

Arab Bedouin culture and place in international politics

During the time of Muhammad, more so in Mecca, the Arab Bedouin already had a developed culture. Economically, they were involved mainly in five activities, where there was a specific grouping specialized in each activity. Herding was the dominant source of livelihood whereby the Arabs kept camels and other small animals such as goats and sheep. The camel was the preferred animal since it could survive in such desert areas. Animal keepers were pastoralists, and so they could move from one place to another depending on the availability of pasture and water. These animals were mainly kept for milk and flesh.

Agriculture was also practiced along the oases where the agriculturalists grew wheat and dates. The Arabs in Bedouin did hunting for food. The fourth source of livelihood was traded. The Arabs used the camels for transport of goods, chiefly wine and skilled singing girls as slaves. They also practiced raiding in which they kept horses that were solely used for this purpose.

Concerning socio-political structures, the Bedouin Arabs divided into smaller groups called clans and many such units formed a larger territory called a tribe. In these groups were developed hereditary economic and social solidarity. The clan groupings were majorly for economic purposes whereas the tribal ones were for political strength.

On the issue of international politics, the Bedouin played a significant part. It was lay between three agricultural lands of Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. These are the territories in which the Bedouin Arabs carried out their hunting. They were also mercenaries in the armies of the Roman and Sasanian empires, and thus they were able to control the trade routes through the lands of their neighbors.

Muhammad's priorities and challenges in Medina

When Muhammad migrated to Medina, he wanted a new ground to grow his faith and establish peace within his heart with the work he had in spreading his religion. He also prioritized to improve the moral standards of his followers in Medina who had poor moral standings in the society. He also wanted to add more believers into the new faith considering that Medina was a fertile ground for new souls. However, in the quest for these desires, he met several challenges. One, the people living in Medina were well off economically due to the successful agricultural and trading activities, whereas Muhammad and his followers from Mecca were of lower economic status. He, therefore, felt the great difficulty of making an extended stay at Medina as guests to their brothers. This situation made them start raiding the Quraysh. These cases of attacks at a certain point were seen as acts of treachery which Muhammad accepted. His efforts in leading an example of moral responsibility were somehow thwarted by this acceptance.

Within Medina were Jews who firmly held to their Jewish culture and faith, and so they could not accept Muhammad's message. This was a great stumbling block to his mission. With time, there were set guidelines for moral conduct, and thus Muhammad saw that he had succeeded in bringing back the right moral standards of the Muslims in Medina. However, there cropped a generation of hypocrites. It proved to be a big challenge for the so-called prophet of Allah that he called such individuals as 'waverers,' and they gave him trouble for several years.

Main reason for Muhammad's migration to Medina

Muhammad felt a lot of opposition while in Mecca, and his life was also threatened by the enemies of Islam. He was being protected by Abu Talib who died in the course of time.

Khadija, Muhammad's wife who was his strong spiritual supporter also died. These events led him to look for a safer place to develop his faith and religion, and so he moved to Medina. The stages that resulted in this migration began first with the meeting on the pilgrimage at Aqabah with a handful of converts from Medina who subsequently increased in number in the following year and promised to follow Muhammad's teachings and his leadership and that they would also offer him protection when he goes to Medina. The next move was sending some of his followers, about seventy in number from Mecca to Medina one by one. Finally, he then went by himself.

The effect of this migration on the Meccan society was the decline in the strength of the Islam religion since most of them moved to Medina. Further, with the new state of the Muslim minority in Mecca, there were significant attacks that subsequently led to their surrender. On the other hand, however, there was a shift of religious dominance in Medina when the population of Muslims substantially increased to compete significantly with the Jews and the few Christians who lived in these regions. Moreover, with this migration, the less economically privileged migrants from Mecca increased raiding activities against the wealthy individuals in Medina which subsequently increased resentments among the different communities residing in the region. However, of significant effect was the fact that Medina became a key and central point for Muslim power (Hodgson).

Work Cited

Hodgson, Marshall G. S. *The Venture Of Islam, Volume 1*. 1st ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.