

## **Particularities of Bedouins' Social Life**

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### Abstract

The Bedouins are ethnic groups of nomads living in tents and connected to grazing and to growth of sheep and camels. But, today we do not treat Bedouins as nomads, as this is a society settling in permanent settlements in the South. However a very large part of them live in settlements which the state does not recognize, and also due to this do not obtain the various services and connection to infrastructures, which are the expectancy of a recognized settlement: education, health, welfare services, electricity and water. The Bedouin population in the Negev is a subgroup within the Arab minority in Israel, and has a cultural, historical, social and political uniqueness distinguishing between it and other subgroups (Zvikel & Barak, 2000). This article describes the lifestyle of Bedouin society and its social and cultural characteristics in the past as nomadic life and its unique characteristics. Bedouin society is characterized by many social and cultural characteristics. Honor and freedom are values of primary importance in the life of the Bedouin. In order to obtain them in the expansive desert the Bedouin gave up the pleasures of life in the permanent settlements. The endogamous marriages constituted great importance for the size of the socio-political frameworks. Under desert conditions, the size of the family was small, and therefore marriage had importance, and in order not to waste them and to disperse women outside the family and the tribe, marriage was concentrated inside .

*Keywords:* tradition, values, settlement, family, economics.

The findings of the National Insurance (1987) show that close to half of the Arab adults, 60% of the children and 40% of the household owners are found under the poverty line and this after reception of support from the state by means of social security allowances.

Arab society stresses the harmony and the connection between man and his surroundings (Al-Haj, 1994) and considers especially interpersonal loyalty, mutual respect as a basis for human relations and giving respect and esteem to the family elders.

Despite the changes which took place in Arab society, various studies point out that this society still prefers collective orientations in its social, family and intra- family connections, over individualist orientations. Traditional Arab society must take care of and protect the individuals within it, especially in the light of the close and tight family connections. Therefore the importance of the family and its connections exceeds the importance of the surrounding society. Also mutual respect within the nuclear family and between members of the extended family is stressed a lot. This is expressed amongst others in economic support, treatment of children etc. (Al- Haj, 1987; Barakat, 1985). The Bedouin population in Israel is a subgroup within the Arab minority and has cultural, historic, social and political uniqueness differentiating between it and other subgroups. Bedouins are ethnic groups of people living in tents and connected to grazing and to growth of sheep and camels. This definition includes, therefore, Bedouins living in settlements and nomadic Bedouins, it does not distinguish between constant wandering and seasonal wandering (El- Fuel, 1983).

#### *The tribal and social structure in Bedouin society*

Origin and belonging are very important things with the Bedouins. So, every Bedouin takes care of his affiliation group. The biggest group among the affiliation groups to which every

Bedouin belongs is the big meta- tribe populating with it several small tribes. The Bedouin in his affiliation to this group also identifies with it (Sal-Man, 1980). In certain regions from the Land of Israel and neighbouring states the Bedouins know wide and big tribes. The tribe in these cases includes also tribes from the same origin. The tribes in the tribe are united in very wide divisions. The divisions are loose in relation to the place as they did not move and did not encamp together and they do not have one head, but these divisions are more stable in relation to time as they constitute individual bodies existing for many generations. In the distant part these divisions were more united and stronger, and they were under the command of one person who was a sort of legendary man who commanded as supreme head of a type of council of heads of the tribe. The supreme sheikh is called with them Sheikh El Mashaikh (leader of leaders) (Ashkenazi, 1957).

A sub tribe: it is chiefly a tribe which expanded and branched out. Intermediate divisions exist within the tribes which almost every tribe belongs to one of them. The sub tribe situation is formed at the time that households expand and the main tribe becomes a sort of union of tribes.

The tribe: is a union of families and it constitutes the basic unit to which every individual belongs. The members of the tribe move, encamp, graze their flock and till the lands together and in full coordination between them and under the authority of one person. The tribe is a united and orderly society, which is composed of small social collective settlements which are united comprised from several households. The tribe dwells on a defined area that is their known and limited area of wandering (Ben David, 1981). The clan: is a small social collective settlement which principally is a family which extended and branched out until several sub families were created within it.

The household (tent): is the limited family in which the sons and grandsons are included. This limited family was controlled by the father when he is among the living. After his death every sound founds a sub family (Sal-Man, 1980).

#### *Leadership of the tribe and its management*

The tribe head the Sheikh is the leader and governor of the tribe, and he is the last adjudicator on every matter in the tribe. His role changes; in wartime he must stand at the head of the campaign with heroism and bravery, he and his sons, and in peacetime is a supreme judge and leads his tribe members to places of pasture.

From a theoretical point of view, the authority of the Sheikh was based on the council of tribe elders but from an operative point of view he was the enforced governor and everybody surrendered to his words and in his hands is a decisive right of veto (El- Fuel, 1976).

