

**Anthropological and Ethnographical study of the Bedouin in East
Palestine**

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ABSTRACT

In the Jericho desert, several Bedouin populations¹ -approximately 5000 people - live in encampments under insufficient housing conditions and lacking even basic services. Previous studies have not shown the inside structure and culture of those people. Very limited surveys have done for the purpose of some aids by the UNRWA² and UNDP³.

This study's goal was to describe and analyze the ways of life and culture among Palestinian Bedouin communities in east Palestine and mainly among the Bedouin encampments that settled in Jericho district, and are at the edge of disappearing.

The study focuses on anthropological and ethnographical aspects of Bedouin society. Moreover, how these aspects contribute to shaping each member man, woman, and children in this society.

The major part of this study was conducted in the field and concentrated on various aspects of daily life of the Bedouin communities; therefore, a daily work in the field among Bedouin groups was taking place. The study provides a detailed picture of social structure, economic structure, tribal law, material culture, traditions, Bedouin knowledge, and the influence of religion practices on the Bedouin life. Thus, this study sheds light on the Bedouin communities that migrated to the east of Palestine in Jericho district in the aftermath of 1948 war. In addition, it shows the social and economic changes that occurred in these groups according to their move from their original home to be merged with other various communities' activities.

In general, chapters of this dissertation seek to examine the lives of Bedouin communities under different social and cultural customs. In addition, how they are consistent with the social and economic disparities. Hence, these chapters discuss the different activities performed within household, showing the activities performed by males and females within the Bedouin society.

The major findings of the study can be summarized as follows: Bedouin society is characterized of special social, economic, law, and traditions. That is giving it a unique type

¹ This Population is part of different Bedouin Refugee tribes, and will be described in general as Bedouin.

² UNRWA is United Nations Relief and works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near east.

³ UNDP is United Nations Development Programme.

of life in comparing with urban style of living. Moreover, traditions, law, and religion play a big role in shaping the daily life of the Bedouin communities and in both dealings with each other or with others.

Finally, there is a defined picture for the man and the woman roles in Bedouin life that we can see in all different matters of life within the Bedouin communities.

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Statement of purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide a full anthropological and ethnographical picture of the Bedouin society in Jericho district in east Palestine. It describes and analyzes the reality of the exclusiveness life the Bedouins live.

The Bedouin societies seem to be the most affected societies by the ecological and geographical conditions, which marked them with special morphological characteristics that led them to adapt to the difficult life they live. Moreover, within these conditions, they could shape their socio-economic structure, their tribal law, their own traditions, and their own knowledge and culture.

Today many changes are taking place among the Bedouin throughout Palestine. Products of technology have been imported into their life. Some of the Bedouin groups have settled in villages and cities, and attracted by education, health, and agriculture.

Therefore, the Bedouin communities in this study are having an exclusive political situation different from other Bedouin living in the near countries, since Palestine is under Israeli occupation, which has an impact to their way of life as well as most of the Palestinian population.

The information provided on this dissertation came from nine months of fieldwork among Bedouin communities. The last three months of the fieldwork (April, May, and June of the year 2007) were of daily sharing life. The fieldwork has been conducted in different Bedouin encampments that came from different tribes who settled in Jericho district in east Palestine. Some visits took place with Bedouin groups who moved during the summer to mountain areas mainly to Ramallah area.

These communities are living a pastoral life, depending mainly on raising sheep and goats, with limited other works for men for satisfying the household life. The Bedouin practice their daily life, herding, grazing their flocks, and producing milk produce for eating and selling.

Bedouin live in encampments of varying sizes, clustering in black tents, or in metal and wooden barracks. They live either on the sides of the main road or between hills not very far from the main road.

The man and the woman both know their duties towards the nuclear family and towards the extended family. Each practices his role among the tribe keeping its traditional and cultural way and applying its law.

In the chapters of this dissertation, since the names of areas, tribes, and individuals have been transliterated in several ways, I have tried for the sake of easy recognition, to keep to the most accurate to Arabic. Moreover, I have used the term Bedouin communities to indicate generalization and Bedouin encampments to indicate specification, which means that Bedouin encampments always refers to Bedouins understudy.

I should point out one other thing that is the using of '*al*' before names, which is the Arabic word for 'the', in addition of the using of '*Abu*' before male's name, which is the Arabic word for 'the father of', and the word '*Um*' before female's name, which is the Arabic word for 'the mother of'.

1.2 Literature Review

The Bedouin Anthropology and Ethnography of the Middle East have attracted some attention since the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The literature review in this study is divided into two parts; the first includes the major approaches that have studied the Bedouin in the Middle East, by concentrating on anthropological and ethnographical approaches mainly. The second part includes the studies that have been conducted on the Bedouin in Palestine, trying to include as much anthropological and ethnographical studies as well on the Palestinian Bedouins. It is important to mention that the 19th century archives of the Bedouin in Palestine were not used because these archives are located in the Negev at Ben Gurion University archives where it is not accessible for me.

1.2.1 Anthropological and Ethnographical approaches to the study of Bedouin in the Middle East

Most of ethnographies or social scientists who studied the Bedouin in the Middle East focused mostly on the description of the Bedouin society in a way in which they see it and how they interpret it. In general, the social scientists produced statistical description about the Bedouin societies. Few pioneers in this field described the Bedouin societies by sharing their own life, and giving a detailed description of this experience. The leaders of this kind of studies mainly were not Arabs but travelers⁴ who came into the Middle East in the beginning of the 20th century for other purposes. Later, in the 20th century the interest started to take place among the educated people from several fields to study the Bedouin societies in the Middle East either for the interest about them or for research purposes.

One of the pioneers in this field was the Czech Alois Musil (1928, 1930), who explored many of the Middle East areas, and recorded archaeological remains of the region. His wide range of interest was concerning geography, religious studies, ethnography but also political issues of today's world. In his main ethnographical two books; *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (1928), and *In the Arabian Desert* (1930), he described many sides of the Bedouin culture and life.

In his book *Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (1928), Musil provided a detailed description of the Rwala people in northern Arabia. He based on his stay with them, including mythology, falconry, social structure, the tent and its furnishings, their food, dress, weapons, marriage customs, children, poetry, camels, horse and breeds, supernatural laws, hospitality, vengeance, war and peace, laws of inheritance, and other ethnographical issues.

Since we earlier mentioned the Rwala Bedouins in the above lines, it is useful to mention here that Rwala Bedouins in Arabian Peninsula had a big attention from the western researchers that reached that area.

Lancaster, William (1981) and his family spent several years with the Rwala Bedouins of the Arabian peninsula, living as they did. Lancaster's analysis focused on Rwala social organization and the way in which the Rwala manipulate their social environment to cope with changing conditions. Like nomads everywhere, the Rwala were under pressure to come to terms with sedentary and modernization; Lancaster examined the way in which they cope

⁴ Those explorers were dispatched by their countries through military missions mainly during the Ottoman and Turkish rules, and later during the First World War.

with what they see as an attack on their identity and autonomy. He gave clear explanation of kinship systems in nomadic societies. Lancaster considered by many scholars to be one of the best modern ethnographies on Middle Eastern ethnic groups, this highly regarded, unromanticized account of Bedouin life.

Back to Musil, in his book *In the Arabian Desert* (1930), he registered every bit of information available through his journey in the Arabian Desert; moreover, he described the places and even the actions of the people who were joining him. Most of his interest included the Marriage customs and milking camels. Besides, through this trip he already published other topographical and geographical books related to the region, where the subject is not related to our study here to include it. He described the hospitality among Bedouins, the importance of coffee, the habits of eating, hunting falcons, and war, besides how Bedouins deal in a war time with other tribes.

In the Middle East mainly in Palestine, Syria, and Jordan, T. E. Lawrence in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922), that appears to be an ethnographical book deals with his experience during the war with several inputs of political issues. Lawrence describes in this book several Arabian cultures especially, the habits of the Bedouin people he was engaged with mainly in the Negev in Palestine and in Jordan, also about their hospitality. Moreover, he adopted some of the customs and traditions of those people⁵.

Several works on the sociology of the Bedouin society occurred in the 70's and 80's of the 20th century, and latterly several other works continued to be done in the 90's. Al-Fawal (1974, 1983), is one of the Arab sociologists who studied the Bedouin people from the sociological views including ethnographical issues. He refers in his works to several terms and definitions among Bedouin society. He brings to the reader a classification of the social structure of Bedouins including the kinship, social system, and general characteristics of the Bedouin society. The author compares between the role of man and woman inside the Bedouin community and its impact on the economy of their own society. Hence, he brings an ideal picture about the effect of ecology and environment on Bedouins life style.

⁵ More information about T E Lawrence see: James, Lawrence. *The Golden Warrior, The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia*. London: Abacus, 2005.

One of the few works that addressed to Bedouin women, came from Abu-Lughod, Leila⁶ (1986, 1993), she has challenged this concept to view the Bedouin women who are organized around kin and around women's worlds. In addition, she includes in her works the status and role of the Bedouin woman that undergoes under the kin and familial bonds that are of utmost importance.

Abu-Lughod, Leila (1993) focuses the reader's attention on the question quite directly that is, what does the Bedouin woman, the subject of "Honor and Shame," stand to gain by breaking with her tradition and completing her education? What does she stand to lose by breaking the social tradition? Under the circumstances, what outcome should one hope for this action? Then she discusses the changes that took place on the Bedouin woman in a modern world.

The author published the other book (1986), where she deals with the poetry in the Bedouin society and its significance and relation to the Bedouin Environment. She brought to light the Bedouin poetry, which is an integral part of their sentiments, and lives that could give a profound ethnographical picture about the deepest feelings and thoughts of these people. She includes poetry about love, marriage, death, honor, and divorce. Although these feelings are, the most veiled sentiments in anthropological researches, and needed to be uncovered to understand more about these people.

Thesiger, Wilfred⁷ (1959), wrote about his journey in the Arabian Desert and Empty Quarter⁸. He collected in his work his experience with the Bedouin in Arabia, their attitude towards him and their characteristics. He wrote about the Bedouin friendship and relationship to strangers. He gave a description of the traditional life of the Bedouin in south Arabia. In addition, through his time that spent with Bedouin he could include their values of loyalty to the tribe, obedience, generosity, hospitality, honour, cunning and revenge that kept their lifestyle through many centuries, controlled by a strict code of rules, which is shameful to break.

⁶ The anthropologist Abu-Lughod studied the Bedouin community in Egypt's Western Desert.

⁷ More information about Thesiger see: Maitland, Alexander. Wilfred Thesiger, The life of the Great Explorer. London: Harper Perennial, 2006.

⁸ Thesiger worked in the Arabia in the years 1945-1949, while the world was preoccupied with the outcomes of the World War II.

Von Oppenheim, Max Freiherr (1943), made his series including the names of the tribes that settled in Palestine, Sinai, Trans Jordan, and Hedjaz⁹. This is one of the most important documents collected tables for the tribal names in the Middle East countries.

A Jordanian Bedouin researcher, Al-Abbadi, Ahmad Oweidi (1976, 1988) made a significant ethnographical work about the characteristics and traditions of the Bedouin society. In his significant approach (1988), he gives a revised study about the tribal Law of the Jordanian Bedouin. In his book (1976) regarding the Bedouin traditions, he conceptualizes his own terms and critics to the Bedouin traditions and culture. He concentrates on the Bedouin generosity and gives detailed examples from their hospitality and generosity. He does pay a big attention to the coffee and food among Bedouin society.

In his work Al-Abbadi, Ahmad about the tribal law (1988), he describes the tribal law in eastern Jordan and the transaction that happened to this law from 1921 to 1982. He focuses in showing the importance of this law and its effect on either individuals or groups related to the Bedouin tribes. He shows the changes that occurred on tribal law, which is not a written law; it transfers between Bedouin judges verbally. Al-Abbadi (1988) concludes the judge codes that have been adopted by the Jordanian authorities for solving the Bedouin problems and they called it, the Supervision on the tribal law¹⁰.

From the other hand, one of the first scholars who wrote about tribal law was Al-Aref Aref (1933) whose approaches will be included in the following pages under the approaches written on Palestinian Bedouin.

Returning to the Middle East approaches regarding the ethnographical studies we find some researchers who steered their researches on studying specific anthropological concepts or ethnographical terms related to Bedouin society. Such scholars are Al-Rabaya'a, Ahmad Hamdan (1974), Jabbur, Jebrail Sulieman (1988), Al-Arabi, Fawzi Radwan (1989), and Badawi, Nadia (1994), giving to the publication an explanation for general ideas or impressive experience about Bedouin society from an eye of a critical sympathetic anthropologist or from roughly historical anthropological events, which yet view the life style of Bedouin groups from various aspects.

⁹ Is the region of Western Saudi Arabia where the three main cities of Jeddah, Mekka, and Madina are.

¹⁰ Simply it is cooperation between the tribal leaders with the governmental judicial system to imply the law.

Al-Rabaya'a, Ahmad Hamdan (1974), discusses the Jordanian Bedouin society in north Jordan from an anthropological view. He puts theoretical section to make a possibility for an introductory to Bedouin communities and nomadism. From the practical section, he includes a picture about Bedouin socio-economic structure and Bedouin traditions. His work is kind of type that falls in a category of modernization¹¹ of Bedouin society and it calls for a programme of social change rather empirical research. Although, he is not the only researcher who calls for these rather programmes.

Jebrail, Jabbur (1988), deals with definitions about Nomads and nomadism, bringing some examples from Syria, referring to the nature and ecology of Bedouin environment continually interrelating it with its animals and plants.

Very few works emphasize on ownership among Bedouins, specifically the land tenure, which comes under the economic structure of the Bedouin. Al-Arabi, Fawzi Radwan (1989), gives detailed view for land tenure among some Bedouin groups, and its correlation to tribal relations. In his study, Al-Arabi shows how Bedouins take the land tenure as one of their economic system¹². Al-Arabi is a researcher who calls for the modernization and the invasion of the technology among the Bedouin¹³.

Some of the ethnographies have been attracted to studying the Bedouin of Sinai Desert, where several studies have been taken place there including geographical and ecological studies. The geographer Hobbs, Joseph (2003), has conducted one of these works in Sinai Desert. The author lived with Bedouins in Sinai, and worked with some people from the Bedouins whom lived in that area. He walked through the desert registering all the phenomena he saw along the way including ecological issues, plants, and animals. His work was about one of the tribes in Sinai, describing all aspects of the present life and conditions of it, mainly the difficulties they face in that part where they are living. The significance of this work is that the author is presenting it as a portrait of Bedouin life, emphasizes on how the Bedouins themselves view their world.

¹¹ This will lead to full integration of Bedouins in the urbanization style, with the awareness of a greater change of Bedouin cultural, religious, and social features.

¹² This doesn't imply to the Bedouin in our study since none of them is a land owner.

¹³ It is worth to include this information in spite of that it will take me a while as anthropologist to accept the manifestation of Bedouin dependency on the city and to comprehend this phenomenon as a greater change on their life.

One of the modern anthropologists, who explored two of the Bedouin tribes in the Egyptian eastern Desert, and spent some good time among them, is Badawi, Nadia (1994). Badawi sets out with the history of these tribes, their morphological characteristics, their living habits, their traditions, and their social life. Hence, she concludes her experience with these tribes showing the role of women in the household suggesting a more comparative perspective contrasting contemporary Bedouin society with that of the past.

In writing about the material culture of Bedouin, Weir, Shelagh (1976) examined the Bedouin material culture in Jordan. He tried to give also a photographic documentation and description of materials that the Bedouin are using in their daily life. He collected his work from various groups from one of the Bedouin tribes in south Jordan. He included in his work their handcrafts, making tents, weaving, and jewellery.

Gellner (1981) emphasizes in his book about marriage, customs among Muslim society. He is one of modern anthropologists who studied different cultures in the Muslim society. He discusses the mutual relations between arid areas and urban areas under the same political and traditional system.

One of important subjects in anthropology that attracted scientists from several fields is the study of kinship. Recent contributions to the study of kinship have critically questioned a number of the basic assumptions of earlier kinship studies. Holy (1989), made a significant contribution to the study of kinship in the Muslim society. His famous discussion about kinship is that the sharedness relates to blood, mother's milk and birth parents.

Stone (2001) argued that Kinship is not always more significant than other forms of relatedness and there are other principles than blood that constitute kinship. She even argued that kinship and social identity have been preoccupied with biological or corporal relations. From other hand, Schneider (1984), Schneider even argued that there was no such thing as an idiom of kinship.

The detailed studies about Bedouin Anthropology and Ethnography are limited in the anthropological studies in the Middle East in general. Most of the studies are made from statistical and sociological views that lack the detailed description of Bedouin society.

1.2.2 Anthropological and Ethnographical Approaches to the Palestinian Bedouin

Literature on Bedouins of Palestine is limited where few books and articles deal with the Anthropology and Ethnography about them. Most of the literature was made on Bedouin of the Negev¹⁴ since the year 1948, and illustrated by Israeli researchers. Some of these studies emphasized the context of nomadism in modern political state, and were mainly biased concerning about the effect of the population of the Bedouins on the Israeli government and community. From other side, these studies emphasize on the modernization of the Bedouin communities and elimination of their characters as Bedouin to involve them in the village or city life. Accordingly, the Bedouin groups who are living in the area of Negev started to lose their morphology as Bedouin from several aspects but forcedly.

It is important to mention here that the ethnographical works were not of full picture about Bedouin, most of the studies contain some or partial aspects of ethnographical issues about them. Therefore, I found it necessarily to mention this information before listing the publications about the subject that might the reader find it not fully related, but partially to the subject.

Palestinian researchers, who were able to reach the Bedouin areas and to make their research on them, were not of huge numbers. One of the Palestinian Pioneers who started the first works on the Bedouin of Palestine is Al-Aref, Aref.

Al-Aref (1933, 1935, and 1944) examined in his books the tribal law, the Bedouin history in the Negev, and some collective experiences among the Bedouin of Beersheba. It should be noted that Al-Aref was employed under the British Mandate as a district administrative officer in Beersheba, and from this experience, he had to make his works about the Bedouin in Beersheba through the years he spent with them.

Al-Aref (1935) in his book *History of Beersheba and It's Tribes* is considered as one of the first historical works that has been written about Bedouins in Palestine. It could be said that it is a more detailed study about the tribes that settled in Beersheba, their origins, and their history. From another side the author collected all the names of the archaeological sites in the area of Beersheba that are no longer mentioned in these days. Al-Aref registered the

¹⁴ Abu- Sa'ad Ismael (march. 2003) a professor at Ben Gurion University wrote on his article "since the late 1960s, the government of Israel has carried out an urbanization policy of resettling the Bedouin community of the Negev in towns. This policy was problematic from its inception, firstly because the entire process was imposed from the outside. The Bedouin had no share in decision-making and were not participants in shaping the program or designing the new communities."

stories he heard from the Bedouin themselves and from their sheikhs about their history and their tribal origins. It is clear here that he was able to make an oral historical record of these people which made it one of the basic references the researcher could turn to when studying the history of Palestine in general and the history of Beersheba in specific.

Al-Aref (1933) made the first published book about tribal law, which is an ethnographical book rather a law book. He examined a detailed study about the tribal law and penal code, including the major crimes and their tribal penal code. Concluded his study in ten chapters, each chapter is a unique study by its self, based again on his experience and oral history from the Bedouin people in Beersheba. He brought up in the first chapter the origins of Beersheba's tribes, and then he started to give detailed tribal laws that contain mainly the laws of murdering, stealing, and marriage laws. By the end of his book, he finalized it with two chapters including the medication and the knowledge among Bedouins.

Similarly, in his work *love, law, and legend*, Al-Aref (1944) concentrates on the different social aspects of the Bedouin society, in particular in the form of woman and household, in addition to the sheikhs and their role. This work describes the life of Bedouin as a long life water battle where they fight for existence.

Abu-Rabia, Aref¹⁵ is another Palestinian scholar and modern anthropologist giving scholarly studies about the Bedouin of Negev. Abu-Rabia in his pioneering articles about Bedouin, and as a Bedouin from Beersheba focuses on the Negev Bedouin discussing their Livestock Rearing from different angles mainly concentrated on Social, Economic, and Political Aspects. He shows in his studies how the social, political, and economic change has had an effect upon the traditional livelihood of the Negev Bedouin. The author considers how, despite all the problems encountered - such as the expropriation of land by the Israeli authorities and the demolition of authorized dwellings - sheep rearing is still considered essential and worthwhile for almost all households.

Abu-Rabia also has made other works and articles concluding several anthropological aspects among Bedouin life that considered as important as any other issues such as medications, rituals, and education among Bedouins.

Among the works on the Bedouins of the Negev and especially in the field of social anthropology and social work among Bedouin are the studies of Al Krenawi, Alean¹⁶ who is a

¹⁵ He is a professor at Ben Gurion University in the Negev.

¹⁶ He is a professor at Ben Gurion University in the Negev.

socio-worker mainly did several works among Bedouin in the Negev concentrating on their social life and their culture. He published different articles such as Al-Krenawi (1999a) examining in this article the conflict resolution through rituals among the Bedouin, who practice the ordeal by fire to resolve various forms of disputes. He analyzes how the Bedouin practice this ritual to resolve the conflict of reciprocal relationships between the individual, small groups, and the society. Where the ritual reflects the social order, reinforces conformity to collective values, deters behaviors that deviate from culturally acceptable norms, and transforms social structure by resolving conflicts between the people among the Bedouin society.

Likewise, in his study of conflict resolution through rituals, Al-Krenawi (1996) concentrates on a description of the ritual system and social work among the Bedouin in the Negev. The author presents in this article information regarding the social work and traditional healing rituals among them.

Very important issue that takes part of the ethnographical studies among the Bedouins is the Blood vengeance as a reaction of murdering. Several works deal with this subject such as Al Krenawi (1999b) who discusses how blood vengeance can place the Bedouin children at high risk of neglect. Thus, he examines the psychological and the social implications of vengeance on the children. In another article (1997), he includes social work study regarding blood vengeance among the Bedouin communities.

Other scholar worked among the Bedouin of the Negev, Falah, Ghazi (1989) is giving a clear picture about Bedouin life in the Negev before and after the year 1948¹⁷. The author analyses in deep the life of Bedouin according to the changes occurred on the political and economic situations aftermath of 1948 war. He gives a series of events, which Bedouins in the Negev had lived and how these events affected their life. He made his analysis depending on the human geography, historical geography, and political geography to finalize the changes that happened to these groups in their lands. The author summarizes his work on how the Israeli occupation has deep impact on the nature of life experienced by Bedouins.

¹⁷ In 1947, the newly formed United Nations accepted the idea to partition Palestine into a zone for the Jews (Israel) and a zone for the Arabs (Palestine). With this United Nations proposal, the British withdrew from the region on May 14th 1948.

An alternative approach by Marx, Emanuel (1984) focused on the economic system that has been adopted by Bedouins according to the rapidly economic changes that affected their life style. The author concerned with recent developments among Bedouin back from Palestine and Sinai. He examines how these Bedouins are absorbed in industrial urban society; they settle in towns and villages and yet they maintain traditions and tribal frameworks.

Diqs, Isaak (1984) as a boy was a Bedouin and he is one of those researchers who made their work from only their experience of living as a Bedouin. He made his work as stories that he gained while living with his family and his tribe where he roamed and grew up in the deserts and pasturelands that have nurtured the Bedouins for centuries. This author is presenting the life of Bedouin in Palestine from his own eyes as he lived it and as he experienced it, giving an actual view of how is the life way of those people of his own. I myself consider the self-experience as a perfect ethnographical work to give the clear picture of any group of people under study.

Some articles have been published concerning Bedouin and their way of life, each article concentrated on certain anthropological and ethnographical subject among Bedouin. Most of these articles are concerning the Negev area, since Negev contains the largest Bedouin population in Palestine. Moreover, these articles include chronological changes that took place on these groups since the year 1948 hitherto.

Maddrell, Penny (1990), wrote her article about the Bedouin of the Negev today. She deals of terms of how they have been emerged into the new rules of the Israeli government and army. Focuses her work to represent the effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict tends to present the Bedouins in the Negev as those of rapid social change from a nomadic to a settled existence.

1.3 The significance of the study

This study is bringing to light an Anthropological and Ethnographical full picture of limited people whom have been ignored most of the time and even not included in the calculation of population¹⁸.

According to the limitations of the Anthropological and Ethnographical studies in the Middle East in general and on Bedouin in particular, this study is making it possible to present numerous aspects that consist the Bedouin society in Jericho district city in East Palestine, by giving information about social structure, economic structure, Law, material culture, knowledge, and traditions of these people.

There is lack of studies focusing mainly on the Bedouin and certainly, there is lack of studies focusing on Anthropological and Ethnographical aspects of Bedouin. The present study will therefore contribute to filling this gap in the anthropological and ethnographical literature on Bedouin societies in the Middle East and mainly in Palestine.

This study will be a good example in giving a full view of Bedouin society in Jericho district in East Palestine, and as well will be a reference for researchers in the future who are studying the Bedouin in General and focusing on specific anthropological and ethnographical aspects of the Bedouin societies in the Middle East.

The long-term objective of this study is giving a historical reference to the publication that is talking about Bedouin society whom settled in this area, and is at the edge of disappearing. They are threatened all the time to be moved forcibly by the Israeli's army from their current encampments to nowhere.

Therefore, this study focuses on the Bedouin society in East Palestine from inside and outside picture, trying to collect and represent as much information about daily life of those people not neglecting their own traditions, culture, and way of life. Thus, the scope of this research is generally wide looking to make Anthropological and Ethnographical study among the Bedouin communities in Palestine possible to be handled and to be searched in the future as well. Because this kind of researches is limited and needed yet and therefore a thorough analyses of its significance is making it possible within the scope of this study to be viewed.

¹⁸ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

1.4 Reasons for choosing the site

Fieldwork of this study was conducted in Jericho district that located mostly in middle eastern part of Palestine in the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea; nearby is the site of the ancient city of Jericho. Jericho is a semi arid area watered by a number of springs, and surrounded by orchards¹⁹ and intensive center gardening; a large part of the population is engaged in agriculture.

The most intensive area of Bedouins in Palestine is located in Beersheba in the Negev desert that is not accessible for me since I am a Palestinian Identity holder, which prohibited any research among the Negev area. Therefore, the first reason for choosing Jericho district is that Jericho district is the only area that is accessible for me for this kind of study. The first Bedouin camp occurred in this area in the year 1950, where most of its people came originally from Beersheba after the year 1948. No Bedouin lived in middle eastern part of Palestine before the year 1948. The fact that 10,000 currently live in this region is the result of migration from the Negev, due to Israeli force. Five thousand of them are living in tents and metal barracks along the road sides.

Second reason for choosing the site is the collection of different tribes in the same district. Different families (close families) who allocated in that area came from different tribes. Members of the same extended family inhabit each camp, although these camps are sharing the same Bedouin culture. They depend on animal husbandry (sheep and goat), and some agricultural activities are mainly used to consolidate the pastoral activities, such as cultivation barley to the consumption of animals. From other hand, the Bedouin who settled in Jericho district are calculating a big number of population regarding to their nearly to the city and transportation and other urban civilization, although they still depend mostly on pastoral production which signifies the Bedouin community.

Third reason for choosing the site is that despite their closeness location to the cities of Jerusalem, Ramallah and Jericho, Bedouin People in this area are still keeping their own way of life that they inherited from their ancestors up to date. They are still practicing their social life, traditions, culture, and law, although some of them are adapted to urban life during time. Unlike other Bedouins who live in Hebron district or Beithlehem district Bedouins in Jericho

¹⁹ Mainly Oranges, and Bananas.

district did not adapt the urban form of life. This make richness to the study when study Bedouin original way of life.

Jericho district locates in the middle eastern part of Palestine where the main road from Ramallah-Jerusalem to Jericho is around 50 Km, where at distance of 20km from Ramallah city you start noticing Bedouin tents and camps line the road. Each family is taking part of the camp along the line, left and right sides of this road. Secondary leading road²⁰ from Jericho to Ramallah contains other Bedouin camps at its beginning.

