



## BĀŞERĪ

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**BĀŞERĪ**, a pastoral nomadic tribe of Fārs belonging to the Kamsa confederacy. Traditional location and area are best understood through the tribal concept of the *il-rāh*, the tribal road and schedule. Winter pastures (*garmsīr*) were between Jahrom and Lār; by Nowrūz the tribe used to gather on the plain of Manşūrābād near Lār, which served as winter residence of the khan. During spring they migrated past Jahrom, Kafr, Sarvestān, Marvdašt to the area around Dašt-e Morġāb (ancient Pasargadae), whence they dispersed in June into summer quarters (*sarḥadd*) around Kūh-e Bol near Ābāda. The autumn migration returned along the same route during September-November, utilizing stubble on harvested lands. Distance covered each year was about 1,000 km, with striking and repitching of tents about 120 days a year.

The population in 1958 was 3,000 tents or 16,000 persons, all of Shi'ite persuasion. They speak standard Persian of the variety spoken in Shiraz. Some are bilingual and speak Turkish as well. Groups related to this main body of Bāşerī are found west of Isfahan under the Daraşūrī khans of the Qaşqā'ī confederation, to whom they defected around 1277/1860 (according to their oral tradition). The Būgard Bāşerī are found in northwest Fārs along the Qaşqā'ī-Boir Aḥmad border. Scattered Bāşerī groups are also found near Semnān, which is sometimes represented as the tribe's original homeland. On the other hand, many individuals and camps presently counted as Bāşerī derive from other tribes like Nafar, Bahārlū, Arab, Qaşqā'ī, and even settled villages.

The basic unit in Bāşerī society is the tent (*kūna*) occupied by a nuclear or



extended family. Several tents form a herding unit to be viable in terms of labor force and assemble a sizable, but manageable, herd (200-500 animals). Except during winter dispersal, camps comprise ten to forty tents organized in several herding units. Tribesmen are aligned in thirteen patriclans (*tīra*), often subdivided into segments (*awlād*), each with a headman (*kadkodā*).

The nomads keep sheep, intermingled with 10-20 percent goats, and use donkeys for transport. Their economy is based on the sale of pastoral products, i.e., wool, clarified butter, and lambskins. Buttermilk, dried curds, and meat are consumed; other staples such as flour, rice, sugar, and tea are purchased, as are most items of household equipment and cloth other than tents. Animals are individual property, whereas pasture rights are held collectively with temporary usufruct allocated to *awlāds*. Some Bāşerī own agricultural land as private property, which they let on sharecropping contracts to tenants.

The ecological, economic, demographic, and political relations of South Persian tribes are highly dynamic, especially when they, like the Bāşerī, occupy an *īl-rāh* in close contact with other tribes and passing through densely settled lands. Nomad households and camps readily shift their tribal allegiance depending on the quality of leadership and security provided by competing khans. Thus the Bāşerī have grown by assimilation while other, once larger, tribes have disappeared. The nomad and animal populations of the region as a whole are also subject to fluctuations. Households pursue herd management policies that generally succeed in producing growth in flocks, and good hygiene and nutrition produce human population growth. The balancing of animal population and the carrying capacity of pastures seems to depend on cycles of disease and natural catastrophe rather than human agency. But such losses, and unequal gains, together with fluctuation in prices and terms of trade for pastoral products, result in the impoverishment of some households. These people are forced to seek employment in towns and villages. Thus the growth of the human population is to some extent relieved through sedentarization of the poorest. The richest, who tend to invest some of their surplus in land, also tend to become sedentarized as landowners. As a result, the Bāşerī maintain a relative economic homogeneity.

The Bāşerī khans are drawn from the Żargāmī family, originally of the Kolombā'ī *tīra*. The income of the khan derives from private lands, private flocks, and the right to tax the tribesmen's herds (one to three per hundred animals). It is through chieftainship that the tribe functions as a political body.



The khan represents the tribe and adjudicates internal disputes. Succession is among the closest agnates of the deceased khan, by acclamation and fiat.

The *Ḳamsa* confederation, composed of the Arab tribes *Šaybānī* and *Jabbāra* in *Fārs*, and the Turkish tribes of *Aynālū*, *Bahārlū* (qq.v.), and *Nafar* beside the *Bāšerī*, was formed in 1278/1861-62 by the government and placed under the leadership of 'Alī-Moḡammad *Qawām-al-Molk*, a wealthy merchant of *Shiraz*. It served both as a counterweight to the powerful *Qašqā'ī* confederation, adjoining it to the northwest, and as a means to secure trade routes to *Shiraz* from the ports of *Ḳārak* and *Bandar-e 'Abbās*. Thus, from their palace at *Nāranjestān* in *Shiraz*, the *Qawām* family ruled a tribal confederation of up to 16,000 tents (ca. 1914), until this political structure was shattered by *Rezā Shah* in the 1310s Š./1930s.

*Recent history.* The *Bāšerī* grew from a nucleus of sections called *Waysī* (*Kolomba'ī*, 'Abdolī, *Labū Mūsā*, *Farhādī*, *Jūčīn*, *Īl-e Ḳāšš*) to encompass also the 'Alī-Mīrzā'ī under *Ḥājī Moḡammad Khan* in the late 13th/19th century. *Ways*, the eponymous ancestor, is said to have come from *Khorasan*, while 'Alī-Mīrzā is supposed to have been a native of *Fārs*. Growth in numbers and influence continued under *Ḥājī Moḡammad's* son *Parvīz Khan* (r. 1293-1314 Š./1914-35). During his last years and the first years of his son *Moḡammad Khan* (r. 1314-25 Š./1935-46) *Rezā Shah* sought by highly repressive means to settle all the tribes, and most *Bāšerī* were prevented from migrating, which resulted in severe losses in both flocks and people. With the weakening of government control after *Rezā Shah's* abdication and the occupation of *Iran* by the Allied forces in 1320 Š./1941, the tribesmen resumed pastoral migrations and tribal autonomy. Resistance to government control under *Moḡammad-Rezā Shah* (r. 1320-57 Š./1941-79) was temporarily resolved by the abdication of *Moḡammad Khan* in favor of his younger brother *Ḥasan-'Alī Khan* (r. 1325-35 Š./1946-56) until the tribe was finally placed under army administration in 1335 Š./1956. Government schemes for sedentarization, increasing encroachment of cultivation on pastures in the spring-autumn zone, and enhanced economic opportunities in the sedentary sector led to the discontinuation of the long, collective migration and extensive sedentarization. Some nomads continued to send flocks and shepherds to the south in the winter; others stabled and fed their animals in the upper mountain zone through the most severe months. After the revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79, however, some *Bāšerī* groups are reported to have resumed their migrations.

See also [ḳamsa](#).



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