traditions; on the other, he states quite simply that some traditions are mixtures of ‘popular texts and verses’ taught to Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian children, before they embraced Islam. Again, about Ḥadīth the author tells us, ‘The persons quoting them did not always have good memories, sometimes being careless or even deliberately deceitful in repeating words attributed to the Prophet’ (p. 52). Thus the two main bases on which rests the entire edifice of Islam (the Qur’an and the Tradition) are subjected to sweeping doubts, leaving the accessories of Kālām, ‘ilm al-rijāl, jurisprudence, tafsīr, logic, philosophy, etc., behind.

Such missionary injections apart, the book gives, in broad outline, an idea only of the methods of teaching followed by the Medieval Muslim scholars rather than the aims and ideals of the system of education prevailing in the lands of Islam. Dr. G. Makdisi’s well-written essay ‘Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh Century Baghdad’ (SOAS, XXIV/i, April 1961), gives a much better idea of what the Muslim system of education aimed at than the monograph under review. It is a pity that a well-planned, well-knit and fully interpretative history of Muslim education from the earliest times to the present-day still remains to be written. The work under review as well as those cited above, coupled with a thorough and critical study of the classical Arabic works, treating of books and scholars, educational institutions and mosque-colleges, endowments and foundations, biographies and bibliographies, general and local histories, including various adab works, will prove of immense help to a future historian of Muslim classical education who wishes to produce a work of intrinsic worth and lasting value. The present book is neatly printed and the get-up is fine. The Appendices seem mostly superfluous. The jacket carries a good picture, whose source has not been revealed, of a Medieval Muslim teacher, clad in his voluminous ringed turban and flowing black woollen robes, taking a class of elderly students in one of the liwāns of al-Azhar, giving the impressing of a distinguished scholar respected by his pupils and people at large for ‘the ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyrs’.

KARACHI

A. S. BAZMEE ANSARI

Frederick J. Simoons, EAT NOT THIS FLESH. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1961, pp. 241.

The subject of this interesting work is more closely defined in the sub-title Food Avoidances in the Old World. Here, apparently for the first time, an attempt is made at a general survey of those curious prejudices which cause one people to recoil with seemingly instinctive horror and disgust from an animal food which may be the staple diet or even the favourite delicacy of another, perhaps neighbouring people.

Professor Simoons is a cultural geographer, and it was whilst carrying out doctoral research-work in North-West Ethiopia that his attention was first drawn to these prejudices. He observed that all Ethiopians, Christians and pagan equally with Muslim and Jew, regarded the pig as unclean and rejected pork as food; that Ethiopian Christians considered the eating of camel flesh as a Muslim trait and as an offence liable to punishment by excommunication; that
all Ethiopians avoided horseflesh and some refused to eat domestic fowl. Afterwards, when travelling across Africa from Ethiopia to Nigeria, he "noted that there were large areas where a particular flesh food was used and others where it was avoided; and that those who rejected a food had strong feelings on the matter" (p. vii). It was at first his intention simply to write a short article on these taboos as he had found them in Africa; he was fortunately persuaded to work up his material into a comprehensive study of flesh food avoidance throughout the Old World.

A chapter each is devoted to six animal foods: pork, beef (with special attention to India as "the center of beef avoidance in the Old World"), chicken and eggs (avoided in large parts of Africa, and here and there in Arabia), horseflesh, camel flesh and dogflesh. In a final chapter he discusses the nature and manifestations of these group prejudices and speculates as to their origins. The problem is not merely an academic one. These "foodways" as the author calls them, "the modes of feeling, thinking and behaving about food that are common to a cultural group" may sometimes "lead men to overlook foods that are abundant locally and are of high nutritive value, and to utilize other, scarcer foods of less value" (p. vii). This is a complication which nutritionists, planning the feeding of the world's growing population, have not perhaps fully taken into account.

The following remarks, based largely on Islamic material, may perhaps be of use to the author in a second edition of his work; for it is greatly to be hoped that he will continue his researches in this interesting and hitherto neglected field.

