

Rajput Flavors in the Mughal Kitchen: Delving into Culinary Psychology of Medieval India

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ABSTRACT

Food, a fundamental need for human life and development, is crucial to culture and the development of one's identity because it always reflects one's choices, beliefs, status, habits, and personality. The present article seeks to recreate the history of Indian food, a topic that has been relatively understudied in gastronomy literature. The foundation of Mughal- Rajput alliance under Akbar not only helped in the consolidation and expansion of the Empire but even ensured entry of culinary artists from different regions of India who incorporated Persian flavors into their pre-existing cooking techniques. The advantages from the Hindu diet, consisting mainly of vegetables, was thus being advocated by the Mughals. This article, hence focuses on the adaptability of the Indic vegetarianism by the so-called alien invaders of South Asia. Here, it is argued that the Mughals advocated the harmonious adaptability of the Mughal cuisine with varied transcultural and transnational practices and upheld the message of syncretism. The finding thus, advocates that cuisine, as a phenomenon, be analyzed as a transcultural process rather than as a structure.

Keywords: *Mughal, Rajput, Kitchen, Vegetarianism, Dining, Etiquette, Cuisine*

Introduction

The Mughal kitchen was an institution in itself, of which every detail was precisely worked out, regulated and recorded. The ladies of the harem did not cook their meals. The harem's premises included a communal kitchen, but it was sufficiently distanced from them to preserve privacy and purdah. Expert cooks were engaged in it. It supplied all food-requirements of the harem inmates. No cooking was allowed inside the harem and the Rajput ladies married to the Mughals also ate from the common kitchen.

Mughals were voracious eaters and loved their food. When Mughal glory was at its peak and even during its fag end when due to scarcity of resources the harem inmates were forced to sleep empty-stomach many times, the Royal kitchen remained witness to hectic activity. The imperial kitchen called as *Matbakh*¹ had a prime position in the *zenana*. Innumerable varieties of food were prepared in the Royal kitchen by expert cooks coming from many corners of the globe. The Royal kitchen became all the more important because it catered to the taste buds of one of the most powerful man on earth- the Emperor of Hindustan.

Though the Mughal ladies did not cook their food yet the royal kitchen formed an important part of the imperial family as not only the king's family but also he himself took food there, even the drinking water was subjected to careful scrutiny before being used by the king and other members of the *Shahi* family. Writing about the imperial kitchen Abul Fazal, notes that "This department hires only reliable and knowledgeable individuals. The Prime Minister himself serves as their leader's assistant. In order to ensure the department's success, His Majesty chooses a true and enthusiastic man to the position of Mir Bakawal, or Master of the Kitchen. Additionally, there are multiple taskers, a shrewd writer, and treasurers for both the cash and the stores."²

Various Sufiyana or pure vegetarian dishes were prepared in the Royal kitchen like *Zard Birinz*, *Shirbirinj*, *Badinjan*, *Pahit*, *Khichri*, *Saag*, *Halwa* etc. Names of some rice- meat dishes were: *Qabuli*, *Hafi Duzdbiryani*,

¹Fazl, Abul. (1993). The Akbarnama. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. p.59.

² Fazl, Abul. (1993). The Akbarnama. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. p.59.

Qutab (samosa), Qima Pulao, Bughra, QimaShurho Harisa. While various pure meat dishes were also prepared like *Malghuba, Qaliya, Musamman, Kabab, Yakhni, Biryani, Dupiyaza* etc.³ Many kinds of Indian bread were also prepared called Roti or chapatti. All the Mughals were very fond of *achaar (pickles)* prepared from seasonal vegetables like *aam, nimbu*, chilli, garlic, ginger, *amla* etc. Sweets like *jalebi, balushahi, khurma*, and *imarti* formed an essential part of everyday meal.

Different kind of *namkeens* were also consumed as snacks during medieval age. Both men and women of the Royal family were very fond of eating fresh and dried fruits. Both locally available and exotic fruits were relished by members of the imperial household. Among fresh fruits, apples (*seb*), peaches (*shafitalu*), date (*khajur*) and pear (*nashpati*) were most popular and were sent from the colder regions to places like Agra and Delhi. Besides these, the Mughals loved to indulge in locally available seasonal fruits like mango (*aam*), banana (*kela*), pomegranate (*anaar*), blackberry (*jamun*), guava (*amrud*), water melon (*tarbuz*), musk melon (*kharbuz*) etc.⁴

Since, there was always the danger of king being poisoned and after the sad incident of the first Mughal Emperor Babur being poisoned by a cook bribed by Ibrahim Lodi's mother, the Mughal kings' demonstrated great caution in matters of dining. In fact, Akbar avoided dining outside the harem. Extra care was taken in the preparation and serving of meals. A strict action plan was followed right from the procurement of raw material, preparation of the dishes to laying them on the *dastar-khwan*.

