in the thriving literary and cinematic life of the city (Prakash 2010, 117-40).

An important shift was signaled by the violence that erupted upon partition, after which the city became increasingly divided into religious enclaves (Prakash 2010, 117-42). Political developments included the nationwide post- partition call for the establishment of states upon linguistic lines (Gupta 1982, 62), (Patel 2005, 14). In Bombay this provided new impetus for a Maharashtrian linguistic and ethnic claim on the city that had originated in the early 20th century under the leadership of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Tilak (Gupta 1982, 42). The movement argued for the establishment of the state of Maharashtra as a linguistic territory with Bombay as its capital. The campaign’s success in 1960 witnessed an increase in migration from interior regions of the newly established Maharashtra state (Patel 2005, 14). The city became increasingly dominated by a Maharashtrian demographic but was still economically and culturally controlled by non-Maharashtrian elites (Gupta 1982, 47).

This combination of political and economic estrangement together with “regional chauvinism” was given a militant voice through the establishment of the Shiv Sena with Bal Thackeray as its charismatic and self-proclaimed dictatorial leader (Gupta 1980). The Shiv Sena articulated an ethnic Maratha

nativism combined with an expression of Hindu pride that was epitomized in folklore by the defeat of the Moghuls at the hands of the Maratha king Shivaji. To become an active member, a Shiv Sainik, meant “to become a soldier in Shivaji’s army” (Hansen 2001, 50). The Shiv Sena introduced a “long-standing plebeian discourse of masculine assertion into the public and political realms” (Hansen 2001, 72).

The first group to bear the brunt of the Sena’s violence and intimidation were South Indian migrants to the city who presented a perceived threat in terms of social standing and employment. During the late 60s South Indian owned restaurants and white collar workers were targeted (Punwani 2005, 235), (Gupta 1982, 167). Then in 1968 Bal Thackeray accused actor Dilip Kumar of being a Pakistani agent. A few days later Shiv Sainiks vandalized a cinema theatre that was showing *Mughal-e-Azam*, a Hindi film that depicted a love affair in the Mughal court of Akbar. In 1970 the first direct anti-Muslim communal violence by the Shiv Sena took place over a Hindu temple claim and again in 1973 when Muslims refused to sing an Indian national song ‘Vande Mataram (I praise thee, Mother)’ (Gupta 1982, 168-69). The once cosmopolitan public sphere of Bombay was being overrun by a nativist current.

Following a lull in activity the Shiv Sena was revitalized by a nationwide turn towards a radical form of right wing Hinduism, *Hindutva*, that took root across the country through the activities of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) between 1982-1983 (Hansen 2009, 154). *Hindutva*, meaning Hinduness, articulated a “cultural nationalism (that) was communal, masculine, and aggressively anti-Muslim, but also rationalist and in favor of rapid modernization” (Hansen 2009, 79). The 1984 riots on the outskirts of Bombay witnessed the “systematic looting and burning of Muslim houses, shops, and factories” by Shiv Sena activists under the watchful gaze of the city police (Hansen 2001, 77). The same pattern was repeated in the Bombay riots of December 1992- January 1993 to much more devastating effect. Following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodha in December 1992, “angry Muslims took to the streets all over India” with Bombay as an important locus of activity (Hansen 2001, 121). After daily incidents of unrest throughout December, January witnessed an eruption of violence as “groups of Hindus, often led by sainiks, rampaged the city, systematically looting and burning Muslim shops,

houses and businesses” (Hansen 2001, 122). The death toll “exceeded 800; more than 150,000, mainly Muslims, fled the city; and more than 100,000 took shelter in hastily erected refugee camps in Muslim areas in central Bombay considered relatively safe for Muslims” (Hansen 2001, 122). This time too reports indicate both the complicity and indifference of the local police to the plight of Bombay’s Muslims (Punwani 2005). The combination of anti-Muslim sentiment, violent attacks and police complicity confirmed the status of Bombay’s Muslims as a stigmatized, marginalized and vulnerable minority. In 1995 when the Shiv Sena came to power it affirmed the Maharashtrian ethnic and linguistic claims to the city by changing the name from Bombay to the Marathi colloquial, Mumbai (Patel 2005, 4).

Over the century Mumbai has become a city increasingly hostile to a Muslim sense of belonging. After the riots of 1992-1993 Muslims reported a feeling of displacement from the once cosmopolitan public space (Punwani 2005). However as noted above certain Muslim majority locales continued to be considered safe havens. An important site for my fieldwork was the area between Crawford Market, Dongri and Byculla that was connected by the famous Mohammed Ali road. Entering the area one is immediately greeted by visible signs of Muslim presence that has intensified after the riots as Muslims entered and others fled (Robinson 2005). The often derogatory or exclusionary naming of this area by outsiders as “mini Pakistan,” that serves to produce Muslims as inimical to the nation (Mehta 2012), was a term used by Muslim residents to claim a space of relative autonomy and safety. Within these areas the experience and subjectivity of Muslims is not entirely dominated by the frames of communalism, stigmatization and marginalization that have piqued scholarly interest (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012), (Hansen 2001), (Ghasem-Fachandi 2012). Recent ethnographies of Mumbai have argued for closer consideration of internal Muslim difference and sectarian debates as crucial for the shaping of Muslim subjectivities (Gupta 2015) but “also as a force shaping the presentation of Muslim religious identities to a wider public” (Eisenlohr 2015, 690). Here the “threatening Hindu other does

not always loom large” (Eisenlohr 2015, 691).¹ Following these insights I consider communalism and stigmatization an important background context for the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai that at times emerged in discussion but which at other moments was superseded by other concerns. For example, congestion and civic neglect of Muslim areas were symptoms of the position of Muslims in the city but were not always perceived as directly related to an active regime of oppression.

Both Gupta and Eisenlohr note the presence of various groups of Muslims in the old city. The area continues to be “home to a significant population of the Muslim mercantile class” that includes Memons, Bohras, Khojas and Konkani Muslims (Gupta 2015, 352) as well as those of Maharashtrian, North and South Indian origin. The Muslim cosmopolitanism that Nile Green noted a century earlier continues to thrive. Besides divides between Sunnis and Shias are further internal differentiations among each group. For example, Twelver Shias in Mumbai identify with regional origins of Uttar Pradesh (North India), Iran or as Khojas from Gujarat (Gupta 2015, 359). Internal differentiation in the Sunni community includes followers of the Indian reform movements of Barelwis, Deobandis, Ahl-e-Hadith and the recently emerging transnational Salafi organizations. Members of these groups too continue to identify according to their region of origin.

During fieldwork, the majority of my informants were Sunni Muslims of Maharashtrian and North Indian (U.P.) origin. Two prominent theological orientations among my informants were the followers of the Deobandi and Barelwi schools. The Deobandi school, established in Deoband in U.P. in North India in 1867 was an ulama response to the decline of Muslim rule. The school placed an emphasis on orthopraxis, rationalized and institutionalized ulama education, and attacked popular Sufi practices of ‘shrine worship’ (Metcalf 1982), (Metcalf 1978). The Ahl-e-Sunnat wa Jama’at (People of the Sunnah and the Community) or Barelwis, as they are commonly known, was a movement founded around the leadership of Ahmed Riza Khan of Bareilly in U.P. in North India as response to the Deobandi approach.

¹ These recent observations dovetail with earlier arguments by Peter van de Veer who showed how sectarian difference and “internal” debate rather than concerns about origins, syncretism or Hindu influence were most salient in understanding a saint’s festival celebration in Gujarat (van der Veer 1992).

Khan established a Madrasa in Bareilly in 1904 (Riaz 2008, 75) and issued fatwas that provided textual Quran and Hadith² defense of popular Sufi practices (Sanyal 1998). Both groups adhere to the Hanafi legal tradition but differ on the place of intercession in Muslim practices of worship.

Amongst my informants were staunch supporters of each position as well as self-proclaimed “cocktail Muslims” who combined allegiances on various issues. For example, Hassan whom we will meet in chapter three criticized the Barelwi practice that required an maulana (trained religious scholar) to perform the ritual practice of Quran recitation upon assuming residence of a new home or business venture, in exchange for a monetary fee. He preferred the Deobandi position that argued that recitation could be performed on one’s own without incurring fees. However, I had also accompanied him on one of his many late-night visits to pay respects and offer donations at Sufi shrines in the city and had heard about his family’s Sufi shaikh (leader) from their native village in rural Maharashtra who occasionally visited to bless their home and business. It was clear that practice did not always coincide with sectarian affiliation. Also among a group of friends it was very likely to find individuals from different places of origin and with different theological allegiances.

The choice of my informants was shaped by the serendipity of the ethnographic fieldwork encounter as well as the trials of conducting fieldwork in a mega city like Mumbai. The majority of the arguments presented in this thesis derive from a handful of regular informants who were amenable to my enquiries and with whom I cultivated long standing relationships. This was supplemented with interview data from various levels of both fleeting encounters and less intensive acquaintanceships. The Sunni bias was in large part determined by their demographic majority among Muslims in Mumbai.

The majority of my fieldwork was conducted in South Mumbai. Two major areas of research were the Colaba neighborhood in the old colonial town as well as the somewhat amorphous Muslim area that stretches from Crawford Market towards Byculla along the Mohammed Ali road. This latter area marked the end of the ‘colonial town’ and the beginning of the ‘native town’ (Kidambi 2007). As noted

² The term hadith refers to the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad that Muslim refer to as a source of authority and as a guide for everyday conduct.

it continues to be an important area for the Muslim trading communities. It is also famous across the city for the Muslim food on offer. Specific sites within the area included the Crawford Mutton Market that continues to supply meat to many restaurants and hotels across South Mumbai, the adjacent neighborhood of Mussafir Khana, the Minara Masjid area, Dongri, Bhendi Bazaar, Null Bazaar and a neighborhood referred to as JJ Junction. Besides informants involved in the halal certification industry, meat and restaurant trade and a welcoming family of perfume retailers, were the many fleeting encounters and conversations as I traversed the labyrinth of lanes and roads that connected these adjacent areas. After the riots in 1992-1993 the area has become increasingly cut off from the rest of the city both out of fear as well through the construction of an overhead flyover beginning adjacent to Crawford Market that allowed commuters to bypass the congestion below. The Colaba neighbourhood could not be more different in terms of layout and demography. My main fieldwork site in that area was a small chicken and mutton shop owned by two brothers of Maharashtrian origin who serviced the predominately non-Muslim clientele in the area. Many afternoons were spent at the shop interacting with a mixed group of Muslim and Hindu childhood friends.

Most of the fieldwork presented in this thesis were from these areas of Mumbai. An important exception was the Municipal abattoir in Govandi in North Mumbai which was a site for the production of meat and trade in livestock. Besides fixed research sites a favorite “timepass” among Muslims in Mumbai was for groups of male friends to roam the city on culinary expeditions. I was often invited by research informants on these late-night trawls to enjoy various delicacies. On occasion this even lead to visits beyond the city to what were known as dhaba’s, roadside restaurants along national highways that in Mumbai attracted Muslims eager to escape the congestion and noise of the city.

The contribution of the ethnography in this thesis to the study of Muslims in Mumbai is that it does not directly challenge dominant stereotypes and representations, nor aims to illuminate the extent of Muslim deprivation in the city. Rather I explore the ethics and materiality of Muslim food practices in the city towards an understanding of Islam as a lived tradition. The notion of a lived

tradition is articulated through engagement with prevailing literature on the anthropology of Islam and ethics.

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ISLAM: A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

This thesis draws upon insights from within the Anthropology of Islam and the Anthropology of Ethics in order to develop the notion of Islam as a lived tradition. The focus on ethics and Islam is particularly salient to a consideration of Muslim food practices. The texts of Islamic jurisprudence and *akhlaq* (morals, ethics, manners) include references to rules on producing and consuming halal food, advice on human-animal interactions, trade, and the etiquette of eating and hospitality. However, it is clear from the Muslim food practices in Mumbai that these texts do not simply define practice. Though many Muslims remain aware of some Islamic ideas of a correct diet, the advised times of meals, and proper comportment (*adab*); practices differ in significant ways. However rather than ignoring this divergence or assuming non-compliance this thesis considers how different Muslims engage in the practice of Islam as a lived tradition. In the opening vignette, we saw how Shoaib and others were not merely transgressing halal but were in fact producing new expressions and formulations through their consumption practices.

TALAL ASAD: THE 'DISCURSIVE TURN'

A key author in the Anthropology of Islam over the past decades is Talal Asad, who, in 1986, argued for a study of Islam as a discursive tradition. Rejecting the symbolic anthropology of Clifford Geertz and the structural-functionalism of Ernest Gellner, Asad proposed an understanding of Islamic practices as inseparable from a history of Islamic discourse. He criticized the development within anthropology that considered sectarian and geographical differences in Muslim belief and practice as evidence of absolute mutability and fragmentation (el-Zein 1977).

"Islam as the object of anthropological understanding should be approached
as a discursive tradition that connects variously with the formation of moral

selves, the manipulation of populations (or resistance to it), and the production of appropriate knowledges" (Asad 1986b, 7).

Everyday practices of Muslims, according to Asad, were inseparable from the discursive formation of Islam. Approaching Islam as a discursive tradition allowed for a deeper understanding of the moral and political formation of selves while resisting the tendency to view differences in opinion and practice among Muslims as evidence of multiple Islam(s). For Asad, debate and difference have long characterized the Islamic discursive tradition.

The work of Talal Asad spawned a rich field for the study of Islam. John Bowen showed how various aspects of Indonesian Muslim life, including ritual practices, healing, and farming were the subject of religious debate. Rather than positing a distinction between popular locally specific practices versus supra-local high tradition, he showed how different practices were inspired by different conceptions of an Islamic tradition (Bowen 1993). Brinkley Messick argued that religious and political authority in Yemen was produced through the everyday practices of producing commentaries, manuals and memorization of the texts of Islamic jurisprudence (Messick 1996). Both of these studies focused predominantly on discourse as the language practices of a scholarly elite engaged in learning and debate.

The shift to a consideration of bodily practice and "moral selves" occurred with Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind's seminal studies of piety in Egypt. Mahmood's work in particular has become a hallmark for both the Anthropology of Islam and the Anthropology of Ethics. Mahmood argued that the subjectivity of Muslim women "pietists" could not be captured through the liberal western framework of freedom and agency that "have become naturalized in the scholarship on gender" (Mahmood 2011, 13). Rather, understanding Muslim women's piety through "the coherence of a discursive tradition" (Mahmood 2011, 17), allows for consideration of how "norms are... performed, inhabited, and experienced in a variety of ways" (Mahmood 2011, 22). The cultivation of submission, modesty and fear entailed "practices of subjectivation" (Mahmood 2011, 32) that included veiling and prayer towards the realization of "a particular modality of being and personhood" (Mahmood 2011,

120) drawn from an “Islamic interpretive tradition of moral discipline” (Mahmood 2011, 126). In a similar vein, Charles Hirschkind’s ethnography of cassette listening practices in Cairo argued that the fear in Western popular discourse that associated sermon cassettes with terrorism was related to a particular hierarchy of the senses in the western enlightenment tradition that privileged sight over sound. The result has been a sustained concern in the literature on Islam with the “perceived excess of sound, gesture, and bodily movement within Muslim intellectual and spiritual practices” (Hirschkind 2006, 14). Rather he argues for sermon listening practices as inseparable from Islamic ideals of ethical listening rooted in both Quranic recitation and popular music traditions. Learning to listen and ‘listening with the heart’ were ethical practices linked to the formation of moral selves. The cassette tapes provided a “sonorous environment where the nourishing, transformative power of ethical speech works to improve the conditions of one’s heart, fortifying moral sensibilities that, in accord with Islamic ethical traditions, incline towards right action” (Hirschkind 2006, 10). From both these perspectives, the employment of a western archeology of the self to Muslim practices would result in at best confusion, at worst prejudice.

The work of Mahmood and Hirschkind in extending the insights of Talal Asad toward the study of Muslim practices has been central to the so-called ‘ethical turn.’ The shift in approach from that of Bowen and Messick to Mahmood and Hirschkind can be traced through the career trajectory of Talal Asad, who moved from a detailed consideration of the study of Islam, to the discursive formation of the discipline of religious studies (Asad 1993), to an ‘anthropology of secularism’ (Asad 2003). The work of Mahmood and Hirschkind has developed a field of inquiry where the anthropology of Islam and the anthropology of secularism are inseparable. In this approach the figure of the Muslim is presented as a discursive partner through whom the norms and ideals of western political theory are provincialized (Chakrabarty 2007).

THE ‘EVERYDAY POSITION’: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

The consideration of the anthropology of Islam and secularism as codependents has not been without considerable debate. A generation of younger scholars has engaged in sometimes-polemical discussions concerning the pros and cons of the 'discursive turn.' A review of the criticisms and strengths of each position will be instrumental for our discussion. Samuli Schielke has articulated the most vociferous critique of the 'discursive turn' in the anthropology of Islam (Schielke 2009), (Schielke 2010). Through a close reading of Mahmood he identifies three "flaws" in her argumentation. The first, is "taking committed religious activists as paradigmatic representatives of religiosity." Second is that "she can tell us much about the intended outcomes of the project of piety, but only little about its actual consequences." Thirdly her "hermetic approach to 'culture' and 'tradition'" (Schielke 2009, 36), and "a focus on 'discursive tradition' makes it very easy to view religion as if it were a coherent entity, dynamic within but clearly demarcated to the outside" (Schielke 2009, 37). Schielke does not deny the existence nor the importance of an Islamic discursive tradition but argues that holding it as the central object of study is over determined. Piety, he suggests, "does not proceed along a unilinear path. It is an ambivalent practice that is often related to specific periods in life, especially those marked by crises" (Schielke 2009, 37). Following from these insights he proposes a new focus for the anthropology of Muslims through a renewed conception of ethics beyond Mahmood's conceptualization of the habitation of norms through practice.

An anthropological study of morality and ethical subjectivity has to take this inherent *ambivalence as a starting-point*. Rather than searching for moments of perfection, *we have to look at the conflicts, ambiguities, double standards, fractures, and shifts as the constitutive moments of the practice of norms* (Schielke 2009, 37-38)(my emphasis).

Ethnographically Schielke is similar to Mahmood in the continued focus on Muslim reformers (in Egypt Salafi's) and on *piety as Islamic ethics*. Where Mahmood sought to understand the moral registers of personhood upon which revivalist norms were produced, Schielke focuses on the ambiguities, conflicts and fractures involved in producing, practicing and fulfilling those very same

norms. Both maintain a conception of Islamic ethics as presented by revivalist (Salafi) norms of piety. The ethnographic result is that Schielke, often discussing individuals who have at some point been drawn towards Salafi movements, points to moments of failure and inconsistency in their practices of ethical self-formation. For Schielke morality is an “incoherent and unsystematic conglomerate” constituted by the “key moral registers” of “religion,” “social justice,” “community and family obligations,” “good character,” “romance and love,” and “self realization” (Schielke 2009, 30). Contradictions between austere norms of prayer and piety, which for Schielke constitute “religion,” and other aspects of life produce the ambiguity, ambivalence and fractures that illuminate his theory of ethics. He shows for instance how the norms of prayer in Ramadan conflict with the desire among young men to play afternoon football and “kill time” (Schielke 2009), and how the raucous expressions of fun and joy during Maulid celebrations conflict with the austere piety of the reform movements (Schielke 2012). It is clear that in formulating this ethnography of ambivalence he too depends on a conception of a coherent set of ‘Islamic norms’ with which to contest. In this position ‘Islam,’ presented as piety, remains a coherent yet singular aspect of a larger ethics of fragmentation and ambivalence of life.

Schielke is not alone in formulating this approach. He, together with a group of anthropologists of the Islamic world have in a recent edited volume “focus(ed) specifically on situations which are characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, anxiety, creative play and contestation” (Schielke and Debevec 2012, 7). Running through the study is a latent conception of what Islam is that clearly maps onto revivalist visions. Knut Graw for example presents a case study of “divination and islam” that seeks to bridge the divide between these supposedly incompatible practices (Graw 2012, 25). Lisa Debevec focusses on Burkina Faso Muslims who do not pray. Enquiring about their non-compliance she discovered that age, matrimony, gender and class were important as people “juggle and accommodate a variety of pressures, goals and needs, and they try to get by in life in the best possible way” (Debevec 2012, 44). Jennifer Peterson interviewed producers of a new form of Mulid Dance Music in Egypt. Asking about the halal status of their music she was able to apprehend the ambiguity

of producers regarding the Islamic status of their music as evidence of an attempt to negotiate the distinct moral registers of 'religion' and 'self realization' (Peterson 2012). Another author worthy of mention is Magnus Marsden whose monograph *Living Islam* is a study of village life in Pakistan's North-West Frontier. Similar to Schielke he shows how contrary to the popular perceptions in Western media regarding the onslaught of reformist Islam and the unthinking nature of the Muslim, his informants are "critically engaged in debate on the shape of Islam and the current state of the Muslim world" (Marsden 2005, 9). The determination of ethical and moral practice is not the sole reserve of religious leaders or trained authorities. Through exploration of "the important role that music, poetry and travel played in the living of a Muslim life" (Marsden 2005, 4) he seeks to understand "the way Chitral Muslims experience a form of Sufi Islam that is active and important in their region" (Marsden 2005, 34). Through "Sufi" practice Marsden seeks to problematize normative notions of Islam as a "book-centered faith" by showing "the making of ethical and moral decision(s) as a conflictual and ongoing process" (Marsden 2005, 23). This line of research has produced detailed and commendable ethnographies of Muslim practice across the world. However, in each the spread of fun-killing, mindless, revivalist Islam looms large. Seeking to shift the focus away from the revivalist project of piety they remain attached to showing the instability of the very same project through a focus on ambiguity, ambivalence and imperfection.

This sustained focus on the imperfection, contradiction, and the ambiguity of piety has inspired a response by scholars affiliating themselves with the work of Mahmood and Hirschkind. A recent article co-authored by Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando engages the work of Schielke, Debevec and Marsden while defending what they see as false accusations against Mahmood and Hirschkind. Fadil and Fernando quite correctly point out that the invocation of the everyday as contingency and resistance leads to "an oppositional distinction between domains that are saturated by power and social conventions (Islamic doctrine and morality) and those that are not (everyday practice)" (Fadil and Fernando 2015, 69). This distinction, they argue, produces a conceptual divide between "exceptional or extra-ordinary subjects who have a strong commitment to religious norms (usually

labeled “Salafi’s”) and, on the other, ‘ordinary’ or ‘everyday’ Muslims who do not” (Fadil and Fernando 2015, 73). Rather, they prefer the work of Hirschkind and Mahmood for paying attention to how the ethical practices of self consciously pious men and women are in “constant engagement with the Islamic tradition” (Fadil and Fernando 2015, 63). The ‘everyday position’ (my term) they argue, produces a view of the Salafi or reform oriented Muslim as an abnormal, overly austere aberration obsessed with norms as opposed to ordinary people who are content to live with ambivalence and contestation. This approach they argue is indebted to a normative secular liberal commitment to the problem of structure and agency, which Mahmood so successfully provincialized. Rather they suggest, following Mahmood and Hirschkind, the commitment of anthropology should be to “make legible... the everyday conduct of people considered odd, exceptional, or extraordinary, without simply rendering them as similar to “us” (Fadil and Fernando 2015, 83).

Both positions have made important contributions to the Anthropology of Islam but require a closer review than offered thus far. For purposes of reference I use ‘discursive position’ to refer to Mahmood, Hirschkind, Fadil and Fernando and ‘everyday position’ for Schielke, Debevec, Marsden and others. Clearly there is a tendency amongst the ‘everyday position’ to search for some true, normal, everyday sphere separate from the obsessive modernist reformer view of Islam. In their view, reformists are a modern aberration that destroy the fun and joy in everyday life. These authors harken back to a time when “earlier, more mystical traditions of Islam” that accommodated ambivalence had not been threatened by reformist visions (Schielke 2009, 26). This resonates with the long-standing Orientalist idea of the ‘good Muslim,’ as the ‘Sufi Muslim’ (Ernst 2007). There is no room in this conception of ethics for an understanding of change, allure and desire on behalf of reforming individuals who seek to appropriate and embody a vision of piety different from the one in which they have been brought up (as the proliferation of da’wa movements in Cairo indicate). Furthermore, the conceptual separation between religion and the everyday or between reformist visions and Sufi Islam has been critiqued (Metcalf 2002), (Lindholm 1998).

On the other hand the 'discursive position' over determines the habitation of norms in the pursuit of an ethical life, ignores the biographical trajectories of individuals as they grapple with change, and has largely left Asad's early reminder that debate and difference is intrinsic to an Islamic discursive tradition unheeded (Asad 1986b). Also problematic is their conceptualization of Islamic morality and personhood as conceptually distinct from secular liberalism. For example, Peter van der Veer's reflection on the "secularity of piety" (van der Veer 2008) in the work of Mahmood points to the privatization of religion shared by religious and secular reform movements in the contemporary. The conception of piety that the discursive camp identify resembles very closely the austere, interior protestant mode of practice.

Despite the sometimes-polemical exchange, various points of similarity can be discerned between these positions. Both sides see reform Islam as an aberration, as "odd, exceptional or extraordinary" (Fadil and Fernando 2015, 83). The 'everyday position' seeks to deconstruct the reformist project of moral perfection by pointing to moments of failure or fragmentation. The 'discursive position' aims to understand them and make them legible through their technologies and projects of moral self-making as a counterpoint to secular liberal norms. Second is the shared equation of Islamic morality and ethics with piety. The 'discursive position' presents a Foucauldian archeology of piety that links contemporary practices to a genealogy of Islamic discourse. The 'everyday position' points to ambiguity and fragmentation in attempts at achieving piety. Thirdly, both positions reproduce an implicit notion of Islam as static. For the 'discursive position' even contemporary practices contain some kernel of Islamic morality as piety, that can be traced directly to individual texts from the Islamic intellectual legacy. The 'everyday position' hope to see the timelessness of Sufi Islam resist the onslaught of the modern, reformist aberration. Understanding these similarities brings into view the audience that each addresses. Both engage the Euro-American public sphere replete with its anti-Muslim bias and the constant fear of the threat of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The 'discursive position' seeks to explain the seeming incommensurability of Islam with the West as a result of very different histories of formation and different conceptions of moral personhood. Salafis are not

violent nor are they like “us”. This approach is best suited to address questions of Muslims at the interface of and in engagement with the dominant western public sphere.³ The ‘everyday position’ addresses the Salafi threat by showing that Muslims ‘are just like us,’ ordinary people struggling with the challenges of life, love, and everything else.⁴ Both remain entangled in the legacy of Orientalism and audience in the representation of Islam that Edward Said identified (Said 1982), (Said 1978).

Following this analysis it is clear that the Anthropology of Islam that Asad suggested has developed into an Anthropology of Piety. Piety as it has been most clearly conceived in the work of Mahmood resembles very closely an austere, private form of Protestant religious experience. The ‘everyday position’ seem to accept this definition only to destabilize its fulfillment, or point to ‘popular,’ Sufi resistance. It is not clear why the Islamic tradition has become equated only with pious practices nor why all Muslim practices are so easily encapsulated as projects of ethical self-reform. Not all Islamic practices are about piety in terms of a gradual move towards perfection. It is not even clear whether piety within the Islamic discursive tradition can be so easily encapsulated into an austere, private mode separate from other aspects of life.

This thesis shifts the debate in the Anthropology of Islam through an analysis of the ethics of Muslim food practice which encapsulates concern about halal slaughter, business practices, interpersonal relations as well as sacrifice, fasting, feasting, charity and care. An important theme is the practice of halal slaughter and consumption. As it has been conceptualized and practiced halal refers to a community of shared values with whom ones interacts, transacts and shares meals with. Halal practice does have moral consequences for the individual concerned and their relationship to the broader community. However, where the contemporary practice of halal is clearly related to an Islamic discursive tradition, and practiced, negotiated and contested in the everyday, it is not reducible

³ Both Mayanthi Fernando Nadia Fadil work on Muslim subjectivity in Europe and the challenges that it poses for normative understandings of secularism.

⁴ In his response to Fadil and Fernando, Schielke admits to writing his article on Ramadan from a position of “affective discomfort” with the threat of Salafi Islam on popular practices in Egypt, that he sought to challenge (Schielke 2015).

to piety as a project of moral self-reform. Importantly the moral consequences of halal consumption are mostly considered with regards to its non-performance. There are usually no positive connotations associated with performance. Halal is a bare minimum. While its omission and transgression is considered much more serious than say, missing a prayer, it is also much more common for Muslims to fulfill certain tenets of halal consumption yet rarely pray. Understanding the ethics of halal practice, is about understanding the nature of interpersonal relationships; the importance of trust, trade practices, changing economic conditions, human-animal relations, conceptions of food and the body as well as personal piety. This thesis considers how Muslims like Shoaib and others navigate this terrain as they produce Islam through their everyday practices. Beyond the focus on halal I show how individuals with different ethical dispositions and different subject positions engage in the practice of Islam as a lived tradition. Arguing for Islam as a lived tradition this thesis seeks to resituate the focus of the Anthropology of Islam away from a direct concern with representations in the Euro-American public sphere. Understanding Islam as a lived tradition is a venture towards anthropological consideration of Muslim practices in their complexity, fluidity as well as commitment to the past.

ISLAM AS A LIVED TRADITION: BETWEEN DISCOURSE AND ORDINARY ETHICS

Talal Asad's contribution to the Anthropology of Islam has been crucial for formulating a notion of 'discursive tradition' through which Muslim practices were linked to a history of textual production. For Asad the notion of 'discursive tradition' bridged the divide between orthodoxy as doctrine and orthopraxis as ritual through attention to the way in which religious authority, textual production and embodied practice were inseparable. "A practice is Islamic because it is authorized by the discursive traditions of Islam, and is taught to Muslims – whether by an 'alim, a khatib, a Sufi shaykh, or an untutored parent" (Asad 1986b, 15). However, Asad also pointed to the centrality of reason, debate, difference and change as "a natural part of any discursive tradition" (Asad 1986b, 16). He thus set the anthropologists task to "analyze the kinds of reasoning, and the reasons for arguing, that underlie Islamic traditional practices" (Asad 1986b, 16). Crucial for his analysis was his argument that "although

Islamic traditions are not homogenous, they aspire to coherence” (Asad 1986b, 17). Asad was thus interested in the “efforts of practitioners to achieve coherence” (Asad 1986b, 17). This theory of a “living tradition”⁵ was most clearly followed by Saba Mahmood who applied these insights to the women’s piety movement in Cairo. In recent work Asad has further clarified his notion of tradition and bodily practice through ethnographic interview data with an Egyptian cleric. Analyzing the cleric’s discussion of virtue and practice as a kind of “conscious repetition that aims at making one’s self-conscious actions unself-conscious in the future” (Asad 2015, 176), he compares the “ability to perform devotion well (to devote oneself)” to “the mastery of grammar” (Asad 2015, 176). “It was not simply a matter of acting as in the past but of acquiring a capability for which the past was a beginning and by which the need to submit consciously to a rule would eventually disappear” (Asad 2015, 176). Asad’s concept of ‘discursive tradition’ was specifically related to the study of Islam. There he argued, bodily practice towards the cultivation of virtue was informed by a rich history of texts. The goal of the practitioner was achieving not only coherence but also mastery of the self to the extent that the need to consciously follow rules would be rendered redundant.

James Laidlaw has been critical of Asad’s approach to tradition which he argues is indebted to the career trajectory of Alasdair MacIntyre. Through a close reading of MacIntyre, Laidlaw argues that his notion of tradition progresses from, *After Virtue*, wherein “tradition is an historical mode of life in which a distinctive version of critical reason is embodied” towards a “more solid faith in the authority of the universal Church” as “authority steadily gains ground against rational argument and internal disagreement” (Laidlaw 2014, 65). He is also critical of MacIntyre’s divergence “from Aristotle in portraying the exercise of ethical virtues as an unreflective process” (Laidlaw 2014, 65), which he sees reproduced in the work of Asad, Mahmood and Hirschkind (Laidlaw 2014, 69-71). Laidlaw argues that moral capacity or incapacity “is something one does with one’s freedom” (Laidlaw 2014, 154). For

⁵ Asad used the term ‘living tradition’ to refer to the way in which pious Muslims sought to inhabit a particular set of norms informed by an authoritative Islamic discursive tradition. I use the term ‘lived tradition’ in order to retain the importance of an Islamic discursive tradition of text and practice while recognizing the relevance of ordinary people as they produce new expressions and practices of Islam.

Laidlaw the question is no longer one of tradition as the habitation of norms or the desire to follow rules, but rather about ethical reflection and the exercise of moral judgement that arises from “hard choices or situations of moral ambivalence” (Laidlaw 2014, 172). He thus prefers the work of Magnus Marsden and Samuli Schielke for illustrating how “followers of reformist Islam also think and feel in moral registers other than those of piety” (Laidlaw 2014, 171). He also appreciates the approach of Joel Robbins who argues for separate “value spheres” in life that are either dominated by “the morality of reproduction” or “the morality of freedom” (Robbins 2007, 300). The morality of reproduction relates to aspects of culture that are the subject of routine behavior. The morality of freedom refers to “cultures or domains in which values are in conflict that people become conscious of making choices and feel themselves to possess freedom” (Robbins 2007, 311).

Laidlaw’s critique of Asad is important for recognizing the over emphasis on figures of authority and the unconscious compliance with rules. However, Laidlaw’s notion of “reflective freedom” is also “tied” to “the constitution of the subject through socially instituted practices and relations of power and mutual recognition” (Laidlaw 2014, 177). Similarly, Joel Robbins “morality of reproduction,” relies on a conception of culture wherein “the rules are clear and the compulsion to follow them very strong” (Robbins 2007, 299). I argue that rather than returning to some unspecified idea of culture we may consider tradition as an important lens for thinking about how the practices and norms of particular groups are inseparable from histories, memories, and affective relations. In view of Laidlaw’s critique, it is also important to consider how the development of Asad’s work on Islam is related to his own commitment as a “postcolonial and poststructuralist” who has been critical of the taken for granted assumptions of “the European Enlightenment, and the modern West” (Scott 2006, 136) and who has been instrumental in initiating “secularism as an object of anthropological enquiry” (Das 2006, 93). I remain indebted to the aspiration of Talal Asad to conceptualize “tradition...a more mobile, time-sensitive, more open-ended concept than most formulations of culture. And it looks not just to the past but to the future...with each new beginning, there is the possibility of a new (or “revived”) tradition, a new story about the past and the future, new virtues to be developed, new projects to be

addressed” (Scott and Hirschkind 2006, 289-90). As discussed in the previous section, this openness of tradition has not been fully reflected in the work of Asad, Mahmood and Hirschkind. The notion of authority and power that is particularly prominent in Asad’s conceptualization needs to be extended to include the practices of individual Muslims from various walks of life who negotiate and produce new and sometimes idiosyncratic routes through which to express themselves in the present while remaining tethered to a sense of being Muslim. As the opening vignette indicated, Shoaib was producing halal through his consumption practices at McDonalds in a manner that indicates neither ambivalence with supposedly conflicting value spheres of Islam and neo-liberalism, nor the habitation of a particular interpretation of orthodox Islamic norms.

Michael Lambek and Veena Das have developed an approach to ethics that considers the speech and actions of ordinary people. Termed ‘ordinary ethics’ they argue that “ethics is intrinsic to speech and action” (Lambek 2010, 1). Inspired by Wittgenstein and Austin’s analysis of ‘ordinary language’ Lambek argues for “ethical insight deeply embedded in the categories and functions of language and ways of speaking...kinds of acts and manners of acting” and as “relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief” (Lambek 2010, 2). “The ethical is immanent to our lives as human beings” (Lambek 2015). Discussing practical judgement, Lambek argues that the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* need not pertain to abstract virtues, but is “exercised continuously between, for example, expending time on earning a living to feed your children and playing with them, or between playing with them and having time for yourself” (Lambek 2010, 23). Similarly Das considers the “ethical as a dimension of everyday life” rather than as a “set of judgments we arrive at when we stand away from our ordinary practices” (Das 2015a, 134). Work on the self is always undertaken with reference to some social context (Das 2015a, 135) and that although events are important for bringing ethical considerations into view, their “rightness” is only felt when they are integrated back into the flux of everyday life (Das 2015a, 140). Rather than abstract rules, or conceptions of the good such as religion where “the ordinary is transcended and ethics intellectualized,

materialized, or transcendentalized” (Lambek 2010, 3) they suggest attention to the unexpected and minute moments where life is stitched together (Das 2015a).

However, in articulating ‘ordinary ethics’ as immanent in “ways of speaking...and manners of acting” both Das and Lambek remain focused on the historically contingent nature of the present. For Das this means paying attention to the way in which violent events in the past are “reanimated in the present...as embodied knowledge” (Das 2015b, 54). She thus gestures attention to the way in which acts and words are ethical in that they carry the potential for life to be held together but also torn apart. Lambek’s analysis is less focused on violent events. In a recent chapter, he discusses the ordinary through reflection upon the license plate slogans on vehicles in New Hampshire and Quebec. He shows how through comparison and a close consideration of place, history, and language “we can unpack a whole worldview and ideal way of life, buttressed by a political philosophy” (Lambek 2015). Here the past and the future unfold through the present. I suggest that Veena Das often draws on a Hindu discursive tradition to understand seemingly mundane acts (Das 2013), (Das 2015a) and Lambek’s discussion of license plates points to a particular tradition of political philosophy in North America. The notion of a lived tradition which this thesis develops is a theoretical bridge that connects Asad’s emphasis on tradition as authoritative textual production, towards a more open conception of ethics as the paths forged by individuals in everyday life.

In developing the idea of a lived tradition, it is instrumental to return to Wittgenstein’s discussion on language games that has informed the approaches of Asad, Lambek and Das. Veena Das has explained “Wittgenstein’s general view” of the “many empirical assertions that we affirm without specially testing them” and that “if this scaffolding is questioned, then we are not in the realm of mere differences of opinion” (Das 1998, 189). I take this scaffolding as the metaphor for establishing basic criterial conditions around which a tradition revolves. However, the metaphor of scaffolding is too rigid for considering the different forms of argumentation, subject positions and contexts in which a lived tradition emerges.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein discusses the difference between an ideal language and language in use (Wittgenstein 1953). In paragraph 83 he presents the scenario of a group playing ball-games. Despite the claims of someone that they are following a “definite rule” he calls on us to imagine what that means. In the frame, the group “start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly.” He then poses a question which is also a suggestion:

And is there not also the case where we play and—make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them—as we go along.
(Paragraph 83).

In a lived tradition practitioners make up the rules as they go along. This process is not entirely random but can be quite unexpected. For example, Shoaib, in the opening vignette, determined that McDonalds worldwide was halal. He drew on his own expectations regarding standardization in the fast food industry, an assessment of Muslim consumer demand, and the authority of his experience of consuming McDonalds in both Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. He did not require the authority of a religious figure or a set of definite rules through which to practice halal consumption.

Thinking about a lived tradition is to follow Wittgenstein in questioning the very notion of a definite rule. In paragraph 85 he discusses how a rule is like a signpost. Again, through a series of questions he destabilizes any clear connection between a rule and its application.

Does the sign-post leave no doubt open about the way I have to go? Does it shew (show) which direction I am to take when I have passed it; whether along the road or the footpath or cross-country? ...And if there were, not a single sign-post, but a chain of adjacent ones or of chalk marks on the ground—is there only one way of interpreting them? (Paragraph 85).

Although there may be many ways of interpretation, Wittgenstein maintains that it is not a case of either absolute certainty or absolute doubt. The rule like a signpost “sometimes leaves room for

doubt and sometimes not.” It is important to note that Shoaib’s rule regarding the halal status of McDonalds did not address the question of certainty with regards to the substance of what was consumed and neither was he in doubt. Committed to the practice of halal, his assessment offered him a practical solution to the consumption of halal at McDonalds. As we will see in the next section, his judgement was informed by a particular discursive tradition of intention (niyat) and halal practice where certainty was considered impossible and unsubstantiated doubt frowned upon.

