The performance of sacrifices or ritual offerings away from home effects a crucial transition for Pakistani labour migrants. The efficacious performance of these rituals, hitherto unambiguously associated with "home" in its broadest affective and moral sense, is contingent on the mediated ritual support of significant others: kin, friends, neighbours and the poor. Sacrifice and offering are predicated, in other words, on the reconstruction of a moral universe, and in order to achieve this reconstruction, migrants must reconstitute crucial moral categories of the person. Once reconstructed, rituals of offering and sacrifice come to constitute powerful focuses for sociability. A family's current intimate circle, as well as its widest network of acquaintances, is gathered in order to seek blessing, redemption or atonement.

When Pakistani labour migrants in Manchester hold rituals locally they are, in effect, staking a ritual claim in their Manchester home and its permanency. They are also expressing the nature of their relationships with other Pakistanis living locally. These congregational or indexical aspects of the ritual are extremely significant, for certain rituals cannot be held without the ritual services of a broader congregation. In this paper I am concerned with the role of fellow migrants as ritual mediators, effecting a desired transformation in the condition of individuals and their families.

My argument, therefore, hinges on an approach to ritual which stresses its performative rather than expressive features, and examines the "ritualization" of social relationships among labour migrants in town (Gluckman 1962:24-5). This ritualization scheme, I show, a special significance in the urban industrial context. If in tribal societies ritual arguably serves to highlight specific roles where multiplex relations prevail, among urban labour migrants such ritualization transforms the segmental relationships between neighbours, workmates or business acquaintances into morally diffuse relationships. Urban ritual overcomes, in other words, the spatial dispersion and segmentation of social relationships by gathering together a varied congregation which is, nevertheless, united in moral support for an individual or family.

From a religious perspective, it is possible for Muslims to perform acts of personal sacrifice or offering anywhere. There is no ancestral shrine, as for many African labour migrants, no central consecrated altar, as for some Semitic people (1). These rituals are, nevertheless, contingent on a moral spatial order. Performed in order to seek blessing or a release from affliction, they require the support of a circle of significant others. They cannot be performed in an alien land, in the midst of strangers. Similarly, a man is not buried in the wild, but amidst those with whom he belongs.

The countering of affliction and the seeking of divine blessing are, moreover, crucially mediated for Pakistanis through socially significant categories beyond a migrant's immediate set of kinsmen. As Muslims,
Pakistani migrants believe that the gaining of atonement, expiation or divine blessing requires an act of giving away, of selfless generosity. The efficacious performance of atonement rituals depends, in other words, on the recognition and reconstitution of a moral universe beyond the family which includes, most importantly, the social category of "friends" and for some, equally crucially, the social category of "the poor". The act of communication in sacrifice or offering is only fully possible through the mediation of the poor. Without them a sacrifice or offering is incomplete.

There is more to home therefore than just a sentimental attachment. Fundamental acts of Islamic piety are perceived to be possible only in a society where certain social categories exist, and are explicitly recognised. Yet the "poor" are said to be absent in places such as Manchester. For labour migrants the performance of sacrifices and offerings away from their natal home sometimes represents, then, a compromise, a distortion of the meaning of these acts. They cast doubt on the validity and efficaciousness of the rites outside their "natural" setting.

More generally, the transfer of rituals away from their "natural" context is associated for labour migrants with a heightened consciousness of the cultural presuppositions underlying the rituals. The taken-for-granted features of rites become an object of conscious reflection, as migrants grapple to resolve emergent dilemmas around hitherto normal, expected or "natural" aspects of the rituals they perform. Migration, like homecoming or strangerhood, brings into focus the implicit rules and norms hitherto left unquestioned and unexamined (Schutz 1944; 1945). Not just the meaning, but also the countering of misfortune is thus problematic for labour migrants (cf. Mitchell 1956)(2). The effective means of redress have to be extended and re-interpreted for, in an urban industrial environment, many of migrants' social relations are segmental or recent.

As a big city, Manchester has a heterogeneous Pakistani migrant population (P. Werber 1978). Many of migrants' friendships have been forged locally, in the context of work or neighbourly interaction. Few migrants have remained encapsulated in networks of home boys or fellow villagers (grain). There are, nevertheless, crucial variations in migrants' perceptions of the long-term significance of their residence in the city. These perceptions are expressed ritually in differing symbolic orientations. Hence, some migrants prefer to make offerings and sacrifices at home, and to bury their dead at home. Others make these sacrifices locally, hold frequent domestic rituals locally, and often bury their dead in Britain. They tend to sustain much broader networks of friends and acquaintances. Like "Red" and "School", migrants vary in their "rootedness", in their very perception of where home is, and in the experience of the surrounding social environment in which they live.