The Bedouin tradition places conditions for attraction (leadership) like the sheikh being health, strong and an exemplary hero. Thus, he is a sort of military commander for the tribe, only if he does not have the suitable talent is another person chosen to fill the job of leadership of the tribe forces in wartime. He also needs to be a known judge but in cases that the sheikh cannot judge and there was a more experienced person than him the job of judgment was entrusted in the hands of that person. The person who answers the conditions becomes head of the tribe, but from a practical point of view mostly attraction would pass in succession and in rare cases a strong person from the tribe members dominated.

The sheikh is considered as representative of the tribe outwardly, both other tribes and also towards the government. Inwardly he judges his tribe members according to the Bedouin tradition. He also took care that the tradition would be fulfilled in its entirety and it was

forbidden for him to change it or to manipulate it but only to behave and judge according to it and thus it was not possible that he would take lone cases and cope with them by themselves as this would contradict the tradition.

### *General data*

The Bedouins in Israel count today 250,000 people (or close to 3% of the general population). In the Negev the Bedouin population today counts 180,000 people. Approximately 40% of this population lives in permanent Bedouin settlements, counting 7 townships, one of which, Rahat, was declared as a city in July 1994. 60% live in unrecognized settlements (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997).

The growth of the Bedouin population is considered as very fast. From 17,800 in 1961, to 120,000 in the year 1999. The birth rate of the Bedouin population is among the highest in the world. Among the general population, the natural rate of growth in Israel in the years 1995-6, was 14.8 per thousand people whilst the natural rate of growth among the Bedouin population in the Negev was 42 per thousand people (Levinson, 1999). From the end of the Ottoman government period Bedouin society in Israel, like in the neighbouring countries, was subject to a process of change. The challenge of the Bedouins is not only to survive in the modern state framework, but also to integrate in it and to achieve positions and status in all fields of life. But, it is a regrettable fact that the Bedouins in Israel did not succeed in achieving these goals, and due to reasons connected to them, on the one hand, and to the establishment, on the other, they became a marginal society suffering from governmental indifference (Meir, 1997).

Only from the end of the 60s, at the time that the State of Israel started to settle part of the Bedouins in planned and recognized settlements, did they become an influential factor. However

Bedouins society continues to suffer from difficulties of adaptation to urbanization, to progress and to the culture surrounding it, so that adaptation receives a conflicting character, whose reasons lie in the unwillingness of the Bedouins to give up the cultural values and elements which set them apart always by contrast to other groups and cultures. For example, in the field of education the inevitable conflict exists between traditional education and modern education. In the meantime the conflict of prevention of acquisition of education from girls exists and their limitation to the fields of the home. In the field of health the use of traditional medicine is still very widespread, both at home and also with traditional cures and often a clash is revealed between traditional medicine and modern medicine. A constant argument exists between the state and the Bedouins as to the character of the Bedouin settlement. In the opinion of the state, the urban settlements can develop for the Bedouins the services and economic institutions required for them, which small settlements do not have the power to supply (Shalhoub-Kaborkian, 1996).

*The structure of Bedouin Arab society*

Even Haldoun, an Arab-Moslem historian and sociologist from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, claimed that the tribal organization is created following socioeconomic circumstances in order to ensure that the group will be able to continue to exist. The tribe is created for the sake of assurance of mutual help between its members, at all the levels, from an economic, social and political point of view (Jabour, 1988). As the tribal organization was designed to protect the individual drawn to situations of danger, the individual in a society like this acts out of loyalty to his family and his tribe and displays much commitment towards them. His education is founded from childhood on preference of the group interest of the individual.

The roles of the individual in Bedouin society and his status change according to his age and depend on his sex. From childhood a different social path is fixed for women and for men and a clear division of roles exists between them at all the organizational levels. The status of the women is lower than that of the man, but changes also take place in it during her life and the jobs imposed on her change.

*The development of the individual in Bedouin Arab society*

Self-identity, and mostly the supportive social networks, are built on the tribal basis, when the tribe constitutes a group of affiliation. Arab society is a patriarchal society- the father is the head of the family, the dominant figure and the charismatic person. All the family members are subordinate to him and respect him and his having the legitimate authority to decide in everything connected to their lives (Al-Krenawi, 2000). This patriarchal structure is not expressed in the borders of the family but exists in all layers of society. In tribal societies social order limits the youngsters and the women to various fields of life, according to the rules which every culture dictates (Sal-Man, 1980). Whilst the family and tribe elders keep for themselves the authorities and the power by means of the control of the material resources (the land, the livestock, the money, etc.). This patriarchal regime and supreme authority also determined special roles for the man: to protect the house from any damage; to fight for the honour of the house; to protect property and the property of his family members and to increase them.

