

Turbet, the post-bags from these places being collected by the same mounted courier. The direct cross cut runs more to the west, and is reckoned 80 farsakh. The post road to Yezd is divided into eleven stages, some of which are very long. The road to Seistan is reckoned 79 farsakh, and that to Halvan 20 farsakh long. The Naibend road is 30 farsakh; there is a road also to Birjan.

There is, besides, a road to Bahabad, which, as far as I know, has never been used by any European unless by Marco Polo. It runs through Kurit, Balucha, and Rizab. The statements of the distance vary from 48 to 53 farsakh.

I was much tempted to choose this road as the next stage on my journey southwards. We took counsel of a camel-owner who knew the road. He could not let out any of his camels on hire for such a journey just at the moment, for the desert was *gel* or slippery after the last rain; but if we liked to wait until the desert dried up he would willingly serve us. Two days before, a caravan of 300 camels had arrived from Sebsevar. It was going to Yezd and intended to pass through Bahabad, but had to wait at the village of Kurit outside Tebbes till the desert dried up. If we arranged so that we could set out in its wake, we should find the desert road dry in its trail. It would, of course, have been interesting to see this part of the desert, to cross another kevir depression, and to explore the continuation of the little range of hills we had crossed near Rabat-gur, but it would have taken us too far out of our course, and obliged us to give up the remarkable oasis of Naibend, from which we were also separated by little-known desert tracts. I therefore decided to go to Naibend, but on the way thither we heard so many interesting facts about the Bahabad desert that we made a compromise and took a long deviation to the west before reaching Naibend.

In Tebbes there are 200 large palm orchards and at least as many small ones. It is estimated that there are quite 100,000 female palms (*mader*); in every garden there are two male palms (*nehr*)—singularly enough the same word that is used to denote a camel stallion. The palms first bear fruit after fifteen or twenty years, but