For Wittgenstein rules are not absolute boundaries to be crossed nor are they simply irrelevant. His discussion in paragraph 88, again considers boundaries and the concept of exactness through the example of time and punctuality. Setting a clock at an exact time, instructing someone to arrive at dinner at an exact time, and determining exactness in a laboratory or observatory each “have a different though related meaning.” This observation leads him to conclude that “‘Inexact’ is really a reproach, and ‘exact’ is praise”.

No single ideal of exactness has been laid down; we do not know what we should be supposed to imagine under this head—unless you yourself lay down what is to be so called. But you will find it difficult to hit upon such a convention; at least any that satisfies you. Paragraph 88.

Members of a lived tradition may attempt to determine the rules of the game. They may employ notions of exactness as a reproach against others and engage in efforts to persuade others and regulate compliance. However, as anthropologists we should refrain from judging a particular position internal to a lived tradition as authoritative over the whole. Further, observing the language and practices of even the most committed activists would definitely bring to view instances through which they themselves make up the rules. In fact, the notion that human beings whether in particular cultures or traditions simply submit to rules is, according to Wittgenstein, an over simplification. Rather, we should pay attention to the interesting and perhaps minute ways in which people make up the rules as they go along. This process of invention and negotiation is however not random. Rather we should pay attention to the way in which historically informed practices undergo a process of transformation

and recalibration within the contemporary discursive and material environment. As we saw with Shoaib, this process is more fluid than an analogy of scaffolding suggests.

Thinking about Islam as a lived tradition builds upon Asad's insights into the discursive formation of Islamic practices but extends his concept to incorporate a more open notion of authority and individual practice beyond the narrow focus on coherence and piety. Akin to the rules of a game, virtues and norms of conduct are not strict boundaries to be crossed, but rather Wittgensteinian 'signposts' that guide conduct, that gesture towards the direction of the path, but which do not preclude the possibility for shortcuts, innovations and reformulations. Various actors may make up the rules as they go along yet all maintain that they are playing the same game. Though all actors maintain a sense of adherence to Islam the specific practices differ in interesting and significant ways. Importantly this development is not the preserve of scholars but unfolds through the practices of ordinary people.

A key to unpacking this creative and processual emergence of a lived tradition requires a consideration of how the question of rules, compliance and everyday practice is discussed within the Islamic discursive tradition.

NORMS, VIRTUES AND THE EVERYDAY: NIYAT (INTENTION) AND RITUAL PRACTICE

Approaching Islam as a lived tradition is a methodological and theoretical approach towards observing how Muslims articulate ideals and norms about the good Muslim life from within their particular situation, class position, sectarian affiliation and individual disposition. These positions may differ significantly and lead to much criticism and debate but that does not mean that each individual is living in a constant state of uncertainty and ambiguity. For example, many laborers in Mumbai whom I knew did not fast during Ramadan. They argued that the tough working conditions rendered them exempt. However, others from the trading classes and ulama whom I spoke to contested their position. According to them normal livelihood was not a cause for exemption from fasting. Nevertheless, both positions continued and as far as I could tell no major crisis of the self, ensued. Engaging with the

discourse of fasting and the rules for exemption each position was an articulation of Islam. Non-fasting laborers incorporated the norms of fasting, the rules for exemption, as well as material conditions of hard labor under extreme conditions in producing an expression and practice of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai. Importantly these different positions did not necessarily intersect in open dialogue and public debate. Rather they constituted an implicit debate, continuing side by side in Mumbai in forming the topography of Muslim practice in the city.

Through this ethnographic example of fasting and non-fasting, it is clear that the question of norms and ordinary life is not the sole concern of the anthropology of ethics. Religious traditions as discursive condensations of histories; affects, practices and bodily sensations are replete with considerations of both norms and everyday implications. One example in that regard is a discussion by Veena Das on 'noncruelty' (anrhamasya) and 'non-violence' (ahimsa). Writing about the treatment, slaughter and consumption of animals she refers to contradictory statements in the Laws of Manu which state "that one can never obtain meat without causing injury and therefore one should abstain from eating meat" while another "that there is no fault in eating meat, drinking liquor or having sex, for these are the natural activities of creatures..." (Das 2013, 24). Where non-violence signified an absolute condition towards animals and is associated with the former, non-cruelty suggested "that a single-minded pursuit of dharma can itself be the cause of violence" (Das 2013, 26). Non-cruelty was the recognition of the bodily passions and that living itself was inseparable from various forms of violence towards animals and other humans. For Das, non-cruelty was the intimate "sense of togetherness" and "feeling" that eluded non-violence as "obligation or rule following" (Das 2013, 28). The examples presented point to the way in which the Hindu discursive tradition carved a space between abstract rules and virtues and the "messiness" of everyday life. This distinction between non-violence and non-cruelty can be a useful lens through which to understand the approach of Hindu customers at the butcher shop discussed in greater detail in chapter 3. Many abstained from meat consumption on 'holy days,' most commonly Tuesday and Thursday. However, for the remainder of the week they preferred freshly slaughtered chicken over packaged refrigerated products. For them

the proximity to the violence of slaughter assured freshness and taste, and was anyway inseparable from meat consumption no matter how hidden the process. Meat eating on particular days was not necessarily a source of anxiety or ambiguity, but rather an indication of the complexity of the Hindu lived tradition.

Within the Islamic discursive tradition, the discourse on *niyat* (intention) and practice, offers a similar insight that cautions against a linear association between norms, virtues and compliance.

In Islamic studies '*niyat*' (intention) has received much attention. Paul Powers has traced how "early western scholarship ... saw Islam as mechanically ritualistic" (Powers 2004, 426). He cites a sample of scholars who considered Islam devoid of anything but a formalist obsession with ritual. For example "in 1951 Gustave von Grunebaum remarked that Islam, its prayer marked by 'peculiar formalism' (13), 'left the believer satisfied with an arid, if physically exacting liturgy' (13)" (Powers 2004, 427). Powers notes how this early approach gave way to the notion that Islamic practice was in fact "the surface of a deeply 'spiritual' experience" (Powers 2004, 427). He cites a well-known Prophetic tradition that was central to legal texts and was taken as the source of this newfound spiritualism: "Actions are defined by intentions, and to every person what he intends (*innama al-a'mal bi-l-niyyat wa-innama li-kull imri'in ma nawa*)." The attraction of '*niyat*' for these arguments lay in the Islamic discourse that *niyat* could be performed "with the heart" and did not have to be uttered (Powers 2004, 427). Against these "spiritualist" interpretations, Powers argues that the primary purpose of intention (*niyat*) in Islamic law and practice is taxonomic (Powers 2004, 436). For example, with Islamic forms of charity there are different categories that have different obligations and can be disbursed in different ways. Through the statement of intention money exchanged becomes *zakat* instead of say, *sadqa*, or *lillah*.⁶ The same is true of prayer, where the same actions can be defined in

⁶ *Zakat* is a category of charity obligatory on all Muslims above a certain level of wealth. *Sadaqah* and *lillah* are voluntary forms of charity that can be offered by anyone. There are different rules for disbursement depending on the category. For example many people argue that *Zakat* cannot be disbursed to non-Muslims but *Sadaqah* or *lillah* can. Also people who pay *Zakat* may not receive it, but can receive other forms of charity.

different ways to fulfill different obligations. Central to Powers' analysis is the notion that "niyyat, the internal, subjective dimension of right action, is presented as generally stable and subject to the will" (Powers 2004, 454).

However, there is also an aspect of the discourse of intention that Powers references in relation to al-Ghazali that connects niyat to notions of "sincerity" and "truthfulness" (Powers 2004, 451) without reducing the discussion to a search for the spiritual core of Islam. Brinkley Messick has discussed the legal implications of niyat (intention) for contract law. A central problem for legal scholars was that "ultimately, neither knowledge of God Almighty nor of the intentions and meanings located in the interiors of other humans are fully attainable and ascertainable by interpreters." As with the famous hadith above, ultimate meaning inhered in intention. However, as an interior state this was not accessible to others. "But these sources of authoritative meaning, these locales of truth, remained the identified objects of interpretive efforts" (Messick 2001, 178). Legal scholars grappled with the problem of "an assumed gap between forms of expression and intention" such that "legal analyses amount to attempts to erect bridges from the accessible to the inaccessible" (Messick 2001, 178). The work of legal scholars thus involved attempts at reading outward signs for manifestations of ultimately inaccessible but always estimable meaning. Erin E. Stiles ethnography of Zanzibar's Islamic courts has shown how "establishing intention in legal acts is a crucial element of judicial reasoning" (Stiles 2003, 273). In Zanzibar's divorce courts the act of interpretation involved the "recognition of the multiple interpretations of actions and the motivations of the actors based on the presupposition of scenarios of male-female, husband-wife interactions at this particular point in Zanzibari social and cultural history" (Stiles 2003, 274). Statements and practices of divorce were not taken at face value. Rather the judge was charged with the task of assessing what the actual intentions of the plaintiffs were in order to determine whether they meant what they said. Through this assessment he was able to confirm or over rule cases of divorce.

According to the Islamic discursive tradition, "the stability of intention subject to the will" (Powers 2004, 454) ensured that utterance was sufficient for performance. However, as the

scholarship on the legal tradition has shown, utterance and meaning were not co-produced. Legal scholars employed interpretive efforts based on linguistic analysis and sociological assessment to determine whether people meant what they said. This dual nature of *niyat* (intention) points to its subjective stability and social opacity. However, opacity did not deter interpretation. I argue that understanding Islam as a lived tradition requires the recognition of this discourse of *niyat* (intention) as it relates to everyday practice.

A number of important aspects of the sociality of ‘*niyat*’ can be noted. Following the prophetic tradition above it is widely argued that only correct intentions will earn blessings and reward from God. Muslims are thus encouraged to cultivate a pious disposition that would link the interior state of the individual to the practice. However, it is very common in Mumbai and elsewhere in Muslim societies for people to judge the overtly pious as insincere when considering their acts of prayer in conjunction with other less virtuous aspects of their lives. Like the legal practitioners mentioned above, Muslims engage in interpretative efforts to critique outward forms of piety which they assess stem from impure intentions. However, these efforts are always limited. The true intention of another individual is after all unknown. This limit to interpretability in social practice is best exemplified by prophetic traditions that caution against undue and unsubstantiated critique of others.⁷ On the other hand, as a number of ethnographers of the Muslim world have shown, possessing the correct intentions may serve as a justification for criticized practices (Schielke 2012, 159) and even non-performance (Stiles 2003, 277). Through appeal to the stability and opacity of *niyat* practitioners may take refuge in the idea that God knows one’s true intentions. Making a claim to being a good person is sufficient to deflect attention from non-compliance. Finally, a more esoteric discourse of *niyat* (intention) relates to the pursuit of piety. Here the stability of intention becomes complicated. In the pursuit of piety and the cultivation of a virtuous disposition there exists the possibility that one’s true

⁷ “Whoever shields [or hides the misdeeds of] a Muslim, Allah will shield him in this world and the Hereafter” (Nawawi n.d.).

“Verily Allah has pardoned for me my ummah: their mistakes, their forgetfulness, and that which they have been forced to do under duress” (Nawawi n.d.).

intentions are in fact inspired by worldly gain. Here the vices of pride and jealousy are the intimate partners of the virtues of submission, love and detachment. Together with an inherent tension in Islamic discourse where the Prophet Muhammad as the final messenger initiates an absence that is to be emulated but never matched (Tayob 2014), *tajdid* as the renewal or revival of society and the self is never certain. This discursive constellation on *niyat* (intention) as it pertains to everyday practice is crucial for understanding the unstable connection between norms and compliance. Internal to the Islamic discursive tradition, practitioners are warned against judgements of others, and of assuming that practice ensures salvation. Methodologically this means that at the very least anthropologists should refrain from making those very same judgements. Theoretically it allows for a consideration of Islam as a lived tradition where through the notion of *niyat* (intention) and interiority, norms and ideals may remain suspended in a perpetual state of seeming incompleteness.

I argue that a central tenet that connects the practices of the traders and laborers discussed above, in relation to their divergent Ramadan practice is that both maintain the *niyat* (intention) to follow Islam. Neither denounce the importance of Ramadan, even in non-compliance. Similarly it was clear with Shoaib's practice in McDonalds that he was producing *halal* in new ways. Common arguments in Mumbai for the *halal* status of McDonalds rest on a variety of generalized but situated assessments about Muslim involvement in the meat industry, Hindu aversion to slaughter and the commercial interest of restaurants in serving the consuming public. Underlying these assertions is the importance of *niyat* (intention) for *halal* practice. According to the authoritative practice of *halal*, the supply by a fellow Muslim constitutes *halal*. Doubt of the individual is an offense to the integrity of the person. If the supplier is later deemed to have betrayed the trust of the customer, then the sin for the transgression lies with him. There is no sin attached to the un-intentional and ignorant transgression of *halal*. Similarly, a lack of intention on both sides to engage in non-*halal* supply or consumption exonerates both. From within this tradition of practice the issue of certainty over the substance of *halal* does not arise and doubt in the absence of proof is foreclosed as an undesirable practice. The stability of intention on behalf of the consuming individual is therefore an important aspect through

which halal practice can be extended into new contexts. Without judging Shoaib's intention, it is crucial to consider that he was not interested in transgressing the rules of halal. Rather through the stability of intention, and the certainty of his commitment to living a Muslim life, he was producing new routes for the practice of halal in Mumbai.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is comprised of five chapters which presents an ethnography of the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai towards an understanding of Islam as a lived tradition. I deploy the notion of a lived tradition to illuminate different traditions of practice among Muslims in Mumbai but also to show how these positions are never homogenous nor complete.

The second chapter presents an introduction into the background of halal meat production and consumption in Mumbai. What are the ethical implications associated with halal consumption in Mumbai? How is trust in halal established? How have neo-liberal developments in the trade and production of food introduced new practices of halal? How do Muslims practice halal under these changing circumstances? The chapter addresses these questions by presenting some of the ethical implications that Muslims invest in halal and a background overview of the mechanisms, networks and arguments through which trust in halal is established. The emergence of halal certification in Mumbai has been a response to the expansion of global trade and the introduction of foreign fast food outlets. Halal certification presents a new tradition of halal practice that introduces a very different basis through which trade in halal products is conducted and trust in halal is produced. Given this changing material context of halal practice Muslim consumers and traders make ethical judgments through which to negotiate, evade and innovate their practice of halal. Approaching the emergence of halal certification in Mumbai as a lived tradition illuminates the ways in which neo-liberal developments introduce changes to prevailing practices but do not necessarily eliminate or induce a complete transformation.

The third chapter focusses on a Muslim butcher shop as a node in the network through which halal meat is produced, traded and consumed in the city. What are the practices of halal chicken production and consumption in Mumbai? In the competitive meat markets of Mumbai how is trust produced at the store? How has the availability of ready-slaughtered, hygienically sealed packaged chicken impacted on the practices of halal production and consumption? What are the practices through which the butcher seeks to extend his influence and maintain customer interest in fresh chicken consumption? The chapter begins with an overview of halal slaughter in the store. It focusses on the sensory engagements of customers with the process of slaughter and their preference for fresh meat. The relatively recent introduction of packaged chicken is presented as an alternative material regime of halal meat production that entails a distinct sensory experience of slaughter. This sensory recalibration threatens to eliminate the Muslim butcher from public life and produce his livelihood as a site of disgust. Through fresh and 'frozen' chicken halal meat production can signify very different things. However, at this butcher the ethical practices through which trust is produced are inseparable from the freshly slaughtered chicken. The chapter considers the ongoing competition between the two forms of halal meat production as the owner seeks to retain customer demand. This entails a series of ethical practices through which Muslim butchers maintain their position in the halal meat industry in Mumbai. Approaching halal meat practices in Mumbai through the lens of a lived tradition allows for a consideration of continuity, change and situated ethical practice.

The fourth chapter turns to two well-established restaurants in the old Muslim quarter of the city as locations where halal meals are produced, traded and consumed. Each restaurant claims a distinctly Muslim heritage. However, as an elderly informant of mine one day explained, the one was "sufi food" while the other was "just business." The chapter approaches this insight as an informed categorization through which to think about differences in restaurant narrative and practice. Both produced "Muslim food" through very different idioms. However contrary to the distinction above there were also similarities between the two. How do the Islamic virtues of care and responsibility towards the poor obtain specific meanings through restaurant practice? How do the narratives and

material practices of each restaurant indicate very different expressions of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai? Through the narratives and practices of each restaurant an ethics of care and responsibility towards the poor is practiced differently in each. Through each restaurant we see how language and material practices are reflective of different articulations and expressions of Islam as a lived tradition.

The fifth chapter considers practices of animal sacrifice during the annual Id-ul-Adha celebrations. In Mumbai the festival is known by the name, Bakri Id (lit: goat festival). During the sacrifice slaughter is performed by family members in the home. What is the authoritative meaning of qurbani (sacrifice) as understood by Muslims in Mumbai? How does this ethical impetus and virtue guide the practices of sacrifice? How do practices of boasting, pride and bargaining remain connected to the practices of sacrifice? The ethnography considers how an Islamic discursive tradition of obligation and commemoration has developed into a notion of sacrifice that considers love, intimacy and care as a pre-requisite for the cultivation of the virtues of surrender and detachment. Through the stability and opacity of *niyat* (intention) for practice, aesthetic appreciation of goats and practices of care practitioners engage in ethical reflection and judgements through which the final performance of sacrifice is produced as a feeling (*ehsaas*) of loss. Observable and interpreted but opaque this notion of sacrifice as feeling (*ehsaas*) situates the ultimate test of compliance as an internal experience. Approaching the practice of qurbani (sacrifice) as a lived tradition, this chapter offers an ethnographic vantage point that moves beyond discussions of the possibility or impossibility of sacrifice.

The sixth and final chapter presents an ethnography of the practices of Ramadan that include fasting, feasting, prayer and shopping. It considers temporality during the month as well as individual ethical dispositions as important for understanding the different practices during Ramadan. What values and virtues do Muslims in Mumbai associate with Ramadan? In what ways are abstract virtues materialized and embodied in the practices of fasting and feasting during the month? How are practices during the month temporally circumscribed? The chapter begins with an overview of the virtues of restraint, generosity and care emphasized during Ramadan. Within this discursive tradition are overlapping and competing notions of virtue. However, in Mumbai informants consider various

subject positions and practices in positing the idea of Ramadan as a “month of great blessings” during which prayer, shopping, food and profit are all available in abundance. Through the competing notions of virtue and abstract conception of “blessings,” different individuals, at different times, make judgements about how to partake in the practice of Ramadan. Through an ethnography of practices of fasting, sharing during Iftar (the evening meal) and prayer we see how individual ethical disposition and temporality are crucial for the practice of Ramadan. The chapter concludes with an ethnography of the intensification of celebration, feasting, shopping and alms-giving as the day of Id approaches. Approaching the practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition, this chapter illuminates how different individuals engage in different practices through which the “blessings” (barakat) of Ramadan are obtained.

CONCLUSION

This thesis develops the notion of Islam as a lived tradition as a theoretical and methodological contribution to the anthropology of Islam and ethics. The ‘discursive position’ argues for the study of Islam as a discursive tradition where Muslim practices of piety need to be understood through a discursive genealogy of Islamic texts. This approach develops a particular notion of *Islamic ethics as piety* with which to contextualize and provincialize secular European norms of personhood. An alternative conceptualization in the anthropology of Islam that I have referred to as the ‘everyday position’ emphasizes an ethics of ambivalence and uncertainty. Here, *Islamic ethics as piety* is one particular sphere of a much larger ethics of life. Conflicts between pious pursuits and livelihood or family commitments produce ambivalence and uncertainty. In both approaches Islam is reduced to a particular conception of a reformist ethics of piety as a coherent set of norms with which to engage. However, in approaching the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai it is clear that not all Muslim practices are aimed at a gradual process of ethical self-reform. On the other hand, Muslims like Shoaib, in the opening vignette, engaged in halal food consumption practices in new contexts without necessarily experiencing moments of ambivalence or uncertainty.

For Wittgenstein, the rules of a language game are like signposts that do not produce either certainty or absolute doubt. Rather he suggests that we make up the rules as we go along. Exactness is not an observation but rather a praise, and inexactness a reproach. Following Wittgenstein, I argue that an anthropology of Islam should not be concerned with the habitation of norms or their failure. Rather we may observe the ways in which different practitioners engage in ethical reflections and judgment through which to make up the rules as they go along. The centrality of *niyat* (intention) in the Islamic discursive tradition is an important vantage point from which to understand how practices may remain suspended in a seeming state of incompleteness. The subjective stability of intention and its social interpretability but ultimate opacity is an important lens to understand the practice of Islam as a lived tradition. Here the subjective stability and social opacity of intention may provide the key through which to extend practice into new contexts even against authoritative pronouncements.

In each chapter I focus on how sources of authority and power may provide an important point of reference for the development of practice. However, in each case we also observe how differences in individual ethical dispositions, occupation and context are important for the specific ways in which the practice of Islam as a lived tradition emerges.

CHAPTER TWO: CONSUMING AND PRODUCING HALAL IN MUMBAI: BETWEEN GLOBAL DISCOURSE AND LOCAL PRACTICE

One evening in Dongri while drinking tea with two childhood friends, a discussion about halal practice began. Both were IT professionals. Junaid worked in Mumbai and his friend Hussein for a bank in Singapore. They both travelled frequently for work purposes. Junaid raised a confusing issue regarding halal that he had recently faced on a business trip to Thailand, “if there is food being made in a pan, but before that you know that the pan was used for non-halal cooking, then what do you do?” he asked. The question was interesting because it presented a certain confusion about halal. I joked that it was perhaps easier to question less and eat more. The friend from Singapore then added his opinion. He was familiar with the issue and clear about the solution, “if you know that they have used separate utensils and there has been no mixing, then you can eat it.” Junaid continued to disagree. He then explained the scenario, “I was on work and they were making omelets with bacon. So I told the guy, don’t put bacon for me. I knew that there was bacon in that pan before. But I ate it. You see I was thinking about it, the eggs are not haram, so does the pan make the eggs haram because there were some haram things in it before? I wasn’t sure so I ate it.” Hearing this the friend again interjected, “No no, you can’t eat that. Everything must be separate. Plates, pots, utensils. I mean if there is no option and you are starving then ok, you can eat it.” Junaid laughed, “there were no other eggs! But I could have had some cereal or bread, that all was there.”

Evident from this conversation between childhood friends were two very different practices of halal. What seemed like a straightforward issue regarding the presence of bacon in the frying pan, did

not present a problem for Junaid. His practice of halal pertained to the food consumed not utensils and crockery. For Junaid, doubt was not a basis for abstinence. However, for the friend who had lived in Singapore halal consumption necessitated a consideration of pots and pans. It was clear that he had been introduced to the regime of the halal certification industry in Singapore where spaces of public halal consumption were regulated according to a separation of ingredients, utensils and even eating areas (Marranci 2012). For him the presence of non-halal substances in the same kitchen meant that only starvation would warrant consumption. Hussein was thus appealing to the caveat of necessity in Islamic law that allowed for the transgression of halal.

Through this conversation we see how halal consumption is the terrain for very different practices of Islam as a lived tradition. Each friend expressed an approach to the practice of halal in mutually exclusive ways. However, it was clear that both were engaging with a discursive tradition of halal practice and were committed to the consumption of halal.

This chapter is a consideration of two dominant practices of halal in Mumbai. Halal was a serious matter and transgression bore consequences for the moral constitution of the person. Although the importance of halal was not contested there were different ways in which trust in halal was produced. For many in the city trust was produced through Muslim networks of trade. However, a new regime of halal certification was emerging in Mumbai that altered the basis upon which trust in halal was produced and demanded the inspection of a document rather than personal guarantee. Certification presented a new material and discursive formation of halal practice in cooperation with global organizations. However, as a lived tradition the practice of halal was not confined to fixed rules. In the case of Junaid and his pork-laced omelet, the practice of halal was not about achieving absolute certainty nor did it necessarily leave the practitioner in a state of doubt. Rather through the centrality of *niyat* (intention) as an important guide for halal practice we see how Muslims engaged in reflection and ethical judgments through which new and innovative routes for the practice of halal were established.

Research on the contemporary consumption of halal in minority contexts has argued for halal consumption as an expression of national, ethnic, minority and consumer identity's (Bonne and Verbeke 2008), (Fischer 2011), (Woong 2007), (Gillette 2005), (Marranci 2012). Most recently Johan Fischer has considered the interplay between Malay state organizations, scientific laboratories, Islamic organizations and neo-liberal "audit cultures" in the regulation of a certified form of standardized, "global halal" (Fischer 2016). In each of these studies we obtain a snap shot of halal in a particular form. Completely absent is the historical work that has argued for the progressive development of halal practice (Cook 1986), (Freidenreich 2011). This chapter contributes to these debates by showing how halal certification overlays onto an existing mode of halal production and consumption. What emerges is not merely the expression of consumer identities in new contexts, but rather the production of halal in new ways.

Audit cultures as discussed by Marilyn Strathern, identified a trend in UK higher education policy where statistical measures and reports were becoming the basis for assessment (Strathern 2000). This entailed the establishment of "new categories of experts" who identified what counted as relevant knowledge and then designed procedures and regulatory mechanisms to ensure compliance (Shore and Wright 1999, 560). The "audit cultures" critique of education was that it drew attention away from the value-added practices of teaching and research towards the bureaucratic function of compliance reporting. Strathern had drawn on critical accounting scholarship that compared audit practices to Latour's scientific process of "fact building" in the laboratory (Power 1996, 309). From this perspective audit entailed the development of "abstract indifference to the substance of performance" through "a shift from substance to process" (Power 1996, 302). Audit was a self-referential loop. For example, the audit of quality control involved the establishment of quality control departments that produced information that testified to quality standards. A quality control audit was the practice of assessing this newly developed documentation.

Similar to quality control audits, halal certification was engaged in the process of "fact building" in an attempt to produce certainty over the materiality of halal. DNA tests, supply chain management

and documentation were produced in support of halal certification. This development has been particularly powerful in the growing market for global halal trade. The certification industry has attempted to establish new rules for halal practice under changing conditions. However, as this chapter will show halal certification did not produce anything close to “abstract indifference to the substance of performance” (Power 1996, 302) but rather introduced a piercing scientific gaze into the materiality of the substance consumed. Unlike Power’s discussion of quality control audits where ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards have become an agreed upon practice for producing trust, halal certification has not been hegemonic precisely because halal practice is not entirely dependent on procedures and certification. As a lived tradition, the practice of halal was not simply confined to rules. Traders, employees and consumers in Mumbai practiced halal without recourse to certification. Importantly the centrality of *niyat* (intention) and intra-Muslim trade for halal practice meant that halal could not be reduced to a question of material certainty. Rather than simply follow the dictates of the certification industry, Muslims engaged in ethical reflection and judgment that gave rise to new practice of halal. At times this entailed an indifference to the documentary regime of certification while remaining committed to the practice of halal.

MORAL CONSTITUTION, NIYAT (INTENTION) AND COMMUNITY IN THE PRACTICE OF HALAL

Halal, meaning permissible, was a crucial practice of Muslim food consumption in Mumbai. Interaction within Muslim networks of trade and labor ensured that it was not always an explicit concern. However, for Muslims in Mumbai halal remained a serious issue that signified more than permissible food and proper ritual slaughter. Unlike practices of charity or prayer there was no direct notion of reward (*sawab*) for fulfilling the consumption of halal. Halal practice was the bare minimum. It was considered the obligation through which a covenant with God was established that ensured the sustenance of the Muslim community. However, besides this notion of a covenant, the transgression of halal had consequences for the moral constitution of the individual. Livelihood, earnings and

individual moral judgement were negatively affected through the transgression of halal. However, despite the weight of concern, Muslims in Mumbai appeared relatively unperturbed. Junaid barely flinched as he relayed his encounter with the bacon-laced omelet. Understanding this complex practice of halal necessitates a consideration of the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for the establishment of trust.

A common discussion amongst informants concerned the rationale for the prohibition on pork. It was often expressed that underlying the law was the potential for the physical nature of the pig to have implications for the morality of the person. An informant who was also a doctor of Unani⁸ medicine explained, “that thing is dirty, it lives in dirt, its sweat is even dirt. It is haram (non-halal) because if we eat it, it will affect us physically, psychologically, totally.” The taboo on halal was not arbitrary. Clearly it was related to questions of boundary and order and purity and pollution (Douglas 1979). However here halal also incorporated Indian theories of medical practice that linked health, morality and food (Zimmerman 1999), (Khare and Rao 1986). In the explanation offered, the physical dirt of the pig inhered in the meat, which if consumed threatened the health of the body and the general well-being of the individual. Importantly, this chain of association was not limited to medical practitioners.

Aadil was a regular informant of mine. We often met to have afternoon tea outside his cell-phone store in Colaba. He was originally from U.P. in North India and was of a family of aalims trained in the Deobandi tradition. His own grandfather had been a very prominent shaikh (religious authority) and much of his family had continued the tradition of ulama training. One afternoon he invited me to join him for his new lunchtime favorite of McDonalds. As we enjoyed our crispy-chicken burger meals, Aadil narrated a story about halal and morality.

There was a rich but dishonest man who put chrores⁹ of rupees into a bag
and then went to the house of a poor man and offered him the opportunity

⁸ Unani, literally meaning Greek, is an Indo-Muslim system of medicine that traces its roots to the medical treatise of Avicenna (Ibn Sina). It is based on a theory of bodily humors (Alavi 2008).

⁹ In the Indian numerical system 1 chore is equal to 10 million. The use of chrores, in the plural, is a reference to a huge amount of money.

to take as much money as he wanted. The poor man refused. After some time the rich man, very confused, replied, “ok fine then, come to my house for a meal at least.” So the next day at the rich man’s house, after the meal the poor man needed to use the bathroom. In the bathroom was a watch of only 500 rps in value. Seeing the watch the poor man decided to take it. The rich man, having discovered the theft, was very confused as to why the man could refuse the money the day before and then come to his house and steal a cheap watch, so he went to a maulana (religious leader) to enquire. The maulana then replied, “you see at his house he was eating halal, and so his actions were pure. That is why he denied your haram money. But having come to your house and after eating your food, he too started to have haram thoughts, and wanted to do haram things.”

Aarif recounted the story to emphasize the importance of being fastidious about halal practice for protecting one’s moral constitution. In the story narrated there was no direct transgression of halal. Rather it was the non-halal earnings of the rich man that inhered in the food he served that had consequences on the poor man’s ability to judge between right and wrong. The story may be read as an aspect of a Deobandi-inspired moralizing discourse that emphasized correct ritual practice as the basis from which all other good’s would follow (Metcalf 1982). However, combined with Hakim’s articulation it pointed towards a shared notion that the consumption of halal had ethical implications for the moral constitution of the person. Here the physical dirt of a pig and the figurative dirt of ill-earned gains were two aspects of non-halal practice that were analogously compared for their consequences on individual morality.

In addition to the consequences of halal consumption for the development and maintenance of moral selves was the covenant with God wherein halal slaughter and sacrifice were actions that secured God’s barakat (bounty/blessing). In these narratives halal alternated with qurbani (sacrifice) as the basis upon which God ensured the sustenance of Muslims. Sitting in the Crawford Market

neighborhood one evening, Farouk told me a story that his father had told him. It was a story often repeated in numerous iterations that related the abundance of farm animals in India to the fastidiousness of Muslims to the practice of halal.

Goats normally give birth to at most 2 babies per year. Of that one dies.

However pigs give birth to how many piglets? 10 at a time easily. But, if you go all over India, in any city, small villages, anywhere, you will find herds of goats but so few pigs! So that is the barakat (blessing) of halal, of Allah blessing Muslims for doing the slaughter in his name. It is the same with earnings. If you make haram (impermissible) money, it will come quick and easy but also vanish. But halal earnings will have barakat. That is the barakat of Allah.

The number of goats and pigs in this story was told as if it was independent of consumer tastes and farming practices. Because Muslims performed the halal method of slaughter of goats, and sacrificed them for Bakri Id (goat festival – Chapter 5), God ensured their abundance. Here again Farouk made the connection between earnings and slaughter. Halal earnings had barakat (blessings) and longevity compared to haram (impermissible) earnings that were quickly floundered. Altaf, another informant, recounted an iteration of the story where the pigs in Farouk's narration were replaced by tigers. Goats were available in abundance, yet tigers, not consumed by Muslims, were facing extinction. Even more remarkable was the availability of chickens, "every day 20-30 lakhs of chicken are slaughtered in Mumbai only, but there is never a shortage. Where is it coming from? That's what you need to think about. Ultimately it is by Allah's will." According to these narratives halal was a covenant between Muslims and God whereby obedience and correct performance ensured God's provision.

The practice of halal was a safeguard against moral degeneration, encouraged financial prudence and secured God's favor. Haram consumption, in contrast, threatened dissolution into immorality and shortage. These expressions can be read communally, as indexing the moral strength

and divine evidence of Muslim food practices in the face of marginalization and stigmatization by the mainstream public sphere. However, Aarif's story of the stolen watch point also to a consideration of moral constitution and ethical resolve threatened by the transgression of halal.

Given the significant hazards associated with transgression, Junaid appeared particularly lax in his encounter with the bacon. How was he able to simply overlook the potential for the consumption of bacon fat? The key to understanding the practice of halal in Mumbai is that contrary to the story of the poor man in the rich man's house, the unintentional transgression of halal was not considered a cause for concern. The centrality of *niyat* (intention) to halal practice produced a series of guidelines as the basis for the practice of halal. The practice of halal was premised on trust. The consuming individual was usually not the person who performed the slaughter. The consumer trusted the store owner who in turn trusted the supplier or slaughterer that the proper halal practice had been performed. This separation of practitioner from consumer resulted in a potential for transgression. However, the Islamic legal tradition on halal absolved the consumer of sin for unintentionally transgressing halal. Importantly it was also considered a sin to doubt another Muslim. Given the intention (*niyat*) to consume halal, ignorance was innocence as long as there were no clear and obvious indications that the provider was untrustworthy. This particular notion of trust was premised on interaction within networks of intra-Muslim trade. However, as a lived tradition, individuals were likely to extend these practices beyond established contexts. The stability of *niyat* (intention) for halal practice meant that it was possible for Junaid to eat a bacon-tainted omelet and for Aadil to narrate the importance of halal consumption even as we ate in the relatively uncertain and much debated space of McDonalds. The importance of intention (*niyat*) for halal practice was clearly explained to me one morning in Dongri at a prominent neighborhood restaurant.

Asadullah was the day manager at a well-known restaurant in Dongri, a popular Muslim area in Mumbai. Upon hearing about my research on halal he began to explain an important basis through which trust and intention (*niyat*) were integral to the practice of halal in Mumbai:

“Here halal is not a problem, everything is coming from Deonar (Mumbai Municipal Abattoir) and there Muslims are slaughtering. Meat from there is being exported all over the world as halal. Those people that are doing the business are those people who have recited, ‘Laa ilaha ill-Allah Muhammad-ur Rasulallah (There is no God but God and Muhammad is his messenger)’ so they will answer to Allah.” At this point a man sitting on the edge of the fishpond, waiting for an account query to be sorted entered the conversation, “we don’t have to worry, at the end of the day we trust in them, they are Muslims.” Asadullah then offered an analogy with prayer as explanation, “when we go to mosque, that imam who leads, we don’t know him, who he really is, but we make the niyat (intention) to read behind the imam. And if he is not pak (pure in thoughts and actions), then he must answer to Allah, not us.”

Asadullah’s explanation was an elaboration of the Islamic legal tradition on halal. Both he and his friend were clear that Muslim involvement in the meat industry meant that the consequences for transgression rested with the suppliers and slaughterers. The analogy to prayer referenced the ultimate opacity of the intention (niyat) of another person. Outward signs of appearance could never indicate “who he really is.” As a Muslim, the stability of one’s own intention was sufficient for the practice of both communal prayer and halal consumption. The centrality of niyat (intention) for halal practice effectively located halal concerns at the level of inter-personal interaction within a community of shared values. Doubt in the halal status of a fellow Muslim was considered an offence on the supplier. This inter-personal and communally charged notion of trust offered a solution to the moral hazards of consuming haram. Central to this conception of trust upon which halal was practiced was that the actual materiality of the substance consumed evaded scrutiny. Correct intention on the part of the consumer, and Muslim involvement in the supply chain, ensured halal practice. There was no question of certainty over the substance consumed, and doubt was foreclosed as an undesirable

practice. Within this lived tradition of *niyat* (intention) and halal practice Muslims engaged in ethical reflection and judgments through which the practice of halal was extended into new contexts. Like Junaid and his omelet this practice of halal did not necessarily conform to the rules and agenda of the halal certification industry.

CERTIFYING HALAL: GLOBAL NETWORKS AND STANDARDS IN MUMBAI

The changing economy of food production in Mumbai presented a potentially different scenario for the practice of halal. Packaged meat, the increasing prevalence of international fast food chain stores such as McDonalds, and meat exports, involved transactions over long distances in an impersonal market. Globally these developments had precipitated the establishment of a halal certification industry that had been initiated by Malaysia during the late 70's and early 80's (Fischer 2016). The growth of the industry over the past three decades has given halal certification a global scope. The halal industry has sought to establish the halal certificate, backed by auditing procedures, chemical testing, and supply chain management as a solution to trading, preparing and consuming halal in an increasingly impersonal market. With halal certification trust in halal is produced through expert knowledge, certification procedures and documentary evidence.

Two crucial developments that the certification industry has introduced to the practice of halal have been the emphasis on 'food technology' and the concept of 'cross-contamination' as risks for halal practice. Food technology presents the possibility for enzymes, flavorants and additives of animal origin to render seemingly non-meat products non-halal. Cross contamination was the industry term given to the risk of physical contact between halal and non-halal substances at any point in the production, transport and retail of food. Through these new 'risks' the industry has expanded halal consideration beyond meat products and into the opaque, expert world of food technology. Given the ubiquity of invisible threats to halal, detailed investigation of ingredient lists and production processes aim to establish material certainty. Once the substance of halal has been ensured Muslim involvement

was no longer necessary. This shift to material certainty through halal certification sought to render the unintentional transgression of halal unacceptable (Tayob 2016).

This particular approach to halal has been the result of global developments in production and trade where Muslim's were not necessarily among the trade intermediaries in the supply of food. The new material context of international trade and global food exports gave rise to a new practice of halal. However, in India the idea of Muslims dominating the butcher occupations is well established. In Mumbai the continuing prevalence of Muslim involvement in the meat industry means that halal certification remained limited to the export market and to local outlets of international chain stores. These were places where the established forms of trust assured by Muslim involvement appeared to be no longer practicable. However, as we have seen through McDonalds, even many of these new spaces of Muslim consumption remained uncertified.

In India three major halal certification organizations had been established to facilitate new arenas of Muslim consumption and trade. *Halal Certification Services* and *Halal India* both operated out of Tamil Nadu. The third and largest certification organization was the Jamiatul Ulama-I-Hind that had seven offices for halal certification countrywide. The Jamiatul Ulama Maharastra (JUM) and its halal certification department functioned under the ambit of the Jamiatul Ulama-I- Hind Halal Trust. Established in 1982, the JUM was the first halal certification organization in India. The focus of the organization at that stage was the provision of halal assurance to customers in Dubai and the Middle East for meat exports from India. JUM certificates were deemed sufficient and no specific procedures were established. At that stage the certificates were a documentary supplement to what remained a transaction premised on intra-Muslim trust.

Over the subsequent decades increasing global alignment transformed the activities of the JUM. In 1984 a delegation of JAKIM representatives from Malaysia travelled to India with veterinary inspectors to approve the country as source of imported meat. JAKIM is the Malaysian governments' official halal certification department. Since then the JUM have received and lost accreditation with the Indonesian national halal organization and forged a close alliance with a Deobandi-aligned South

African organization called SANHA (The South African National Halal Authority). As of 2014 JUM halal certificates were backed by inspection and documentary procedures that had been approved and accredited by JAKIM. The actual procedures were based on the guidelines of SANHA (The South African National Halal Authority), a Deobandi organization that had recently visited the JUM to ensure that all standards were aligned. The connection with South Africa rather than directly with Malaysia had been through Deobandi ulama networks.¹⁰ The relatively recent establishment of inspection and documentary procedures was evidence of an increasing attempt by international halal certification organizations to standardize halal.