The Bedouin man is not occupied with physical work, as it tires him out and prevents him from doing the acts for which he was created as a man. The Bedouin man who excels in his force and physical and moral suffering has a happy character and makes do with little (El-Fuel, 1967).

Since 1948 a gradual process of transition of the Bedouin society started from a traditional-nomadic lifestyle to permanent settlement. Ben-David (1981) notes that Bedouin society in the Negev is found today within a complex web of intensive processes and events, as well as being exposed to the influence of other cultures with which it is found in constant interaction. Consequently, this society started to lose part of its collectivity. This is expressed and illustrated in the diminution of the responsibility towards the individual. The penetration of modernization in the last two decades caused crumbling of part of the social conventions and change in the traditional frameworks. The process of permanent settlement is an important starting point for an understanding of all the social processes which this population undergoes. The accelerated urban process brought unwilling disconnection from the traditional lifestyle. Like this in fact a chain of economic, social and political changes started, when the changes in the status of the Bedouin woman is part of them (Ben-David, 1991; Elatauna, 1993).

*The cultural and social characteristics of Bedouin life*

a. Honour and freedom in Bedouin life. Honour and freedom are cardinal values in the life of the Bedouin. In order to gain them in the expansive desert the Bedouin renounced the pleasures of life in the permanent settlements. He who will think that the Bedouin lives in the desert for lack of any option or simply is not aware of the advantages of plenty in city or village life will make a mistake, only as life in the desert define poverty and plenty differently. He who studies deeply the essence of this life will realize that it is a perfect and whole experience in which the hope and ambitions of the individual do not pass the borders of imagination, and not due to narrow horizons but due to a well justified rationality.

It is correct that historical development teaches that most of the Arab tribes undergo a process of nomadism and became urbanized during time, but this happened following intensive intervention between the inhabitants and the influence of the long arm of the central government, which was strengthened in the changing periods of history in the region. But from a psychological and rational point of view, the transition was never a goal by itself.

The verses of the poetry which the Bedouin wife of the First Caliph of the House of Umia- Moauia Ben Abi Sophian- said, express the attitude to the Bedouin culture: *Wa Le-beit Tahfoko Alraiaho Fih, Ahabo Elia Min Kasser Manif*, saying: a tent in which the beloved wind will whistle on me from the built palace to the citadel.

b. Honour as a value. The meaning of honour with the Bedouin has two thresholds- a low one and a high one. The low one is defined as a situation that you do not have and there is nothing on you, that is, you do not have a debtor, who owes you and that you are worried by its return, and there is no debt on you which you are pursued for its return. And honour, both to your credit and also to your debit, is limited to three planes.

1. The material – money, property, land, etc.
2. The good name of the individual and of the family clan.
3. The honour of the woman – indeed it belongs to the good name, but is more sensitive and constitutes an issue by itself.

From a material point of view it is preferable to be requiring and not required, demanding and not owing. But, both of them have a meaning of honour. Every sum and every subject and force is important. There is a Bedouin saying which says: *Alkaram belkontar, waalhesab beldinar*, that is: generosity can be in great weight. A person can give generously, but by contrast to this he will not want them to cheat him or oppress him even by one Dinar, as then not the

material value plays but the personal honour of the owner of the dinar. The traditional Bedouin judge also deals in this way when he discusses monetary law, and we are witnesses also to them today in discussions on the Bedouin law, full of ongoing discussions and with many arguments, at whose end a respectable sum of money is judged for the plaintiff. But it often happens that the plaintiff gives up the compensation decreed to him by the traditional judge in that judgment meeting, as what is important to this Bedouin is that he will hear with his own ears the judgment in his favour (*isma hako*). And when he defeats his rival and it only remains for him to realize his right, which is now ruled in his favour, then he gains a sort of uplifting and spiritual elevation, especially when he turns the attention of those present at the trial and they honour him by saying: *wajouhkom aliha*- which means you are witnesses that I give up my right, which a certain person owes, and the whole discussion was in order to teach him that it is not easy to cheat me or to bite into my right.

The good name – the demands and the problems which can arise on this place are a sort of slander (but not in the widespread sense in wide society). Therefore, fixing the right of the plaintiff adds to his respect and to his reputation and detracts, of course, from the respect of the defendant. In Bedouin society also a juicy insult can be a cause for development of a bloody fight. If the insulted party does not take the law into his own hands, then in the best case (for the insulter's part) he will be brought to discussion in the *Manshad* trial. Manshad is a sort of High Court of Justice discussing severe crimes, like desecration of the family honour. In this type of quarrels also its verdicts are very severe from the material point of view, whilst humiliating the owing side. The ruling can amount to huge sums paid whilst maintaining ceremonies all of whose goal is the return of the damaged honour. The ceremony itself is known by the name the *biad*, whitening from the word white. In this ceremony the debtor is asked to visit three Shegs of

various Sheikhs. He is placed in the opening of the Shegs (the Diwan-place of Bedouins' men meeting) and declares aloud: I sinned in slandering a certain person in vain. I declare I did a stupid thing and the honour of a certain person is white as snow or like a white handkerchief.

