

from the beginning of winter till *noruz* (New Year), or during four months. No one travels through the desert in summer, because it is then warm, and therefore it is difficult to carry water. In the lower parts of the desert the heat is deadly to dromedaries. During the summer the kevir ground becomes as hard as stone and quite dry on the surface. It breaks up into slabs and ridges, which are softened by the rain of the next winter and smoothed out again, and this process is repeated year after year. It seems to be due to some expansion in the clay through drying.

The brooks which water Khabis and the villages below it are said to be distributed by a number of irrigation canals, the overflow from which seldom, if ever, reaches so far as the Nemek-sar. It may be possible that after a particularly violent downpour a large flood may find its way to the lowest depression of the Lut.

On the whole, this sharply defined desert basin, which has the form of a triangular bowl, is in a state of far less advanced development than the great Kevir. At any rate it is less filled up with kevir clay. Only the long strip along its south-western margin, which bears the name of Nemek-sar, is flat. It is partly filled with kevir clay, partly with pure salt. Here the height amounts to about 1000 feet above sea-level, while Khabis at the edge of the desert lies at a height of 1800 feet, and the passes in the skirting mountains, according to the English map, rise to 9650 feet. Towards the east the basin rises from its deepest hollow more slowly, as shown by the itinerary described above from the English map. To the north and south-east the rise is likewise very slow.

In the great Kevir we find quite a different form of relief. The process of filling up has proceeded so far that the surface is almost quite level, or at any rate shows only trifling inequalities. The Lut desert is advancing to the same state. Clay and salt are washed down from the surrounding heights in the rainy season, exactly the material which in time forms kevir.

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