Beat: Local

History of Awazem in Arabia

Awazem

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USPA NEWS - Since its inception, the ancient Awazem tribe has taken part in building Kuwait in various political, social and economic fields side-by-side with other tribes and families. The Awazem tribe descends from the famous Arab Hawazen tribe of Bani Qais Eilan bin Modhar bin Nizar bin Ma'd bin Adnan.

It is currently known that the Hawazen were divided into three main parts throughout Arabia:
1- Hijaz Hawazen including Bano Jasham, who are currently represented by the Otaiba tribe.
2- Yamamah Hawazen including Bano Amer ibn Ouf, who are currently represented by the Subaei tribe.
3- Ahsa Hawazen including Bano Kelab, who are currently represented by the Awazem tribe.

In his book 'Kuwait History', Kuwait's prime historian Abdul Aziz Al-Rasheed said the Maliki doctrine was dominant in Kuwait and was followed by some of Kuwait's rulers and some known urban and desert-dwelling families.
Both ancient and modern Arabic history is full of mentioning scores of genuine Arab tribes and clans that had had a great impact and played a great role in pre- and post-Islamic history. One of these tribes is the Awazem, geographically living in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, while others, less in number, live in other countries.

A Genuine Arab Tribe
The Awazem are a purely Arab tribe mentioned in many history books by writers, who all agree on tracing its lineage to the Hawazen; a major pre- and post-Islamic tribe.
According to Abdul Rahman Abdul Kareem Al-Obaid's book 'The Awazem Tribe,' their original home is the northeastern parts of Arabia. They also have family connections with the Awazem in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen and Bahrain.
In a paper published in Al-Kuwait Magazine in 1928, Abdul Aziz Al-Rasheed spoke about the Awazem's Arabism, genuineness and Bedouin nature. He also confirmed their lineage with the Hawazen.
Dr Jamal Zakariya Qassim believes that the Awazem originally came from Ahsa, Najd, Kuwait and Qatar, while the Awazem outside these regions have roots in Arabia.
Non-Azmi and Azmi historians believe that the Awazem are the descendants of Aal Atta of Hozan and that Azem and Atta are both the descendants of Kelab ibn Rabee'a ibn Amer ibn Hozan.

This was confirmed by Hamad Al-Jassir in Al-Arabi magazine in 1416 AH, Jamal Zakariya Qassim in his book 'The Arabian Gulf,' Dr Hamad Rasheed Al-Feel in his book 'Kuwait Population,' Abdullah Nasser Al-Sane in a preface for poet Salem Al-Dawi's poetry book, Dr Ahmed Al-Muzaini in his book 'Kuwaiti Tribes And Family Lineage,' Fayez bin Moussa Al-Badrani Al-Harbi in his book 'Najd Tribes News,' Mohammed Sulieman Al-Tayyeb in the 'Arab Tribes Encyclopedia,' Ibrahim Jarallah Al-Shareefi in his book 'Golden Masterpiece In Arabia Lineage,' Orientalist Georg Wallin in his book 'An Image Of Northern Arabia' and the Royal British Navy's book about Arab countries.

Homeland
Ever since the early days of Islam, the Awazem inhabited the area between Ahsa in the south and Kathema (Kuwait) to the north. When the Qarmatians ruled this region, the Awazem extended their power to Bani Amer. In the second and fifth centuries after the hegira, the Qarmatians' power faded and Bani Amer ruled the region until the Ottomans invaded it in the mid-10th Hijri century. Mention of the great-grandfather Hozan kept being repeated by regional historians and it was proved that Awazem clans used to dwell and move to Hijaz and Najd between the 11th and 12th Hijri centuries. They were mentioned in innumerable poems.

Awazem's Bedouin Nature

The Awazem were nomads travelling in search of food and water for their sheep. The majority roamed the entire area of Kuwait, while in Saudi Arabia, they travelled around the area surrounding the eastern and northern water valley and some of them went further into Qateef and Ahsa.
They are widespread in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the west of Madinah, in Sader and near Hael. Some of them live in Qatar, Jordan, Yemen and Egypt.

