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Location and Nature of Arab Tribes

Beyond a shadow of doubt, the biography of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ obviously represents a complete picture of the magnificent Divine Message that he communicated in order to deliver the human race from the swamp of darkness and polytheism to the paradise of light and monotheism. An image, authentic as well as comprehensive, of this Message is therefore only attainable through careful study and profound analysis of both backgrounds and issues of such a biography. In view of this, a whole chapter is here introduced about the nature and development of Arab tribes prior to Islam as well as the circumstantial environment that enwrapped the Prophet's mission.

Location of the Arabs

Linguistically, the word "Arab" means deserts and barren land without water and vegetation. Ever since the dawn of history, this term has been used for the Arabian Peninsula and its people.

The Arabian Peninsula is enclosed in the west by the Red Sea and Sinai, in the east by the Arabian Gulf, in the south by the Arabian Sea, which is an extension of the Indian Ocean, and in the north by old Syria and part of Iraq. The area is estimated between one million and one million and three hundred thousand square miles.

Thanks to its geographical position, the peninsula has always maintained great importance. Considering its internal setting, it is mostly deserts and sandy places, which has made it inaccessible to foreigners and invaders, and allowed its people complete liberty and independence through the ages, despite the presence of two neighboring great empires.

Its external setting, on the other hand, caused it to be the center of the old world and provided it with sea and land links with most nations at the time. Thanks to this strategic position, the Arabian Peninsula had become the center for trade, culture, religion and art.