Despite these differences, however, certain ritual acts continue to be performed only in Pakistan by all migrants. These acts, "for the life", like the act of sending a dead man's body home, give ideological priority to the home country, its people, its very soil, over the alienness of the diaspora.

The variation in ritual performance is not simply one of cultural background, exclusivity or continued encapsulation in the sense first defined by Mayer (1961, 1962). Pakistanis of all classes and
backgrounds, whether rural or urban, educated or uneducated, continue to foster an exclusive culture and remain, in most cases, encapsulated within Pakistani circles of kinsmen, friends or acquaintances (on the complexity of lifestyles cf. P. Verbner 1981). Nevertheless, the broadening of social networks and the celebration of certain domestic rituals locally marks an important personal transformation: from being a Punjabi defined in terms of a highly particularistic socio-geographic identity - as originating from a specific village, kin group or neighbourhood - to becoming, in addition, a Mancunian, an urbanised Muslim, a member of a farflung Pakistani diaspora, an indefinite sojourner rather than a temporary visitor. The construction of self and personal identity is thus a crucial component of this transition.

Core Rituals

The ritual I focus on here is known as khatam quran, the sealing of the Koran, or the communal Koran reading. It is held primarily by women in the domestic domain and is an important locus of interhousehold women-centred sociability (cf. P. Verbner, forthcoming). It is thus a feature of migrant life mostly absent during the all-male, initial phase of migration, and only introduced into Britain with the arrival of wives and families.

The khatam quran, although perhaps the most central domestic ritual performed by Pakistanis in Manchester, is a relatively simple, unelaborate ritual. In times of danger, thanksgiving or transition Pakistanis convene their fellow migrants for a ritual of formal prayer and commensality. Like the slamiana for the Javanese (cf. Jay 1969:188-230), this seemingly simple ritual lies at the heart of Pakistani religious observance and may be regarded as a "core ritual" (cf. Geertz 1960:1). It is performed by a congregation composed mostly of women who are gathered in the house of the ritual convener. Between them the assembled guests read the entire Koran in one sitting. Each of the participants reads one or more chapters (sura) out of the thirty in the Koran. The reading is dedicated to the person convening the event, and is regarded as a service performed by the readers for the convener and his or her family. After the reading of the Koran has been completed at least once, an offering of food is made which is distributed to the guests. In Pakistan a share of the food is set aside for the poor as charity (sadaq), but this is not done in Manchester as 'there are no poor people here'. By custom, the Koran should be read with absolute accuracy, so as to conclude Arabic words which vary only slightly in their spelling. A high degree of ritualism thus characterizes one part of the proceedings. Otherwise, the structure of the ritual is very simple, and it contains little figurative elaboration.

Despite this apparent simplicity, however, the ritual embraces central religious and moral ideas and forms the basic model for a series of other rituals, all concerned with the two themes of sacrifice and prayer. The analysis of labour migrants' perceptions of the ritual, and of related rituals, brings into sharp focus what they consider are the fundamental features of the rites. It thus highlights the crucial elements of sacrifice and offering from a novel angle, lending some credence to certain approaches in the general debate about sacrifice and offering.

Symbolically, the moral attachment of a family to its current home and surroundings is tangibly expressed during khatam quran through a transformation of secular into sacred space. One room in the convener's
house - and, by extension, the whole house - assumes, temporarily, certain features of a mosque. Shoes are taken off at the threshold to the room and people read the Koran seated on the ground. Along with the burning of incense, these observances serve to define the space as holy or sacred. The following description sets out the basic features of the ritual.

When I arrived at S.'s home the ritual had already begun. Downstairs, a few men were occupied in last minute preparations for the meal, assisted by one of the women. Upstairs, eight women were reading the Koran in one of the bedrooms. Mattresses had been laid on the floor and a white cloth spread over them. The women were seated on this sheet, their heads completely covered by chiffon scarves (dupatta). Their shoes had been left on the threshold of the room, where they lay in a large heap. The room was filled with the aroma of burning incense. A pile of books on a raised surface in the midst of the seated women represented the chapters of the Koran still to be read. Each woman sat with a book containing one chapter in her hand, reading the Koran in a soft murmur. The little talking there was took place in hushed voices, but mostly the women concentrated on getting the reading over with.