Recording this procedure thus, writes Abul Fazal: "During the time of cooking and when the victuals are taken out, an awning is spread, and onlookers kept away. The cooks tuck up their sleeves, and the hems of their garments, and hold their hands before their mouths and noses when the food is taken out; the cook and the Bakawal taste it, after which it is tasted by the Mir Bakawal, and then put into dishes. The Mir Bakawal attaches his seal, and writes on it the names of the contents, whilst the clerk of the pantry writes out on a sheet of paper a list of all vessels and dishes, which he sends inside, so that none of the dishes may be changed. The dishes are carried by the Bakawal, the cooks and the other servants. The servants of the pantry send at the same time, in bags containing the seal of the Bakawal, various kinds of bread, saucers of curds piled up, and small stands containing plates of pickles, fresh ginger, limes and various greens. The servants of the palace again taste the food, spread the table cloth on the ground, and arrange the dishes. After His Majesty has dined the dishes are taken away."⁵

The women of *zenana* could take food anytime they wanted from morning till night, as there was no fixed time for meals. All women including the Rajput wives of the Emperor took meals from the same kitchen but they consumed it in their own apartments. Commenting on it Pelsaert writes, "Each wife takes it (food) in her own apartments; for they hate each other secretly, though they seldom or never allow it to be seen, because of their desire to retain the favor of their husband."⁶

Tensions and jealousies would understandably have been a part of a polygamous household. However, acute acrimony doesn't seem likely given the peculiar nature of the harem. For only a woman could understand the other woman's feelings best. Shelled inside the seraglio, away from their near and dear ones, these lovelorn ladies seldom had any one to talk to. Especially old age would have melted away the youthful vigor and ambition. In those solemn lonely hours they would have had no one else to turn to but each other.

We are told that at the start of every year an estimate of annual expenditure of royal kitchen was made by the Sub-treasurers and based on this estimate money was allotted.⁷ Monthly statement of kitchen expenditure was also made which was signed by Mir Bakawal and the writer. It is interesting to note that the choicest items were collected from all parts of the country for the imperial pantry and at the onset of every quarter it was the duty of

³ Nath, Ram. (1994). Private life of the Mughals (1526-1803). Rupa Publications. Jaipur. pp.93-97.

⁴ Nath, Ram. (1994). Private life of the Mughals (1526-1803). Rupa Publications. Jaipur. p.97.

⁵ Fazl, Abul. (1993). The Akbarnama. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. pp.60-61.

⁶ Pelsaert, F. (1925). Jahangir's India, the Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert. W. Heffer & Sons. pp.64-65.

⁷ Nath, Ram. (1994). Private life of the Mughals (1526-1803). Rupa Publications. Jaipur. p.83.

the Mir Bakawal and *Diwan-i-Bayutat* (Superintendent of stores and workshops) to collect these items. For instance *Sukhdasrice* was procured from Bharaji (Bahraich), *Dewzirarice* from Gwalior. *Jinjin* rice came from Rajori and *Nimlah*, ghee was brought from Hisar Firuza; ducks, water fowls and some vegetables from Kashmir.⁸

The Rajputs, the Hindu aristocracy, were angered by Humayun's men eating beef. To appease Hindus and uphold his hegemony, Akbar even went as far as to become a virtual vegetarian⁹. However, Akbar's successors were unable to manage food politics as shrewdly as he did. The *Ni'matnama*, or "Book of Delights," has one of the oldest descriptions of Mughal cuisine. It was a recipe book created in the fifteenth century by Ghiyath Shah, the Sultan of Malwa. During Akbar's conquest of the Malwa Sultanate in 1562, it is thought that the text made its way into the Mughal kitchens. The book includes comprehensive recipes as well as remarks on each dish that categorizes it as either a poor man's cuisine, a dish fit for a king, or a monarch's favorite. The book also includes miniature artwork with the king as the main subject. Recipes for numerous sambusas can be found in the *Ni'matnama*. *Sambusas* are created with a delicate pastry, a savory, hot filling, and then deep-fried. Venison was used to make the *sambusas'* filling.¹⁰

