

"a cosmological level", but constituted parts of the levels of environment discussed in previous chapters.

As the fallah's religion did not pertain only to the acts of worship and fulfillment of religious obligations but permeated most aspects of his everyday life, so did the different elements of the sacred environment interact with daily existence. The spatial and conceptual aspects of the sacred environment extended from Mecca, the centre of the world for the whole muslim community, to amulets against the evil eye. The hierarchical order of the sacred environment corresponded closely to a hierarchical concept of the cosmos (al-kawn) and to a hierarchical system of worship and practices. Holy places such as el-ka'aba, the Dome of the Rock and regional sanctuaries pertained to a level beyond the village boundaries, a regional environmental level. The religious ceremony of reaching or being in the "centre of the world" was, and continues to be, symbolized by the hajj, a ritual act of pilgrimage to Mecca performed by members who belong to the Muslim community (ummat-el-muslimin). Sanctified features such as holy trees and haunted springs pertained to the landscape level, the mosque to the village level, and holy tombs to the living quarter level. Many other sacred artifacts pertained to the object level.

Not only did the different sacred elements belong to different environmental levels, but they also had different functions. While places located at the regional level (Mecca, Dome of the Rock, regional sanctuaries) functioned as foci for the unity of the whole Muslim community, the village mosque enhanced village unity and village identity amongst the men, while local saint's tombs did not transcend the realities of kinship and gender separations.

The world of tangible physical artifacts--mosque, holy sanctuary, tombs and material objects - mediated the fallah's abstract system of religious beliefs with his daily life.

Both natural as well as social powers acted upon the fallah. Elsewhere, we have discussed the social forces and shown how they enabled him to enter into relationships with his fellow peasants,