One of the main reasons I have chosen the site is that the camps at first road are threatened to be transformed by the Israeli army because of the proximity of the Bedouin encampments to the Israeli settlements. Bedouins settled on the secondary road are not yet threatened to be transformed since they live in a blank spot where no Israeli settlements are nearby. The area along the road Ramallah-Jerusalem-Jericho has numerous Bedouin camps, which have been targeted for the demolition from the Israeli forces, and Bedouin are under reinforcement of transaction. From other side none of the institutions had the interest to introduce any development projects to this area according to the earlier reason of forcedly transaction, except for some structure or medical aid from the UNRWA.

Finally, this kind of anthropological study has never been taking place among those groups. These groups are threatened from the Israeli army to be forcedly moved and their encampments are threatened for demolition. The Israeli aim is to demolish the Bedouin encampments and to empty the area to put its hand on these lands for the extension of their settlements. Therefore, it was important reason to choose this area for this present study to make a documentation about them before they disappear from this area.

1.5 Methodology

“The secret is to live like them, and with them, and to share your food with them, and not keep anything apart for yourself, and then they accept you”²¹

²⁰ It is called Al-Mu'arrajat road.

²¹ This sentence has been cited from Thesiger, Wilfred. Arabian Desert. London: Longmans Green, 1959: P. 22.

The methodology of this study took place under several stages; the first stage was literature research trying to collect literature pertaining to the subject. The second stage was making survey research of Bedouin camps in the study area. The third stage was conducting the fieldwork by participation and observation and gaining informants from within Bedouin encampments, and the last stage is data analysis and ideas development through inducing these ideas from the perspectives of the members of the culture and from observation.

The statistical data of the demographic distribution of Bedouin camps were collected through the survey research in the study area, calculating Bedouin camps and latterly naming the tribe and family in each camp. A car was rented, and the area was surveyed and scanned without any contact yet with Bedouin. The name of the family and tribe was registered at the first contact with them.

The statistical data related to Jericho city has been taken from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and some other information from the Municipality of Jericho.

Most of the ethnographical data for this study was collected through participant observation, which lasted in the field from August 2006 to end of June 2007 while the last three months were with continuously daily contact with Bedouin groups' under study. It was very important to have a good start with Bedouin, to have their trust, and to gain the entrance to their culture, to give the proper information and to let me integrate and interact with them.

Participant observation emphasized participation as an opportunity for in-depth systematic study of Bedouin groups and their activities by recording the changes in meaning of the different social regions for the researcher, transitioning from stranger to member to insider. Determining vocabulary concepts was a major focus of this method, seeking to illuminate the inter-subjective meanings of critical terms. In other hand, through this method was the categorization of the observed behavior, as in interaction analysis possible.

The data gathered by the active participation in the social world of Bedouin groups; through entering the Bedouin universe and getting close to them in which these Bedouin are already busy interpreting and understanding their environments.

List of questions were prepared including the whole concepts of interest of the study. These questions were divided according to the issues that will be discussed with the Bedouin.

Under each issue there were numerous questions listed for asking the informant whom has the knowledge of this particular issue. The questions were asked as soon as I started meeting and interviewing them. This list made it easier not missing concrete information from the Bedouin themselves, besides made it possible to start communicating with these groups. As I entered the Bedouin culture more deeply, new questions and avenues open up, required further investigation.

The first visit to each camp was a key to preparing Bedouin groups under study into the research and to entering the group and gain their respect and trust. This visit encouraged Bedouin groups to cooperate with me, giving me the correct information, and to ease my mission in their community that they know. Making this step a successful step depends on the researcher's personality and his acceptance of the community he is studying. Introducing the Bedouin to me and my study and the aim why I am between them was one of the important basics that of the first visit. Honesty is critical attitude to gain their respect and trust from the beginning.

The research took place in a systematic method; I conducted the first visit for all camps one after another as an introductory to myself and to Bedouin groups. Each camp had its first visit with introductory interviews with some informants and mainly was the elderly man in the camp.

Participant observation method was used as a main tool to derive all ethnographical data from the community under study, where the material was recorded in filed logs, but no tape or video recording was possible. Through participant observation, I had the whole possibility to focus on all the activities that are performed by Bedouin groups. In addition, it was the main way to analyze the whole attitudes and behaviors that are as a result of actions among the Bedouin with each other in the same group.

This method was varied between complete observations at first days, and then to observer as participant at final stages. Between these stages, I was sometimes observer as participant and others participant as observer. This variation enriched the contact continuity with members of the Bedouin encampments. This variation depended on how much I was involved and accepted among these groups.

Following the elementary interviews that held at the first visits of the encampments, unstructured interviews were performed in each visit I made to measure the unclear issues,

opinions about all issues related to the research, and unanswered questions about law and traditions. The interviews conducted to get as much descriptive details on all the aspects in this research, and to derive more information about the differentiation between male/female and their roles in that community. This technique was held inside the field with elderly men, women and even youth in few times, and has been documented on notebook onsite.

In the commencement of the interviews, selection of informants was not based on my personal judgments but on identifications and nominations made by community members of Bedouin groups. Likewise, conclusions about cultural understandings of the phenomena of interests are not my personal insights, or even of particular community members, but are views cross-validated through repeated, in-depth interviews with a broad cross-section of representative informants.

It should be mentioned that this method was very important in perceive this culture and respond to charges of subjectivity by emphasizing that my approach eschews preconceived frameworks and derives meaning from the community informants themselves, whereas my first visits and research survey instruments often reflected my conceptual categories preconceived prior to actual encounter with respondents.

The informants were interviewed multiple times, using information from previous informants to elicit clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. This process was intended to reveal common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study.

The interval of the fieldwork was from August 2006 to end of June 2007 and was discontinuous for the purposes of being with Bedouin groups in different seasons and occasions. Therefore, it assured the ability to distinguish the difference of activities and way of life through different times during the year. The last three months of fieldwork was a sustained period because several occasions like marriages took place, and noticed changes in economic system is occurred besides the seasonally transition from one area to another for some groups.

The last stage of the research methodology was analyzing and developing the ideas collected through the entire field interval. It was very important to get as much notes as I could for not missing any issue. Writing notes was the most sensitive time between me and the Bedouin members. Most of the time, they did not like that I was writing while they are talking and they could not read what I have written about them. Some of the schoolchildren

from the camps, who are able to read, came to me asking for reading what was written. My handwriting was not clear for them so at the end they were tiered spelling what I have written so they returned the notebook to me.

Most of the analyzing stage was taking place back home in Ramallah city, where I could revise my notes and specifying the missing issues for the purpose of seeking validation of induced ideas by going back to members of Bedouin community for their reaction. I advocated most of the time a structural observation and structural visits, following with structural analysis by reviewing some literature for the aspects under study to assure cultural understandings and interpretations.

It should be mentioned that it was important to be capable of understanding the cultural mores of the population of Bedouin communities by mastering the language or technical jargon of that culture, and by basing findings on comprehensive knowledge of their culture. There was no danger of introducing bias towards perspectives of my own culture, as much of anthropologists face. Emphasizing this latterly comprehension made it easier analyzing and interpreting the Bedouin culture rather from a personal perspective.

Systemic Photography was a necessarily tool that has been used through the visits and stays at Bedouin encampments. Photos were taken for artifacts and settings to present information and to record events that have been placed at one or another of Bedouin camps. Photography was used to document some activities and to describe some artifacts or tools. Sometimes, it was difficult to separate oneself from the discussions or activities inside the field to get to make photography. The attitude of Bedouin towards photography was not comfortably, especially when it is taken for faces of the people. Thus, most of the pictures I had taken were after taking the permit of those people. Women photography is more complicated, since women at Bedouin encampments do not accept to be photographed, especially the young women, while it was easier with older women. Photographing of the places, tents, artifacts, tools, animals, and living units was acceptable.

I could not make video and tape records because the Bedouin people did not accept it at all. Therefore, I was able only to use the digital camera photographs.

In general, the people of all camps were cooperative, and were relieved after they knew my aim and my study. They accepted me after few introducing moments of myself and the aim of my study. They tried their best to give me the information I needed especially after

continuing visiting and contacting them. Still I faced some problems not only inside the encampment but also during my visits. It was difficult for Bedouin to accept the idea that studying them is for the purpose of research and not for aid and support, which made my mission at first visits more difficult than the latter visits.

Most importantly, was the problem of the Israeli Check points along the way from Ramallah city to Jericho city and from Jericho city back to Ramallah. There were two fixed checkpoints along the main road Ramallah-Jerusalem-Jericho and other two on the secondary road from Jericho back to Ramallah. It should be explained in this context that Palestinians are not allowed to use the main road in two directions by the Israeli army. Because of this reason, we were using both roads. Sometimes the Israelis did not allow the car to pass the checkpoint for more than one hour, and other times they did not allow me to pass. The most struggling checkpoint was at the entrance of Al-Uja²², where I was not allowed to inter this area, but finally I got into negotiations with the Israeli army at the checkpoint until finally I got a permit to inter for few hours.

Rain, very hot weather and some sandy storms were the most climatic problems, not only for me but also for the Bedouin themselves. Rain was making the ground wet and muddy. Hot weather was making it so difficult to stay inside the tents where no single breeze there. Sandy storms brought up lots of dust and broke some parts of the tents sometimes. In the month of June it was the reproduction period of flies, while so many flies around the area and around artifacts and food.

The informants from the Bedouins always intended to give the nice and good information about themselves and about their tribe. From other side, they tried hardly to hide the timid and bad news. Sexual relations among Bedouin are the most discreet and sensitive issue to talk about. Since I am a woman, it was very hard to get the detailed information or even some information from men about sexual relations. Married women were open to give some information about timid issues like sexual relations under marriage relationship. Male informants do not approach the intimate world of personal and family life or to the world of women. When I asked them about issues related to the women's world they nominated their wives, sisters or daughters to talk about it. All the information about Bedouin law in chapter five I got from male informants. Women do not talk about law and judgments. From their side when I asked them about this subject they referred to men for asking them.

²²Al-Uja area is a closed spot; Bedouin inhabit the area where an Israeli checkpoint at the entrance prohibits any Palestinian from entering if he is not one of the inhabitants of that area.

Men did not talk freely about some crimes, in particular the crimes that condemn their tribe; they tried all their best to give the nice image about their tribe. I spent more time with women than men speaking and sharing all the daily life of their own.

When I made this research, I did not stay overnights for a sleep in any of the encampments except one time when there was a wedding among Al-Jahalin tribe. Bedouin people did not accept the idea of me staying overnight. Women told me that since I have a place to sleep in Ramallah city then I had better go to it rather to sleep overnight. I did not myself insist for staying overnight when I got the clear answer about not staying. Moreover, I visited them from the sunrise until nine or ten o'clock in the evening. I often left the encampments when it is time for the Bedouin to sleep.

Finally, I added some quotes that have been taken from the Bedouins themselves regarding several issues in this research to assure the information within the text.

2 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING THE AREA

2.1 Introduction

Jericho city is one of the main cities in Palestine, and considered since ancient times as a road for the trading between Jerusalem in Palestine and Amman in Jordan and vice versa. One of the holy places of Christian Pilgrimage, through it passed the pilgrims in their way to Jordan River where the Christ was baptized. Jericho city was called Tell- El-Sultan which contains the ruins of the oldest civilization discovered in Jericho is 10,000 years old and related to the Neolithic age²³.

In addition to its tourist sites, Jericho is considered an important area for agriculture. It is famous for its citrus fruits, dates, bananas, flowers and winter vegetables. The location and climate of the city made it possible for different Bedouin groups going to Jordan, or coming from Beersheba to settle near the city and restart their life. Nowadays we find many encampments that settled around the area of Jericho and they are practicing their daily Bedouin life. Due to their presence near the city and transport facilities, it was more possible for them to using many of the city and rural areas services.

2.2 Location

Jericho (map 1) is the Palestinian city called the green oasis, watered by a number of springs, which made it an intense place for agriculture. The city situated in the Jordan Valley which lies 7 km west of the River Jordan, 10 km north of the Dead Sea and 30 Km east of Jerusalem. It lies 276 meters below sea level and thus it is considered the lowest spot in the world.

A major ford of the Jordan accommodated travel from Transjordan²⁴ through the river to the west. This route connected the Transjordanian Highway and the Madaba²⁵ Plain in Moab²⁶ to the International Coastal Highway along the Mediterranean Sea. Jericho in ancient

²³ It is the Greek name for the new Stone Age, which dated to 10000 years ago.

²⁴ It is a political division territory under Ottoman rule, and called Emirate of Transjordan, which is equivalent to Kingdom of Jordan today.

²⁵ One of the cities locates in Jordan, and it is famous of its archaeology and Byzantine mosaic.

²⁶ It is the historical name in Jordan for the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

time controlled the northern road in the Jordan Valley that led to the important trade city of Baysan²⁷.

Jericho is situated on a narrow plain on the western side of the Jordan Valley. Behind the city, the land rises sharply into a mountainous wilderness. Excavations at Jericho date the earliest settlements to the Neolithic Age (8,000 B.C.), making it one of the oldest cities of the world²⁸.

The name Jericho derived from the Can'anite word *yerah*, meaning moon or month or new moon. Early inhabitants of the area probably worshiped the moon god, whom they believed controlled the cycles of the moon and therefore the agricultural seasons.

2.3 Ecology and Climate

According to few studies that were done by Al-Islah charitable Society in the year 2003, Jericho area is a low-lying (244-398 m below sea level) arid to semi-arid area with most Palestinian built-up areas between 100 and 300 meters below sea levels. The Jordan Valley, of which Jericho district is part of, is situated on the floor of the northern tip of the 6,500-kilometer-long Syrian-East African Rift²⁹, Jericho is at latitude of 31° 52'N and longitude 35° 28'E.

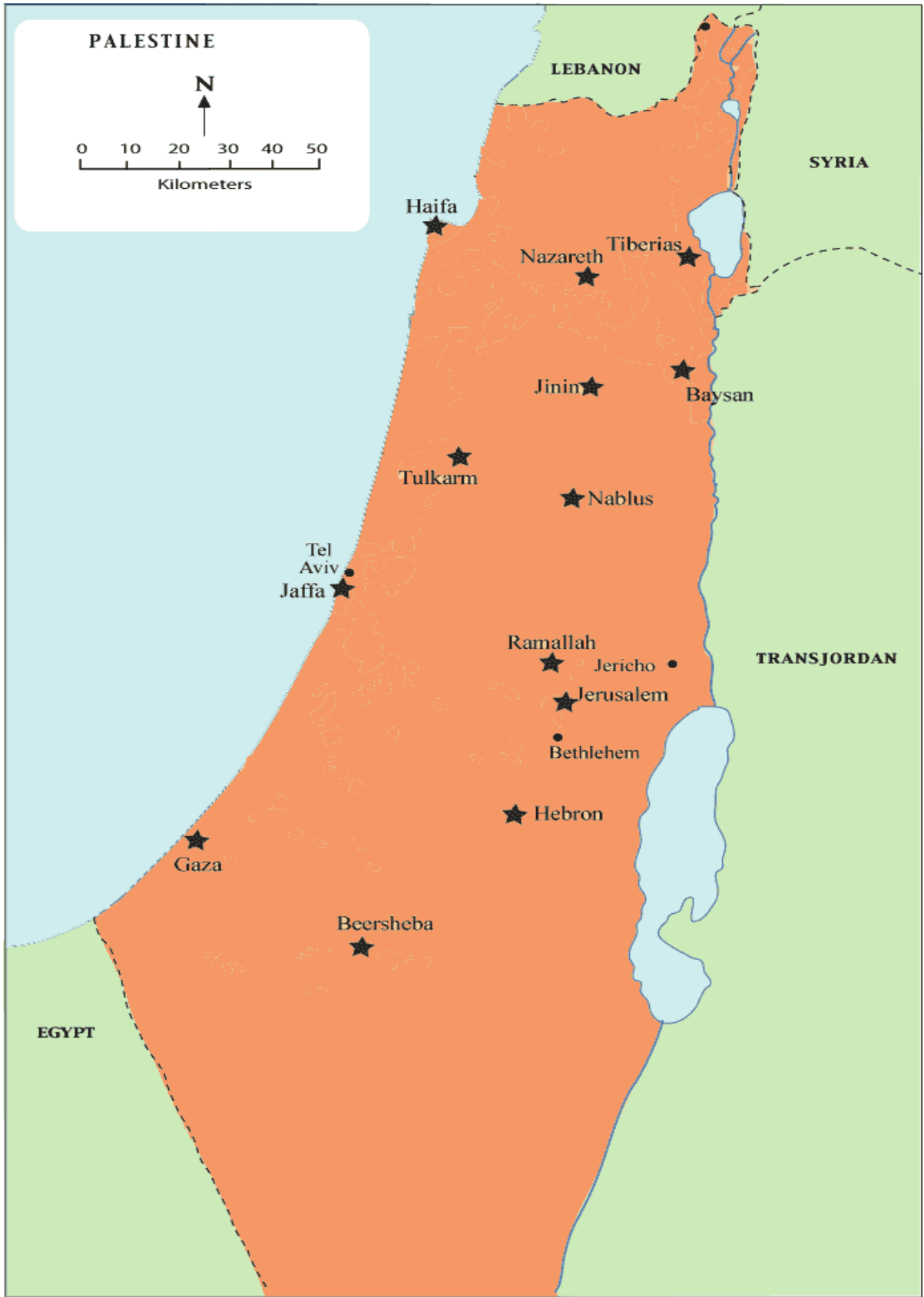
The climate of Jericho and the Jordan Valley is affected by the subtropical aridity, which is characterized by long, hot, and dry summers and short, cool winters.

January is the coldest month in this area, with an average temperature of 19°C, while August is the hottest month with a daily average temperature of 30°C and an average maximum temperature of 38°C. The average minimum temperatures for the same months are approximately 7°C and 22°C, respectively. In the years from 1994- 2004 and according to the Palestinian Metrology Department, the daily average temperature throughout the year was 23.3°C, and the average maximum temperature was 44.9°C, with maximum temperature 48°C in 2002, while the average minimum temperature was 3.6°C with minimum temperature 0.6°C in 1997.

²⁷ De Vries, 1997: P. 189.

²⁸ De Vries, 1997: P. 189.

²⁹ Which is called the Great Rift Valley; it is a continuous geographic trough.



Map 1: Map of Palestine, showing Jericho city.

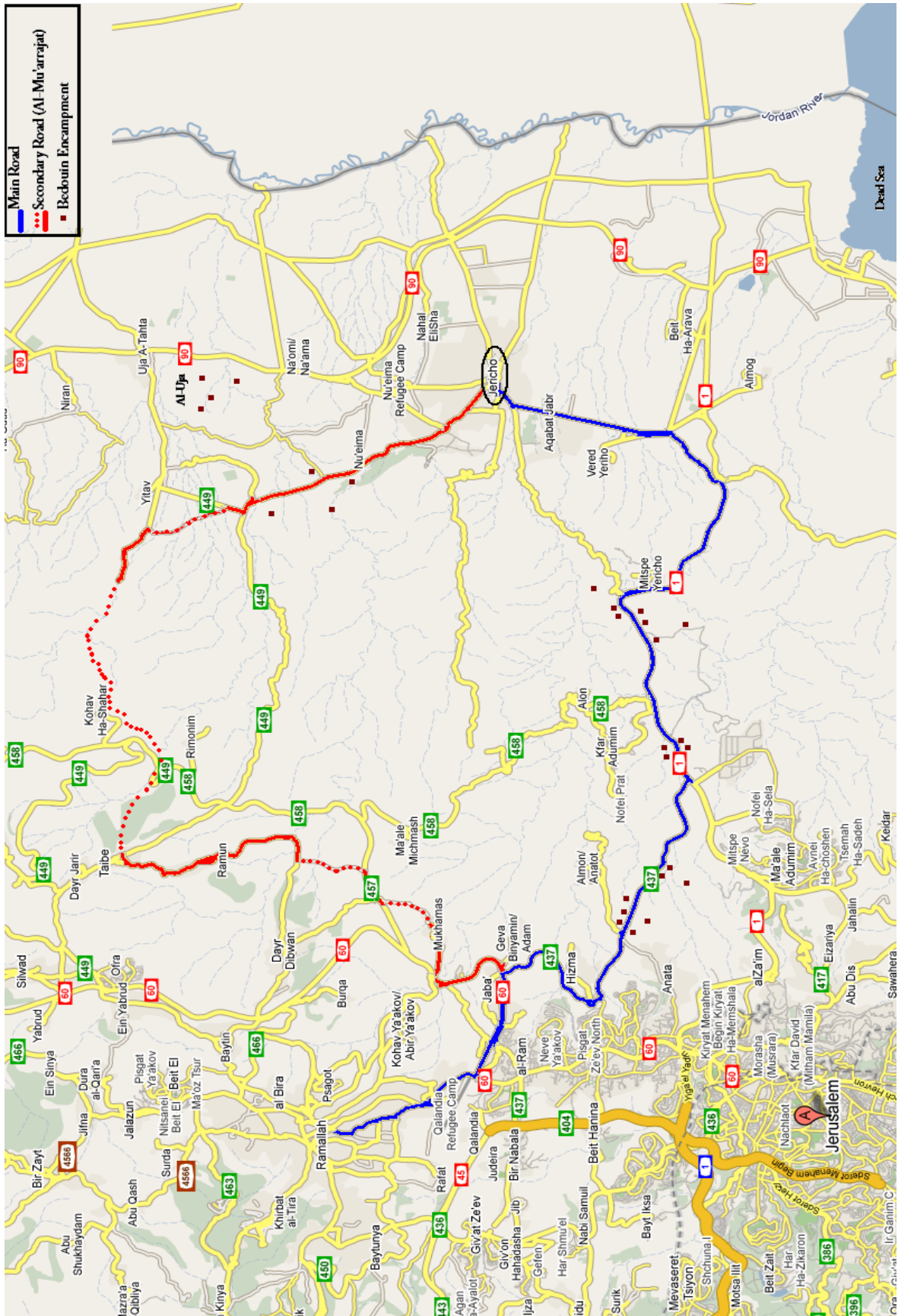
The average annual amount of rainfall is 150 millimeters, and the average annual humidity is 52%. According to Palestinian Metrology Department, the annual average rainfall in the period between 1994 and 2004 was 146.29 mm and fell between October/November and March/April, with the rest of the year mostly rainless. The maximum annual rainfall was 240.3 mm in 2002/2003 season while the minimum annual rainfall (driest season) was 40.3 mm in 1998/1999 season.

The amount of rainfall in Jericho area is less than that of the surrounding mountains and the coastal regions, thus Jericho area relies entirely for drinking and irrigation on subterranean wells and springs such as Ein El-Sultan spring³⁰. The source of this water is situated in the distant mountains. Ein El-Sultan spring is considered the main water source for agriculture. It has an output of 680 cubic meters an hour and a salinity of 600 fractions in one million. It provides a steady output throughout the year. It is used equally for drinking water and for irrigating. Ein El-Sultan is not the only spring that the area contains, but there are several springs surrounding the area and were one of the attracted reasons for the Bedouin to settle in this area specifically.

The area within the municipality of Jericho limits is about 45 square kilometers, and according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic of the year 2005, the population of the city of Jericho alone is 19,147 inhabitants. If we include the population of the surrounding villages and refugee camps, the number goes up to 40,905 inhabitants³¹.

³⁰ Ein is the Arabic word for spring.

³¹These statistics don't include the Bedouin population in the area of the study.



Map 2: Bedouin Settlement in Jericho district including Bedouin encampments³².

³² Resource of this map is www.googlemaps.com. I put the Bedouin encampments to proximal locations.

2.4 Bedouin Settlement

Jericho as a city and a district is the smallest Palestinian district in terms of population but vast in terms of land.

According to the Islah Charitable Social Society research for the year 2003, they mentioned that Jericho district is composed of 11 rural villages, two refugee camps and one major city, which is Jericho. More than 25 Bedouin encampments are scattered in the Jordan Valley in Jericho District.

To make it easier for the fieldwork I divided the Bedouin gathering in Jericho district into four areas.

Area A: Bedouin Encampments those are located along the main road (Ramallah-Jerusalem-Jericho) within a distance of 7- 25 km from Jericho city. Area A contains 19 different Bedouin encampments.

Area B: Bedouin encampments those are located at the secondary road (Al-Mu'arajat) including Ein Al-Duyuk and Al-Uja³³ where the distance is 3km from Jericho city center. Area B contains eight different Bedouin encampments. It should be mentioned that in Al-Uja also live some *fallahin* (peasants) from Hebron district. Those *fallahin* live a resemble life of that of the Bedouin. They live in tents and graze herds. They came to this area from Hebron district seeking water and food for the flocks. They do not have any contact with the Bedouin, although they are living near to them.

Area C: is Aqbet Jaber Refugee camp, which is 3 km far from Jericho city center. Bedouin from different tribes live in this area, in addition to *fallahin*.

Area D: is Jericho city itself. The last two areas will not be included in details in this research except for some comparisons because the Bedouin in these two areas have integrated in the city life almost totally, while the aim of this research was to reach the real Bedouin life in their encampments.

All Bedouin encampments in Areas A and B are composed of living unites related to the same extended family of the same tribe. The families are extended families up to three or

³³Although both areas belong to Jericho district, they are excluded from the municipality services and population statistics of the district.

four generations are living in the same encampment. There is no mixture of different families from other tribes living within the same encampment.

Unfortunately, neither the municipality records nor the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) got database about the demography of Bedouin communities who are living in this area. It should be mentioned that nomadic Bedouin were not counted or undercounted in both Ottoman and British censuses in the years between 1800 and 1948. Those who became settled in Palestine after the year 1948 would then be added to population figures, but those who immigrated to Jericho district were always not counted.

Thus, it was difficult to make a concrete statistics about the whole encampments and members in the study area, and the numbers that are given in this study of the population will be approximate numbers.

Bedouins who live in Areas C and D are living in small and scattered communities in cement houses. Bedouins who are living in Areas A and B are living in black tents, barracks and tarpaulin tents. The traditional Bedouin black tents are often not used now except for some parts of the same living unit, as they are expensive and not widely available. In addition, Bedouins are threatened more that their tents might be demolished by the Israeli army when the tents are fragile and can be removed any time. They are currently under the threat of being driven out of their land as a result of the continuous harassment, therefore, the Bedouin live in semi tents or barracks. They live either on the sides of the main roads or between hills not very far from the main road.

Regarding my own survey, there are 19 Bedouin encampments along the main road (Ramallah- Jerusalem) to Jericho, and 8 encampments in Area B along the secondary road (Al-Muarrajat) including Al-Uja area (map 2). Each encampment is composed of members related to the same extended family as part of the same tribe. The average family unit size is 6 members keeping in mind that this number is for one nuclear family (husband, one wife and children). Normally when any one of the sons gets married, he remains in a separate tent within the same encampment where the rest of his father's family is, and so on for the next generation of sons. This structure allows them to share the same social and economic units inside the encampment, which will be discussed in detail in chapter three. We must take in consideration that most of Bedouin men tend to marry a second wife, where his wife and her children will also occupy a place in the same encampment.

The Bedouin economic manner to earn their living depends on rearing animals and selling the produce like cheese, and yogurt, which will be discussed in details in chapter four. Bedouins face many constraints, including limited movement, diminished holding capacity and productivity, high production costs (particularly barley) and lower productivity due to hygiene problems, in addition to lower market prices for their produce. This has led to substantial reductions in family incomes.

Poverty is increasing among Bedouin communities, according to several factors. One of the possible causes of their poverty is the marginalization of the pastoral economy due to a reduction of herd size because of their proximity to the Israeli settlements. Israeli army prohibits them to approach even few meters out of their encampments to the near grassy lands, which causes a limitation in herding areas. The increase of living costs is also another reason for the poverty of the Bedouin, and as mentioned before the Bedouins face many constraints, including limited movement and high cost of barley production. Such factors will be discussed at greater length later.