In Mumbai, the JUM office was a small double story building which housed the organizations' welfare and community activity offices on the first floor with the halal certification department on the second. My main informant at the JUM held the title 'halal coordinator.' Riaz had graduated from Deoband in 2007 and joined the Halal trust in 2010. I first visited Riaz at the office where he worked along with another five co-workers. All along the walls were shelves with various company files that he occasionally consulted as we spoke. The files contained documentation about client certification applications, production processes and product ingredient lists. Riaz explained that the first decade of the organizations' operations were focused solely on the certification of meat. Since 1992 the range of certification services had expanded to include both meat and non-meat products such as processed food, gelatin and cosmetics. The JUM now employed a food technologist as a Halal Technical Administrator who ensured that all the ingredients used in food production were halal.

The certification of clients was processed according to the newly established guidelines. When a new client applied for certification they were required to submit documents that detailed the manufacturing specifications of all products produced in that particular factory. A review of the ingredient lists and production diagrams was performed. Once the assessment was deemed satisfactory a plant inspection was undertaken and a quotation for certification prepared. Full-time

¹⁰ SANHA was a particular successful certification organization that's success was premised on a stringent emphasis on transparency, accountability and proper procedures. SANHA was also amongst the founding members of the World Halal Council (SANHA, 2015).

on-site Muslim inspectors were required for slaughter operations. At slaughterhouses an aalim (trained religious scholar) was employed as a halal inspector to ensure that there was someone on site to ensure that halal procedures were being followed. For manufacturing environments a review of ingredients and production processes was followed by annual “halal audits” where production documentation was re-assessed and new ingredients or any changes in production procedure approved.

It was clear that the activities of the JUM were increasingly aligned with the global standards of the halal certification industry. Procedures, inspections and documentation supported the halal certificate in its claims to material certainty over halal. A notion of molecular halal was taking root in Mumbai as a new tradition of halal practice with new rules and a new basis for the establishment of trust through the inspection of documentation and labelling. However, as discussed in the previous section, the practice of halal in Mumbai was informed by a practice of trust that was not dependent on establishing certainty regarding the materiality of the substance consumed. The niyat (intention) to practice halal within networks of Muslim trade ensured compliance. These two approaches to halal were different expressions, articulations and practices of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai. However, as a lived tradition the importance of niyat (intention) for halal practice meant that these two realms did not remain distinct. Through ethical judgement Muslims in Mumbai extended the pre-certification practice of halal into new contexts.

UNDERSTANDING INDIA: OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIZATION AND INDIAN FOOD HABITS

Riaz was responsible for overseeing the halal certification operations of the JUM. However even he did not fully agree with the implications of the new certification standards for the practice of halal in Mumbai. It was clear through our interactions that Riaz did not consider certification necessary for halal consumption and trade. Rather he employed a number of caveats regarding the ‘uniqueness of India’ that precluded adherence to the very guidelines that his organization had been established to

patrol. Underlying his assessment regarding the excesses of certification was the importance of *niyat* (intention) for *halal* practice within Muslim networks of trade.

Halal certification industry guidelines required that a trained *aalim* be present at the slaughter site at all times. Riaz argued that this requirement was unnecessary. He asserted that in India most of the meat industry employees were of the Qureshi slaughterer caste. Accordingly, their caste status and occupational heritage imbued them with authority over the practice of *halal* and therefore precluded supervision, “they (Qureshi’s) mainly do the slaughter and they know the proper way to do it,” Riaz explained. The prevalence of Qureshi involvement in slaughter was then extended to the whole of India, “you see, most non-Muslims also buy *halal*. But only the *Sardaar Ji*’s (Sikhs). They have their own cutting, which they do themselves. They cannot eat *halal* meat.” According to Riaz, all meat in India, excluding that slaughtered by and for the Sikh community, was *halal*. Community membership and occupational specialization ensured that all meat in India was *halal* and that certification organization guidelines did not necessarily apply. Through this generalized assessment regarding the involvement of particular groups of Muslims in the production of meat, Riaz articulated a practice of *halal* that was not based on material scrutiny of every single product of Muslim consumption. Through his judgement he devised a new route for the practice of *halal* certification in India wherein certification standards were important for international compliance but not necessary for ensuring *halal*.

Importantly the concerns of the *halal* certification industry extended beyond meat products. Food technology had been a major driver of *halal* industry growth. The *halal* status of ingredients, additives and enzymes was thus a central element of the JUM mandate. India was a major producer of food technology products for export around the world. However here Riaz was similarly unconvinced by the need for the molecular investigation of *halal* certification. According to his assessment, “India doesn’t import products as other countries do. All products are made here, they are local.” Since most items were produced locally their *halal* status was less uncertain than in other places where a variety of raw materials used in food production were of imported unknown origin. Riaz’s assessment regarding

the ubiquity of halal-slaughtered animals in India meant that food technology products manufactured using those animal products were also therefore halal. Moreover, he explained that non-halal items were not a regular component of Indian cuisine. He explained this by recourse to the example of cooking with wine, a common practice in Europe which he argued was absent in India. Finally, he argued that the vegetarian diet of the Hindu majority presented an added level of assurance. According to Riaz therefore, uncertified products were not necessarily non-halal. Halal certification was therefore not necessary for local consumption and the widespread practice in India of labelling vegetarian food products with a green dot provided ample assurance. Riaz sustained this assertion even in the face of evidence that had brought the green label into doubt.

Gelatin was a clear example of Riaz's approach to food technology and halal. As an organization the JUM defined halal gelatin as that which had been produced from the bones and hides of halal-slaughtered animals. It did not accept the relatively lenient interpretations of halal that accepted gelatin from non-halal sources.¹¹ However, given Riaz's assertion regarding the prevalence of halal slaughter in India, this was not a concern. By extension all locally produced gelatin was therefore halal. In order to meet export demand for halal certification, the JUM certified export bound gelatin as halal. However, it did not do the same for local consumption. The complication however was that many Muslims in Mumbai had become aware of the contentious nature of gelatin for halal practice. Overseas travel and exposure to email communications and group chats on smart phones were an important source of information regarding cross-contamination and food technology. I had met a number of informants who expressed concern over gelatin, yet relied on the green labeling as an assurance of vegetarian ingredients. For Riaz however, these queries were a result of ignorance.

You see here people don't know what is in the food. Look at the medicines

for example. There is a green dot on it but the capsule is made from gelatin.

Now people are not thinking, that, what is in this gelatin? We know it is not

¹¹ According to an authoritative legal opinion the process of manufacture of gelatin entailed the total transformation (Istihaala) of bones and hides into a crystalline substance. Due to this total transformation (Istihaala), the gelatin produced from non-halal animals was deemed halal.

vegetable gelatin because for medicines it is not favored, mainly because it is easily 10 times more expensive and it goes bad quickly. Now Hindus don't know this and they are putting the green dot on. They don't understand what is happening, and they just print the label. For Muslims it is ok because the gelatin is halal.

Riaz had obtained these insights into the unsubstantiated application of the green label during the pre-certification investigation of a medicine exporter. His discovery of the falsely printed green label did not raise concerns about local food production practices. It rather confirmed his assessment regarding the general consumer ignorance of food production in India. This particular case was not a major concern for Muslim interests since he had already assessed that all gelatin in India was in fact halal.

Riaz's evasion of central tenets of the certification industry requirements was not an indication of a lack of interest in halal, or a desire for transgression. He was a trained aalim and diligently managed the JUM's vast certification operations. Riaz employed an established practice of halal in India that incorporated assessments regarding the national food culture and occupational specialization. Rather than concern for the chemical make-up of particular items he focused on the 'uniqueness of India.' The arguments presented were highly generalized assessments that did not account for regional and group variations in Indian food practice, nor non-Muslims participation in the meat industry. Rather they stemmed from a deeply ingrained and established notion that butchers in India were Muslim. This assumption had been further entrenched in Mumbai through the history of occupational migration to the city. Riaz's practice of halal was premised on the centrality of niyat (intention) for the establishment of trust within Muslim networks of trade rather than claims to material certainty. Conditions of food production had changed and products such as gelatin were now considered within the purview of halal. Halal certification aimed to introduce a new discursive and material tradition of halal practice to account for these changes. It was clear from the discussion that Riaz was aware of many of these developments. However even as a halal industry employee he did not merely submit to

these new rules. Rather through his arguments and consumption practices he devised a new route through which to ensure halal practice in a changing context.

FAST FOOD AND PACKAGED MEAT: HALAL PRACTICE WITHOUT CERTIFICATION

The majority of the JUM certification services were targeted at the export market. The organization was not particularly interested in promoting halal certification for the local consumer market. Clearly given Riaz's assessment of halal in India, certification was not necessary. In South Africa, halal organizations had utilized the Muslim publics' ignorance of complex food production processes to stimulate demand for halal certification (Tayob 2016). However, in Mumbai the Muslim public had begun to demand information regarding the halal status of new places of consumption and unknown products, but the JUM was unconcerned. For them consumer ignorance presented an unnecessary nuisance rather than market potential.

Importantly many of the new international chain stores and packaged meat manufacturers in Mumbai appeared equally aware of the practice of halal. As mentioned, halal certification was provided to large meat producers that exported chicken and beef. However, many of these chicken manufacturers also serviced local consumption. Godrej was a prominent packaged chicken producer in Mumbai. It was a non-Muslim owned company that had, already in the 1990's, approached the JUM for halal certification for export to the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Locally the packaging did not bear the JUM halal certification logo but the word HALAAL was printed.

“they are registered with us and we have inspectors there but the logo is not on the packaging. If we print the label on each package then the question of cost comes in and we need to charge for each label, so they don't want that. Also the packaging has so many other things that there is not much space also. So instead they just write Halaal on it.”

Riaz did receive queries about the halal status of Godrej from businesses that used its chicken as ingredients for food production and required assurance of halal for their own export certification

requirements. The “ordinary public” rarely queried the halal status of the packaged chicken. They too employed a constellation of arguments regarding the nature of India, Indian food habits and occupational specialization that automatically rendered most chicken halal. Whenever queries about Godrej were received, Riaz assured them that the chicken was halal. For Riaz halal consumption and halal certification were different realms of practice.

A recent development in Mumbai had been the growth of demand for international fast-food chain stores. Venky’s and Habro along with Godrej were the official suppliers for Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in India. When KFC first arrived in India it approached local chicken producers to tender for supply agreements. A condition of supply was halal certification. KFC had international experience with halal and made the decision to certify all operations, “KFC brought them to us,” Riaz explained. The JUM, sensing an opportunity for halal certification services advised KFC to obtain in-store certification. KFC representatives ignored the suggestion and have since established popular stores in and near Muslim majority neighborhoods. Nevertheless, despite the absence of in-store certification, Riaz was confident of its halal status, “our main concern is that the chickens are slaughtered as per Islamic Law, and with KFC we are happy it has.”

However, concern over KFC was fairly widespread in the Muslim community. I had heard rumors of a video circulated online that testified to halal transgressions at Venky’s chicken manufacturing plants. Some of this concern had resulted in phone calls and emails that questioned the halal status of KFC. Riaz advised callers that the stores were not certified but that the chicken was halal. He was after all unconcerned with the potential for food technology to render locally produced food non-halal. As fieldwork progressed I noticed that a few KFC’s had begun to display in-store notices of halal and trained their employees, a few of which were sometimes Muslim, to re-assert the halal status of their food. It was clear that retail outlets were aware of the practice of halal in India where self-signage and Muslim involvement constituted sufficient assurance regarding halal.

Certification sought to bureaucratize and document halal. It was premised on the notion that certainty over the material substance of halal could be assured. It thus presented a discursive and

material development of Islam as a lived tradition. However, as has become clear, the pre-certification practice of halal in Mumbai was based on a constellation of assessments regarding the uniqueness of India, the prevalence of Muslim involvement in the Mumbai meat industry and the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for halal practice. This practice of halal was premised on Muslim networks of trade and consumption. Clearly these two practices of halal pertained to two different realms of food production and trade. However, the boundaries that separated Muslim networks of trade from global developments were clearly not impermeable. Muslims in Mumbai extended a pre-certification basis for the practice of halal into new contexts producing new practices. Importantly the JUM was not interested nor in a position to induce more certification contracts since retailers already appeared aware of Muslim consumption practices in the city.

CERTIFICATION, FRAUD AND BELIEF: INSANIYAT AND DEBATES OVER THE PRACTICE OF HALAL

The communally charged notion of trust upon which halal was practiced meant that the doubt of a fellow Muslim constituted an offense. In everyday conduct I had never seen a Muslim friend or informant query the halal status of a restaurant or butcher. Place, location and visible markers of identity were sufficient to determine religious affiliation which ensured halal consumption. However, the possibility for doubt to constitute an offense meant that halal was ripe terrain for the articulation of sectarian sentiment and moral judgment.

During fieldwork two debates regarding the proper practice of halal emerged. The first was a widely publicized scandal regarding allegations of fraud and malpractice by Indonesian and Malaysian halal authorities. The second was a sectarian interpretation regarding the involvement of particular Muslim groups and non-Muslims in the supply of halal. In both instances a notion of *insaniyat* (humanity) as virtue was offered as a critique against obsessive concern with certification and sectarian division. Through these controversies it was clear how the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for halal practice together with the deployment of *insaniyat* (humanity) as critique produced a practice of halal

as a lived tradition that evaded the attempts for documentary and material certainty that halal certification strived towards.

CERTIFICATION AND INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION: INSANIYAT AS CRITIQUE

During 2014 an international uproar emerged over the detection of pig DNA in Cadbury chocolates in Malaysia (Hafiz 2014). The Malaysian Health Ministry had detected the transgression during its routine tests of supermarket products. The controversy quickly spilled over into Indonesia who also began subjecting Cadbury chocolates to its own molecular testing (Reuters 2014). Indonesia had previously been faced with a similar scandal when Ajinomoto was found to have included a pig protein in the production of MSG (Arnold 2001b). A few months earlier in 2014 they had also been charged with accepting bribes from Australian beef exporters in exchange for halal certificates (Jazeera 2014). One afternoon discussing these controversies Riaz recalled the JUM involvement with the Indonesian halal organization:

These Indonesians have been here before. At first they did the certification and took the fee and everything. Then suddenly after one year they came back and told us no. We didn't know why. All these things that are happening now started after that. You see the first thing is insanियat (humanity), the problem is that nowadays people don't have it. A Muslim, an aalim (scholar), can do those things (cheat), and a normal person can be the best person. But the problem is that people don't have insanियat (humanity).

In the incident recounted, the JUM had lost the Indonesian accreditation. It was thus forced to find an alternative means of exporting products to Indonesia, "when our products did not have Indonesian certification for halal, then we used to send them to Pakistan, get their certification, and then send it to Indonesia." The JUM had circumvented the documentary conventions of halal certification for which the organization had been established. Here transgression was presented as an ethical practice that ensured that the interest of ensuring halal trade was maintained.

Insaniyat (humanity) was articulated as a virtue through which human beings came to recognize the humanity of others. In this case, it referred to the human potential for both integrity and deceit regardless of religious affiliation. Having insaniyat (humanity) entailed recognizing this potential and not producing unnecessary doubt regarding the motives of others. After the controversy and in light of the fraud allegations Riaz's appeal to insaniyat (humanity) was also an implicit interpretation of the niyat (intention) of those involved in the halal certification scandal. While the true intention of another individual could not be known and should not be doubted, it could be assessed and interpreted. Applying the view of hindsight and the widespread publication of the controversy assured Riaz that these individuals were engaging in halal certification in pursuit of financial gain rather than out of concern for Muslim consumption. Insaniyat (humanity) was deployed as a critique against the Indonesian halal organizations that had foregrounded financial interests in certification over the task of assisting the Muslim community in their practice of halal. Importantly the transgression of the industry's documentary rules was an ethical practice through which halal consumption and trade was assured. Between the discursive and material regime of the halal certification industry, and the pre-certification practice of halal within Muslim networks of trade, the JUM had developed a new position. Through new shipping routes and documentary creativity they produced a practice of halal as a lived tradition that was both global in scope and maintained through networks of intra-Muslim trust.

The interplay of insaniyat (humanity) and niyat (intention) as critique was further expressed in a discussion about a sectarian controversy regarding halal.

SECTARIAN TENSION: INSANIYAT AS MODERATION

In Mumbai, as in much of South Asia a significant divide existed between followers of the Deobandi and Barelwi schools. These reformist schools of thought had both emerged in late 19th century India. A major point of contention between the groups was a difference in aqeeda (creed) regarding the nature of the prophet. For the Barelwis the prophet was first created as noor (divine light) and then afterwards in the form of a human being. He thus remains in the world, omnipresent.

For the Deobandis the prophet appeared in a human form and died as a human. He was an example for other human beings but not of the angels, who were created from noor (divine light). According to an extreme Barelwi position the Deobandi error of aqeeda (creed) rendered them non-Muslim and by extension nullified their prayers as well as the halal status of their food.

Not yet aware of the prevalence of this point of contention for halal practice, I was surprised one afternoon when a staunch Barelwi informant expressed a controversial stance on halal. Irfan owned a stall directly adjacent to a halal-certified Subway fast food outlet. I met him one afternoon as I was searching for the nearby mutton market. Intrigued by my research on halal Irfan began with a critique of the JUM for leniently issuing halal certificates. The Subway, not certified by them, was nevertheless an example, "They got some certificate or what not but the main thing is how can a non-Muslim sell halal?" he asked.

Irfan had clearly been exposed to criticism about whether it was acceptable to allow halal certification to non-Muslims. He questioned the practice of the halal certification industry in offering certification. Noticing my hesitation at answering he continued, "see it's like this, if your wife makes lunch for you at home and then packs it into a tiffin and sends it with a non-Muslim delivery person to your office is it halal?" I hesitated again. "No. It's not halal. Because the non-Muslim has touched it!" I was startled and exclaimed that it was a particularly strict view, "yes it is strict, but it was the example I got at the Raza academy (a Barelwi organization) when I went. You see if a non-Muslim is involved in the preparation then how can you be sure it is halal? what if they added their own things?" Irfan had through this example extended the fairly common concern with offering non-Muslim establishments halal certification towards the judgement that all non-Muslim involvement in food production was by definition not halal. What at first sounded like a concern with touch and purity was actually a suspicion expressed against all non-Muslims for potentially jeopardizing halal practice.

Most of my other informants considered Irfan's example of the tiffin delivery service as "crazy" and "extremist." For example, Irfan was one of the "crazy" customers that Hassan describes in Chapter 3 who insisted that he witness the prayer being recited as his chicken was slaughtered. He transgressed

the agreed upon practice of halal by casting doubt on fellow Muslims. However in the tiffin example he limited his suspicion to non-Muslims. Of interest was the basis upon which Irfan's arguments were refuted. A Barelwi maulana with whom I often met explained:

That is wrong, galat baat hai (it is wrong speech), in Mumbai the tiffin delivery people are part of a big organization (tanzeem). It is very organized. You give your tiffin and you receive your tiffin. You write your name on it every day and make sure you get that one. That is there job, they are an organization, and they don't do anything to the tiffin. They just bring it to you.

As we sipped on a soft drink that had just been purchased from a nearby kirana dukan (corner store) he emphasized his point:

...see this shop. Where we have just gotten the coldrinks, they are not a Muslim store. But we buy this coke there, because he is selling it. That is his business. Why would he do something to the coke just to harm us?

The explanation provided was that if something dubious were done to the products then the reputation of the business would suffer. Intentional sabotage of the Muslim practice of halal was a serious accusation. Appealing to the importance of reputation for business practice and the regulation of organizational practice, this maulana was not prepared to level unsubstantiated accusations of intention to harm. He thus extended the common practice that warned against doubt of a fellow Muslim into business interactions with non-Muslims. This was especially important given the Hindu-majority context where the exclusion of non-Muslim involvement in food consumption was both impractical and offensive. For him reputation and reliance on organizational practice precluded any basis for doubt.

Riaz too was critical of Irfan's position. He had on another occasion explained that people like Irfan who insisted on inspecting the slaughter of chicken in front of them were behaving improperly, "if you make the shahadat (testament of faith) you are a Muslim, finished," he had explained. Hearing

of Irfan's position regarding the tiffin he again articulated a notion of insaniyat (humanity) and niyat (intention) with reference to the establishment of doubt and the practice of trust:

It is a non-Muslim yes, but humanity (insaniyat) comes first. So both the Muslim and the non-Muslim are only that in name, inside they can both deceive you. So the principle is that insaniyat is first. Then also there is the question of proof. See, now we just had some Sprite. Between the shop and here they could have put something inside. But how do we know that? We cannot simply speculate. If there is no proof, if you have not seen them do something, then we must trust that it is halal. So this idea that just because it is a non-Muslim then they cannot be trusted is nonsense. Both Muslim and non-Muslim can deceive.

Riaz again re-iterated a notion of insaniyat (humanity) as the underlying potential of human beings to engage in honesty and deception regardless of religious affiliation. Religious affiliation was the "name" that did not necessarily reflect the true intention (niyat) to deceive. Here insaniyat (humanity) was deployed to suggest that each individual regardless of sectarian or religious affiliation be offered the benefit of the doubt. "Having insaniyat" thus involved the recognition that speculation could not be a source of doubt. In the absence of evidence of deception, "we must trust that it is halal." Underlying his argument was clearly the recognition that doubt constituted an offense and should not be unsubstantially charged. This communally charged notion of trust contained a warning for the potential for unsubstantiated accusations and rumor to devolve into chaos. Riaz was expressing an important basis for the practice of halal in Mumbai where the correct intention (niyat) and Muslim involvement ensured halal. However here, through an appeal to insaniyat (humanity), he extended this practice to included non-Muslims as well.

The Barelwi maulana did not appeal to the notion of insaniyat (humanity) in his refutation of Irfan's contention. He was critical of the Deobandi emphasis on insaniyat (humanity), which he argued was the basis for their claims regarding the non-divinity of the prophet. He preferred to focus on the

economic aspects and organizational logic. For him it did not make sense for a non-Muslim business to intentionally threaten the interest of their Muslim clientele. He also recognized the potential for unsubstantiated doubt to constitute an offense. Despite his avoidance of the term *insaniyat*, he articulated a very similar connection between doubt, trust and (*niyat*) intention in the determination of *halal*. He too extended the caution against unsubstantiated doubt of a fellow Muslim to include trade with non-Muslims as well.

Through these two examples it was clear that the practice of *halal* in Mumbai was in a state of flux and debate. *Halal* certification was a practice of *halal* that sought material certainty through rigorous investigative procedures of all contexts of Muslim consumption. However, this was only one discursive and material formation of *halal* practice as a lived tradition in Mumbai. In contrast the pre-certification practice of *halal* in Mumbai was based on the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for *halal* practice and reliance on Muslim networks of trade. Through an appeal to *insaniyat* (humanity) and an assessment of *niyat* (intention) Riaz critiqued the entire premise of the *halal* certification industry. In his view the documentary and molecular transparency that certification aimed for was an offense to the practice of *halal* premised on a particular notion of salvation and trade within a community of shared values. The fraud revelations presented proof that the certification industry privileged greed and financial interests over the assurance of *halal*. However, *insaniyat* (humanity) was also the means through which *halal* practice was extended to include trade with non-Muslims by equating all human beings as equally capable of deception and honesty. On the other hand, Irfan bhai's criticism of the *halal* certification industry in Mumbai and their willingness to certify non-Muslims was combined with an approach to *halal* that was even more piercing in its desire for transparency. He was not even content with consuming within Muslim networks or reliance on documentary evidence, but demanded that prayer upon slaughter be recited audibly and within eyesight. These differences of opinion, practice and implicit debate point to the salience of *halal* as a lived tradition.

The shifting terrain of global trade was producing new challenges for *halal* consumption. *Halal* certification presented a final solution. It aimed to establish material certainty and documentary

procedures over halal trade and consumption. However, the premises of the industry were not necessarily accepted at face value and Muslims continued to engage in alternative practices of halal. For some, like Irfan Bhai, it involved an even more piercing gaze of halal production. However, for others like Riaz and Junaid, the practice of halal was extended into new contexts through the stability of the *niyat* (intention) to consume halal. As a practice of Islam as a lived tradition there were clearly different routes towards the fulfillment of halal.

PRODUCING HALAL VERSUS CERTIFYING HALAL

Traders and food producers presented an important position from which to engage the debate on halal certification. As producers of halal products, they were directly subject to the increasing documentary demands of the certification industry. The manner in which they expressed their experience of the certification industry is crucial perspective from which to understand the evolving terrain of halal production.

As we have seen above there was widespread critique of halal certification practices in Mumbai. However different actors had different forms of critique. One afternoon I met with the CEO of Hajj House, an Islamic organization responsible for collecting zakat, publishing literature and facilitating pilgrimage in Mumbai. He was among a small but growing number of Muslims in Mumbai that supported the premises of halal certification. He was critical of the application of certification audit procedures, not its goals. Stricter compliance and increased technical training regarding food production processes was the solution. He suggested greater attention to local practices of halal that were not cognizant of changes in the now molecular terrain of halal. He recognized the deficiency of halal practice in Mumbai and sought increasing certification as the solution. The CEO was in favor of certification to an extent that even the JUM was not. His position was clearly in line with his occupational endeavor to ‘rationalize’ Muslim practice.

Another informant was the representative of a large JUM halal-certified meat exporter. He expressed a similar concern regarding levels of professionalism in the industry. He considered the JUM

the only credible certification service. As for the others, “anyone will just give out a certificate for a bit of money,” he explained. However, despite the failure of audit procedures he was not concerned about the halal status of those products. Similar to Riaz’s assessment, he explained that in India at least 90% of all slaughter was in fact halal. Like the CEO, his concern was with the levels of professionalism in the local halal industry. A halal certificate should be premised on certain auditing procedures and inspections that were not being conducted. However for him procedural compliance was a matter of operating principles that did not necessarily jeopardize his practice of halal.

Traders connected more intimately to the production of food, and for whom the fees of the certification industry were a central concern, expressed a more vociferous critique. Khalil Bhai of Taj Mahal restaurant (Chapter 4) had recently begun manufacturing what he claimed was India’s first ready-made Mughlai spices. One evening, discussing halal certification in South Africa, he enquired about certification fees, “here they are big thieves, all trying to make money,” he explained. He then recounted with a sense of incredulousness the story of a friend of his who had a container of mehndi (hair dye) rejected at a Saudi Arabian port due to an absence of halal certification. Following that incident he realized the importance of halal certification for the export market.

I went to them (JUM) to ask them how much it costs to get certification. First they said the registration fee was 25,000, so fine I said ok, 25,000. Then they say no... after that you need to get a new one every year, for another 25,000. So 25,000 a year, so I thought ok I can just print the label. No! They want for each package that leaves the factory another 50 paise! I laughed at them, that’s my whole mark up. Then I went to some other organization, the Kerala guys are much cheaper. They said ok 5,000 they will give me a certificate. I told my friend he must start this thing. Get a few maulanas together, start certification. Good business it is. But, actually I don’t need that thing, my market is all local. I just thought ok if it’s cheap I’ll just put it. I told them, I am a Muslim, what is the issue?”

Khalil Bhai's experience of the halal certification industry had been soured by what he thought were inconsistencies. First were the seemingly ridiculous demands of the Saudi Arabian port authorities for a non-food product. That incident introduced him to the documentary-nature of halal certification. However, it also alerted him to the marketing and export potential. Then, seeking documentation, a Keralan organization that he approached was ready to offer him a certificate for 5,000 Rupees based on the absence of non-halal substances in his production process and his Muslim identity. While he considered the JUM fees excessive he was perplexed by the ease with which the second company was willing to issue the certificate. If it was so simple, why should he be paying at all?

For Khalil Bhai, halal practice was integral to membership in a community of shared values. Halal referred to the slaughter of meat not spices and hair dye. His name should have sufficed for trust in halal and anyway his spices did not include animal ingredients. The documentary focus of the certification industry was thus perceived as an offense to his Muslim identity, and in the process producing strange items such as halal hair dye. His suggestion to a friend to also establish a certification organization indicates the extent to which certain actors perceive certification as a documentary veneer for the actual practice of halal which is anyway assured through trade within Muslim networks. For trader's halal as a lived tradition presented a business opportunity. His suggestion was thus a new route for producing halal and facilitating Muslim trade.

In contrast to Khalil's spice manufacture, meat producers were directly involved in the production of halal through slaughter. Siraj was the nephew of the owner of one of the largest chicken wholesalers in the Crawford Market. Their business involved the slaughter, cleaning, de-feathering and cutting of 5-6000 chickens per day. Un-skinned chicken was in high demand by 4 and 5 star hotels in the city. The hotels had during the past decade begun demanding that all meat supplied was halal certified. Siraj's operation was not. He supplied the hotels via an agent. Agents came to him with their order of chickens. The slaughtered chickens were then transported to a separate premises, washed, packaged, labeled and then sent to the hotels. For Siraj the contravention of procedure was an ethical

practice through which he remained competitive. His chicken was halal, and the agent was certified. Like Riaz he considered the halal certificate a documentary adjunct to the necessary activity of halal slaughter. As a butcher his duty to ensure the provision of halal meat to the Muslim community did not necessitate compliance with the documentary demands of the halal certification industry. Through the middle man he was able to continue his supply contract and ensured that both halal slaughter and documentation were complied. The agent presented a new route for the supply of halal in the context of the halal certification industry in Mumbai.

Different actors had different assessments of the practice of halal. For the CEO and the large meat exporter certification was evidence of Muslim progress towards professionalism. For most however it was not necessary for the practice of halal. For the smaller food producers certification was an offense, a nuisance to be overcome or a business opportunity. For these actors' halal practice involved the circumvention, critique and evasion of halal certification. As the practice of a lived tradition the shared commitment to some notion of halal practice and the correct *niyat* (intention) ensured that divergent practices were different routes through which the imperative to consume halal was maintained.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has been an introduction to the practice of halal in Mumbai towards an understanding of Islam as a lived tradition. As a lived tradition, there were a variety of practices and subject positions from which halal was practiced. The obligation and intention (*niyat*) to consume halal was the signpost that guided Muslim food practice. For Muslims in Mumbai a history of Muslim occupational involvement in the meat industry and broad conceptions regarding the vegetarian nature of India and Indian food habits was an important background through which halal was assured. This was further secured through the specific migratory patterns in Mumbai where it was common for particular caste and regional groups to predominate in particular industries. There was a widespread notion among Muslims that in India, no matter what or where one ate, halal practice was assured.

Different spaces and practices of consumption offered different routes towards the fulfillment of halal.

Underlying this practice of halal was a peculiar notion of trust and *niyat* (intention). The practice of halal was premised on trust. The consumer was usually not the supplier or the slaughterer. A series of relationships of trade and labor supported halal practice. However, it was considered a sin to doubt or question a fellow Muslim. Familiarity as well as signs and symbols of Muslim identity were thus important markers for determining trust in halal. In the event of deception, the sin for transgression lay with the provider. The stability of *niyat* (intention) for Muslim practice ensured that the consumer was assured of the consumption of halal. In the event where both the supplier and consumer were unaware regarding some potential for transgression, then both were absolved from sin. The unintentional consumption or supply of non-halal did not incur punishment. In the absence of concrete evidence that a particular supplier was untrustworthy the *niyat* (intention) to consume halal ensured compliance. This notion of trust, *niyat* (intention) and halal located compliance at the level of interpersonal interaction. Halal practice did not aim for certainty over the substance consumed and doubt in the absence of evidence was frowned upon.

Global developments in trade and food production technology had introduced new concerns. The growth of multi-national corporations and international fast food chain stores presented increased choice for Muslim consumption. Food technology complicated the distinction between meat and non-meat products. The use of animal derived flavorings, colorants and enzymes presented the possibility for non-meat products to also be included into the consideration of halal. The export of meat around the world now meant that intra-Muslim networks were no longer relevant for the practice of halal. The halal certification industry employed complex auditing procedures, chemical testing and certification documentation as a means of facilitating halal consumption in these new contexts. It sought to establish material certainty over the chemical make-up of the items concerned. Halal certification introduced a scientific gaze into the production of a now molecular halal. In Mumbai halal

certification was limited to the new spaces of international fast food outlets, packaged meat producers and exports.

However, Muslims in Mumbai employed background assumptions that precluded concern over halal even in these new contexts. Through the innovative practice of Islam as a lived tradition foreign kitchens and McDonalds outlets were all rendered halal. The gaze of the halal certification industry was evaded even by its own representatives. For them the intimate familiarity with meat production in India precluded concern over halal. *Insaniyat* (humanity), as the potential for deceit or honesty regardless of religious affiliation was deployed as a critique of the obsessive documentary focus of the halal certification industry and extended halal practice beyond intra-Muslim networks of trade to include non-Muslim food production as well. Fast food outlets were seemingly aware of this practice of halal in Mumbai. They produced their own signage and employed Muslims rather than obtain certification. Halal certification was perceived as an affront to the interpersonal practice of halal. Individual traders had different experiences and opinions regarding halal certification. While Muslims professionals lauded the need for increasing compliance and levels of professionalization in the industry, traders expressed offense at the documentary demands. For Muslim butchers the evasion of halal certification requirements through middle-men was a situated ethical practice whereby halal was assured and trade continued. The centrality of *niyat* (intention) for halal practice ensured that each of these avenues remained connected in the pursuit of halal. A common thread was a perceived gap between the realm of halal assurance and the documentary practices of halal certification. This allowed for the extension of halal practice into new contexts in the absence of certification and for the direct evasion of the certification requirements. Through these practices of production, negotiation and evasion, Muslims were producing new routes towards the fulfillment of halal.

This chapter has approached halal as a practice of Islam as a lived tradition in exploring halal practice in Mumbai as well as the way in which Muslims extend halal practice into new contexts in innovative ways. The increase of global trade and international fast food outlets had precipitated one particular important development of halal practice in Mumbai. However in Mumbai the moral

connotations of halal consumption and the often-generalized ways through which trust was produced ensured that pre-certification practices of halal continued even in new contexts. After all, under certain conditions the (niyat) intention to consume halal ensured compliance. This chapter contributes to arguments about neo-liberal developments that emphasize continuities with established traditions and practices (Kipnis 2008). As I have shown the practice of halal involved multiple sources of authority, alternative discourses from which to draw, and different conceptions of the good through which the practice of halal was produced. Approaching halal practice in the contemporary through the lens of audit cultures misses the complexity of Islam as a lived tradition. Halal certification is introducing a new discursive and material tradition of halal practice to facilitate global trade. However, halal certification does not induce a total transformation. Established forms of practice and reasoning continue as practitioners engage in ethical reflections and judgements to devise new and innovative routes for the practice of halal.

The next chapter focusses on a particular butcher shop in Mumbai as a node for the production of halal in the city. It considers how the corporate manufacture of packaged chicken competes for market share with freshly slaughtered chicken. Both forms of chicken production are halal yet each signify very different engagements between humans, animals and slaughter and has implications for the way in which trust is produced. The chapter considers the emerging terrain of halal chicken production, the changing consumer sensibilities and the ethical practices whereby the Muslim butcher seeks to retain his influence over chicken consumption preferences.

CHAPTER THREE: PRODUCING HALAL

CHICKEN: MATERIAL FORM, SENSORY

ENGAGEMENT AND SITUATED ETHICAL

PRACTICE

One afternoon, standing at his chicken and mutton store, Hassan and I were discussing government plans to modernize the meat industry and prevent live slaughter within the city limits. Hassan was skeptical about the effect of changes to the economy on his fresh chicken business. He had already witnessed the attempts and failures of large retail stores to usurp business from the kirana dukan (corner store). Even the packaged chicken producers that sold ready-cut and cleaned chicken products used his outlet as a distribution avenue. They too had failed to make a major impact on the consumer preference for fresh meat that crossed the religious divide. With regard to the newly proposed plans he speculated that the incoming BJP¹² government might have the political will to enforce the new laws since they had the interest of big business in mind. However he was nevertheless skeptical of the chance of success. Both the preference for fresh meat and the requirements of halal precluded their influence. "If they ban it then out of compulsion (majboori se) people will eat it, but sales will go down. Muslims like to see the cutting in front of them, jab dekhte hai tab lete hai, sahi tareeqa halal ka dekhna chahiye (when they see, they will take, they want to see the correct manner of halal). If it is somewhere else people will be unsure." According to Hassan, halal practice required that animals were slaughtered in the city. It also meant that customers were present while their animal

¹² The BJP is the Bharatiya Janata Party. Headed by Narendra Modi, the party is a major proponent of Hindutva, Hindu nationalist ideology, as well as economic modernization reforms. During 2013 the party was widely touted to win the following years elections. In 2014 the BJP won the national election.

was slaughtered, skinned and chopped into pieces of various sizes. Nothing was hidden from view. Hassan did point to the malleability of halal practice in suggesting the possibility for change. However, as he explained, for now there was a preference for the taste of fresh meat and distrust of ready-packaged products.

This discussion with Hassan over fresh and 'frozen'¹³ chicken products provides an insight into two material forms of halal chicken production and consumption in Mumbai. Fresh chicken was slaughtered in store and cut according to customer specifications. So-called 'frozen' chicken was produced in large factories on the outskirts of the city where they were slaughtered, cleaned, cut, packaged and then delivered in refrigerated trucks. Hassan stocked 'frozen' chicken in the refrigerator below his shop counter. Both fresh and 'frozen' chicken was halal. The difference was the location of the slaughter that had significance for the experience of both purchasing and consuming meat. In Mumbai as Hassan indicated, fresh chicken and halal slaughter were closely associated. However contrary to his assertion it was clear that Muslims accepted the halal status of the 'frozen' products. Muslims in Mumbai were confident about Muslim involvement in the meat industry. Fresh and 'frozen' chicken were both halal. Contrary to Hassan's explanation, halal practice did not in and of itself resist the introduction of 'frozen' chicken and the shift to corporate meat production. Rather this chapter considers each as a material expression of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai. Both were halal yet signified very different experiences of meat consumption, different modes of production, and had different implications for the way in which trust in halal and meat quality was produced.

The importance of fresh meat consumption became clear during an early morning visit to a large mutton and chicken wholesale market where I noticed a woman buying mutton. The market was divided into small counter spaces where different traders processed carcasses for delivery. The shop she was purchasing from was one of the largest in the market and occupied 5 spaces. They used a computerized sales system and also stocked fish and chicken. The woman was a Christian from Colaba

¹³ 'Frozen' was the term used to refer to pre-cut, refrigerated chicken products. Actual frozen chicken was not available in store.

and would have been considered amongst the 'old elite' of South Mumbai. She had been coming to this exact store for over 20 years. Recently she had stopped eating a lot of mutton and ordered her chicken from the Colaba Market, nearby her home. However, it was her son's birthday and she wanted to prepare a mutton dish as a celebratory meal. As we stood on the blood spotted floor various activities surrounded us. In front, a kasai (slaughterer) was carefully carving meat off a leg of lamb for her order. Nearby the heavy thudding of a knife against a chopping block was the sound of manual mince production. Given the sensory overload I wondered about her experience of buying meat in a wholesale market.

"Here it is dirty, but at the end it is the best. It is smelly though! I was actually just thinking, I felt bad to cover my mouth you know, imagine I am covering and they are working here?"

The woman acknowledged the lack of cleanliness and the stench but considered it a reasonable inconvenience. At the market, there was a guarantee of freshness that given the heat and absence of reliable cooling, the local supplier could not necessarily provide. Also, she knew this supplier and trusted the quality of his meat which, dependent on the age and health of the animal, was difficult to determine after slaughter. Importantly, she hesitated from covering her mouth and nose to protect herself from the stench of decay. She was after all just passing by. Wouldn't her actions offend those who earned their livelihood in that space? The odor was the result of a particular form of work and livelihood. It was repulsive but expected. Only choosing to buy elsewhere and thereby sacrificing freshness and quality could avoid it. In itself the smell was nothing extraordinary. This sensory engagement was a quotidian aspect of fresh meat consumption in Mumbai.

Clearly this Christian woman also consumed halal meat in Mumbai. For her ritual slaughter was not a primary concern. However, she was aware that she was entering a space predominated by Muslim butchers. Her practice of not expressing aversion to the stench in the market was an ethical practice of respect for the livelihood of her supplier. Her practice of visiting the market points to the way in which fresh halal meat consumption and production is linked to the establishment of trust,

interpersonal relationships and assessments of freshness, quality and taste. The introduction of 'frozen' chicken products introduced a new material regime of halal meat production that appealed to a different sensibility. It appealed to sanitized hygiene, convenience and an aspiration to be 'western.' (Staples 2016), (Watson 2006). However, for the Muslim butcher, it presented a threat to his livelihood and had the potential to produce disgust from his occupational practice.

