



## NEHĀVAND

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**NEHĀVAND**, a town in western Iran, situated in the northern Zagros region (lat 34°11' N, long 48°22' E, elev. 1,786 m/5,860 ft.). It lies some 90 km/50 miles south of [Hamadan](#), from which it is separated by the massif of the [Alvand Kuh](#), which rises to 3,572 m/11,716 feet, and from which streams provide Nehāvand and its agricultural hinterland with a plentiful water supply.

Since Nehāvand lies on an historic route from central Iraq through Kermanshah (q.v.) to northern Iran, it has often been traversed by armies and has been the site of various battles (see below). Nehāvand and its region have been inhabited since prehistoric times, as disclosed by the excavations conducted in 1931-32 at [Giyan Tepe](#) by Georges Contenau and Roman Ghirshman. The excavation showed that the site of Giyan Tepe had been occupied from at least the fifth millennium to about 1,000 BCE. In Achaemenid times, Nehāvand was within the southernmost part of Media, and according to Strabo, the town was (re-)founded by Xerxes I. In 1946 a stone stele was found near Nehāvand bearing an inscription of the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus III (r. 223-187 BCE) instituting the cult of his wife Queen Laodicea (see [EPIGRAPHY ii. GREEK INSCRIPTIONS](#); Matheson, pp. 115-16). During Parthian times, Nehavand was, according to the later Arab historian Dinavari (p. 40; tr., p. 66), the seat of the Parthian prince Ardavān, son of Ašah (i.e., Artabanus I), while, under the Sasanians, the district of Nehāvand seems to have been granted out to the Qāren family (see [KĀREN](#)), and there was a fire temple there (Dinavari, p. 94; tr., pp. 124-25; cf. Markwart, p. 19).

When the Arabs invaded Iran from Iraq during the caliphate of 'Omar (r.



13-23/634-44), a famous battle was fought near Nehāvand at a date placed by the Arabic sources between 18 AH/639 and 21/641 (Minorsky, p. 23). The Sasanian commander is named as Du'l-Ḥājebayn Mardānšāh b. Hormoz and the Arab one as No'mān b. Moqarren, governor of Kaskar in Lower Iraq. The Arabs were victorious, and the Iranian plateau was opened up thereby to the invaders (Balāḍori, pp. 302-7; Dinavari, pp. 133-38; tr., pp. 168-74; Ṭabari, I, pp. 2596-615; tr., pp. 179-200; Maqdesi, V, pp. 180-82; tr., II, pp. 856-58; Caetani, IV, pp. 474-504; Spuler, pp. 13-14; Noth, pp. 274-76; Donner, pp. 428-35).

Nehāvand flourished in the early Islamic centuries as part of the wider province of *Jebāl*, at first as the center of the district of Māh al-Bašra (Media of the Basrans) with its revenues allocated to the stipends (*ʿaṭā'*) of the troops from Basra garrisoning it. The geographers describe it as a prosperous commercial center, in particular trading in high quality saffron grown in the adjacent district of Rudrāvar between Nehāvand and Hamadan, and as growing fine crops of fruit, exported as far as Iraq, while willow wood was produced for polo mallets, as also were various scents and unguents. It had two congregational mosques, an older and a newer one (Moqaddasi, p. 393; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 358, 368; tr., pp. 350, 359-60; Eṣṭakri, p. 199; Abu Dolaf, p. 18; tr., p. 50; *Ḥodud al-ālam*, p. 141; tr., p. 132; Yāqut, V, pp. 313-14; Schwarz, pp. 498-509; Le Strange, pp. 196-97; tr., pp. 212-13; Barthold, p. 181; tr., p. 268).

In the 4th/10th century, the Arab traveler *Abu Dolaf Yanbu'ī* journeyed through the districts of Hamadan and Kermanshah, and noted “fine remains of the [ancient] Persians” at Nehāvand, including talismanic figures of a bull and a fish carved from stone. He mentioned also the discovery, in the time of the caliph al-Ma'mun, of a subterranean treasure chamber containing two gold caskets (p. 18, sec. 44; tr., pp. 49-50). Little is recorded of events in Nehāvand over the next centuries, although the assassination of the Great Saljuq vizier Neẓām-al-Molk (q.v.) took place at the nearby staging post of Saḥna in 485/1092 (Rāvandi, pp. 134-35).

In the 8th/14th century, Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi described Nehāvand as a medium-sized town with a fertile surrounding agricultural region, with corn and cotton grown there in addition to various fruits; the population was mainly of Kurds, who were in religious affiliation Twelver Shi'ites (p. 74; tr., pp. 76-77). During the warfare between the Ottomans and Safavids over control of Iraq and western Iran, Nehāvand came into prominence. Soon after the beginning of *Shah 'Abbās I's* reign (r. 996-1038/1588-1629), Morād Ill's commander Čeġālezāda (Čaġāloġli), in 998/1589, built a fortress there as an



advance base for a future Ottoman invasion of Iran, and this was held by the Turks for several years, until in 1011/1602-03 an internal revolt of the populace of Nehavand, coinciding with the Ottoman sultans being distracted by the Jalāli rebellions in Anatolia, brought about the expulsion of the Turks, after which Shah ‘Abbās’s governor of Hamadan, Ḥasan Khan, razed the fort to the ground (Eskandar Beg, 406-7, 410, 515, 635-36; tr., pp. 584, 588, 691, 825-26; Savory, p. 85). With the decay of the Safavids in the early 12th/18th century, the Ottomans were again in control of Nehāvand until [Nāder Shah Afšār](#) recovered the town in 1142/1730. It fell prey, however, to local Baḳtiāri chiefs until, in around 1165/1752, Moḥammad Khan Zand advanced from Hamadan in the name of the nominal Safavid ruler installed at Isfahan, and a battle took place at Nehavand. The Baḳtiāri leader [‘Ali Mardān Khan](#) was at first victorious, but when Karim Khan Zand came personally to Nehāvand, ‘Ali Mardān Khan was defeated, and he fled into the mountainous interior of the Zagros (Golestāna, pp. 192-201; Perry, pp. 33-35).

Various Western travelers have passed through the Nehāvand region over the last few centuries (for these, see Gabriel, index s.v.). In modern times, Nehāvand has become the administrative center of a sub-province (*šahrestān*) of the same name in the province of Hamadan (Razmārā, pp. 460-61). In 1960 the town had a population of 26,500, but this has now increased to 72,218 (2006 census).

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