2.5 Services and Utilities

2.5.1 Transportation

Very few people from either Area A or B own a car, which is always an old car or a pickup. Most of their travel is by public transport. Bedouin encampments that are located along the main road (Ramallah-Jerusalem) to Jericho are using the public taxi or public vans. These vans go to Jericho city from one side, and to Bethlehem, Ramallah, or to Jerusalem from the opposite side. None of the Bedouin goes to Jerusalem city but rather to some near villages because the Israeli army prohibits all Palestinians to enter the city of Jerusalem.

Bedouin live in Area B mainly those in Ein Al-Duyuk go usually to Jericho city on foot. People at Ein Al-Duyuk live up the hill, which made it difficult for them to arrive on foot. Those living in Al-Uja wait for a public transport that passes from the nearest road once each other hour.

The Bedouin who are living in Area C (Aqbet Jaber refugee camp) are using the public transport that goes to Jericho city center and vice versa.

The Bedouin in Area D who are living in Jericho city are using their own cars, the public transport or on foot like other people who are living in the city.

2.5.2 Water, Electricity, and Telephones

Mainly due to political controversy over water rights and the use of water by Israel as a tool for repression, Bedouins have scant access to water resources. Bedouin encampments in Area B that locate near the springs are making access to get to the water and use it like those who are living beside Ein Al-Duyuk, Ein Al-Uja, and Ein Al-sultan³⁴.

Springs that locate near the encampments in Area A like Ein Fara and Ein Wadi Al-Qelt³⁵ have no access for Palestinians by the Israelis. Some of the Bedouins who are living in Area A worked to extend a pipe subsidiary of the main barrel that feed the Israeli settlements nearby the encampments. Each time the Israelis found the subject matter of this connected barrel, they break it to prevent the water access to the encampments.

The rest of Bedouin encampments either in Area A or B contain water reservoir where they fill it by purchasing the water from Jericho city or Al-Ezaria village³⁶.

Electricity is not provided to the Bedouin encampments in both areas A and B. Most of them use power transformer, but only at night. Only one encampment in Area A from Al-Ara'arah clan has an access to electricity, provided from the main road supplier power.

No telephone access is at any of the encampments. Usually men use cell phones; they use it mainly for the work and call other men friends. Women do not use the cell phones since all of them stay inside the camps, and no need for them to use it.

"We buy mobiles and use them only for work, or to make an important call to a friend or a relative. We recharge the mobiles in the Gas station in Jericho."

(Khamees from Al-Jahalin-Area A)

³⁴ The closest water spring to Jericho city locates 1km from the city center.

³⁵ Both springs are the main and biggest springs in Jericho district.

³⁶ Locates near Jerusalem city, which is close to Area A.

2.5.3 Education

There are no schools near the encampments, except for one small school in Area B called *Omar Ben Al-Khattab* basic school. The main schools are located in Jericho city, Aqbet Jaber refugee camp, and Anata village³⁷. The children from Area A mainly go for study to Anata UNRWA School for boys and girls.

The encampments in Area A that are closer to Jericho city; its children go to Aqbet Jaber UNRWA School. The children in Area B go to study at the UNRWA basic school and governmental school in Jericho city. Education will be discussed further in detail in chapter seven.

2.5.4 Health facilities

The UNRWA clinic that locates in Aqbet Jaber refugee camp is the most used health center for the Bedouin in Area A. Bedouins go to the governmental Jericho hospital as well for chronic cases and sometimes in case of baby delivery. A mobile clinic is making regular visits to each encampment, checking on their health and giving medicine when needed. Either UNRWA sends the mobile clinic or other funding organization to give health education and health facilities to Bedouins.

From other side the Governmental Hospital of Jericho sends a regular pediatric to Areas A and B who makes checkups on the babies in each encampment, and gives the proper treatment.

³⁷ It is the nearest village to the first encampments in Area A.

3 CHAPTER TWO: BEDOUIN TRIBAL HISTORY

3.1 Introduction

Several Palestinian researchers had the interest about Bedouin history and Bedouin tribes in Palestine, unlike other researchers who wrote about Bedouin in the nearest countries. For example, researchers in Jordan made no written history about Bedouin who immigrated during many years for searching shelter and source of water. The only history that has been written on the Jordanian Bedouins is the oral history from the elderly people³⁸.

When we register the Bedouin history in Palestine we must bear in mind that they are the minority population among Palestinians comparing to Bedouin quantities in the neighboring countries in Jordan, Sinai, or Arabia. Bedouin in Palestine are distributed in different geographical areas from northern Palestine in the Galilee to the southern Palestine in the Negev. The largest communities are the Bedouin in the Negev in Beersheba³⁹.

Most of the researchers who studied the history of Bedouin in the Negev agree that the Bedouin arrived to the Negev and Sinai from the Arabian Peninsula, and that some of them had arrived before the expansion of Islam in the 7th century⁴⁰.

The main changes in the Bedouins history in Palestine came after the Israeli colonization, which was the reason for the redistribution of the demography of the Bedouin in the Negev⁴¹. This will be shown here in this chapter in more detail.

Bedouins in Palestine went under different eras from 7000 years ago hitherto, which affected their life style and the land ownership. Bedouin in Palestine as other Palestinian population lived under the Ottoman Empire, British Mandate, and Israeli colonization. This sequence of historical events formulated Bedouin history in this area⁴². The tribes of this study are those who immigrated to Jericho district in the aftermath of 1948 war, and originally came from Beersheba, Hebron, and few from Bethlehem.

³⁸ Al-Rabaya'a, 1974: P. 61.

³⁹ Falah, 1989: P. 57.

⁴⁰ Abu-Rabia, 1994: P. 15.

⁴¹ Falah, 1989: P. 171.

⁴² Al-Aref, 1935: P. 31 & 34.

3.2 Tribal History through Time

Bedouin history in Palestine is connected with the history of the whole population in this area. The Bedouin were affected from the different rules of Ottomans, British Mandate and Israeli colonization. Before recalling the history of Bedouin tribes, it is important to mention the Bedouin demographic status in Palestine.

Bedouins in Palestine are distributed in four major regions: the northern region of Palestine (Galilee), the coastal region (The Mediterranean coast), the southern region (mainly Beersheba), and the Dead Sea region (Jericho district). Northern part of Palestine contains several small Bedouin groups, settled mainly in the Galilee⁴³. Since a century, the tribes in the northern part were fragmented and were not as stronger as before so they had been distracted into small groups. The origin of Bedouin in this part goes back to Horan in Syria, who immigrated to Palestine at the last hundreds of years⁴⁴. Some of the Bedouin in the northern region have driven to the pastoral life and became latterly as pastorals that their life depends on agriculture. Others are keeping their Bedouin lifestyle and keeping their seasonal trips⁴⁵. Changes in both the processes and the patterns of Bedouin sedentarization in Galilee in northern Palestine took place under entirely new political conditions, which came after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The pattern of Bedouin sedentarization in Galilee has developed in two distinct directions. First, the Bedouin themselves have built permanent structures for residential purposes, a process usually referred to as 'spontaneous Bedouin settlement'. Secondly, the state authorities have planned and established settlements⁴⁶.

At the second region; the coastal region, Bedouin tribes are living along the Mediterranean coast in the western part of Palestine. Most of Bedouin tribes who live in this region came originally from southern Palestine and settled as small groups between Haifa city and Jafa city along the coast⁴⁷.

The largest Bedouin communities are living in the southern part of Palestine. The region called the Negev desert that has Beersheba city⁴⁸ and continues to Hebron district. The Negev covers over some 12,000 km² or about 50% of the whole area of Palestine. It forms an inverted triangle shape whose western side is contiguous with the desert of the Sinai desert in

⁴³ Falah, 1989: P. 29.

⁴⁴ Oppenheim, 1943: P. 34.

⁴⁵ Oppenheim, 1943: P. 35.

⁴⁶ Falah, 1985: P. 361.

⁴⁷ Oppenheim, 1943: P. 106.

⁴⁸ It is the largest city in the Negev desert.

Egypt, and whose eastern border is the Wadi Araba⁴⁹ in Jordan⁵⁰. Bedouin tribes lived in this area since decades, and established their own economic and political system during the time. The city of Beersheba established on the year 1900 among the Ottoman Empire, and started this city to have a political role within the Ottoman government⁵¹. This will be discussed in more details in the following lines.

Jericho district in east Palestine is the fourth region where the Bedouin are settled in Palestine, which is the area of this research. Before the year 1948 there were no Bedouins inhabited this region. All Bedouins came from Negev, Beersheba and very few from Hebron after the year 1948. The Israeli army has moved them forcedly from their lands from the south. They moved toward the north to Jordan and to Sinai in Egypt while others moved to Jericho district.

The records of settlement of Bedouin in Palestine goes back to 7000 years ago from the ancient times, but were part of people of Palestine. The first recording for the real Bedouin tribes are first recorded as entering Palestine in the 5th century AD when some tribes penetrated from the south. Little is known about Bedouin in Palestine in the following centuries, but certainly, during the Ottoman period (16th -19th centuries) Bedouin tribes controlled the Negev and were also established in the Galilee⁵².

Bedouin tribes ruled the Negev largely independently and without interference for thousands years. For long periods, Bedouin tribes until the 19th century controlled large stretches of land and charged passengers whom travelled through this land⁵³. The Ottomans only started establishing a firm government at the end of the 19th century in order to increase safety and protect pilgrims⁵⁴. Between the year 1900 and 1948 the Bedouins who inhabited the Negev were rich Bedouin families and landowners who were dominated by the Turkish rule as Bedouin sheikhs. The Turkish rule continued on the Negev from the year 1900 to 1917, while the Turkish Government made all the facilities to draw the Bedouins attention to inhabit the Negev area, so they will be able to control them through their important men; sheikhs, and later established a tribal court in the Negev⁵⁵.

⁴⁹ It is lying between Dead Sea to the north and Gulf of Aqaba to the south.

⁵⁰ Falah, 1989: P. 42.

⁵¹ Falah, 1989: P. 45.

⁵² Maddrell, 1990: P. 4.

⁵³ Same reference as 52.

⁵⁴ Ginat & Khazanov, 1998: P. 60.

⁵⁵ Falah, 1989: P. 46.

During the World War I, the Negev Bedouins fought with the Turks against the British, but later withdrew from the conflict.

Late in the rule of the Ottoman Empire, an administrative center for southern Palestine was established in Beersheba and schools and a railway station were built. The authority of the tribal chiefs over the region was recognized by the Ottomans.

Towards the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1914, the Turkish authorities estimated the Bedouin population of the Negev to be 55,000. Nevertheless, Ottoman figures were for tax gathering and were not designed for demographic accuracy⁵⁶.

Palestine became under the British Mandate who ruled from 1917 to 1948, while through this period many changes had occurred among the lifestyle of the Bedouin in the Negev. During the British Mandate, Bedouin movement was restricted due to the new frontier separating French and British Mandatory territories in the area⁵⁷.

The British kept a close watch of Bedouin tribes' movements who were living in the nearby of the frontier to prevent smuggling the transmission of disease and border incidents. For the first time the Bedouin had to carry passports and mark their livestock⁵⁸.

The British Mandate in Palestine brought order to the Negev; however, the order was accompanied by losses in sources of income and poverty among Bedouins. This transformation for Bedouin occurred when they failed to register their lands and land ownership under the British Mandate, then the life of the Bedouin in the Negev in spite of the desert nature turned to depend for the maximum on the agriculture⁵⁹.

The British recorded that the Negev Bedouin were so poor that they could not pay any school fees and seldom paid their taxes or repaid government loans⁶⁰.

The Bedouin who settled in the Galilee area in northern Palestine, had less Bedouin population and their agricultural land was little extended. They became more integrated with the *Fallahin*⁶¹ (Peasants) life and some of them had houses out of cement and not tents which played a role later for their sedenterization⁶².

⁵⁶ Maddrell, 1990: P. 4.

⁵⁷ Ginat & Khazanov, 1998: P. 60.

⁵⁸ Ginat & Khazanov, 1998: P. 61.

⁵⁹ Maddrell, 1989: P. 5.

⁶⁰ Same reference as 59.

⁶¹ The word *Fallahin* is plural of Fallah and means the cultivator of the soil, which has the English translation of a peasant.

⁶² Falah, 1985: P. 361.

Changes in traditional Bedouin life occurred more rapidly in the Galilee. Many Galilee tribes were splinters of originally larger groups, in contrast to the large Negev tribes. Living as small groups among larger peasant communities probably hastened acculturation to them, and the consequent swing away from traditional Bedouin occupation⁶³.

The establishment of Israeli state at the land of Palestine in 1948 affected the completely Palestinian population and the Bedouin as well. The conflict between the State of Israel and the Negev Bedouin yet had started after 1948 especially over land. From other hand the conflicts between the Bedouins living in Palestine and the Israeli government. Efforts by Israel to move these Bedouins to other areas are strongly due to the establishment of the Israeli settlements around or near Bedouin encampments⁶⁴.

When the Israeli Army occupied the Negev in 1948, the majority of the tribes were expelled to Jordan, Gaza Strip, and Sinai⁶⁵.

During the year 1948 and at the beginning of the 1948 war thousands of Palestinian population were expelled from their lands and villages and also thousands of Bedouin of the Negev were expelled and for several years afterwards⁶⁶.

Other Bedouin, who were afraid of the Israeli authorities, especially because they had participated in battles against Israel, left of their own accord⁶⁷. The policy of the Israelis was to move the Bedouin out of the Negev, but nobody knew where they were supposed to go⁶⁸.

According to UN report of the year 1953 three fourth of the Bedouin in the Negev were forcedly expelled from their lands and headed for some areas in Palestine, such as Jericho and Hebron and the rest moved to Jordan and Egypt.

As we mentioned before, Bedouin in the Negev failed to register the land ownership, and this reason made it possible for the Israeli authorities to put its hands on these lands and later they announced them as military closed areas, which prevented the Bedouin to return to their lands since that time.

The Bedouin who remained in this area were confined to various closed military areas. The real reasons for maintaining the closed military areas are concluded as firstly, preventing

⁶³ Maddrell, 1989: P. 5.

⁶⁴ Prusher, 1998: P. 11.

⁶⁵ Digs, 1967: P. 13.

⁶⁶ Maddrell, 1989: P. 7.

⁶⁷ Abu-Rabia, 1994: P. 15.

⁶⁸ Marx, 1967: P. 19.

internal refugees from returning to their lands. Secondly, protecting the labour market of the Jewish immigrants by controlling the movements of the Bedouin. Thirdly, expropriating the lands of the Bedouin by the Israelis. Finally, preventing the formation of undesirable political organizations⁶⁹.

After the year 1968 most of the Bedouin in the Negev pressured to move off from their lands into governmental urban settlements as a plan of sedenterization of the Bedouin. Hence, the Israeli government sought to make the Bedouin tribes give up their nomadic way of life⁷⁰.

Bedouin today in the Negev and Beersheba are concentrated in seven urban settlements while most of them especially the new generation lost their Bedouin identity.

3.3 Bedouin Tribes under study

Bedouin tribes included in this research are the people from the fourth region in Jericho district. When the Israeli state was established in 1948, the Israeli government expelled the Bedouin in southern Palestine mainly from the area along Beersheba to Hebron.

The main tribes of this study that are settled in Jericho district came from three tribes. Each tribe of these tribes is divided into several clans and families those who are distributed in different encampments⁷¹.

3.3.1 Al-Jahalin tribe

Most of Al-Jahalin tribe people are settled along the area between Beersheba and Hebron in southern Palestine, but mainly around Hebron city. This tribe came originally from Tell-Arad⁷², to the north of Beersheba⁷³.

Aftermath of 1948 war, Bedouins from Al-Jahalin tribe has been forced by the Israelis to move from Tell-Arad. They moved to Jericho and Jerusalem surroundings.

Al-Jahalin tribe went through different fights with other tribes, especially in Yatta Village in Hebron district, where the tribe spent its summer migration and practiced their

⁶⁹ Maddrell, 1989: P. 7.

⁷⁰ Falah, 1985: P. 362.

⁷¹ Before the year 1948, each Bedouin tribe had its own territory while all its clans and families are living together in the same encampment.

⁷² It is an archaeological site located in the northeastern part of the Beersheba valley some 30kms south of Hebron, on the edge of the Negev

⁷³ Aroui, 2000: P. 7.

pastoral life with their sheep. Bedouins of Al-Jahalin were considered as strong fighters, and forced the people of Yatta to give up one of the lands near Tell-Arad for them⁷⁴.

Nowadays Al-Jahalin tribe is situated in Za'atara as part of Hebron frontier, and in Al-Ezaria near the Jerusalem-Jericho road⁷⁵.

In Area A of this study along the main road Ramallah- Jerusalem to Jericho, different clans from Al-Jahalin inhabit this area. Each clan from Al-Jahalin tribe has its own encampment, which is separated from other clans' encampments.

The clans of Al-Jahalin who were included in this research and living in the area under study are Al-Dawaheek (Abu- Dahouk), Al-Sarai'a, Abu-Ghalyeh, and Ghawanmeh.

Al-Dawaheek (Abu- Dahouk) is one of the largest clans of this tribe, and the Sheikh of the whole tribe is from this clan as well⁷⁶. The Sheikh lives in Area C in a stone built house.

Abu-Dahouk clan consists of 500 families living in Area A of our study (Ramallah- Jerusalem- Jericho road), Area C (Aqabet Jaber refugee camp in Jericho), Beit Iksa and Al-Nabi Samuel villages near Jerusalem⁷⁷.

Al-Sarai'a clan is also one of the biggest clans of Al-Jahalin tribe. It consists from 400 families living in different areas and some of them in Area A along Ramallah- Jerusalem to Jericho road⁷⁸. Others mention that this clan originally came from the biggest Bedouin tribe Al-Tarabeen who lived in Beersheba. They came from the son of Al-Tarabeen Sari'e who is the son of the grandfather of Al-Tarabeen Ateya⁷⁹.

There is only one encampment from Abu-Ghalyeh clan in Area A. In general, it is a small clan of Al-Jahalin tribe. Among this clan, I met the oldest Bedouin of all encampments (Abu-Ibrahim). He told me that when the 1948 war happened he was 20 years old. This encampment is near to Kfar Adumim Israeli settlement, by which they are facing many problems.

⁷⁴ Oppenheim, 1943: P. 73.

⁷⁵ Marx, 1984: P. 24.

⁷⁶ Oppenheim, 1943: P. 121.

⁷⁷ Arouri, 2000: P. 9.

⁷⁸ Same reference. as 77.

⁷⁹ Al-Aref, 1933: P. 77.

3.3.2 Al-Ka'abneh tribe

Their origin comes from Hebron, and as other Bedouins they have been transferred to other areas rather the original site. Several encampments are situated in Area B along the secondary road (Al-Mu'arajat) and Al-Uja. The tribe consists of 500 families where approximately 2500 individuals are living in Palestine⁸⁰. Other members are living in Jordan. Several families from Al-Ka'abneh are living and working in Anata, which is one of the villages on the road going to Jerusalem.

Al-Ara'arah clan occupies one of the biggest and richest encampments in Area A. They say that they are a sub-clan from other clan called Al-Zwaydeen, which is one of Al-Ka'abneh clans.

Most of Al-Ka'abneh clans of this study live in Area B. They practice seasonal migration to Ramallah and Toobas⁸¹.

“We migrate every year from April to November to Ramallah area; we take with us all what we need for the 6 months of migration. We practice our life normally as we are in our encampments in Al-Mu'arajat. When we migrate we build small living units with one tent, and we sell the milk products to people from Ramallah.”

(Um Khalid from Al-Ka'abneh tribe-Area B)

3.3.3 Al-Rashaydeh tribe

Some members of this tribe came originally from Bethlehem and others came from Ein Jidi near the Dead Sea. Today they are living in the biggest Bedouin encampment in our research in Ein Al-Duyuk, and the other smaller one in Al-Uja.

This tribe consists of 250 families of total 1,500 individuals. They have been exposed to harassment by the Israeli occupying authorities⁸².

⁸⁰ Arouri, 2000: P. 9.

⁸¹ Toobas is a village near Jenin city in north Palestine.

⁸² Arouri, 2000: P. 10.

3.3.4 Settlement of Ma'ale Adumim

In Area A and along the main road Ramallah-Jerusalem- Jericho, the Israelis established the biggest Israeli settlement called Ma'ale Adumim (Figure 1). At these lands for so many years Al-Jahalin and AL-Ka'abneh tribes were living.

Ma'ale Adumim, the biggest settlement in the region, stretches for about 50sq km on the heights overlooking the whole area. Its population, now around 32,000, is planned to reach 50,000 in the very near future⁸³.

About 86.4% of Ma'ale Adumim was built on private Palestinian lands. Most of the Palestinian claims to the land of Ma'ale Adumim were filed by Al-Jahalin Bedouin tribe whom were squatting on state land assigned to the community, since the 1980's. These claims were rejected by the Israeli courts after a thorough investigation. Later, Bedouin tribes in this land have been warned many times by successive Israeli governments that eventually they would have to move⁸⁴.

The Israelis succeeded to displace the Bedouin from the land of Ma'ale Adumim to nearer lands, although the Bedouins were living there since 1951. This pressure on the Bedouin to move from their lands still exists from the Israelis for the sake of widening Ma'ale Adumim, which becomes as a daily nightmare until this moment.

Displacement has a negative impact on Bedouins, whose life depends on their moving around during the year. As a result of being forced to move away from their natural land, many sheep died and milk production decreased. There is no grass for the sheep in this land⁸⁵.

Several times barracks owned by Bedouin tribes (al-Jahalin and Al-Ka'abneh) in Area A were demolished and several people were harmed. In spite of the demolition, the Bedouin turned back and built other barracks, but they are still warned to move up to this date.

⁸³ Bora, 2006: P. 54.

⁸⁴ Safian, 2006.

⁸⁵ Arouri, 2000: P.11.



Figure 1: A Bedouin is grazing his sheep in front of Ma'aleh Adumim Settlement⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ Source of the Figure: www.inminds.co.uk/article.php?id=10100

4 CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF BEDOUIN GROUPS

4.1 Introduction

Bedouin Social structure is the social net relations that bring all the local members of Bedouin groups together at certain time period.

Bedouins organize themselves according to patrilinear corporate groups. The size of these groups depends on social context and can vary from a handful of people close in kin to several thousands making up a tribe. Bedouins define themselves as members of tribes and families. All defined groups are headed by elders (*sheikhs*), a position that is hereditary, going from father to son. People are divided into social classes, depending on ancestry and profession. Passing from one class to another is relatively feasible, but marriage between a man and a woman of different classes is difficult⁸⁷.

Bedouin groups under study are living in tents or metal and wooden barracks covered by a cloth, composing their living units among the same family members that related to the same clan and same tribe.

The Bedouin morphology contains different major classifications; most of sociologists classify them into four or three classifications. In this study, we will give three major social classifications that; are tribe (*qabila*), clan (*ashira*) and family (*usra*). The tribes are the basic structure for all Bedouin groups, where the clan is a smaller classification than the tribe, and the family is the last and the smallest classification. When you ask a Bedouin about his origin, he replies of the name of the tribe (*qabila*).

The Bedouin people under study tied together in a kinship relation that ties them and supports them for any external or internal economic or social activities. In Bedouin society, any social, economic, and political activity, especially relations with groups from outside the tribe, requires the support of the kin group. The kinship controls and organizes the relations and responsibilities upon individuals and groups.

The kinship system of Bedouin groups is understandable by generation's numbers. The genealogical system divided into minimal five generations, where each generation afterwards could be divided into other generations⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ This definition is derived from Encyclopedia of the Orient 1996-2007.

⁸⁸ Musil, 1930.

4.2 Regional System

4.2.1 Living unit

The living unit of Bedouin groups under study is the place where these groups are living and practicing their daily life. In Bedouin encampments under study the tents and barracks are the living units of these groups.

The tent is the main place that brings under it most of the Bedouin activities. The Bedouin tent is ideally suited to the desert environment and the nomadic way of life⁸⁹. The people I interviewed call the tent *bayt al sha'ar*, which means the 'house of hair'; the black Bedouin tent traditionally woven from goats' hair. Nowadays the woven strips can be bought, but few women still weave their own. Weaving the tents is one of the women's responsibilities, which we will talk about in the latter chapter.

The tent components are the roof, walls, poles, and ropes⁹⁰. The roof and the walls are of cloth strips, and the poles are from wood, that used to support the angles and the roof of the tent tied with the guy ropes (Figure 2). The tent cloth expands when wet and becomes waterproof in the rain because when it rains the weave contracts and does not let the water in⁹¹. The tent's texture makes the winter to become easily for the Bedouin especially when it is cold outside with a small fire inside, thus the tent stays warm.

In the heat of the summer, the outside of the tent feels very hot to the touch while the inside remains blissfully cool. When I made my study in the summer time in June, the black goat hair tents, especially the guesthouses were warm from inside, but when one side of the tent was opened; some ventilation started to move and made it cool.

Most important of all, the tent and its contents can be packed up and moved in only an hour or two's work⁹².

Tents are differentiated by the number of center poles they have, and vary in size according to the size and wealth of the family⁹³. We see in most of Bedouin communities that the tent of the *sheikh* is the biggest tent inside Bedouin encampment and contains six to eight poles.

⁸⁹ Weir, 1976: P. 1.

⁹⁰ Same reference as 89.

⁹¹ Kay, 1978: P. 11.

⁹² Same reference as 91.

⁹³ Weir, 1976: P. 3.

The living units of Bedouin groups in Jericho district differ from one family to another and differ from one encampment to another.

In the Areas A and B barracks are used as tents most of the time especially and widely in Area A, where the Bedouin are threatened for transfer by the Israelis (Figure 3). The barracks are more frequent in use for the reason that it is more solid and difficult to be removed by the Israelis. The barracks are made from Aluminum sheets; they are used for the roofs and the walls of the tents and covered sometimes with the tent's cloth out of goat hair (Figure 4). Bedouin tend to make cement floors for the barrack tents for the reason of making them more solid to avoid being removed easily by the Israelis. Plastic sheets cover the metal roofs of the barracks tents, and cloth strips above the plastic sheets to make the tent warm and waterproof in the wintertime. Wood is used as poles for the tent, where barracks used metal sheets that are supported by wooden poles. Although in Area A it happened that the tents have been removed by the Israelis several times. Every time this procedure was happening, the Bedouin groups returned to the camp and made up the encampment once again by rebuilding their tents.

The typical living unit either out of cloth or out of barracks has main parts: the men's section, the women's section, kitchen, and bathing and toilette area.



Figure 2: Bedouin Tent⁹⁴.

⁹⁴ Source of the figure: <http://www.nizwa.net/heritage/dhofartrad/dhofar.html>.



Figure 3: Bedouin barracks at one of the encampments in Area A.



Figure 4: Bedouin barrack tent covered with goat haircloth.

4.2.1.1 Men's section (*Majlis*)

As part of the tent, the men's section (*majlis*) occupies a big part of it, and is located at the end of the whole tent. This section serves two functions: gathering of the men of the family and as a guesthouse sometimes for little quantity of people or for a close friend. It is furnished with carpets, mattresses, and bellows. During the evenings, the men from the same encampment gather where all social activities are taking place. The men discuss different topics such as the tribal social and economic issues, and they exchange the daily news.

Men spend most of their time together, either they gather in the men's section or if they are of a big quantity, they gather at the guest house (*Madafa*), open the fire, drink coffee, and sometimes play *Rababa*; traditional Bedouin musical instrument. The males of the same nuclear family gather together with women of the same nuclear family at the women's section, especially in winter to serve only one fire for the whole family. Both men's and women's sections are separated by a carpet⁹⁵ which is hung leaving spaces at the top, and sides which makes it possible for the women to receive and hand things at the men's section.

4.2.1.2 Women's section (*Shig*)

Women's section (*Shig*) is where women gather and where the family meets and sleeps. This section serves as a gathering area for women from the same encampment and a place for receiving women guests. It is the place where the husband and wife with their children sleep at night. A piece of cloth separates between the parents sleeping area and the children sleeping area. When the kids are getting a bit older around age of 12, also another piece of cloth is put to separate between girls and boys in the sleeping area. When the boys are getting adult, they move with their father to sleep in the men's section⁹⁶.

