

to be strangers, the former from Egypt, the latter from Iraq. Hence both their regional function and their foreign descent made them go beyond (be outside) the village kinship domains in their location.

The majority of saints descended from the "fallaheen" (seven to the lower quarter clans and three to the Shu'aibi clan); the Barghouthi had only two. None came from the ruling family of ed-Daher. It is quite honourable for a clan to have holy saints amongst its members. Hence disputes over the origin of awlia were not uncommon. For example, the origin of sheikh Khaled, one of the villages holy shrines, has been disputed. Both the Barghouthi (Dar Abu Khattab) and the fallaheen (Dar Misshel) claimed that the saint was one of them. Some of these holy men were honoured by one of the clans only. For example, sheikh Khalaf, located in one of the Shu'aibi houses, was honoured only by the Shu'aibi clan. In fact, he was not even known or recognized by members of other clans. There were also two female holy saints, both called al-sheikha Salha (the "benevolent" sheikha). One belonged to the Rabi family and had a hermitage at the Majdoub makam. The other was from the Daher family and resided in the makam of sheikh Abdullah (from the Dawood family).

Along with makamat built over the burial or hermitage sites of highly honoured saints, the tombs of less revered holy men, referred to as sheikhs or hajj, were also venerated. Because they were often easily reached (located inside the village, between the houses, or even inside the houses as in the case of hajj E'mar, people - particularly women - would visit them, light oil lamps or incense and make vows in their names on a daily basis.

Unlike regional holy shrines, local shrines (makamat) and local saints tombs (qubur) did not transcend the reality of kinship groupings and gender separation. Many reflected kinship divisions by the mere fact of being the tombs of descendants of one particular clan. Unlike the village mosque, holy shrines of Deir Ghassaneh were more of the women's domain, since it was mostly women who vowed in the name of these saints. Men merely stopped to pray as they passed a holy shrine during the performance of their daily chores.