Akbar, interestingly, consumed vegetarian diet three times per week and even had his own kitchen garden. The emperor made sure that his plants were meticulously nourished with rosewater so that the veggies would smell delicious when cooked. It is also thought that *panchmel dal*, also known as *panchratna dal*, and a few other vegetarian meals were introduced into the primarily non-vegetarian Mughal kitchen by Akbar's Rajput wife, Jodha Bai (also known as Harka Bai/ *Maryam-uz-Zamani*). When Shah Jahan ascended to the throne, the court had its own recipe for *shahi panchmel dal* as a result of its enormous popularity within the Mughal royalty.

Akbar also paid keen attention to arrangement of pure drinking water. To this end, he constituted a separate department called *Abdar Khana*.¹¹ Ganga water was arranged for his drinking. Men of trust were reposed around banks of river Ganga to dispatch the water in sealed jars. Water was brought from Sorum and Haridwar. It was ensured that Akbar only had Ganga water both during his stay at the capital and while travelling. In fact Abul Fazal tells us that on Akbar's instruction Saltpetre was used to cool down the water.

In the reign of Akbar the use of ice also became prevalent. It was brought through carriages, by water or by bearers from Panhan district, 45 kos from Lahore.¹² It was not easy to carry ice since long distances had to be covered in those days of difficult transportation. Therefore the trade of ice had become a profitable business. Akbar's court historian Abul Fazl mentions in *Ain-i- Akbari* that, "Out of the ten boats employed for the transport of ice, one arrives daily at the capital, each being manned by four boatmen. The ice bundles contain from six to twelve *sers*, according to the temperature. A carriage brings two loads. There are fourteen stages, where the horses are changed and besides, one elephant is used: Twelve pieces of ten to four *sers* arrive daily. If it is brought by bearers, twenty-eight men are required for the fourteen stages. They bring every day one load, containing four parcels. All ranks use ice in summer; except the nobles who use it throughout the whole year."¹³

The Mughal royal house thus not only endorsed vegetarianism, they themselves practiced it too. It also portrayed the disposition of the Mughals towards their conquered subjects. It was not all about imposition of the Mughal cultural practices by suppressing the indigenous cultural traits, as mainstream understanding tends to represent. There was definite acculturation and adaptability of local customs and practices in everyday consumption habits of the Mughals. The adaptation of vegetarian dishes hence, provided an alternative insight into the common understanding of the meat loving Mughals.

⁸Fazl, Abul. (1993). *The Akbarnama*. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. p.60.

⁹Sen CT. *Feasts and fasts: a history of food in India*. London: Reaktion Books; 2014. p.78.

¹⁰Titley NM. (2004). *The Ni'matnama manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu: The Sultan's book of delights*. Oxon: Routledge. p.456

¹¹Nath, Ram. (1994). *Private life of the Mughals (1526-1803)*. Rupa Publications. Jaipur. p.103.

¹²Fazl, Abul. (1993). *The Akbarnama*. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. p.105.

¹³Fazl, Abul. (1993). *The Akbarnama*. (H. Beveridge, Trans.) (Vols. 1 to 3). Delhi. p.58.

During Akbar's rule in India (1556-1605), the cuisine of the Mughal Empire underwent significant changes, blending Persian, Central Asian, and Indian influences. Akbar was known for his love of food and even created a royal kitchen that was staffed by hundreds of cooks and chefs.

Some of the popular dishes during Akbar's time included:

1. **Biryani**: A fragrant rice dish made with meat or vegetables and flavored with saffron, spices, and ghee.
2. **Kebabs**: Grilled meat or vegetable skewers seasoned with spices and served with mint chutney.
3. **Pilaf**: A rice dish cooked in broth or stock and flavored with spices and herbs.
4. **Korma**: A creamy, fragrant curry made with meat, vegetables, or paneer (Indian cheese).
5. **Naan**: A leavened flatbread baked in a tandoor (clay oven) and served with curry or kebabs.
6. **Samosas**: Fried or baked triangular pastry filled with spiced potatoes, peas, and meat.
7. **Halwa**: A sweet dessert made with semolina, sugar, ghee, and dried fruits.