Size of this section varies depends on the wealth of the family and the number of family members. This area contains mattresses, blankets, bellows, and carpets that are used under the mattresses. I have seen that, if the people are not wealthy, they use old blankets under the mattresses, to separate between the mattresses and the sandy floor. At one side of the women's section, there is a little space for the woman to arrange and keep her belongings in a

⁹⁵ Wool carpets are usually expensive so Bedouin people in this study replace it with a piece of cloth or metal sheet.

⁹⁶ Usually the father sleeps in the men's section, to be ready to receive guests any time during the night.

wooden box. When there is not a wooden box, a metal one could be used and covered with a piece of cloth. The women keep their inherited things such as beads and bracelets besides their clothes and pictures inside the wooden or metallic box. Most of women I met prefer to wear their golden and silver jewellery as a reason of not being stolen from the box.

Fifty years ago, the wooden box was one of the important furniture that the bride takes from her parents' house having inside it all her belongings. Nowadays they are using packets and bags for their stuff.

If several nuclear families are living in one tent, the living area may be divided by piles of stores and bedding, or by further dividing cloth walls, to give each group a section of their own⁹⁷.

I have noticed that when women gather in the women's section they smoke cigarettes. They do not smoke outside the tent or in front of men.

“When we are happy, we smoke, and when we are not feeling good also we smoke.”

(Um Mohammad from Al-Jahalin-Area A)

4.2.1.3 Kitchen

The kitchen⁹⁸ is the activity unit where all the cooking and serving activities of the Bedouin are taking place. Typically, Bedouin women are responsible for the cooking and eating section.

The kitchen consists part of the living tent, and is mainly located beside the women's section. The kitchen function is preparing, cooking the meals, and storing the food such as the solid yogurt and cereals (wheat and barley). The kitchen always includes a big fire-hole (*Mawqid*) for cooking and baking bread (Figure 5). In most of the encampments, I have noticed that they use shelves to keep all the kitchen utensils. They do not use a large quantity of utensils, but rather the necessary ones. Stones are used to sit the cooking pots on it during the cooking and making the bread. There are no carpets used inside this section.

The fire is open two times a day, in the early morning for making bread and tea, and in the evening for making bread and cooking the dinner. Wood is used to open the fire collected by women from areas and trees around them. The piece of cloth, which usually separates

⁹⁷ Kay, 1978: P. 13.

⁹⁸ The word kitchen is used in this context to refer to the cooking place, but among Bedouin they don't use the word kitchen, but rather place of cooking.

between the kitchen and the women's section, is removed during the daytime to make the movement easier between the two sections.



Figure 5: Kitchen's Fire-hole (*mawqid*).

Preparing the yogurt⁹⁹ is taking place one or two meters outside the kitchen, where a churn (*Sy'eyn*) is used to churn the milk to producing yogurt and butter, which will be discussed in details in the coming chapter.

The kitchen area appears to be like a sin area for men, only women and young girls are moving around there.

4.2.1.4 Bathing area and toilette

Bathing and toilette areas are separable; bathing is where to bathe. Toilette area is the farthest place in an encampment. In general, most of the encampments contain a small place

⁹⁹ Bedouin call the fresh soft yogurt *Gergeb*. When they talk they don't say yogurt but rather *gergeb*.

made up of metal sheets or wood that is completely covered which used as a bathing area and another one that serves as a toilette. The bathing place is an empty space with normal soap and a pot that they fill it before getting bathing¹⁰⁰. Toilette is a hole in the ground looks like the mobile toilettes that are used in the camping areas here in Europe.

4.2.2 Guesthouse (*Madafa*)

The guesthouse (*Madafa*) is part of each encampment, it is the first tent built in front of the whole encampment. In some Bedouin communities, the guesthouse is part of the men's section. In most of the encampments, I have seen that the guesthouse is separated tent from the men's section. The guesthouse is furnished with mattresses, bellows, and carpets under the mattresses.

At one of the encampments in Area B the guesthouse had chairs and small table at one part of it. When I visited them for the first time, they hosted me at the guesthouse at one of the chairs, although it is only for male visitors. The best furniture is always chosen to furnish the guesthouse, where guests and *sheikhs* visit the Bedouin there. In each guesthouse, there is a fire-hole, mainly for making coffee and tea. A coffee hearth is scooped in the sand in front of this section, and a line of coffee pots, a pestle, mortar, and a roasting pan stand steady to hand¹⁰¹. The flaps of the guesthouse are always open, day and night, to indicate readiness to receive guests at any time.

It is important here to mention that among the people in this research, not all the encampments have fully prepared guesthouse, although Bedouins are ready to prepare it at the moment they receive guests.

When the tribe receives visitors' men and women, men enter the guesthouse, and women go to the women's section.

When I visited the encampments and I asked to meet the elder of that encampment, they hosted me most of the time in the guesthouse. After the first visit, I started to go to the women's section.

¹⁰⁰ Because they have a shortage of water, they look after the quantity of water when they take their bathe.

¹⁰¹ Kay, 1978: P.12.

4.3 The morphology of Bedouin communities

4.3.1 Tribes

Every Bedouin inherits membership of a tribe through the male line. Tribes and confederations of tribes formerly inhabited and controlled their own territories¹⁰².

The tribe is the fundamental structure of the Bedouin society, and all members in the same tribe are related to same patrilinear line, and have one *sheik* who leads the tribe¹⁰³.

The Bedouin people of this research unlike the people of the cities and villages, the tribe for them is to which they belong and not the region.

Bedouin groups of this study are from three different tribes that are:

- *Al- Jahalin*
- *Al- Ka'abneh*
- *Al- Rashaydeh*

Each tribe of these tribes consists of different clans that will be included in the section of the clans.

Bedouin tribes in Palestine speak the same language, which is Arabic; the language is one of the basic components of any tribe. The dialect of the Bedouin does not vary so much from one tribe to another. However, it varies, for example, from the dialect used by Jordanian or Arabian Bedouins with many of similarities¹⁰⁴.

The tribe occupies specific place and has one culture, which drew it up to practicing the same rituals either religious or social¹⁰⁵.

Not all the Bedouin members in our research from the same tribe occupying the same place, but they are still practicing the tribal roles and laws. A *sheikh* leads each tribe. He is one of the elders and he is respected by all tribe members. Each *sheikh* has a council that consists from the clan's elders of the same tribe, and supports him in his opinions and resolutions.

In the Bedouin social structure, tribe always comes at the top of the hierarchy of the system. Moreover, it said to be a complete political, economic, and social unit¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰² Weir, 1976: P. 7.

¹⁰³ Al-Fawal, 1983: P. 88.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Mozany, 1981: P.7 &8.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Fawal, 1983: P. 92.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Fawal, 1974: P. 202.

In Palestine, in most times the *sheikh* inherits his position from father and grandfather, as well as he inherits the wealth from his father. One of the *shiekh*'s responsibilities is the political and managerial supervision of the whole tribe.

In Jordan the *shiekhs* of the Jordanian Bedouin tribes, play a role as a mediator between the tribes and the government for resolving Bedouin groups' problems¹⁰⁷. This might apply for the Palestinian Bedouin under the Palestinian Authorities but for limited extents.

4.3.2 Clans

We see the clans in every society, and it is considered a familial society whom their members came from one ancestral line. If we go back to the famous anthropologist Durkheim, he defined the clan as a group of people who each of them considers himself a relative to the other but they don't acknowledge this relation unless if they refer it to the same totem¹⁰⁸

To the Bedouin society, the clan is the number of families that come together to formulate a bigger social group which all its members came from the same patrilinear ancestor, and they call each other as cousins. Thus, the relation is blood relation and not a totem as Durkheim defined the clan.

Regarding to the Arab Bedouin, it is social and political units who together consist a tribe and it differs from the tribe in the size of the group, which is less than the tribe¹⁰⁹.

None of Bedouin groups in this research is of matrilineal clans, which is a character of none of the Arab Bedouins.

The Bedouins of this research as mentioned before are derived from three different tribes and each tribe includes different clans (table 1) that are:

Al-Jahalin

- *Al-Dawaheek (Abu- Dahouk)*
- *Al-Sarai'a*
- *Abu-Ghalyeh*
- *Ghawanmeh*

Al-Ka'abneh

- *Al-Ara'arah.*
- *Al-Dway'ain*

¹⁰⁷ Al-Abbadi, 1988: P. 256.

¹⁰⁸ Durkheim, 1912.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Fawal, 1974: P. 203.

- *Al-Zwaydin*
- *Al-Qurab*
- *Najada*
- *Mleehat*

Al-Rashaydeh

- *Al-Treefat*
- *Abu-Kharbeesh*

Tribe Name	Clans			
Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	Al-Sarai'a	Abu-Ghalyeh	Ghawanmeh
Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Ara'arah	Al-Dway'ein	Al-Zwaydin	Al-Qurab
	Najada	Mleehat		
Al-Rashaydeh	Al-Treefat	Abu-Kharbeesh		

Table 1: Tribes under study and its clans.

Each clan of these clans consists of different families tied together and related to each other as part of the clan and as a bigger part of the same tribe (table 2 & table 3).

Each clan in the tribe has its own *sheikh* who leads that clan, and he reflects his clan in the tribal council.

4.3.3 Families

The family is the smallest structure among the Bedouin that comprises a man and his wife, their unmarried children and perhaps an older relative, who all live in the same tent¹¹⁰. The traditional Bedouin family mirrors the structure and dynamics of the Bedouin society. Like the society as a whole, the Bedouin family is authoritarian, hierarchical, dominated by males, and oriented to the group¹¹¹.

Bedouin families of the people under study are of three types, Nuclear family, polygyny family, and extended family. Nuclear family is the husband, wife and their children. Polygyny family is the family that consists of more than one wife and their children. Extended family is

¹¹⁰ Weir, 1976: P. 7.

¹¹¹ Al-Krenawi, 1989: P.6.

the family that includes two or more nuclear families where there is main family and all other families are extended from the main family.

Fifty years ago, in most times, Bedouin grandfathers of the same tribes under study had polygyny families and consisted with them all together their extended families. Now a day we do not see many of polygyny families according to the harsh economic situation.

The main function of the family inside the Bedouin society is reproduction at first position as all families in all eras¹¹². The family within the Bedouin society brings up sexual relation under control and under authorized relation.

Inside Bedouin family the sexual relation ties the relation between the husband and the wife, while as a result of reproduction and bringing up children to the family, this will rise the importance of the economic function of the family, which strengthening the relationships between all members in the family.

The economic function of the family raises the importance of the role of each males and females inside Bedouin families. The male is the leader of the family and the responsible person of all members in his family, where the female takes other responsibilities inside the family¹¹³. The roles of females and males inside Bedouin family will be discussed in details further in chapter four.

Most of the families I met are nuclear and extended, where the father and his children are living in the same area but in different tents – if the sons are married. From an economic perspective, a large family may be seen as an investment and security measure in times of uncertainty¹¹⁴.

The average number of Bedouin families in this research is six members with average of four children. Except for one of the encampments in Area B, the average number of children in the family is one in most of the nuclear families due to high sterility cases among men¹¹⁵.

¹¹² Al-Fawal, 1983: P. 63.

¹¹³ Al-Fawal, 1983: P. 72.

¹¹⁴ Giacaman, 1997.

¹¹⁵ Most of men tried to see doctors for this problem.

There is no single permanent locality for the Bedouin of this region; especially because those Bedouins are immigrants from their permanent settlements in the Negev. Tribes, clans, and families of Bedouin encampments come under one locality, which is the religious building that gives the Bedouin community its religious dimensions. Unlike other worldwide tribes, the Arab Bedouins are Muslims and they practice the Islamic law. Each member from families, chiefs, *shieks*, and individuals represents its role religiously separately from political role.

The case in this study is that Bedouin are settled in different encampments where there is no advanced relations between Bedouins from one tribe with another. The relations only enclosed to the clans, and families of the same tribe within the same encampment. Although there are occasions where men are involved in the relation with other tribe's families out side the one's encampment, such occasions are as weddings and funerals. Bedouin, who inhabited a certain locality, settle there without moving. Furthermore, Bedouin do not keep social relation with the locals of the urban side of Jericho. It should be noted that the *shiehk's* position is crucial to the Bedouin in any tribe, where any relation between the clans in the same tribe or between different tribes goes through the *shiek's* contact. He is the lead body with the external relations.

Locality plays an important part among Bedouin. All members who inhabit certain encampment know each other since they belong to the same tribe, same clan and from the same extended family. From other hand, Bedouin in this study have gradually lost their relations with other clans for the same tribe where the distance separated them and the members of the same tribe are living in the different localities. In this case, Bedouin lose touch to a certain extent with the main tribe.

Encampment	Tribe Name	Clan Name	No. of families
1	Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Dway'ain	20
2	Al-Jahalin	Al-Sarai'a	4
3	Al-Jahalin	Abu-Ghalyeh	10
4	Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Ara'arah	30
5	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	40
6	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	30
7	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	20
8	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	10
9	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	30
10	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	10
11	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	6
12	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	5
13	Al-Jahalin	Al-Sarai'a	35
14	Al-Jahalin	Al-Sarai'a	10
15	Al-Jahalin	Al-Sarai'a	5
16	Al-Jahalin	Ghawanmeh	25
17	Al-Jahalin	Ghawanmeh	5
18	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	15
19	Al-Jahalin	Al-Dawaheek	5

Table 2: Tribe name, clans, and number of nuclear families in Area A.

Encampment	Tribe Name	Clan Name	No. of families
1	Al-Rashaydeh	Al-Treefat	50
2	Al-Rashaydeh	Al-Treefat	30
3	Al-Rashaydeh	Abu-Kharbeesh	20
4	Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Qurab	30
5	Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Qurab	20
6	Al-Ka'abneh	Najada	50
7	Al-Ka'abneh	Mleehat	30
8	Al-Ka'abneh	Al-Zwaydin	10

Table 3: Tribe name, clans, and number of nuclear families in Area B.

4.4 Kinship and Bedouin kinship system

I would like to begin writing about kinship with a quote from a 1984 book for Schneider. He wrote; “The idiom of kinship, the content of kinship, the web of kinship, the kin-based society all depend in large part on the idea of kinship itself. From the beginnings of modern anthropology, around the middle of the 19th century, the prevailing conception of kinship has been fairly stable and only underwent one significant modification. At first kinship was taken to be a purely biological relationship deriving from the facts of human sexual reproduction”¹¹⁶.

Kinship studies have traditionally been the core of the anthropological enterprise, but the knowledge gained in studies of indigenous kinship systems has not generally been of interest to other disciplines¹¹⁷. Kinship organization of most primitive societies was seen as based on descent groups, which were exogamous and were mutually related through a series of marriage exchanges¹¹⁸.

In kinship for Ladislav Holy is discussed in the context of the processes of reproduction, construction of gender, and sexuality¹¹⁹. For Holy the notion of the primacy of bone over flesh becomes an appropriate metaphor in expressing the closeness of kinship, where the bone is paternally kin and the flesh is maternally kin. The Arab tribes recognize all those to whom they can trace genealogical connection as their kin (ahal). Within this category, kinship distance is evaluated in terms of genealogical distance from ego, but kinsmen are closer genealogically equidistant kinswomen, and any connection traced through a man is closer than that traced through a woman. Thus of two genealogically equidistant kin, the one who is paternally related is closer than the one who is related maternally¹²⁰.

The biological framework – held out to be the natural foundation for the analysis of family and marriage relationships around the world. Morgan the founder of kinship studies, set forth the systems of kinship terminology reflected people’s understandings of their biological relationships as based on marriage practices¹²¹. The meaning of kin terms, the genealogical approach tends to see biological relatedness as basic and primary, with other

¹¹⁶ Schneider, 1984 : P. 53.

¹¹⁷ Lindholm, 1986: P. 334

¹¹⁸ Holy, 1996: P. 2.

¹¹⁹ Holy, 1996: P. 6.

¹²⁰ Holy, 1991: Pp. 47&48.

¹²¹ Stone, 2001: P. 3.

meanings being secondary and derived from the primary biological meanings of the terms by genealogical or metaphoric extension¹²².

Gellner from other hand argues that if we suppose an anthropologist observes, in a society he is investigating, a certain kind of recurring relationship between pairs of individuals or of groups. (It may be a relationship of authority, or a symmetrical one of, say, mutual aid, or of avoidance, or whatnot.) Suppose the autochthonous term for the relationship is *blip*. The crucial question now is: Under what conditions will the anthropologist's treatment of the *blip*-relationship fall under the rubric of kinship structure? It will be so subsumed if the anthropologist believes that the *blip* relationship overlaps, in a predominant number of cases, with *some* physical kinship relationship¹²³.

Holy, Schneider, and Gellner have agreed that the processes of reproduction, birth, and nurturance, in one form or another provide the essential foundation of kinship. Furthermore, the biological processes often are taken to represent human nature and are seen to provide the necessary constant for systematic cross-cultural comparison. Culture, by comparison, is to be considered an epiphenomenon. It is useful for describing particular systems of kinship and describing human behavioural variety, but it is dependent upon human nature (defined in biological terms) and cannot serve as the framework for comparison. Comparative analysis is the foundation of science. In kinship, for Gellner, and Holy, this hinges on biology¹²⁴.

Although Schneider agreed with that, the biological processes formulate the kinship, he expressed his view to study kinship as part of cultural or symbolic system and he has applied this to western societies¹²⁵. This view will not apply to Bedouin societies that their kinship is studied fully depending on biological relatedness and In Islamic law kinship system depends on two basic relationships: relationship by blood, and affinity. Blood and affinity are regarded biological relatedness in the Bedouin society, which is a Muslim society.

¹²² Schneider, 1984:Pp. 116 &133.

¹²³ Gellner, 1960: P. 187.

¹²⁴ Ottenheimer, 2001: P. 201.

¹²⁵ Schneider, 1972: P. 38.

The study of kinship, from its very inception, has been based on the assumption that kinship creates divisions in society by conceptually separation those who are genealogically related to each other from those who are not so related¹²⁶.

Kinship system vary in different forms of social organization all over the world in respect of three characters: the socially recognized genealogical relationships of its members, the linguistic system by which relatives are classified and grouped, and the system of behavior patterns which regulate dealings among members of the group¹²⁷. In the desert, the local groups are defined due to a supposed kinship, and put its members under loyalty and obligation to kinship¹²⁸.

The Palestinian Bedouin groups' view the kinship system, which they operate as made up of several groups ultimately descended in the male line from a common ancestor. This system's fundamentals are the mother and father then the brotherhood of man.

Kinship forms the primary ties in the Bedouin communities .At its widest, of course, the Bedouin kinship system gives rise to a basic belief in Adam and Eve¹²⁹. In this matter marriage system in the middle east is not an exogamy preferred system but rather it is allowed or preferred cousin marriage which creates an individual network of kinship ties within and across the segments of this system¹³⁰.

Bedouin clans of this study said to include different generations, though none of the people of one clan can trace the exact genealogy. Most of the people I interviewed were able to distinguish members from their own clan but were unable to trace their exact ancestral link to more than four generations.

As political and economic motives change with time, so the genealogy must change to accommodate changing assets and new options and so there is no true genealogy truth is relative to the pragmatic needs of the group involved. Thus, a society that appears to be constrained by the past is in fact generating the very genealogy through which it explains the present¹³¹.

Bedouin society puts a strong emphasis on affiliation to the extended family, the hierarchic order of which is maintained by superiority of men over women and elder over

¹²⁶ Holy, 1996: P. 143.

¹²⁷ Davies, 1949: P. 244.

¹²⁸ Gellner, 1981: Pp.29 &58.

¹²⁹ Lancaster, 1981: P. 28.

¹³⁰ Goody, 1973: P. 3.

¹³¹ Lancaster, 1981: P. 35.

younger. Within this structure, marriage and motherhood serve social functions: Marriages are arranged with the purpose to strengthen inter- and intrafamily bonds; consanguinity and polygamy are common. Motherhood, especially a high number of male children, determines women's social status¹³².

As we mentioned earlier, the Bedouin society is a patrilineal classified society. This signifies that individuals trace descent through the father and are given the surname held by the father and his patrilineal group.

There is strong emphasis on marriages and shared birth parents within kinship discourses among Bedouin society. A child is considered to inherit blood from its birth mother and birth father and is related to both its birth mother and birth father's relatives through blood. This blood is the basic component of the kin and kin patterns of the Bedouin clans.

Among the Bedouins, girls and boys belong to the father, and this is the case whether the parents are still married or divorced, but the girls are never included in the genealogical patterns of the Bedouin clans.

It is considered respectful to call elderly persons grandmother or grandfather, and the mother's male relatives may be titled mother's brother (khal) and mother's female relatives may be titled mother's sister (khala) as well. Age mates may be called sisters or brothers in order to indicate a friendly relationship, but also to indicate obligations to support one another. Sometimes boys or men call a woman sister, referring to a close and non-sexual relation. I was called sister from all the men and boys I met in all the encampments.

It is important here to mention that the kin group is responsible for all its individual members in matters of morals and honor, including blood vengeance.

The terms, which are elicited from all Bedouin groups of this study, are as follows:

Jiddi: My grandfather

Jaddati: My grandmother

Abuuy: My father

Immi: My mother

Akhuuy: My brother

Ukhti (khayti): My sister

Zawji: My husband

¹³² Cwikel et al, 2003: P. 242

Hormati: My wife¹³³

Ibni: My son

Binti: My daughter

Hafeedi: My grandson

Hafeedati: My granddaughter

'*Ammi*: My uncle of my father's side

'*Ammi*: My father in law

'*Amti*: My aunt of my father's side

'*Amti*: My mother in law

Khali: My uncle of my mother's side

Khalti: My aunt of my mother's side

Iben 'Ammi: My cousin (male) of my father's side

Iben 'Ammi: My brother in law

Bent 'Ammi: My cousin (female) of my father's side

Bent 'Ammi: My sister in law

Iben Khali: My cousin (male) of my mother's side

Bent Khali: My cousin (female) of my mother's side

Ibn Akhuuy: My brother's son

Ibn Ukhti: My sister's son

Bent Akhuuy: My brother's daughter

Bent Ukhti (khayti): My sister's daughter

Beside these terms, there are general terms are used for the elders. *Ammi* (my uncle) is used to call any elder male either a close relative or not. *Amti* (my aunt) is used to call any elder woman from the father's side. *Khala* (Aunt) is used to call any elder woman from the mother's side. The Bedouin call any male kid with their names or they call him *walad* (boy), and they call the female kid with her name or they call her *benit* (girl). Any stranger male kid is called *walad* and any stranger female kid is called *benit*.

It should be mentioned that Bedouin do not call the woman with her name at all, except if she is not married¹³⁴. They call her *horma* or *Um fulan* (the mother of *fulan*).

¹³³ The husband calls his wife *ya mara* or *ya hurma*.

¹³⁴ Sometimes they call the unmarried woman with *ya benit*.

One more point to be added to this section is that if I would extended in making genealogy classifications for the tribes understudy and their clans I would have needed a separate research and different topic for the thesis.

5 CHAPTER FOUR: ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF BEDOUIN GROUPS

5.1 Introduction

Throughout history, every society has faced the fundamental economic problem of deciding what to produce, and for whom, in a world of limited resources. When we talk about Bedouins, we barely could mention a complicated economy but rather we find them live comfortably by herding sheep and goats, and producing yogurt and cheese.

Some fifty years ago or more the camel has been the mainstay of Bedouin economy, but nowadays and among the Bedouin people of Palestine, the camel is not included any more in their economy. Musil in his book included a big chapter talking about the camel and its importance in the life of the Arabian Bedouin, as shown in this poem, “*He shall not water his camel, who does not pull up the bucket well*”¹³⁵.

The primary economic activity of the Bedouin is animal husbandry by natural graze and browse of sheep, and goats. This way of life, called pastoralism, has been in existence for long time. At the core of pastoralism is migration, the pattern of which is determined by a combination of seasonal and area variability in the location of pasture and water. Because water and grass can be in short supply in a particular area at the same time that it is abundant elsewhere, survival of both herds and herders makes movement from deficit to surplus areas both logical and necessary. Pasture and water are seldom found randomly scattered about in a given region, but generally are distributed in a regular fashion in accordance with a particular seasonal pattern of climate.

Not all the Bedouin people in this research practice the seasonal migration according to the hard political situation, which prohibits them to leave their encampments for a long time. This later will allow the Israeli military to put their hand on the land they are settling. Since the 1960s, pick-ups and other vehicles have come to Bedouin life to serve their needs.

The main income for the Bedouin comes from selling their milk produce and sometimes selling sheep and goat.

¹³⁵ Musil, 1930.

5.2 Production and cash income

Bedouin life depends on raising the livestock, and the flocks ranged in size between a few head to some hundreds of head. A flock is considered the property of all family members. For the owner's family the flock is a source of meat, dairy products, wool, and wool fibers¹³⁶. The dairy products obtained by a household from its flock are used mainly as food, they also confer social and economic standing and hence power and authority on the flock's owner¹³⁷.

In general, pastoral production and agriculture do not satisfy all the needs of the people in the entire areas under study, so other sources and ways of making a living are sought.

The main production is out of milk produce, especially in the months of milking (February- June). The main cash income is derived from the sale of the milk produce in the months of milking and from the occasional sale of the sheep and goat. Sale of their produce does not provide them with the sufficient income to cover all their needs.

Nowadays, more families are involved in agricultural activities, mainly they cultivate barley for the need of their animals, but still not enough for their households.

Pastoralists produce none of the essentials of metal or cured leather. They are dependent on persons outside their own group for practically all specialized work.

Today the Bedouin buy most of their needs from the nearest city, mainly from Jericho and Ramallah. They need to buy clothing, coffee, tea, sugar, rice, and some household goods.

The Bedouin standard of living has been risen in many ways, they use pick-ups, they buy vehicles, they buy televisions, radios, and mobiles, and they buy vegetables and fruits, and cold cans such as coca cola.

Paid employment is attracting most of the young men among Bedouin encampments, since the livestock flock is not large. The young men among Al-Rashaydeh tribe go to work at one of the nearest Israeli settlement where they pick up vegetables and fruits for daily payment. They apply for a permit from the Israelis to work there, and they pay their transport costs and food for the whole workday.

¹³⁶ Abu-Rabia, 1999: P.23.

¹³⁷ Same reference as 125.

One of the men (Abu-Mohammad) from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A works ,for example, on front-shovels that belong to a company in Anata village near Jerusalem, and he goes upon request.

It is important here to mention that the Bedouin send their children to schools although most of them go to the UNRWA schools where no tuition is paid, but still they need to cover their transports and other school costs.

5.3 Work division

As with most pastoral societies, the division of labor among Bedouin is determined by the type of animals that are herded. When both large and small domesticated animals are kept, the larger animals; camels and, in a few cases, cattle are the responsibility of the men. Within each livestock unit, rights over animals and their products are differentiated by sex and age, with older men generally privileged in the ownership and disposal of animals through sale and slaughter. Women in pastoral societies have a critical role in the socio-economic and cultural activities, and the conservation of natural resources and of the household and tribal communities. Women are often barred from close contact with large animals. It is generally the responsibility of the women and older girls to herd, feed, and milk the smaller animals (goats and sheep). When only sheep and goats are kept, men tend to be the herders, and women help with the feeding and milking of the flock.

At the encampments of this research, women from the three tribes perform all domestic tasks including food preparation and collecting firewood for cooking. They are responsible for child rearing and usually for food provision. The woman is frequently in charge of selling the milk produce such as dried yogurt, butter, and cheese. They take it to local markets and to town market centers for selling it mainly to people in Jericho, Ramallah, Hebron, Anata, and Al-Ezaria.

The weaving has traditionally been women's work, for making tents, rugs, bags, belts, grain sacks and other household products. Traditional patterns and colors are incorporated in the products for contemporary lifestyle, including floor rugs, tapestries, cushion covers, and bags. Normally, Bedouins weave on ground looms made of two sturdy lengths of wood staked into the ground. The long warp threads are stretched back and forth between them and the weaver sits at one beam inserting the wefts, or crosswise yarns.