This chapter considers the two material forms of halal meat production through the lens of a lived tradition. Different practices of halal production signify very different avenues for the production of trust and are linked to different assessments of quality, and hygiene. Here the ethical practices of a Muslim butcher in Mumbai were not necessarily informed by abstract notions of piety or of 'Islamic trade.' Rather they entailed the situated ethical practices of his attempts to maintain customer interest in fresh halal chicken and thereby secure his livelihood and place in the city.

SOUTH MUMBAI CHICKEN AND MUTTON CENTRE: PRODUCING FRESH CHICKEN

The primary site for this chapter's discussion of the trade and consumption practices of fresh and 'frozen' halal chicken was the South Mumbai Chicken and Mutton Centre. Two brothers, Hassan and Shams managed the store. They had assumed responsibility for the business from their father. Hassan, the younger brother was 26 years old. Shams was 31. The brothers were from the Shikalagar, knife-sharpening caste. They were Maharashtrian Muslims whose family had been in Mumbai since the 1950's when their grandfather had started the business. The family were well known and well-established. They owned the store property as well as a few small apartments in the area. The market area was a small but bustling center of trade. Outlets included pharmacies, tailors, fruit vendors, butchers, textile stores and printing services. Nearby were three other butcher shops.

The store was a small, square-ish space, with a street-facing counter. Along the right hand wall was a chicken coup that housed up to 50 chickens. At the rear was another counter with a cutting block for mutton and a hanging rack. The left hand side counter was where chickens were slaughtered, skinned, cleaned (guts removed) and cut according to customer requests. Hassan spent most of his

day on a seat behind the front counter. On his desk he had a scale where chickens were weighed before slaughter, a calculator, a few pens, a telephone and two notebooks. Directly behind the store-front was a storage room of about twice the size, where goats and chickens were kept before sale and where goats were slaughtered.

The brothers sold fresh and 'frozen' chicken, eggs and mutton. Fresh chicken was available in two varieties, 'desi' chickens and broiler chickens. 'Desi' chicken, as the name implied, was a local breed that was not mass-produced. 'Original Desis', as they were called, retailed at over 300 rupees per kilogram and had, by most accounts, ceased to be sold in Mumbai. 'Farmed Desis' were still available at 200 rupees per kilogram. These were a local breed of 'Desi' chicken that had been mass produced. It was expensive compared to the 120 rupees per kilogram for the standard white-feathered broiler chickens. Eggs were also available as broiler and Desi. Mutton, at 400 rupees per kilogram, was more expensive and therefore much less popular since it was unaffordable for most people.

Hassan did not slaughter himself. He received orders from customers in person and via the telephone. He weighed the chicken before slaughter by hooking its wings into each other and placing it on the scale before passing it on to the slaughterers with instructions of the customer specifications. He then recorded the weight and revenue in the sales notebook. He had two workers who were responsible for slaughtering, cleaning and cutting the chickens. The most senior slaughterer (kasai), Salahuddin, had worked at the store for the past 9 years. The junior slaughterer would receive the chicken from Hassan, make the incision in the neck and then drop it into a box with a heavy wooden lid that was stored below the counter. The chicken, after expending its last breath flapping and bouncing loudly around the box, was removed for processing. The head of the now blood covered chicken was chopped off. Then, in one swift movement, the skin and feathers were removed. The chicken was then handed to the second slaughterer (usually Salahuddin) who was stationed at the same counter in front of a wooden chopping block. He made two vertical incisions alongside the neck allowing him to rip the body in two. The guts would fall into a bucket below. The chicken was now ready to be cut according to the customer's specifications. The entire process from slaughter to packet-

ready product took around 2-3 minutes. The customer received the order while the packet was still warm from the body-heat of the recently slaughtered chicken. After a round of customers had arrived the employees washed the blood-covered counter and walls with water. Guts and blood were cleared and stored in a separate container for sale or disposal. On particularly warm afternoons, when the store-front came under direct sunlight, a strong odor of decaying body parts and live chicken lingered in the air.

Chicken was the main business activity and widely consumed in Mumbai. Distinctions of meat quality included that between smaller chickens that were considered softer and tenderer as compared to large chickens that were tougher and drier. Desi chickens were of far superior quality and taste but unaffordable for most. Farmed Desis presented an affordable compromise. Customers would make their choices between the large and small chickens, or between broiler and Desis, based on personal taste preference, budget and the meal being cooked. Generally larger chickens were used for preparing curries, while the smaller chickens preferred for grills. Broiler chickens were by far the more popular variety, although many people suggested that it lacked the “heat” and energy that the original desi’s had. This was sometimes a positive assessment that chicken could be consumed regularly without any negative digestion effects.¹⁴ However more common was the criticism of large scale production methods that produced chickens in “factories.” For these customers, the lack of “heat” signified a lack of nourishment and was evidence of the unscrupulous production practices of the animal rearing industry.

The production and consumption of fresh halal chicken clearly involved various levels of sensory engagement between humans, animals and slaughter. This practice of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai extended beyond halal to include assessments of quality, breed, taste and nourishment. However, the chicken store also stocked what was called ‘frozen’ chicken. This was the word that both

¹⁴ In Indian theories of medicine food was classified according to whether it was “hot” or “cold.” An imbalance in diet was thought to have negative consequences for digestion which in turn affected bodily health and general well-being (Zimmerman 1999), {Khare 1986}. In these assessments, dietary concern was deployed as a comment on the broiler industry.

Hassan and his customers used to refer to pre-cut refrigerated chicken. In Mumbai the difference between packaged, refrigerated chicken and that which was actually frozen was often blurred. It seems that there was a perceived similarity in that both were pre-slaughtered and chilled.

‘FROZEN’ CHICKEN: CORPORATE MEAT PRODUCTION

‘Frozen’ chicken was manufactured by one of a handful of large corporations. Amongst the popular brands were Godrej, Venky’s, Habro, Al-Kabeer and Zorabian. As discussed in the previous chapter some of these companies were halal certified but none of them had obtained on-package halal certification. Muslims were nevertheless generally content that the chicken was halal since they assessed that all slaughterers employed were definitely Muslim. However, beyond the question of halal were concerns over product quality. ‘Frozen’ chicken producers did not compete over freshness. Rather these products appealed to a sense of hygiene, branding and convenience.

This was clearly expressed by a senior representative of a major meat exporter in Mumbai who lamented the “myth going around, that frozen is not fresh.” This “myth” meant that only 1% of the company’s total turnover was aimed at local demand. He of course was of the opinion that ‘frozen’ was “as good as fresh” since freezing was the best way of preserving food. Importantly his lamentation of local market preference included an attack on local producers who he explained “had absolutely no concept of hygiene.” In contrast he assured me that everything in the company’s factory was “nothing less than EU or US health and hygiene standards.” Evident in this conversation was the failure of this major exporter to garner sufficient local demand. Missing from his testimony is that the local market was resistant to refrigerated products and would not even consider purchasing actually-frozen chicken pieces. Nevertheless, the company’s local turnover, though small, made an appeal to sanitized packaged, branding and the convenience of ready cut products. His reference to EU and US hygiene standards clearly indexed the aspiration potential of an ‘India shining’ discourse that sought to present the nation as a globally competitive economic power (Kaur 2016).

A major player in the 'frozen' chicken market was Godrej chickens. The Godrej manufacturing plant, situated just north of Mumbai, was operated as a joint venture with American chicken manufacturing giant, Tyson Foods. Tyson Foods had been a pioneer of the American chicken industry during the 1960's in transforming an expensive, rare and protein rich product into one of the most widely consumed and unhealthy items on American menus (Striffler 2005). Before the pioneering work of Tyson Foods in both broiler production and retail, Americans bought their chicken from local butchers. Later supermarkets began stocking whole individually-wrapped branded chicken. As profits slowed Tyson's introduced piece-packages where consumers could purchase only certain parts of the bird. Suddenly 8 leg pieces were available for sale in a single package. Striffler documents how this moved to sell pieces revolutionized both the consumer experience of choice and convenience as well as industry profits. Entering the Indian market Tyson clearly identified the growth potential.

In addition to the convenience of piece-packages was the ability of packaged meat to hide the messy and violent aspects of meat production. According to Timothy Pachirat, the industrial meat industry "enable us to eat meat without the killers or the killing, without even – insofar as the smell, the manure, and the other components of organic life are concerned – the animals themselves..." (Pachirat 2011, 3). In Mumbai 'frozen' chicken producers facilitate this distancing process through sanitized packaging and appealing design. Zorabian, a prominent chicken producer in Mumbai included a large and clearly visible logo that testified to its ISO 2200 certification compliance. ISO standards were the international health and hygiene protocol that the aforementioned meat exporter referred to. The Zorabian company mascot was an image of a smiling chicken, presumably welcoming its own consumption. Through design, packaging and the separation of slaughter from the point of purchase, 'frozen' chicken reconfigured the relationship between humans and animals. It presented a new set of sensory engagements with slaughter.

However, besides packaging and branding was the potential for the new production practice to produce disgust out of fresh chicken production. Following Norbert Elias, Pachirat argues that the modern slaughterhouse is part of the "civilizing process" of modernity where various aspects "of either

moral or physical disgust has been increasingly segregated, confined, and hidden from sight” (Pachirat 2011, 10). In Pachirat’s analysis the violence of slaughter is equated with “moral or physical disgust” (Pachirat 2011, 10). Faced with scenes of carnage during research he became vegetarian, “it’s just not worth the pleasure when you know the system,” he explained in an interview (Bittman 2012). Pachirat’s personal experience and analytical approach is an expression of a position within the anthropology of meat that “the killing of non-human animals for human consumption is inherently problematic” such that “cultural groups, especially in small-scale settings, have sought to overcome the ambiguities of ‘dead animal flesh’ through a variety of material, classificatory and ritual practices” (Staples and Klein 2016, 14). However, as discussed in the opening vignette, in India the sight and smell of animals and slaughter did not necessarily evoke disgust. As discussed in the introduction, the Hindu discursive tradition included discussion and debate regarding the difference between violence and cruelty. Similarly, for many Muslims the practice of slaughter was a violent act, but not cruel, offensive and evocative of disgust. Besides the Muslim experience of slaughter during Bakri Id was the meaning informants invested in the prayer upon slaughter. An informant one day pointed out that the prescribed utterance was not “Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim” (in the name of God the most gracious, the most merciful), but rather “Bismillah Allahu Akbar” (in the name of God, God is great). For him the difference between invoking God’s greatness rather than His mercy was an implicit recognition of the violence of the act. However, it was not a cruel act, since it was what God had ordained.

Rather than a-priori assumptions regarding the “inherently problematic” nature of slaughter is to consider how the shift from violence to cruelty and disgust is a process that accompanies the introduction of industrial meat production practices. ‘Frozen’ chicken with its claims to sanitation and hygiene had the potential to produce disgust out of the sensory experience of stench. Fachandi has discussed the politics and affect of disgust during the Gujarat Pogrom of 2002 where the figure of the Muslim as butcher was presented as a site of abjection (Ghasem-Fachandi 2012). In Mumbai the introduction of ‘frozen’ chicken signaled not only a threat to the livelihood of the butcher but also his increasing invisibility from public life as well as the potential to produce his body and occupation as a

site of disgust. Despite their religious obligation to practice halal, the consumption of ‘frozen’ chicken presented the potential for Muslims too to express disgust at the visibility of slaughter. Perhaps without the same violent potential that Fachandi discusses in Gujarat, Muslims had already begun to express concerns over the lack of hygiene standards at Muslim butchers and restaurants.

The production and consumption of ‘frozen’ chicken thus presented a sensory recalibration of the practice of halal. It introduced a relatively detached consumption practice. Packages of pre-cut breast pieces, or thigh sections were stored in the refrigerator. Each package contained the exact same weight. It was impossible to tell what the age and size of the chicken had been before slaughter. Sanitized packaging and product design further facilitated the separation from the immediacy of the act of slaughter. Assessments about quality and taste excluded questions about breed or age. More relevant was an emphasis on design, sanitized packaging, convenience and aspiration. As a material form for the practice of Islam as a lived tradition, ‘frozen’ chicken signified a new set of meanings for halal meat consumption that included the potential to produce the site of Muslim meat production as a site of disgust. Hassan’s endeavors to retain customer interest in fresh chicken was an ethical practice through which he remained financially competitive but also signified a symbolic gesture that secured the visibility of a potentially stigmatized profession.

PRODUCING FRESH CHICKEN: TRUST AND HALAL SLAUGHTER

Customer preference for ‘fresh’ or ‘frozen’ chicken and the associated quality of each was tied to the question of trust. Trust, for example, was the single factor that differentiated the brothers from the two smaller and far less successful stores only 10 meters away. This was something that Hassan often pointed out and was one of the brothers’ main concerns as they discussed opening a second store in Navi Mumbai.¹⁵ Lack of trust was also at the heart of the “myth” that ‘frozen’ was not fresh. It

¹⁵ There had been significant migration from Colaba to Navi Mumbai (New Mumbai) as old residents capitalized on the housing market boom, sold their apartments and relocated to the new city. Those ex-customers often complained to the brothers about a lack of good chicken in the new areas, leading them to consider a branch in the new city.

was the basis for the suspicion of ‘frozen’ products. Fresh and ‘frozen’ chicken were two material forms of halal meat production that relied on very different means for the production of trust.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the practice of halal was premised on a relationship of trust between suppliers and producers in which the *niyat* (intention) to consume and produce halal was central. Transaction with a fellow Muslim was the basis for trust given that both parties had the intention to consume and supply halal. To doubt the halal products of a fellow Muslim was considered a sin. Conversely, in the case of transgression, the sin accrued to the supplier. In Mumbai the prevalence of Muslim involvement in the meat industry led to the very common assertion that all meat in the city was halal. This was further supported by the nature of labor migration where particular occupations were predominated by certain castes from certain areas. It was often explained that packaged chicken producers employed Muslim slaughterers with a view to both the local and export market. The halal status of ‘frozen’ chicken was assured through this widespread confidence regarding Muslim involvement in the meat industry. Hassan occasionally received queries regarding the halal status of the ‘frozen’ chicken. He assured customers that it was halal but advised them that the taste and texture were undesirable. Doubts about the halal status of ‘frozen’ chicken did not constitute an offense.

In contrast, the halal status of fresh chicken was directly linked to Hassan’s Muslim identity and reputation. There was an immediacy to the consumption of halal through the actual interaction with the Muslim butcher and the practice of visible slaughter. For new customers, his Muslim identity was clear from the framed picture of a Sufi Shrine, a section of the Quran, and some other Islamic paraphernalia that adorned the store. Hassan had never encountered any queries from religious authorities about the halal status of his meat and Muslim customers rarely questioned the halal status of his fresh chicken.¹⁶ However, a few customers, who Hassan referred to as “those people” did query

¹⁶ Hasan explained that most often it was non-Muslim customers, eager to avoid *jhatka*-slaughtered meat that would query whether his meat was halal. *Jhatka* was the Sikh prescribed method of slaughter where the head of the animal was severed in one blow. With halal slaughter the jugular and windpipe are cut but the spinal chord remains intact. This ensures that the animal is not paralyzed upon slaughter so that the heart continues to pump the maximum amount of blood out of the body. The Sikh and Muslim communities do not consume each other’s meat. Hindu customers often preferred halal.

the fulfillment of halal. These included particularly scrupulous customers such as Irfan from the previous chapter who would stand at the store and attempt to ascertain if the slaughterer was in fact uttering the required prayer, enquired why religious garb was not worn, or whether the animal was in fact facing Mecca during slaughter. Some demanded that the chicken be offered a sip of water before slaughter. Amongst these requests the requirement to wear correct religious garb was not stipulated in the discursive traditions of halal practice and was clearly an instance of individual customers making up the rules. In Mumbai only the utterance of the prayer upon slaughter was considered compulsory (Urdu: farz, Arabic: fard). The rest were optional rules known as the sunnat, practices of the prophet, that were usually followed more closely on special occasions of slaughter such as the Bakri Id or the aqeeqah sacrifice (offered upon the birth of a child, or at discretion in honor of saints) when individuals rather than professionals performed the actual slaughter (chapter 6). Hassan recounted these incidents of doubt with a sense of incredulity. Except for the gesture of offering the chicken water, he did not comply with these requests. He clearly considered the expression of doubt an offense and directed them elsewhere rather than comply with their “silly” demands.

‘Fresh’ and ‘frozen’ chicken were two material practices for the production of halal in Mumbai. As practices of Islam as a lived tradition there were differences in the way in which trust in the halal status of fresh and ‘frozen’ chicken was produced. This also had implications for how doubt was perceived. Trust in the halal status of ‘frozen’ chicken relied on generalized assessments regarding Muslim involvement in the meat industry while trust in fresh chicken was produced through personal interaction with the butcher and sensory engagement with slaughter. The connection between doubt, trust and offense in the store point to the communally charged notion of trust for the practice of halal where doubt over Hassan’s halal production practices constituted a personal offense. However, the trust which customers placed in Hassan clearly extended beyond concern with the practice of halal slaughter. Other assessments of meat quality such as taste and texture were important for customer

satisfaction and preference and were linked to the way in which trust in each material form of chicken production was produced and maintained.

FRESH CHICKEN: DELIVERY, SELECTIVE PRICING AND THE PRODUCTION OF TRUST

Trust that customers placed in Hassan and Shams had been produced through familiarity and generations of successful exchange rather than appeals to sanitized hygiene or package design. However, trust was also produced through the carefully cultivated relationships between Hassan and his customers that were inseparable from the substance of the fresh chicken products. There were two important business practices through which trust was produced and maintained. These were the free delivery service and the practice of selective pricing. Through each it was clear that the production of trust was about more than the transfer of goods and money, but also included the gradual and carefully calibrated practices of placing confidence, having faith, exercising patience, delivering orders and offering discounts. The exchange relationship clearly resembled Shipton's discussion of entrustment through which commercial exchange and the gift were linked in the production of trust (Shipton 2007). However here it was not only the act of exchange but also the small, seemingly inconsequential practices through which trust was produced and maintained. These practices were inseparable from the materiality of the fresh chicken product.

The free delivery service was part of Hassan's repertoire of attractiveness and was common in various industries in Mumbai. It was a service that I often made use of when ordering my weekly groceries from the local 'kirana dukan' (corner store). Given the ubiquitous presence of delivery in Mumbai it was a business practice that for the most part failed to pique my interest. I presumed that since most businesses offered delivery, it was simply a matter of remaining competitive. The fallacy of my assumption was made clear one afternoon when Hassan explained that customers did not query the weight of the packets delivered. They all trusted that he would prepare and deliver the exact chicken that had been ordered. This was particularly important since the weight of the chicken was measured before slaughter. The nett weight of the "dressed chicken," after the skin, feet, head and

entrails had been removed was significantly less than the live weight. Customers could of course make rough estimates but had no means for exact determination. This aspect of slaughter meant that the delivery of fresh chicken involved completely different registers of trust than the delivery of non-perishable groceries or prepared food. Customers trusted Hassan to provide them with the order for which they had been charged. Delivery was of course a value added service that offered a measure of competitiveness, but was crucially dependent on a relationship of trust between Hassan and his customers. The trust that preceded the transaction and continuously produced through it was inseparable from the materiality of the fresh chicken, produced, and processed in store. Hassan did not offer packaged 'frozen' chicken for delivery.

Another practice through which trust was produced was selective pricing. One afternoon an elderly woman arrived at the store with a request for boneless thigh meat. Hassan explained that she would only receive her order the next day since the process of deboning leg pieces required much work and the store was very busy at that time. She accepted his explanation, bought one small chicken for that days meal, and said that she would return the next day. Having observed the interaction I was struck by the women's calm acceptance of a delay in her order. Aware that boneless leg meat was the most tender and flavorful part of the chicken, and usually very expensive, I wondered what Hassan was charging her. Hassan explained, "we give it at the same price. That lady has been buying from us since she was a little girl. Her parents were buying from my grandfather." Trust produced through familiarity and generations of successful exchange had translated into Hassan offering her a premium product at below market rates. This was something not offered to all customers, many of whom were either turned away or quoted high rates for labor intensive requests. In exchange the women exercised patience and understanding regarding his operational demands. She did not take her business elsewhere and compromised immediacy. Their interaction was an example that while familiarity was crucial for trust, it was augmented by the almost invisible acts through which trust was produced and maintained. Like the delivery service, the trust that inhered in the relationship between this customer and Hassan was inseparable from the materiality of the fresh chicken product.

Selective pricing was not reserved for the well-known, familiar and reliable customers. It was also a means of attracting new customers. However, not all new customers were offered discounts. I noticed a bias in favor of those who appeared visibly poorer or who requested bones and other unused parts. They usually asked the price, then hesitated, before requesting a discount. Occasionally he offered them a discount of between 10-20 rupees per kilogram. One day, after such a customer had arrived and received a discount, I confronted him about this selective application. Hassan explained that it was his way of attracting new customers. He then added with a smile, “actually our supplier price has come down a bit, and we have not adjusted our selling price. So I can afford to give them something.” The particular customer on that afternoon was a man from Mussoorie, in Uttarakhand province in North India. He had never met the man before but was aware that many laborers from that region arrived in Mumbai as construction workers. Attracting new customers was clearly tied to acts of generosity. That generosity was not uncalculated or ‘pure’, since his supplier price had dropped. However it was not random since he only offered it to those whom he perceived to be in a state of financial distress but who were also potential customers. Hassan often chased beggars, and drunkards (charsi) away from the store when they sauntered past asking for money or food. His assessment of a certain kind of poverty, and his small acts of generosity, were central to the production of trust. These practices were clearly linked to the relationship with his live chicken supplier with whom he had a long-standing relationship, and who had offered him a discount on the live chicken rate. As we will see this relationship was very different from the sales representatives of the packaged chicken producers.

Delivery and selective pricing were business practices that involved everyday ethical acts through which trust was produced and maintained. The production and maintenance of trust was inseparable from the materiality of the fresh chicken products that were slaughtered and processed in store, and the live chicken suppliers with whom Hassan had cultivated long standing relationships. Besides Hassan’s aversion to supporting beggars and drunkards, there was nothing to indicate a specifically ‘Islamic’ inspiration for his practices. The discounts he offered or the delivery practices were not reserved for particular religious communities, and traders from other backgrounds in

Mumbai likely engaged in very similar practices. More important than linking these acts to a specific Islamic discursive tradition of business practice was that they were closely tied to the production of freshly slaughtered halal chicken. As a Muslim butcher in Mumbai the practice of halal slaughter and fresh chicken processing in store was central to his business practice and was the means through which he was able to cultivate and maintain trust.

The delivery service, selective pricing and the expression of doubts over halal each indicate the extent to which the maintenance and production of trust in Hassan was inseparable from the fresh chicken. 'Frozen' chicken, in contrast, sought to bypass the trust that customers placed in the individual butcher. It introduced certainty of weight and pricing and a different means for the determination of halal. It was clear that 'frozen' chicken manufacturers did not compete on the same ethical terrain. Rather they were indicative of a new regime of food production that was inseparable from particular ideas about hygiene and sanitation, convenience, packaging and branding.

FRESH AND 'FROZEN' CHICKEN: FRESHNESS AND TASTE VERSUS ASPIRATION, HYGIENE AND CONVENIENCE

Although both fresh and 'frozen' chicken was halal each signified very different sensory engagements between humans, animals and slaughter. However, far from accepting these new products, many customers expressed concern and aversion. They felt that the impeccable hygiene of the packaged products sacrificed taste and was 'too soft.' The absence of reliable refrigeration and an intermittent electricity supply introduced doubt into the storage of 'frozen' chicken. The widespread association of the immediacy of slaughter with meat consumption meant that informants often expressed dismay at the seemingly ludicrous 'western' practice of ageing meat.¹⁷ However, for others, packaged 'frozen' meat was more 'hygienic' and convenient. The introduction of ready-marinated

¹⁷ Ageing is the practice of storing meat in a refrigerator at just above freezing temperatures before sale to allow the natural enzymes in the meat to break down proteins, resulting in a more flavorful and tender product. According to some reports all supermarket meat in the United States has been aged for around 7 days. This process often takes place during storage and transport (Pryles n.d.).

chicken breasts pointed to the extent to which convenience had become an important factor in consumption practices. These customers appreciated the 'softness' and that it cooked faster. For them the new product design and packaging were appealing.

For Hassan, these differences were related to the relationship between class and sensory experience. 'Frozen' chicken customers were prepared to pay a premium for products they perceived to be "cleaner and more hygienic" because it was "more expensive and looked nice." They were "usually rich people, they feel sick when they see all the blood, the smell, even the sound of the chicken and the cutting." They trusted the corporate manufacturers and were willing to pay the higher price to receive a clean, blood-free product. In contrast, "our chicken when you take it home there is still blood on it, some feathers maybe. You have to wash it. That one ('frozen') is totally clean." On a few occasions 'frozen' chicken customers approached the store to place orders with scarves over their noses to block the smell. Hassan always mocked them jokingly after they left. Their actions contravened the relationship of trust and familiarity that was central to halal meat production and consumption in Mumbai. However contrary to Hassan, wealth or class did not determine preference. Many affluent Colaba residents would drive by in large sedans to collect freshly slaughtered chicken, while others placed orders for delivery. Similarly, with the clearly 'elite' women in the opening vignette. Rather it was clear that there was an aspirational value attached to consuming products perceived as new, and modern.

Nevertheless, the majority of customers were unconvinced. Hassan often received complaints about a strange chemical taste in the packaged chicken, of excess water or an off-putting smell. He explained this to customers as evidence of additives injected during the production process. For these customers, what was supposed to be a more hygienic form that avoided the sensory engagement with slaughter, in fact produced a new set of unsavory sensory experiences. According to ardent fresh chicken customers the divide was clear, "Jo fresh khate hain woh frozen nahin khate (those who eat fresh they do not eat frozen). Usme taste nahi hain, bharosa nahin hai (there is no taste, and no trust)." As Hassan explained "the average customer, he doesn't actually trust the frozen chicken, they wonder,

‘why does it stay so long? What chemicals are in there? Why is it so soft?’” The preference for fresh chicken seemingly assured customers against the ‘unnatural’ practices of the corporate producers. The widespread awareness of the broiler industry and suspicion about unscrupulous feeding and medicating practices were at least somewhat tempered by consuming fresh chicken.

This distrust of ‘frozen’ chicken was related to a broader ethics of food consumption and production in Mumbai. Given the common incidence of stomach ailments from consuming bad food, I was often advised that contrary to what I may think, those “hi-fi” (fancy, middle class) places presented a higher health risk than even street-food stalls. This was due to the propensity of the former to store food. Street food seemed dirty, but at least it was fresh and turnover was fast. This was explained in the context of meat one afternoon by an informant who had previously worked as a deliveryman at one of the 5-star hotels in South Mumbai. After sharing a meal together for under 30 rupees each, at one of the old Irani cafes in Colaba, he began to disclose the seemingly ludicrous practice at 5-star hotels that he had discovered when working there as a deliveryman. He explained how he could not believe that they stored meat in the deep freeze for up to 3 months before discarding it as unfit for consumption! Even though the poor ate at cheap places, at least their food was fresh and tasty. The distrust of ‘frozen’ chicken, the ‘unnatural’ practices of corporate producers, and the suspicion of “hi-fi” places pointed to an ethics of chicken consumption that was inseparable from the familiarity, trust and immediacy of ‘fresh’ chicken production and consumption.

However, assertions of taste, texture and quality were highly subjective assessments. This was evident in the way that the softness of ‘frozen’ chicken was valued by its consumers, but denigrated by its detractors. Similarly, assessments of product quality such as water content and taste were hard to objectively determine. Trust was central to these assessments of quality. As we have seen the trust customers placed in Hassan had been produced over generations through decades of successful exchange and everyday ethical practices. The extent of this trust was that many customers continued to purchase even their ‘frozen’ chicken from his store. The trust placed in Hassan afforded him a certain level of authority over their consumption preferences. The customer experience of quality was in part

determined by the advice which Hasan offered, and the familiarity of the customer with the store. Hassan's authority over customer preference of course overlapped with his interest in sustaining demand for 'fresh' chicken. For him more in-store processing translated into higher profits. However, the introduction of 'frozen' chicken and the shift to corporate production also threatened Hassan's position in the city. The potential invisibility of meat production offered the possibility for his livelihood to be rendered as a sight of disgust. 'Frozen' chicken thus threatened both his profit as well as the symbolic relevance of the Muslim butcher as an intermediary for the supply of meat. Maintaining customer interest in fresh chicken was an ethical practice through which Hassan remained profitable, relevant and respectable.

The centrality of trust to assessments of product quality was most clearly evident in the contestations between Hassan, chicken suppliers and customers over meat consumption preferences. Despite widespread reservations about 'frozen' chicken, it had obtained a fairly significant market share. However, the choice between fresh and 'frozen' chicken was not stable. Rather it was the material terrain upon which trust was tested and strained as Hassan and his customers negotiated their consumption preferences.

MAINTAINING FRESH CHICKEN DEMAND: A SITUATED ETHICAL PRACTICE

Early during fieldwork, Hassan had been selling farmed 'desi' and broiler chickens as well as the Godrej 'frozen' packaged chicken products. At some point during the year he discontinued his Godrej supply. He explained that the customer demand was too low, that he had been receiving complaints about product quality and that the product was too expensive. The cost of spoiled products was falling on him, "customers were finding that water that stays in the packet, when they open it there is a bad smell. Then they return it. So I have to give them their money back, and the stock?" he asked rhetorically as there was no straightforward mechanism for him to return the goods to the manufacturer. Furthermore, he was confident that he could convince the existing Godrej customers to change their purchasing habits. Hassan explained, "Our customers are like that, they trust us, they

listen to us. Anyway, the fresh is cheaper. If I compare the best quality fresh chicken to theirs, then Godrej is still 15 rupees per kilogram more expensive. So I tell them, try this fresh one, then see. Then they try it and realize that the taste is better.” According to Hassan, the cost of complaints combined with his ability to command purchasing behavior was sufficient basis for him to discontinue stocking Godrej chicken. Even though ‘frozen’ customers had changed their tastes, he was confident that he could convince them otherwise. For the next 2 months, he sold only fresh chicken at his store.

During this time Hassan began processing his own ready cut and washed chicken according to various specifications. One of those items, for example, was chicken that had been de-feathered but with the skin still remaining. Un-skinned chicken was an important selling point of the packaged ‘frozen’ chicken industry. The processing time for de-feathering was much longer than the time taken to remove both the skin and feathers together. Processing plants utilized machinery that removed the feathers within seconds. Hassan had to do it manually. The problem was that chicken kept in the refrigerator lost water and discolored during the day. The solution was to imitate a practice of brining of the ‘frozen’ chicken manufacturers where the cut and cleaned chicken was soaked in ice-cold salt water for about an hour. The process kept the chicken looking fresh and the skin did not discolor. It also facilitated the absorption of water. As Shams one morning, during the soaking operation, explained, “we get about 100 grams like this.” According to the brothers brining was a necessity that had been forced upon them by the large producers who produced de-feathered, ready-cut, brined chicken at competitive rates. In the food industry the process of brining was widely regarded as improving the texture, moisture content and flavor of chicken. Here the brothers had adopted a practice of the ‘frozen’ chicken industry in an attempt to compete with the large manufacturers. They insisted nevertheless that unlike the “injections” that the industry used, their solution was simply saltwater. The practice of brining was financially and aesthetically beneficial to Hassan in his attempt to remain competitive. Brining was an ethical practice though which he responded to customer demand and remained competitive and relevant in the chicken industry.

A few days later I was at the store when an elderly Hindu women came asking for Godrej chicken breasts. Hassan told her that he was out of stock and had stopped selling it. He offered her his own ready-cut chicken. "Is it soft?" she asked. "You try this once you will see how nice it is and won't go back to Godrej!" he assured her. She accepted his advice and left. Hassan turned to me as if to prove that his strategy was working. His customers trusted him and would surely not be disappointed. Interestingly fresh chicken customers suspected the 'frozen' products of being too soft. This has also been noted by Staples in his research in Tamil Nadu (Staples 2016). On the other hand, 'frozen' chicken customers preferred the texture of the packaged chicken, which Hassan and Shams were attempting to reproduce through brining. Clearly the manufacturing industry introduction of packaged products had made in-roads into the consumer's halal meat consumption preferences. Texture and taste that were usually associated with animal health and age were now produced through brining. By imitating the practice and exercising his authority over customer consumption preferences Hassan hoped to convince 'frozen' customers of the value of fresh chicken.

However, Hassan's business, by his own estimate was 25-30% geared towards 'frozen' chicken. Not all of the 'frozen' chicken customers were willing to change over to his brined fresh chicken. They had become accustomed to the particular constellation of texture, taste and presentation of the packaged chicken products. One problem for Hassan was that non-butchers could also sell 'frozen' chickens. A nearby kirana dukan (small corner grocery store) was an official supplier of Godrej products. In Mumbai, as has been noted in the U.S. (Striffler 2005), the packaged chicken form signaled the potential exclusion of the individual butcher from the economy of meat production. Hassan was thus forced to resume stocking 'frozen' chicken, except this time from a different supplier, Zorabian, a premium chicken brand. It was only then that he revealed an additional factor in his original decision to discontinue the Godrej supply.

The family had entered a period of financial difficulty after his sister's wedding earlier that year. He had thus been struggling with making the stock payments. The local Godrej sales representative had started demanding full upfront payment upon delivery. Hassan argued that was not a common

practice in the market. Usually a down payment was offered with the remainder paid later. Unlike his live chicken suppliers with whom he had an established relationship the Godrej sales representative was a young commerce graduate, instructed to manage customer relationships according to a debt management formula. The sales representative thought that since Hassan was selling 6,000 rupees of Godrej products per day, he would have no alternative but to accede. Hassan however maintained that his business was not determined purely by price nor brand, “we have been here for 50 years or something. My father’s father started this business. The customers know us, they trust us. If I tell the customer that this product is better, they will start believing that.” He now assessed that the customers who bought Godrej chicken were already paying a higher price and would most likely not mind a slight increase. He had of course learned that the opposite was not true as customers continued to demand ‘frozen’ chicken. Importantly, Zorabian was offering him a profit of 35 rupees per kilogram and reasonable payment terms, whereas Godrej was only offering 10 rupees per kilogram and demanding up-front payment. The financial decision was clear. Hassan began selling Zorabian chicken.

About two weeks later Hassan and I sat at the store chatting as a steady stream of customers came and went. A few asked for the ‘frozen’ Zorabian chicken that he kept in the fridge below the counter. They had clearly been convinced of the new product. Then, two teenage girls, doing some shopping for their parents arrived. They were looking for Godrej chicken. Hassan, without hesitation, directed them to the nearby supermarket that stocked Godrej chicken. Soon after, another women came to ask for the ready cut, Godrej chicken. Hassan explained that he had changed his supplier. She persisted as to why Godrej was no longer in store. Hassan then explained to her that Zorabian chickens, though more expensive, were of a better quality than Godrej. Godrej chickens had a high water and fat content which drained out during cooking. The reason, he said, was that Godrej placed their chickens in cold water after slaughter, which rendered them 100-200 grams heavier. The result was that the apparent saving of 20 rupees was not realized. Listening to his explanation she accepted the Zorabian packet and left.

In a short space of time I had witnessed two very different customer interactions with regards to the change of brand. It turned out that the two girls whom Hassan had directed to the nearby supermarket were actually long-standing customers. He knew the family and that they were specifically looking for the Godrej brand, “some customers don’t like to change, they started buying Godrej frozen chicken, and they want to continue.” The extent of their relationship with him was that they continued to enquire from him, but would nevertheless not switch brand allegiance. He had thus not bothered to explain the merits of Zorabian chicken to them. With the second customer he had, as he often claimed, been able to convince her to change her brand allegiance. He deployed an explanation of the exact practice, which he conducted each morning for his de-feathered chicken pieces, in order to discredit the quality of Godrej chicken. Except now rather than offer her his own de-feathered chicken he suggested an alternative packaged brand. While texture and taste were clearly important for customer determinations of quality of chicken these sensory aspects were inseparable from the trust which customers placed in Hassan and their own assessments of the merits of fresh or ‘frozen’ chicken.

For Hassan, ethical practices of halal chicken production involved attempts to ensure the continuation of fresh chicken demand. He exercised authority and imitated production practices of corporate chicken producers in order to remain competitive. As an important site for the production of halal in Mumbai Hassan was engaged in the practice of Islam as a lived tradition. He was not a pious activist or a religious scholar but rather an important node in the Muslim supply of meat to the city. However, beyond financial incentive was the stigma in India and Mumbai that surrounded the Muslim butcher as a potential site of abjection and disgust. The introduction of ‘frozen’ chicken threatened his market share and profit model but also signaled his exclusion from public life and the potential to produce his livelihood as a site of disgust. Hassan’s ethical practice of remaining financially competitive and relevant as an intermediary for the supply of meat thus entailed practices of concealment, imitation and duplicity not stipulated by an abstract ethics of Muslim business practice as gleaned from authoritative sources in a textual tradition. Rather they were the situated ethical practices of a Muslim

butcher in Mumbai engaging in ethical judgements and reflection in devising a route towards his own financial security and public respectability.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered fresh and 'frozen' chicken as two material forms for the production of halal in Mumbai. Muslims widely agreed that both products were halal. However, as two productions of halal each signified very different relationships between humans, animals and slaughter. The meanings produced through halal production were therefore not fixed. Rather they were inseparable from the material practices entailed in the production of each. The chicken store was an important site for the ongoing contestation over customer preferences between fresh and 'frozen' chicken. It was a location for the practice of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai.

Consumers of fresh chicken chose a specific animal for slaughter. They were privy to the entire process from live animal to packet-ready product, cut according to their own specifications. The immediacy entailed a sensory engagement with the smell, sight and sound of slaughter. For these customers the process of meat production and consumption was potentially unpleasant but unavoidable. They valued the taste, freshness and texture of fresh chicken. In contrast, 'frozen' chicken had been slaughtered in large factories on the outskirts of the city. It offered meat consumption without the blood, stench or violence of slaughter. Packaged under sanitized conditions and stored in refrigerators it altered the sensory engagement between humans and animals. Packaged chicken offered convenience, sanitized hygiene, appealing packaged design and the aspiration for Indians to consume in new, modern ways. Consumers of 'frozen' chicken appreciated its texture and taste which was inseparable from the packaging and design which together urged the customer to trust its quality. For them the smell and sight of slaughter at the butcher store was evocative of disgust. The material terrain of halal production, between fresh and 'frozen' chicken, clearly involved assessments of product quality, taste and lifestyle that was inseparable from the different ways that trust in each was produced.

Importantly, the encroachment of 'frozen' chicken into the Mumbai meat market was far from complete. Central to these varying assessments of quality was the production and maintenance of trust. Trust in 'frozen' chicken was produced through appeals to hygiene, convenience, package design and branding. Trust in fresh chicken was intimately tied to the figure of the Muslim butcher. Familiarity, generations of successful exchange and everyday ethical acts were the practices through which Hassan produced and maintained trust that remained tied to the 'fresh' chicken products. The intimacy of trust placed in Hassan and fresh chicken production was evident in his different responses to doubts over halal. Queries about 'frozen' chicken evoked a response and affirmation, whereas concerns over the halal status of 'fresh' chicken constituted an offense. The link between trust and fresh chicken overlapped with his own interest in maintaining the fresh chicken market. 'Frozen' chicken presented a less profitable revenue stream and signaled the potential exclusion of his main livelihood activity from public life. It presented the possibility for his livelihood to be produced as a site of disgust.