The Bedouins will be well guarded lest women will be involved in quarrels between clans and tribes, in order for desecration of the family honour not to take place. But also the woman is required not to irritate people of the rival camp, otherwise her sentence will be like the man's sentence, and here her honour is not concerned. Indeed, Bedouin law being stringent usually for injury to a woman and multiplying four times the compensations which her offenders are required to pay, makes her sentence like the sentence of a man and her compensations like the compensation of a man, if she is pushed to a fight with men.

It is forbidden for any stranger to make any contact with the daughter of another clan, except for understood cases whose goal is obtaining necessary information in the heart of the desert, like questions on the place of encampment of the tribe or on the water place or on a beast which got lost, and even this it is desirable to be done from far. A contact which does not hint to good faith and it will be discovered that it just irritates and whose goal is to approach the woman, can entangle the woman in persecution by her parents and the guardians of the woman's honor, and the persecutions can deteriorate to injury to her, even up to death. Often passersby or seekers of contact are required to swear that they do not have any evil intentions. In this oath there is purification of the meeting, both to the honour of that woman with who the contact was, and also to the honour of the person, as proof of the pure and businesslike intentions in the creation of this contact.

In Bedouin society the material situation of the person has indeed influence, but the social status is fixed by the standing of the individual, whose components are honour and pride.

This is correct not only in Bedouin society but also with the Arab whoever and wherever he is, townsman or villager, which are two derivatives of the Arab culture, although the fellahs and the townsmen treat today standing with less devotion than with *badia*.

c. The value of freedom. Freedom as a value demands clear definition or at least clarification, as when the Bedouin says today that his freedom is limited it is fitting that we will know what he means. This question becomes clear only when they re-examine the lifestyle of the Bedouins in the past, in the desert, when the tribe lived in relative disconnection without any hand reaching it. Indeed the definition hinted at here is a situation of total freedom, starting from the simple man until the whole tribe, as if this was a situation of anarchy, and it is not. The individual had to obey rules arranging the relations between him and his social environment, and in the same way the relations between all components of society were arranged. Moreover, the rules which were practiced then arranged also the connections and relations with the outside world in which central government exists (if there was such). It turns out therefore that the freedom to which the Bedouin clings today is limited freedom. However, he is right, as the freedom which he intends has defined expressions. At the tribal or group level this was the freedom to roam, without consideration of political borders (if there were such). The possibility of escaping from the tribe framework – something which happened and was possible in a clan framework and on condition that the clan was strong enough to protect itself- is also an expression of freedom. In the modern state man or a group cannot take himself out from its territory or from a framework and declare that from this day onwards he is independent and free from any authority.

With deep sadness owners of sheep flocks, Bedouins, grumble that they are not free to graze their flock without receiving a permit from the qualified bodies in the state. These are only

two examples at the tribal and clan (the family) level. At the level of the individual the ambition for freedom starts in the desire of a man to found an independent family framework, and since the Bedouins start to deal also with agriculture, he wants his plot of land which his father bequeathed to him whilst still alive. They say that a true Bedouin whose basic values are honor and freedom, strives for these things: *Biot wasia*- a wide tent (containing the coffee accessories, and in fact this means the capacity to entertain guests); *Rakuva saria*- a fast car, in the past these were the camel and the horse; *Wa-emraa motia*- and a reluctant woman.

There are those who add to these three components also the weapons of the Bedouin and also much livestock and more and more, but these are supplements which are added later.

#### *Endogamous marriage and their role in Bedouin society*

In the past, when the tribe was conducted as a political autonomy, both on the internal plane (versus other tribes) and also on the external plane (versus the state in which the Bedouins lived), the fate of the socio-political frameworks had much importance. In other words, natural increase and birth played a very important role. But in desert conditions, the size of the family was small, and thus marriage had importance, and in order not to waste them and to scatter women outside the family and the tribe, marriage was concentrated inside. Turning the efforts to internal marriage is called endogamy, whose whole goal was (and still exists with many families) to marry within the extended family, in order for the children who will be born will be its own. If the timing does not enable internal marriage, they make a match with families outside the extended family (the clan). But in order not to lose their children, they are married according to the *badal* pattern (exchanges of brides), which means that they give a wife and receive a wife. As in the past the traditional economy was built on cooperation of all the labour force in the

extended family, so the endogamous marriages only strengthened the extended family framework.