Akbar was also known for his interest in vegetarianism and encouraged the consumption of vegetables and fruits. He reportedly ate a simple vegetarian diet, consisting of lentils, beans, vegetables, and fruits, on certain days of the week. Overall, Akbar's rule saw the introduction of new culinary techniques and ingredients, which greatly influenced the cuisine of the Mughal Empire and of India as a whole.

Rajput Food habits during Akbar's Rule

During Akbar's rule, the Rajputs were one of the major powers in India. They had their own distinct cuisine and food habits, which were influenced by their geography, culture, and religion.

The Rajputs were predominantly Hindu and therefore their cuisine was primarily vegetarian, although some Rajputs did consume meat, especially game meats like venison and wild boar.

Their diet also included milk and milk derivatives such as ghee, buttermilk, and yoghurt.

Some of the popular dishes in Rajput cuisine during Akbar's time included:

1. **Dal Baati Churma**: A wholesome dish consisting of lentil curry, roasted wheat balls (baati), and a sweet crumbled wheat preparation (churma).
2. **Gatte ki Sabzi**: A curry made with gram flour dumplings and a spicy yogurt-based gravy.
3. **Ker Sangri**: A vegetable preparation made with dried berries (ker) and beans (sangri) that are native to the arid regions of Rajasthan.
4. **Laal Maas**: A fiery meat curry made with mutton and red chili powder.
5. **Mawa Kachori**: A sweet fried pastry filled with a mixture of reduced milk (mawa), nuts, and sugar.
6. **Bajre ki Roti**: A flatbread made with pearl millet flour that is popular in Rajasthan.
7. **Lassi**: A yogurt-based drink that is a popular accompaniment to Rajput meals.

Overall, Rajput cuisine during Akbar's time was known for its simplicity, rusticity and the use of local and seasonal ingredients. However, it was also influenced by the Mughal cuisine, and as a result, some dishes like *Laal Maas* and *Mawa Kachori* have a significant Mughal influence. Akbar was known for his interest in different cuisines and food habits, including Rajput cuisine. According to historical records, Akbar often invited Rajput chiefs and nobles to his court and would ask them to bring their regional specialties and recipes with them. He was particularly fond of the Rajput-style meat dishes, especially the *Laal Maas*.

To further increase his knowledge around Rajput cuisine, Akbar also commissioned a book called '*Ain-i-Akbari*' which documented the administration, culture, and daily life of the Mughal Empire, including its food and culinary practices. The book provides a detailed account of the various dishes and ingredients used in Rajput cuisine during Akbar's time. Additionally, Akbar was known for his policy of religious tolerance and often hosted feasts that included both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes to accommodate the dietary restrictions of both his Hindu and Muslim subjects. He is said to have encouraged the exchange of culinary knowledge and practices between different communities, which helped to enrich the culinary landscape of the Mughal Empire.

They wouldn't consume the dish until a trusted authority sampled it. Armed guards kept watch over the food while it was sealed in the royal kitchens, counted, and finally delivered to the royal dining room. A person's rank determined how many dishes were offered to him. Ice for their drinks was transported from the Himalayas. The Mughals loved their food and drink and brought some incredible customs and delicacies to our nation, starting with Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, and ending with Aurangzeb, who expanded the empire across the entire subcontinent. Thanks to his relationships with Indian families through marriage, Akbar greatly influenced the royal kitchen. He reportedly practiced vegetarianism three days a week and had a private kitchen garden that was irrigated with rosewater to give the product a fragrant flavor. Some histories claim that in the final years of his life, when he also became a vegetarian and gave up drinking, he only ate once every twenty-four hours. Additionally, he only drank Ganga water and thought it could solely heal any illness.

Emperor Akbar was profoundly influenced by the doctrine of Ahimsa, and issued a number of *farmans*, or royal proclamations, prohibiting the killing of fish and animals and urging people not to eat meat at least for a duration of six months in a year.¹⁴ Ahimsa emerged as a religious principle practiced by Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism that literally translates as "non-harming and non-violence." towards not only any kind of living creatures but as well as in words, thoughts and actions. Although, Ahimsa as an ethical concept traced its lineage to the sacred Vedas. However, the evolution of the concept of Ahimsa as a non-injury to animals developed in the later Vedic phase, particularly as settled agriculture came into force, instead of pastoralism. Ahimsa later became the central concept in the Upanishads.