When they had completed reading the whole Koran, the women came downstairs to join their husbands, who had arrived as the reading was nearing completion. All the guests gathered together for a joint meal. Before the meal was brought to the table, a prayer was said in private over a portion of the food, asking God for forgiveness in case any mistake had been made in the proceedings.

Since this was a *khatam* held by middle-class migrants, mainly urban in origin, men shared in the meal. There was some joking, as when the convener left the room to bring some more food; "she is going to pray" the men joked, amidst much laughter.

The reason for the *khatam* was never openly stated during the proceedings. It was, apparently, held because the couple convening the event were recently married (although the husband had been living in Britain for many years); they had recently arrived from Pakistan, had been unemployed but had both found jobs and were able to repay their debts. In other words, a *khatam* held as thanksgiving after a period of hardship and change, and it marked the couple’s residence together in a new home. The congregation attending were all friends, with the exception of the convener’s brother.

The food prayed over at the completion of a Koran reading consists, usually, of water, milk, a sweet dish, rice and fruit. The fruit is distributed first, immediately after the reading is completed, while the readers are still reclined on the floor. The selection blessed is representative of abundance, purity and the essential ingredients of a meal. The portion of the food prayed over is distributed first in order to ensure that it is entirely consumed, and none thrown away.

The Counting of Misfortune

*Khatam qurans* are held in order to ask for forgiveness (baksh), thanksgiving (shukriya), and divine blessing (barkat, or baraka in Arabic). Although the three notions appear at first glance to be different, the ideas surrounding them are closely linked (cf. also Hubert and Mauss 1964:14). The emphasis depends on the occasion. If the *khatam quran* is held to celebrate recovery from an illness, it is held for shukriya, thanksgiving. Since, however, there has been, it is believed, an unwanted intervention by God or spirits, a sin possibly committed either knowingly or unknowingly, an act of expiation is also involved. The convener is thus seeking to rid himself of the condition which caused the misfortune or affliction (*baila, musibat*) while at the same time seeking barkat. Hence, *khatam qurans* are intended to transform the state of the convener from that induced by negative intervention or lack of divine protection into one of *barkat* - endowed through positive divine intervention (3). *Barkat* is thus the opposite of affliction. This opposition is expressed in the formal structure and permutations of different offerings or sacrifices Pakistanis make.

The *khatam quran* ritual is divided into two key phases: in the first phase the Koran is read. In the second phase, food, which
constitutes, in part at least, an offering, is presented to the assembled congregation. The two phases, although closely linked, represent two separate religious acts, each surrounded by a set of theological and cosmological beliefs.

The central feature of the first ritual phase is the recitation of the Koran. This recitation is considered to have immense power. The divine force invoked in the recitation has the power to expel evil spirits and to protect against them. The reading of the Koran also evokes barakat, which is then imparted to the food served. Barkat, or baraka in Arabic, is a "beneficent force, of divine origin, which causes superabundance in the physical sphere and prosperity and happiness in the psychic order (Encyclopedia of Islam 1969:1032). The text of the Koran is charged with barakat (4). A Khatam quran is intended to transform the state of the convener into one of barakat, which is also shared by those reading the Koran in his or her name. The complete recitation of the Koran, especially if done in a short time, is considered a meritorious achievement. Pakistanis say they read the whole Koran because they 'cannot be quite sure what particular passage suits the occasion', and this is particularly so where danger is present. The Koran, they say, includes a saying for every type of occasion, but the location and meaning of these passages is known only to God. By reading the Koran in its entirety they ensure that they have read the appropriate passage. In this way they hope to influence God, which is the intention of the khatam.

This type of explanation clearly stresses the magical power of the Koran in influencing God and the spirits. This magical aspect is indicated by the great emphasis placed on accurate reading. There must be no change of zabar or pech (minor vowel marks in Arabic), for this might change the meaning of the word. Indeed, the Koran is read in Arabic, which few Pakistanis understand (although most migrants have, of course, read the Urdu translation of the Koran).