However, the trust which customers place in Hassan afforded him a certain authority over their consumption practices and quality assessments. In order to remain competitive Hassan had begun to imitate a few of the practices of the corporate producers. He now offered chicken with the skin remaining and had begun brining his ready-cut chicken in a solution of saltwater each morning. The process of brining contributed to the aesthetics of ready-cut chicken and earned him a 10% weight advantage. Importantly the excess water content of 'frozen' chicken was the precise explanation that Hassan offered to customers in his attempts to discredit the packaged chicken suppliers. Through these contestations in store it was clear that remaining competitive included practices of concealment and deception. Trust in fresh chicken production also involved layers of opacity between suppliers and customers. I argue that practices of deception, dishonesty and concealment were the ethical practices through which Hassan sought to retain customer interest in fresh chicken consumption. As a practice of Islam as a lived tradition Hassan's ethics of business practice did not confirm to abstract notions of Islamic ethics from Quran or Hadith sources that emphasized honesty and integrity in trade. Rather these were the situated ethical practices of a Muslim butcher engaged in fresh chicken production in

Mumbai, faced with both economic obsolescence as well as the potential for increased exclusion and stigmatization. Retaining customer interest in fresh chicken was an ethical effort at remaining competitive, relevant and respectable.

Approaching halal chicken production through two material forms has offered a view to the ethical practices of a Muslim butcher in Mumbai. As a context for the practice of Islam as a lived tradition there was no opportunity to over determine ethics as defined by some notion of tradition or a coherent set of rules or values. Any such attempt would ultimately curtail the possibility for apprehending Hassan's practice and inevitably point to moments of breakdown or ambivalence. Rather, this chapter has shown that the practice of Islam as a lived tradition emerges in particulate contexts as individuals from different backgrounds and with different dispositions forge a Muslim life for themselves. Here the butcher shop, Hassan's perspective and interaction with his customers, the city of Mumbai and the material forms of chicken production were the terrain through which Islam as a lived tradition was practiced. In the next chapter, we consider two restaurants within the old Muslim quarters of the city as nodes for the production and trade of halal meals. In each we see how being Muslim in the restaurant industry may be linked to very different expressions of ethical subjectivity and business practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE NARRATIVE AND MATERIAL PRACTICE OF ISLAM AS A LIVED TRADITION IN TWO MUSLIM RESTAURANTS

One evening, after a meeting with Arshad bhai, the owner of the famous Taj Mahal restaurant in the old Muslim quarter of the city, I visited ‘uncle’ at his ittar (perfume) store. ‘Uncle,’ as I usually addressed him, was an elderly man in his early 60’s. He was a regular discussant of mine who was always eager to hear of my research adventures. He was familiar with my interest in Muslim food practices and that I was conducting research at both Taj Mahal and Bukhara restaurants. Both were well known in the area and had well-established reputations. Recounting my meeting with Arshad bhai provoked a response. With a shake of his head he advised me not to go there since it was “just business.” Bukhara restaurant, in contrast, was “sufi food” and was thus a better choice.

The judgement was intriguing since it came from a self-proclaimed “chaubis number,”¹⁸ who on numerous occasions had warned me against attending Thursday evenings Sufi practices at local shrines in the area. Here however he was not referring to sectarian divisions. By invoking “Sufi food” he was making a judgement on the integrity of the owners, the quality of the food, and ‘balance’ in the amount of masala and oil used. In contrast he said that Taj Mahal used generous amounts of chili rather than masala, “balance hone chahiye, phir taste aata hai, yeh log (Taj Mahal) zyada mirch dalte hain aur kam

¹⁸ “Chaubis number” was a common term used to refer to the followers of the Tablighi Jamat and the Deobandi school of thought, popularly known as ‘Wahhabis.’ These groups were well known for their criticism of practices of worship at shrines. The term was originally coined by the followers of the Barelwi school as a jibe against the ‘Wahhabis’ who “think that only they are Muslim, 24 hours a day.” It has since been appropriated by some as a term of self-reference. As one Deobandi follower one day explained, “we are solid gold, proper Muslims, we only follow the sharia.”

masala” (there should be balance, the taste comes, these people (Taj Mahal) put too much chilli and less masala). In his analysis the importance of masala, as a source of taste, fragrance (khushboo) and medicinal value was compared to chili, a cheaper ingredient that was said to overpower the delicate combination of spices that was the sign of a truly refined meal and testimony to the skill of a master cook. It also indexed the integrity of the owners in their willingness to forego profits in exchange for the use of prime ingredients.

Ingredients, the skill of the cook, and fragrance were all central to the assessment of restaurant food quality in Mumbai. Importantly both of the restaurants were well known in the area. Despite the numerous establishments that lined the streets of Mohammed Ali road there were only a handful that stood out. I would often receive recommendations from informants about specific restaurants where particular dishes should be eaten. Of course opinions differed even amongst friends and great debates took place over which nalli nihari (shin stew) or mutton bhuna (fried mutton) was actually the best in the city. However, uncle’s assessment extended beyond individual tastes or dishes to incorporate a judgement on the management of the restaurant, the skill of the cooks and the integrity of the owners. As we will see the distinction between “sufi food” and “business food” was a categorization that linked restaurant practices and owner narratives.

This chapter presents the narratives and material practices of two restaurants in the old Muslim city of Mumbai. Each was an important site for the preparation, trade and consumption of halal food. As self-declared and visibly Muslim establishments their Islamic identity was clearly displayed. Concern about halal was therefore never raised. More important were question about food quality, bodily health, price and taste. The reputations which ‘uncle’ alluded to were an assessment that had congealed over decades of food preparation, social interaction and trade. Although both were producers of ‘Muslim food’ there were both differences and similarities between the two restaurants. This chapter considers the narratives and material practices of each restaurant as different articulations and expression of Islam as a lived tradition in Mumbai. Producing Muslim food and being a Muslim trader entailed different routes through which to express and practice an ethical subjectivity.

Taj Mahal is the more popular of the two restaurants. Its fame extends well beyond the old 'native' town. Located near the bustling Bhendi Bazaar intersection it has an online presence and has been featured by the CNN Traveller Blog. The restaurant has a large 25-40 item menu, but is most famous for the nalli nihari, shami kebab (soft, round mutton kebabs), chicken white biryani, and an item named after a famous movie star who provided the recipe. An entire meal in the downstairs non-AC (non-air-conditioned) section costs between 40 – 60 rupees. Upstairs the AC (air conditioned) section charges 3-4 times as much and attracts a more "hi-fi"¹⁹ clientele. Bukhara in contrast, is neither as internationally renowned, nor does its fame extend as widely beyond the old city into greater Mumbai. Among residents of the area it evokes strong associations with its founder, Hajji Sahib, who was a Sufi shaiikh in the area and whom attracted many followers until his death in Madinah in 1989. His son and grandson currently own and manage the restaurant. Bukhara has a menu of less than 10 items. A basic meal of curry and roti²⁰ costs between 30-50 rupees. The restaurant had not been divided into an AC and non-AC section.

Taj Mahal had renovated the restaurant in order to accommodate a broader range of clientele and capitalize financially on higher paying customers. They had also expanded the menu and included a branded item sold under the name of a well-known film star. Bukhara had chosen to remain indebted to an image of simplicity and refrained from initiating a spatial separation in the restaurant. This difference in the material and advertising practice of each restaurant was central to the ethical and founding narratives of each.

However, décor or fame was not necessarily indicative of respective financial success. Besides the restaurant business each of the owners had expanded their interests into other areas. Arshad bhai

¹⁹ "Hi-fi" was a common term in Mumbai that was used to refer to people of middle to upper-middle class social standing as well as to the spaces frequented. For example the new shopping malls that had been constructed in the city since the 1990's. The term could also be used as a kind of derogatory statement to refer to people who were fussy or spoilt.

²⁰ A roti is a famous Indian flat bread that is eaten as a daily staple. It is made from flour and water.

of Taj Mahal had recently begun manufacturing a ready-made, boxed, Mughlai spice mix. He aims to compete with the popular Pakistani brand, Shaan Masala. Other operating interests included another restaurant in Mahim, a catering service, a guesthouse and the supply of crafts. Also listed on the website is a company dedicated to the manufacture of “holy stickers” as well as an organization that provides free food to the poor in the area. In comparison, Amin bhai of Bukhara was developing a solar field that sought to capitalize on the de-regulation of the solar power industry in India. His son, Muhammad, was managing a townhouse property development in a nearby hill-station and often discussed plans to establish a canning factory for their food for export to Europe and the United States. Bukhara were clearly engaged in more capital-intensive investments. In contrast Taj Mahal had more fame and was engaged in more explicitly Islamic related enterprises. Besides the feeding program and “holy stickers,” Arshad bhai was the trader in Chapter 2 who recounted his suggestion to a friend to open a halal certification organization.

Each restaurant was clearly implicated in broader networks of religious patronage and obligation. At Taj Mahal this was evident in the family business interests of manufacturing Islamic paraphernalia, as well as the management of a feeding scheme for the poor. At Bukhara, the Sufi authority of its founder was passed through the family lineage and had become closely connected to the reputation and practice in the restaurant. The fusion of business and finance with other forms of authority, patronage and obligation is often considered under the framework of ‘moral economy.’ Two important sources for the notion of ‘moral economy’ are Mauss’s essay on the gift and E.P. Thompson’s 1971 essay on *The Moral Economy of the English Crowd In The Eighteenth Century*.

However, sociologists have critiqued, the morality of ‘moral economy’ for its emphasis on a generalized, abstract notion of ethical life (Granovetter 1985). All actors in a certain time period or place were presumed to fall under the framework of some moral system. This critique has been levelled at E.P. Thompson who originally used the term to explain the food riots in the late 18th century as response to a change in the economic and moral order of things whereby a moral economy of patronage and obligation was being replaced by a new moral order of competition and political

economy (Thompson 1971). Similarly, anthropologists have argued that the anthropology of moral economy, modeled on Mauss's idea of the gift, tends towards a romanticism of personal small-scale business practices in opposition to the cold market rationality of capitalist enterprise (Parry and Bloch 1989). Evoking 'moral economy' often produces a "distinction between nonmarket and market-based societies" (Arnold 2001a, 1). Increasingly scholars have recognized that in fact "all economies – not merely pre- or non-capitalist ones – are moral economies" (Browne 2009, 12). This has given rise to recent arguments for capitalism as "an explicitly moral order" (Ho 2015, 414), but also how particular virtues inspired by religious traditions may be incorporated into business practice (Weeratunge 2010, 348).

This chapter contributes to these latter studies through an investigation of the narrative and material practices of two restaurants. Business interests, material practices and owner narratives are not assessed for the relative morality of each or as a measure of their position on a moral economy-political economy spectrum. Proximity to customers, religious affinity and location are important but do simply determine trade practices. Rather, through comparison we may appreciate the similarities and differences between two well-established restaurants in the same neighborhood. This chapter argues that rather than assuming a moral economy of Muslim food in Mumbai, or presuming a particular form of Islamic ethics, we may observe how the narrative and material practices of each restaurant is a different expression and materialization of Islam as a lived tradition.

BUKHARA RESTAURANT: THE JOURNEY OF HAJJI SAHIB

The founder of Bukhara restaurant, Hajji Sahib, was well-known in the area. He had founded the restaurant in 1957 after spending almost thirty years in Mumbai. His son Amin and grandson Muhammad narrated the story of his early life, arrival in Mumbai from Uttar Pradesh, gradual success and spiritual transformation. The narrative emphasized Hajji Sahib's spiritual, business and technological acumen. Throughout the narrative it was clear that Hajji Sahib was the central agent in the success of the restaurant. As Muhammad on many occasions mentioned, "he was like a visionary."

The form of the narration includes instances where Hajji Sahib was himself recounting aspects of his life to others. Reported speech was the trope whereby the protagonist's words were the medium of an ethical message. Through the narrative we begin see an articulation of a particular ethics of food, cooking, and responsibility to the poor that been practice and materialized in the restaurant. However, the financial implications of the restaurant practices and the family's material success are never made explicit. As we will see the particular narrative technique wherein the ethics of business practices is articulated while financial implications are silenced is an expression of Islam as a lived tradition.

The early days of Hajji Sahib's life entailed an almost miraculous change of fortunes. The narrative emphasized his simple, hard working and honest nature. He had, at a very young age, faced with his father's death taken on responsibility for his family. He had earned his first wage at the age of 8 by working for the construction of a mosque in his native village in rural U.P. in North India. According to the story, those earnings afforded the family much needed grains and lentils that ended a three-day hunger that had followed the death of their father. In the narrative, his first earnings were the result of a virtuous employment which he then dedicated to the care of his family. Here already an ethics of care and responsibility were foreshadowed. He had worked hard as a young boy, slowly sharing the burden for supporting the family with his younger siblings as they too reached working age. After the mosque was completed he began an apprenticeship as a cook under a well-known *ustad* (master/teacher) in Bareilly. Following his training he worked at a British military encampment outside the town preparing *tandoori roti*'s. Finally, in around 1930 he returned to his hometown near Bareilly where he started his own *roti* making business. The *roti*-making enterprise was a significant event in Hajji Sahib's life as it was the first time that he was an independent actor. He was no longer a child, trainee, or employee.

So in the gully, in the neighborhood one respected man came to father. He came and he said, "here take 1 kilo of flour and make rotis for me." So father took the flour and made the rotis and gave them to the man. But instead of 11 (which was the industry norm) he placed 12 rotis in front of the man. So

the man asked, “why did you give me 12 rotis?” So father replied, “look here, actually from 1 kilo 12 rotis are made, the hotel (roti shop) owners are keeping the 1 roti for themselves because our costs are too high. The costs of making the roti’s that you pay, that they do not increase.” He said it like that. So the man said “Aha!” and he got his stick, “you are all cheating,” and he beat them all and closed all of the shops. All of the other hotels were closed. So, all of the hotel owners got angry with father, “that Moosa has disclosed my secret, our secret.” So father got very confused. So he said, “ok, I will close my hotel.” And he closed his hotel and came to Bombay.

The roti business that Hajji Sahib had started was common in much of North India. Customers brought flour to the store and roti’s were prepared for collection or delivered to the home. Usually there was an agreed upon fee for the labor and an agreed quantity of roti’s that a particular weight of flour would yield. In this town the agreed upon rate was eleven roti’s. Hajji Sahib had offered the customer twelve. Hajji Sahib’s ethical judgement to maintain absolute honesty in his roti business was in fact also a business strategy whereby he underpriced his competitors. For the competitors Hajji Sahib’s decision was a betrayal and disclosure of an industry secret. In the narrative, it had dire consequences for the others in that they were forcefully closed. Importantly neither Amin nor Muhammed mentioned the financial implications or betrayal as they narrated the incident. Rather they emphasized the ethics of honesty embodied by Hajji Sahib. I argue that we consider this narrative strategy as an ethical judgement that proceeded throughout the restaurant practices whereby an ethics of simplicity was maintained even as fortunes continued to rise.

Following the roti making incident, Mumbai, a place of opportunity and competition free from the social constraints of the village, provided the setting for the recognition of integrity to translate into commercial success. However as with most migration in India, Hajji Sahib, was never completely untethered from his past networks. According to the narrative another incentive for travelling to Mumbai was to search for a brother with whom the family had lost contact. Arriving in the city he soon

met past acquaintances and colleagues that recognized his skill as a cook, the authority of his teacher (ustad), and his personal integrity. Through their support he began his first roadside restaurant on the very first day that he arrived in Mumbai. Through a combination of hard work, integrity and “vision” he soon owned 10-12 businesses in the food industry including milk shops, sweet shops and a number of small restaurants. Hajji Sahib had seized the opportunity of Bombay through integrity and taste rather than dodgy dealings. His largest and most well-known restaurant, established in 1940, continues to be run by Amin’s brother. Clearly Hajji Sahib had become a financial success.

It was much later, in 1954, while visiting the khanqah (Sufi lodge) of his Sufi shaikh (Sufi master or teacher – also known as a pir) near Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, North India, that Hajji Sahib began his spiritual transformation. He fell in love with his pir (deewana ho gaya – to be in a rapture, to go mad with love) and decided to remain by his side. He left his businesses and family behind in Mumbai and moved to the khanqah. He spent between 2-3 years there. During that time, he returned to Mumbai intermittently to sell a business or two before returning to the khanqah with the proceeds which he donated for upkeep and maintenance. Finally, when he had only one business remaining his pir said to him, “you have only 1 hotel remaining, you go! Go look after your business.” In 1957, upon receiving these orders he returned to Mumbai, whereupon he procured the property directly opposite his last remaining restaurant and started Bukhara restaurant. The narrative of Hajji Sahib’s journey from successful businessmen to mureed (Sufi disciple) was a common trope in the Sufi hagiographical canon where disciples made decisions to abandon worldly enterprise in search of higher knowledge.

The establishment of Bukhara restaurant was the second ethical event in the narrative of Hajji Sahib’s life. It was his first business venture after completing a process of spiritual training. He was now deemed fit by his pir (teacher) to re-enter the world. The seeds of integrity and hard work from his early life had flourished into a fully-developed individual who was ready to guide and care for those around him. Bukhara restaurant was inseparable from the character development that Hajji Ahmad had undergone. It was a restaurant that was integral to his new found “hamdardi” (sense of feeling for fellow human beings) that had been cultivated during his Sufi training and which he practiced through

the “samjhake baat” (speech and words that were full of understanding) to those that began to surround him. In the narrative Hajji Sahib embodied an altruism that was central to the cultivation of Sufi ethics (Heck 2006). Bukhara restaurant was a materialization of this ethical development.

The restaurant was envisioned as a place that would cater to people from all walks of life, providing cheap, wholesome food that had nutritional as well as medicinal value. As Amin recounted Hajji Sahib’s words: *“the common man will have good food and at a cheap price... we will prepare cheap food, for everyone.”* Hajji Sahib’s quest to ensure affordable taste and quality meant that “from the first day there was a que outside, a que outside with people fighting to get in.” But Hajji Sahib was also a doctor of Unani medicine, a hakim.²¹ He was not an officially trained hakim but had cultivated his knowledge by reading and listening to trained professionals. It was his hobby and passion (shauq). He soon became known in the neighborhood for offering treatments to those in need. Importantly, “also he used to put such things inside the food so that the food was physically beneficial for people.” Bukhara restaurant became known for tasty, good quality, nutritious and healthy food. It was “faidamand” (beneficial) food for “you, yourself, for the body.” The ethics of integrity, hard work and care embodied by Hajji Sahib was materialized through the food production practices.

In the narrative of Hajji Sahib’s life, the seeds of integrity, hard work and skill were the source through which he was able to rescue the family and achieve success in Mumbai. Later a process of spiritual training and awakening gave birth to wisdom and altruism that materialized in Bukhara restaurant. The narrative structure resembles that of the Prophet Muhammad himself, who was widely known as an honest businessman before receiving revelation from God. Here the results were a restaurant through which an ethics of care and responsibility for the poor was practiced and materialized. Importantly the ‘visionary’ quality of Hajji Ahmad meant that his son and grandson attributed all developments, ideas and insights to him. Decades after he had passed away the son and grandson were always quick to point out how specific aspects of the restaurants’ layout, cooking

²¹ Unani literally meaning Greek, is an Indo-Muslim system of Indian medicine in which a balance between food items, the body of the patient and the environment is central. It is based on a theory of bodily humors (Alavi 2008).

methods and technological infrastructure had all been initiated through his “vision.” For example, the roti mixing machine was explained as his innovation. Hajji Sahib had instructed a local artisan to modify a machine originally designed to remove truck tires from the rim. Similarly, the large industrial size extractor fan in the cooking area had been commissioned by Hajji Sahib. Even the staircase in the building where the office was located was said to have been miraculously constructed by Hajji Sahib one evening with the help of just two workers, after engineers and architects had after months of trying failed. The deferral of agency to Hajji Sahib had produced a desire to ensure that the restaurant remained in the same material condition that he had envisioned. In around 2005 when the new demand for Chinese-style Indian food caught the family’s attention, they began a new store across the street rather than tamper with the menu at Bukhara.

An important practice of the ethics of care in the restaurant was explained as a commitment to keeping prices low. The restaurant operated on a mark-up of 20-25%, which the family explained was very low for the Mumbai food industry. This was the operating rule that Hajji Sahib had devised for the restaurant. The rationale was explained through a Prophetic tradition that emphasized the duty of feeding ones neighbor regardless of their religious or sectarian affiliation.

so according to his hadith (Prophetic tradition) is that as we are Muslims we have to see for our neighbor, if he is hungry we have to feed him. So in that manner we have to feed our community also, if it is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Catholic or Christian or whatever community... we have to look after all the community as one...

The prophetic tradition had emphasized the importance of feeding the less fortunate. In the restaurant this ethics of care through feeding was practiced as the provision of good quality and healthy food (faidamand) at a low price. The abstract prophetic injunction to practice universal and unrestrained care for others obtained specific and circumscribed meaning through practice. This was significant since the restaurant was not a charity organization and had amassed a significant fortune through the practice of offering low priced food to the thousands of single, male laborers in the city.

The ethical principle of care clearly had financial implications. However, these aspects were not made explicit in the narrative of the restaurants success.

The prophetically inspired sentiment of care and responsibility to the poor was expressed again in relation to the space of the restaurant and the choice of décor. At some point during the 1970's, once the popularity of Bukhara restaurant had grown significantly, there were both working class laborers as well as "hifi" (middle class) clientele frequenting the restaurant, eating at the same tables and paying the same amount per plate. A friend had at that point suggested that the restaurant undergoes a complete renovation to capitalize on the dual market. In India, a common practice was to portion a section of the restaurant as an AC-section. Literally meaning air-conditioned the AC section was a space where wealthier clientele were able to eat in relative comfort and quiet, at double to triple the rate. The reply of Hajji Sahib to the friend appealed to conscience in refuting the proposed plan.

"if we sell such expensive food that we do not sell to the poor, then how will
we show our face to Allah?"

Segregation would necessarily mean that a certain part of the restaurant, and that section of the menu would become inaccessible to many of the clientele. It threatened to introduce a divide into the restaurant that would undermine the ethics of feeding and care that was practiced through the provision of affordable quality. The establishment of Bukhara restaurant was consciously designed to emphasize a commonality amongst clientele. Here the temptation for maximizing profit through brand capitalization was rejected in favor of an ethical commitment. The narrative situated these business decisions as issues of conscience that a professed ethics of equality, simplicity and care would not allow.

The link between charging a low markup as an ethical practice with latent financial implications and the refusal to segregate the restaurant was practiced through the regular consumption of their own food. Both Amin and Muhammad tasted various dishes after both the morning and afternoon preparation sessions to approve of the taste. However, they also regularly served guests portions of the famous keema (mince), mutton bhuna (braised meat) or new Chinese style chicken, of which I was

often a recipient. For some time the practice of eating and feeding guests did not strike me as unusual. I was used to receiving tea and biscuits from informants, and this was a restaurant. I considered it an instance of the famed Indian hospitality. In Mumbai, however, many people were often averse to eating restaurant food due to suspicion about the use of un-fresh ingredients and poor quality oil. Taste of course drew people back to regular haunts but it was never without complaints about digestion and concerns for health problems. Beyond concern about whether the family actually used good quality ingredients the consumption of their own food was an ethical practice that mediated the relationship between the family, guests and customers.

This became clear one evening during a discussion between Amin and a few friends about “those people,” that did not eat their own food. The conversation had begun with a general discussion about food purity and wholesomeness and reached the rather somber conclusion that nothing was pure (shudh) any longer. Science and corporate profits had spoiled everything. The discussion prompted Amin to narrate a story of a visit to a friend’s farm where after a tour of the property they proceeded to the farmhouse. Directly beside the house was a small area that had been cordoned off. The friend explained, “this is ours.” Amin was perplexed since he had just seen many hectares of farmland which was also theirs. The friend then clarified, “no no, that is for sale, this is for us!” The story immediately drew gasps of shock and disapproval from those listening. Amin continued, “they eat only that for the whole year, the rest is for selling, imagine? that which you sell you must eat!” he exclaimed. Everyone agreed that it was a great shame that business people were selling products which they themselves did not eat. Hearing this story one of the friends commented on how rich people like the Ambani’s were probably only eating the best quality foods while they left the poor-quality products for the local markets.²² From this conversation and the response of the friends it was clear that consuming one’s own food was an ethical practice that was expected from the food industry but which was increasingly betrayed. In view of this discussion the family’s continued consumption of their own food was a

²² The Ambani family are the majority shareholders of the large Indian conglomerate, Reliance Industries Limited. One of the brothers, Mukhesh Ambani, had become infamous in the city for building a 27 story, 1 billion dollar home.

practice whereby the ethics of care and feeding in the restaurant obtained specific meaning through digestion. This was clearly not a charity establishment. Care and responsibility for the poor did not translate into handouts. Rather it was practiced through the commitment to cheap, good quality food that they too consumed. Through these practices explicit discussion of financial implications was sidelined and a notion of equality and “hamdardi” (sense of care and togetherness) was produced.

The narrative and material practices at Bukhara were a particular expression of Islam as a lived tradition. The emphasis on the authority of a Sufi shaikh and the deferral of agency to his insights and “vision” were narrative forms that had clear resonance with an Islamic discursive tradition. However, the way in which the care and responsibility of the Prophet was practiced through the service of low price, high quality food was an example of how abstract notions of unrestrained virtue obtain specificity. The restaurant was after all not a charity establishment like the many langar khana in the area that served free food to the destitute. Rather by selling good food at a low price the family had amassed a sizeable fortune that facilitated their expansion into more capital-intensive enterprises. However, financial implications of ethical practices were never expressed. At Bukhara restaurant, this particular constellation of narrative and material practice was a route through which to establish a practice of Islam as a lived tradition in the restaurant industry in Mumbai.

TAJ MAHAL: SUCCESS, SIMPLICITY AND FAME

Situated within a kilometer of Bukhara was the Taj Mahal restaurant. My first introduction to Arshad bhai, the owner of Taj Mahal restaurant, was through Amin. Given the proximity of the two restaurants they were competitors as well as acquaintances. They were each members of a well-established elite of successful restaurateurs in the old city. The narrative and material practices of Taj Mahal are a related but different expression and practice of Islam as a lived tradition. At Taj Mahal a clear Muslim identity and appeals to a blessing received from a saint, was combined with references to the families humble origins and Arshad bhai’s emphasis on his own invention and innovation. Here

an ethics of care and responsibility to clientele was explicitly linked to the financial implications of all business decisions.

Arshad bhai's narrative began with a brief history of his family's background. Portrait photographs of his father and grandfather adorned his office. He was the third generation to manage the restaurant. His family's ancestral home was in the Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. His father and grandfather had been a mere 20 years apart in age and had lived in Delhi and parts of U.P. They were poor laborers who had once owned a halwa-paratha stall (flaky flat bread served with usually bright orange sweet semolina-based dish) at the annual urs (saints day celebration) at Kaliyar Sharif in Uttarkhand. This enterprise was the only mention of their past occupations. In 1923 the two travelled to Mumbai in search of work in the city. Failing to secure employment they decided to start a small stall on the sidewalk in a market known for Islamic book-sellers. They began preparing nalli nihari (shin stew) to sell to the passing trade of laborers in the area. Following an initial success, they managed to obtain the restaurant premises directly behind their location on the pavement. Arshad bhai attributed the family's financial success in Mumbai to a spiritual blessing received at the shrine in Kaliyar Sharif. Kaliyar Sharif is a major Sufi shrine of the Chishti Order. Appealing to the blessing as a source of success, Arshad bhai's narrative also created a link with an agency beyond the self. However, this blessing received was expressed as an abstract notion of barakat obtained through the space of the shrine and the resident Sufi shaikh, rather than a process of spiritual awakening.

In the narrative of Taj Mahal an ethics of care and responsibility to clientele was articulated. However, it did not reference either Prophetic hadith or ethical events in the life of his father and grandfather. Rather Arshad bhai referred to the "lessons" that his father had emphasized as the key to success. Although not articulated in the same narrative style of discovery and transformation as at Bukhara, it was clear that the "lessons" connected the restaurant practices to the family's own humble origins and subsequent financial success.

Arshad bhai's father's first lesson was an emphasis on taste over décor. He had said ...

“son, decorations and things are not needed, that taste, the tongue, if your food is good then people will eat sitting on the footpath,”

The restaurant was originally a sidewalk establishment where food was cooked and customers served. This history was central to Arshad’s father’s resistance to the renovations that had since been made. The reported reference to the footpath indexed the family’s frugal origins and the restaurants’ humble beginnings on the very sidewalk in front of the current location. The emphasis on taste over décor was an expression of an ethics of simplicity as well as a business “lesson.” Eventually the renovations were made and an AC-section added upstairs. However, the downstairs non-AC section was kept in its original form and the prices remained affordable. This, Arshad explained, was related to his endeavor to strike a balance between heritage and innovation.

Even today, in my restaurant I have not made any hi-fi decorations, even though we were the number 1 people in India who serve beef and had a AC section! We have an AC section. And those celebrities they come and eat there. But downstairs, even today I have kept that old heritage look, so that even the one who wears a lungi can come and sit and say, “this is my restaurant!” Because what will happen if I make it ‘hi-fi,’ it will cost only 20-50 lakhs maximum, probably 30 lakhs, but you will be able to sit there and eat, and celebrities will come and eat, but that lungi wala (lungi wearer)? No.... so they have a great feeling that “I eat there were so and so reporter also comes, so and so writer comes, that actor comes, and I eat in that restaurant.” So for those people they have that feeling.

Kahlil bhai’s language of heritage and innovation clearly bears an awareness of marketing appeal. However, his eventual transformation of the restaurant and the inclusion of a separate AC section had not meant a complete rejection of his father’s lesson about the importance of taste over décor. In the narrative the memory of his father’s advice still lingers in his appeal to the subjectivity of the lungi-walla, a euphemism in India for a person of simple means. Considering the subjectivity of his

less well-off customers he suggests that they would not feel comfortable in more spectacular surroundings. In his narrative, the divided restaurant offers ordinary customers the potential for pride that comes from eating in a restaurant where the rich and famous also frequent. Arshad bhai turned the potential for discomfort into an opportunity for pride. Customers were grouped and patronized but also fellow human beings with whom the family shared a common history.

However, with the next breath Arshad was clear to relate this identification with the customer to his own financial interests.

Ok also there is another thing is that they (common man) come to my place and bring 50 rupees, in one day they come three times, so in a month that is 4500 rupees. So for me they are more important. People like you, hi-fi people they come, once a month, every 15 days, they eat for 1,000 rupees, take a parcel, but that poor thing (bichara) he comes three times, so he is very important!

Arshad was clear to discuss the financial implications of his business practices. His business relied on repeat customers. They were his bread and butter. His consideration of their experience of pride through the dual pricing strategy had financial incentives since if he had converted the entire restaurant he would lose his most regular and lucrative customers. In the narrative, there was a clear identification with poorer clientele that referenced the families own humble origins together with an articulation of the financial implications of keeping poorer clientele as repeat customers.

The second lesson, which Arshad bhai narrated, was the importance of remaining attentive to customer reactions. Unhappy customers would not return. This lesson related to the importance of consistency in taste and quality to the value of word of mouth advertising. Through this lesson customer subjectivity was considered, and the prospect of shame articulated.

...so father also used to say another very good thing that to be a success, when a customer comes, eats and leaves, whether he comes back 15 days later, a month later or two months later, but with him he brings someone,

that means that your food is good, and he has invited his friends. And that means that on every time, the exact same taste should be there! Today it is good, tomorrow it is very good, the next day light (halka)... for example you have my Nihari, “yes very tasty” then you go to your friends and tell them about it, ““yes it was very tasty!” then when you bring your friends and on that day the taste is not good, then how insulted you will feel!... “come on friend, you said it was good but there is no enjoyment. This is all nonsense, bullshit.” That is how it happens. So the most important thing to take care of is that the exact taste is maintained, constantly.

In Indian cooking traditions the ability to consistently produce the exact same flavors was considered the hall mark of a master cook. In this “lesson” attributed to his father, Arshad bhai related consistency to the importance of maintaining repeat customers and the value of word-of-mouth advertising. Interestingly the form of the narrative related a scenario between friends where a disappointing recommendation may provide an opportunity for ridicule. Referencing a particular kind of male sociality and banter, Arshad bhai was expressing an identification with his potential clientele where a lack of consistency in the food had the potential to invite ridicule and shame. For him, this would then translate into a lower likelihood of a repeat visit. Arshad bhai’s narrations of his father’s “lessons” were conveyed through an identification with the customer experience of pride and shame and the implications of their experience for his own profit and loss.

Through these two “lessons” the importance of taste, simplicity and consistency was emphasized. In Taj Mahal restaurant, the financial implications were made explicit. Good food equals happy customers which equals success. However, the importance of taste over décor clearly indexed both the families own past and the continued reliance of the restaurant on laborers in the area. Having reneged on his father’s first lesson Arshad bhai articulated the potential for a sense of pride that eating at Taj Mahal now afforded its poorer customers. Similarly, the second lesson of consistency was expressed through appeals to customer satisfaction and repeat visits as well as an identification with

potential customers as people with whom one shared the experience of shame and ridicule by friends after offering a food recommendation. Here an ethics of care and responsibility referenced the family's humble origins and an identification with clientele as fellow tasters, as the route to financial success.

ARSHAD BHAI ON PRIDE AND INNOVATION

For Arshad pride, shame and financial success were unambiguously articulated. This was also reflected in the narrative of his own life and the contributions that he had made to the development of the restaurant.

Arshad bhai was clear to explain that he had received the restaurant "ready-made." He did attribute agency for the success of the restaurant to the blessings received at the shrine and the hard work of his father and grandfather. However, a major difference to Bukhara restaurant was that the restaurant was at present not in the same condition as when he had assumed control. Arshad bhai thus supplemented his acknowledgement of others with expressions of pride at his own "innovations" and "inventions." Although having founded the restaurant, Arshad bhai was clear that his father and grandfather "did no invent much." He did claim that they were the pioneers of nalli nihari (shin stew) in Mumbai, which continues as the restaurants' signature menu item. However, it was through his own initiative that he had added a number of dishes to the menu, upgraded the restaurant, increased its visibility through advertisements and started a line of packaged spices. He was eager to point out their Internet presence, and was quick to tell me that international news media outlets had featured his store. He expressed pride through the claim that two menu items, Chicken White Biryani and Chicken Hakimi, were his original creations that other restaurants in Mumbai had since begun to copy. The expression of pride, innovation and invention was a theme running through Arshad bhai's narrative of how he became involved in the restaurant.

Arshad bhai had been involved in the restaurant from a young age. He had with "great difficulty" completed the 10th standard, but had already started working in the shop since standard 8. He recalled how he was "the richest boy in class because when I was behind the counter the money would go into

my pocket, 1 rupee, 8 ana, like that, so in the end I had 10 rupees in my pocket.” After the 10th grade he began to work in the restaurant on a full time basis. His father instructed him to learn various aspects of the business to ensure uninterrupted trade in the event of emergencies. It was during this period of apprenticeship that he developed a passion for cooking which he described as his “bara bara shauq (big, big, passion)”.

...and then I developed a passion (shauq), how did that passion develop?

When I used to go anywhere then people used to say, “ey Arshad bhai, tell me, is this made properly or not?” So I used to feel very proud, and I used to go and taste, “in here there is too little salt,” “in here do this.” So I began to feel that this was a very prestigious job that so many people would be saying, “check this...how is that?...What should we do?”

This status was confirmed one day when he received a call from a catering school to give a lecture to students even though he had “not even studied!” However the lecturer insisted,

...“areh you have practical knowledge! So come, you can come and tell ours students all about your restaurant.” So I felt very proud that look here, I am not literate, have not studied at all, but from this experience my work is being done...

Arshad bhai’ narrative of his early career in the restaurant as well as his developing passion to apprentice in the kitchen were both articulated through the allure of status and pride. He was clear that the prestige of the master chef inspired his passion for cooking which was confirmed by his feeling of pride at being invited to lecture at the catering school. Even his early childhood antics of siphoning money out of the till were articulated in relation to his status as “the richest boy in class”. The theme of pride continued through the narrative from his communication of his father’s “lessons” to his own reflections on his trajectory within the restaurant.

Upon completing his apprenticeship and slowly assuming more responsibility for the restaurant he began to introduce changes to the business. He had initiated the invention of recipes, the renovation of the restaurant, the importance of advertising and a new line of packaged spices. The process of overcoming his father's hesitation towards the renovation of the restaurant had taken between 2-3 years. His father was after all adamant that taste not decorations were the route to success. Finally, in 1986 he agreed and they added an air-conditioned mezzanine level.

Upon completion of the renovations, Arshad bhai had the idea of hosting a ribbon-cutting ceremony to announce the opening. He wanted a big film star to be at the grand opening in order to create publicity. However, he did not want to pay exorbitant fee's. A friend of his was the cousin of a major film star. An introduction was arranged. Upon meeting the film star, he found out that he was already a regular delivery customer of Taj Mahal's signature nalli nihari. The film star readily agreed to offer his services at no charge. This was the start of a developing relationship. One day the star offered Arshad bhai a recipe of his own and said "here, sell it on my name." The dish was a success and continues to be listed on the menu. The introduction of a branded menu item had produced a significant amount of publicity for the restaurant. The item had been mentioned on international news websites. I had heard people in the neighborhood ridicule the dish but it nevertheless attracted countless others. Whenever I was in the restaurant I had noticed that it was a fairly common menu item.

Another celebrity association in the restaurant was a framed painting by MF Hussain, a famous figure in Indian modernist art. Hussain had been born into a poor Muslim family in Maharashtra and was later a founding figure of The Progressive Artists Group of Bombay (PAG) during the 1940's. He courted controversy through his depictions of the great Indian epics and was eventually exiled to Qatar (Samantara). His paintings have been auctioned in London and New York for well over a million Euros each. Arshad bhai narrated the incident of the evening he met MF Hussain in the restaurant for the first time.

One day I saw him and asked, “sir how is the food?” so he replied to me, “this is the first time you are seeing me, I always come here.” So I said, “no sir, but can you write something for me?” So he said ok, “two minutes,” and he scribbled a painting. I preserved that and framed it. I have it with me, it is in the restaurant. So alhamdulillah (praise be to god), they are celebrities.

Arshad bhai narrated the incident to emphasize the caliber of his clientele but also his own advertising and marketing acumen. Importantly in the narrative of both celebrity encounters the star in question had already been regular customers. Taste preceded his advertising venture. Arshad bhai’s contribution had been to innovate through advertising in order to increase the popularity of the restaurant. This “innovation” was his contribution to the legacy of the Taj Mahal restaurant.

In the narrative of the founding and practices of Taj Mahal, Arshad does acknowledge the groundwork of his father and grandfather in giving him the restaurant “ready made.” However, he was clear to situate himself as a significant figure in its current success. Although the reputation of the signature nalli nihari clearly preceded his own influence, he had innovated and invented to extend the restaurants reputation beyond the confines of the old Muslim neighborhoods and into international news. Arshad bhai’s clear articulation of pride and claims to innovation was combined with his expression of the financial implications of his business decisions. This was evident in the manner in which both of the “lessons” of his father were explained through financial incentive. However, in addition to the financial implications were the references to the “lungi walla,” the poor laborer, and the footpath. Together these references clearly index the families own humble origins as laborers in Mumbai. Through considerations of the shame and pride of his clientele, and the identification with them, Arshad bhai articulates an ethics of care and responsibility in his own idiom.

Arshad bhai’s narrative did include clear referents from an Islamic discursive tradition. The family’s humble origins and change in fortunes were attributed to the blessing of their saint in Kaliyar Sharif. However, the ethics of care and responsibility referenced the family’s own origin and rise in fortunes rather than Prophetic tradition. More relevant to the narrative was the importance of taste,

invention and innovation as the route to financial success. However, it was clear that Taj Mahal was a Muslim owned establishment that serviced a predominantly Muslim clientele. The restaurant was indeed a very important landmark of the old Muslim neighborhoods. Arshad bhai engaged in the sale of Islamic paraphernalia and operated a charity feeding service. I argue that the narrative and material practices at Taj Mahal point to a particular expression of Islam as a lived tradition as an expression of pride, worldly gain and innovation combined with a notion of saintly blessings. The comparison between Bukhara and Taj Mahal is crucial for apprehending the different ethical subjectivities and practices of Islam as a lived tradition.

CONCLUSION

A careful consideration of the narratives and material practices of the two restaurants points to very different practices and subject positions entailed in the practice of Islam as a Lived Tradition. The restaurants competed in the same neighborhood for the same clientele and have both achieved significant levels of financial success. The reputation which ‘uncle’ expressed in the opening vignette were in fact a categorization and analysis of the different restaurant practices. “Business food” did not signify ‘un-Islamic.’ Rather it pointed to a very different expression and practice of Islam as a lived tradition.

