

times.

Peasant Islam, however, significantly modified orthodox practices. The supernatural and unseen realm which occupied a significant part in the fallah's consciousness and practices did not always reflect orthodox religious thought but sometimes ran contrary to it. Though the fallah was monotheistic in his belief and had a fatalistic attitude concerning his future and destiny (God's decrees are unchanged by any human being), he still honoured and revered many folk saints (awlia) besides God. The saints were seen as the blessed men of God with superhuman powers; they occupied a position between God and man and hence acted as mediators. Saints were of two levels: Ahmadiyah (forbearing) who shared characteristics with God, and the a'djam who shared characteristics with demons, hence, saints were both honoured and feared at the same time. Some of these saints had a regional reputation, and were visited and worshipped by members of neighbouring villages; others were considered local saints visited and honoured by villagers from Deir Ghassaneh only, or even members of one clan. Villagers of Deir Ghassaneh also honoured regional saints located outside of their own village. The Muslim community in Palestine had three important seasonal pilgrimages to holy shrines referred to as mawasim (singl. mawsim): mawsim en-Nabi Rubeen (prophet Rubeen), mawsim en-Nabi Musa, and mawsim en-Nabi Saleh (Fig. 6.1) As recently as the 1940s, the women of Deir Ghassaneh had their own mawsim (discussed below).

In addition to being intermediaries to the Almighty, local saints acquired an independent "divinity" on their own. They therefore, come closer to man than God himself:

"As in ancient times God still appeared to some people, to guide and to help them. But the saints appear more frequently to reproach, protect and to assist them, hence more sacrifices and vows were made to the saints than to God and also more direct help was expected from them than from God" (Cana'an, 1934: 63).

Besides his beliefs in God and saints, the fallah respected and