As pointed out by D. N. Jha in his book "*The Myth of the Holy Cow*", The Upanishadic scriptures even went so far as to challenge the necessity of animal sacrifice, prioritise asceticism as a means of gaining self-realization, interpret novel perspective into the act of sacrifice, and advance the idea of ahimsa.¹⁵ The rise of Buddhism and Jainism between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE and their stringent advocacy of Ahimsa further popularized the doctrine of vegetarianism among the masses. Akbar thus, to respect the traditions of his majoritarian subjects tried to curb the indiscriminate slaughter of animals. This in a sense was unprecedented in Indian history and he could be compared with the Mauryan King Ashoka, who also issued rock edicts banning the slaughter of animals. Ashoka, of course was bound by his Buddhist religious obligations to issue such order. Akbar, himself a devout Muslim, however was not under any such pressure to maintain such restrictions. Akbar, tried to maintain harmonious co-existence within his empire which was composed of various ethnicities and diverse religious affiliations. Even at his court, he made an effort to limit the consumption of beef and shunned other meals which might upset Jains and Hindus.¹⁶

Akbar was rather inquisitive and wanted to know about other religions and often assembled scholars belonging to different religions including Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and even Jesuit scholars and engaged in serious spiritual interactions. He even attempted to spread *Din-I-Ilahi*, a new religion that incorporated the best aspects of other faiths. He himself tried to practice what he preached and as mentioned by Abul Fazl. Akbar abstained completely from meat on Fridays and on his birthday on Sundays.¹⁷ He fasted regularly and frequently

¹⁴Stuart, Tristram. (2006). *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, p. 264.

¹⁵ Jha, D.N. (2009). *The Myth of the Holy Cow*. (7th reprint.) New Delhi: Navayana Publishing Pvt Ltd., p.42.

¹⁶ Sen Taylor, Colleen. (2016). *Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India*, India: Speaking Tiger Publishing. p.183.

¹⁷Blochmann, H. (trans. 1927). *Ain-i-Akbari*. Vol.1, p. 64.

and ate only once in the day. His Majesty only eats once during the course of a 24-hour period, and he never finishes his meal. His meal also doesn't have a set timing. However, the staff always has things prepared in advance so that, within an hour of receiving the order, a hundred savories are served.¹⁸

Delectable Vegetarian Recipes from the Royal Kitchen

Abul Fazl chronicled the functioning of the imperial kitchen and classified following dishes:-

The prominent dish known as *Sufiyana* was comprised only of vegetarian delicacies. These included *Zard birinj* (Zarda/sweet rice), *khushka rice*, plain rice, *pahit* or lentils cooked with ginger, cumin seeds, asafetida and ghee, mostly eaten with *khushka* rice.¹⁹ While *Saag* cooked from spinach and other green leaves, fennel seeds, ghee, onions, ginger, pepper, cardamoms and cloves, was described by Abul Fazl as, 'one of the most pleasant dishes.'²⁰

There are also references of various kinds of sweets including several types of *Halwa*. *Halwa* again was imported by the Mughals to India which reflect the diverse culinary influences adopted by the Mughals in Indian context. *Khichdi* was one of the major dishes of *Sufiyana*. In fact, *khichdi* a quintessential Indian vegetarian dish, became the favorite of the Mughal rulers. So much so Jahangir (1605-1627) Akbar's son and successor, absolutely adored it. He particularly favoured the '*bajra khichdi*' which he had encountered in western India. He recorded, a mixture of split peas and millet boiled together. It is a kind of split grain which does not grow in any other country but Hindustan. It is cheaper than most vegetables. As he had never eaten it, he ordered them to make some and bring it to him. It is not devoid of flavor, and it suited him well. He ordered that on days of abstinence, when he does not eat dishes made of flesh, they should frequently bring me this *khichri*.²¹

