

THE HEBREW BEDOUIN IN THE BIBLE





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Dar

Jerusalem

Be'er Sheva

Israel

Jor

Cairo

القاهرة

6th of
October City

مدينة
أكتوبر

Aqaba

العقبة

Sharm
El-Sheikh

شرم الشيخ

Tabuk

تبوك

Asyut

أسيوط

Hurghada

الغردقة

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Bedouin

- * Or Bedu are pastorally nomadic tribes in the desert regions of the Sinai, Arabia Peninsula, and the Negev.**
- * They are animal herders who migrate and cultivate land in the dry summer months.**
- * The difference between Arabs and Bedouins is the emphasis on relations with genealogically distant kin.**

Water Determines Territory and Conflict

- * A Bedouin has uncontested access to what he terms “the trough and the grassy valley”
 - * Grass and water are the scarcest resources
- * In the Bible discovery of rare water in the desert was seen as no less miraculous and intervention by God

Numbers 21:17-18

17) Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it.

18) The princes rigged it by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah.



Joshua 15:17-19

17) And Othniel the son of Ken, the brother of Caleb, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife

18) And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field, and she lighted off her ass, and Caleb said into her, What wouldest thou?

19) Who answered, Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

Exodus 17:1-8

- 1) And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim, and was no water for the people to drink.**
- 2) Wherefore the people did chide with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said unto them, “Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?”**
- 3) And the people thirsted there for water and the people murmured against Moses and said, “Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”**
- 4) And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, “What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me.”**

5) And the Lord said unto Moses, Go before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6) Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb and thou shalt smite the rock, there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7) And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying “Is the Lord among us or not?”

8) Then came the Amalekites, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Jethro's Well Exodus 2:16-17

16) Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

17) And the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.



Livestock

There are 3 types of livestock are attributed to the desert dwelling nomadic patriarchs:

*** Abraham Gen. 13:5, 21:28-29, 24:10**

*** Isaac Gen 26:14, 24:9**

*** Jacob Gen. 30:37-43, 32:15-16**

All three types of these animals excel in conservation of bodily water.

Camels

- * **Highly adaptable**
- * **Urinate and sweat infrequently**
- * **It can raise body temperatures to as much as 43° during the day**
- * **Can go without water for 20-30 days in winter months and 5-7 days in summer.**
- * **It can lose up to 27% of its weight in water**



Black Goats **(hejazi)**

Gen 27:9

**Go now to the flock and fetch me from
thence two good kids of the goats, and I
will make them savory meat for thy father,
such as he loveth.**

Sheep

(Fat tailed awassi)

Exodus 29:22

Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covered the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them , and the right shoulder, for it is a ram of consecration.

1 Samuel 9:24

And the cook took up the shoulder and that which was upon it, and set before Saul. And Samuel said, “Behold that which is left set it before thee and eat for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people.” So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

Herding

Bedouin flocks consist mostly of females. Females are not butchered until the age of 6 or 7 when they cannot lamb.

Males are used for slaughter and sale

Exodus 34:19

All that opens the matrix is mine, and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep that is male.

Lev 1:10

And if his offering be of flocks, namely of the sheep, or of the goats for a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring it a male without blemish.

Numbers 6:14

And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one Ram without blemish for peace offerings.

Tents

Made from
goats hair of
the black
goats



The modesty of nose rings/ men and women

- * Nose rings play a role in the modesty of women of which the Bedouins are very strict.**
- * The prime role for women in this society is to bear males for her husband's clan.**
 - * Men outside the clan are not allowed to bring “strange seed” into the clan therefore women are raised modestly and under close scrutiny.**
 - * Women are veiled starting with the mouth.**
 - * An exposed mouth on a woman is a suggestion of the vagina.**

Gen 24:47

And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said “The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, who Milcah bare unto him.” And I put the earring upon her face and the bracelets upon her hands.

Gen 24:65

For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, it is my master, therefore she took a vail and covered herself.



The Importance of Confederations and Clans

- * Formed by a lack of government.**
- * Protection was obtained by forming groups of blood kin forming a Tribal confederation.**
 - * Tribal confederations protect clan's territory and water supply.**
- * Bedouin tribal confederation is a territorial group with no permanent chief but has an ad hoc leader.**
- * Confederations and all its component parts also grow and change but split less frequently than clans. When clans grow and split they form sub clans.**
 - * Bible tribes have a near identical structure for confederations and clans.**

