

but quite distinctly in an even tint of blue. Agha Muhamed insisted that this hill could not be seen from the middle of the desert, nor Kuh-i-Jandak, however clear and calm the weather might be. He added that the reason was that one "goes so deep down" in the Kevir that everything is hidden.

Agha Muhamed had his home in Ardekan, and was only twenty-two years old. He was the owner of 25 camels in the caravan he led. He found his way into my sketch-book, and looked picturesque in his voluminous turban wound several times round his head, and a coarse cloth round his neck. It was a serious matter for him and the other partners in his caravan that he should be stopped by rain. Their 55 camels were worth 3500 tuman, and the goods were estimated at 100 tuman a camel load, or 5500 tuman. Agha Muhamed's caravan had been nine days on the way from Yezd to Jandak, had stayed there two days, and now unexpectedly lost two more. His destination was Shahrud, and he reckoned it twenty-five days' journey from Yezd. Now, every day cost him, according to his account, 30 tuman in food and fodder for the seven men and camels and the wages paid to the former. Every day, then, increased the expense of the journey and diminished the profits. When the camels are passing through desert country they must be fed with straw and cottonseed; when they are not working they forage for themselves on the steppe.

The most active caravan traffic began, he considered, about March 5, and continued for two months, during which time 200 caravans marched through the desert in both directions. In summer few passed, for by the beginning of June it becomes fearfully hot in the desert, where there is no water, and men become so thirsty that they have to drink once every hour of the store they have carried with them. Camels can go without water for three days in summer and six in winter, and longer at a pinch. Agha Muhamed said, like my other informants, that only the two routes we intended to try were used for caravan traffic, and he knew no direct way from Turut to Tebbes. Even the usual way from Turut to Khur is avoided as