Married women often go to Jericho, Al-Ram, or Ramallah to buy clothing for the family members; sons and daughters; also, they go to Jericho to buy other household's needs.

Bedouin women have to work hard as they tend the flocks, do the housework, cook, make bread, milk the herd, collect fire-wood, take care of the small children, draw water, spin and weave. They are also responsible for dismantling the tent and setting it up again. Children usually help with tending the flocks and collecting brushwood for the fires.

In particular, the role of women in managing mainly penned livestock for milk and milk products, the production of which could evolve into a viable home industry inside Bedouin encampments¹³⁸.

Historically the Bedouin men regarded themselves as free shepherds and raiders; these were the only manly jobs. They scorned other labour in agriculture, trade, and crafts, which were performed by slaves or by the settled population. Today Bedouin men in this study have adapted to modern life and many have farm or city jobs. They are good at handling tractors and cars and many work as drivers. Some are moving into higher education and the professions. The youngest brother of Abu-Aref from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A has graduated from the university, and now he is hiring a good job. They always mention his name for his achievements rather than being a shepherd or a labor worker.

The man's task is also slaughtering and receiving guests, where women do not serve men guests. It has shown that the women and the elder daughters have the greatest burden of work inside Bedouin communities. Man is considered being the master of the family and its members.

5.4 Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a subsistence pattern in which people make their living by tending herds of domesticated animals, that normally live in herds and eat grasses or other abundant plant foods. Among the Bedouins, it is mainly sheep and goats. It is often camels in the more arid lowland areas such as in Arabia.

¹³⁸ Degen, 2003: P. 108.

A Bedouin ideology directs social, political and economic activity, while pastoralism continues to provide household subsistence and profit in the market for some¹³⁹.

The livestock rearing of the Bedouin in Negev remains a crucial element of Negev Bedouin society, despite the sedentarisation of much of the community in that area by the Israelis in the years of 1960's¹⁴⁰. This is also applying for the people in the research areas, who continued to remain rearing their livestock.

In the Negev till today the people keep the flocks which emerged that the flocks are kept for status, preservation of social networks, source of income, employment, family cohesion and maintaining land claims¹⁴¹.

This is shown clearly among Bedouin of this research, the more the flock is the more the status of the person is, and the more income he gets.

Bedouins are normally migrating only in parts of the year, depending on grazing conditions. In winter, when there is some precipitation, they migrate deeper into the desert, while they seek refuge around secure water sources in the hot and dry summer time. For many Bedouins, the city surrounding is the preferred location for the summer months. Most of the people migrate to Ramallah and Nablus since they find green mountains, although many do not migrate from their encampments.

The drought has also led to a shortage of grazing land, particularly in the Jericho area and desert around, which has resulted in Bedouin now buying substantial amounts of fodder, which they also cannot afford. As with the crisis regarding water purchase, Bedouins are also either selling livestock or buying fodder on credit. Again, certain suppliers are now no longer willing to continue supplying them, understandably, without payment.

I would like to mention in this part that none of the Bedouins I met is raising camels except for one man (A.E) from Al-Jahalin tribe who is making work out of it. Although raising camels was one of the fundamental characters of the life style and economic income among Bedouins in the Negev by the year 1948.

Each nuclear family owns from 10 sheep and goat to 250. The maximum number of sheep and goat I knew was 500 that were for the richest Bedouin man in the whole encampments and was from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A.

¹³⁹ Meir, 1997: P.253.

¹⁴⁰ Parizot, 2001: P.50.

¹⁴¹ Stavi, Kressel, Gutterman, and Degen, 2006: P. 53.

The flock is brought together in a pen just near each family's living unit. Milking process is taking place inside the pen (figure 6).



Figure 6: Livestock in the pen.

5.4.1 Grazing

Changes in lifestyle, mobility, and dependence on motorized transport have affected the way people use the rangelands. In the past, every tribe had its own territory for grazing. In dry times, that particular tribe could move to the territory of another tribe provided that certain conditions were met. Some of these traditional rules have been abandoned as pastoralists have come to depend on cheap barley as an alternative to long-distance movements in times of drought.

“Each one of us knows his flocks. If you change the place of any of the sheep, it turns back to its group.”

(Nayfah from Al-Rashaydeh- Area B)

According to the people I interviewed, the elder son especially the one who dropped from the school grazes the flock for his family, which is a daily activity. The beginning of the grazing is after milking at early morning until the end of the day at the sunset time when the second milking starts. Grazing was one of the female tasks some 20 years ago when the political situation was more secured. Nowadays among the people I met, none of the females do grazing.

“When we were living in the Negev before the year 1948, I was grazing our flock with my cousins. We leave in the early morning to the nearest grazing area, and come back by the sunset, It was the most wonderful era in my life.”

(Um Mohammad from Al-Jahalin- Area A)



Figure 7: A boy from Al-Jahalin in Area A, riding his donkey in the evening after he came from grazing his family's herd.

The shepherd takes with him a bucket with tea, sugar, butter, bread, water, a cup, and sometimes a radio. He rides a donkey and takes the herd for grazing (figure 7). Not all the herd is taken to the pastures. The weaned lambs and kids are left behind to be looked after by whom stays home. In some mornings, the shepherd is accompanied with another brother or a cousin who has vacation from school.

“Sheep eat more than goat do, so we graze them separately, each herd alone.”

(Abu-Aref from Al-Ka’abneh tribe- Area A)

Barley supplements have become an important factor in Bedouin society, because the Israelis are restricting grazing on the rangelands around the encampments. In some nearer areas, barley is cultivated, which is limited to the short rainy seasons. The people pay 1200 NIS (*Sheqels*) per ton barley, which equals 230 Euro. A 100 heads of sheep consume the ton in one week to 10 days.

Israeli restrictions have forced the shepherd’s flock off much of its grazing land. A drought has sent the price of replacement fodder skyrocketing and the economic crisis has crushed demand for the Bedouins’ sheep.

A decade ago, Israeli authorities began closing off much of the area around the encampments, or few ten meters far from the encampments giving a reason of that, the land is part of the settlement.

Large parts of the land in Jericho district are officially off limits for the Bedouin though in many areas the Bedouin still graze cautiously, as they do not have any alternative locations. If caught they can be subject to arrest, livestock confiscation and shelter demolition¹⁴².

There are families from Al- Jahalin tribe close to Ma’ale Adumim settlement, transporting their animals to Nablus region, where they could graze them but this process is costly with no other alternative.

¹⁴² In the year 2004, the Israelis killed a shepherd from Al-Jahalin tribe in Area A, and three of his herd just a couple of meters in front of his encampment giving a reason of that he approached the settlement’s area.

5.4.2 Milking

The milking season lasts for 4 months, from March to June, but the best milking time is in the early three months. The milk quantity depends on good pastures. The greatest burden of work falls, however, on the women and older girls¹⁴³.

Milking process goes through different stages until the products of milk are produced. The woman and her daughters are responsible for milking the sheep. They milk the sheep twice every day, once in the morning after the Morning Prayer, and the other in the evening at the sunset time. After the second milking, they place the whole-day milk into the churn (*sy'eyn*) to be churned (Figure 8).

Milk has been traditionally churned in bags made out of goat skin. Churns (*Sy'eyn*) can hold between 25 to 40 liters of milk¹⁴⁴ (Figure 9). The out products from the churned milk are butter and sour milk (yogurt). The sour milk is used to make the solid yogurt (*jamid*) which is dried in the sun then is kept in a leather sack for the use in winter. The fresh butter is made into *samen* (ghee or clarified butter) by boiling the butter to separate it from the milk solids. It is then used for long-term storage.

Through the milking season, when there are lambs and goat kids, the goat and sheep mothers must not be milking for three months, since the lambs and kids are weaned for three months.

After the milking season, the butter and dried solid yogurt (*jamid*) are sold to the nearer places in Anata, Jericho, and sometimes Ramallah. Women usually go to sell the fresh products; butter and solid yogurt through the milking season to people upon request. Most of the people I met do not produce cheese unless someone requests it. The girls who do the milking usually in their teens, and they dropped out of school. If the girls are many and they attend the school, they replace each other every other day.

¹⁴³ Abu-Rabia, 1999: P.23.

¹⁴⁴ Abu-Rabia, 1999: P. 25.



Figure 8: An empty churn (*sy'eyn*).



Figure 9: Filled churn (*sy'eyn*) churned by a boy¹⁴⁵.

5.4.3 Slaughtering

The animal slaughtering among the Bedouin is a regular habit, which is according to the Islam, is permissible since they perform the *Tasmiya* (Almighty Allah Ta'ala in His infinite mercy) at the time of slaughter. Usually the Bedouin slaughter the sheep and goat during a major event such as the religious feasts.

Bedouin hospitality is more than a cup of coffee, tea, and a mattress in the *madafa*. Their tradition dictates that guests are offered the best, for that, they practice slaughtering in case of receiving guests. They also practice slaughtering in the occasions of weddings, condolences, and newborns.

Slaughtering is men's exclusive task, which is never practiced by women. Women only help in washing the guts and taking off the animal's skin to dry it and to make rugs.

¹⁴⁵The girl who was churning the milk refused to appear in the photo, so her brother took her place only for the photo purpose.

Children (boys) are taught to slaughter a sheep but they do not practice it until age of 16 and above.

5.4.4 Veterinary & veterinary medication

Veterinary specialists should play an important role among the pastoralists who own animals, to making it possible to control the herd's health and to monitor the spread diseases among animals.

Bedouin consider the veterinary specialists as an important man, whom they could call any time in case of suspecting any disease among their herd.

The pasture could obtain animal's diseases, which requires medical care from the veterinary but it is rather better preventing the disease. The most common diseases that the Bedouin confront among the animals are fever, and diarrhea. Other diseases could be fatal for the animal if has not been prevented. From other side there are transmitted diseases, once one animal has it the whole flock will do.

Other injuries or broken bones need immediate treatment from the Bedouin. Most of Bedouin could handle these injuries or broken bones by using some herbs and plants.

Keeping animal hygiene is one of the important tasks the Bedouin must obtain through the whole year and specifically in the months of delivery and milking. The people told me that if a disease hit one of the livestock, the first step they take is to isolate it from the whole livestock. If the disease spreads to the whole livestock then this regarded as a mortal blow for the whole year.

UNDP (United Nation Development Programme) established a project to improve animal health, productivity and husbandry through a series of activities. Two mobile veterinary clinics have been purchased, equipped with a veterinary doctor, laboratory, and medication. The mobile clinics are equipped to provide services including ultrasounds, artificial insemination, and vaccinations.

The mobile clinic visits each encampment once a week. It gives the proper medication when needed and check up over the herd for any complications. The Bedouin do not pay the medicine required for any treatment, since the project is an aid-funded project.

The Bedouin who live in areas that the mobile clinic does not reach them have a contact with a veterinary specialist who visits them upon their request over the phone for the cases they cannot cure.

5.4.5 Agriculture

There are several traditional means utilized by Bedouin to guarantee themselves access to grain and other sedentary produce. A household may, if its tribal land is close enough to rain-fed cultivation, sow and harvest crops.

Sedentarization of the Bedouin in the Negev and in other areas such the area under study did not prohibit them to quit their Bedouin life of livestock breeding. The agriculture was introduced to them by means of changing in their life style and settling¹⁴⁶.

Purely nomadic pastoral existence of Bedouins in this research does not exist, since the Bedouin groups now partly sedentary tribesmen who complement livestock breeding with cultivation.

Among the various factors that enter into the acceleration of nomad sedentarization, the scarcity of watered grazing lands and the higher yield, which can be realized from cultivation, are especially important. The case is so in the Bedouin communities in Palestine due to the political situation, which forced them into sedentarization as mentioned earlier in chapter one, which pushed them into cultivation¹⁴⁷.

Some Bedouin from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A have acquired some tracts of land just above their encampment and another near Hizma village¹⁴⁸, which they have put into cereal cultivation such as barley, and alfalfa, employing those selves (men, women, and sons) as laborers. From other side, one of Al-Jahalin tribe in Area A does rent the land from the villagers near Nablus city and cultivate it with barley. Other people from Al-Ka'abneh in Area B, also do rent a large tracts of land from villagers near Ramallah city and cultivate it with barley and alfalfa.

¹⁴⁶ Parizot, 2001: P.37

¹⁴⁷ Falah, 1985: P. 362.

¹⁴⁸ This village is the nearest village to Al-Ka'abneh encampment, locates some 3km from the encampment.

Abu-Aref is one of the men from Al-Ka'abneh tribe told me that although they cultivate this small land, the agriculture still unpleasant work for a Bedouin. In addition, that the outcome crop from the cultivation does not support much in the herd feeding.

None of the people in the Bedouin encampments owns any of the agricultural land that he cultivates. Bedouins rent the land as sharecroppers, or cultivate it with or without a permission of the owner if the owner is unknown.

They start working in the land in winter (in December); they plough it by renting a tractor. Men, women, and sons all together work in cultivating and harvesting the land. The harvesting time is in the summer after the end of milking season, mainly in July.

Bedouin cultivate barley using local stocks, tillage, and rainfall farming conditions. Not only this, they used to harvest their fields by hand. The harvesting by hand proved to be cheaper than by sickles¹⁴⁹. I have noticed that in some encampments for Al-Jahalin tribe in Area A the people have planted some uneatable trees to bring

"We hardly cultivate the land. It is a hard task for a Bedouin to cultivate. The outcome from the cultivated land serves as a food for the herd only for 20 days in June or July, while no green grass around."

(Abu-Aref from Al-Ka'abneh- Area A)

shadow, just beside the women's quarter or the kitchen. Women also plant mint and basil in most of the encampments among Al-Jahalin Al-Ka'abneh, and Al-Rashaydeh tribes in both Areas A and B.

5.4.6 Land tenure

Generally, each Bedouin group seeks to control a land area that contains sufficient resources to sustain communal life. Each has a definite zone with well understood, though often variable, limits, and has certain rights of usufruct denied to other Bedouin groups. Only in an emergency does a pastoral unit attempt to graze its herds outside of its traditional area. Nevertheless, the case of the Bedouin groups under study is very different and the land they settle in is not considered as owned land. Land is an issue of great importance to the Bedouins because they need immense areas to sustain their traditional pastoral way of life.

¹⁴⁹ Simms And Russel, 1997: P. 696.

It is important to mention that the law of land tenure among the Bedouin society does not apply the land own by single individuals or families but it is considerable as tribe owned land¹⁵⁰.

Historically, Bedouin tribes regarded themselves as collective owners of their grazing grounds. These rights were respected for centuries, but were not documented on paper. The first sign of change came in 1858 with the new Land Law of the Ottoman Empire that defined the various categories of land and issued title deeds to the owners. Those who failed to register out of ignorance or for fear of having to pay taxes eventually lost their ownership rights, as Ottoman law is still the basis of land ownership in all countries of the region¹⁵¹.

Forced expropriation of land by the Israeli state backed by its military might is a fact of life in Palestine. The Bedouins didn't retain any part of the lands they consider their own and they submit to the plans of the authorities to settle them in villages and townships, continuously Israel reduced the amount of land in the Negev available to its Bedouin in an effort to induce them to settle in villages and towns. In the areas A and B of this research, it is not allowed to own the land, considering it "state –land." The United Nations (UN) owns the land of Area C since it is a Refugee camp.

Land ownership and the right to exploit it have been, since the birth of the state of Israel in 1948, at the centre of aggressive policies towards the indigenous Bedouin nation and have dramatically hindered the process of integration¹⁵².

Israel has dispossessed the Bedouin and destroyed their traditional way of life since the year 1948. Today Israel has passed laws depriving them of any rights to the land they held and empowering the authorities to evict them by force¹⁵³.

¹⁵⁰ Al-Arabi, 1989: P. 54.

¹⁵¹ Al-Arabi, 1989: P. 22 & 37.

¹⁵² Bora, 2006: P.54.

¹⁵³ Battersby, 1995.

6 CHAPTER FIVE: TRIBAL LAW

6.1 Introduction

Tribal law looks like a unique identity according to Bedouin, and they taking it as a pride for their persistent. In addition, it is considered as awareness of one's place in the tribe or clan. It must be taken into account that Bedouin who are living in the areas in this study are not replaced under the government. Their areas do not appear on the municipality map. Moreover, the political complexity of this area is making it more difficult for adapting the tribal law as an official law among the government.

The major affirmation of the tribal law undertakes the traditional and cultural principles of the Bedouin and it is more likely called the law of *urf*. In Bedouin communities, tribal chiefs (*sheikhs*) and judges represent the supreme authority. The tribal law, based on collective tribal and family responsibility, and the treatment of all conflicts as civil disputes to be settled between man and his fellow, or between the families concerned, rather than criminal matters to be prosecuted by the state or society.

The Bedouin tribal law has remained to this day entirely unwritten and dependent for its very existence upon verbal instruction handed down from father to son¹⁵⁴.

It must be mentioned in this context that discussing the Bedouin tribal law needs more than one book. However, since this study is about the whole Bedouin community from anthropological and ethnographical view, then what will be included in this chapter about Bedouin law is only what I have heard from the people I met.

¹⁵⁴ Kennett, 1968: P. 8.

6.2 Applying the tribal Law

6.2.1 Bedouin Judges

The major feature of the tribal law is that it is an unwritten law, and has no court. However, it did not come from nowhere; it has been derived from different sources as Islamic roles, Bedouin traditional life, proverbs and transmitted aphorisms, besides inheriting it through the family from one's father¹⁵⁵.

The judges are Bedouin people from different tribes, who did not study this law or went to universities to apply it. They have learned it through their travels between the tribes, experience, inheritance, and from other relevance or similar cases. Judges are not free for this profession, but rather each of them has his own life and he practices his daily duties in grazing, agriculture, or others. The place where the judges meet for an incidence is a known place (tent) and in front of a bunch of men.

When the judgment is announced, the guarantors must be there to guarantee the implementation of the judgment. The judgment is said verbally, where the guarantors and the witnesses recognizing it and keeping it. This does not mean not keeping a written copy from the judgment, since nowadays writing and reading spread among Bedouin communities.

Being a judge required the good reputation among Bedouin tribes, which comes either by inheritance or by wealth and knowledge. Son of chief most of time is a chief and if the father is a judge the son most of time is a judge. Having a good knowledge of the Bedouin problems combined with long experience with Bedouin cases are the major characteristics of being a judge. Before the year 1948, Bedouins of Beersheba had their own judges whom were limited to certain tribes and clans. Thus, when a case was occurred, Bedouin named the judge whom could deal with it.

There are various kinds of judges with expertise in different spheres. There are three main kinds of judges, in addition to expertise judges. The three main judges are *al-malam*, *al-kbar*, and *al-manasheed*. One of the most common and complicated expertise judges is specialized in murder crimes called: *manaqe' aldmoom*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁵ Sonbol, 2003: P. 49 & 53.

Al-malam judges are three judges for each tribe. It takes the character of councils. When a case occurred among Bedouin, they first go to *al-malam* judges to explain the case. *Al-malam* judges look like the public prosecutor in the civil law. Among the judges the case will be discussed, investigated, and might be solved.

Al-kbar judges are also three judges for each tribe. They are much known for their knowledge as highly experienced in the Bedouin tribal law. They could manage all the cases that are occurring among the Bedouin tribes. *Al-kbar* judges have the abilities to give any suitable judgment and penalty. They look like the magistrate court.

Al-manasheed judges are at highest esteem of three judges, and at lowest of one. The plaintiffs are transmitted to them by *al-malam* judges. Most of the plaintiffs that *al-manasheed* resolve are honor crimes, attacking other's tents, or insulting. These crimes are considered the gravest crimes among Bedouin, because it is attacking women and individuals. *Al-manasheed* are very strict judges, they name a very big amount of money as a result of penalty and punishment, which might be not supportable. Thus, people avoid this kind of crimes among Bedouin due to its high penalty code where a normal person cannot handle it.

The special judges are who specialized in one kind of plaintiff. *Manaqe' al-dmoom* means where the blood percolated, thus the blood crimes are referred to those judges.

The judge from the defendant's tribe and the judge from the plaintiff tribe do not judge when the case belongs to their tribes. A judge from a third tribe is called to judge such a case.

6.2.2 The law procedures

Regarding Bedouins, the crime is not an individual crime; but it affects the whole family and clan of the defendant. The defendant here may not be trialed, but rather one from his family will, because the responsibility is collective especially when there is a payment of *diyya*. The trial is individual trial in cases of honor, and theft crimes, where the defendant must be punished.

An important issue according to Bedouin is that, the Bedouin woman is always believed by the Bedouin community and the judges in the cases of honor and insulting. Moral concerns in a tribal context where a woman between her people and clan and hence under their

protection and support, are very different from the city context where woman could be in daily contact with strangers.

The law procedure takes several steps before it reaches the last action of punishment. Bedouin law relies on heavy deterrent punishment for even minor crimes. This is combined with honor, or the alleviation of the financial implications for the convicted.

If one of the Bedouin offended people in their rights, if there is a dispute between the parties, or if there is a misunderstanding between men, women, or children, the tradition is that the elder of the defendant's family makes a visit toward the tent of the one whom has been abused.

The elder may take with him a group of people (*jaha*) to acknowledge the conviction and to apologize to the plaintiff's family. This procedure called *msalaha*, which is the Arabic word of reconciliation.

If the convicted does not acknowledge his mistake then the plaintiff sends up to three men to the convicted to ask him for his (the plaintiff) right. This procedure called *badwah*. The plaintiff could send up to three *badwas*, and then if his request has not been answered then he would take his right by force without being defended by others.

If the convicted answered the *badwa* then the two parties will meet at a named place and time at the tent of *al-malam*, which we talked about earlier in this chapter. *Al-malam* tries his best to get into agreement between both sides and to give a correct judgment by showing the mistake that the abuser did.

Every side of the two parties pays money for *al-malam* to judge between them. This amount of money is equal from both sides and called *rezqa*. *Rizqa* differs in amount from one judge to another¹⁵⁶. When I did, my study *rizqa* counted about 200 JD (Jordan Dinars) from each side, which equals to 200 Euro.

Bedouin practice a unique procedure, which is burying *al-hasa*. In Arabic, *al-hasa* means the small stones. The plaintiff buries these stones in the tent of *al-malam* to ask for the judgment. Then the judge would make all his efforts to give the judgment.

If the two parties did not agree about the judgment, then they would ask for a judgment from another judge that *al-malam* named for them. This procedure called *al-'adf*.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Abadi, 1988: P. 93.

In each trial, the judge asks the two parties to agree to appoint a guarantor (*kafeel*); he is a person of power and stature in the tribe, chosen by each party where he guarantees the application of the judgment. The guarantor must not be the chief of any of the parties. He is a wealthy man whom has the ability to pay any expenses due to the judgment.

One of the most difficult practices that the Bedouin practice in their law is *Bisha'a*, or ordeal by fire, which is analyzed as a conflict-resolving ritual of reciprocal relationships between the individual, small group, community, and society. This ritual reflects the social order, reinforces conformity to collective values, deters behaviors that deviate from culturally acceptable norms, and transforms social structures by resolving conflicts between two or more people and by reinstating a sense of mutually agreed-upon justice¹⁵⁷.

If the charges are very grave, *Bisha'a* is a common ceremony conducted among Bedouin in Palestine, Sinai, and Jordan. It is used to detect the lie, by which entails the defendant to lick a hot metal rod. If the tongue of the accused shows scars or burn then he is considered to be guilty of lying.

Bisha'a is administrated by a special person (*Mobash'shi'*) who is called to establish it in cases that have detected peculiar of the Bedouin¹⁵⁸.

There are two important other points to be mentioned here in this text. First, the oath: it is used in general as a tool to approve the reality. The one who swears the oath, his says must be believed. It is a big sin for a Bedouin to swear a lie. If the liar is discovered, his status among his tribe will be lowered and he will never be a witness again in any other case.

Second and very important point among Bedouin law is *alwajh*. *Alwajh* in Arabic means the face. While people are discussing how to solve a problem among Bedouin, one of the known and respected people stands and says this case is upon my face (*be wajhi*), which is a matter of commitment from his side to assure one of the parties not to go further with this dispute¹⁵⁹. If the party who has been assured by the man broke the promise and continued the dispute then he would have acquired a severe sanction. This is called among Bedouin (*taqtee' alwajh*)¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999a: P. 163.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Aref, 1944 : P. 119.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Aref,, 1933: P. 96.

¹⁶⁰ Taqtee' alwajh is the Arabic translation of cut the face in the literal sense.

In Jordan for example since 1974, the tribal law has been merged within the civil law, although there are many cases that the tribal judges solve it away from the civil law of Jordan¹⁶¹.

6.3 Penalty system

6.3.1 Family disputes

The most common conflict among Bedouin community are the family disputes, which usually can be solved informally inside the tribe and with the two parties in conflict by a help of the *sheikhs* without turning to the judgment and judges.

If the conflict spreads beyond the tribe's border or extended to reach the *fallahin* then the Bedouin turn to the judge. Abu-Dahook from Al-Jahalin tribe told me that they always search the resolution by turning back to the judges in time of crises.

Al-Jahalin, Al-Ka'abneh and Al-Rashaydeh tribes that are among this study mentioned that, when they turn to their tribal law in any case, their judge mentions nine judges to them, and then the defendant and plaintiff will agree upon three names to judge between them. All the three judges then are entitled to fees for their services, which called *rizqa* that we talked about earlier in this chapter¹⁶².

Limited sanctions in tribal law penalties on moral actions could be replaced by money payment but where there is no death sentence or imprisonment. If a judge has said this, it is an accepted theory that replaced with money. For instance, the judge may mention the penal code of the thief is cutting a thief's hand or can be replaced by ten camels, though the tribe pays the ten camels instead.

Among the custom in the tribal law, the offender is not responsible for the offence individually, but rather it charges the responsibility up to all the first five levels of his cousins (*Khamsa*), while the primary responsibility lies on the offender himself, according to the

¹⁶¹ Al-Abadi, 1988: P. 405.

¹⁶² Al-Aref, 1944: P. 107.

Islamic doctrine and civil law. The offender here is not punished, but punished one or all of his relatives as a collective responsibility. As well as paying *diyyah* or fine resulting from retribution hits the offender's relatives and distributed to them as a shared payment in case of murder crimes. This excludes theft and honor assault where the offender bears the retribution individually about what he did.

6.3.2 Murder crimes

"...If anyone kills a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all people. And if anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all people" (Qur'an -5:32).

In Islam, committing a murder is an extremely serious crime that covered by the law of retaliation (*qisas*), which is relevant to that used in the tribal law, whereby the relatives of the victim decide whether the offender is punished with death by the authorities or made to pay *diyyah* as compensation.

Murder crimes are the most serious of crimes among Bedouin mainly occur in cases of blood vengeance or defending homes, which are explained as revenge and denying shame¹⁶³.

When the killer has committed an act of murder, he must evacuate his tribe and quit his tent to another tribe (*jala'*). When the murder quit his tribe to another, with him go all the male members of his family. If he and his relatives do not quit, they are all liable to be killed by the relatives of the murder victim¹⁶⁴.

Any of the murder victim's relatives could take revenge: this means that every man close to the killer even up to his tenth grandfather would be in rescue for this revenge. The famous proverb among Bedouin in this case is "blood calls for blood" or "life calls for life."

Blood vengeance is widely practiced by the Bedouin accordingly to the murder crimes. It has a huge negative effect on the Bedouin communities. The practice of blood vengeance, the obligation to kill in retribution for the death of a member of one's family or tribe, is illegal in most countries of the world; however, many traditional cultures still demand this form of maintaining honour¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶³ Al-Aref, 1933: P. 83.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Aref, 1944: P. 87.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997: P. 515.

If the killer asks for the judgment then other procedures are proceeded immediately to prohibit the blood feud of the murder's family members¹⁶⁶. The killer's tribe put (*atweh*), which is the truce that prevails between the two parties and has deadline until the murder accepts the judgment and apply it. According to Islamic roles in murder crime, it is permissible for the victim or the family of the victim to have the right to pardon¹⁶⁷.

