

causing them to run still more imperceptibly into one another. It is silent as the grave. A raven, which was seen yesterday, has disappeared. Perhaps he lives on lizards which dart here and there among the stones. No wild asses or gazelles haunt this desolate region, where neither man nor beast wanders. But the stillness which accompanies this abomination of desolation is striking, and I enjoy an hour of solitude on the top of Kuh-i-Ghasemi.

I return to the camp by a short cut, where I sink into the finest, almost feathery dust, with gravel swimming, as it were, on its surface and giving way under the feet. This also must be the result of weathering, and the gravel protects the dust from the wind.

The description I was given of the Bahabad road shows that it runs through a perfect desert of disintegrated hills. The name itself implies the most complete desolation. Certainly three wells are to be found in it, but two are salt, while the third is called Cha-i-serd or the "cold well." We therefore lost nothing by giving up this road, and we decided to direct our course to Naibend, the next great stage.