At Bukhara restaurant the narrative of Hajji Sahib’s hard work, honesty and integrity were the foundation for his spiritual development under the tutelage of his pir (teacher). He had embodied the authority and technical skill of a master cook (ustad) and the humility and care of a Sufi shaikh. Bukhara restaurant was the materialization of these combined developments. Now food production was not merely a route to financial success but an expression of care for the laboring poor that constituted the majority of the restaurant clientele. The narrative trope wherein the seed’s of honesty and integrity flourished into a more expansive sense of care for humanity (hamdardi) and wisdom, resembled that of the Prophet Muhammad. The restaurant’s commitment to the use of good quality ingredients, masala and a low profit markup were explained as the materialization of a Prophetic injunction of care

and generosity towards the poor. The resistance to the construction of an AC section in the restaurant was related to the prospect of shame of facing one's creator with the knowledge of having denied people food for want of money. Through these practices abstract notions of care, generosity and conscience obtained specific meaning. The restaurant was not a langar khana (food distribution outlet). Bukhara was a for-profit business where the virtues of care and generosity was practiced through the preparation of low priced, good quality food. Here conscience was circumscribed in relation to responsibility and care towards existing clientele.

A key feature of the narrative was that all agency for the material form of the restaurant, the food production practices and technological achievements were attributed to Hajji Sahib. He was described as a visionary, an avid reader, a master cook and someone with a passion for engineering. He had commissioned the modification of a piece of machinery used for the service of truck tires in order to mix roti dough. He had also installed a large industrial size extractor fan in the cooking area. The deferral of agency was a factual possibility given that the restaurant was still in the same material condition that he had overseen. However, it was also a further indication of the way in which a Sufi practice of humility was narrativized. Bukhara was a restaurant inseparable from the barakat (blessings) of Hajji Sahib. His son and grandson were mere heirs. They continued to practice the particular ethical constellation of care, generosity and conscience through deferral of agency to the legacy of Hajji Sahib as well as the regular consumption of their own food. Eating the food and serving it to guests was a practice through which the particular ethics of care, generosity and conscience that was attributed to Hajji Sahib was re-embodied through ingestion.

At Taj Mahal the narrative of the restaurants' establishment and success was a balance between "heritage" and "innovation." The restaurant had been established by Arshad bhai's father and grandfather who had previously worked at a halwa-paratha stall at the annual saint's day celebration at a famous Chishti shrine in Kaliyar Sharif in Uttarkhand in North India. Arriving in Mumbai in search of employment the father and son duo were forced by circumstance to start a small road-side stall serving nalli nihari. The signature dish was a success through which they eventually obtained a proper

restaurant premises. This original success in Mumbai was attributed to good fortune, the blessings of the resident saint at Kaliyar Sharif and his fathers' "lessons." The "lessons" included the emphasis on taste over décor that referenced the family's humble origins on the sidewalk, as well as the importance of food consistency to ensure satisfied and repeat customers. The lessons emphasized the importance of taste, simplicity and consistency that pointed towards an ethics of care and responsibility towards clientele. This was referenced both in relation to the family's humble origins and financial implications rather than appeals to Prophetic tradition.

Importantly, although Arshad bhai had received the restaurant "ready made," he was quick to emphasize his own invention and innovation. He recounted his own involvement in the restaurant as a coming of age through which he had contributed to the current material form and practices of the restaurant through the invention of new dishes, the construction of a mezzanine level for an AC-section, and the employment of advertising and marketing strategies. These efforts had increased the scope of the restaurants fame and drawn a diversified and "hi-fi" clientele. Originally drawn towards his passion for cooking by the allure of the status of a master cook, he expressed great pride in his contribution to the restaurant. However, in engaging in renovations he had transgressed his father's emphasis on taste over décor. Here the expression of his own sense of pride was also the feeling through which he expressed an identification with clientele as fellow human beings with whom one shares a sense of pride. The consideration of the pride and shame of clientele was the idiom through which he relayed his father's "lessons" and was able to emphasize continuity despite the renovations. In both "lessons" his concern for clientele was combined with an explicit recognition of the financial implications of his decisions.

In each restaurant, the idiom in which the narrative was expressed and the link between the material space and restaurant practices were very different. At Bukhara the deferral of agency to Hajji Sahib and the emphasis on prophetic injunctions and a Sufi ethics of care had been materialized in the restaurant practices to produce specific meanings of care, generosity and conscience in a business context. The narrative and material practices at Bukhara was one particular expression of Islam as a

lived tradition. At Taj Mahal the attribution of agency to saintly blessings and the efforts of the father and grandfather was combined with clear expressions of pride and innovation. Arshad's fathers "lessons" identified with poorer clientele through the family's humble origins. Here an ethics of care was expressed through the consideration of clientele subjectivity and their experience of pride and shame in the restaurant. However, all decisions and restaurant practices were also explained as containing financial implications. A language of heritage and innovation, blessings and invention, and pride and shame were an articulation and materialization of Islam as a lived tradition.

This chapter has compared two restaurant narratives and practices in the old Muslim quarters of Mumbai. Abstract and universalizing notions of an 'Islamic moral economy' would fail to capture this divergence in practice and ethical subjectivity. Similarly, an over emphasis on Islam as piety through a language of humility or care would either elide Taj Mahal as an important site for the anthropology of Islam or consider its practices as evidence of fragmentation or failure. Rather by considering each restaurant as the location for the practice of Islam as a lived tradition we have seen how at Bukhara restaurant notions of Islamic morality were expressed, but also how they obtained specific meanings through practice. The language and material practices at Bukhara were a particular route through which a Sufi ethics was translated into a business context. At Taj Mahal we have considered how narrative tropes of blessings received from saintly intercession are combined with an emphasis on individual efforts of innovation and invention that have in addition to the restaurant success, also included the manufacture of Islamic paraphernalia and the establishment of a feeding scheme for the poor. In each case the owners and their descendants devised routes through which to conduct and express themselves as Muslim restaurateurs and entrepreneurs in Mumbai. The narrative and material practices of each indicate the different ethical subjectivities entailed in the practice of Islam as a lived tradition.

The next chapter is an ethnography of the practices of Bakri Id (goat festival) in this area. The chapter approaches the practice of sacrifice as a lived tradition in understanding how different

practices at different times combine in commemoration of the Islamic version of the great Abrahamic sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIVE: PERFORMING SACRIFICE:

AESTHETICS, PRICE AND CARE IN THE

PRACTICE OF QURBANI

It was a bustling Friday evening 10 days before Bakri Id (lit: goat festival). Walking through Dongri with two friends we chanced upon an increasingly common scene wherein a particularly large black and white goat was the center of attention of a group of men who stood around watching, feeding and talking about it. The man who was feeding it corncobs noticed us. We asked him whether it was his goat. He motioned towards the owner, Aziz, a quiet man in his mid-40's who together with 'uncle,' ran the ittar store in front of which we stood. The goat's name was Kuvran, but his nickname was Kurkure after the popular spicy snack.

Aziz stood aside quietly as the group of men entertained themselves with Kurkure. He said that easily 2 hours of 'time-pass' was spent like this each evening. One of the men was playing with Kurkure, pinching his hide so that he would charge or tapping his head to entice him to rise up onto his hind legs into striking position. The sight of a goat standing tall on its hind legs was one that excited onlookers and always drew gasps of delight. It was a pose associated with goat-fighting, a practice that was common in the area but somewhat frowned upon during the days preceding sacrifice. It offered a view on the goat's full size and stature which allowed for comparison to fully grown men. The other form of play was the act of pushing back against the charge of the goat with one or two hands. Whenever Kurkure chased too aggressively or became agitated, Aziz was on hand to pacify him either by touch or by summoning him away from the group with the click of his tongue. Aziz himself never engaged in these practices of play.

As we watched the scenes unfold a delivery of tea arrived in a plastic bag. The tea was poured into a metal cup. Aziz motioned to Kurkure to step forward. He then offered him some tea. Kurkure

drew a sip and pulled away. Aziz then realized that the tea was too hot for him to drink. He began to blow into the tea to cool it down, “woh thanda ho gaya” (“it is cold now”) he said as he offered it to Kurkure again. Kukuri took another sip. In between sips Aziz continued to blow on the tea to cool it down. Kurkure drank for a while then, apparently satisfied, turned to leave. Before allowing him to go Aziz grabbed a nearby cloth and wiped his mouth. Goats were after all not cup-trained.

Kurkure was 22 months old. He had been born in the alley behind the ittar (perfume) shop. His mother had been bought 4 years ago and his father sometime after. Kurkure had four siblings. One had died suddenly at a few months of age, one had been stolen and another two were sold along with their mother to someone in the area. While recounting the story, Aziz offered to show us a picture of the baby goat that had passed away. It was a camera photo of 2 tiny twin goats of 2 months old that he had saved on his phone.

Kurkure was due to be sacrificed in two weeks time. The play, care and intimacy between Aziz and Kurkure was a practice through which a particular understanding of sacrifice was produced. Performing sacrifice (qurbani) with feeling (ehsaas) was a virtue. The feeling (ehsaas) of pain and loss was the ultimate test of submitting one’s desires and attachments to the will of God. This was a highly subjective experience of sacrifice. However, the celebration of sacrifice was also a social event. Not all individuals had the time, space or inclination to raise goats from a young age. Also important were market practices of purchasing goats that included an arduous search and tough negotiation. In the neighborhoods goats were paraded, compared and cared for. A shared aesthetic appreciation for goats meant that discussions about price and admiration of the beauty of particular breeds was common.

This chapter considers the different practices during Bakri Id through the lens of a lived tradition. Different actors devised different routes through which to commemorate and celebrate the festival of sacrifice. Importantly the practice of qurbani as sacrifice extended beyond the actual moment of slaughter to include the practices of play, boasting, bargaining, and care that preceded the event. Through these practices attachment was developed and the moment of slaughter was produced as an experience of a feeling (ehsaas) of loss. Central to the practice of qurbani is the interplay between

niyat (intention) in the performance of sacrifice, aesthetic appreciation of goats and the cultivation of intimacy between humans and animals.

THE SYMBOLIC AND ETHICAL VALUE OF SACRIFICE

The study of sacrifice in anthropology has received considerable attention. The famous study by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss focused on Vedic and Hebrew textual representations of sacrifice as paradigmatic for a general theory. In their analysis sacrifice was a practice that established the spheres of the sacred and the profane as well communication between them. Sacrifice was thus a means of sustaining the social and sacred order of things (Mauss and Hubert 1964). Evans-Pritchard who wrote the foreword to the English translation of the book was influenced by Mauss and Hubert. However, he differed in his analysis of the relevance of the Semitic model. Rather he suggested that “the sacrificial role of cattle among the Nuer” was to establish a symbolic link between man and ox, clan and herd, and cow and women. This symbolic unity he suggested was the basis for understanding Nuer society (Pritchard 1953). In his analysis, he includes interesting observations of the practices of play, care and intimacy between men and cattle but did not consider them of relevance for his symbolic analysis of sacrifice.

In India, the practice of animal sacrifice is always a symbolically charged and potentially divisive event. Since at least the 19th century incidents of communal violence between Hindu’s and Muslims have revolved around the Muslim practice of animal sacrifice and cow slaughter (van der Veer 1994), (Pandey 1983). During Bakri Id the Hindu right wing discourse that imagines the Muslim as butcher is realized as individual homes and alleyways in Muslim areas become make-shift abattoirs. However as discussed in chapter 2, Muslims did not necessarily interpret slaughter as cruelty and thereby evocative of disgust. Against these public representations they emphasized the importance of Bakri Id as a practice through which Muslims made claim to the space of the city in the name of religious freedom. I was often told by informants that the practice of qurbani was a religious obligation that the state and Hindu society in general, had to accommodate. Beyond political claims was the importance of sacrifice

as a symbolic re-enactment and commemoration of the willingness of the prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, Ismail.²³ The event also marked the end of the Islamic calendar and coincided with the final day of the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

Another important symbolic meaning evident during the frenzied build up to Bakri Id was the association between masculine power and virility and goat size and strength. During Bakri Id goat size was highly valued. I was often told that in Mumbai goat size and ego were directly related. Price was often the first question asked by people admiring another person's goat. In the opening vignette Aziz's friends played with Kurkure by inciting him to charge or rise up onto his hind legs. However, unlike the symbolism of goats and rams in the Mediterranean, in Mumbai there was no distinction made between a ram and billy-goat, with the former symbolizing masculine strength and virility and the latter feminine shame (Blok 1981), (Pitt-Rivers 1965). In Mumbai, the practice of doing time-pass with goats in the buildup to the day of slaughter became part of an everyday male sociality that was evident during the remainder of the year. However, where large goats were admired and paraded I never encountered a case where someone was publicly ridiculed for owning a small goat or a cheaper breed. As we will see size and price were also important elements in producing an ethics of sacrifice as feeling (ehsaas).

The ethics of sacrifice has been addressed in both Continental philosophy and anthropology. Nietzsche famously analyzed the ethics of sacrifice in the Christian tradition through an economic lens of debits and credits in order to expose the "great ladder of religious cruelty" (Keenan 2003, 167). Similarly, Derrida argued that Abrahams willingness to sacrifice Isaac disclosed the fundamental paradox of ethics, where the ethical obligation to God necessarily entailed the betrayal of his son and wife (Derrida 2008). Both argue for the impossibility of an ethics of sacrifice. Magnus Course and Maya Mayblin suggest that a key tension exists between the anthropology and philosophy of sacrifice. Where anthropologists studied sacrifice through the logic of reciprocity and gift exchange, philosophers

²³ In the Muslim version of the Abrahamic sacrifice God orders the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Ismail (Ishmael), the son of Hagar, rather than Ishaaq (Isaac), the son of Sarah.

argued that “only unmotivated sacrifice, with no return, no future, no beyond can really be a sacrifice if we are to escape the logic of reciprocity of the gift” (Mayblin and Course 2013, 309). The volume sought to solve the impasse through attention to “how sacrifice emerges beyond the altar, and becomes embedded in the full gamut of social life” (Mayblin and Course 2013, 313). They approach sacrifice “as trope, as practice, as discourse...beyond the realm of ritual” (Mayblin and Course 2013, 313). However, I argue that this approach over determines the separation between ritual practice and so called ordinary life and simply avoids the issue of animal sacrifice denigrated by Christianity.

Dennis Keenan argues that the impossibility or *aporia* of sacrifice is the product of an entanglement between philosophy and anthropology (Keenan 2005). A central problematic in both fields hinges on the tension between sacrifice as economical (with some possibility of reward) versus true sacrifice as aneconomical (without reward or future consideration). Keenan identifies this tension as integral to the Christian theology of sacrifice as a “necessary passage through suffering and/or death...on the way to a supreme moment of transcendent truth” (Keenan 2005, 1). However, in order for that moment to occur, “sacrifice has to be beyond calculation and hope of reward, so as not to be construed as self-serving (and, therefore, not a genuine sacrifice)” (Keenan 2005, 1). This sacrifice without calculation “extends even to the simple *intention* of sacrificing” (Keenan 2005, 1) meaning that any kind of reward, such as social prestige, negates the sacrifice. He suggests that this identification of true sacrifice without calculation or reward was the basis for the biblical exhortations to sacrifice in secret where only God sees. However, since God sees, salvation is the reward. What appeared to be aneconomical sacrifice, without calculation or reward, was in fact a safeguard against “terrestrial reward” but “it comes with a celestial reward” of salvation (Keenan 2005, 2). The entanglement between philosophy and anthropology he argues is evident in the work of Mauss and Hubert who argued that “normal sacrifice was performed with an eye towards self-interest” whereas the “God who sacrifices himself gives himself irrevocably” (Keenan 2005, 18). Anthropological theories of sacrifice similarly held on to an idea of true sacrifice unattainable by ordinary beings and perfected by Jesus.

Further evidence of the entanglements between the two fields is notable in the centrality of the gift for thinking through sacrifice in both Mauss and Hubert as well as Derrida.

Recently Michael Lambek has addressed this tension regarding the possibility of sacrifice through a close consideration of ethics and exchange. Although “sacrifice is frequently analyzed with respect to exchange... exchange is but one sort of value transaction” (Lambek 2008, 150). He argues for economic value and ethical value as two realms of consideration, incommensurable to each other (Lambek 2008, 145). Economic value/price is relative value. Economic values are commensurable with each other and are a function of choice (Lambek 2008, 135). They are measurable and comparable (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). In contrast an Aristotelian notion of virtue pertains to “persons or character” (Lambek 2008, 134), whereby “ethical values” are “posited with respect to some absolute standard...which cannot be negotiated” (Lambek 2008, 135). Ethical values are incommensurable with each other and defy standards of measure (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). Determining a balance between two virtues or goals, like justice and compassion, requires the exercise of practical judgment not choice (Lambek 2008, 145). Lambek’s analysis of measurement and value points to the limits of economic discussions of sacrifice. Separating the economic and the ethical as incommensurable to each other he suggests that we consider sacrifice a practice through which ethical values are produced. Lambek’s argument is presented through a reading of the Saklava myth of sacrifice and is therefore a largely symbolic analysis of origins.

This chapter develops Lambek’s analysis through careful attention to the practices of sacrifice in Mumbai. Focusing on sacrifice as a process I draw attention to the way in which market practices of purchasing goats, the practice of raising and caring for goats, and the custom of charging young children with responsibility for the goats are all important for practicing sacrifice as a productive act through which particular ethical values of life are produced. Approaching the practices of qurbani as a lived tradition this chapter considers how aesthetic appreciation, *niyat* (intention) and human-animal intimacy entail a practice of sacrifice where ethical and economic values are intertwined and entangled

rather than incommensurable. The practice of qurbani necessitates a series of ethical judgments concerning goat size, price, breed and care toward the performance of sacrifice with feeling (ehsaas).

QURBANI AS SACRIFICE IN MUMBAI: A LIVED TRADITION

Two major festivals punctuate the Islamic calendar. The first, known in Arabic as Id-ul-Fitr marks the end of the month of fasting, Ramadan (Chapter 6). The second is Id-ul-Adha which falls in the final month of the Islamic calendar and marks the end of the Hajj pilgrimage. Id-ul-Adha commemorates the Islamic version of the great Abrahamic sacrifice. The prophet Ibrahim, according to parable was, upon God's orders willing to slaughter his son Ishmael. However, at the moment of slaughter God provided a sheep in exchange. In a symbolic re-enactment Muslims around the world remember the sacrifice by offering a sacrificial animal in commemoration of the Prophet Ibrahim's piety, love, devotion and submission to God.

Another name for Id-ul-Adha is Baqr Id, which means festival of the cow. In South Asia it has been transformed into Bakri Id, meaning goat festival. The name alludes to the popularity of goats and avoids the religiously and politically sensitive issue of cow slaughter. Bakri Id is also referred to as Qurbani-ki-Id, popularly translated as the festival of sacrifice. Qurbani is the word for sacrifice in the sub-continent. Qurbani functions variously as a verb, and noun, referring both to the act of sacrifice, as well as a particular animal as a sacrificial offering.

For most in Mumbai performing qurbani involves purchasing, caring for and finally slaughtering one's animal. Two weeks before the day of sacrifice the Deonar municipal abattoir ground is host to a large goat market. Farmers from all over India travel to Deonar with a variety of different breeds on offer. Eager customers flock to the market in search of their qurbani offering. The Deonar Id market is the largest in India, with up to 200,000 goats traded over a period of two weeks. A common practice, for those who have the time and space, is to purchase a goat at least 3 days before the day of slaughter and bring it into the home in order to develop a relationship with the animal. An unmistakable sign of

Muslim areas during this two-week period is the presence of goats and people in various stages of interaction.

Beginning at least two weeks before the festival are discussions about the upcoming goat buying. Goats are brought into housing compounds to be kept in courtyards or on apartment roof tops. Those without such facilities erect street-side bamboo constructed taurpalin covered stalls, called mandis (markets). Young children, both boys and girls, tend to and play with their goats in the evenings. Many even take off from school for the last few days before Id as the excitement of having a goat in the home builds. Men do past-time till late in the evening with their goats in the vicinity. Much of the discussion during this period of “goat-fever” revolve around one’s own goat, the goat market conditions and prices, the types of goats on offer, and the particularly “large and beautiful” goats that certain neighborhood individuals may have purchased that year.

The impetus for the purchase of goats during this period was the duty for performing sacrifice that was incumbent on all financially-able Muslims. Qurbani was an obligation ordered (hukm) by God in commemoration of the sacrifice of Ibrahim. A discursive tradition of sacrifice had been produced that demarcated the guidelines through which the obligation for sacrifice on all financially-able Muslims (sahib-e-nisab) was to be dispelled. During fieldwork I had the opportunity to study Urdu with a local Barewli maulana. During classes we read through a book of short stories and advice to Muslims entitled, ‘The Gift of Two Id’s and the Issues of Sacrifice.’ The book had been written and compiled by a Deobandi aalim, but was widely accepted by various Sunni schools of thought in Mumbai. It provides a basic outline of the rules and obligations for performing sacrifice.

Qurbani is only obligatory on individuals with a level of savings in excess of a certain value of gold or silver. These are people of sufficient financial standing (sahib-e-nisab). Wielding the knife was preferred but not necessary. The obligation of qurbani could be dispelled through another person. This is usually performed through the services of local mosques and madrasas (Muslim schools) that collect money from congregants and perform the slaughter on their behalf. Slaughter could also be performed by a family member or friend. An individual may also elect to perform qurbani on behalf of others,

usually family members. Both the delegation and assumption of the responsibility for others is enacted through the utterance of a statement of intention (niyat) through which the reward for particular acts is attributed to particular individuals.

Different animals are considered worthy of different shares of sacrifice. Large animals such as camels, cows, bulls and buffalo's are worth seven portions. This means that seven individuals may pool their resources together in performance of their sacrificial obligation. Small animals like goats and sheep were worth a single portion. In Mumbai where the price of a single goat far exceeded the cost of an entire Buffalo, the slaughter of large animals was the cheapest option for dispelling the obligation of sacrifice. The sacrifice of goats was a status symbol. It indicated wealth, a willingness to spend money in pursuit of God's orders, and was a means of showing off and partaking in the "goat-fever" that preceded the day of sacrifice. Importantly the size of a goat and its temperament and domesticity was important for cultivating the care, affection and attachment necessary for performing sacrifice with feeling (ehsaas).

However, as the obligation for sacrifice depended on financial standing it was also recommended that it was dispelled according to capacity (istita'at se). A wealthy person who chose to only slaughter large animals may be considered stingy, whereas a poor person who over spent was considered foolish. The choice of goat or bull and the cost incurred thus included an ethical judgement that negotiated between the virtue of submission to the will of God and the vice of being miserly or foolish. However, the condition of capacity (istita'at) also meant that excessive displays of spending were not so easily interpreted as pride or ostentation since the wealthy were encouraged to spend more. There was no absolute mechanism of measure to indicate when a particular practice constituted a virtue or vice. The sociality of niyat (intention) meant that people did criticize the excessive spending of particularly ostentatious goat collections as a show of pride. However, the stability and ultimate opacity of niyat (intention) for Muslim practice ensured that this criticism was somewhat limited. The practice of sacrifice ultimately inhered between an individual and God. For example, many people refrained from

expressing criticism through the explanation that the rich were obliged to spend more. Clearly price and wealth were central to the ethics of sacrifice.

The practice of sacrifice also stipulated that the animal be free from defects. This included physical disability and chipped or broken horns. It was advised that the animal be stout (*farba*) and healthy (*tandurust*). These guidelines translated into a desire to purchase large, healthy and beautiful goats. A common goat-rearing practice aimed at increasing the size of goats was castration. Khassi goats (castrated) were very common and highly valued for qurbani. However, there was some debate as to whether castration constituted a defect. The authoritative Shi'i position in Mumbai did not allow for castration. Some Sunni's also followed this position and I occasionally encountered discussion among friends about the merits of each. An authoritative Sunni position was paraphrased one evening by an informant reading from a book of *fatawa* (legal opinions):

“you see according to this fatwa making a khassi is a defect, because the testicles are cut. But because of that the goat becomes bigger and stronger because its sexual power is gone, so it grows bigger and more beautiful. Also the meat is tastier. So it means that the goat is more expensive (*mehnga*) and is better for qurbani. Allah will more easily accept our qurbani. The broken horn decreases the value of the goat so it is not allowed. The same is with an animal with only 3 working legs, it cannot be offered for qurbani.”

According to this legal opinion price was a test of defect. A castrated goat was larger, more beautiful and tastier. It thus demanded a higher market price. The increase in value meant that the sacrifice was more likely to be accepted by God. In this legal tradition, it was clear that price and aesthetic appreciation were important for the fulfillment of sacrifice. It was clear in these stipulations that the ethical value of sacrifice was intertwined with price as an economic measure.

In Mumbai and indeed much of South Asia the lived tradition of qurbani had developed from an emphasis on aesthetic appreciation, value and financial standing to include practices of care and intimacy between humans and animals. This was an interpretation that produced a notion of sacrifice

as the feeling (ehsaas) of loss upon slaughter. This understanding of sacrifice was explained to me one evening by Riaz of the JUM (chapter 2).

Riaz explained that the performance of qurbani necessitates three levels of mohabbat (love). The first level of mohabbat is for God who has given Muslims the order (hukm) to perform qurbani. He then narrated a popular Quranic verse that “the blood and meat of the animal do not reach God, only your piety reaches God.” Riaz explained that true piety was only attainable through love for God. He used the example of namaz (prayer) to explain. Namaz was an order from God, “when we follow God’s orders out of love then that is piety, but if someone is making 5 times namaz just so that other people can see him do it, then that is not real.” Here Riaz was referring to the interior level of intention (niyat) by which actions were judged. There was a possibility for disjuncture between actions and intentions. Submission to the orders of God (hukm) with love was the correct disposition. It was a means of quelling the attachments and desires of the nafs (ego).

The second level of love was for the animal being offered for qurbani. “We have to do it with mohabbat (love), with ehssaas (feeling), if you love the animal then the slaughter will be with ehssaas (feeling) and we will be reminded of the sacrifice that Ibrahim Alayhissalam (peace be upon him) was prepared to make before God sent the dumba (ram) in place of Ishmael.” Riaz raised goats for qurbani. Each year once the market at Deonar opened he bought a few small 4-5 kilogram goats which he then raised outside his home for the next year’s sacrifice. “I look after them for the whole year, we grow attached to them. When Bakri Id arrives and I have to do the qurbani, when I have the knife in my hand, then my eyes start to tear,” he explained. As we will see, tears and solemnity were an important expression of feeling (ehsaas) during the slaughter. They signaled the attachment and love for the sacrificial animal that had been cultivated through practices of care and intimacy. Tears were an outward manifestation of the correct intention (niyat) for sacrifice.

Finally the third level of mohabbat was exemplified in the manner of slaughter. Riaz narrated another common verse from the Quran that stated something to this effect, “do everything with ehsan, even if you have to kill an animal or a person, do it with ehsan.” As Riaz explained, “Ehsan is

excellence, it is doing your best, it is also mohabbat (love) for fulfilling Gods hukm (order) as best as possible. So, we make sure the area is clean, the knife is sharp, so the animal feels minimal pain. If the knife is getting stuck and the zabiha (slaughter) is not easy, then that is not acceptable.” Slaughter was an order from God. The duty upon Muslims was to overcome their attachment to the animal and perform slaughter with excellence. This was understood as reducing the animals pain but also of ensuring a certain notion of dignity for the animal about to be sacrificed.

The discursive position that Riaz articulated was different from the instructional manual which stipulated the rules and regulations of compliance. The notion of qurbani performed with feeling (ehsaas) was an instance of how Islam as a lived tradition was a terrain of production. The practices Riaz described transformed qurbani from commemoration and obligation into a practice of love, care and loss. However, as an articulation of Islam as a lived tradition there was a clear resemblance between the two discursive positions. Through an emphasis on human-animal intimacy and practices of care Riaz’s articulation of qurbani aimed at producing an experience of pain and loss meant to resemble the torment that the prophet Ibrahim had experienced upon receiving the order to sacrifice his son.

Interestingly the Barelwi maulana whom I knew was not eager to endorse this practice that linked qurbani to feeling (ehsaas) and love (mohabbat) between humans and animals. He suggested that the Muslim desire to purchase animals before the day of Id in order to care for them in homes was inspired by market prices. As the day of Id approached prices rose. Buying early was a way of saving money. He also dispelled the connection between qurbani and love as specifically related to the care for animals, “nowadays people love (mohabbat) their money, so if they give it then that is qurbani as well,” he explained. This religious leader’s reluctance to endorse the authority of Riaz’s practice stemmed from his consideration that it was not a basic necessity. The average person did not have the time, money or space to engage in this arduous process of raising goats for slaughter. However, he accepted that raising animals for qurbani was a virtuous practice that earned extra reward (sawab). He also accepted the notion of love and attachment as a pre-requisite for the practice of sacrifice.

Between these discursive positions on sacrifice were the practices in Mumbai. The relationship between Aziz and Kurkure perhaps most clearly resembled that which Riaz described. Most people did not engage in these practices of care. They delegated the actual performance of slaughter to a local mosque in Mumbai, or saved money by sending the request to a rural village area. For them parting with hard earned money to feed poor villagers was the route through which to fulfill the obligation of qurbani. Between these positions was the widespread practice of keeping a goat in the home for a few days or weeks before slaughter. This entailed visits to the Deonar market in search of a goat, practices of care in the home, boasting and comparison. Here a shared aesthetic appreciation for goats and the desire to offer the most beautiful for sacrifice produced the notion of a personal aesthetic attraction. Aesthetic value, size and price were combined with periods of care and intimacy toward the performance of qurbani with feeling (ehsaas). The subjectivity of aesthetic appreciation, the experience of feeling (ehsaas) and the ultimate privacy of niyat (intention) produced different routes towards the fulfillment of the obligation to sacrifice.

AN ETYMOLOGY OF QURBANI: CULTIVATING LOVE IN THE PURSUIT OF 'CLOSENESS'

One evening at Bukhara restaurant (Chapter 4) I met with Amin's friend Taariq. Taariq had attended Aligarh University as a major in the natural sciences but had since pursued his passion for language. He was proficient in Hindi, English, Urdu, Arabic and Farsi and had been working as a freelance translator in Mumbai for the past 20 years. Taariq explained that the etymology of the word qurbani was key to understanding the importance of aesthetics, appreciation, care and love (mohabbat).

Taariq began his lesson on the etymology of qurbani by explaining the Arabic system of roots through which multiple words could be derived. In this case, the root of qurban was q-r-b, pronounced qaraba. From that derived qurb, meaning 'close', qarib meaning 'he who is close' and qurbat meaning 'closeness.' He then explained that the addition of the suffix, 'aan' indicated double. So by implication 'qurbaan' had the meaning of 'double close.' Qurbani however was not an Arabic word. It was an Urdu

word that he said meant 'of closeness.' The word was best explained through example. He then offered the following definition of qurbani as, "allah ki qurbat haasil karne keliye" meaning "to sacrifice or offer in order to seek nearness or proximity to Allah." The emphasis on sacrifice was important since namaz (prayer) and other religious acts (nek kaam) were also qurbat but were not qurban since they did not entail the offering of valuable things. Aleem then refined the definition once more, "spending on things that are valuable and valued in ones own view in the aim (maqsad) of seeking proximity and nearness to Allah." This final definition brought us back to the sense of "double closeness." The "closeness" to the offering which was then given up and sacrificed in order to seek "closeness" to God. Aleem then added a series of adjectives which were contained in his English use of valuable and valued, namely beloved (pyaari), value (qadar), like (pasand) and desired (chahna).

Taariq was a trained linguist. His etymological explanation resonated with Riaz and others' explanation of the meaning of qurbani as sacrifice that emphasized mohabbat (worldly love) as a pre-requisite. Often this explanation was followed with reference to the Quranic verse wherein God had ordered the Prophet Ibrahim to make an offering of that which was most beloved to him, his "sab se pyaari cheez" (most beloved things). Love (mohabbat) and value (qadar) was the key through which sacrifice with feeling (ehsaas) was produced. The etymological emphasis on subjective factors of desire and value situated the ultimate proof of performance in the experience of an individual. Feeling, and taqwa (piety) had outward manifestations but were mere signs of feeling (ehsaas) and love, known only between the individual and God. The subjective aspects of feeling and desire coincided with the opacity of niyat (intention) in locating the proof of compliance in an interior sphere of the self.

Unlike the arguments of the Barewli maulana this desire for cultivating worldly love was especially reserved for animals who were brought into the home, "treating them as children" in order to develop a relationship. The comparison with children referred to the practices of care and served as a metaphor for the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. However it also related to a particular conception of human-animal relations. In Islamic discourse a hierarchy of beings distinguished animals and plants from humans through the formers' lack of a rational faculty (Foltz

2006, 15-17). However, since all categories of creation were under the authority of God, an animals lack of reason did not translate into mere domination. Rather through comparison, animals were considered much like children. Adeem, a neighborhood friend, explained one day that they were “be zaban (without language), bad dimagh (bad mind) and na samaj (no understanding).” Goats could not speak, think or understand, “they are simple animals, they don’t have the ability to choose, to decide what is right or not.” The task of caring for animals was to ensure that they were comfortable, fed, healthy and obedient. This hierarchy of being thus translated into a further metaphor with children who learned habits through repetition, instruction and care.

However, raising animals was also considered a practice through which ethical reflections on one’s own life were obtained. As many informants explained, raising animals was considered a prophetic precedent and ethical practice through which it was said, “you can learn everything about life by looking after goats, watching them, caring for them, feeding them.” This was explained through the importance of care and patience necessary for raising goats. It was often emphasized that the pastoral practices were an example of the Prophet Muhammad, Jesus and Abraham. Animals were creations of God, each with an individual consciousness, set of habits and unique personality. Becoming attuned to those habits was an ethical practice. This required raising one’s animals with *tawajjuh* (concentration/attention/focus) such that feelings between the person and goat developed. Through these practices the final sacrifice of *qurbani* entailed the slaughter of an animal as well as the sacrifice of one’s own sentiments, attachments and companions in adherence to God’s orders.

This discursive understanding of sacrifice entailed the loss of something that was loved (*pyaari*), valued (*qadar*), liked (*pasand*) and desired (*chahna*). Only the loss of something that was subjectively desired, liked or loved could translate into the subjectivity of feeling (*ehsaas*) required for the fulfillment of *qurbani* (sacrifice). Together with the opacity and centrality of *niyat* (intention) for the fulfillment of sacrifice, this produced a notion of compliance as an internal experience. The cultivation of feeling (*ehsaas*) through sacrifice entailed a series of practices through which a subjective and personal sense of attachment could be developed. However, most people did not raise goats from

birth. For them the days or weeks preceding the day of slaughter were crucial for cultivating the care, love and appreciation for the sacrificial animal. Here, aesthetic appreciation, time and the expenditure of hard-earned money was an important step towards the performance of sacrifice with feeling.

FINDING THE PERFECT GOAT: TIME, BEAUTY AND BUDGET

As I approached, most of the goats that marked the streets of Mumbai had been sourced from the Deonar abattoir grounds. As one informant explained, Deonar was really a large “goat –fair.” The market operated for 24 hours per day, with farmers sleeping in the pens with their goats. Huge amounts of cash transactions were conducted. The atmosphere at Deonar was festive and electric. Between the goat stalls were women selling goat-food, and entrepreneurs offering garlands and necklaces as goat decorations. Food stands sold a variety of popular snacks and sweets. Larger stalls served full meals of dal gosht (lentils cooked with meat) and biryani. The event was so popular that I met two friends that had travelled from Pune, a nearby city about 2 hours away, to revel in the atmosphere and admire the goats on offer. Others from across Mumbai also came just “for the fun of it.” Much of the excitement stemmed from the widespread aesthetic appreciation amongst the Muslim community for goats.²⁴

Many admired the size, color, stature, head shape and even facial markings of various goats. Certain breeders were famous for bringing prize goats to market. That year a particularly well-known breeder from Gopal was quoting 12.5 lakhs for his prize goat (18,000USD). Groups of mostly male friends as well as whole families wandered the muddled lanes taking pictures of particular goats and posing with them. However, in addition to this shared code of aesthetic value was the actual practice of finding, negotiating for, and purchasing a qurbani offering. Here aesthetic appreciation was about a balance between personal attraction and individual budget. There was virtue in spending hard-earned money on sacrifice but not in overpaying or exceeding one’s budget. Finding a qurbani goat therefore

²⁴ In India Muslims are sometimes ridiculed as goat-lovers.

involved an investment of time and effort often late into the night in search of the most beautiful goat that one could afford.

One afternoon I accompanied Hussein, Javid and Zia to Deonar. Hussein was a self-proclaimed “goat-enthusiast” who had turned his passion for goats into a business and had begun raising goats on his families property in rural Maharashtra. Javid and Zia were friends who had requested Hussain to accompany them as a second opinion on goat health and to act as a bargaining partner. It happened to be three days before the Id celebration and the last Sunday before Id. The market was crowded. Traffic was backed up for at least a kilometer leading towards the area.

Inside Deonar thousands of people streamed up and down muddied lanes. Some had goats in tow having completed a successful deal, while others were still searching. By the time Hussein and I arrived Javid had just concluded a deal for 25,500 rupees (\$US 360) and was heading to a nearby ATM to withdraw the cash. He had purchased a pure white Rajasthani goat. He explained that it was his ‘prize’ goat. He intended to purchase one more medium-size goat for under 20,000 rupees (\$US 300). Zia also intended to purchase one prize goat and one medium-size goat. He had however not yet found one that both appealed to him aesthetically and matched his budget. Zia complained that over enthusiastic buyers were keeping the market prices high. “They doing this thing for Allah, they are giving it to Allah, so they think ok and they pay.” He however, was also a self-proclaimed “goat enthusiast” who raised goats on a small land holding near Viral (on the outskirts of Mumbai). He thus felt that he had a better sense of the fair market price. Clearly the judgement of how much to spend was an important component of purchasing a sacrificial goat. There was no virtue in over-paying.

Both Zia and Javid were searching for a white goat, preferably of Indore breed. Zia explained that “in all of India the most beautiful goat is from Indore, that is in Madhya Pradesh. It has a pure white skin.” This was of course a very commonly held assessment. Tales of large white horse-size Indore goats abounded. However not any white goat would do. The particular goat had to capture the attention and attraction of the buyer. Its figure, stance and even facial features were aspects that may sway an unsuspecting buyer. As I followed the friends through the market they occasionally stopped

at trading pens holding 50-60 white goats each. The friends would stop at each pen, but only one or two would catch their attention. The three would confer with each other and then approach the farmer for a quote. That day they were receiving quotations of 30,000 rupees and upwards. Hussein and Zia valued the goats at a between 18-22 thousand.²⁵ After an entire round of the market easily three to four hours had passed without luck.

The friends continued to complain that the market was “tight” and was being buoyed by the overzealous crowds. Zia was tense and absorbed by the search. Javid, had already found his first goat so was more at ease. He described to me the satisfaction of finally finding a goat– “it makes you happy, but not a normal happiness, a special happiness. It means that you can now fulfill your qurbani.” Javid had been at Deonar for 14 hours the day before and since 12pm on that day, trudging through the famous Deonar sludge. It was already 8pm which meant that it had been a total of 22 hours and counting. Zia had been coming every night for the past 5 nights and not yet found a single goat. Noticing my amazement at the time spent in the market, Javid explained - “you see, you have to find the perfect goat, the one that you are attracted to, that you find beautiful but also that you can afford.” This personal sense of value (qadar) and desire (chahna) exceeded the widely shared codes of aesthetic evaluation. The market practice entailed choosing a goat that instantly captured once personal sense of aesthetic appreciation and was within budget. The time and effort expended were part of the process of building knowledge of the market towards this exercise of judgement. The final purchase was an ethical judgement that made the fulfilment of the obligation to sacrifice possible. The satisfaction that Javid described was the feeling of spending hard earned money on an object of beauty and value with the intention (niyat) of performing sacrifice.