While I was doing this research, a murder crime occurred among one of the families of Al-Ka'abneh tribe who lives behind the area of this research. This case lasted for several months and has not been solved until *diyyah* has been paid by the offender's relatives. An announcement of *Solh 'Asha'eri* (tribal reconciliation), in the newspapers, has been announced. The tribal reconciliation and payment of *diyyah* ensured that the family of the murdered will not attack any member of the family of the killer.

If the tribe of the victim is not a large tribe, Bedouins of this tribe accept *diyyah* and they forgive the killer. They consider losing one member is a big loss, therefore, they don't want to lose more in a loop of killing.

If the offender fled beyond the borders of his tribe, the time of blood feud will float on the surface, and any fellow member of his blood relatives up to the first five levels of male cousins (*Khamsa*) may have to pay for the blood by his own life. A blood feud may last for many years. There is a proverb among Bedouin says "One of Bedouins took revenge after 40 years of his son's murdering, and when this happened he said I was hast". Blood feud could put the tribes in a cycle of revenges for many years that cannot be solved.

The Bedouin Law is invaluable in cases where murder and theft has been committed out in the desert, and where no evidence exists. Any civilized penal code is hopelessly inadequate in these cases, but the Bedouin code possesses machinery peculiarly adapted to discover the truth in the apparent absence of any evidence whatsoever¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁶ Blood Feud is three-day stand. If any of the victim's family kills one of the killer's family, this will close this case, although the killer will be known later, it is considered blood vengeance.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Aref, 1933: P. 92.

¹⁶⁸ Kennett, 1968: P. 8.

6.3.3 Theft crimes

Theft crimes among Bedouin are mainly of animal theft, more especially of sheep. If the theft is money theft and the accused is detected then he will be punished by turning four times of the stolen money¹⁶⁹. In cases where the accused does not acknowledge his theft crime, although there is a witness then the Bedouin judges have the right to establish *bisha'a*¹⁷⁰; we talked about it in the first section of this chapter.

Sheep theft is the common theft crime among Bedouin since old times. According to the difficulty of the political and the economic situation among Bedouin under this study, this kind of theft is eliminated. If it happens, the theft will be punished by turning four times of the stolen sheep. For example, if one sheep has been stolen, then four sheep must be returned.

6.3.4 Honour crimes

Bedouins traditionally have placed great importance on the concept of honour (*ird*) and honor code (*sharaf*). Slight to a member of a tribal group is an injury to all members of that group; likewise, all members are responsible for the actions of a fellow tribal member. Honor is inherited in the family or tribe and in the individual as the representative of the family or tribe. Slightings are to be erased by appropriate revenge or through mediation to reach reconciliation based on adequate recompense.

Honour codes (*sharaf*) and preservation of honour (*ird*) are very important customs among all Bedouin. Dishonor of the woman is the gravest crime that Bedouin may apply. Bedouin woman as much as she seems to be controlled by social norms she is in return is protected by a Bedouin law system that counts any misbehavior against her 4 times the punishment awaiting a man under similar circumstances. The penalty for dishonor is the harshest of all: death. Raping and killing a woman are the gravest of the gravest crimes among Bedouin.

I must mention here that when I asked Bedouin about dishonor, they always hesitated to give me a clear picture. The people of each tribe I met always keened to view the best honor

¹⁶⁹ Al-Aref, 1933: P. 111.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Aref, 1933: P. 112.

picture of their tribe. None of the men or women I met mentioned a dishonor especially woman raping. I heard only one story of raping which happened 20 years ago among one of the families of Al-Jahalin tribe in Beersheva and not among whom I studied.

7 CHAPTER SIX: MATERIAL CULTURE OF BEDOUIN GROUPS

7.1 Introduction

The nomads take pride in the material simplicity of desert life and the good physical and mental health it engenders¹⁷¹.

The material culture among the Bedouin communities is very simple and rather poor in the Bedouin societies. This could be attributed to two main factors: the raw material from which traditional artifacts are made is very limited and the unsettled nomadic life makes it difficult for the Bedouin to carry and produce plentiful items of material culture¹⁷².

The Bedouin is moving from one place to another constantly, as a result women often responsible for material culture productions, including making handcrafts, sewing their clothes, cooking, and cleaning.

Bedouin of this study have been introduced to the cities and villages, which made them to attaining their household needs from the nearest places. This limited the production of material culture such as handcrafts, clothes, cooking raw materials and cleaning materials.

Bedouins make their own clothes from the wool of their sheep, and goats. The design of the clothes is both functional and fashionable¹⁷³.

Bedouin traditionally wear loose clothes flowing robes that covered them, from head to foot, protecting them from the fierce sunshine, wind and sand of the desert. It is difficult to mention that all the Bedouin in different countries wear the same costume, but rather different with different colors, and the head veil (*Kafīyya*) is the common cloth between all Bedouin in different countries¹⁷⁴. The availability of raw materials and products in the market made changes in the cooking procedure and using kitchen utensils among the Bedouins.

¹⁷¹ Hobbs, 2003: P. 49.

¹⁷² Hurreiz, 2002: P. 149.

¹⁷³ Lawrence, 1922.

¹⁷⁴ Jabbur, 1995: P. 263.

7.2 Bedouins clothes

7.2.1 Female's clothes

The Bedouin women in Jericho district like all Bedouin women in Palestine wear a black cotton dress with long pointed sleeves (figure 10). A head cloth (*tarha*) covers their hair and sometimes their faces are hidden behind a cotton black veil (*burqo'*). The use of the face veil is not a very common phenomenon among the Bedouin women of this study. I have met two young girls from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A, who put the face veil. The costumes worn by the Bedouin women of Palestine are very different from those worn in Jordan, although it is just the other side of the river¹⁷⁵.

“I put a face veil because of the dusty and windy environment we are living and not to the veiling itself, when I work outside the tent I veil my face to keep the sun rays away from my face”

(Fatima from Al-Ka'abneh tribe- Area A)

I have been told that before the year 1948 the dress worn by Bedouin women was black richly embroidered, covered with a black cloak (*'abaya*). The face veil (*burqo'*) is also embroidered and fixed with gold or silver coins from all its edges (figure 11).

This richly handmade dress and face veil showed the financial status of the Bedouin women. Wife and daughter of the sheikh add gold and silver coins to the face veil and to the head cloth coil¹⁷⁶ (figure 12).

The women I met wear two layer dresses, the first dress is decorated long sleeved one, and the upper dress is loose black sleeveless dress. They wear a dark head cloth mainly black.

¹⁷⁵ Weir, 1976: P. 51.

¹⁷⁶ Musil, 1928.



Figure 10: Bedouin elder woman from Al-Jahalin tribe, wearing black dress with black veil.

The woman in figure 10 agreed to take the photo because she is an elder, although she was embarrassed to look to the Camera, which will show her face. I mentioned before that photographing women's faces was the most difficult issue in photographing.



Figure 11: Left: Bedouin woman dress, veil, and *burgu'* of woman from Beersheba. Right: Bedouin dress of woman from Hebron¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁷ I took this photo in the Jordan Folklore Museum in Amman- Jordan.



Figure 12: Bedouin head cloth coils planted with gold and silver coins¹⁷⁸.

Most of young women wear loose long skirt and sleeved shirt. They cover their heads with black or colored head cloth (*tarha*). They also wear modern long dress (*dishdash*) mainly of dark colors.

The colored embroidered dresses are significant for married women; it is shameful and embarrassing that the unmarried women wear such dresses¹⁷⁹.

In certain occasions such as marriages, the women wear the decorated and embroidered dresses, and colorful head covers.

Slippers are the most common shoes that Bedouin women wear. Rubber shoes are used in winter times. They buy the slippers and shoes from Jericho city market.

¹⁷⁸ I took this photo in the Jordan Folklore Museum in Amman- Jordan.

¹⁷⁹ Jabbur, 1988: P. 271.

7.2.2 Male's clothes

Bedouin man dresses for the desert, his layered and flowing robes absorbing the sun's hot rays while allowing cooling breezes to circulate. He winds a cloth around his head and neck to retard moisture loss that can lead to heat stroke and to shield his face against the harsh, dry sand.

The traditional male Bedouin dress is a long white robe (*thob*), a sleeveless cloak (*'abaya*) and a distinctive head veil (*kafiyya*), and a head ropes (*'aqal*)¹⁸⁰. The Bedouin robe is loose fitting, allowing air to circulate, preventing sweat from evaporating too quickly and slowing dehydration in hot dry air. The head cloth (*kafiyya*) is the most distinctive part of an Arab's clothing. It is held on by heavy woolen coils (*'aqal*)¹⁸¹.

The long robe of the man (*thob*) is made out of cotton. There are many colors; it is a matter of personal preference occasion, and season. The Bedouin man covers the robe with a flowing outer garment (*'abaya*). In addition, he wears cotton trousers under the robe. In winter, he may wear a waterproof coat of woven sheep hair.

Usually the Bedouin wears leather shoes, open like sandals. The leather material and opening shoes do not keep warmness to the feet, and bring ventilation to them.

The elders always wear these traditional clothes. The young men are occasionally wearing them. The young men I met in all encampments wear the modern clothes of trousers and t-shirts.

The boys wear modern clothes out of Market that their mothers buy for them from Jericho city market. What I have noticed is that most of the children in the Bedouin encampments do not wear shoes; they walk inside the encampments with bare feet.

The color of the Bedouin clothes varies from light colors mainly white in the summer, and dark colors mainly black and brown in the winter. The color of the head cloth (*kafiyya*) is white or off-white most of the time (figure 13).

A leather belt is used to tie the Bedouin robe. Sometimes the belt has a small pocket at one side to keep money.

¹⁸⁰ Weir, 1976: P. 57.

¹⁸¹ Lawrence, 1922.

Nowadays most of the Bedouins in this research do not make their clothes, but rather they purchase them from the markets in Jericho, Ramallah, Anata, and Al-Ezaria. When they go to Hebron or Bethlehem, they purchase better-fabricated clothes from other Bedouins who weave the Bedouin costumes.



Figure 13: Bedouin man wearing the robe and white *kaffeya* fixed by 'aqal¹⁸² .

¹⁸²Abu-Sayah is one of Al-Jahalin Bedouin who lives with his wife and children in a single encampment nearby one of the villages in west Ramallah city. He has chosen not to go to the original encampment in Jericho since the grass and water in this area are available for his flock.

7.3 Cleaning and appearance

7.3.1 Daily cleaning and bathing

Since the Bedouins inhabit the desert and live in tents, the cleaning process is different from the way we got used to it. The Bedouin does not apply a good hygienic life style. It is rather he uses what is feasible for him in the harsh environment.

A Sandy wind is a reason to make the tent's furniture unclean. Women clean the covers of the mattresses and bellows from time to another. The frequent cleaning is taking place in the kitchen section, where all house activity is happening. Washing of utensils and the floor of the kitchen is a daily activity done by women and daughters by turn.

Washing clothes is daily task done by hand using water and soap. This task is exclusively done by women. Each wife is washing the clothes of her family members. Daughters of young age are yet not prepared to make this difficult task, but rather at age 14 and above. A rope is tied between two poles to hang up the washed clothes to let them dry.

In summer time, it is more frequent for daily bathing especially the kids. I have noticed that at the encampment of one of Al-Jahalin tribe, where the water is available the kids are having a daily bathing without using soap or shampoo. The bathing area is a separate place most closely to the kitchen. Soap is used once each several days for bathing. Shampoo is not used except by some young girls who go often to the market and have extra money for it.

A tooth brushing is not a common habit among Bedouin communities. Few individuals use toothbrush and tooth paste upon their individual preference.

The use of water is not frequent according to the shortage of water supply for the Bedouin encampments in either Area A or Area B as mentioned earlier in the first chapter.

7.3.2 Ornamentation

7.3.2.1 Hair cut and shaving

Bedouin woman usually keep her hair long, and she does not cut it. Sometimes, she cut it if one of the women offers her a haircut. Other times the woman herself cuts her hair but never makes a short cut.

The woman's long hair is often dyed with henna. Henna is a natural dye obtained from a plant. Henna gives a red color to the hair. One of the women from Al-Ka'abneh tribe uses black henna, which is a modern, black dye and called black henna. None of the Bedouin women goes to hair salon.

The Bedouin men often shave their heads. Since the encampments are near to the cities, sometimes they go to hair salon, mainly when they have special occasion. Not all men wear beards, but it is a common phenomenon inside the Bedouin communities.

7.3.2.2 Jewellery

Jewellery of woman ornamentation is an appreciative part in the life of the Bedouin women. First jewellery that Bedouin woman receive is as a wedding present. Customarily, a prospective bridegroom pays the bride's father a dowry, part of which he uses to buy jewellery for his daughter. Under Muslim law, any jewellery bestowed on the bride becomes her own property and insurance in times of need.

Most of Bedouin jewellery is made out of silver, which could be affordable by the Bedouin woman rather than the gold. Bedouin women are rarely seen without their bracelets made out of silver, but some of the necklets and head-ornaments are so cumbersome that they are worn only on special occasions such as weddings and celebrations.

Gold jewellery is worn as earrings, and nose rings (*Khuzama*). It is believed that the diseases enter the body through the nose, mouth and ear openings, thus wearing the jewellery in these areas will prevent microbes and viruses to enter the body¹⁸³.

Certain pieces of jewellery are thought to have protective and beneficial effects on the wearer such as jewellery that combines talismanic with decorative functions¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸³ Badawi, 1994: P. 56.

¹⁸⁴ Weir, 1976: P. 59.

Among the Bedouin I met, the women have told me that they wear the bracelets they have inherited from grandmothers and mothers. Moreover, the married women wear their marriage rings and earrings. Bedouin men often do not wear jewellery, but rather false rings.

7.3.2.3 Kohol and tattoo

Kohol (black eyeliner) is the common make up that the Bedouin women always use. It is rarely to see a Bedouin woman without *kohol*. Men sometimes use *kohol* especially in marriage occasions. I met several times young men who are using *kohol*, but never met an elder man uses it.

Older women have their faces tattooed with blue-greenish dots. The tattoo was reflecting the image of Bedouin married woman. Nowadays women do not tattoo their faces because it is believed that it is a sin in Islam¹⁸⁵.

Tattooing the chin, was sometimes highly elaborated looking and looked more like a beard than a tattoo (figure 14). Alongside that was another practice by Bedouin woman tattooing the lips and above eyebrows blue. This was considered to be the embodiment of beauty by Bedouin men.

Tattoos were quite extensively used as amulets among the Bedouins with the wearers imbuing them with magical powers. These were often in the form of dots or a small cross. They were mostly done on the hands or feet and it was common to see women with three dots on the hand. They either provided protection or strength depending on which hand.

Bedouin women in Egypt besides the tattoo they practice marking the *Sholokh* upon their faces, which are made by warmed knife and black powder filling, which leaves straight black scarves on the face¹⁸⁶. In Palestine, this phenomenon does not exist.

¹⁸⁵ Women of this research whom wore tattoo were of minimum age of 40, while all old women wore them.

¹⁸⁶ Badawi, 1994: P. 55.



Figure 14: Tattooed Bedouin woman from Jordan¹⁸⁷.

7.3.3 Handcrafts

Although nomadism dictates a lifestyle unencumbered by material goods, the Bedouin have developed a rich culture incorporating necessity and art. Tents, mats and rugs are all made of wool designed and woven by the women, are used in different places. The most essential material items in the living unit of Bedouin are made of wool. Bedouin tribes produce rugs, bags, and other household items using sheep's wool and goat hair. Traditionally the entire process is done by hand; from the washing, carding, spinning, and dyeing of the yarn to the finished product. Wool is naturally dyed to provide brilliant colors. The Bedouin style of weaving is unusual in that it produces "warped face rugs" unlike the traditional "weft" rugs. Warped face rugs are preferable for their high-density and signature texture.

Bedouin weaving in principle is a form of warp faced plain weaving done by women on a ground loom. Bedouin women learned the craft of weaving from an early age, watching, and assisting their mothers in the spinning, dyeing and weaving of wool. All woven cloth is made of interlacing two sets of threads or yarn, the warp or stationary thread and the weft or the active weaving thread. The weft is passed one over, one under the warp, through the shed and counter shed, as the steps alternate so the fabric is formed. The weavers used this technique to weave a wide range of items for their daily use from tent walls to storage bags, and rugs.

¹⁸⁷ Source: www.visajourney.com

All the Bedouin women above 30 years of age from the tribes under study practiced weaving some time in their life. Now none of them is practicing weaving, except one woman from Al-Rashaydeh tribe, it was not for her own use, but rather for selling (figure 15). Two years ago, she quit weaving it. With the decline in the use of wool, the art of spinning is disappearing among Bedouin.

One of the handcrafts that the Bedouin copied from *Fallahin* (peasants) is making *hasir*; is a mat used as floor covering and for sitting and sleeping that made from dates' leaves¹⁸⁸. This kind of covering is cheaper than the wool carpets and they are easier to formulate. All the encampments from Al-Jahalin, and Al-Ka'abneh, and Al-Rashaydeh tribes are using *hasir* in most of their living units.



Figure 15: Bedouin woman from Al-Rashaydeh tribe is spinning the wool thread.

¹⁸⁸ Hurreiz, 2002: P. 150.

7.4 Food and drinks

7.4.1 Bread making

“I’m the bread of life” bible: John 6:48

“This is the bread, which comes down from heaven; that if any man eats of it, he may not die,” bible: Gospel of John 6:50

Bread constitutes the most important food of the Bedouin and *fallahin* (peasants) in Palestine¹⁸⁹.

The various flatbreads made from all types of cereal grain are probably among the oldest food products prepared by man. Wheat flour of various extraction levels is the principal flour for a wide range of flatbreads¹⁹⁰.

Wheat is the basic ingredient in flatbread (*shrak*) that is made by Bedouin. The flatbread is the daily content of any Bedouin meal. Use of handle millstone in grinding reflected a marked advancement in grinding tools. It is no longer remaining the use of the handle millstone in any Bedouin encampments in this study. Nowadays they buy the grinded wheat from the markets of Jericho or Anata village.

Bedouin used to be the wheat transporters before the year 1948. They transported wheat on their camels and sold it later to the *fallahin* in the villages¹⁹¹.

The flat bread is prepared twice a day by the Bedouin under study, in the morning for breakfast and in the evening for dinner. Wife and daughters prepare the dough and bake it. Wheat flat bread becomes hard and fragile after few hours from baking. The taste of the cold and hard bread is not acceptable by the Bedouin.

It is important to give a good care in keeping the wheat flour either it has been grinded inside the tent or bought from the market. Storing the wheat flour must be away from the sun and humidity¹⁹².

The ingredients for making the dough are the wheat flour, salt, and water. The quantity depends on the size of the nuclear family. The dough is left in a big bowl called “*batyeh*” then it is covered with a piece of cloth.

¹⁸⁹ Canaan, 1962: 10

¹⁹⁰ Qarooni, 1996: P. 2.

¹⁹¹ Canaan, 1962: 10

¹⁹² Abu-Hadba, 1988: P. 155.

Batyeh is a big wooden bowl used to prepare the dough, it is made of different sizes depends on the family size. Both Bedouin and fallahin use it¹⁹³. The Bedouin women from Al-Rashaydeh tribe are still using the “*batyeh*,” although there are varieties of bowls are used nowadays. Among the other tribes from other encampments, plastic bowls are used often for the dough making.

The wife or elder daughter from each nuclear family wakes up before the sunrise to prepare the dough for the breakfast. In the evening, it is the same procedure prepared for the dinner. The quantity of the bread in each time depends on the size of family members whom will eat that meal.

While the wife is preparing the dough, the daughter is opening the fire. The fireplace for baking is composed from stones rounded the fire and covered by a cast-iron disk (*saj*). *Saj* is a convex plate set on the fire from the side that is convex (figure 16). The process of preparing the dough and then baking it takes about 30 minutes.

When the Bedouin people like Al-Ka’abneh tribe from Area B are moving to other place in the summer, they take the cast-iron disk with them to prepare the same bread in the new area. Bedouin never buy ready bread from the market.

¹⁹³ Abu-Hadba, 1988: P. 157.



Figure 16: The researcher is preparing flatbread with Bedouin women in Al-Rashaydeh encampment.

7.4.2 Food preparation

The material constraints of environment, technology, and physiology set boundaries for human diets, but even traditional societies such as Bedouin have been quite skilled in exploiting the available resources.

Traditionally, the Bedouin livelihood primarily involved herding of sheep, and goats that provide meat, milk products, and wool. Meat is only eaten on special occasions (such as feasts, weddings and visits from guests) as this entailed slaughtering an animal and consuming it before the meat spoiled. Limited amounts of meat are made into *hamit* (meat cooked and then sealed in mutton fat at a ratio of 1:2), which kept well for extended periods and is used as a source of fat, flavoring and meat for cooking.

Some families from Al-Jahalin, Al-Ka'abneh and Al-Rashaydeh raise few chickens as a source of eggs as a protein supplement instead of eating meat.

“When we heard about the disease : Bird Flu, we killed all the chicken we had.”

(Um Mohammad from Al-Ka'abneh- Area A).

Milk products make up a large portion of the traditional Bedouin diet. Fresh milk is used for cooking and drinking. Milk, yoghurt, and butter from the Bedouin herds form the staple part of their diet. Thin, flat loaves of bread are baked on a hot, convex iron plate over an open fire as explained earlier in this chapter. Meat, usually mutton, is a luxury eaten usually at a certain celebration or on the arrival of guests. *Samen* (clarified butter or *ghee*) is the fat used for cooking. Small amounts of vegetables from the market are also eaten.

Cooking and eating tools vary from those were couple of decades ago. Urbanization and accessibility to the markets influenced the process of food preparation, and cooking tools. The kitchen's utensils are used nowadays mainly plates, large bowl, large platter (*seder*), and cooking pots (aluminum or copper pots). The Bedouin eat with their hands, using bread as an eating utensil for many dishes, thus maintaining high bread consumption.

Most of the Bedouin utensils that are used today have been used by the peasants (*fallahin*) of Palestine, especially the large platter (*seder*). The most frequent used food tool among Bedouin is *batyeh* (large wooden bowl), where the entire family squat around it to eat their food¹⁹⁴.

Two main meals are served daily in most households; the breakfast and the dinner. The breakfast is served in the early morning; after the mornings pray around 6 o'clock. The breakfast consists mainly from bread (*khubez saj*), butter, and milk. When I was at my fieldwork, I have been always served exceptionally sour milk, butter, yogurt with olive oil and bread. The large meal of the day is eaten in the evening (the dinner) after the animals have been milked around 18 o'clock. It is usually cooked in a large tinned aluminum or copper pot over an open fire and may consist of rice cooked with *samen*.

The process of food preparation is an exclusive task made by woman. Woman decides what to cook depending on the ingredients availability. Man has nothing to do with this

¹⁹⁴ Al-abbadi, 1976: P. 135.

process, except serving men in special occasions such as weddings and funerals where women do not show up at guests' tent. In nuclear families, wife is responsible for food process. Daughters share mothers in this process and they can start cooking individually after adolescence (from age 13 and above). In polygamous families, each wife is responsible to prepare the food for her and her children. If the two wives are sharing the same kitchen then both of them prepare the food for the completely family members.

As mentioned few lines ago, the woman decides what to cook depending on the ingredients availability at her kitchen. Nowadays Bedouin woman has been influenced by the way how the *fallahin* cook, by preparing the food that consists of rice and *borgol* (half-grinded wheat) with vegetables. Apart from stock and their milk products, the Bedouin table today consist other untraditional ingredients such as vegetables and olive oil.

Traditional Bedouin meals are *mansaf*, *zarp*, and *tharid* that still the main dishes in several occasions. As sweets, *Fateera* is prepared from bread with *samen* and sugar¹⁹⁵.

Mansaf is the typical Bedouin dish served on special occasions. *Mansaf*, would normally be a festival or major family event dish for the Bedouin. Mainly served when there are guests or when there is a wedding. It is stewed lamb with a sauce made from dried yoghurt, served on a bed of rice and bread, specially prepared over an open fire, and sometimes sprinkled with pine nuts. It is served on a large platter and eaten communally by right hand. In Bedouin style nothing is wasted, the entire sheep is served up on a bed of rice and the meal is consumed in order - the men eat first, then women and finally children pick at what is left.

Zarp, (also called *makmora*) is an occasional and special meal. The whole goat is cooked in the heat of a fire built in a small underground stone oven. An oven is built from stones leaving the top open. A big fire is built in this oven and when the fire has burnt down the goat is placed on the ashes. The opening is sealed with more stones and the whole is sealed and covered with a thick layer of mud. It takes 2 hours to cook.

The taste of it is similar to the grilled meat. *Zarp* is served when Bedouin moved from one place to another or in the season of migration¹⁹⁶. *Zarp* is a typical meal among the

¹⁹⁵ Al-Abbadi, 1976: P. 163 & 164.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Abbadi, 1976: P. 164.

Bedouin in Sinai in Egypt. They bury the whole sheep or goat in the sand and cover it with the glowing coal, and seal it with small stones for 20 hours¹⁹⁷.

Tharid, is the Bedouin food that served any time of the year and at any occasion. It is prepared from wheat bread soaked in broth.

Traditional Bedouin customs surrounding food, where the family members squat around the large platter on which the food is piled. One leg is folded underneath and the other knee is raised in front of the body to rest the arm on. Bedouin use only their right hand for eating, (the left hand used for wiping themselves is considered unclean), and with it they tear pieces of bread from the thin loaves with which they scoop up some food and carry it to their mouths. The whole family surrounds the platter and eats together. The father starts always eating then followed by the rest. Before any start, each member in the family spells *Besem ullah* (with the name of God).

It is considered impolite during eating to, eat from the amount in front of the neighbor, start with the meat, put the hand in the mouth, eat from different platters, and leave what is served¹⁹⁸.

7.4.3 Drinks (Coffee, milk, tea, and others; herbal drinks)

Bedouin purchase number of drink products, including tea, coffee, besides sugar. Today Bedouin also purchase soft drinks such as Cola and juice although they do not consume it a lot.

Bedouin people do not drink a sufficient amount of water; they rather drink sour milk when they are thirsty.

In the summer season Bedouin keep the water and milk in a 10 liter plastic galloon which covered totally with a thick cloth. They leave the galloon all night outside to keep it cold for the next day since they have not refrigerators.

Coffee is the Bedouin traditional drink. Green coffee beans are roasted lightly in a skillet and, after being cooled, ground with fresh cardamom in a mortar and pestle. It is transferred to the classic beaked Arabian coffee pot of tinned copper or brass (*dalla*).The end

¹⁹⁷ Hobbs, 2003: P. 50.

¹⁹⁸ Al-abbadi, 1976: P. 160.

result is a light-colored bitter flavoured coffee, served in tiny cups in small portions. Coffee is an important symbol of hospitality for a Bedouin. Shaking the cup after drinking it indicates that you do not want a refill. Men drink coffee more than women do. Once they prepare it, they drink it all the day. Coffee making is an exclusively male task and is a reason for men gathering at the men's section, enjoying sharing their stories while drinking. In the absence of the man, woman could prepare the coffee but do not serve it to men, but rather only to women.

Bedouin consume milk, from goat and sheep, although among the Bedouin who raised camels the preference was for camel's milk. Milk is drunk freshly and daily especially at breakfast. Bedouin prefer it sour milk after churning and removing the butter. All household members drink milk regardless of their age or sex. People I met also serve sour milk to the guests as they did with me.

Tea drinking was introduced at a relatively late stage but has become well established. Bedouin today make tea several times a day since morning to late evening. They serve the tea very sweet using sugar and often flavoured with mint, sage, or some other locally grown desert herb and put in a metal teapot then served in small glasses.

Herbal drinks are commonly used by Bedouin since old times. They usually use *za'atar*, sage, and mint. Bedouin women pick the herbs from mountains and valleys around the villages. They go in group of 2 to 4 women and pick them.

