

come to the guest-house during the evenings. The arrival of gypsy groups (en-nawar) gave the guest-house a festive atmosphere. They spent a few days around the village, where they erected their tents and came to the guest-house at night. Both men and women gypsies sang and danced, creating a pleasant lively atmosphere. As long as the gypsies were in the village, men would stay late at the guest-house and would go home late to sleep and get some rest before an early start the next morning.

The Ceremonial Functions of the Guest-House

The guest-house was also the communal place where all village ceremonies took place or culminated. During the month of Ramadan, a few minutes before sunset each man fasting would come with his sons to the guest-house, carrying their cooked food, and sit down with his grown up sons around him waiting to hear the prayer (m'uathen). At that moment they would start to eat with the rest of the men their communal meal. Afterwards they were offered coffee. Then together they prayed the



Fig. 5.6 : Men shared their communal meal during the month of Ramadan
Source: Graham-Brown (1980)

evening prayer, relaxed, and later moved to the mosque to pray the night prayer led by the Imam. Afterwards they would go back to the guest-house where they would stay up quite late and then go back home where they would eat their suhur (late night meal) and sleep until late the next day.

On the first day of the two Moslem annual feasts (al-fitr and al-adha), the men of the village dressed in the morning, went to the mosque and then to the cemetery. Then they assembled at the guest-