After the goat was purchased, “We like to take the goat home for at least 2-3 days to keep in the building, for the children to look after, feed, play with. It’s part of the excitement of it. If we just buy

²⁵ This I later found out was a common formula for market negotiations. A father of two who had just successfully completed his purchase and mistook my interest in his goats for a foreigner asking for advice, advised me to divide the first price in 2 and then add 2-4 thousand rupees.

the goat the day before there will be nothing. We want to have some attachment to the animal before qurbani.” This practice was aimed at ensuring that the day of sacrifice was not simply a day of celebration. Javid explained that it was normal for children to cry on Bakri Id because they “get very attached to the goats very quickly. But even adults!” he said as he pointed towards Zia who often cried when he slaughtered goats which he had raised himself. The stories of grown adults shedding tears on qurbani were common. The expression of grief and sadness stemmed from the cultivation of a relationship with the goat before slaughter and was clearly most intense for those who raised the animal from a young age. However, for others the process began in the market where the desire to perform qurbani with feeling (ehsaas) entailed the expenditure of time and money on an object of subjective aesthetic value.

Through feeling (ehsaas), qurbani as an order of God (hukm) became an ethical practice of reflection on the ephemeral nature of material and social relations. As an experience, it was likely to be expressed through tears or solemnity but never fully captured by these expressions. The feeling (ehsaas) of sacrifice (qurbani) was a subjective experience that like niyat (intention) was ultimately inaccessible to others. Importantly the cultivation of this feeling, the aesthetic appreciation of Muslims towards goats, and the lessons regarding the ephemerality of life began as a young child with the responsibility for taking care of the goats before slaughter.

CHILDREN: PRACTICES OF CARE AND THE PEDAGOGY OF SACRIFICE

Children, both boys and girls, were an important part of the preparation for qurbani. As Javid explained, the practice was directly related to a desire for children to partake in the pedagogy of sacrifice. They spent hours in the days before Bakri Id playing with the goats, feeding them and taking care of them. As one informant described his own children, “nowadays (during the build-up to Bakri Id) the children are so busy with the goats that you can’t even call them to eat, they don’t even feel hungry. They feed them, talk to them also, full conversations! Whole day. Then when qurbani comes they are all inside sleeping.” The initial excitement, care and fun followed by slaughter and sadness

was the process through which the meaning of qurbani as the willingness to forego an object of care and love (mohabbat) was produced. For children, this was a pedagogical process through which the ephemerality of material and social life was transmitted.

Children interacted with their goats as pets. They fed them, scolded them, named them, petted them and took them on walks around the neighborhood to give them exercise. The association of goats and pets extended beyond qurbani as throughout the year certain households kept small breeds of goats in lieu of dogs. On my first fieldwork during Bakri Id I chanced upon a particular apartment building in front of which were four goats and four young girls of around 10 years of age in a state of great excitement. It was already after 11pm on a weeknight, two nights before Id. The most vocal amongst them was scolding a large white Madhya Pradesh breed of goat for not eating. The moment I drew my camera I caught their attention and was called inside for a tour. They began introducing me to their goats, each of whom they had named. Included were a *stawny* and a *tawny*. They had adorned the goats with small decorations. The fourth goat was not theirs so they were not feeding it, but they had named it anyway. The girls possessed a vast knowledge of goat breeds which they were eager to exhibit as they boasted about how they too had visited the Deonar goat market with their fathers. It was clear that in a short space of time, through constant attention to their goats, the girls had developed a sense of attachment.

The following year I returned to their building on the night before Id. This time the atmosphere was far more subdued. I stood beside some onlookers viewing the goats. A few adult men were arranging logistics for the slaughter the next morning. The most talkative girl from the previous year recognized me and recalled that I was “writing a book on goats.” She became very excited, invited me inside the gated area and ran indoors to call her friend. Before she ran off I asked her what her goats’ names were this year but she explained that their parents had instructed them not to name them. “They will have to go soon,” she said. She hurried inside and emerged moments later with another girl whom I also recognized from the previous year. The two then proceeded to give me a tour of their favorite goats. Most of the goats were sitting down. For the girls that was a sign that they were already

aware of their fate, “see they are very sad today, our parents tell us they can see the knife in their eyes, they know, tomorrow they will go to heaven.” On that somewhat somber note I enquired about whether they were planning to watch the proceedings the next morning, one girl replied, “yes we watch but not for our goats, when our goats are being done then we go inside.” As one man had previously explained, “we tell the children that these are jannati (belonging to heaven) goats, they are not for them to keep.” The night before Id was far less buoyant and festive. The impending slaughter had been explained to the girls through an Islamic tradition of death and afterlife. However, these narratives though important did not simply alleviate the feeling of loss and sadness. Importantly, the girls had already developed a personal relationship with their family’s goats that they could not bear to watch them undergo the general fate.

The companionship that children developed was evident in another conversation with a group of cousins of between 6 and 12 years of age as they tended to their goats. As we spoke the conversation alternated between their inquisitiveness about me and their desire to show me their goats, “see this one, see how it sleeps,” one boy pointed out. I was unsure as to what he was asking me to see, “we sleep inside on our side, see how he sleeps, like this,” he said, showing me how they wrap their feet under themselves. Another boy pointed to another two goats who were lying side by side with their heads rested against each other, “and those two, they are brothers,” he said. The children were eager to know if I had pets and were disappointed to hear that I did not. Between them they had a cat, a goldfish and a parrot. As our conversation entered a lull and I was preparing to greet them farewell the young girl, in a rather sombre tone exclaimed, “kal is mandi ki yaad ayegi” (tomorrow the memory of this will come) I didn’t catch her phrase at first so she elaborated, “tomorrow it will all be gone, then the goats, the mandi, we will remember this time.”

Children experienced qurbani as a process, from practices of care and fun to sadness and loss. Their parents offered them explanations of their goats transported to heaven. This may have eased the experience of slaughter but clearly did not offer immediate respite from grief. Transportation to heaven was a common explanation children were offered regarding the death of loved ones and family

members. Following Lambek we may consider sacrifice as one means through which symbolic values of heaven, an afterlife or God are produced. However, with qurbani it was not the moment of sacrifice that was most pertinent but rather the process of care, attachment and loss. The children reflected on the similarities and differences between themselves and their temporary pets. The young boy who analyzed the sleeping habits compared them to himself. The other who directed me to look at the two brother goats lying side by side was clearly pointing to the affection between the two goats, like the affection expected between human brothers. Through practices of play and care the children were developing affection and intimacy with their goats. Through the process of care, attachment and loss the ephemeral nature of material and social relations was produced. Nothing belonged to them. Everything ended in heaven. The importance of this practice of qurbani for the production of reflections on detachment and the instability of life were most evident in the relationship between Aziz and Kurkure.

SACRIFICE: COMPANIONSHIP, LOVE AND LOSS

Two days before Id I was on my way to visit Aziz and Kurkure. Given the surge of activity and goats on the streets that evening I nearly walked directly past the Ittar store, only for Aziz to call me back. "Where is Kurkure?" I asked, expecting to see him. Aziz replied somberly, "after one more day there is no more Kurkure." He pointed to his right where Kurkure was being tended by some of the regulars. I was taken aback by his response and didn't have an eloquent reply so rather crudely asked him if he was already becoming a bit sad, "well, it's been two years," he replied. The discussion changed with me telling him about my previous day's experiences and asking about his ittar business. Suddenly Kurkure started bleating. Aziz immediately turned to look and said that he was feeling warm. As we chatted some tea arrived. As was the custom some was kept aside. This time Aziz allowed it to cool properly before feeding him. He went over to give Kurkure the tea. As Aziz walked over Kurkure stood up. A friend handed him some crackers. He fed Kurkure some tea and a few crackers, keeping some for himself.

The approach of Bakri Id was beginning to weigh on Aziz as the loss of a companion. During the past two years Aziz had cared for Kurkure, paying careful attention to both his diet and behavior. Aziz shared tea and biscuits with Kurkure daily. On a few occasions I had seen him scolding Kurkure for chewing on something inappropriate and called him towards him for a caress when he became over excited. Care included affection and reprimand. Kurkure had become an important part of Aziz's everyday life.

The next night I was again at Aziz's store. Many in the area were busy preparing their knives for the next morning. The atmosphere was palpably less buoyant than the previous days. When I arrived, Aziz was alone in the shop sitting with his arm around Kurkure in a warm embrace, stroking his neck. After I started speaking to Aziz, Kurkure began misbehaving by attempting to chew the cardboard on the shop counter. Aziz reprimanded him and took him over to the ledge a few meters away. Many who passed mentioned that it was Kurkure's last day. Aziz was clearly not happy at having to hear this repeatedly, and shook his head each time. He seemed pensive.

That evening 'uncle' was not in the store because he had gone to the Deonar goat market with a group of friends to experience the final day. Sitting at the store, his son Imraan arrived. He was a 26-year-old advertising professional in Andheri. He did not enjoy the practice of raising goats, "this whole thing is too much, it's too stressful at the end. I had one goat a few years back, but it was too much, I decided then never to do it again." On that occasion, he was unable to wield the knife nor be in the vicinity of the home during slaughter. He also refused to eat the meat until a few days later when the memory of the animal had subsided and when the meat had been mixed with other mutton and was no longer identifiable. Ahmed's sentiment testified to the torment that sacrifice could entail and that he was not prepared to undergo. His decision to change his practice of qurbani and to not consume the meat until after it had been mixed was an indication of the practice of Islam as a lived tradition where individuals devised different routes through which to fulfill the obligation of sacrifice. He did not doubt the practice and obligation to perform qurbani as an order from God. Rather he felt that the torment involved in this particular kind of practice was more than he could endure.

The three of us spent the final evening in the store with Kurkure, occasionally joined by a friend of theirs or two. Soon it was 1am. The car returned from Deonar. It was a large Landrover with 10 people in it. As it arrived the passenger window was rolled down and the news announced. Their father had bought two baby sheep. There was much excitement as the sheep were offloaded. They were 3 months old and had cost 3,000 rupees each. Ahmed, though annoyed, understood that his father had purchased the goats to fill the void that the slaughter of Kurkure was going to leave behind.

Uncle's trip to Deonar and his return with replacement goats point not simply to the substitutability of animals as conduits for human practice. Rather we need to understand the way in which purchasing goats at a young age included the intention (niyat) to raise them with care and love and to develop a relationship in the aim of ultimately sacrificing them to God. This continuous process of cultivating love, attachment and loss was an ethical practice through which reflections on the ultimate instability and impermanence of life were produced.

THE SLAUGHTER: TOTAL SURRENDER

On the day of Id slaughter usually began after the morning prayers. Some mosques performed the prayers upon daybreak to avoid having to perform slaughter in the searing midday heat. After the prayers, I met Ahmed outside the family's apartment building and followed him upstairs. The family lived on the third floor of an old chawl building. At one end of each floor were two toilets and a shared washing area where the slaughter was going to take place. There were four goats that were going to be slaughtered on the third floor that day.

Arriving upstairs, Aziz informed us of a problem in the day's proceedings. The kasai (laborer who assists with skinning, and cutting), whom he had contracted the day before and agreed on a price of 2,000 rupees, had arrived in the morning, taken one look at Kurkure and decided that he would not be able to do the work since Kurkure was too large. Kasai's charged more to chop, skin and clean larger goats. However, they were also known to threaten to leave a job under the pretext that the goat was larger than they had expected. Aziz was not willing to negotiate. The kasai working on the floor above

agreed to assist with Kurkure once his work was completed. The delay would eventually cost two hours during which he was becoming impatient. He wanted the slaughter be over as quickly as possible. While waiting, he was mostly quiet, periodically returning to Kurkure's side to feed him by hand and stroke him affectionately.

Eventually, as the morning drew on and the work upstairs was completed, the kasai announced that he was ready to proceed with the slaughter of Kurkure. There was a discussion about who would hold Kurkure down while the qurbani was performed. Ahmed flat out refused. He could not even stand to be in the building. He left with his friend for a smoke outside, saying that he would be back in half an hour. Ahmed's two brothers agreed to hold Kurkure with the help of the kasai. Aziz said he was unable to do it, and would not do the zabiha (slaughter) either. 'Uncle' was going to do the slaughter. Aziz, visibly tense, posed with Kurkure one last time as his brothers and I took pictures. He removed Kurkure's decorative collar and passed him onto the brothers to lead him towards the slaughter area. Aziz urged me forward but said that he could not watch. I stepped forward for a better view. Aziz paced nervously behind me.

Kurkure was dropped to the ground and held firmly in place by the brothers. One grabbed the hind legs and placed pressure on the body. The other grabbed the front legs and did the same. The kasai grabbed Kurkure's head, pulled it back and twisted it to the side to reveal the neck and make the skin taut. This was always done when slaughtering to ensure that the knife was able to penetrate with ease. Kurkure bleated and writhed. Aziz was tense, "Ek dam zabiha karo," (slaughter quickly, in one go) he shouted, as he came over my shoulder to see what was taking so long. The brothers and the kasai increased their grip and 'uncle' laid the knife on Kurkure, but he did not apply enough pressure and the knife was not as sharp as it should have been, so an incision was not made. Kurkure struggled and bleated again. "Ek dum maro," (strike now, quickly) Aziz again cried out as he paced behind me. 'Uncle' firmed his grip and recited the takbir (Allahu akbar) again, loudly, and this time the incision was clean and deep. The blood gushed forth. He stepped back to fetch the water which was nearby. Water was poured over the neck to assist the blood-flow and to reveal the arteries, veins and wind-pipe. The

kasai took the knife and made sure that all veins and arteries had been severed. This ensured the quickest release of blood from the body. The brothers continued to hold on as Kurkure went through his final convulsions. With the slaughter complete Kurkure was no more. Aziz immediately turned to leave the building.

Through Aziz we see how the virtue of performing sacrifice (qurbani) with feeling (ehsaas) derived its meaning and ethical impetus from the human-animal relationship of companionship before slaughter. However, in seeking to cultivate a particular practice of qurbani, Aziz devised his own rules. He was not prepared to wield the knife, assist in the slaughter of Kurkure nor eat the meat. Intimacy, care and affection had precluded his direct involvement in slaughter or consumption of the meat. Both slaughter and consumption were explicitly advised. The common practice was to prepare the liver for breakfast, and then have a more elaborate dish of biryani for dinner. However for Aziz the relationship of care and companionship meant that the practice of qurbani involved handing over permission to slaughter to a close relative and desisting from the consumption of the meat. The intention (niyat) to sacrifice was sufficient for the fulfillment of the act. Aziz partook in the willingness to let go of worldly attachments in favor of an order (hukm) by God through a slightly different path. Although he was clearly solemn, pensive and ultimately concerned with the swiftness of the slaughter, he did not shed tears.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered the different practices of qurbani in Mumbai towards an understanding of Islam as a lived tradition. The practice of qurbani was not uniform. There were different routes through which the obligation to perform qurbani was fulfilled. Different individuals of different ages practiced qurbani in different ways. Throughout these practices was a resemblance of the desire to commemorate the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son in lieu of God's orders.

An Islamic discursive tradition outlining the rules and obligations of qurbani points to the importance of financial calculation and aesthetic value. Qurbani was only obligatory on financially able Muslims and was supposed to be dispelled according to capacity. There was thus a minimum level above which qurbani was performed, but no absolute maximum. For the individual concerned over-spending presented the possibility for ostentation, pride and foolishness and under-spending a sign of miserliness. The choice of how much to spend thus entailed an ethical judgment that accounted for individual wealth levels, and that struck a balance between ostentation and stinginess. However, another aspect of the discursive tradition of qurbani was the importance of defect-free, healthy and beautiful animals. Castration, a rearing practice which contributed to goat size, taste and market price was considered acceptable. Price was thus an indication of a shared code of aesthetic value. Elements of measure and comparison in sacrifice were common and clearly central to market practices, but ultimately limited through the subjective stipulation of financial capacity. The rich were allowed to spend more than the poor. Measure and comparison between individuals was ultimately not a test of the worth of sacrifice. This practice of qurbani emphasized compliance with God's orders (hukm) from within one's individual financial position in commemoration of the sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim.

In Mumbai and much of South Asia a development of this tradition emphasized the importance of performing qurbani (sacrifice) with feeling (ehsaas). This entailed offering an object of personal attachment, value and love toward the experience of pain and loss. The cultivation of human-animal intimacy was central to this production of sacrifice. Rearing animals was expressed as a Prophetic precedent of Muhammad, Jesus and Abraham. Animals were compared to children in their need for attentive care and guidance. Raising animals with concentration, attention and care was important for the cultivation of patience. This practice of sacrifice sought to reproduce the pain that the Prophet Ibrahim was prepared to undergo in his readiness to sacrifice his own son. This particular tradition of sacrifice meant that it was common for Muslims to purchase young goats and care for them for up to three years before offering qurbani. Tears and solemnity were outward expression of the feeling (ehsaas) of sacrifice.

However, most people did not raise goats from a young age. Rather they endeavored to purchase a goat at the Deonar market a few days in advance in order to bring it into the home to care for and develop a relationship. In the market the importance of aesthetic appreciation was central. A shared code of aesthetic value meant that many Muslims arrived at the market to admire the goats on offer. However, for those practicing qurbani the importance of personal attachment and value translated into a desire to purchase a goat that appealed to a personal sense of aesthetic appreciation. The goat purchased had to both capture the attention of the buyer and be affordable. Market practices included hours spent in search of a beautiful goat at the right price. In the market a personal aesthetic appreciation was an important measure of value through which qurbani with feeling was produced. Purchasing a goat that appealed to a subjective sense of beauty and was within budget entailed an ethical judgement through which the practice of qurbani was fulfilled.

The practice of purchasing goats ahead of slaughter was especially aimed at children who were tasked with the responsibility to care for and feed their goats. The children treated their goats as temporary pets. They named, fed and played with them. This practice of care was a pedagogical process through which they reflected on the differences and similarities between humans and animals. It was also arguably the means through which the widespread aesthetic appreciation for goats was produced. For the children, the inevitability of the slaughter was the end-point of a process through which they were taught about the ephemeral nature of this world, and the importance of an afterlife.

Through these different practices a particular set of meanings of qurbani were produced. Submission to the orders of God (hukm), the fulfillment of obligation and the commemoration of the sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim were all important. For people like Aziz and Riaz the process from care and attachment to slaughter produced qurbani as a feeling (ehsaas) of loss and sorrow. Like the children tasked to care for their goats, the slaughter was a moment through which reflections on the ephemerality of life was produced.

The emphasis on piety as love, through the feeling of loss, situated the fulfillment of qurbani in an interior realm. Like the niyat (intention) to perform qurbani, feeling (ehsaas) was not fully captured

by external expressions of tears and sadness. Together with market practices that emphasized the importance of subjective aesthetic appreciation, sacrifice (qurbani) as feeling (ehsaas) was produced as an experience. Measurable elements of qurbani such as price, goat size and a shared code of aesthetic appreciation were not incommensurable with the ethical value of sacrifice. Rather these elements of measure were intertwined with immeasurable aspects of individual aesthetic appreciation, intimacy and feeling (ehsaas). Through ethical judgement practitioners devised a route through which to perform the sacrifice, of an object of ethical and economic value, with feeling. The economics and ethics of sacrifice were not incommensurable in the practice of qurbani.

This chapter has sought to illuminate how the Muslim festival of sacrifice entails a range of practices all aimed at the fulfillment of Gods orders (hukm) to commemorate the great sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim. However different practices of qurbani point to different routes through which the obligation was fulfilled. The next chapter considers the festival of Ramadan to consider how a different ethical dispositions, times and places produce different routes through which the blessings (barakat) of the month are obtained.

CHAPTER SIX: FASTING AND FEASTING

DURING RAMADAN IN MUMBAI

Ramadan in Mumbai is famous for the varieties of foods on offer. Minara Masjid lane, as it is commonly known, is the locus for a host of food stalls that offer festive delicacies including titar (partridge), nalli nihari (spicy shin stew), Hyderabadi chicken (deep-fried tandoori chicken), haleem (thick meat and wheat broth), malpua (deep-fried pancake served with cream) to the thousands of revelers that descend on the area each evening after sun down. As the month draws on so the crowds increase. Finally during the last 10 days the streets are host to a constant throng of crowds as the markets extend across various of the main streets and by lanes, and Muslims from across the city visit each evening in search of Eid clothing and to enjoy the specialty foods only available during the month.

Visiting the area in the evenings it is hard not to be drawn in to the tangible excitement that it exudes. The sights, smells, sounds and crowds produce a manic atmosphere that tantalizes the taste buds, seduces the olfactory senses and assaults the eardrums. The daytime cannot be more clearly marked by absence. Many of the same stores that remains open until well after midnight do not re-open until midday. The daytime streets are relatively quiet for a normally very busy area, and the tired faces and parched mouths contribute a subdued atmosphere. The dull morning and afternoon lull are punctuated around 2 hours before the evening meal (iftar) when roadside stalls begin trading in popular iftar snacks such as cut fruit, fried meat and vegetable cutlets. After the fast is broken time is spent rejuvenating and rehydrating before a late evening meal after 10pm, which is when the streets begin to come to life. The time of the evening meal usually coincides with the end of the evening prayers even for those who do not attend.

The rhythms of activity in the city during the month are clearly marked by feasting and fasting that has long characterized various forms of religious abstinence. The observations described are common throughout the Muslim-majority world during Ramadan. To an observer the stark contrasts

may appear strange. If Ramadan is about prayer and abstinence, why is there so much consumption involved? However, as we will see this observation of an apparent disjuncture is also perceived by members within the community. For example, religious leaders often castigate congregations for excessive consumption and festivity during the month at the expense of more pious pursuits. As an anthropologist, to posit the conjunction of abstinence and consumption as a contradiction is to choose sides regarding the practice of Ramadan. This chapter approaches the ongoing process of consumption and abstinence during Ramadan as a practice of Islam as a lived tradition. Different individuals at different times devised different routes through which to participate in the month.

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RAMADAN

Ethnographies of Ramadan have emphasized it as a sacred time marked by heightened practices of piety, adherence to norms and altered behavior. Two important ethnographies have been conducted by Sarah Tobin in Jordan and Samuli Schielke in Egypt.

Tobin argues that an “Islamic” framework of morality and a “cultural” one is in tension throughout the year. She points to the ongoing debates about appropriate dress, music and alcohol consumption. However, during Ramadan the “Islamic” framework “eclipses another more diverse ‘cultural’ framework” (Tobin 2013, 292). During the month, as contentious forms of consumption are prohibited, other forms of consumption emerge through which the “practices associated with Ramadan are embedded and entrenched in the social and cultural landscapes” (Tobin 2013, 314). Of those she noted an increased expenditure on food and clothing and less on travel and music. Novel items noted were “Ramadan lights” and “Ramadan decorations” (Tobin 2013, 305). For Tobin, Ramadan was a month of consumption and celebration dominated by an “Islamic” framework. Schielke’s ethnography, discussed in detail in Chapter 1, is presented as a critique of the ‘discursive approach’ to piety of Saba Mahmood. He points to sociality and amusement as important aspects of Ramadan as are prayer and fasting (Schielke 2009, 24). However according to Schielke playing football during Ramadan is an “ambivalent exercise” that mixes the ascetic discipline of fasting with fun and

entertainment. Taking place during Ramadan as a substitute for drinking and smoking it is “temporally limited” (Schielke 2009, 25) and therefore “legitimizes less consistent approaches to religion and morality for the rest of the year” (Schielke 2009, 25). In an attempt to draw attention away from overly sincere piety he focuses on an ethics of ambivalence and fragmentation. For Schielke practices of charity and piety during the month are inspired by utilitarian notions of paradise and salvation.

There are key similarities between these two approaches in that they both emphasize the importance of Ramadan as a kind of sacred time, set apart from ordinary life. For Tobin that means a triumph of Islamic morality and the pursuit of new forms of acceptable consumption. For Schielke the month inspires utilitarian piety and serves as a scapegoat for unacceptable behavior for the remainder of the year. This chapter builds on the insights of these papers into the importance of festivity and celebration during the month. However, in Mumbai the various activities observed during Ramadan did not necessarily produce ambivalence. Amusement, laughter, joy and camaraderie were integral to the practice of Ramadan. Pious contemplation, reflection and prayer was not the only form of Ramadan practice. Rather as we will see, different individuals devised different routes through which to participate in the practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition.

This chapter will consider how a discursive tradition of Ramadan that emphasizes the virtues of piety, generosity and care obtain specific meaning through practice. However, beyond the emphasis on virtue or reward are the ways in which the significance of Ramadan inheres in different practices. For shopkeepers or restaurateurs profit was perhaps even more important than prayer. Ramadan in Mumbai was the ‘high season’ for shopping and consumption that Tobin observed in Jordan. Also, the month of Ramadan was not homogenous and specific times were imbued with particular significance. Different individuals, with different occupations, ethical dispositions and at different times of the day or month devised different routes through which to practice Ramadan. Peter van der Veer has argued that understanding the practices of playing and praying at a Sufi festival necessitates a consideration of “multi-vocality” as different actors and groups attend and celebrate in different ways (van der Veer 1992). This chapter develops this line of analysis through the practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition.

The centrality and opacity of *niyat* (intention) for Muslim practice ensures that different individuals may devise different routes through which to reap the rewards of Ramadan.

A DISCURSIVE TRADITION OF RAMADAN

According to the Islamic discursive tradition, Ramadan is the month during which the Prophet Muhammad first received Quranic revelation. The origin of the Quran and the Prophet-hood of Muhammad thus both stem from this month. During the month able-bodied Muslims of sexual maturity are required to abstain from all food, drink and sexual activity from before sunrise until sunset. It is also advised that foul language and impure thoughts be controlled. Fasting is prescribed as an exercise in restraint from worldly desires during the daylight hours. A Quranic verse often quoted explains that the aim of fasting is so that Muslims may become righteous (Quran, 2:183). Righteousness is variously understood as self-control, remembrance of God and generosity and care for the poor. Muslims are implored to engage in the remembrance of God through prayer and recitation of the Quran. A common practice was to complete the entire recitation of the Quran during the month. Also important are the evening prayers known as *taraweeh*. These are non-compulsory prayers that follow the final evening prayer of *isha* and are only performed during the month. Practicing generosity through sharing and care for the poor are emphasized and Ramadan is often the month during which Muslims perform their annual obligatory *zakat* distributions. Another popular narrative is the notion that the devil is locked away during the month of Ramadan. Good deeds are thus easier to adhere to and rewarded in excess. This produces the common understanding that Ramadan is a gift from God during which Muslims may accumulate merit (*sawab*).

However, fasting is limited to the daytime hours. Unlike the Lent fast in the Christian tradition, prohibitions are not in place for the entire month as a whole. Evenings are thus a time of relief from the arduous daytime abstinence. The sunset meal of *iftar* marks the end of the fasting day and is an important communal meal. A well-known Prophetic tradition advises that the *iftar* meal should not be eaten alone. Sharing is thus an important practice during Ramadan as are the endeavors to feed the

poor as well as friends and neighbors. The notion of righteousness as generosity and care means that much time is spent preparing and eating a variety of food. Ramadan evenings the world over are famous for street food markets, special Ramadan delicacies and large evening banquets.

As much as the month of Ramadan is divided between daytime fasting hours and evenings of respite, there are also certain days during the month which are considered more auspicious. Laillatul-Qadr, (the night of power), was the night on which the Prophet received the first Quranic revelation. The exact date is unknown and there are conflicting hadith reports about when it falls. According to one Prophetic tradition it is on one of the odd numbered nights during the last 10 days of the month. Another states that it is on the 27th night of the month. The night of Laillatul-Qadr is the topic of a short Quranic chapter. An important verse therein, Lailatul qadri khairum min alfee shahr (The night of Laillatul-Qadr is better than a thousand months), is interpreted as meaning that worship during that night accrues rewards equivalent to one thousand months of prayer. The odd nights of the last 10 nights are thus times of increased prayer as Muslims seek to reap the rewards on offer.

From this brief over view of the discursive tradition of Ramadan it is clear that the notion of righteousness or virtue with which the practice of fasting is associated, has different meanings. Practices of prayer, reflection and remembrance of God include fasting, congregational prayer, and recitation of the Quran. However, righteousness as generosity and sharing involves care for the poor as well the preparation of food, and communal feasts with friends and family. Besides these different routes through which notions of virtue are practiced, is the temporality of the day and month. The abstinences of fasting are prescribed only during the daytime hours. Sexual activity and food consumption are not prohibited in the evenings. Congregational prayers such as taraweeh are advised but not compulsory. Finally, other important times within the month include holy nights such as Laillatul-Qadr when prayer and recitation is intensified. As a practice of Islam as a lived tradition there are different routes through which to partake in the practice of Ramadan.

A MONTH OF GREAT BLESSING: BLESSINGS OF ALL SORTS

Beyond the textual referents from an Islamic discursive tradition are the way in which Muslims communicate and produce meanings of Ramadan through practice. As was clear from the description in the opening vignette, smoking shisha till late in the evening, doing time pass, shopping, gifting and feasting were important practices during the month. For Muslims in Mumbai Ramadan was clearly a kind of sacred month, set apart from the rest of the year. It was a month of revelation and excess reward. However, the special significance accorded to the month did not translate directly into uniform expectations of piety, prayer or charity. The practice of Ramadan included festive enjoyment and revelry as well as prayer and fasting. An important insight into the different routes through which the Ramadan is practiced was relayed to me by an informant one evening through the notion of “great blessings” (*bara barakat*).

Qadri was the owner of an annual Ramadan stall on the famous Minara Masjid lane where he sold religious music ranging from lectures, *naat* (instrument-less songs of praise for the prophet) and *qawwali* (poetry and praise accompanied by a singing troupe and instruments). He was a *mureed* (disciple) of a Sufi *shaikh* (leader/teacher) in Chembur. During the remainder of the year he rented sound equipment for weddings and other private events. He was also often contracted to provide and install sound equipment at saints day celebrations at shrines in Mumbai (*urs*). Through numerous late night conversations and continuous cups of tea I struck up a relationship with Qadri and his son, Mohsien, a 20 year old engineering student.

One weekend morning at around 2am, Mohsien, Qadri and I were at the music stall. Mohsien and I were planning to leave for our respective homes. Qadri would keep the store open until the *fajr* prayers at around 4am at which time the crowds in the bustling market area would finally subside. As we exited the street we passed the Suleman Mithaiwala sweet shop, one of the oldest and most well-known sweet sellers in the area. Mohsien expressed an interest in purchasing something. I was surprised that sweets were eaten for *sehri* (pre-dawn breakfast) as I avoided sugar in the mornings convinced that the sugar spike resulted in mid-morning hunger pangs, “we have sweet for *sehri* and

iftar, it is Ramzaan,”²⁶ he laughed. Waiting for his order amidst the early morning sehri rush I commented on how busy the lane was at this early hour. Mohsien’s reply was insightful, “over here we have a saying, ‘Ramzaan ka maheena ek bara barakat hai (the month of Ramadan is a month of great blessings)’ That is for everything. Food, sweets, people, prayer, business. There is lots of everything!” Mohsien’s statement resonated with me for the following few days as I observed the various forms of excess all around. Some prayed until late into the night, while others shopped. Some visited the various food stalls in the area while others whiled the night away in time pass amongst friends. It often happened that my attempts to retire for the evening at any time before 3am were met with gestures of disapproval and invitations to stay on. There were many routes through which the blessing of Ramadan were obtained.

A funny twist to Mohsien’s explanation occurred one evening three nights before Id. I had just attended a large mosque-sponsored iftar (meal to mark the end of the fasting day) that was a regular feature around the city. After the prayers, I discovered that my sandals were not where I had left them. After a short search in vein, and finding that my attempts to ask any of the caretakers were met with looks of disbelief, I surrendered and ventured into the wet, sloshy monsoon streets. Repulsed by the dirt of the city I was reminded of Mohsien’s explanation about blessings and wondered if it applied to thieves as well! Of course given the markets that lined the streets of the area it wasn’t long before I had a cheap replacement. Later that evening, with new sandals, I ventured towards the stall and was pleasantly surprised to find Mohsien in the store. I recounted my misfortune at having lost my sandals and that I was reminded of what he had said about the blessings of Ramadan, he laughed, “you see its true, even for the thieves, but maybe someone just took them by mistake, and what could happen? Either they will use it or they will give it to someone, so it is ok.” Perhaps because it was Ramadan, Mohsien preferred to dispel the accusation of theft in a mosque. Nevertheless, through the circulation of theft or charity someone would receive the blessings of my lost sandals.

²⁶ In Urdu, the Arabic word Ramadan was pronounced as Ramzaan. I have mostly used the word Ramadan in this chapter to enable conversation with other contexts in the Muslim world.

Mohsien's attitude towards loss and circulation was reflected in the mood that pervaded the month. There was indeed much money and time spent on personal consumption and enjoyment, but also on charity and prayer. The excess of prayer, charity and consumption was characteristic of Ramadan and reflected the "great blessings" of the month. Blessings did not necessarily indicate nor exclude practices of abstinence and prayer. Rather it was a way of understanding the different pursuits at different times, by different people, during the month. People fasted and feasted, shopped and shared, prayed and played. The markets that emerged during the month facilitated the desire to spend and share. The blessing of Ramadan included notions of merit (sawab) for prayer, fasting and charity, profit for those who owned businesses and food stalls, and comradeship for friends and family who associated the month of Ramadan with late night time-pass, and of course feasting. The "great blessings" of the month encompassed various practices under the process of consumption and abstinence and extended consideration of Ramadan beyond piety. Ramadan was a month of sacred significance. However, the shape and form that auspiciousness acquired depended on the way in which different individuals devised different routes through which to partake in the blessings of the month.

Importantly the different practices through which the blessings (barakat) of Ramadan could be pursued were clearly varied and sometimes at odds. For example, a particular individual who chose to pursue acts of generosity through assistance to the poor by volunteering to take part in feeding programs or clothing collection drives, may necessarily forgo participation in the evening taraweeh prayer. At other times shopping, time-pass and the preparation of food imposed on other forms of virtuous practice. However, informants did not necessarily consider seemingly apparent conflicts as such. Sermons in mosques would often re-iterate the importance of prayer over other pursuits, and overzealous friends may take it upon themselves to castigate others. However, feasting and fasting and praying and playing continued. Different individuals engaged in different practices of Ramadan.

FASTING

Scholarly consideration of Ramadan has foregrounded practices of fasting. This attention, combined with widespread media coverage of Ramadan across the globe, has produced the representation of fasting Muslims in Ramadan. Conducting research in Mumbai, and given my middle class Indian-origin South African background where fasting is widespread, I too held these expectations. I of course remember the temptation as a teenager to sneak a drink or chocolate during the school day but the thrill of that transgression had faded with adulthood. My expectation thus foregrounded the notion of Ramadan as a 'pillar' of Islam, obligatory on all adult Muslims.

However, as Ramadan began I was often asked by regular acquaintances as well as in fleeting interactions whether I was in fact fasting. At first I assumed that my regular informants might be testing my obedience to the norms of Ramadan. However, I soon realized that the reason that so many asked the question was that many did not fast. According to the rules of Ramadan, fasting is compulsory on all able-bodied adults with exemptions applicable in cases of necessity. The definition of what constitutes necessity and therefore exemption is where much discussion and debate takes place. The sick and the elderly are specifically exempt from fasting, as are menstruating women. For many, the exemption of age and weakness was not a deterrent for compliance, while for others arguments about ill health, infirmity or labor demands were. As discussed in the introduction, the decision of how to apply the exemption for fasting was an ethical judgement.

One afternoon I was sitting outside the Colaba chicken store discussing the impending start of Ramadan with a few friends. Sanjay, was an eager participant in the discussion so I assumed that he was also Muslim. A few minutes later as we exchanged names he explained that he was not, "but I fast also," he added. Perplexed, I enquired how he had come to that decision, "we are friends here, so our friends do it, so for a few days I join in too. It is a sunnat," he explained. Having used the word "sunnat," which in Islamic discourse refers to the practices of the Prophet Muhammad, I was eager to understand what "sunnat" meant to him. He struggled to explain, "you know, good things," he said. When I explained to him what the Islamic connotations were he clarified, "oh ok, no here it is not like that, it is just those things which are good to do, good practice." Sanjay did not fast for the entire month. He

usually fasted during the last few days to be part of the feeling and “join in too”. In contrast, Hassan, through whom we had met, did not fast all. Hassan explained that he had decided not to fast since he always ended up becoming ill every year during Ramadan.

A few days later with Ramadan underway I met his brother, Shams. He too did not fast. He explained that he had a stomach ailment, which became exacerbated from fasting. At that point it seemed that many of the Muslims whom I knew were not actually fasting. The same was true of the workers in the chicken shop. Salahuddin, explained that the heat in the shop made fasting impossible. He fasted when he was in his native village but not in the city. In Mumbai the working hours and heat were too intense. As the month continued it was increasingly clear that many involved in hard labor did not fast. In contrast most traders whom I knew did. They of course had the luxury of adjusting business hours for the month. As a practice of Islam as a lived tradition individuals made ethical judgements about the exemptions for fasting. However even those who did not fast refrained from eating in public. Hassan and Shams, for example, did not have tea during the day in full view of customers. The practice reflects Tobin’s observation about a public morality during Ramadan in Jordan.

Importantly, however, the fact of not fasting did not mean that these Muslims were excluded from the month. Other abstinences included alcohol consumption and visits to the red-light districts, and daily prayers were performed with increased regularity. They reveled in late night visits to the lanes around the Minara Masjid to enjoy the various delicacies on offer and made preparations for Id that included shopping for gifts. Even for them Ramadan was a time of special significance. Though not fasting they too participated in the “blessings” of the month through the practice of prayer, feasting and shopping.

For those who did fast the “month of great blessings” was linked to bodily practices of hunger and care. Qadri elaborated the connection between hunger and care one evening as we sat at his music stall. He narrated a proverb that evoked the connection between fasting, hunger, and care, “bhook aur pyaas ehsaas dilate hain (hunger and thirst gives rise to feeling).” He explained that when one has an empty stomach then suddenly the worries and concerns of other people become very real. “No

matter if one is rich or poor, hunger is felt the same. So you see at iftar people feed each other, give each other water, that is the feeling that comes from hunger. For the other eleven months we have no hunger, we are full, so we cannot feel.” Schielke considered the charity and sharing that he observed as a feature of Egyptian Ramadan as an instrumental application of a prophetic narrative that promises double reward for all good deeds during the month (Schielke 2009, 27). However for Qadri “feeling” was not a product of calculation and reward but a bodily sensation of hunger. Linking fasting to the experience of hunger Qadri articulated a particular “blessing” of Ramadan that produced a sense of care and generosity absent at other times of the year. For Qadri the specificity of an increase in care and generosity during Ramadan was a proof of the “blessings” of the month rather than an instrumental search for reward.

The practice of Ramadan as a month of “great blessings” encompassed a range of practices. Each practice produced different meanings of the “blessings” of Ramadan. Pervasive through each instance was a sense of piety, care, generosity and a feeling of togetherness. However, these abstract notions were always circumscribed through practice. For Sanjay, a non-Muslim, fasting referred to “good things” between friends. For Hassan, Shams and others on whom fasting was obligatory but who considered themselves exempt, the “great blessings” translated into increased observation of prayer, the enjoyment of late-night feasting and shopping for gifts for family members. For Qadri “blessings” inhered in the feeling of care and generosity towards others that emanated from the experience of hunger, and which was expressed towards fellow fasting Muslims through the sharing of food during iftar. Clearly the virtues of piety, generosity and care were always practiced and materialized in specific ways, in regards to particular people at certain moments in time.

IFTAR: PRACTICING GENEROSITY AND CARE

Time during Ramadan was not homogenous. There were various practices through which specific times of the day, night and month were imbued with significance. Of particular importance were the meals that marked the start of the fasting day (sehri) and it’s end (iftar). Iftar, the sunset

meal, was socially the most important meal of the day. Following a Prophetic tradition it was commonly explained that iftar should not be eaten alone. As Qadri had indicated iftar was understood as a communal meal marked by sharing and camaraderie. During Ramadan, most of the mosques in Mumbai provided mass iftar meals to whoever chose to attend. These were funded by donations from traders and business people in the area. Two important virtues associated with the practice of communal eating and sharing was generosity and care for others.