Za'atar, a tasty, mild green herb, similar to thyme, is used to season food and instead of the more common sage, to give a particularly intense aroma to the ubiquitous sweet Arab tea¹⁹⁹. Sage, (*Marameyeh*) is a sub-shrub that is typical to the Mediterranean, has a bitter taste and used mainly with tea and as a medication for stomach ache, and cramps²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁹ Bora, 2006: P. 54.

²⁰⁰ Abu-Rabia, 2005b: P. 406.

8 CHAPTER SEVEN: KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITIONS OF BEDOUIN GROUPS

8.1 Introduction

Bedouin people have gained their knowledge and traditions as a reflection of their environment and scarcity of resources. Bedouin migration is usually perceived as the process of moving from one geographical area to another, in which the migrants have to adjust themselves to a greater or lesser extent to their new surroundings. The Bedouin, however, experienced the impact of migration in the most powerful way, and they gained their life style through this kind of living.

Education started to be a significant potential of Bedouin life. Education can help the Bedouin community to regain control over their own development.

Bedouins inhabit Palestine collected their traditions and practices through time and from ancestors. Bedouin hospitality is part of a routine imposed by the desert, and as such has existed from the earliest times. From other hand, occasional celebrations and tribal feasts are lavish occasions when a sheep is slaughtered and served in a traditional manner. The continuity of practicing their own culture led to unique traditions.

Moreover, there is an extensive system of obligations to visit relatives and friends after certain events or occasions (such as illness/hospitalization, birth, a long trip or marriage of a son or daughter), which also involve the sharing of food. Traditionally, guests would bring a gift of coffee beans, sugar, *samneh* or home-reared chickens and the hosts usually serve a meal, as well as tea and coffee.

8.2 Education

Traditionally, most education was informal and not widely developed within the Bedouin community because, as a nomadic society, their way of life required other skills. Through the informal education system they developed, which is based on actual observation and participation in the process of day-to-day life, children receive an education that suitably

prepared them for the life they are to lead as adults. History, moral and religious values are passed on orally by respected elders, poets, and storytellers²⁰¹.

Bedouin Areas A and B have accessibility for schools. Most of the Bedouin children do attend the nearest schools. However, often the distances traveled to school, especially for the younger children, are exhausting and in general, there is no transport or the transport is paid for privately. The children who live in Area A from Al-Ka'abneh tribe go to Anata to attend the UNRWA Basic School. Children, who live in the encampments that are nearer to Anata, go studying to Anata School. Other children, who their encampments are nearer to Jericho city, go to Jericho school. The girls often go to school until age 15, and latterly they stay home to help in the household activities. The children in Area B from Al-Rashaydeh tribe go walking to UNRWA Basic School and governmental school in Jericho city. Some of them go to *Omar Ibn al-Khattab* Basic School; the small school that Al-Ka'abneh tribe has built in Area B. This school has up to the 6th grade, some children from Al-Rashaydeh go to study there, and then they continue studying at Jericho governmental school. Those children, who study in Jericho city, walk 2 km each way each day as there is no transport from their place. Every time I met those children coming back from school, they were exhausted especially when the weather is hot at midday.

In Area B at Al-Uja, the Bedouin children attend the UNRWA Basic School that is the nearest school to their encampment in Al-Uja village, and they pay privately for a taxi each day.

UNRWA Basic Schools have grades up to ninth class. When children finish ninth grade, and want to continue their secondary classes, they go to the governmental schools. Most of the girls drop out of school after the ninth grade. They get either married or stay home helping mothers in households' keeping. Only one girl I met from Abu-Galyeh clan from Al-Jahalin tribe in Area A, attends the university at her second year.

Among the people in this study, parents encourage education for children, girls, and boys. High percent of mothers would like to see their sons finish high school and a bit less would like to see their daughters finish high school although the existence of financial barriers to realizing their aspirations for their children education²⁰².

²⁰¹ Givati-Teerling, 2007: P.5.

²⁰² Abu-Sa'ad & others, 1998: P. 347&348.

It should be mentioned that education for the Bedouin girl used not to exist. It was impossible for her to study around forty years ago. She was governed by the customs and traditions that forbade a girl to leave the house under any circumstances. So going to school would be one of the greatest shames²⁰³. However, today same women who lived this life are encouraging their daughters to go to school in the encampments of this study.

8.3 Hospitality

Bedouins are most famous for their hospitality (*diyafa*)²⁰⁴. It is part of their creed rooted in the harshness of desert life, that no traveler is ever turned away. Bedouins are known as generous people for the tradition of their hospitality and guest respect.

Prophet Muhammad, with his characteristically practical sense, might have wished to enforce the routine of the desert when he said, "whoever believes in God and the day of resurrection must respect his guest," its sanctions is essentially social and not religious²⁰⁵.

Any stranger or visitor can approach a Bedouin tent and be sure of three days' board, lodging, and protection after which he may leave in peace. A guest is always welcome. The Bedouin believe any guest is the guest of God (*Dayf Allah*).

Hospitality always includes food, which could not be refused without offending the host. Bedouin will always offer their guest a rich meal, even if they have to slaughter their last sheep or borrow from neighbors to do it. Their honor is bound by their hospitality and lavish generosity²⁰⁶.

Most of Bedouin in this study offer the coffee and tea for their guests immediately after the guests are sitting down. I have been offered tea every one hour, and sour milk in the morning times. Young women prepared tea for every one setting in the tent including me. In spite of the difficult financial situation of most of the Bedouin in this study, they offered me a small meal including bread, butter, and yogurt every time I stay for long hours.

²⁰³ Abu-Lughod, 1993: P.208.

²⁰⁴ *Deyafa* is the Arabic word for hospitality, which is derived from the word *dayf* which means guest.

²⁰⁵ Hughes, 1995: P.8.

²⁰⁶ Shryock, 2004: P. 35.

8.4 Bedouin celebrations

8.4.1 Marriage celebration

Marriages among Bedouin society are arranged by senior kinsmen. Sexuality is de-emphasized as an orientation of social life, but this allows the development of the cultural ideals of pride and independence²⁰⁷. Nowadays Bedouin marriage follows Islamic tradition. Marriage is usually arranged, although according to Islam the women should always have the right of refusal.

Marriages among Bedouins are always preferred between cousins, especially children of the father's brothers. The cousin (*ibn-amm*) has the first right to the girl's hand. Not only is marriage to the *bint- amm* (female parallel cousin) or the *ibn -amm* (male parallel cousin) preferred, but also, in addition, the father's brother's son has a customary right to his cousin. The strongest responsibility for a woman's chastity befalls her father and brother, followed by the father's brother, the father's brother's son, mother's brother, mother's brother's son, etc. They exercise this responsibility by seeing to it that she gets married or by actually marrying her. What amounts, under certain circumstances, to an obligation to marry a kinswoman is thus directly related to the responsibility for her chastity²⁰⁸.

A recent study found 60% of Bedouin women married to a cousin or another relative; 35% of women were in a polygamous marriage²⁰⁹.

The majority of the Bedouin people I interviewed held the view that cousin marriage is the preferable kind of marriage although is associated with genetic diseases. However, the biomedical discourse of genetic risk did not change the traditional Bedouin method of mate selection²¹⁰. Hence, the right to marry the cousin has the function of protecting her from irresponsible conduct, conduct that would stain the honor of her father and his agnates. One of the arguments is that cousin marriage is also a symbol system that facilitates the expression of solidarity and honour between these families²¹¹.

Although the female cousin may refuse to marry her father's brother's son, she may not marry anyone else without his consent first. Nevertheless, these cousin marriages are seen as reinforcing the unity and authority of the minimal lineage. Explanations of the custom of

²⁰⁷ Abu-Lughod, 2001: P. 373.

²⁰⁸ Holy, 1989: P. 73.

²⁰⁹ Cwikel, 2003: P. 240.

²¹⁰ Raz & Atar, 2005: P.27.

²¹¹ Holy, 1989: P. 75.

cousin marriage in the Middle East frequently detail the various political and economic motives that make such marriage attractive to the families that resort to them²¹².

Women of Al-Jahalin, Al-Ka'abneh, and Al-Rashaydeh tend to marry from age 16, and men do from age 19. Elder women told me that at their time 50 years ago, women tended to marry at age 13 and men at age 16. The women under marriage are protected by a very strict code of honour but are allowed to move about relatively freely and to talk to other relative- men. Bedouins consider the marriage as a reputation institute for the sake of the children, by which to how the children will benefit from this particular mother or father in the long term²¹³.

Polygamy, though allowed by Islam (up to four wives) is rare nowadays. The man often marries the second wife because large families are traditionally desired, but family sizes are declining due to economic necessity. To be able to help another member of the family is considered an honor as well as a duty. The first wife usually does not accept the idea that her husband gets married a second wife, but cannot say a word. The extended family shares a close relationship, often living nearby in a separate tent. Parents will often help or support their children even after marriage.

Divorce is not common among the people of this research. The divorced woman and the widow return to live in their father's tent. In case of divorce, the children go to live with their fathers. In case of widowing, the children go to live at their father's place with the father's parents or brothers.

“When man starts to stay alone without his family, this means he starts thinking of a second wife to remarry. This thinking comes to surface only when the man is having more money and now is in a better economic situation, which will allow him to have a second wife. Most of the time, the man likes to have a woman from Fallahin as a second wife.”

(Um Mohammad from Al-Jahalin-AreaA)

“It is easier for me to see my husband dead, rather to see him getting married to a second wife, and there is a proverb in this context says: Their funerals rather their marriages”.

(Um-Ismael from Al-Jahalin tribe- Area A)

²¹² Holy, 1989: P. 73.

²¹³ Lancaster, 1981: P. 43.

Traditional Bedouin wedding begins with the '*Al Khoutba*' (proposal), where the groom's father, accompanied by close relatives and clan's *shiekh*, visits the bride's father to seek his daughter's hand for his son. The ceremony revolves around the traditional coffee. All the people drink the coffee after the agreement of the bride's father. '*Al Khoutba*' could be any time before the wedding ceremony, but not more than one year. This is followed with negotiations between the two families and mutual agreement of a marriage contract. The negotiations between the two families are relayed through a tribal public address system.

Customarily, a prospective bridegroom pays the bride's father a dowry, part of which he uses to buy jewellery for his daughter. The other part of it the bride uses it to prepare for her wedding clothes. Under Muslim law, the bride's dowry in this nuptial settlement becomes her property. When I was doing the research the average dowry paid to the bride's father was around 2500 JD (Jordan Dinars) which is about 2500 Euro.

For the wedding ceremony, the bride usually wears traditional Bedouin embroidered dress. This costume is richly embellished with fine hand embroidery, worked in cross-stitch by *fallahin* women. Bedouin women in Palestine do not sew these costumes and they do not practice this tradition at all. The design is embroidered across the front and back of the dress, down the sleeves and along the main seams. Machine-stitched embroidery is now replacing the hand embroidery, since it is cheaper and does not take a longer time (figure 17). This costume nowadays is limited to the use only in '*Laylat al-Henna*', and the wedding costume is the normal white dress. The man usually wears new costume (trousers and jacket).

To the year, 1987 Bedouin marriages lasted for one week. Every day they had different preparations and activities for the whole week. In these days, marriage celebration lasts for only two days, so most of the celebrations held at evenings. Many of the celebrations are held at the family's place (house). Bedouin marriages today are having the two days, '*Laylat Al-Henna*' and the wedding day.



Figure 17: Bedouin machine embroidered for *Al-Henna* dress, for one of the new married woman from Al-Ka'abneh in Area A.

The wedding preparations get underway with the colorful '*Laylat Al Henna*' when women of the bride's tribe and the groom's tribe gather to decorate her hands and feet with *henna* (orange-red dye). The '*Laylat Al Henna*' ceremony is the evening before the wedding day, which is the Bedouin version of a bridal shower; it is more than mere skin paint. It symbolizes beauty, luck, and health. *Tharid* was served in '*Laylat Al-Henna*' among a family from *Al-Jahalin* tribe (*Abu-Dahook* clan) at one of the weddings I attended. In this wedding, the bride

"We take brides from the *Fallahin*, but we never give our girls to them. Only Bedouin men could marry our girls"
 (Um. Ismael from Al-Jahalin tribe- Area A)

was from *Fallahin*. Nevertheless, normally among richer families sheep slaughtered and *Mansaf* is served. The *Laylat Al- Henna* is also a practice among Palestinian *Fallahin* (peasants) since very old times.

Wedding days are joyful events when a sheep is slaughtered. The young couple joins the husband's family clan. The women and men sit separately, under the black tents. Guests bring wedding gifts (*nuqout*), which are traditionally sheep, rice, or money²¹⁴. Like weddings elsewhere in Palestine, a Bedouin wedding provides everyone the opportunity to dress up in their best clothes and celebrate with food, music, and dancing. Traditional musical instruments still use the materials used in earlier times. *Rababa* or Arabic fiddle is the Bedouin musical instrument, which made from wood, goat's skin, and horse's long tail hair used as strings (figure 18). In the days of wedding, Bedouin men dance *dabkeh* (*deheyyeh*), and women sing (*tarweed*) and *zaghareed* (sounds made with tongue).



Figure 18: The researcher trying to learn how to play *Rababa* at one of the sites.

²¹⁴ *Nuqout* is the amount of money given to the bride at the day of wedding. It is practiced by all Palestinians.

Before the year 1948, when these tribes were living in Beersheba, men were dancing with swords for the whole night.

The preparations for celebration begin by building new tents (for men and women) at the groom's tribal place for receiving the guests. The celebration starts on '*Laylat Al-Henna*', which happens often on Thursdays. This is followed by the wedding day on Fridays. Wedding day starts by receiving guests from morning time. The sheep is slaughtered since early morning to start cooking on open fires inside large pots (*Qodoor*) that vary in size from 60 to 100 liter. The guests who bring sheep as a wedding gift, their sheep are slaughtered also with the rest of the wedding sheep. Women from the groom's family are responsible for the food preparation. *Mansaf* (described earlier in chapter 6) is the wedding meal. It is traditionally meal served for this occasion since old times. The meal is served after Friday's prayer. Men eat at the guest's tent; women eat at the women's tent.

The wedding ends with the bride's departure for the groom's tent. Sixty years ago, the bride departure was when she mounts a camel fitted with a special and comfortable saddle, heading the groom's tribe place toward the groom's tent.

A week later, the bride pays a visit to her parents, and presents them with a sheep, some rice, sugar, and butter, to indicate her well-being in the husband's house and has all her needs²¹⁵.

When the bride joins the new groom's family, she starts her new life as one of the members in this family, doing their activities and sharing their daily life.

8.4.2 Newborn celebration

Children are valuable among the Palestinian society and mainly among the Bedouin community, and their birth is celebrated. A newborn child is made a household member through rites of seclusion and purification, which new mothers observe for between seven and forty days after childbirth. Mother of the baby does not cook or go out of her tent for 40 days, unless she has no one to help her. The husband does not sleep at the mother's quarter for the same 40 days, until she is purified from the post delivery menstruation.

²¹⁵ Losleben, 2002: P. 44.

A new mother does not bathe until seven days after birth. Moreover, she stays eating well for the whole seven days to make it easier for the baby to take breastfeeding²¹⁶.

The Bedouin celebrate the birth of the baby on the 7th day, when the baby is one week (*sobou*). Two sheep are slaughtered at the 7th day if the child is male²¹⁷. Ritually Bedouin sacrifice the sheep in accordance with the Islam law. When the child is 40 days old (*el-arbe'en*) all relatives gather at the father's tent and celebrate for few hours and having dinner. Relatives cover the newborn with gifts of incense and amulets to fend off the evil spirits. When the newborn is female, one sheep is slaughtered on the 7th day and the celebration is limited to the parents and close relatives. The 40th day celebration is not made for a baby girl birth. It should be mentioned that all Bedouin women give breastfeeding for almost 2 years. Except one woman I met from Al-Jahalin tribe in Area A, she did not give breastfeeding according to some illness.

Usually, if the baby is the first, he or she called after the man father's name if a boy and the man mother's name if a girl. Frequently, the father called the other children after his family member's names. Some of the boys will have the names of their uncles; some of the girls will have the names of their aunts. Thus, you can find for example three cousins called after the grandfather's name. And it is so for the girls.

When a family receives a baby boy, the whole family announces it between other tribes from the first day. At the 7th day of the child's age (*sobou*), guests come to celebrate and congratulate the family bringing gifts with them like sheep if they are wealthy. In the ceremony, the baby is held by his mother and introduced to the women in the women's tent. He is held by his father as well and introduced to the men in the men's tent.

Usually, this is followed by Circumcision or genital alteration when the child is a boy. This surgical operation, which is commonly prescribed for purely medical reasons, is also religious ceremony among Muslims and called purification (*tohoor*). Universally, all Muslims practice circumcision for the boys. In some Sudanese and Egyptian Bedouin tribes circumcision is practiced for girls as well, which is considered dangerous and beyond religious law. For very recent days, the man who practiced the circumcision among Bedouin

²¹⁶ Abu-Lughod, 1993:P.128 &129.

²¹⁷ It is an Islamic ritual to slaughter two sheep when a baby boy is born, and one sheep when a baby girl is born and called *Aqeeqa*.

people is not a medicine doctor, but a known man who practiced upon experience during time, and he is called purifier (*emtaher*).

Some People from Area A take their children for circumcision to a medical center in Al-Ram area on the main road Ramallah-Jerusalem. Others in Areas A and B go to Private clinic in Jericho.

“Sometimes we make the circumcision for all the boys who have not been circumcised along with one of the feasts (Eid).”

(Abu-Mohammad from Al-Ka'abneh- Area A)

Some Bedouin practice circumcision for the infants at age of one week, while others at age of a year or two bringing several boys from the same encampment, performing the circumcision at one event, and later all the boys' families celebrate this day together.

Most of Bedouin prefer a baby boy than a baby girl. They say that a girl is not like a boy- he will become a man; the girl does not have as much strength of will. Nevertheless, girls are dearer to the parents than sons are²¹⁸.

8.4.3 Special ceremony (Maqam *El-Nabi Mousa*)

Maqam in Arabic means saint's shrine. *Maqam Al-Nabi Mousa* is believed to be the shrine of Prophet Moses. The place is about 11 km southwest Jericho city, in a side road to the right of the main Jerusalem-Jericho road. Annual religious festival is related to this place and honored by Palestinian Muslims; mainly Bedouin and *Fallahin*. In general, it looks like pilgrimage to the *Maqam*, where it begins by the beginning of the spring and lasts for one week. Since the year 1967, the festival has been stopped according to the Israeli occupation by transforming that area to a military training area. In the middle of 90's the festival restarted in the *Maqam Al-Nabi Mousa* until the year 2000. Again, the festival has been stopped and restarted in the year 2006. This year in 2008 and while I was writing this dissertation I have read in the news that the Israelis prohibited the festival for this year.

It should be noted that the aftermath of the Crusades sparked a religious awakening amongst the Muslims, who started building and reconstructing many religious structures in Palestine. The fear of a renewed Crusade drove Muslim political leaders to concentrate large armed forces in central cities and strategic sites. This objective was partially accompanied by

²¹⁸ Abu-Lughod, 1993: P.160.

the foundation of centers that were sacred to the Muslims, such as known saints' tombs that were visited by the Muslims on set holidays. In this fashion, the Nabi Musa tomb was also built. The structure was first erected by the Royal Sultan Baybars, the fourth royal sultan. He also stood at the head of the festivities²¹⁹.

The place as it is now is a huge storey building topped by a complex of Domes (figure 19). The building consists of a large courtyard surrounded by over 120 rooms (figure 20). The main mosque, with a minaret lies against the Western Wall of the courtyard. To the right of the mosque's entrance there is a door that leads to a small room where is believed that the tomb of Prophet Moses is there. The tomb is covered with a green cloth that is the holy color of Islam. The main entrance of the place will lead to two sections, one for men, and another for women to practice their prayers during the whole week of festival. The Maqam is surrounded from two sides of Muslim cemetery, where Bedouin bury their dead. This will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter.



Figure 19: Maqam Al-Nabi Musa.

²¹⁹ Abu-Rabia, 2006: P. 10.



Figure 20: Maqam Al-Nabi Musa from inside.

Since the visit to *Maqam al-Nabi Musa* typically lasts several days, the pilgrims equip themselves with supplies of food, dishes, water, tents, blankets, clothes, and lambs for slaughtering. Visitors habitually conduct general and private prayers by the tomb of *Nabi Musa*, touch and kiss it, and light incense and lamps filled with olive oil. A patient suffering from the evil eye, evil spirits, jinn, or madness is treated by fumigation with incense taken from *Nabi Musa*. Bedouin women used to take small stones from *Nabi Musa* and hang them as a necklace (*qladih*) around their neck and down the abdomen over their womb in order to hasten a difficult labour²²⁰.

All Bedouin from the Bedouin encampments where I made this study keen to keep this ritual every year, men and women. They prepare themselves and the objects they want to take with them some days before the celebration date. Women who have their monthly menstruation and after birth menstruation do not go there until they get rid of it before the end of the celebrations. All Bedouin go walking to the place, since it is considered to be not far from their encampments and to assure their patience in making this pilgrimage.

²²⁰ Abu-Rabia, 2006: P. 11.

8.5 Funerals

Death is accepted as a natural part of life. If you ask any Bedouin about death, he will tell all things come from God and return to him as The Qur'an tells. More particularly as Muslims believe, human beings have been created by God for a specific purpose. The degree to which they succeed in fulfilling this purpose shapes their own selves, and then determines the mode in which they return to God after death. Bedouin as Muslims believe that God alone defines the life span of every living thing. According to Islam, one's death is predetermined. This is a key factor in shaping Muslim as well as Bedouin funeral and mourning rites

Customarily the funeral starts with silent men in the tent, women wearing black in another tent. Preparing the deceased begins with the washing of the body. Washing the dead body prior to shrouding and burial is obligatory. As a general rule, males should take the responsibility of washing males, and females should wash females. The only exception to this rule is in the case of husband and wife, or small children. The evidence given that it is permitted for a husband to wash his wife and vice versa. In the case of a martyr, the body should not be washed at all, but recommended to be shrouded with a sheet. Shrouding (*takfeen*) the entire body after washing is also obligatory. The preferable colour of the shroud is white. The preferable number of sheets is three. This is followed by funeral prayer over the Bedouin which takes place outside the mosque in *Maqam El Nabi Mousa*. Men participate in the prayer where women are not. All Bedouins practice the entire Islamic procedure without exceptions.

The body is buried facing Mecca before the first sunset after the death. It is traditional for the family to receive condolences afterward for three days in the dead person family's tent. Guests drink coffee and receive lunch meal for the first three days. Islamic tradition dictates the practices associated with death. The body is buried as soon as possible and always within twenty-four hours. Among Bedouin groups of this study, an effort is made to bury the dead in one place, the Cemetery of '*Maqam El-Nabi Mousa*' (figure 21). Some of them mainly from Area B bury their dead at Jericho cemetery because it is nearer to their places. All people from Area A bury their dead in '*Maqam El-Nabi Mousa*' except for one encampment from Al-Ka'abneh tribe. They bury their dead in Anata village cemetery.



Figure 21: Cemetry of Maqam El-Nabi Musa.

Bedouin visit the graves annually mainly when the deceased is a close relative. It is recommended in Islam to visit the graves for the purpose of getting admonishment and remembering the hereafter, but never for weeping and crying. Bedouin women usually weep and cry while visiting the graves remembering their deceased.

In the Islamic view, death is not a punishment, but a natural termination of life to be accepted unconditionally. Thus, funeral rites and mourning rituals are closely linked to the faith of Islam among Bedouins: the belief that the purpose of the worldly life is to prepare for one's ultimate passage to eternity. The belief in the Day of Judgment and resurrection (*al-qeyamah*) has a direct impact on the way of how Bedouin people practice there rituals.

It is believed that one's readiness to fully participate in religious ritual largely determines whether, at death, one is destined for either Paradise or *gahannam*. The gendered

discourse of Islam is particularly relevant to practices surrounding death, burial, and mourning²²¹.

Black tents are built for men and others for women to receive guests for condolences. If the deceased is an elder, his oldest son builds the tents and receives the condolences. Offering condolences to the relatives and friends of the deceased is an important act of kindness. The words to say to the desolated are those taught in the Qur'an: "*Innaa lillaahi wa inna ilayhe raje'oun.*" This means: "To Allah we belong and to Him we return." Usually, offering the condolences for three days. It is not limited to three days, and could be extended for as long as there is a need for it. Bedouins of this study also commemorate the first, third, seventh, and fortieth day following someone's death. This has absolutely no basis from the Qur'an or Sunnah.

Bedouin men receive condolences in their tent with silence. On the other side, women receive it with weeping and crying. It is agreed upon Muslim scholars that weeping for the dead is permissible, whereas crying out loud and wailing are not. The Prophet Mohammad said: "The one who is wailed for is tortured on account of it." Bedouin women mourn loudly. Some of them shave their heads and tear their clothes in mourning. The Islamic term for mourning is *Hidaad*. Mourning for more than three days is not permitted except in the case of a husband's death. According to Muslims women, whose husband has must observe what is known as the *Iddah* - The waiting period before she may remarry, which is four month and ten days. Bedouin women I met who lost their husbands still dressed in black and none of them remarried.

Bedouin family of the deceased slaughter Sheep and women from the same family cook food for the entire three days to feed the guests. People from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in both areas A and B quit this habit, and replaced it by slaughtering and cooking by other people from further families. Grieve made it difficult for them to practice slaughtering and cooking during the first days of condolences. This practice among Bedouin people is also considered of generosity, since people come from far distances to condolence the family. Every one of the guests who brings sheep, his sheep is slaughtered in front of his eyes, then carried into women's section to be cooked.

²²¹ Greenberg, 2007: p.3.

On the seventh day, the family of the deceased receives guests to read Al-Fatha; the first verse in the Qur'an. They drink coffee and eat dates. This is repeated on the fortieth day with exception of visiting the graves.

8.6 Medication and traditional medication

8.6.1 Today's Medication

Bedouin People in Areas A, B, and C usually obtain their medication at UNRWA clinic in Aqabet Jaber refugee camp. The medication is free for Bedouin who hold UNRWA refugee card. Regular checkups for children and newborns are taking place in this clinic in addition to all vaccinations. In case of baby delivery, women go to the governmental hospital of Jericho, which locates in Jericho city center. Other serious and severe health problems, which need regular treatment, people go to the same hospital of Jericho.

“Last year when I migrated with my brother's family in the summer to Nablus area, I gave birth to my daughter at the nearest hospital there. My step sister also gave birth at that time but in the tent.”

(Um Ismael from Al-Jahalin-Area A)

A mobile clinic visits the Bedouin encampments regularly. Physicians and nurses who work within the mobile clinic make check ups for the Bedouins when needed and give medication when there is any kind of illness. Some medications are regularly given by each visit such as Paracetamol due to its frequent use in several cases. It is notable that Bedouin people do not visit the dentist unless he has severe problem with teeth and needs a direct treatment.

8.6.2 Herbal Medication

Although, the modern way of medication and handling the illness had been introduced to the Bedouin life, they still use the traditional medication. Since old times, nomadic people used the available plants and herbs for their treatment, medication, and spiritual rituals. Bedouin people are better known through using herbal medicine, which was the only source

they got in the desert when they were ill. Herbal medicines are used as cures and medicines universally among nomadic people.

Herbal remedies are becoming more widely recognized in the Palestinian region and mainly among Palestinian Bedouin who are strong advocates for using these remedies, Most of the herbs are used both as food and as medicine. Wild herb foods often show higher values and more inter-specific variation in their content of minerals than do cultivated herbs²²².

The plant kingdom has provided an endless source of medicinal plants first used in their crude forms as herbal teas, syrups, infusions, ointments, liniments, and powders. Today a great number of modern drugs are still derived from natural sources, and about 25% of all prescriptions contain one or more active ingredients from plants²²³.

The Bedouins had experienced traditional healers before 1948, diagnosing their illnesses and suggesting remedies. Some of the illnesses and traditional methods used by the Bedouin healers during that time are still used hitherto. Now a day the most common illness among the Bedouin are, fever, diarrhea, influenza, and broken bones. These illnesses are commonly among the Bedouin societies according to less hygienic application²²⁴.