In an alternative explanation, the morality of the Koran is emphasised. The Koran contains "all the laws and sayings needed to live a good life". When moving to a new house, I was told, it is right that the whole Koran be read. Where the Koran has been read, one is reluctant to sin or, if one does sin, one feels guilty about it.

**Sacrifice and the Mediation of the Poor**

Going against the magical aspect of the Koran as a book containing barkat is the notion of intention or niyat (niya in Arabic) central to Islamic religious observance. While much emphasis is placed on the accurate reading of the Koran, the reading is followed by a prayer over the food asking God for forgiveness for any errors made in the proceedings. My informants were clear that the intention supersedes the ritualistic aspects of the event. Perhaps the most important difference between the two phases of the ritual - the Koran reading and the offering made - relates to this distinction. Paradoxically, perhaps, the reading of the Koran represents the more ritualistic phase, while the commensal meal and the associated offering given away to the poor is closely tied to the intention of the convener. And, moreover, the difference between the way in which offerings are made is linked to subtle differences in intention rather than in the form of food or money given away. Was the khatam held for shukriya (thanksgiving), for barkat, during illness, to consecrate a new house? The intention is all important.
The problem of how to manage misfortune or deal with affliction is at the heart of all these observances. Pakistanis believe that nothing happens without the will (raza) and knowledge of God. Hence their view of affliction and misfortune is closely related to their view of the moral order, of good and evil in the eyes of God. A serious illness or misfortune is believed to be caused by the intervention of evil spirits and these can only be exorcised through God's help. Indeed, they should not have afflicted a person in the first place unless he or she lacked divine protection. In cases where khatam qurans or sacrifices are performed during the time that a person is seriously ill or has a chronic illness or an unnatural condition (such as barrenness in women), or in times of misfortune or trouble, the ritual is held for the explicit purpose of expelling evil spirits through the recitation of the Koran and through almsgiving. Some migrants, who deny the presence of evil spirits even in the case of serious illness, talk instead of the presence of misfortune or danger caused in their view by sin. It is the misfortune, musibat (or bara), which a person rides himself through almsgiving and prayer. Reading the Koran is seen both as a protection against such misfortune and as a means of exorcising evil spirits.

Not all khatam qurans are associated, however, with exorcism, or even primarily with expiation since, as we have seen, many are intended to seek divine blessing or as thanksgiving, after the danger has departed. As will be seen, the ritual stress dictates the ritual form.

A crucial, long recognised feature of sacrifice has to do with what parts of a sacrificial victim or offering are consumed and what parts are given away or destroyed (5). From this perspective, the significance of the communal meal following the Koran reading cannot be understood apart from other practices of Pakistani sacrifice. Hence, true sacrifice, i.e. the ritual slaughtering of an animal, may take a number of different forms. In Manchester, many Pakistani migrants perform animal sacrifices locally on two main occasions: at the annual Eid Zoha festival and after the birth of a child, particularly a son. The first sacrifice is known as qurbani, the second as hasida. The structure of the qurbani sacrifice represents an explicit model for the proper division of an animal in personal sacrifice, where the ritual act is intended to be both piacular and for the sake of divine blessing.

Qurbani sacrifices are performed to commemorate the binding of Ismail by his father Abraham (the Islamic version of the binding of Abraham in the Old Testament). This myth, whether in its biblical or koranic form, exemplifies the principle of substitution of a life for a life in sacrifice. According to Islamic tradition the bakra (sacrificial victim) is supposed to be divided into three equal parts, with a third shared by the family of the sacrificer, a third by kinmen and friends, and third given away to "the poor". In Manchester, since "there are no poor" two thirds are given away to kinmen and friends.

The qurbani sacrifice contrasts significantly with another form of personal sacrifice known as sadqa (from the Arabic sadaq, a term also used for almsgiving in general). Sadqa sacrifices are always performed in Pakistan. They are preceded by a khatam quran and are held, I am told, 'for the life': if someone is mortally ill, or has escaped a very bad accident, a sadqa sacrifice is made. The idea appears to be one of substitution, and the unusual aspect of this type of sacrifice for Pakistanis is that the animal is given away to the poor in its entirety. Neither the sacrificer nor any of his kinsmen are supposed to partake of
the sacrificial victim. To do so would be to detract from the efficacy of the ritual act. In cases of abnormal illness, I was told, the meat is not even given to the poor, but is thrown away.