In the Muslim-dominated areas surrounding Muhammad Ali Road, the two hours preceding iftar was marked by a sudden surge in roadside street stalls selling iftar treats. The rush would peak around 45 minutes beforehand before subsiding as snacks were taken home or to roadside gatherings. It was common for groups of friends to each buy a few items before meeting to share together at a specified place on the pavement, or in someone's store. On the second evening of Ramadan I was invited to have iftar with 'Uncle' and Ahmed at the iftar store in Dongri. Arriving at the shop an hour and a half before sunset I found that Ahmed was home, fasting but ill, while 'Uncle' and Aziz busied themselves with preparations. Fruit and a few fried savory items were procured from nearby stalls that lined the streets. Falooda (refreshing rose flavored drink) was sent to the store from the family home nearby. 'Uncle' and Aziz were busy setting the food, plates and glasses onto a tablecloth on the floor in the back room of the shop.

With time to spare I went over to greet Liaqat, who owned the clothing stall next door. He was an acquaintance of the family, "a good man," who had been offered some space in front of an unused property of theirs. He greeted me warmly and said that I should sit with him. At first I did not apprehend what he meant, "come here, you stay here," he repeated. At that moment he was busy dealing with some interested customers so I indicated that we would continue speaking once he was free, "no, no, you have iftar here," he clarified. Up until that point I had assumed that he, 'Uncle', Aziz and Ahmed were going to have iftar together. This was clearly not the case. I awkwardly attempted to walk away towards Ahmed, who had just arrived from home to join the iftar, but Liaqat called me again. I then explained that I had been invited specifically by 'Uncle' to join them for iftar but that I

would join him (Liaqat) the next day. Having expected commensality between neighbors I was surprised by the separation. Clearly, providing iftar conferred hierarchy and reward (sawab) associated with the act of feeding during Ramadan.

Around twenty minutes before iftar we were all beckoned into the back storeroom. About 7 of us were seated on a straw mat around a spread of food that included 2 platters each of fruit, samosas, aloo vada's (spicy, fried potato), and chicken cutlets. There were dates, sharbat (rose flavoured drink) and some sweetmeats. A friend of Ahmed's stopped by with a gift of savories before continuing to his own home. For the twenty minutes before iftar we sat around the food in almost complete silence. The meager discussion revolved around the high cost of the food during Ramadan when the price of fruit was as much as double the normal rate. Ahmed thought that we should just be eating dal-chawal (lentils and rice) and be done with. Hearing this, 'Uncle,' who had been silent for the entire time finally joined the discussion, "nahin nahin, phal zaroori hai (fruit is necessary)," he disputed. There were long periods of silence as we all sat in a kind of respectful observance of the meal to come. Finally a discussion began over the exact timing of iftar. Someone said it was 19:24 while others said no, it was 19:25. With the debate still unsettled the azan (the call to prayer that marks the end of the fasting day) began and we broke our fast with dates and water followed by fruit and savories.

Most iftar's followed a very similar routine. There was a jostling for clients as people invited friends passing by to join. Finally once the group for the day had settled, there was a period of up to 20 minutes of almost complete silence. I soon realized that this was a common practice across Mumbai. Both the desire to invite friends to join iftar and the silence had utilitarian reward-inspired incentives. It was said that there was reward for whoever fed a fasting person and that the final minutes before iftar were when prayers were most likely to be heard. However the practice of silence was also understood as cultivating an ethical disposition towards food. After a day of fasting it was suggested, according to a Prophetic tradition that one should drink water in small sips, and chew slowly. Haste when eating was thought to indicate and produce the vices of greed and gluttony. Understood from within this discursive tradition the practice of silence and prayer was also a moment

to take account of the days fast and to reflect with appreciation on the meal to come. The discussion Ahmed instigated about excess and the simplicity he advised through his suggestion of breaking the fast with “dal-chawal” (lentils and rice) should be understood from within this practice. The cost of food was after all a result of the high demand, which to him at that time was seemingly counter-intuitive. Later, after the evening prayer, we would happily tour the back lanes surrounding Muhammad Ali Road in search of various Ramadan foods on offer.

The practice of silence demarcated a particular time of reverence after a long day of fasting and before the time of feasting. The relevance of the time of silence was inseparable from the time of bodily hunger during the day that was drawing to an end. The time of silence thus pointed to the way in which the virtue of restraint obtained specific meaning through a moment of reflection on the food about to be consumed. This moment soon passed, and over indulgence during iftar was common. Similarly through this practice of iftar it was clear that the virtue of generosity was highly circumscribed. Friends and family were part of the circle of others with whom one endeavored to share food. Ahmed’s friend who visited the store on his way home was an example of how generosity at the time of iftar obtained specific meaning in relations to close friends and family. Liaqat, as a relatively more distant acquaintance was not included. Importantly it was only after everyone had eaten their fill that the remainder of the food was distributed to beggars in the neighborhood who walked the streets collecting iftar leftovers. Through the practice of iftar in the store a particular route for Ramadan as a lived tradition was established. Hierarchy, status and a utilitarian search for rewards (sawab) were clearly an important part of the practice. However reducing our analysis to an ethics of utility would necessarily miss the way in which a particular reflection on food, sharing and excess in the moment preceding the feast of iftar was inseparable from the bodily practice of hunger cultivated through fasting as well as the practice of silence.

A different practice and expression of generosity and care during iftar was explained a few days later when I finally joined Liaqat to break the fast. He articulated a conception of fate and fortune (naseeb) produced through the sharing of food. Arriving for iftar with Liaqat it was clear that what he

had to offer was humbler than his relatively more illustrious neighbors. The fruit for example was less varied and had been cut in the home and sent to him by his wife rather than bought from one of the roadside vendors. As we broke our fast and ate he narrated a common proverb that related food, fate and fortune, “har insaan apna naseeb khata hai (every person eats their fate).” One meaning, Liaqat explained, was that everyone gets what is his or her due. He explained that in the context of sharing food and offering and accepting invitations for meals it pointed to the disparate fates of two individuals entwined around a meal. It was my fate to have his food and it was his fate to offer it to me. Furthermore, sharing food was a practice whereby the fortune of an individual that had ultimately been received due to the grace of God could be shared with others. The generosity of iftar was therefore also a way of giving thanks to God. Liaqat expressed a meaning of sharing and generosity during iftar that was a way of offering thanks as well as a moment where the fate of the giver and receiver became entwined. Sharing a meal together Liaqat reflected on the meaning of our interaction during Ramadan that exceeded a concern with utilitarian accumulation of rewards (sawab). Given his humble means, the opportunity to share was expressed through a reflection on life, fate and fortune.

During Ramadan when both the utilitarian rewards associated with sharing were emphasized and the bodily experience of hunger cultivated, concerns about fate, fortune and providence were expressed through the desire to share food. Sharing was a practice cultivated in relation to the virtue of generosity, as well as detachment from material wealth. At the end of the fasting day the iftar meal had the potential to confer a moment of heightened sensitivity towards others, food and fate. However, this desire to share was clearly not universal. There was hierarchy associated with the act of hosting iftar. The sharing practiced during iftar was not reducible to an abstract notion of charity or obligation towards the less fortunate. Rather generosity was circumscribed to family and friends and the poor were only included as the recipients of leftovers. Important also was that the potential for a moment of reflection was not necessarily all encompassing in explaining the entire month or even day. For example, Ahmed’s comment on excess did not extend into our late-night trawls through food markets in search of his favorite Ramadan treats. Similarly, Liaqats reflection on food, fate and fortune

should be understood from within his own particular position as a humble street trader. As the practice of Islam as a lived tradition different individuals engaged in ethical reflection and judgment through which they developed different practices, reflections and routes to partake in the “blessings” of Ramadan.

PRAYER

Besides fasting, prayer is the practice most closely associated with piety. However even during Ramadan attention to practices of prayer was not homogenous. The time of the day and month as well as individual ethical disposition were important for the manner in which prayer was practiced. Besides the obligatory five daily prayers was the supplementary prayer of taraweeh. Taraweeh prayer began after the final evening prayer of isha, and lasted for a duration of between one to two hours. Other important times of prayer during the month were the night of Laillatul-Qadr when Muslims endeavored to reap the excess rewards (sawab) on offer.

Taraweeh prayers commenced on the evening before the first fast began. Even though not everyone performed either the obligatory or optional prayers for the entire month, it was clear that there was an increase in compliance during Ramadan. The urge to pray was surely related to a utilitarian desire to obtain maximum reward (sawab) from the month. One particular recommendation through which reward was earned was the complete recitation of the entire Quran. Differences abounded as to whether the recitation should be completed in private or in congregation. Most men abided by the latter, while women, whom usually did not attend prayer in congregation recited for themselves at home. The recitation required around 1 hour of time per day either at home or in congregational prayer.

Taraweeh prayer was an important medium for achieving the recitation of a complete Quran but was not obligatory. Due to work constraints or as a judgement aimed at achieving maximum rewards (sawab) in minimal time, there was a desire to complete the Quran without the need to attend prayer for the entire month. There were thus special taraweeh prayers held in private homes and smaller

mosques where the entire Quran was completed two to three times during the month. At these gatherings, the prayer leader (imam) recited at a much faster pace. Many of my informants attended these prayers for the first 10 days so that “then the sunnat is done, our duty is done.” While this clearly resonated with a utilitarian approach to prayer and reward it also reflected the passage of time during the month. The first 10 days were a time of feverous devotion that was matched only by the odd numbered evenings during the last 10 nights when excess rewards were promised. I observed that the middle of the month was the time when the mosques were far more quiet even for the weekly Friday prayer. During this period the practice of Ramadan had become quite routine and many were becoming fatigued by the irregular eating and sleeping hours. Finally, the final 10 days, as the Id approaches, witnessed a combination of important nights of prayer as well as increasing excitement and preparation for the celebration of Id.

However, these rhythms of prayer, devotion, reward and anticipation did not capture the experience of those for whom the inclination to attend prayers did not even arise. An alternative Ramadan practice was evident one evening I spent with a group of friends and cousins. We met about an hour before iftar, collected some food and congregated at their ‘office,’ which was a small empty ground floor property in a market area that they used for time-pass. As we waited for iftar to be announced by the azan (call to prayer) from the nearby mosque, there was no pause or prayer. When I pointed that out Reyhaan, the friend who had invited me over joked, “over here no one prays, they just talk.” It turns out that of the four friends, two had performed the recommended completion of the Quran during the first 10 nights. The other 2 had not completed the Quran nor attended taraweeh at all that year. That evening, after breaking fast and enjoying the large varieties of food that had been amassed in front of us, we continued to socialize right through the two evening obligatory prayers (maghrib and isha). We eventually proceeded to another of their friends’ homes for an evening of hookah smoking, tea and chatter. The only reference to Ramadan that evening was when a non-Muslim friend Amit came to visit and was castigated for the post-sehri (early morning pre-sunrise

breakfast) photograph of a model's cleavage that he had circulated, "after sehri time, he sends the picture of cleavage! Ey.... Fasting time!" a friend chimed, in a jovial manner.

These sorts of Ramadan practice were not exceptional. Having spent time with these friends outside of Ramadan it was clear that this was not a special kind of temporally limited 'halal' practice. During the remainder of the year they also did not party or go out drinking. In fact many of their weekends were spent exactly like this. A difference during Ramadan was that this practice of hanging out was far more regular. Also, given the vibrant evening markets that extended until just before dawn there was much more activity and food to enjoy. If anything, it was the excess of consumption rather than prayer which distinguished Ramadan from the rest of the year. For these friends the joys of late night consumption together with friends was an expression of camaraderie, generosity and care. As a practice of Islam as a lived tradition they produced their own route through which to participate in the "blessings" of the month.

From these two very different vignettes it was clear that time as well as individual disposition was important for understanding prayer during Ramadan in Mumbai. It has often been observed that religious practice and life-cycle stage are closely related. A cursory observation at a variety of taraweeh prayers during the month indicated that the congregation was predominantly over 30, and most well into their 40's. Important too was that many who opted into the quick-fire taraweeh during the first 10 days were younger. However, within these groups were the multitudes of individuals who for whatever reason did not actually pray at all. For them fasting or acts of care and sharing were practices through which they participated in Ramadan. For those who do not pray, but only eat, the reduction of Ramadan practice to utilitarian notions of reward is not clear. Rather through the centrality of *niyat* (intention) in Islamic discourse we may appreciate how different practices may be the route through which to make claim to the good. It was clear that there were a variety of ethical dispositions towards Ramadan practice and many means of accessing the blessings of the month. Many informants did view these positions as contradictory. Indeed, religious leaders castigated the less austere for their revelry. It was common to hear mosque sermons and post prayer talks that complained to those in attendance

of the excess consumption that Ramadan introduced. However, these were common tropes almost the world over. Their mention was evidence of exception rather than compliance. More tellingly, it was often joked that the same maulana who gave speeches in the mosque would later be found ordering malpua (deep fried pancake) from the nearby stall. Even the most pious were after all, over time, inclined to enjoy some of the culinary “blessings” of Ramadan.

The prevalence of different practices and the lack of concern or ambivalence by the seemingly less attentive practitioners during the month of “great blessings” point to the way in which Islam as a lived tradition was practiced and materialized in different instances by different individuals. The judgement of which blessing to confer and whether to fast, pray, feast or shop was a matter of time of the month and day as well as individual ethical disposition. This was exemplified by the fact that those who did not fast nor prey did not denounce Ramadan. For them camaraderie, time pass and feasting were ways in which the “blessings” or Ramadan were conferred. This was most evident during the last 3 evenings of Ramadan when the mosques were mostly empty, the markets were full, and even the practice of pre-iftar silence had fallen away.

SHOPPING AND GIVING

During Ramadan significant amounts of time and money were spent on shopping and charity. Many Muslims considered Ramadan the month during which the annual obligatory calculation and distribution of zakat was performed. This was clearly reflected in the influx of beggars from across India who converged on Mumbai during the month. Amongst those whom I met were individuals from Bihar, Gujarat and Kashmir. There was speculation that some may earn up to 50,000 rupees during the month alone. The “begging business” during Ramadan was well established and agents from communities across India earned commissions from collection activities. For them the “blessings” of Ramadan inhered in the cash receipts and commission earned.

The other main spending activity besides charity, was clothing. It was the peak-shopping season. Part of that fervor was inspired by a Prophetic tradition where the Prophet, returning from the morning

Id day prayer adopted an orphan and took him home. He then instructed his wife, Ayesha to arrange new clothing for him. This narrative was often explained through the importance of care for the poor as well as the purchase of new clothing for Eid. As 'Uncle' one day explained, "even if it's just one piece, it should be new." The idea that shopping for new clothes was a "sunnat" was applied especially to young children who often received an entire outfit on Eid day. In Mumbai the emphasis on new clothing included charity efforts by community organizations that endeavored to provide poor Muslims with new clothing to celebrate Id.

The emphasis on clothing and shopping meant that the coincidence of Ramadan with the "high season" was not incidental. The surge in market activity intensified during the final 10 days of the month when the stalls only stopped trading just before the pre-dawn prayer. During this time traders brought large amounts of stock to the Ramadan markets at rates far below retail prices. 'Uncles' son Ahmed and his friends took advantage of the street lined shopping festival to do their entire years' clothing purchases. One evening, sitting at the ittar store, Ahmed and his friends returned from a shopping spree. They had for the previous few hours braved the monsoon rains in search of clothing deals at one of the many stalls that lined Muhammad Ali Road. A friend had informed them that a particular trader had just received a large consignment of brand-name items that were being sold at significant discounts. Five of them had with great excitement returned with 25 shirts and 15 pairs of pants. Ahmed was happy with his purchase and explained the shopping festival that was taking place, "business is great for everyone, meat, food, clothing, catering... even beggars!" Ahmed's exclamation resonated with Mohsiens' explanation of the "month of great blessings." As the practice of Islam as a lived tradition, the celebration, excess and consumption that marked the final 10 days of the month were an expression of the "blessings" of Ramadan.

During the final days of the month, as the day of Id approached, shopping and charity were in ascendance. People had saved their annual income to disburse as charity and to spend on new clothing and other items. The Prophetic tradition that was interpreted to refer to the importance of new clothes clearly also contained an instruction of care for the less fortunate. Charity and consumption were not

separate endeavors. The willingness and desire to spend on oneself and family members was the practice through which it was possible to reflect on the dire condition of the poor. While charity donation incurred reward (sawab) I argue that it was also a practice borne from the excess of consumption and the eager anticipation of the approaching festival of Id. During these last few evenings 'Uncle' found it much harder to herd all of us into the back of the shop for the pre-iftar practice of silence. On one evening the usual group only finally assembled around the spread of food once the call to prayer had already begun. During these final days of Ramadan consumption and excitement superseded prayer or contemplation as the predominant "blessings" of Ramadan.

CHAND RAAT AND ID

Chand raat (lit: moon night) is the final night of Ramadan. The sighting of the moon signals the end of the month of fasting. Following the announcement of the sighting, the taraweeh prayer is called off, and excitement reaches a crescendo. Markets remain open throughout the night and Muslims from across Mumbai flock to the area to conduct last minute shopping. The meat markets experience a surge of activity. Large delivery trucks of live chickens are seen entering the area, that given the preference for fresh meat, is necessary to cater for the last-minute demand. Part of the rush for food and clothing was explained by the uncertain timing of Id. The announcement depended on the sighting of the moon, which was in turn dependent on the earth's rotation as well as local conditions. With the final evening signaled, preparation needed to be made, gifts bought and a final taste of the famous Ramadan delicacies savored.

The common practice in Mumbai was to not sleep for the entire evening. Sitting at the ittar store with 'Uncle', Ahmed and a few friends, there was a general sense of relief. It had been a long month and contrary to the official moral code that sanctioned articulation of relief that Ramadan was now over, the celebratory atmosphere testified otherwise. Following the announcement of Id young boys and girls streamed up and down the streets blowing horns and shouting with joy. The atmosphere was electric. Throughout the evening greetings of "chand raat mubarak (lit: blessings of the moon night)"

were exchanged between friends. That evening I spent most of my time in the ittar store with their friends and family. At around 2am I began vain attempts to excuse myself on account of fatigue but was constantly dissuaded by new topics of discussion. The evening was whiled away in time-pass and tea until finally at 5am everyone agreed that it was time to return home to prepare for the morning prayer. Only then the markets were slowly beginning to wind down as revelers headed home.

After a shower and barely half an hour of sleep I returned to Dongri. I had been warned that punctuality was key since it was raining so it would be unpleasant to be left outside. Finding a place amongst the many men and children in clean and sometimes new kurtas (traditional Muslim dress worn for the Id prayer) and the air fragrant with perfume, I settled to listen to the lecture about the meaning of Id and the importance of being pious and praying rather eating and partying. The imam quoted Abdul Qadir Jilani, as saying that “Id is not for those who have eaten and drunk all month, but for those who have sat in prayer and respected the month of Ramzaan.” There were a few more comparisons of whom Id was for and for whom it was not. The message was that Id was not meant as a day of libidinous indulgence but should also be treated as a day of prayer. This was a common refrain in many mosques all over the world, cautioning congregations not to forget the good practices of the past month. The quote ended with a comparison of the Id of the non-Muslims to those of the Muslims, with the former indulging in alcohol and sins while the latter refrained. This too was directed at people who had refrained from alcohol for the month but who continued once the month had ended. The message so oft repeated was clearly an indication that many did not do as the Imam and Abdul Qadir Jilani before him, had expected. The day of Id was after all, the talk had explained at the beginning, a “day of permissibility.”

Exiting the mosque I joined Ahmed and a few friends for their annual keema (mince) breakfast at a nearby restaurant. After a few cigarettes and some time-pass they returned home to sleep. Exhausted but still needing to fulfill one more invitation I visited another friend for the traditional Id breakfast of sheer korma (sweet almond, cardamom, and saffron milk). Everyone was tired but relieved. The day was for most passed in a half slumber. The streets in the area were marked by

emptiness. The only shops remaining open were the sweet meat stores and the small caterers who were busy preparing the afternoon meal for clients. Also bustling were the fair rides that had been set up in particular locations, where children came to spend the Id money that they had received from their parents.

The exuberance of Chand Raat that erupted in anticipation of the “day of permissibility” was clearly not an aberration. Rather the common explanation to not express relief with the end of Ramadan, and the local religious leaders’ exhortations to exercise restraint were but one kind of expression and practice of Islam as a lived tradition. The need to continuously repeat and emphasize restraint, piety and prayer points to the fact that most did not follow the message. Rather than assume a meaning and practice of Ramadan as authorized by the religious leader, we have seen how Ramadan practice includes the ethical reflections and judgments of different individuals who at different times and in different places produce very different routes through which to partake in the blessings of the month.

CONCLUSION

In Mumbai, as with elsewhere in the world, Ramadan was marked by fasting and feasting. Analyses of Ramadan through either coherence or ambivalence and contradiction miss the process of consumption and abstinence as well as the various practices of Islam as a lived tradition.

The discursive tradition of Ramadan emphasizes the importance of virtue. This is taken to mean practices of prayer and piety as well as care and generosity. For practitioners, the judgement of how to practice Ramadan may necessarily exclude other forms of participation. However, beyond this particular discursive tradition are notions of Ramadan as a month of “great blessings (bara barakat).” This was explained as a consideration of how different individuals from different occupations were likely to reap the rewards of the month in different ways. For business people and restaurateurs Ramadan was a month of profit and trade. For others, the month was spent in moments of fasting, prayer, camaraderie, shopping, eating and time-pass. The practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition

meant that different individuals established different routes through which the “blessings” of the month were obtained.

During Ramadan, there were multiple conceptions of time. The month was considered auspicious, holy and ordained by God and rewards were said to be received in excess. However, within the month other times were important. During the day, the time of fasting was a time of bodily sensation of hunger. This drew to an end with the time of iftar which was a time of sharing among friends and family. Preceding iftar was a practice of silence during which the time of hunger was connected with the impending feast. This moment conferred reflections on the hunger that was about to be assuaged and the food to be enjoyed. During the evening were times of prayer followed by time-pass, camaraderie and further feasting. The evening was a time when the restrictions of the daytime fast were lifted. Other important times during the month included the auspicious odd-numbered nights, especially the 27th night, during the last ten days when the Quran was believed to have been revealed. On these nights’ prayer was thought to accrue huge multiples of reward (sawab) from God, and so prayer as well as sharing and donations were increased. However, these last evenings also marked the end of the month and so coincided with an increase in shopping, donations, feasting and excitement towards the impending celebration of Id. Id as “the day of permissibility” was anticipated as relief and celebration.

Through the passage of time and the practices of different individuals, different meanings of the “blessings” of Ramadan were produced. Even practices most closely associated with the virtues of piety, generosity or care were not uniform. Exemption from fasting did not occlude Muslims from participating in other “blessings” of the month that included the rewards of increased prayer as well as feasting and gift shopping for friends and family. The virtue of generosity and care that was emphasized during the sharing of iftar food was circumscribed between friends and family. Only leftovers were designated for the beggars that flocked to the area. The practice of silence preceding iftar was a reflection produced at the moment that bodily hunger coincided with anticipation over the impending meal. It did not necessarily extend over the entire day or month. Similarly, through practices

of prayer practitioners devised means to obtain reward (sawab) without constant compliance. For others, however the inclination to prayer never arose. For them the “blessings” of Ramadan signified practices of feasting, time-pass and comradery between friends. Finally, as the month drew to an end auspicious evenings of prayer were emphasized. These coincided with the increasing festivity, shopping and excitement as the impending celebration of Id approached. Each of these practices were the routes through which blessings of Ramadan were embodied, ingested and expressed.

Approaching the practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition has allowed for consideration of the ethics of fasting and feasting, praying and playing, and shopping and giving. Emphasis on prayer and piety by religious leaders or certain individuals is only one practice of Ramadan. Equally important are other times and practices of celebration, comradery, feasting and shopping. Seemingly incomplete performance did not necessarily produce feelings of ambivalence or uncertainty. For practitioners, the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for practice ensured that there were many routes through which to lay claim to the ‘good.’ Rather than fixing the proper meaning of the practice of Ramadan in advance this chapter has shown how Muslims in Mumbai were engaged in a process of ethical reflection and judgement through which to produce particular paths of practice. Utilitarian notions of reward were clearly present but not exhaustive. Bodily sensation and material practices as well as times of the day and month were important for the way in which particular individuals related to their Ramadan practice. However, although different practices produced different meanings and routes of compliance, a resemblance persisted. Abstract notions of virtue such as piety, care and generosity were emphasized and clearly important. However, the specific practices spanning prayer, shopping, time-pass and feasting caution against linear associations of practice with piety. The practice of Islam as a lived tradition during Ramadan in Mumbai entailed a process of ethical judgment and reflection on which “blessings” to bestow, when and how.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and boundless future). Even *past* meanings, that is those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) - they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). (Bakhtin 1992, 170)

This thesis has presented an ethnography of the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai. Through the lens of Islam as a lived tradition it has contributed an insight into the way in which practice is a terrain of debate and difference. Drawing on theory from within the anthropology of ethics and Wittgenstein on language games, it has offered a view to understanding innovation within historically informed practices. The notion of tradition is important for understanding why people bother to engage in particular practices and for apprehending the basis upon which their arguments and practices rest. However, the rules of the Islamic discursive tradition are not boundaries to be crossed but rather signposts (Wittgenstein 1953) that guide conduct. This, it has been shown, does not preclude the possibility for shortcuts and innovations.

Developments within the lived tradition of Islam include those initiated by figures of authority such as ulama and lay activists who are engaged in a constant process of interpreting, and translating Islamic norms of practice in the contemporary world. Also important are background level developments initiated by nation states through changes in state policy and economic organization.

New conditions of life in the contemporary world produce new challenges and opportunities that have to be addressed by practitioners of a lived tradition. Authority figures may claim to be acting within a particularly set of rules as defined by a glorious past but they are in fact addressing new developments as they articulate a new notion of being Muslim in the contemporary. Ordinary Muslims face similar challenges as they navigate their social reality. In everyday conduct Muslims face a myriad of situations in which they are required to articulate and practice what they feel is a correct mode of living. They may draw on particular authoritative positions for guidance but inevitably the practice of a lived tradition entails the constant process of reflection and ethical judgment through which new expressions and practices of Islam as a lived tradition emerge. However, this process of emergence, development and innovation is not entirely random. Rather it entails a series of both continuities and ruptures as different individuals articulate different routes for practice.

Over the past decade the evocation of the notion of “discursive tradition” in the anthropology of Islam immediately brings to view the image of a particular kind of pious ethical subjectivity authorized by the textual legacy of some object called Islam. This approach, initiated by Talal Asad and put into ethnographic form by Saba Mahmood, elided the subject positions and practices of all Muslim who did not conform to this authoritative model. The goal was to provincialize Western liberal assumptions of personhood. An unfortunate result of this mode of enquiry is that Mahmood was compelled to compartmentalize all opponents of the piety movement as contaminated by liberal modernity. The anthropology of Islam developed into an anthropology of Muslim piety. Opponents of this view quite rightly point out that Muslims are not all obsessively concerned with pious pursuits. However, their approach is mostly inclined to sideline the of notion tradition. This is understandable given the weight of meaning and association that the term evokes.

However, I have been hesitant to discard the discursive turn. As Asad had indicated, the idea of a discursive tradition captures the way in which memories, histories and affective attachments are relevant for understanding contemporary practice. It allows for a close consideration of how different people in different parts of the world have engaged in critical reflection and produced textual

commentaries and analysis of their place in the world. And calls for a close consideration of how that textual genealogy of thought and practice inheres in the present. Asad's critique of Ernest Gellner on the question of translation was crucial for reflecting on the way in which the tradition of British Social Anthropology had approached the knowledge traditions of other people (Asad 1986a). The idea of a discursive tradition as explicated by Asad thus introduced a much-needed caution against the tendency of Anthropologists to either reduce the thoughts and practices of other people to mere gibberish, or to expect conformance with the trajectory of Western European experience. However, in engaging in the critique of both Anthropology and later Secularism, Asad emphasized coherence within and difference between discursive traditions. In the anthropology of Islam this was achieved through the representation of Islam through a particular form of pious practice.

THE COMPLEXITY OF NIYAT (INTENTION) FOR ISLAM AS A LIVED TRADITION

This thesis has sought to present the complexity of Muslim practice in the contemporary. Drawing on Asad's insights regarding the relevance of a discursive tradition for practice, I have sought to provide an ethnographic account of debate, difference and change within Muslim food practices in Mumbai. This has entailed a serious consideration of the centrality of *niyat* (intention) for Muslim practice. A Prophetic tradition that has been of paramount relevance throughout Muslim history states that "actions are defined by intentions, and to every person what he intends." Analysis of intention within the study of the Islamic legal and ethical tradition have pointed to the complexity of this statement.

On the one hand the stability of intention subject to the will has ensured that the statement of intention before practice ensures compliance. Obligations are dispelled through the prior utterance of intention. This affords *niyat* (intention) a taxonomic function in determining how identical acts may be awarded different status. For example, in the practice of prayer the same bodily movements may either dispel an obligation or earn additional non-obligatory reward (*sawab*). The difference depends on the statement preceding the act, which determines what kind of practice it is. A related aspect of

niyat (intention) has been highlighted by Asad and Mahmood, where practitioners are encouraged to cultivate the correct disposition for pious practice. In this reading niyat (intention) is not merely taxonomic, but rather integral to the cultivation of the self. Here the proper fulfillment of pious practice requires the correct disposition which is in turn gradually produced through practice.

However, the subjective stability and cultivation of intention (niyat) does not exhaust its relevance in the Islamic discursive tradition. From a close reading of the statement it is clear that what is implied is a potential gap between an act, and inner state. Performance is not guaranteed through practice or utterance. As Messick has explained, “neither knowledge of God Almighty nor of the intentions and meanings located in the interiors of other humans are fully attainable and ascertainable by interpreters.” However, “these locales of truth, remained the identified objects of interpretive efforts” (Messick 2001, 178). In cases of public dispute the judge was thus tasked with determining through an assessment of various factors whether people actually intended what they had done or said. Here it is clear that practice or utterance did not ensure performance. The niyat (intention) of others, although ultimately unknown, could not be determined simply through formal compliance and was the subject of interpretative efforts. I have argued that this aspect of niyat (intention) is of crucial social significance in Muslim societies where people may judge the outwardly pious as insincere when considering their acts of piety in conjunction with other less virtuous aspects of their lives.

Less discussed in the literature is the second half of the Prophetic statement, “and to those what they intend,” that seems to suggest a complete disjuncture from practice. This potential for niyat (intention) to present a source of salvation in the absence of practice or as a defense against criticized practice, has been noted in ethnographies of Muslim society. In Egypt Schielke has mentioned how claims to having the correct intention was the basis through which practitioners of the Prophets birthday celebrations defended themselves against criticism. In Zanzibar Erin Stiles has noted how the intention to one day begin praying in the future was the basis through which people explained their current non-compliance. Similarly, a colleague working in Mumbai, Sana Ghazi, has generously shared an interview with a self-declared non-practicing Muslim who combines a hypothetical critique of

people who pray regularly but also cheat others or hurt people, with the claim that “God knows I’m not a bad person.” This was prefaced by the phrase (Allah niyat dekhta hai na, God sees the intention). In these examples the subjective stability of intention allowed individuals to make a claim to the good through which they may deflect attention from criticized practice or non-compliance.

Through the centrality and complexity of niyyat (intention) for Muslim practice and salvation it is possible to understand how an affective relation to the discursive traditions of Islam is possible without producing expectations of how that relation should be embodied. Islam as a lived tradition can accommodate a variety of ethical dispositions and forms of practice. In my research informants were comfortable to explain their practice and even their own inconsistencies or lapses in practice without necessarily experiencing moments of doubt and ambivalence. As is clear from the discussion above Muslims engaged with the discourse on niyat (intention) to criticize outward displays of piety. Contrary to Mahmood, the distinction between an interior self and external practice, as expressed by “middle-class” or “secular liberal Muslim” critics of the piety movement in Cairo is not necessarily evidence that they “share an orientation towards nationalist-identitarian politics” (Mahmood 2011, 146-52) which for her renders them less authentic in their practice of Islam. Rather we may appreciate how the secular liberal and Islamic discursive traditions share a notion of a possible disjuncture between the externality of practice and the interiority of the self.

As we have seen this multi-faceted discourse of intention is crucial for understanding the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai. The practice of Islam as a lived tradition is about appreciating the relevance of discourse, authority and power but also the way in which Muslims make up the rules as they go along. As a lived tradition niyat is important for appreciating the link between seemingly disparate or incomplete practices together with the affective commitment and attachment to the discursive tradition of Islam.

LIVED TRADITION AS A METHODOLOGY

Approaching Muslim practice as a lived tradition is also a methodical contribution. Following Wittgenstein, we may appreciate that exactness is a praise and inexact a reproach. He thus cautions against linear associations between rules and compliance and words and meaning. Practitioners and figures of authority may attempt to determine the rules and patrol practice. However, through the discourse on *niyat* we have seen how compliance is not exhaustive. The practice of a lived tradition is not a coherent entity with clear boundaries. As anthropologists, we should therefore be wary of introducing fixed expectations about what shape and form Muslim practice should take. This means caution against taking sides on internal positions and debates within a lived tradition. Rather we should observe, discuss and understand the different ways in which different individuals devise routes for practice. This necessitates attention to the multiple ways in which their articulations produce both continuities and breaks with past practice and contemporary developments.

Allowing for the complexity of contemporary Muslim food practices in Mumbai as the practice of a lived tradition has meant questioning the way in which anthropology often approaches questions of change, modernity and its 'others.' In anthropology an earlier mode of thinking which considered non-Western people the primitive precursors to modern Western society has given way to a notion of multiple modernities. In this view, different people around the world are no longer non-modern but just differently modern. A particular history of European development is still retained as paradigmatic. However, as we have seen throughout the thesis, encounters between 'cultures' or lived traditions do not necessarily induce total transformations or moments of crisis. Rather than holding particular technological or economic developments as the solid ground upon which all changes flow we should approach these discursive and material formations of power as lived traditions. For example, neoliberal developments in global trade have been particularly powerful in introducing new spaces of consumption, new career opportunities and new forms of ethical subjectivity. However, as a lived tradition the new norms and rules of conduct intersect with alternative traditions of practice, producing novel and sometimes idiosyncratic expressions. Appreciating these moments of continuity

and change as well sameness and difference requires close attention to what people do and say as well as the complex traditions of thought from which they emerge.

MUSLIM FOOD PRACTICE IN MUMBAI

The ethnographic chapters in this thesis have elaborated on the relevance of a lived tradition for understanding the ethics of Muslim food practice in Mumbai. In each chapter I argue for the way in which the approach of Islam as a lived tradition contributes to broader questions in anthropology.

In Chapter 2 I discussed how the practice of halal in Mumbai had been undergoing a process of change. Halal certification was emerging as a response to developments in global trade and the establishment of international fast-food chain stores as places of Muslim consumption. It sought to introduce certainty over halal practice in places where Muslim involvement was no longer assured. However, the centrality of *niyat* for the Muslim practice of halal precluded questions of certainty. In the chapter, we saw how Muslims devised multiple routes for the practice of halal in new contexts. Contrary to arguments that connect halal certification to audit cultures, and the expectations of neoliberal developments as inducing a total transformation in local practice, Muslims had an alternative discourse for the practice of halal upon which to draw.

Chapter 3 presented an ethnography of the interactions between a Muslim butcher, Hassan, and his customers at a chicken shop. It considered the availability of live chicken, freshly slaughtered in-store and 'frozen' packaged chicken as two material forms for the production of halal. Each signified very different engagements between humans, animals and slaughter. Contrary to arguments in the anthropology of meat that view slaughter as inherently problematic and evocative of disgust the chapter showed how an Islamic lived tradition understood slaughter as violent but not necessarily cruel. Corporate-produced 'frozen' halal chicken, through its appeal to sanitation, package design and hygiene, presented the potential for the sight, smell and sound of fresh chicken production and the body and occupation of the Muslim butcher to be produced as a site of disgust. This was particularly relevant in Mumbai where a Hindu-nationalist discourse emphasized the body of the Muslim as

butcher as a site of abjection. In this context, ethical business practice was not about conformance to some notion of ethics and integrity as informed by an Islamic discursive tradition. Practices of concealment, deception and imitation of corporate chicken production were the situated ethical practices through which he sought to retain interest in fresh chicken, ensuring his relevance, profit and respectability.

In Chapter 4 I presented the ethical narratives and material practices of two restaurants in the old Muslim quarters of the city. Through close attention to the narrative form and idiom through which the practices and history of each restaurant was expressed it was clear that there were different ethical subject positions of Islam as a lived tradition. A language of humility, care and continuity was one expression. Another combined an emphasis on pride, innovation and invention in articulating a route through which to engage in a Muslim business practice. Through the complexity of a lived tradition the chapter highlighted the extent to which a focus on piety or some notion of an Islamic or Indian moral economy would miss the interplay of similarities and differences between the two restaurants. The chapter drew attention to the need for closer attention to the specific constellation of ethical narratives and business practice in understanding the ethics of trade.

In Chapter 5 I approached the practice of Qurbani (sacrifice) in Mumbai as the practice of a lived tradition. The importance of performing sacrifice with feeling (ehsaas) was widely emphasized. This necessitated practices of human-animal intimacy and care in the build-up to the day of sacrifice in order to cultivate attachment to the sacrificial animal through which a feeling of loss would be produced. The chapter showed how a series of ethical judgements regarding price, budget and bargaining as well as a personal sense of aesthetic value, and practices of care in the home were the route through which Qurbani with feeling was practiced. Through this constellation of practices of sacrifice as a process it was clear that the ethics and economics of sacrifice were intertwined rather than incommensurable. Viewing Qurbani through the lens of a lived tradition offered an analysis that went beyond concern with the possibility or impossibility of the ethics of sacrifice.

The final Chapter 6 presented an ethnography of Ramadan in Mumbai. It showed how time, individual ethical disposition and occupation were important for the practice of Ramadan as a lived tradition. Piety, care and generosity were important virtues emphasized during the month. However, the particular route through which the virtues of Ramadan were practiced pointed to the importance of ethical judgment and reflection as central to practice. As a month of fast and feasting there were different practices through which the blessings of the month were achieved. Rather than analyses of Ramadan that have emphasized the utilitarian search for reward or the triumph of some notion of Islamic morality, the chapter showed how different individuals engaged in different practices of Ramadan. Abstract notions of the sacred month and utilitarian emphasis on reward (sawab) was not absent nor exhaustive of the complex practices of a lived tradition.

Through five ethnographic chapters I presented a view of the ethics of Muslim food practices in Mumbai. Focusing on a selection of important times and places of Muslim food production and consumption I sought to offer a novel view on Muslims in India. Neither political developments, economic change nor sectarian difference could fully account for the practice of Islam as a lived tradition. Muslims in Mumbai engaged in ethical reflection and judgement through which they produced, consumed, traded and abstained from food. Viewed from the perspective of a lived tradition there was no opportunity to make direct comparisons and contrasts with certain ideal Western tropes of personhood or practice. At the same time, change and challenges for practice did not necessarily produce moments of ambivalence and uncertainty. Debate and difference was integral to the practice of Islam as a lived tradition.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

The scope of a lived tradition necessarily calls for further research in different contexts and for the exploration of new questions and developments in Mumbai. Since concluding my research the political situation in India and Mumbai has changed significantly. The rise to power of the right-wing BJP government at the national level, and the ban on both cow and bull slaughter in Mumbai has

placed additional pressure on the Muslim community. The current governments fusion of right-wing sentiment and modernization reforms is potentially detrimental to the livelihoods of many of my informants. In the increasingly politicized context it would be important to account for new developments and expressions of Islam as a lived tradition in the city. How are Muslim restaurants responding to the new regulation of meat in the city? What are the impacts of new meat regulation on dietary practice and commercial enterprise? I am interested in further exploring the historical narratives of my informants as they trace their arrival in the city within the changing political, religious and culinary landscape. Beyond India I hope to develop an Indian Ocean research project that connects to my previous research on halal certification in South Africa. The connections and disjuncture's along the Indian ocean basin offer a fascinating site through which to explore the expansion of halal certification between Indian trader networks, global organizations based in Dubai, Malaysia and Singapore, and everyday practice. In Southern Africa the presence of century-old trader communities, recent South Asian migrants, Muslims from Southeast Asia and African Muslims presents a unique case through which to view the emergence of Islam as a lived tradition.

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