In his chapter on pigs and pork (pp. 41-2), Professor Simoons accounts for the prejudice against swineflesh prevalent in the Middle East as arising "among pastoral peoples in the arid or semi-arid areas of Asia" and spreading to the settled peoples with whom they came into contact. The nomads looked upon the pig as an animal alien to their own way of life and symbolic of their sedentary neighbours; coming amongst the latter as conquerors they gradually imposed their own prejudice upon them. It is not clear which are the "arid or semi-arid areas" Professor Simoons has in mind, presumably, in view of his mentioning the Scythians' antipathy to the pig. The Eurasian steppes (Herodotus IV, 63; not 68 as given by Simoons, p. 155, n. 79). Elsewhere (pp. 119-20) he offers a more plausible explanation of this particular taboo. Amongst the Egyptians the pig was a sacred animal, and there is, as he points out, a curious dualism in men's attitude towards the sacred. Religious awe is often a mixture of reverence and abhorrence, and when the latter feeling prevails over the former what had once been "sacred" becomes "unclean", though traces of the older feeling may still survive. Professor Simoons instances such survivals in Egypt after the pig's "fall from grace": the Persian practice (also recorded from Baghdad) of keeping a wild pig in the stable to protect the horses from the evil eye can be accounted for in precisely the same way. In Europe, on the other hand, the original attitude towards swineflesh seems to have undergone little change. Amongst the Greeks and Romans, as Professor Simoons perhaps does not sufficiently stress (p. 20), the pig was once a sacred animal and a favourite source of food. This
is a "foodway" which their ancestors must have brought with them from the forests of Central and Northern Europe. It is significant that the Balto-Slavs, the Germanic peoples and the Celts share with the Romans a common word for "pigs"—a word unknown to the Indo-European peoples of Asia and perhaps borrowed from the aboriginal Europeans who taught them the art of swine-herding. To these peoples pork was the food of the gods in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. Thus the ancient Irish thought of the Otherworld as possessing an inexhaustible supply of the choicest food and drink, and in particular of this, the meat they most highly esteemed. The pigs of the sea-god Mannanan were of such a nature that though they were killed and eaten to-day they would be ready to suffer the same fate again tomorrow. In the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, a cycle of four stories reduced to writing by an unknown Welshman sometime in the 11th century A.D. but based on much older material, there is a reference to pigs as "strange beasts the like of which had never come to this island before:" their flesh was better than beef and they were a present from the king of the Otherworld to the ruler of Dyfed (i.e. South West Wales). The stealing of these paradisiacal animals or rather their acquisition under false pretences leads to hostilities between Dyfed and Gwynedd (i.e. North Wales) and is a link in the complicated plot of the last of the Four Branches. The survival of such pre-Christian traditions may well have influenced the Early Church in its rejection of the Mosaic prohibition.

Towards horseflesh the attitude of early Christianity was very different: it was too closely associated with the paganism of Northern Europe to escape the Church's condemnation, of which traces remain to-day in the general prejudice against the use of horsemeat for human consumption. In medieval times we encounter this prejudice amongst the Christian peoples of the Caucasus, where Armenians and Georgians alike are represented as rejecting horseflesh when proffered by their Mongol captors. The Muslim attitude was much less uncompromising. Professor Simoons is wrong in stating that the eating of horseflesh was forbidden by Abü Hanîfah (p. 82); in his and the other schools, except that of al-Shâfi`î, it is simply disapproved (makrûh), while al-Shâfi`î, disagreeing in this, as in other respects, declares it to be lawful food. Both the Ḥanafis and the Mâlikis refer, in justification of their ban, to Qur'ân (XVI : 8): "And He hath given you horses, mules and asses, that ye may ride them, and for your ornament." Al-Shâfi`î based his contrary opinion, according to the Hidâyah, on Jâbir's tradition that the Prophet prohibited the flesh of domestic asses and permitted horseflesh at the Battle of Khaybar. That horseflesh was eaten in pre-Islamic Arabia may be deduced from the famous story of Ḥâtîm Ṭâ`yî: how, to entertain the Byzantine ambassador, he slaughtered his favourite horse, tethered at the door of his tent, because a flood had prevented access to the ordinary animals in the herd (see Sa`di, Bûstân, ed. Forughî, pp. 85-6).

Al-Shâfi`î, whilst allowing horseflesh, agrees with the other Imâmî in banning the flesh of the domesticated (though not the wild) ass and, consequently, the mule. There is a reference to this taboo (not mentioned by Professor Simoons) in the Ta`rîkh Nâmah-yi Harât of Sayî b. Muḥammad b. Ya`qûb (Sayî) al-Harawi (Calcutta 1944, p. 87). A starving fugitive, one of the countless victims of the Mongols' devastation of Khurâsân, waylays an old man riding on a donkey and
seeks to dispossess him of his mount; the old man, learning that the animal is to be slaughtered and eaten, endeavours to dissuade his attacker from his purpose by quoting the actual words of the Prophet's prohibition. On the other hand the Ibadis of South-Eastern Arabia ignored or were alleged to ignore the ban on donkey meat. Ibn Battūṭa (Tr. Gibb, ii : 399) records that at the table of the Sultan of Oman "there is eaten the flesh of the domestic ass, and it is also sold in the market, because they maintain that it is lawful for food, but they conceal the fact from one who comes to their country and do not produce it openly in his presence". The curious difference in the attitude to the ass and the horse is perhaps not unconnected with the fact that the former had been known in the Middle East for more than a thousand years before the advent of the latter. That the ass was in some way a "sacred" animal is indicated by the practice, in medieval Persia, of suspending a donkey's head in a vegetable garden to ward off the evil eye (see Juvenal-Boyle, p. 427, n. 5).