Two beliefs are implicit in sadqa sacrifice among Pakistanis. On the one hand, as the name of the sacrifice—sadqa—indicates, the sacrifice is an extreme act of almsgiving. On the other hand, it is also an act of expulsion of evil spirits or misfortune. For Pakistanis there is no belief that a sacrifice should be burnt or destroyed, nor is there a view that the 'life of the flesh is in the blood' (Leviticus 17:11). There is, moreover, no sacred altar or shrine. The idea that God is partaking directly of any tangible substance, such as the blood of the animal, is abhorrent (cf. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics XI:29). The blood of a sacrificial victim is for Muslims haram, i.e. prohibited and sacred. Their view appears to be that blood removes all the impurities from the animal before it is shared and consumed. In other words, the flow of the blood is a purificatory element of the sacrifice.

Islam recognises, moreover, no priestly order. Nor do the poor constitute scapegoats, bearing or accumulating the sins of the donors (Parry 1980:6). The gift to the poor completes and seals the act of offering or sacrifice (for a full analysis of the processual form of a sacrifice cf. Richard Werbner 1985). Communication in sacrifice is therefore achieved for Pakistanis indirectly, via the poor, and through an act of giving. Thus, one informant told me:

Many people i.e. the poor, only see meat when it is given to them. That is a benefit to God in an indirect way. One feeds somebody poor and God likes it. No, the blood has no meaning. Giving blood in sacrifice is a thing among Hindus, they give blood to Kali, these are pagan customs. But not in Islam.

The central mediatory role played by "the poor" in atonement and expiation presents labour migrants with an intractable dilemma in their desire to perform certain ritual acts outside their "natural" setting; for their perception of the poor reflects, profoundly, the way in which labour migrants reconstitute their moral universe.

Who are "the poor" (lokan sharib)? For Muslims the poor may include any person, even members of one's own kin group or village, such as widows or orphans. They do not form a clear category of outsiders, and this is made quite explicit in the Koran. The notion of the poor cuts across the categories of family, friends and fellow villagers, such as low caste or landless labourers, to embrace the widest humanity. Pakistanis recognise: the beggars around Saints’ tombs, or the residents of orphanages, leper homes, etc. I was frequently told that I could not imagine real poverty, living in Britain. There are, moreover, no persons in Britain willing to define themselves as poor and take the remains of a communal meal or sacrifice.

Pakistani labour migrants universally direct their almsgiving towards Pakistan. If they hold khatam qurans, qurbani or haqiga in Manchester, it is because they feel that the further crucial social category of friends is present here. Without sharing among friends, there is no commensal meal, no barkat, no communication with the divine. It is possible to hold all these rituals by proxy, through kinsmen at home, in Pakistan. The sacrifiencer sends the money for a meal to be prepared or a beast slaughtered in his name. Many migrants, especially more recent arrivals of village origin, virtually always perform these rituals at home. Perhaps for them, more than for middle-class, urban migrants, the poor are a known and personalised group. The village or
home neighbourhood remains the focus of their significant relations; they remain rooted back home, symbolically, emotionally, experientially. Yet over time, they too come under increasing communal and social pressure to reconstitute a moral universe in Britain. Before going on to discuss this process, let me return briefly to the meal which follows the communal reading of the Koran and its ritual significance.

The Rootedness of Labour Migrants

In Manchester, the meal following the Koran reading is shared in its entirety among the assembled guests. For some migrants this makes the significance of the meal problematic and even negates its role as an offering. They regard the meal primarily as an act of hospitality. Other migrants claim, however, that the food is an offering (nawa) given in the name of God, and usually following a vow (manzil) made in times of affliction or personal crisis. Certain universal features surrounding the meal confirm its continuing ritual significance: the "sealing" of the Koran is invariably followed by a distribution of food; the food is prayed over, usually consists of primary elements, and must not be thrown away. In addition a portion of food—usually fruit—is often sent home with guests and this food is known as tobarak or bakshish (from the Arabic roots for blessing or request). The intention of the offerer appears to be the chief determinant of the designation of the offering.

Clearly, however, the ambivalence apparent in migrants' exegesis regarding the khatam meal reflects the fact that in Britain the meal is not appropriately apportioned. We have seen that the nature of divine intervention is related to the form of sacrificial distribution, that a structured relation exists between the consumption of the offering and the contrast between good and evil intervention. This may be represented in the following diagram.