Tribes

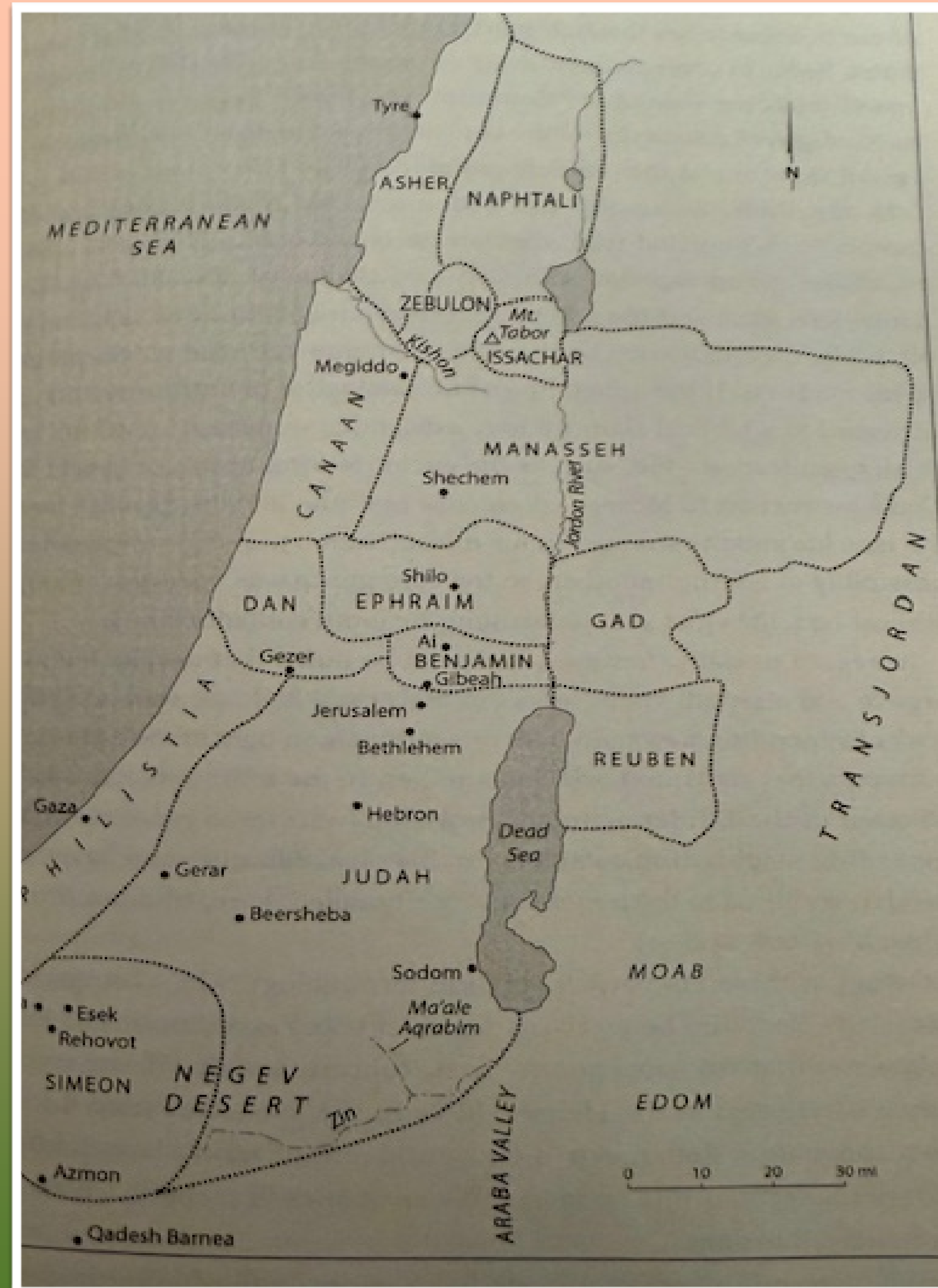
* Initially formed from family units

* Yahovah commanded Moses to count the whole Israelite community by clans and tribes (Num 1:5-6)

* Once in Canaan the tribes became territorial units (Num 34:13-29)

* For protection of land Moses commanded the men off Manasseh that the Israelites must stay bound each to the ancestral land of his tribe (Num 36:7)

* Tribes/clans adopted a “sign” of identification for their tribe/clan for those who wish to join the tribes



The Importance of Sons

- * Sons are preferred to daughters**
- * Girls are considered members of their father's clan**
- * Males once mature (20 years old) are active members**
- * Mature men are able to bear arms and protect the tribe**
- * So important are sons to a clan and its martial prowess that the lack of them is considered a calamity (a dry dwelling)**

Gen 24:60

And they blessed Rebekah and said unto her, "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Sacrifice and Blood

- * Bedouins believe in the cursed ground and that it must be cleansed (Malayka).**
- * Blood was used as a communication tool and for cleansing.**
- * Israelites were commanded by Yahovah to build altars.**

**All the biblical Patriarchs offered sacrifices as well
as the common member of the tribe**

Exodus 20:24

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen, in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

Deut 12:13-14

13) Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest

14) But in the place which Yahovah shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

In Conclusion

- * Bedouin culture and practices are found throughout scripture and influence the Biblical narrative.**
- * A better understanding of Bedouin culture and practices lead deeper scripture understanding.**
- * It is hard to decipher if the Bedouin influenced the Israelite or the Israelite influenced the Bedouin.**

