

Arabian Peninsula

The territory of Arabia is very wonderful and miraculous and it will retain this characteristic even in future. It contains very large deserts. If these deserts had not been devoid of rains and had been green and fertile this land would have fed the hungry and clothed the naked of the world. However, unfortunately Arabia has always remained a desert. It contains vast areas comprising mounds of sand, small and dry hills and stony tracts, which are neither cultivable nor habitable. If farming had been possible this region would have been thickly populated, but the position is otherwise. Although this territory is surrounded by sea on three sides, the rains are very scanty and it is very hot during summer.

It also rains in some areas which makes the atmosphere somewhat cool. However, when the scorching wind blows it is so hot that trees and plants become dry and even the animals die of heat.

The Arab poets liken zephyr, which always blows from the eastern side, with the breeze of Paradise.

There are no perennial rivers in Arabia. However, as and when rains come and the streams begin to flow, the people avail of the opportunity and store water by constructing dams. This water suffices only for some time.

Camel is the typical animal of Arabia which enjoys a distinguished position as compared with the animals found in other regions. The Almighty God has given it long legs so that it may cover long distances easily and may not get weary in the dreary deserts. Its hooves are also such that its feet do not get thrust into the sand. It also possesses sufficient stamina to cross the difficult and strong paths and can tolerate heat as well as thirst. God has given it an extraordinary stomach in which it can store water to suffice for many days and as and when water is not available its owner also takes out water somehow from its stomach for his personal use. The Arabs have given the camel thousands of names.

Vegetation is very rare in this territory. Some thorny bushes grow but they too are withered on account of shortage of water and severe heat. The dwellings of the people are usually tents which cannot protect them either from the scorching winds or from the heat of the sun. In fact there is no difference between living in these tents and living under the sky. For these reasons its population is scanty and scattered. The people of Arabia do not usually live at one place permanently but shift from place to place.

The staple food of the Arabs is dried palm–dates. To this is added the meat of the camels and the hunted animals. On account of their spending their lives permanently in the deserts warfare and bloodshed have become a part of their nature. It is so hot in the desert and valleys of the Arabian Peninsula that the earth accumulates sufficient heat to enable the people to roast the animals on the sand.

Similar deserts replete with sand, scanty and scattered population and uniformity of conditions are very tiresome things and make life unpleasant. Aspiration and hope which are the capital of happy life do not exist anywhere in this desert.

In such difficult circumstances and with such uniform life it was not possible for the nomadic Arabs to become acquainted with the vicissitudes of life and the various ways and manners of the other people of the world. Existence of righteousness and piety which make the heart of man accept faith cannot be imagined in a barren land. Such qualities develop in green and fertile lands and not in stony and dry areas. They develop in persons who are endowed with blessings of all kinds and not in the heart of those who are devoid of them.

A few small towns and settlements of those times were not very significant, firstly because their number was very small and secondly their position was no better than a few tents pitched in a barren desert, which had to suffer the onslaught of unfavourable winds. Of course, in Taif and Madina better means of livelihood were available.

As regards Mecca it was an idol–temple. Its residents were tradesmen in whose eyes one dinar was more valuable than the life of a human being. A life of poverty and indigence in a desert burning like hell with the present full of despair and the future without any hope – this was the condition of what was called the Arabian Peninsula.

What is surprising is this that although there are many lands adjacent to Arabia which are fertile and contain all amenities of life, there were people who ignored all these facilities and preferred to lead a miserable life in this barren land. They, therefore, never thought of stepping out of this desert. And what is more surprising is that the people there considered their homeland to be superior to the entire remaining world. They neither wanted to leave it, nor desired to choose another place as their homeland. This was a miracle of the Arabian Desert even before the Prophet of Islam was appointed to the prophetic mission.

However, if we compare all the cold and sweet springs, the fertile and green lands, the beautiful sceneries, the wealth and all other blessings available to various countries, other than Arabia, with the thing which appeared in that land, all those blessings and facilities appear to be of no value. The Arabian Desert, the land of miracles, produced something which is superior to all other blessings.

That magnanimous being was the great personality who showered his blessings on all human beings, who cleansed the springs of reality, because of whom the value of life became known, righteousness

and deliverance became great things, and reality was elevated viz. Muhammad.

The birth of the cousin of Muhammad, Ali, in Arabia, where human life was not worth more than a dinar was the second miracle of this Desert.

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