Bedouin people have their criteria in traditional preventative and curative measures include locally prepared herbal remedies, branding, the wearing of amulets, and the carrying of Quranic inscriptions.

The most famous remedy that was used is camel's milk, which was used for problems and bone complaints. Now a day, camels are not owned by the Bedouin under study so they don't apply this method.

What I have noticed among the Bedouin groups under study was that they started to be more attached to religious beliefs and accordingly applying traditional medication regarding Prophet's guidance of medication (*Al-teb Al-Nabawi*).

The most common herbs that are used among Bedouin of this study are Thyme (*za'atar*), Sage (*marameyeh*), Rosemary (*Hasalban*), Chamomile (*baboonej*), Wormwood (*shih*), Ment (*na'na'*), and Basil (*ryhan*).

²²² Abu-Rabia, 2005b: P. 404 & 405.

²²³ Sa'ad & Azaizeh & Said, 2005: P. 475.

²²⁴ Abu-Rabia, 2005a: P. 424.

Thyme (*za'atar*): it is used as a remedy for many ailments. The Bedouin and Palestinians use it for gastrointestinal ailments, bronchial problems; colds, flu, and cough, laryngitis²²⁵, diarrhea, urinary tract infection and lack of appetite. It has antiseptic properties, and can be used as a mouthwash, skin cleanser and for skin inflammations and sores. Bedouin women pick up the thyme from the mountains mainly when they migrate in the summer time toward Ramallah and Nablus mountains. Thyme leaves are used in purifying boiled water then is used as drinking tea.

Sage (*merameyeh*): the Bedouin use the sage treat genitourinary tract infections; stomachache, diarrhea, open wounds, nausea, to regulate menstruation and to ease menstrual pains²²⁶. The Bedouin use it also in case of insect bites, throat and mouth gums, skin infections, and vaginal discharge. The Bedouin started to use the sage with tea as *fallahin* to give it a stronger taste.

Rosemary (*Hasa alban*): Rosemary has been introduced to the Bedouin culture through *Fallahin*, because it is typical Mediterranean herbal plant. Rosemary is used internally as a tonic, stimulant, and as a carminative to treat flatulence. It has been used to treat dyspepsia²²⁷, gastrointestinal upsets, colds, headaches, and nervous tension.

Chamomile (*baboonej*): it grows up in the springtime in the mountain areas in Palestine. People pick up the flower of the Chamomile plant, which is used as an herbal tea for its calming and soothing effect. The Bedouin smash the flowers with the stems to use it as headache treatment. The cooling, harmonizing effects of chamomile make it a first choice for nervous tensions, migraines and all kinds of stress related disturbances. It is believed among the Bedouin that it has an effect reducing the symptoms of asthma and other bronchial problems, in addition to treating problems affecting the digestive system.

Woodworm (*shih*): this herbal plant is specific for Mediterranean areas. It has a very strong bitter taste. It has various pharmacological activities particularly antimicrobial (bacteria and fungi). Bedouin of this study are using this plant in wide range for adult people with gastrointestinal problems.

²²⁵ Laryngitis is an inflammation in the vocal cords causes a hoarse voice or complete loss of voice.

²²⁶ Abu-Rabia, 2005b: P. 406.

²²⁷ Dyspepsia is an upper abdominal illness that causes a chronic pain in the upper abdomen.

Leaves and flowers of the woodworm work as calmativ for stomach and cough. They cure nervous problems, calm emotions, and heal the wounds and bronchitis²²⁸. Bedouin people dry the leaves and use it later in boiled water.

Mint (*na'na'*): is one of the most popular herbal plant that is used widely among Palestinian Bedouins. In Area A & B several families from the three tribes planted a basin of mint behind the women's section or in front of it. Bedouin women are using it fresh daily with tea. I had a cup of tea with mint every time I visited her.

It is popular worldwide that mint has a calming effect. It is used to prepare sleeping drugs. It has an effect in calming the cramps and colics in addition to cough²²⁹.

Basil (*ryhan*): this plant also used in wide scale among Palestinians, and for treatments among the Bedouins. It is mainly used in medicine for its digestive and anti-gas properties. Among people, they recommend it for each other when someone has vomiting, constipation or stomach cramps. Since it is one of the mint family, it is also used in case of headaches and anxiety. Basil is a versatile herb that may be used in an abundant variety of foods. *Fallahin* in Palestine use it to give the food special taste.

It should be mention that, Bedouin treat also the snake and scorpion bites by using herbs such as basil and wormwood.

8.6.3 Healing with the Qur'an:

Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an: "We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers." (Al-Israa 17:82)

Bedouin people today are more connected to religion. Healing by Qur'an is a manner that used in several cases. It is believed that God (Allah) has placed particular characteristics in the things that *HE* has created. This is so with the usage of the Qur'an too. The words we recite or write from the

"We hang the frames with Qura'anic verses to remember that everything happens to us is from God, and to know that God is blessing our place and our souls".

(Um Ismael from Al-Rashaydeh tribe- Area B)

²²⁸ Boulos, 1983: P. 286.

²²⁹ Lavergne & Vera, 1989: P. 214.

Qur'an give rise to the effect that is natured in them by God (Allah). It is known that the verses (Surahs) of Qur'an contain effect for illness, evil eye, envy, and others.

The Qur'an is therefore used not only by recitation but also by inscribing its words on paper (or other material) to gain the effect placed in them by God (Allah). Families from Al-Rashaydeh tribe have some wall frames inside the tent containing the images of Sacred Places with words from the Qur'an inscribed, in order to gain the blessings of Allah.

In Arabic language, healing is different from the word treatment, so in this context healing is the proper word used in the meaning of healing by the Qur'an. Treatment of a disease may or may not be effective. When we say healing that means effective in curing a disease in question. Therefore, the idea of healing by the Qur'an is the belief in Allah the Healer of all wound and the healer of the heart distress.

According to Islam amulets denotes the *Jahilya* (before Islam) ideas used by the ignorant. These are made with spells, incantations, charms, magic etc., which are forbidden in religion. In spite of that, the amulets are forbidden in religion, Bedouin still using them and they relate them to religion without knowledge.

8.7 Poetry

Throughout recorded history, poetry has been a central cultural form of expression for the Bedouins, and in early centuries of Muslim history, Bedouin poetry represented the ideal standard for other literary achievements, as well as for Arabic language. Bedouin life flowed in a slow rhythm dictated by the great heat and the scarcity of food and water, which reflected their poetry accordingly to this life style

To read Bedouin Poetry is to enter into the heart and mind, joys and sorrows of a Bedouin society through the greatest of their arts. The Bedouin turned to their imagination to develop a colorful tradition of songs and poetry. Poetry has long been considered one of the highest expressions of literary art among the Arabs. Epic poems are passed down through generations, celebrating themes of war, hunting, honor, and love. The Bedouin group gathers around the poet who entertains them through his well-chosen words. Today, Bedouins have adopted other forms of entertainment, such as the radio and television.

Bedouin poetry remains a spoken poetry even though its lexicon is close to that of the standard language, while some of its expressions and metaphors are derived from the old classical language and are no longer in use. A poetry whose origin is oral, improvised at a particular moment in time, and later memorized and transmitted orally²³⁰.

The poems of a Bedouin are more than aesthetic mode of expression as those found in the western cultures; because of the social constrains in the Bedouin society against expressing his emotional weaknesses, a poem is the only way the Bedouin can express his anger, relief, love, despair, and grieve²³¹.

Abu-Aref is one of the Bedouins I met from Al-Ka'abneh tribe in Area A, who considers himself as a person who says poems. He said that Bedouin people today do not give a great attention to the poem as it was some 60 years ago or before. In a world without telephones and mobiles, Bedouin used unwritten poems to send a message from one place to another serving much than just a letter does on a tongue of an illiterate messenger.

Reasons to impel a Bedouin to compose a poem are message delivery as mentioned, entertainment when gathering, storytelling, and instructions (using them as proverbs)²³².

Bedouin women also said poems through different occasions, but not in front of men. They either compose more illiterate song (*ghinwa*) rather a poem singing them in their happiness or grieve.

Ghinwa is a little song composes of two-line poems filled with images, emotional longing, and sentimentality. This kind of poetry is sung or chanted by women in social contexts like weddings and circumcisions, and everyday routines²³³. These songs are linked to the heart, soul, the inner person; feelings most express negative, dysphoric, painful emotions. Yet the highly formulaic and stylized verbal genre renders content impersonal and allows one to dissociate from the sentiments they express.

While I was doing the research, at time of resting one of the women from Al-Jahalin, Area A was singing for me. All the time she was worried that one of the men would hear her, which will be embarrassing for her.

"I wished I was good in school and I could read like I'm good now in singing."

(Um Ismael from Al-Jahalin- Area A)

²³⁰ Nassir, 2001: P. 219.

²³¹ Bailey & Thesiger, 1991: P. 24.

²³² Bailey & Thesiger, 1991: P. 8.

²³³ Abu-Lughod, 1986: 261.

The poetry of women indicates as a form of communication, resistance, and adaptation to the male-dominated system of power. Poetry in this context provides by the culture as a safety valve and that, women's core issues are revealed by the themes in their songs (*ghinwas*)²³⁴.

²³⁴Abu-Lughod, 1986: P. 171.

9 CHAPTER EGIHT: THE ROLE OF RELIGION ON THE BEDOUINS LIFE

9.1 Introduction

Islam is the religion of Bedouin in Palestine. Islam is the basis of Bedouin social and religious life, although many of their tribal laws and beliefs are not connected to Islamic customs. Bedouin retain many of their pre-Islamic and ancient customs. Prayer times fit naturally into their daily routine, and the fast of Ramadan and religious feasts (*eid al-fitr* & *eid al-adha*) are strictly kept.

Bedouin are fatalists by nature as a result of their precarious existence in the desert. Folk-Islam is widespread; especially fear of the evil eye and evil spirits. Charms and amulets are worn as protection against them. The desert is believed to be inhabited by Jinns, and mad people are said to be possessed by them. Bedouin are careful not to praise anything directly, for fear of the evil eye. Men, animals, and motor vehicles carry charms to protect them from it.

Among the Bedouin under study, people follow their religion with faith and compassion. Religious practices are maintaining a strong connection between them and their natural world.

9.2 Beliefs

Bedouin societies of this study as all Bedouin in Palestine are Islamic believers. They acknowledge and maintain the Five Pillars of Islam which are the declaration of faith, the five daily ritual prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Bedouin groups celebrate the two major Islamic feasts (*eid al-fitr* & *eid al-adha*), and some of them especially elders endeavor to make the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

Bedouins who want to make pilgrimage required being physically and financially capable to make it to Mecca. Pilgrimage season begins in the tenth Arabic month (*shawal*); the month following Ramadan, and lasts through the middle of twelfth month (*Dhu al-Hijja*). Most of the elder people that I met made Hajj to Mecca, although there were not many elders

among the people of this study. Once the Bedouin makes Pilgrimage to Mecca, people start calling him, using *Hajj* before his name.

Bedouin Islamic beliefs are derived from the *Qura'an* and *hadith*. The most important belief among Bedouin as Muslims is that the monotheism which is simply there is only one God (*Allah*). The prophet Mohammad is the last messenger from God and Muslims profess their belief on him. Reading Qur'an is not one of the habits that Bedouin practice. Not because they do not want to, but rather some of them do not know how to read.

All Bedouins believe on the life after death, and there will be a day of judgment and humanity will be divided between the eternal destinations of Paradise and *gahannam* (hell).

According to the big contact with the surrounded desert and natural world, Bedouin believe of the presence of *jinnis* that interfere in the life of people. According to the *Qur'an*, Allah "created man from a clot of blood" at the same time he created the *jinn* from fire. Humans are the greatest of all creatures, created with free will for the purpose of obeying and serving God.

Furthermore, Bedouin are good convinced of the envious and evil eye. Protection from these negative effects of the evil eye can be achieved through prayers and incantations and seeking refuge with Allah. For this reason, Allah told his Prophet to take refuge with him from the evil of the envier²³⁵.

It is a tradition among mostly all the Bedouin to say *Mashallah* (whatever God wills) if a complement has been said. Children among Bedouin are the most vulnerable from the envious eye. For this reason, we find many Bedouin children wear amulets, attach blue eye to their clothes, and wear *kohol* in their eyes. The word *Mashallah* is used as a belief on that bad or good happens only when God wills, so with *Mashallah* they avoid envious eye to attack the other complemented person.

The Bedouins' extreme exposure to the desert's harsh environment and their scant recourse to help in the event of adversity has made their quest for the means to attenuate their fears particularly strong. This quest has led them to adhere to practices that give them the sense of exercising a degree of control over the recurrent afflictions of nature. Among these practices are fatalism, attempts to propitiate Allah, the concept of agents of evil, the creation

²³⁵ Abu-Rabia, 2005c. P.245.

of taboos, and belief in the power of magic. Although these devices do not form an integrated religion, in their appeal to the supernatural they constitute the Bedouin's true religion²³⁶.

9.3 Prayers

The five daily Prayers in Islam are a duty for all Muslims. Most of the Bedouin Practice the daily Prayers. I have been told that these days young men and women practice the prayers better than thirty years ago. Nowadays the religious conscious is more among the Bedouin communities, and the religious practices are more related to the big contact with the surrounding environments.

Five daily prayers are obligatory in Islam, and on these occasions, preparations in ritual purity are required. Ordinarily there are simple ablutions for the daily prayers done before each pray. The prayers must be said while facing the direction of Mecca. The daily five prayers are the Morning Prayer (*Fajr*) which is before the sunrise, afternoon prayer (*Dhuhur*), later afternoon prayer (*Asr*), the after sunset prayer (*Magrib*), and the evening prayer (*Isha*). All the prayers resemble one another in form, but not in length. Other prayers are practiced besides the daily five prayers that are Friday prayer, the two annual feasts prayers, and funeral prayer.

Bedouin women practice the daily prayers more than Bedouin men, and Bedouin young girls practice the daily prayers more than the young boys do.

If the Bedouin men are gathered in the tent, and the time of pray comes, they make the pray in-group, which said by Islam being of higher reward for each person rather to pray it individually.

The prayer of Friday afternoon is compulsory and must be said in Mosque, so the Bedouin men from Area A go on Fridays to Anata Mosque in Anata village to obtain the prayer. The men from the same encampment gather and leave together to Anata mosque by one of the public transports.

In Area B, there is a small mosque in Al-Uja area that has been built by the *fallahin* who live in

"We were going for Friday prayer to Jerusalem before the year 1987, but after that the Israeli Army prohibited any one to reach Jerusalem. Friday prayer in Jerusalem was the most joyous moments for us"

(Um Mohammad from Al-Ka'abneh-Area A)

²³⁶ Bailey, 1982: P. 65.

that area. Bedouin people from Al-Ka'abneh, and Al-Rashaydeh practice their prayers in this mosque in-group (figure 22). This mosque has been built from metal sheets for the reason of the long distance from this area to Jericho, and for Ramadan prayer gathering when the time is short between prayers after breaking the fast (*Iftar*). All the prayers that are done in-group, they are done in uniform rows.



Figure 22: The Mosque at Al-Uja in Area B.

The two annual feast Prayers are, the prayer for celebrating the feast at the end of the month of fasts (*Eid Al-Fitr*), and the prayer for the feast of sacrifices coinciding with the pilgrimage at Mecca (*Eid Al-Adha*). These two prayers are highly recommended prayers in Islam, and must be offered in congregation.

When the feasts come, the Bedouin men gather in the morning to go for obtaining the feast prayer in the big mosques, which are Anata mosque for Area A and Jericho mosque for Area B.

Inside the Bedouin encampments, usually Bedouin practice the services on time. Bedouin men practice it inside men's section or outside the tent. Bedouin women practice the prayers inside the women's section wearing the long sleeved dress and a veil covers the head.

9.4 The month of Ramadan

Most Bedouin communities observe the month of Ramadan as all Muslims. Ramadan is the ninth month of Islamic calendar. During the month of Ramadan Muslims refrain from food and drink from the sunrise to the sunset. This month is a fourth and joyous occasion for the Bedouin communities where the fast is broken in a big family gathering by food, yogurt, and dates.

It is traditional for the completely family members to gather every night and share the *iftar* at one of the family's tent. Women are responsible for food preparation *iftar* (meal just after the sunset) and *sohour* (meal just before the sunrise). Every day, one family prepares *iftar* where one or more sheep is slaughtered depending on the family's economic situation, and then the meat is cooked for the family members in the encampment. Other women from other families come to help the women who are responsible for the food preparation. Men and women gather to have *iftar* separately; the men eat in the men's section, while women and children having their *iftar* at the women's section. When men finish their *iftar* another man invites the members to his tent for the next day and so till the end of Ramadan.

From the first day of Ramadan, Bedouin men start inviting their sisters and daughters whom are married long distance for *iftar* to their places. Usually daughters and sisters come with their children for *iftar* and spend night or two at the father or brother's tent.

In the evening following the *iftar* it is customary for Bedouin men to make the *Magrib* and *Isha* prayers in-group followed by *Taraweeh* prayer. Hence, they gather again at the men's section talking and having coffee until late hour. Women in the time after *iftar* help each other to wash dishes and drink tea afterwards in the women's section.

Sohour is the second meal that is eaten in Ramadan, which is consumed before the sunrise. Each household prepares its *sohour* individually unlike the *iftar* gathering. Each night at the time of *sohour*, one of the family members wakes the other families.

The main *iftar* dish is '*mansaf*', and sometimes *thareed* where the main *sohour* dish is yogurt with bread.

Before the day of *Eid* (feast), during the last few days of Ramadan, each Bedouin family as well as each Muslim family gives a determined amount as a donation to the poor which is known as a charity of fast breaking (*Sadaqat al Fitr*). This donation is of actual food barley, dates, rice, or by amount of money, to ensure that the needy can have *Eid* meal and participate in the celebration. Usually Bedouin people donate *samn*, and solid yogurt of the required amount of *sadaqat al fitr* or replace it with money if they have not enough solid yogurt. When the fast ends (the first day of the Islamic month of *Shawwal*), it is celebrated for three days in a holiday called *Eid-al-Fitr* (the Feast of Fast Breaking).

9.5 Feasts (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha)

Eid al-Fitr and *Eid Al-Adha* are the two annual Muslim feasts. *Eid al-Fitr* is the celebration of the end of Ramadan; the month of fasting. It starts the first day of the Islamic month of *Shawwal* and continues for three days. *Eid al-Adha* is the feast of sacrifice, immediately follows the Day of Arafat, which comes as an end of the pilgrimage to Mecca on the tenth day of the Islamic month of *Dhu all-hijja* and continues for three days. Both two feasts are considered joyous celebration time for adults and children.

In the early morning, every Bedouin bathes, wears new or clean clothes, and eats dates or some other sweet before walking to the mosque for *Eid* prayer. Men wear white and light clothes because white symbolizes purity and austerity, and cover the clothes with a clean flowing garment (*'abaya*).

All the children in the Bedouin encampment gather early morning before their parents go to the prayer; they greet the elders for the *Eid* and gain their respect. Women in each household prepare coffee and dates. Sweets are bought from Jericho for the *Eid*, so the kids could have some extra sweets in that day.

On the day of *Eid*, Bedouin men gather early in the morning in outdoor of the men's

"Women from our clan gather in the day of Eid at the time of the Eid prayer and pray together in the tent of Hajjah Um Mohammad; the oldest woman and the grandmother for most of the clan's families."

(Um Ismael from Al-Rashaydeh tribe- Area B)

section to perform the *Eid* prayer in the nearest mosque. *Eid* prayer consists of a sermon followed by a short congregational prayer. Most of Bedouin in Area A go to Anata Mosque, while Bedouin from Area B are going to Jericho mosque for the *Eid* prayer.

After the *Eid* prayer, Bedouin men from the same family gather in the men's section and start receiving visitors. While other men from the same family scatter to visit other various families and friends in other places for the *Eid* greetings. In the day of *Eid* a sheep or more is slaughtered to feed the completely family members and to celebrate this day together. All the visitors who come to greet the family at the time of lunch stay to have food with the host. Traditionally, people who are wealthy, take a sheep with them as a gift for the *Eid*, while the host family slaughters the sheep for lunch to feed the guest. *Mansaf* is the typical traditional *Eid* meal.

In *Eid al-Adha* which is the feast of sacrifice. A sheep is slaughtered in this feast. The slaughtered sheep meat is divided into thirds, one-third is eaten by immediate family, one-third is given away to friends or relatives, and one-third is donated to the poor and needy. This act symbolizes the willingness to give up some of the own bounties, in order to strengthen ties of friendship and help those who are in need.

After the *Eid* prayer, Bedouin men and women visit cemeteries of their close relatives like parents, brothers and sisters and stay there for several hours, reading Qur'an. This tradition is also done by some Muslim people other than Bedouin. It is perhaps a tradition to remember and to honor ancestors in the happy and celebrated days.

I have been told by one of Al-Jahalin tribe elder woman (Um Mohammad from Area A) that when they were in Beersheba before the year 1948, women gathered the night before the *Eid* and started to sing and dance till late hour, while men are also dancing in the men's section welcoming the *Eid*.

9.6 Bedouin Woman and her relation to Islamic traditions

Bedouin women in general are religious, although their life style proposes them to highly harsh conditions to practice their religion. Islam as a religion has discussed in detail women's rights. These rights pertain to marriage, divorce, property, inheritance, custody of children, and others. Taking into account that Islam although allows a differentiation among

individuals, but this differentiation is not based on the sex of the individual, but on their abilities.

Bedouin girls are considered children until they get their menstruation, then the family starts treating them like an adult. Moreover, after the menstruation the Bedouin community accepts the marriage of these girls. During menstruation and after childbirth, women are deemed ritually unclean and consequently prohibited from performing religious duties. Women do not perform their prayers and do not fast through the days of the menstruation. Culturally and not religiously, women during menstruation do not touch the cooking and food preparation for the family. Unfortunately, this practice is inherited culturally and has nothing to do with Islamic law, but Bedouin women relate it to religion without any base of knowledge.

All Bedouin women I met follow the Islamic tradition of veiling their heads. Generally all Bedouin women wear veil over their heads, and very few of them veil their faces by using the face cover (*Burqu'*). There is no absolute verse in the Qur'an that is saying about covering the faces. Sometimes, if you ask a Bedouin woman who covers her face about the face cover, she will reply about its relation to Islam and the respect of their dignity. Other times Bedouin women relate it to the windy and dusty environment they are living; however, they are using it as a face protection.

Regarding marriage, generally the marriage starts when a man wanting to marry a woman would send a proposal to her father, brother, or uncle. A dowry (*mahr*) from the groom is paid to the bride on the time of getting married. This form of marriage is keeping the dignity of woman and her status in the tribe. In Islamic law, woman must be asked for the agreement upon the man she wants to marry, but unfortunately, there are some cases among the Bedouin I met where women were forced or compelled against their will to marry men they did not know or like.

After marriage, Bedouin woman starts other life that has its Islamic roles and laws as well. Where according to Islam, man, for two reasons, should be the head of the family: One, because he is given the responsibility of earning the livelihood for the family and strive provision of the financial requirements of the family; and two, because he is given the mental, physical and emotional qualities that are more suitable for this responsibility.

From other hand women in nature are given certain qualities that make them more suitable for responsibilities in a number of other situations such as taking care of the children, feeding them, and keeping her household when a man is away. Her relations with her husband should be based on mutual love and compassion. He is responsible for the maintenance of the wife and children, and she is to give him the respect due to the head of the family. She is responsible for the care of home and the children's early training.

One of the major important rights for women in Islamic law is inheritance, which has been specified in detail in some verses of the Qur'an. The woman laws of inheritance take on an even greater prominence in Islam because of the divine justness and equitability of this law, which from other side have been appreciated by whom applying it.

Nowadays, and among most of the Bedouin I met woman has her right according to Islamic law to inherit. Fifty years ago and hitherto in some cases, Bedouins adopted the system of inheritance that operated prior to the Qur'anic revelations which was confined to the male agnate relatives of the deceased. In this old customary system, only the male agnates were entitled to inherit. Amongst this kind of system, there were rules of priority of inheritance where women were always excluded.

The Qur'an does not expressly state the share of the male agnate relatives as such, although it does enact that the share of the male is twice that of a female. In this case, it is obviously said by the Qur'an for the male a share equivalent to that of two females. This indicates the principle of the Islamic law of inheritance, which refers to males and females of equal degree and class. This means that a son inherits a share equivalent to that of two daughters, a full (germane) brother inherits twice as much as a full sister, and a son's son inherits twice as much as a son's daughter and so on.

So Bedouin women as part of this law, when they lose a father, or brother they inherit half of that to the male. As mentioned before nowadays Bedouin apply this law of inheritance according to Islamic law, which is usually not a land neither a house, but rather sheep or money.

Bedouin women usually feel embarrassed (ashamed) when they are asking for their inherited money, and most of the time they abdicate their amount to their brothers as a sign of dignity and respect.

Finally, Bedouin women look forward to an old age in which they are respected and shown every care by their children and by the Bedouin tribe as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Bedouin encampments in part of east Palestine mainly in Jericho district have to be regarded as unique and define communities among the Palestinian population. These encampments are sharing collection of traditions and cultural materials that are giving them their identity and their existence as part of the completely Palestinian community since centuries.

The contemplation of the cultural life style of the Bedouin encampments in Jericho district was always somewhat unexplained. For this purpose, this study has been made as a powerful tool to represent the anthropological and ethnographical aspects among those people.

The Bedouins of this study are derived from Al-Jahalin, Al-Ka'abneh, and Al-Rashaydeh tribes. Al-Jahalin inhabitants are residing along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Al-Ka'abneh encampments are concentrated along Al-Uja and Al-Mua'arajat areas besides one family along the same road Jerusalem-Jericho road. Al-Rashaydeh tribe inhabited the area of Ein Al-Duyuk few kilometers from Jericho city center.

During the last five decades, these Bedouin tribes originally dwelling in the Negev desert, and southern of Hebron, were gradually forced to move from their lands by the Israelis mainly due to political reasons aftermath the 1948 war. Today they are facing many struggles of maintaining their Bedouin life against the threat of being demolished and disappear from this area.

Each of these Bedouin tribes is divided into main divisions that are clans, and families. Members of each tribe are believed to have descended patrilineally from a common ancestor. Women are excluded from the Bedouin genealogies. There is no presence for a woman on the formal kinship units except in the reproduction and bearing children forming the family.

Basic education, health services, and transportation facilities are minimal to these encampments. Water and electricity facilities are lacked among them. Although the Bedouin are living not far from the city, they are still keeping traditional medication and herbal medicine hitherto.

The livelihood of the Bedouin is depended entirely on moving their flocks from well to well and from pasture to pasture in the limited areas around them with difficulties in their

movement according to the existence of Israeli settlement Ma'aleh Adumim, which caused the Bedouin to settle down permanently.

In general, the Bedouin of this study have a relatively harsh existence from one side due to their life style and from the other side due to the political situation and the threatening of movement. Their life units consist of barracks and black tents made from woven, goat hair. The living unit is divided to women's section, cooking place, and men's section. The women do most of the household work, while the men socialize and herd the stocks.

The Bedouins of this study consider themselves as pastoralists, with herding as their most important economic activity, thus they earn their income from selling the milk products such as cheese, yogurt, solid yogurt, and butter. They cultivate crops to some extent as well mainly barley, and some men go to the adjacent towns doing labor jobs. Dairy products are the main food source for them. Most of their meals such as *mansaf* and *thareed* consist of yogurt.

As most of the Bedouins, those people apply the Bedouin law (*Qanoon Al-Urf*), which relies on heavy deterrent punishment, and alleviation of the financial implications for the convicted. They believe that with the severity of the law they are keeping the Bedouin society combined.

Due to new technologies and living near the cities, the Bedouin cultural and material life have been affected and appear to increasing the Bedouin woman activities and responsibilities inside and outside the living unit, while their traditions is kept relatively the same as when they were living hundreds of kilometers away from the city.

However, this usually occurs with the practices of Islamic religion, and performing its applications.

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