

centre. The saha together with the guest-house varied in functions from the village courthouse, thus playing an important role in social control, to the marketplace for passing peddlers. The guest-house lodged passing travellers and housed village visitors and government officials.

An Introverted Enclosure

The saha as figure 5.1 illustrates, had a strong visual impact, which certainly matched its functional importance. It acquired a unique and distinct spatial character by being strongly dissimilar to its surroundings. This spacious place contrasted sharply with the densely clustered compounds around it. The scale of the saha, dictated partly by the surrounding Barghouthi houses, contrasted strongly with that of the fallaheen houses. The saha was contained by the village mosque to the north, the Daher houses to the west and the south, and the guest-house from the east (Fig. 5.2). The buildings formed a circumscribed geometric form. This geometrized form of its plan gave a sharp sense of limits and enhanced the sense of enclosure. The edges of the surrounding buildings operated as a boundary which limited the place and at the same time created a clear distinction between what was inside and what was outside. From the south, the surface of the Barghouthi houses created a stronger and more continuous boundary than that of the north. While the southern boundary separated the saha, the male public domain, from the private domain of women behind, the northern boundary integrated the mosque space within the saha. The similar architectural articulation, same mass-void relation, same distribution of openings [no longer the case], the use of the same building material - pink and white stones - and the same type of roofs (domes) added to the continuity of the southern boundary.

The clustering and concentration of masses - buildings - not only defined the saha's limits, but also defined its relation to its surrounding through its definition of access points. The three access points to the saha have been discussed earlier (Barghouthi quarter, chapter 4). The formal entry, located to the east, was considered the main entry point. The architectural treatment of