INSERT DIAGRAM 1

Whereas the communal meal following the Koran reading imparts barkat, the full ritual efficacy of the meal as a piacular offering (nawa) can only be achieved through a sharing of a portion of the food with the poor. In other words, it can only be achieved in Pakistan, at home.

Nevertheless, as migrants sink roots locally, and in response to misfortunes and afflictions which befall them locally, they begin to hold khatam quara locally, as the following case illustrates:

Maim's family have a simple and frugal lifestyle. The family lives in the central residential enclave, nearby two other closely related couples whom they see frequently. Both Maim and his wife are educated and come from a small town in Northern Punjab. Until the end of 1976 they resisted becoming involved in the activities of the residential cluster. They explain this mainly on financial grounds—he is the sole breadwinner with a simple factory job, and they have five children. In addition, they remit regularly to their family in Pakistan. They live in a cheap terraced house which is poorly decorated and in need, as it subsequently emerged, of major structural repairs. Maim's wife, however, has been on a number of visits to Pakistan and has frequently expressed her positive and deep links with her family there.

Until 1976, when Maim's mother's brother died suddenly, Maim's wife had held only one khatam since her arrival in Manchester several years before. She held it after her youngest daughter had recovered miraculously from a fall from a second-story window. The Koran was read once only, and the suras (chapters) of it were distributed as following: some were read by a cousin residing in the same house, some by an old woman living next door whom Maim's wife addresses as "mother" (and does not know her name), and the rest by the two daughters of her husband's workmate who is also a close neighbour and friend living opposite Maim's house. The readers did not gather at the house of the convener, nor were they feasted to a cooked meal. Instead, each was sent a parcel of fruit to her own house. Some close friends and relatives were not asked to participate and Maim's wife...
explained that this was because there had been enough people for a single Koran reading.

Several months later, Naim’s mother’s brother died suddenly and tragically at a young age. The mortuary khatam qurans held by the family were very large, communal affairs, which mobilised all known friends and acquaintances. The corpse was sent back to Pakistan, but before it was sent, a wake took place at Naim’s kinsman’s house, also within the residential enclave. Virtually all the women of the neighbourhood were there, and, as is the custom, there was a great deal of wailing and overt expressions of sympathy and support. Close kinswomen, such as Naim’s wife, were almost possessed with grief, and were held by comforting neighbours. Naim’s close friends helped wash the body and prepare it for its journey to Pakistan.

The case illustrates the progressive incorporation of migrants into the local community. Funerary khatam qurans in particular are widely embracing social occasions, mobilising relatives and friends from all over Britain and acquaintances—even strangers—living locally. It is considered the duty of friends and neighbours to pay a visit of condolence to the bereaved family, and participate if possible in some of the funerary rites. In the central residential enclave, neighbours congregate at the house where a death has occurred immediately on hearing about it, even if they did not know the bereaved or his family personally. For acquaintances such attendance and prayer for the dead at the house of a bereaved workmate or neighbour is a moral and religious obligation (a shurat), especially if the death has occurred in Manchester, but even if the death is of a close kinsman of their acquaintance in Pakistan.

Hence, as migrants’ stay in Britain is prolonged and extended, misfortune, affliction and particularly death draw them into the local community. A death is followed by three funerary khatam qurans which are slightly more elaborate than the usual khatam, involving also a repeated prayer (125,000 times, or savalak in Urdu) over chickpeas or date stones. The major difference between death khatams and those convened for personal offering is indexical: whereas personal offerings are exclusive affairs, drawing together an intimate circle of friends, funerary khatams are large, open and inclusive (cf. Turner 1974:185; Richard Verbner 1977:XII–XVII). While certain people are invited, anyone is welcome to attend them.

Death is also the occasion for the collection of chanda, contributions, made in order to send the corpse to Pakistan, accompanied by a close relative. In recent years migrants from certain parts of Pakistan have founded formal death associations (cf. P. Verbner 1985). Thus, paradoxically perhaps, the ritual acts surrounding death both draw migrants into a locally constituted moral community while at the same time institutionalising the link back home. As the migrants’ sojourn is extended indefinitely, the ad hoc collections which took place previously in factories or neighbourhoods are being replaced by formal arrangements. For many migrants, therefore, the myth of return is no myth: in death migrants return home on their final journey.