The eating of dogflesh is regarded with equal repugnance by Christian and Muslim, though there appears in neither case to be any religious basis for this feeling. There are, however, as Professor Simoons points out (p. 91), many areas in the Old World, notably China, where the flesh of this animal is or has been eaten and even regarded as a delicacy. In North-East Asia he mentions the Chuckchhees and Gilyak as dog-eaters (p. 97); he might have added the medieval Mongols, whose diet included, in the words of John de Plano Carpini, "dogs, wolves, foxes, and horses, and, when pushed by necessity, human flesh." Curiously enough, the flesh of the fox, despite its close relationship to the dog, is by no means universally condemned as food amongst the Muslims. Approved by al-Shâfî'i, forbidden by Abû Ḥanîfah, it seems always to have been eaten by Bedouin Arabs. Wilfrid Thesiger was told by a shaykh of the Râshîd that sand foxes were lawful food but that mountain foxes were not. The Manâsîr eat foxes, so H. St. J. B. Philby was informed by one of their tribe, but not the neighbouring Murra. A reference to foxflesh as a delicacy in the Persian poet Niẓâmî is presumably derived from an Arab source. The fennec, as one would logically expect, is also approved by al-Shâfî'i; so, more surprisingly, is the hyena. One has the impression that al-Shâfî'i's views in these matters reflect the habits of the desert-dwellers of Arabia, whose diet was naturally conditioned by their environment.

Professor Simoons, it will be noted, has studied food avoidance only in relation to domesticated animals; he, therefore, makes no mention of what is perhaps the most interesting of such taboos, the attitude of many peoples in Europe and Asia towards the hare. The ancient Britons, according to Caesar, kept hares as pets but would not eat their flesh. That they regarded the animal as sacred is clear from the story of Queen Boadicea's releasing a hare that she had concealed in her bosom and causing a favourable augury to be drawn from its twistings and turnings as it sought to escape. Both in Wales and in Ireland a prejudice against eating the flesh of this animal has survived into modern times, coupled with a belief that it is one of the forms adopted by witches for their nocturnal perambulations. In England too the hare was regarded as an uncanny animal, it being believed that a hare crossing one's path was a portent of misfortune. This particular superstition is old and perhaps Indo-European in
origin; for it is recorded to have been held by a 13th-century Lithuanian prince, a recent and lukewarm convert to Christianity. In Western Asia hareflesh was forbidden under the Mosaic law on the ground that the animal "chewed the cud but did not divide the hoof". Amongst the Muslim peoples the position is not so clear. Al-Shāfī'i considered hareflesh as lawful, and Abū Ḥanīfah held that there was no harm in eating it because the Prophet had done so when it was offered to him roasted and had ordered his companions to eat it; also because it was not a carnivorous animal or one that ate carrion, but resembled the gazelle. The desert Arabs seem always to have eaten it with relish. Bertram Thomas records an amusing Bedouin folktale of how the Prophet, annoyed with the hare's behaviour, declared its flesh to be ḥālāl "for all men to eat, every bit of you, even your bowels". On the other hand the Shi'is will not eat the hare, and this attitude is so characteristic as to have earned them the Turkish nickname of tavṣan yemez. The ban, however, seems to be social rather than religious, and the fact that this prejudice is shared by Muslim Persians and Christian Armenians suggests that it is pre-Islamic, if not Indo-European, in origin.

"It is clear," Professor Simoons says, "that many powerful and complex agents play a part in the establishment and abandonment of food restrictions. Great opportunities exist here for the cultural geographer, the historian, the student of culture change, and the nutritionist to extend our knowledge of a little-understood problem that is of much importance in the effort to feed the world's peoples" (p. 125).

MANCHESTER

JOHN A. BOYLE

Notices


This is the second expanded edition of the one-volume (1944) edition of the Select Writings and Speeches of Muḥammad ʿAlī, the eminent Khalīfah Movement leader of Muslim India in the early decades of this century. The last chapter of the first volume comprises the historic leading article of the weekly Comrade, Calcutta (26th September, 1914), captioned The Choice of the Turks, whose publication resulted in the closure of the periodical, forfeiture of the security deposit of the printing press, and the imprisonment of its editor—Mawlāna Muḥammad ʿAlī—the younger of the famous Ali Brothers who made history in the early twenties of this century in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. This editorial of the Comrade was considered so highly dangerous and so gravely seditious by the (British) Government of India that its republication even as late as 1944 was flatly disallowed. It is for the first time now, since the proscription of the relevant issue of the Comrade, that this journalistic masterpiece of Muḥammad ʿAlī is seeing the light of the day again.

Most of the other writings and speeches of this great fighter for freedom, who demanded death or return to a free country during the Indian Round Table Conference in London (1930), included in the collection are of topical value