A claim exists that endogamous marriages were designed to keep also purity of race, when the Bedouins ascribe to themselves being more aristocratic than those who do not belong to the Arab origin. On the family plane the fact that the woman would be truly a cousin on the side of the father has much importance, as her concern for her husband, for her children and for the family property would be great and real. Many sayings were designed to express the amount of connection and the character of intimacy of close spouses. For example: *Banat ammak tunkul hammak* (your cousin will help you in time of trouble); *Min ramal bladek hut ala hadadek* (from the earth of your country put on your cheek), that is, take a woman for you from your family. And the poem warns he who marries a foreign woman by saying: *Nahala min pat banat imo wamasa ala altar el- garib* (woe to a person who passed by his cousin and turned to the foreign bird). And the poem continues and compares the marriage of the foreign woman as if the person went to live in ruins instead of in palaces (which are the comparison to the cousin).

Also today, although the Bedouins integrate in modernization and it was expected that they would reduce the polygamy and the birth rate, they precisely continue to exist and with more vigour, when the rate of polygamy rises and the birth rate does not decrease, even within the Bedouin townships. The trend is explained precisely in democracy. As rule of local authorities depends on the number of electors and as every clan or tribe is interested in being elected to the council or in transferring a delegate of their own to the head of the council, it is natural that a birth race would exist. So the polygamy and the natural increase in Bedouin society are explained.

*Ancient traditions and customs among the Bedouins of the Negev*

The customs of hospitality with the Bedouins in general and among Bedouins of the Negev in particular are a household word, and they in fact remind about Abraham- whom the Bedouins also see as their forefather, due to his traits as the first hospitable person in the history of the human species. He who reads the chapters in the Torah dealing with him will be persuaded, that a nomad living in the desert and growing livestock is concerned. The story of Abraham and the angels who visited his tent is similar in all its details to the hospitality which the Bedouins practice and which in the past other refreshments were not found in their tents. They simply sacrificed for their guests animals from the flock of sheep. Also the Bedouins of the Negev, like their brothers in other places, did not cease from the custom of hospitality, which became the main part and central value in their cultural heritage.

It is worth it for everyone who takes an interest in Bedouin culture to ask himself what is the common thing in the desert and which makes its inhabitants hospitable in a way which is common in other cultures, and why precisely the Bedouins were endowed with this?

Although in the eyes of the stranger it seems that the hospitality was spontaneous, and it really was like this, however there are rules of behaviour in it binding both the host and also the guest. Firstly, the host receives every guest without differences of treatment and attitude as he believes that *Al-def def-alla walkher kher Allah* (the guest is the messenger of God and also the plenty came from God). This means, God does not reject a messenger, and receives him unconditionally. However, in reality, the attitude to the guest is fixed according to his level and his class, and this is correct mostly when the guest is familiar. But precisely as to the strange guest, who they do not know who and what he is, and especially when it is impossible to clarify this, as customarily one should only debrief the guest after three and a third days, they treat him

with the best of tradition. So the saying says: *Al-def lh-thalath ayam watelet* (the guest can stay with the host three and a third days, in which they do not ask him anything and they serve him according to the best of tradition, and often even beyond the material capacities of the host .

There are those who explain hospitality in the Middle Eastern desert in which Bedouins mainly live, as a substitute for hotels and inns which do not exist in it, and that hospitality is a general convention according to which today you host and tomorrow the guest can need the gesture of hospitality. The most important and interesting thin in hospitality is that the host fills his duty, as if somebody stands by his side and supervises his acts and his behaviour towards the guest. And it is not so. Often the host is lonely, whose ten is found alone in the desert, or at most in the framework of a tent of a nomadic family, who can be poor and penniless by themselves. However, they receive the guest and even fight often on the right to host, as the guest is not only the messenger of God but he is rare and a guest does not turn up every day. In any case, the insertion of the name of God on this subject teaches that Bedouins raised hospitality to a level of holiness, and hence also the attitude to it and the rules of behaviour bound up in it. It turns out therefore that hospitality was raised to a level of religious commandment. Those explaining literally the customs of hospitality, deal with their material aspect. That is, the need for a sleeping place, food, water and treatment of the riding beast. But the story and poetry teach that the customs are more than this, due to their nobility and the honour bound up in them, both for the host and also for the guest. Hospitality, whatever will be its quality, provides the host with honour in that he gains publicity in his environment and of course in an attitude of respect on their part, following his generosity, like the words of the saying: *Alli Bihtarim bihtarim halu* (the one giving respect to the fellowman gains respect by himself).

The stranger and guest in general receive in the sheg, which is the gathering place of the men in the tent or in the permanent settlement. Here residents of the settlement have the possibility to meet with the guest and befriend him during the time that he will stay with his hosts. In fact, all the members of the group (a tent or settlement) are partners to the hospitality, as hosting is done according to turn, and it is assumed that everyone know when his turn will arrive. One should not describe a Bedouin tent encampment or settlement in which there is no sack. But if the family is isolated, they accept the guest in the residential tent, and it is assumed that the guest who is landlord allocated for this sake the Northern section in his tent.