Migration and Forays

As nomads, the Awazem were known for moving throughout Arabia and surrounding areas, making the tribe's history. Tribal poets, namely Lafi Al-Jeeha Al-Azmi, also contributed to documenting this history in detail, including travels and heroism. Various poems were written about the Awazem's might, multitude, dominance, ability to alter incidents and defeat their enemies or occupants of their lands.
According to Lafi's poems, the Awazem managed to control the area between Kuwait to the north and Qateef to the south after several battles with tribes dwelling there such as the Dasma battle in 1854, Al-Sabeeha battle in 1878, Al-Tareefa battle in 1895, Meraikh battle in 1915, Al-Noqaira battle in 1924 and the Redha and Noqair battles in 1929, which were the most famous and most mentioned in poetry.

According to men who actually witnessed the last two battles in 1929, they were the most important in protecting the tribe's existence when strangers decided to occupy Ahsa and its surrounding areas. On the way, they came to a well known as Redha Spring, where they wanted to defeat the Azmis living there and take over the well, which they failed to do and were routed. Two months later, the invaders remobilized troops to retaliate, but the Awazem waited for them by a well known as Noqaira, where they again defeated them. According to historical resources, those two battles were behind mentioning the Awazem in history books, and had the enemy defeated them, they would not have been mentioned by historians afterwards.

Awazem, People and Knights of Heritage

In addition to the details of the Awazem and other tribes' Bedouin way of life in both peace and war, social life and socializing with others is also significant in terms of preserving Arabic heritage. Arabic readers can clearly realize that poetic phrases they used speak for themselves using lexicon of the time such as swords, horses, coffee, camels and other desert Bedouin life details. Horses and camels were highly thought of by the Awazem because they needed them in daily life, wars and transport.
The Awazem were famous for breeding Arabian horses. They are also known as knights, using horses in sport and battles. The most famous equine names are Khehailah, Abbiya, Hamdaniya, Kroush, Swaitiyya and Sabha.
These genuine Arabian horse names are still used nowadays. Breeds of these Arabian horses are found in the Arabian Gulf, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Bahrain, and have been mentioned in many poems.

Camels also had the same significance and were mentioned in poetry. A number of historians dealing with Awazem history mentioned this. In an article published in Al-Arabi magazine in 1961 (issue # 37), Al-Alousi said that the Awazem had fortunes of camels.
In Loghat Al-Arab Magazine published in 1911, it was mentioned that "the Awazem dwelled in the vicinity of Kuwait (the Land of ibn Sabah) and had lots of camels". "The Awazem are a Kuwaiti clan of the oldest who ever lived in Kuwait. They worked in trade, especially that of camels and sheep," says the Kuwait Encyclopedia. "Awazem have many kinds of camels they call as Wadhha, Mejaheem, Sha'al, Moghatheir and Wasem Al-Awazem," it adds.

Awazem's Contemporary Whereabouts

Nowadays, Awazem are found in the Levant, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain, and have genealogical ties with those living in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. They share the same history, values, traditions and interests. They have family ties with other tribes in those countries.

Awazem in Lorimer's Gazetteer of the Arabian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia

In the English version of his book "Gazetteer of the Arabian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia" published in 1915, J G Lorimer mentioned the Awazem tribe when writing about the history of the region until the fall of the first Saudi state in 1818, when Mohamed Ali Pasha's troops invaded Dereyya. Lorimer lined the Awazem with one of Kuwait's sheikhs without mentioning further details because of the political aspects of the topic that were only cleared after the reign of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, when Britain was in the quest of a powerful ally capable of facing the Ottoman Empire.
Historian Abdullah Al-Hatem said that the Awazem were a deep-rooted Arabian tribe originating from Hawazen.

Awazem Sub-Factions and Clans
The Awazem tribe comprises of two main sub-factions:
* Al-Qou'a, who include clans of Hadaleen, Braikat and Al-Shagfa.

* Ghayyadh, who include the clans of:
01. Al-Mesahmah
02. Al-Mala'bah
03. Al-Musa'dah
04. Al-Jawaser
05. Al-Ghorbah (Al-Ghareeb)
06. Al-Qorashah
07. Al-Mahalbah
08. Al-Sawaber
09. Al-Atarmah
10. Al-Toumah
11. Al-Mowayega
12. Al-Ababeed
13. Al-Sowayegh
14. Al-Bataheen
15. Al-Howwasheen
16. Al-Khrafshah
17. Al-Jowarioya
18. Al-Shalaween
19. Al-Thebat
20. Al-Qa'amrah
21. Al-Fogou'
22. Al-Qa'eeb
23. Al-Mahalbah
24. Al-Belaihiya
25. Al-Nawa'mah
26. Al-Farshah
27. Al-Tabaqeen
28. Al-Bahari