Conclusion

Short term labour migrants rarely perform certain ritual acts away from home. Almost everywhere, they make personal offerings and sacrifices at home, and almost everywhere they prefer, if possible, to bury their dead at home. Not surprisingly, therefore, burial societies are one of the most widespread form of migrant association. Less recognised, perhaps, has been the common tendency to make personal sacrifices at home. Thus, for example, Kalanga labour migrants in Northeastern Botswana invariably return home to hold a sacrifice, for it
cannot be held without the ritual mediation of crucial kinsmen (Richard Verbner, in preparation).

Nevertheless, as the migrants’ stay is prolonged and extended, there is a shift in their symbolic orientation. Compelling reasons grounded in migrants’ beliefs and current circumstances create a need to make offerings and sacrifices away from home. In this paper I have shown that although Pakistani migrants may hold certain rituals by proxy in Pakistan, this denies critical beneficial features of the rites involved. C , relative newcomers, who believe their stay in Britain is truly temporary, prefer this option.

The cultural dynamics implicit here have comparative implications: short-term labour migrants depend upon others still resident at home to sustain their cultural heritage and perform for them a whole complex of ritual acts. They may stress diacritical emblems such as dress or language, and may seek the company of fellow migrants, but they do not attempt to replicate the religio-cultural environment they abandoned. Long-term sojourners, by contrast, recreate and revitalise within the constraints of their new environment - the richness and complexity of their original culture. This is particularly so when the culture of origin is urban and universalistic, as it is for Pakistanis. Hence the prevalence and focal role of domestic rituals amongst long-term migrants. Hence also the re-introduction of religio-ideological debates and conflicts in the public sphere, and the increasing popularity of literary cultural events. The sinking of local roots leads not, in other words, to the denial of the migrants' cultural heritage, but to its renewed celebration.

Footnotes

1. I conducted fieldwork among Pakistanis in Manchester during 1975-8. I wish to thank the ESRC (then SESC) UK for its generous grant. I am grateful to Richard Verbner for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

2. Hence the destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the Jews in 70 A.D. brought Jewish sacrifice to an abrupt end.

3. I discuss further dimensions of this problem in P. Verbner, 1986, in print. Clearly, relationships between kinsmen in town may undergo a critical change. Thus Mitchell (1966) points out that in town rivalry within the kin group is replaced by support and cooperation in the face of wider oppositions (p.379). P. Verbner, in a critical reappraisal of Mitchell's view, argues that rather than reaching the "rawest grievances", the "ministering of relatives at expiatory feasts in a town is an aspect of their bids for mutual support in the midst of potentially hostile strangers" (R. Verbner 1972; 229-31). Conflicts between Pakistani kinsmen in town do seem often to persist, hence the continuous stress on friendship.

4. The idea that sacrifice is intended to increase the distance between man and God is put forth by Evans Pritchard (1956:198) and developed more recently by Richard Verbner (1985). Hubert and Mauss’s argument that in sacrifice there is an expulsion of “sacred spirit” (1964: 6) differs somewhat, since the spirit referred to is not a deity (cf. Richard Verbner, op.cit.). In other respects, however, my view of sacrifice as combining both expiation and communion is very close to that of Hubert and Mauss, and particularly so with regard to their
discussion of the mediatory role of priests and other social categories in sacrificial communication.

4. Discussions of the Muslim notion of "baraka", are too manifold to be listed here. The most extensive anthropological discussion is still probably that of Westermarck (1926) for Morocco, who also discusses at length the "baraka" present in the Koran (vol. 1: 139) and in sacred passages (205-219).

5. This is a central argument of Hubert and Mauss. For a discussion cf. Richard Werber (1985). Werber also provides a comparative post-structuralist analysis of different forms of sacrifice in a single society. A clear association between the intent of the sacrificer and the distribution of the sacrificial victim can be found in the highly elaborate set of offerings and sacrifices specified in the Old Testament (Leviticus 1-12, 14-17). While Robertson Smith (1927:439) denies the ultimate significance of such variations there is much evidence to suggest that the meaning of sacrifice on different types of occasion is associated with symbolically consistent variations in form. A review of Nuer sacrifice, for example, reveals significant variations in the distribution and disposal of the victim on different occasions.

6. Islam does, of course, have its holy men (pira), saints, marabouts, etc. who mediate with God (cf. Jeffery 1979, Eickelman 1976). They are considered to carry baraka, but do not, apparently, become repositories of sin, since baraka makes them immune to the sins of others.

References


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