The Bedouin tradition of judgment (*Al-Orf wal-ada*) is the soul of society and the central part of its existence, without which one could not imagine organization and order in the nomadic lifestyle. It operates in a link to a system of customs and to rules of the relations between man and man, between the general and the particular, and on the contrary.

All the traditions and customs were designed for one goal: the existence of man in the desert. Hence, if any change took place in the desert itself, it will drag changes after it both in tradition and in the ways of judgment. The law was a law of nomadic tribes, which got organized as a warrior's society following the frequent wars which happened between the tribes. This is a tough law which does not know compromises, on which it is said: *hakama ibarah a-sif, ma huhki*- justice which is not accompanied by the force of the sword, is not justice. And also: *al-hak ma yaji a la bal- houf*- justice will only achieved with the help of fear.

In laws of traditional Bedouin law there is no list of crimes and fines, or punishments on their side. There are also no crimes against society as a whole. In a legal discussion there are only two sides- plaintiff and defendant, or offender and victim. Therefore, unlike in the popular judgment system, there are no fines, but payment of compensation and return of expenses and

losses, which were incurred on the basis of the crime and on the basis of the trial itself, which the offender- defendant carries.

*The group of blood relatives*

At the foundation of the organization of Bedouin society the group of relatives or partners to blood stands tall. There are those who call it the mutual guarantee group. This group has five generations at least, and is called: *El- Hamas o- El- azbia*- blood relatives until five generations (see also the institution of the Hamsa and its essence in traditional law).

The tashmis is the ceremony for removal of a person, a family, or a bigger group, out of the blood group. This is the way to get rid of a violent and evil person, who entangled his blood relatives many times. Their rejection and ostracism are done in the presence of the heads of the blood group in the tribe and in the presence of witnesses and guarantors, in order to provide validity to ostracism. On the other hand, cases and circumstances exist in which an individual or group are interested in being separated from the guarantee group.

*The symbols characterizing Bedouin society from the rest of the other cultures:*

Bedouin society has an unlimited number of symbols unique to it and also identifies itself with them over the years. Most of the symbols which are unique to Bedouins are the fruit of the thought of every Bedouin, which added uniqueness and difference from the rest of the symbols recognized in cultures to these symbols. Most of the Bedouin population operated to highlight the varieties of its culture within these symbols.

Part of the Bedouins still ignore civilization and conduct a different lifestyle and this derives from total identification with continuities of their culture to the next generation:

- The tent: the tent is considered as one of the meaningful symbols with the Bedouins it is prepared from goat wool and is supported in its construction by poles and ropes read a comprehensive explanation on the tent in important concepts in the site.
- Shebriah: a small shaped sword is sharpened in its outset for the goal of self defense and also beauty. It is a symbol also characterizing the Arabs in Yemen.
- A thoroughbred horse: every Bedouin sees in the horse or the mare part of his family and also it is considered as an important symbol in that he uses it for many goals read an article on the Arab horse.
- Traditional dress: Bedouin culture chose for its dress unique to it suitable for the desert conditions and also for the cold of the desert the man's dress is different from the dress of the woman the woman's dress is called *Tub* and the man's dress is called *Keber w-Aabia* together with it there is a head covering called *mandil wamrir wagam hata waanal kaffiya*.
- Bedouin tapestry: a unique symbol for handicrafts charming the Bedouin woman.
- A camel: an important animal a symbol of the desert and an important transport vehicle with the Bedouins.
- Bedouin coffee: an important symbol in Bedouin society and it is called also bitter coffee describing the bitterness of life in the desert and the preparation of the coffee is accompanied by a special ceremony and also its drinking is characterized by a special order.
- Hospitality: hospitality is one of the important and significant symbols that the Bedouins are characterized by other cultures.
- A Bedouin marriage: a significant and magnificent symbol describing within it the abundance of Bedouin folklore.

- A sword: a tool of war called in Arabic *seif* decorated with various inscriptions and decorations found on the back of the sword magazine.
- Tribe: geographic places and unique residence for Bedouins living one by another as a cohesive and homogeneous and sometimes heterogeneous community.
- Shekh: the symbol of the leader and presenter of every Bedouin tribe is a very important function treating solution of disputes, help, representation, and hospitality and mediation problems etc.
- Sources of income: growth of animals like sheep, goats, and camels. Bedouin law: one of the most significant and important symbols in solving different disputes.
- Bedouin poetry: Elshaar Elbedoui is an important symbol and part of the Bedouin folklore from which the Bedouin poet expresses his joy and also praises and laments and also tells, they are called also *Golaat*. Today Bedouin poetry features on the Arab satellite stations.
- Trackers *kassas elatar*: a special trait for Bedouins in discovery of footsteps and this is expressed in the sense of reality and wisdom and sharp sight and excellent physical fitness.

