

altogether, when one is going to Tebbes, but when a traveller's destination is Jandak, as in our case, he must follow the margin of the Kevir. The herdsman believed that in former times a direct track led from Dom, our Camp 12, through the Kevir to Jandak, but it was now out of use; the last time it had been used was some years ago when two men with two camels traversed it and took quite forty-eight hours on the journey. We should have saved four days if we could have used the desert route and cut across the large Kevir bay, but the herdsman advised us not to make the attempt, for he considered it dangerous without sure guides. And even with guides such an undertaking is very risky, for the stability of the salt desert varies in different years, and where one can walk in a dry year one sinks in another year. There is also a risk of being stopped after covering three-fourths of the way by the insecurity of the last fourth, and having to turn back.

Contrary to the statement of our informant at Kuh-i-nakshir, our present herdsman maintained that a direct path ran to Jandak from a point situated between Cheshme-Kerim and Cheshme-dosun. Had we found this way we should already have been at Jandak, but I did not complain, for by following the edge of the Kevir I was able to trace its sharp boundary on my map. Besides, such information is generally uncertain, and the herdsman had never been himself into the Kevir and hoped never to go there.

Our hill at Nakshir grows faint behind us and appears as a dimly marked even outline. Between us and the blunt peninsula of Kuh-i-nakshir lies the Kevir, stretching east and north-east like a land-locked sea. The higher we mount the better we can survey its boundless surface with its various shades from dirty white and yellow to brown and black.

Slowly and surely we draw near to the promontory we have been making for all day long, and near it the ground becomes for a time more favourable, the pebbles cease and are replaced by coarse sand, among which steppe shrubs grow more freely and camels graze. But the