In fact as Francois Bernier, the French traveller and physician recorded *Khichdi* was the primary item of food of the masses during Jahangir's grandson Aurangzeb's reign.²² The Mughals hence embraced the indigenous practices and customs including local delicacies. Jahangir, adopted many of his father's rituals. A treatise written by the Jesuit missionary Jeronimo Xavier, recorded that Jahangir, like his father used to begin his day with worshipping the sun.²³ He also imbibed the taste of vegetarianism from his father and it is said that he indulged only in vegetarian food for nine months of the year. He out of his reverence for his father, continued the custom of observing ahimsa on Sundays, the birthday of his father and on Thursdays to commemorate his accession to the throne. Even Aurangzeb (1658-1707) known for his religious orthodoxy and narrow outlook, chose to live an austere and puritanical life. He rarely consumed meat and mainly restricted himself to a vegetarian fare. He like his ancestors before him, had a passion for fruits, he particularly loved mangoes. Aurangzeb granted his father, Shah Jahan (1628-1658) to eat his favorite dish every day when he imprisoned him at Agra fort. Shah Jahan on the advice of the prison cook instead of any elaborate ingredient, chose chick pea so that he could try a new distinct different delicacy made out of it on an every day basis.²⁴

Acculturation of indigenous Food Practices

The adoption of Vegetarian food was a conscious policy endorsed by the Mughals particularly from Akbar onwards, so as to strengthen the edifice of Mughal rule in India. The ethos of Indian culture naturally entails syncretism as it came under diverse confluences from varied contact zones since its ancient past. In this context,

¹⁸Blochmann, H. (trans. 1927). *Ain-i-Akbari*. Vol.1, p. 62.

¹⁹Blochmann, H. (trans. 1927). *Ain-i-Akbari*. Vol.1, p. 62.

²⁰Blochmann, (trans. 1927). *Ain-i-Akbari*. Vol. 1, p. 62.

²¹Rogers, Alexander. (trans.1900). *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri; or, Memoirs of Jahangir*, London: Royal Asiatic Society. p. 419.

²²Ray Chaudhuri, Tapan and Irfan Habib. (2008). *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. 1: c 1200-c1750, New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 152.

²³Flores, Jorge. (2016). *The Mughal Padshah: A Jesuit Treatise on Emperor Jahangir's Court and Household* by Jeronimo Xavier, Leiden: Brill. p. 58.

²⁴Sen Taylor, Colleen. (2016). *Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India*, India: Speaking Tiger Publishing. p.183.

India's culinary culture could also lay veritable claim to influence transcultural socializing and adaptability. Despite the mainstream understanding of the meat loving Mughals, there were instances where animal free diet was advocated and freely consumed. In fact, it is said that Humayan (1508-1556), the son and successor of Babur abstained from meat for several months while he laid siege to regain his throne of the sub-continent.²⁵ Whether this act was undertaken out of reverence towards his majority Hindu subjects or was it observed just for his health in order to sustain the long and arduous campaigns remains debatable. However, it could not be denied that since Akbar, the Mughals tried to be more tolerant towards the indigenous gastronomic values for political reasons. Akbar, for instance abolished *Jiziyah*, a discriminatory tax which the non- Muslims had to pay. He even encouraged translation of Hindu texts, including Mahabharata and various Puranas and Upanishadas. He appointed Hindus including Rajputs to diverse important administrative posts and established matrimonial relations with Hindu Rajput Kings.

These measures were directed to include his majoritarian subjects within the umbrella of Mughal rule; as it gave a message of syncretic inclusiveness from the Mughal emperors. In fact, his son Jahangir and grandson, Shah Jahan shared a Hindu lineage through their mothers. The Mughal culinary culture hence, encompassed a vegetarian diet within its ambit thereby enriching the already prosperous consumption culture of the Mughal legacy. So, India's gastronomic journey can lay claim to be constituted by transcultural socializing and migration where the Mughal heritage left a lasting impact.

CONCLUSION

In nutshell, it won't be wrong to say that Rajput cuisine interaction with the Mughal culinary experience did bring about a great change in the Gastronomy of Medieval India. As a result, The Mughal royal house not only endorsed vegetarianism but practiced themselves too. It also portrayed the disposition of the Mughals towards their conquered subjects which was not only about imposition of the Mughal cultural practices by suppressing the indigenous cultural traits, as mainstream understanding tends to represent. There was definite acculturation and adaptability of local customs and practices in everyday consumption habits of the Mughals. The adaptation of vegetarian dishes hence provided an alternative insight into the common understanding of the meat loving Mughals.

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²⁵Sen Taylor, Colleen. (2016). *Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India*, India: Speaking Tiger Publishing, p.183.

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