

Be<sup>2</sup>ersheva<sup>c</sup> (Ar. Bi<sup>2</sup>r al-Sab<sup>c</sup> [q.v.]). The place-name Nagb is not found in Classical Arabic historical or geographical literature. After Israel adopted Negev as the modern designation for the southern desert of the country, the Bedouins resident there Arabicised Negev to Nagb, which, meaning "a mountain pass" (Classical *nakb*), has popularly been thought to derive from the famous pass through which the former Mecca-bound Egyptian pilgrim caravan descended from the central Sinai heights to the head of the Gulf of 'Aḳaba.

During the Mamlūk and Ottoman periods, Gaza (Ḡhazza [q.v.]) was the centre of administration, at the head of which was a *kā'imakām* or sub-district governor. In 1901, the Ottomans built Beersheba, which has been the administrative centre of the Negev ever since.

The earliest recorded Bedouin tribe in this area was the Balī, who aided the Byzantine emperor Heraclius to fight the invading Muslim forces (al-Ṭabarī, i, 2347, 2392). The Ḍjudhām, who aided 'Amr b. al-ʿĀs to invade Egypt, may also have lived there (al-Ḳalkaṣhandī, *Nihāya*, 193). The present-day Ḍjubārāt were there by the 14th century A.D. (al-Ḳalkaṣhandī, *al-Bayān*, 169) and the Wuḥaydāt by the 16th century, when they expelled the 'Āyid, that had dominated the southern sector for 300 years (al-Ḍjazīrī, 461). Throughout the ages, the Negev was a refuge for Bedouin groups from north-west Arabia fleeing from vengeance or drought, who appended themselves to local tribes and confederations, some eventually growing and gaining tribal independence, such as the 'Uḳba tribe and the Ḍullām confederation.

The major contemporary Bedouin confederations in the Negev, the Tiyāhā and the Tarābīn, originally came there with the invading army of Bonaparte, in 1799, driving the dominant Wuḥaydāt confederation north. They were subsequently joined by the 'Azāzna. Throughout the 19th century, these confederations fought each other over territory and, internally, over leadership, the al-'Aṭāwna and the Huzayyil contending to head the Tiyāhā, and the al-Ṣūfī and Abū Sitta vying within the Tarābīn. These wars continued until 1890, when the final tribal borders were set.

During the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, most of the Bedouin population fled the Negev to neighbouring countries, only 13,000 out of 65,000 remaining; but by 1990, the Bedouin population was again put at 65,000, almost all of whom had become sedentary.

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(C. BAILEY)

**NAḲD** (A.), the portion of the dowry handed over at the conclusion of a marriage, see MAHR. In modern Arabic, it has the sense of "money", see SIKKA.

**NAḲD AL-MITHĀḲ** (A.), denotes the act of violating a religious covenant ('*ahd* or *mithāḳ*), occasionally used in Shī'ism and, more commonly, Bahā'ism [q.v.], where the standard English term is "covenant-breaking". The terms '*ahd* and *mithāḳ* are Qur'ānic (II, 27, 63, 83; III, 81; VIII, 56; XIII, 20,

25; XVI, 91, etc.), where they refer to God's general covenant with men or His prophets, or to specific covenants, such as that with the Banū Isrā'īl [see MITHĀḲ]. In Shī'ī tradition, the Prophet entered into a specific *mithāḳ* concerning the succession of 'Alī. Each Imām in turn enters into a covenant concerning his successor, who must be appointed in his lifetime by means of an explicit declaration (*naṣṣ*). The imāmate itself is "a known covenant ('*ahd*) on the part of God to named individuals" (al-Kulaynī, ii, 54:3). (For other uses, see al-Aḥsā'ī, ii, 15, 39-40, 41, 42).

In Bahā'ism, the terms are generally used of two covenants: that of God with men concerning His successive prophets and that of each prophet or *waṣī* concerning his successor. In the latter sense, loyalty to the covenant and, more specifically, the individual appointed by it (the *markaz al-mithāḳ*) constitutes a central motif in Bahā'ī doctrine.

The Bahā'ī covenant system closely resembles that of Shī'ism. Mīrzā Ḥusayn 'Alī Bahā' Allāh appointed his eldest son 'Abbās ('Abd al-Bahā') as his *waṣī*; 'Abbās in turn appointed a grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the first of a succession of "Guardians" (*walī-yi amr Allāh*); Shoghi died childless, and authority passed six years later to an elected body, the *bayt al-'adl al-a'zam* (Universal House of Justice).

The punishment for challenging the authority of the central figure or body is wholesale excommunication. Numerous individuals and small groups have been expelled from the body of the movement, but no important sects have yet developed. In the absence of an explicit law of apostasy, the precise compass of *naḳd al-mithāḳ* has yet to be determined. In Western Bahā'ī writing, the Shī'ī origins of the covenant motif are routinely ignored and the system treated as though it is unique.

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**AL-NAKHAḒĪ, IBRĀHĪM** B. YAẒĪD, AL-KUFĪ, ABŪ 'IMRĀN, a Successor (*Ṭābi'ī*), Kūfan traditionist and lawyer, who enjoyed a certain fame, b. ca. 50/670, d. ca. 96/717. His informants were above all 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd [q.v.] but also Anas b. Mālik and 'Ā'isha [q.v.]. He seems to have been part of the latter's circle, and transmitted from her a fair number of items concerning in particular the behaviour of women and husband-and-wife relations, beginning with her own marriage with the Prophet. It is not without significance that a number of these items of information were critically examined by an Ibn Ḳutayba.

But it is above all as a jurisconsult that Ibrāhīm al-NakhaḒī played a major rôle. He appears to have been one of the first great defenders of the use of *ra'y* [q.v.], personal judgment, whose use he nevertheless only envisaged when tied closely to tradition. His teaching seems to have strongly influenced, through the intermediacy of pupils like Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān, various front-rank jurists, above all Ḥanafī ones, but