

between man and God in village religious ritual, explained the absence of elaborate architecture in religious monuments.

Finally, the fact that there has always been only one mosque (as opposed to a number of mosques in the different clan-based living-quarters), illustrated the ability of the village to transcend the factional kinship-based identity of the village. In this the mosque performed a communal egalitarian function. However, the location of the mosque in the compound of the ruling family reminds us that religion also performed a contrary function, that of legitimizing an existing social hierarchy.

THE VILLAGE HOLY SHRINES:

"In almost every village in the country a small building surrounded by a white-washed dome is observable, being the sacred chapel of the place; it is variously called Kubbeh, 'dome', Mazar, 'shrine', or makam, 'station'" (Conder, 1878; II, 218).

At the turn of this century, holy shrines seem to have played a more significant and active role in the everyday socio-religious life of the village than that played by the mosque. While the latter was visited mostly on Fridays, feasts and funeral ceremonies, shrines were visited more or less daily, and while the mosque of Deir Ghassaneh excluded women, holy shrines appeared to be their refuge on many occasions and at whatever time they wished. These holy sanctuaries reflected the fallah's folk or local religious practices while the mosque was the physical manifestation of orthodox Islam, or more specifically one of the five pillars in orthodox Islam.

Deir Ghassaneh had nineteen places which were considered as special or sacred because they functioned as hermitages (khulwat) and burial sites for holy men, more than in any other Bani Zaid village. These sites should be seen as part of a wider network of sacred locations outside the village boundaries. By taking part in the three regional Palestinian religious festivals (mawsim of Nabi Saleh, Nabi Musa and Nabi Rubeen), and also by visiting holy shrines located outside their own village, the villagers of Deir Ghassaneh related to