*The Bedouins in the Negev as a society becoming urbanized*

The Bedouins of the Negev today are found in a very advanced stage of creation of a society different in its character from the traditional population of nomads, and this process is expressed chiefly in the economic and settlement frameworks and to a lesser extent in the social frameworks in fact the Bedouins in the Negev are a unique sector in the State of Israel, both on the part of their culture (like former nomads), but due to their sympathetic attitude to the state and to Israeli society, but until now they suffered from their peripheral location in the

consciousness of the governmental establishment, expressed in their great neglect, by comparison to other sectors in Israeli society.

The transition from nomadic life to permanent settlement is not only change of residence team, but combines within it changes in all the fields of life, until the end of the sixties the process of settlement was spontaneous, and was characterized by relative freedom and by keeping traditional lifestyles and economy until the foundation of the first Bedouin settlement, Tel Sheva, by the governmental authorities, a policy for its acts was fixed, the settlement of Bedouins which even if its intentions were productive, so its results were far from satisfactory. With much consistency six more Bedouin townships were founded, but the basic problems of the Bedouins remained almost unchanged.

From among the savings and problems which arose during the tour of the Bedouins three groups of basic problems depend on government policy and the way of its treatment of the Bedouin population.

a. The problems of the settlement: gradually incompatibility was revealed between the settlement and the traits of the population and its reaction, in addition to neglect of their development and their adaptation to the character of the infrastructure, the services and employment, similarly action is absent for integration of the settlements in the environment (in the Jewish population).

b. The land problems: this lack of solution of central problems causes Bedouin lands to be disputed lands on the political plane, instances of land arrangements prevent any possibility of development on the regional plane and in the Bedouins' settlement.

c. Economic problems: part of it derives from the process of urbanization itself, and lack of local occupational infrastructure.

The process of transition of the Bedouins to planned permanent settlements, is a very significant turning point in their lifestyles and culture. The nomadism and lifestyle which accompanies it, become the province of history and the town and the urban lifestyle take their place. The Bedouins claim that the continuation of their integration in Israeli society is placed today in doubt, as in their opinion the establishment is not interested in their advancement. A young generation, different from its parents grows in the new settlements, which was educated in the Israeli education system and knows to formulate its needs, this generation will be prepared to pay the price of their realization and they are the agents of change, and their adaptation to the urban environment is supposed to serve as an example to the whole population.

And also the adaptation to urbanization depends on change of the conception of the physical and social environment and the situation to which we are witnesses today is fitting of definition in adaptation within crisis, and despite this we still do not renounce initiatives for absorption of changes and for their adaptation to their society and to their unique needs.

#### *The Bedouins in Israel today*

The Bedouins in Israel are becoming integrated in the economic and civilian life surrounding them, they seek to undergo this process without losing the unique character of their life. They seek to control the measure of their proximity to the surrounding Israeli society, within maximal use of the connections with it.

Bedouin men and women experience differently the dilemmas involved in the new reality of their existence. The Bedouin man, going out of the opening of his tent and from the territory of his tribe, encounters a world including new values, relations of power and organization structures, and experiences during this a qualitative struggle for the essence of each one of these

worlds. The new situation to which he is exposed compels him to bridge between traditional codes and the influences of external sources. The situation of the Bedouin men as ambassadors of their society in the external world and as the representatives of this world in their community provides them with a function of primary agents of change. They are the first coming into direct contact with the sources of innovation in the fields of education, work, the institutions of state etc., and they are the only ones exposed to these fields.

The women, by contrast to this, are connected to the home and family- the most limited but not necessarily the simplest social unit. This connection determines the borders of their world, and decrees them to experience the change indirectly, as their exposure to it depends from its nature on male mediation. The levels of the changes and the rates of the innovations taking place in the life of the Bedouin woman are conditional on the positions of her father and husband, and tend to be fixed according to strict patriarchal patterns.

The Bedouins in the Negev number 180,000 people, and are characterized by a variety of forms of settlement, from nomadism until urbanization. The traditional nomadism disappeared in the last fifty years, and today 60% of the Bedouin population (100,000 people) dwell in tens of unrecognized rural settlements, scattered in the Beer Sheva Valley, and lying in part close to the Bedouin townships or close to them. These settlements, built of huts and tin shacks, lack characteristics of a modern organized and orderly settlement, and which lack basic services like running water, electricity, waste disposal, telephone lines, paved roads, schools and clinics. The inhabitants of these villages experienced an escalation of destroying houses during recent years by the Israeli authorities and growing use of force. In the urban pole of the models of Bedouin settlement in the Negev, are found the inhabitants of the new townships which were founded for them by the state from the sixties onwards. The seven Bedouin townships (Rahat, Tel Sheva,

Kaseife, Arour, Lokia, Hura and Segev Shalom) seem like bigger villages more than urban settlements, and today 40% of the Bedouin population in the Negev lives in them (80,000 people).

