

and assured the continued functioning of the social order. Allocation of resources and functions, division of labour and product, coordination, superordination, acceptance of authority and the institutionalisation norms and goals, were all primary forms of these relationships.

The fallah's life was affected particularly by natural forces outside the sphere of his control. The fallah saw himself as part of nature and his destiny as involved with nature's processes and events. He harmonized his cyclical agricultural activities with the established order of nature. However, nature's unpredictable and uncontrollable events - droughts, floods, earthquakes - lay beyond the fallah's control, and hence escaped his ordering abilities. Thus entering into relationships with suprahuman forces - God, the holy saints (awlia) and demons - helped the peasant to explain, control and manipulate the world of the unknown.

The totality of these relationships (i.e. man/man, man/superhuman) united the experienced world of everyday life, and the unseen world, or to use the phrase of O'Dea "the concept of the beyond", into a total reality, which made the norms and rules of the community part of a larger ethical order. The here-and-now realities became meaningful only by being fitted into a transcendental reference to the "beyond" (O'Dea, 1966: 6).

The sacred environment is seen in the context of this work as the symbolisation and concretisation of the "beyond". The sacred environment is also seen as the milieu which enhanced stability and order, and contributed to the maintenance of the existing social order.

At the turn of this century, the village of Deir Ghassaneh was inhabited exclusively by Muslims. In principle, Islamic laws and traditions are embodied in the holy book (the Koran), the practices of the prophet Mohammad (Sunna), and the traditions of Mohammad and his companions (Hadith). This framework constituted, and continues to constitute, the "model" and the guiding principles for all Muslim communities. The meaning of Islamic principles and codes, came to