The tribe made alliances with regional tribes like Ibn Al-Rasheed, Shommar, Al-Montafiq and others. Shiekh Mubarak did well when he alienated the British from the Awazem living in Kuwait, which foiled making any alliances with them since Kuwait and Britain were heading into signing a protectorate treaty in 1899. The sheikh meant no harm to the Awazem – he wanted to protect them.
The Awazem have a long history in the region and have taken part in many wars to protect the country. It is also noteworthy to mention that most of those who wrote about the Arabian Gulf and Arabian history were Western travelers who mainly relied on stories that lacked verification because of the competition amongst different

Second: Homeland
The Awazem settled in Arabia's northeastern corner known today as Kuwait and in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. The tribe lives in the area from Ahsa in the south to Kazema in the north – that is precisely from the west of Jubail city to Sanam Mountain that runs parallel to Kuwait's northern borders. They have been living in the area for hundreds of years and their ancestors, Bani Amer ibn Sa'sa'ah, were dated back by historians to the early days of Islam.
The Awazem are surrounded by Bani Khaled to the southeast, Al-Ajmi tribe to the southwest, Al-Mutair tribe to the west, Al-Thafeir tribe to the northwest, Al-Zubair and Um Qasr cities to the northeast and the Arabian Gulf to the east.
The Awazem also lived on Boubyan and Failaka islands. They also lived in east Hijaz and Najd. They lived in Madinah, Sabha Mountain, Meran, Al-Ad, Al-Hadhab Al-Ahmar, Khashem Mebhel, Al-Nair and many other areas.

Third: Warriors
Historically, the Awazem tribe is a warrior one that took part in many battles and incidents in the regions and countries they dwelt in.

The tribe is famous for keeping its promises and respecting allegiances with allies. This was clear when they helped King Abdul Aziz Al Saud to contain the Ikhwan rebellion and unite Saudi Arabia after annexing Hael, Ahsa, Hijaz and the south.
They also had a great role in supporting Kuwaiti rulers and protect Kuwait's marine borders with Iraq by owning lands and fishing sites on Warba and Boubyan islands.

Fourth: Traditions
The Awazem tribe has good traditions and values such as piety and respecting Islamic values. They helped build charity mosques. They never begged even during the worst of times. They are known not to assault or harm others or neighbors. In return, they never allow others to assault them.

According to Awazem marriage traditions, a girl will never be wedded except to one of her cousins, a tradition shared by all tribe sub-factions, giving priority to grooms from the same family, then the clan, then the sub-faction, and then the tribe. Awazem men and women rarely get married outside the tribe, which is a genuine Arab norm, like when a Bedouin never weds urbanites or townspeople and vice versa. In view of the current developments, most of these traditions have changed.

Fifth: Wealth and Possessions
The Awazem are rich in the finest camels, sheep and the most purebred Arabian horses in Arabia.
The urban side of the tribe owns many dhows and fisheries along Kuwaiti coastlines from the north to south. They also own some commercial stores in ancient Kuwait City. Bin Rashdan Al-Azmi owned Al-Qaiariya market, which was one of the largest then. They are also known to be benevolent and helpful to the poor and the needy.

Sixth: Religion
Awazem are good Muslims following the Maliki doctrine. They had many religious scientists in previous centuries. The scribe of Imam Malik's manuscript in 1074 was Sheikh Mosai'eed bin Ahmed bin Musaed bin Salem Al-Azmi. In addition, medical Sheikh Musaed bin Abdullah Al-Boraiki Al-Azmi graduated from Al-Azhar University in 1882 in Egypt, and specialized in smallpox vaccinations. He owned a library and apprenticed with many scholars. He contributed in spreading true Islam in Kuwait, Bahrain and other countries he visited. They built many mosques like those of Azran Al-Dammak, Bin Fares and Bin Hanwah named after their imams. They own many endowments inside and outside Kuwait.

Seventh: Contributions to Communal Development
The Awazem tribe contributed to developing societies through trade and education. Nomadic Awazem brought their camels, sheep, ghee and wool to sell in Kuwaiti markets and use the money to purchase supplies such as rice, coffee, dates, weapons and ammunition.
The tribe's sailors owned 40 dhows and were very active in importing goods from international markets like India, Ceylon, East Africa, Aden, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain, which provided enough job opportunities for Kuwaitis then.
The Awazem also worked in fishing and made fortunes from selling their catch in local markets. They also played a great role in defending Kuwait at all times.

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