The Bedouin population in the Negev is the population located in the last place in the socioeconomic hierarchy in Israel. According to data of the Central Bureau for Statistics, the seven permanent Bedouin townships are located in the last eight places in the socioeconomic ranking. Also in the proportion of recipients of unemployment benefit the location of the townships is very low.

#### *The socioeconomic configuration*

The continuity of settlement change, marking the stopping of wandering, is subject to economic change characterizing Bedouin society in the Negev since the foundation of the state. The loss of the land assets and of the herds of sheep and camels compelled the Bedouins to abandon the traditional branches of income- arid farming and growth of livestock- and to turn to integration in the economics of the Israel economy.

The residents of the tents in the periphery: most of those living in tents work as hired employees in their region and in the nearby settlements, serve in the army or work as self-employed. The lack of sustainable assets serves as a catalyst for processes of obtaining education, constituting a springboard for economic progress.

The inhabitants of the townships: residence in township often increases the economic plight and worsens the difficulty to provide for the wider family. Many families were charged with financial expenses for the building and with payments to which the Bedouins were not used in the past. Additionally the change in consumption habits burdens them: the acquisition of

electricity, furniture products etc., increases the economic burden. This economic reality does not enable part of the inhabitants of the townships to continue to obtain education, and many youths go out to work already at a young age in order to help the family income. In many cases, however, economic power becomes a characteristic of success and power. The main channel of expression for this is the large residential house, reflecting economic prosperity and prestige. Certain groups, stressing the connection between social status and education, gain an income from professions characterizing the white collar- teaching, work in government ministries and occupation with free professions.

#### *Occupational obstacles*

A shortage of basic infrastructures (education, welfare, economics, health etc.) together with cultural obstacles, constitute an influential factor and source for many obstacles making the integration of workers from the Bedouin sector in the Israel employment market difficult:

*Lack of opportunities:* Many factors connect and increase the difficulty in finding employment opportunities. First of all- living in the periphery- the periphery is characterized by lower accessibility to education, to employment and to reception of services and as most of the Bedouins live in the periphery, so they are more exposed to these difficulties. In addition, the absence of public transport, absence of infrastructures for industrial zones and of sources of employment in regions of population concentrations, a weak local government characterized by big budgetary hardships, the obstacles of language chiefly at the stage of acceptance to work, lack of a network of connections in the Jewish labor market and discrimination on a communal background (indeed more than 60% of the Bedouins are hired workers employed outside the

sector, but there is a great difficulty in being accepted to work with Jewish employers and the job supply with the sector is very limited.(

*Low education:* a level of education of 4-8 school years characterizes 25% of the men and 33% of the women among the youth, 44% are entitled to the reception of matriculation certificates, but 90% are not at a sufficient level enabling continuation of studies. In addition, the psychometric test constitutes a central obstacle in acceptance to prestigious fields of study, whereas most of the graduates of institutions for higher education find themselves in unsuitable employment.

*The type of employment:* Historically, the income of the Bedouins in the Negev was based on agriculture and grazing sheep. Economic and political processes brought the Bedouins to a search of additional sources of income, chiefly in manual labour. The men- many of them are exposed in the employment market to competition with foreign workers in the fields of agriculture and construction. The women- most of them continue to focus on traditional professions which do not enable going out to work outside the settlement and in modern branches, either from traditional reasons and limiting social norms or due to difficulties of mobility and large number of children (a lack of response to treatment of children of working mothers). This trend is changing with time when the Bedouin girls obtain academic education and integrate in the external labour market like: teaching in schools and nursing in hospitals. Since the foundation of the state Arab society in Israel, including Bedouin society, is undergoing a process of change in all the fields of its life: the political, social, cultural, educational and economic (Abu Asaba, 2005). The challenge of the Bedouins is not only to survive in the framework of the modern state, but also to integrate in it and to achieve positions and status in all the fields of life (Zvikel & Barak, 2001), but it is a regrettable fact that over the years the

Bedouins became a marginal society suffering from governmental indifference due to reasons connected to them on the one hand, and to the establishment on the other. As mentioned, the Bedouins continued to suffer from adaptation difficulties to urbanization, to progress and to the culture surrounding them, mostly due to their lack of desire to give up cultural values and elements which set them apart since time immemorial, by contrast to other groups and cultures, and still it is possible to find tension between traditional values and modern values. Together with all this, in the last decade an essential change took place in the attitude of Bedouin Arab society to education in general and to girls' education in particular.

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