

As in the mosque, the entrance of the makam is from the north. As one enters through either one of the two doors, one must bow, showing respect and submission to the spirit of the weli, which was believed to be always present. In the past, the post and lintels of the two doors were painted with henna, which was, and still is, believed to be sacred. The two mihrabs (prayer niches) protruding from the southern elevation (Fig. 6.8) are in the direction of Mecca.

Today the Khawwas, like most other makamat, is neglected and run down. However, until the 1940s the makam had a very serene interior. It had no furnishings except for the few straw mattresses donated to the weli by the villagers. The interior walls, as well as the northern elevation, were kept white-washed. White in Muslim tradition symbolizes the Divine Being, the heavenly light and the good spirit (ibid: XIV). Hence, holy men appeared either in white or green; white cloths were tied around the weli's tomb and silver coins were placed under the threshold of entrances. On the interior walls of the makam some Koranic verses were written. These were believed to drive away evil spirits. On the western wall, there is a small niche where an oil lamp was always kept burning (Fig. 6.7).



Fig. 6.7: Interior of al-Khawwas

Villagers carried with them oil lamps (sometimes olive oil) which they gave to the guardian of the makam (le-kaiyem) who took care of the place. In front of the makam entrance a pitcher of water was kept to refresh visitors.

Villagers from both Deir Ghassaneh and neighbouring villages honoured al-Khawwas by making vows (nider) in his name and by bringing him different offerings. Some lit oil lamps or incense in his honour; some cleaned the makam's floor; some brought him straw mats; others repainted and re-modeled his makam, or made offerings of a lamb on the site.