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**See also:** ALLAH MOST HIGH; AḤMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; ABROGATION; ALMSGIVING; ANGELS; ANIMALS; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; BEGUELEMENT; BELIEVERS; BOWING AND PROSTRATION; CALF; CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH; CHILDREN OF ISRĀ‘ĪL; COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING WRONG; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; CREATION; CUSHIONS; DAY OF RESURRECTION; DECEIT AND DELUSION; DEEDS; DISBELIEVERS; EXCELLENCE; FACE OF ALLAH; FIR‘AWN; FOOD AND DRINK; FOOTSTOOL; FRIENDS OF ALLAH;

GARMENTS; GENEROSITY; GOLD AND SILVER; GOOD AND EVIL; HAJJ; HEREAFTER; HOURS; HUMANS; IBRĀHĪM, UPON HIM PEACE; INJĪL; INNATE NATURE; LAW; MARTYRDOM AND MARTYRS; MARYAM, UPON HER PEACE; MENSTRUATION; MUḤAMMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; OATHS; OPENING LETTERS OF THE QUR’ĀN; PARADISE; PLANTS AND VEGETATION; POLYTHEISM; POWER; PRESERVATION; PROMISES AND THREATS; QĀRŪN; QUR’ĀN; RABBIS; REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH; REPENTANCE; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; RIVERS AND SPRINGS; SATAN; SPEECH; STARS AND PLANETS; SUCCOR; SUPPLICATION AND ANSWER; SUSTENANCE; THRONE OF ALLAH; TORAH; TRIALS AND STRIFE; WAY OF ALLAH; WISDOM; WORLD; YŪSUF, UPON HIM PEACE; ZABŪR; ZAKĀT.

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

## BEDOUIN(S)

### AL-‘ARĀB

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. The First Arabs; iii. The Prophet Ya‘qūb and the Retreat to Nomadism; iv. The Praise and Criticism of Bedouins; v. Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

The Qur’ān refers to Bedouins or nomadic desert Arabs thirteen times, using two different terms: (i) the plural noun *‘arāb* (Q 9:90, 97-99, 101, 120; 33:20; 48:11, 16; 49:14) (sing. *‘arābī*, pl. of the plural *‘arīb*); and (ii) the collective singular noun and nominal verb *badw* (Q 12:100), the active participle used as a noun *bād* (Q 22:25), and its plural *bādūn* (Q 33:20).

The former term is derived from the root *‘-r-b*, which also gives rise to the generic collective two-gendered noun *‘arab* (sing. *‘arabī*), which denotes clarity of expression and articulateness (*al-ibāna wal-iḥṣāh*)—as opposed to the collective *‘ajam*, which denotes “foreign, incapable of correct speech” and is translated mostly as “non-Arab”—because, writes Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1005), “their tongue is the most expressive tongue (*‘arab al-alsina*) and their idiom the best idiom (*ajwad al-bayān*).” The adjectival substantive *‘arabī* usually refers to the sedentary townspeople, but occurs in the Qur’ān only as an adjective in reference to language, not people, although the Qur’ān does refer to the Arab nation by the plural noun *ummiyyīn* (see ARABIC; UNLETTERED) (Ibn Fāris, *sub ‘-r-b*; Qurṭubī and Nasafī, *sub* Q 9:97). The latter term is derived from the root *b-d-w*, yielding the verb *badā*,

“to present itself” the way an object protrudes and stands out against a uniform desert background, *al-bādiya*: literally, the place where things appear in plain sight as opposed to *al-ḥaḍar*, the place of sedentariness (Azharī, al-Fārābī, Farāhīdī, Ibn Fāris, and Jawharī, all *sub* <sup>‘r-b</sup>; Rāghib, *sub* <sup>b-d-ā</sup>; Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 33:20). The English substantive and adjective *bedouin* is a Middle English noun derived from the Old French *beduin*, which in turn is derived from the Arabic *bedaoui* or the nominative plural *badwiyyūn* (*Shorter OED, Littré*), whence the *nisba* (affiliation) and modern family name al-Badawī, also found among some non-Arabs.

### The First Arabs

The origins of the Bedouins blend with those of the Arabs, since all those famed as the primogenitors of the latter and founders of their language were also said to be desert-dwelling nomads:

- Sām, who was “the forebear of the Arabs, Yāfith the forebear of the Romans (*al-Rūm*), and Ḥām the forebear of the Abyssinians (*al-Ḥabasha*),” said the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace (Tirmidhī, *Manāqib*, faḍl al-‘Arab, rated *ḥasan*); “al-Aṣḥar [the blond] b. al-Rūm b. ‘Iṣaw [Esau] b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm... ‘Adī b. Zayd al-‘Ibādī (d. 600 CE) said: ‘the Banū al-Aṣḥar are the kings of the Rūm of whom none remains today’” (‘Aynī, *Umda*, 1:81);
- Ya‘rub b. Qaḥṭān b. Hūd b. ‘Ābir b. Shālikh b. Arfakhshad b. Sām b. Nūḥ, “the first speaker of Arabic and father of all the Yemen” according to genealogists (Abū Ḥayyān, *sub* Q 7:65; Qurṭubī, *sub* 9:97);
- Jurhum, whose language is meant by the phrase *in plain Arabic speech* (Q 26:195) according to the exegetes on the basis of a saying of the Companion Burayda al-Aslamī (Ḥākim, Ḥa Mīm al-Sajda; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab*, at the very end of Branch 15);
- the Prophet Ismā‘īl—upon him peace—according to two hadiths: “The first whose tongue was uncleft (*futiqa lisānuh*) with distinct Arabic was Ismā‘īl when he was ten years old” (al-Zubayr b. Bakkār in *al-Nasab* with a fair chain of transmission according to Ibn Ḥajar in *Fathḥ al-bārī*, Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā’, qawl Allāh ta‘ālā *wa-ttakhadha Allāhu Ibrāhīma khalīlā*; Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 2:31); “Ismā‘īl received this language purely through inspiration” (Ḥākim, Ḥa mīm al-Sajda, *sub* Q

41:3: A scripture whereof the verses are expounded, a Lecture in Arabic for people who have knowledge, with a weak chain). The aboriginal Arabs (*al-‘Arab al-‘arbā’* and *al-‘arība*) are distinguished from the “Arabized Arabs” (*al-‘Arab al-musta‘rība* and *al-muta‘arriba*)—a twofold distinction sometimes used to characterize, respectively, the speakers of Ya‘rub b. Qaḥṭān’s old tongue and the speakers of the Ḥijāzī dialects inherited from the Prophet Ismā‘īl (Baṣmajī, *Mu‘jam*, *sub* <sup>al-A‘rāb</sup>);

Ismā‘īl’s offspring who flourished in the area of the Tihāma valley known as ‘Araba, which became Makka. Among them is the ancestral line of the Quraysh leading up to the Prophet Ismā‘īl through Muḍar b. Nizār b. Ma‘add (“tough”) b. ‘Adnān (“resident”). All of them, like Ya‘rub (“speaks most clearly”) and Qaḥṭān (“hard”), are eponyms of the race, ethos, and eloquence of the Arabs, as illustrated in the exegete Nāṣir al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Bayḍawī’s (d. ca. 719/1319) preamble to his *Tafsīr*:

Glory to Allah Who sent down the Criterion upon His slave for him to be a warner to the worlds (Q 25:1)! He challenged, with the shortest of its suras, the champions of eloquence among the pure-blooded Arabs and found none capable of response. He confuted those who set out to oppose it, among the orators of ‘Adnān and declaimers of Qaḥṭān, until they thought they had been completely bewitched.

*Tafsīr*, Exordium; cf. Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq* p. 5, 31, 217, 361

### The Prophet Ya‘qūb and his family

The Qur’ān mentions that the father and brothers of Prophet Yūsuf, upon them peace, came from the desert: *And he raised his parents on the dais and they fell down before him prostrate, and he said: O my father, this is the interpretation of my dream of old. My Lord has made it true, and He has shown me kindness, since He took me out of prison and has brought you from the desert (al-badw)...* (Q 12:100) al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) said:

It is narrated that Ya‘qūb’s dwelling was in the land of Canaan and that they were people of livestock and lived in the wild. It was also said that Ya‘qūb had moved to a desert land (*taḥarwala ilā bādiya*) and lived there, and that Allah never sent forth a prophet originating from the desert people. It was also said he had gone out to Badā, a place... One says *badā al-qawmu badwan* when they come to Badā, just as one says *ghārū ghawran*, meaning, they came