

CultureTalk Egypt Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>  
What is it to be Bedouin?

**Egyptian Arabic transcript:**

نجله: إنتي أصلك بدوية، بس يعني، أولاً، آيه بدو، أنا مش عارفة يعني؟  
أمل: بصي، على حسب التاريخ إلي أنا سمعته، إلا بيتحكلي يعني كل ما اطلب إن حد يحكلي، لأنو فش حد طبعاً بيتكلم في، يعني إحنا عايشين حياة بدوية في حياة، لكن مش بنعتبرها إنها مثلاً آيه، يعني تاريخ لازم نتعلمه أو كل حد لازم يعرفه يعني. بدو يعني قبائل، حوالي 73 أو 72 قبيلة كانت بتسكن شبه الجزيرة العربية في اليمن والسعودية والكلام داه يعني أكثر القبائل كانت في السعودية.

نجله: يعني هي قبائل موجوده أصلاً في السعودية؟  
أمل: جذورها معرفش لسا لحد دلوقتي موجودين ولا تبدلوا أماكن وراحوا في كل مكان يعني.  
نجله: انتقلوا بعد كده...  
أمل: بينتقلوا كطبيعة يعني زي ما إحنا بنتعلم من التاريخ إن حياة البدو بتتوقف على أماكن المياه وعلى أماكن الكلاً إلي هو العشب

نجله: آه، لسا حقول لك، كنت حسالك، الصحراء، علاقة البدو بالصحراء آيه؟  
أمل: بدو يعني صحراء، مكانهم وحياتهم فيها. اعتقد إن هي البيئة إلي أنسب ليهم، حتى انتقالهم بعد كده ودلوقتي حالياً الناس البدو حتى إلي بيعيشوا بالحضر تبصي تلاقي سبحان الله ليهم... إن هم مرتبطين بالأماكن إلي حوالهم، (...) حوالهم صحراء، جو صحراوي، حتى في بداية المنطقة إلي طبعاً شبه الجزيرة العربية في ناس توزعوا في كل مكان وعائلتي أنا أصلهم برضوا انتقلوا لليبيا ومن صحراء ليبيا انتقلوا برضوا لصحاري مصر، وتوغلوا فيها.  
نجله: مش عارفة ليه حاسة إن في يعني حتى اللون، يعني ممكن اشوف لون الصحراء في البدو، أنا ما بعرف، مجرد فكرة جت...

أمل: كانت برضوا هبة صاحبتني برضوا قاليتلي شكلك صحراوي، أو إنتي شكلك سهلية...  
نجله: في كمان الصحراء يعني برضوا الصحراء طبيعتها، يعني الصحراء طبيعتها، يعني الحياة في الصحراء حياة جافة، يعني مش حياة سهلة يعني، بتحسي إن طبيعة الصحراء برضوا بتدي...  
أمل: طبعها في طبع الشخص، في طبع الناس،  
نجله: يعني لو أنا قلت لواحد... قولتي لي مثلاً، يعني لو أنا قلت لواحد إنتا... لو واحد بيعرف نفسه وقلتي أنا بدوي آيه أول حاجة بتيجي في دماغي عن صفاته مثلاً؟  
أمل: البدو دول زي أي بشر، مينفعش إنك تحطيلهم مسمى معين، أو CATEGORY هم يتخطوا فيه. بس ليهم سمات برضوا في حاجات عامة يعني ممكن هم بيعتروا بيها ومحبوش إن هم يتصفوا بحاجات غيرها.

نجله: زي؟  
أمل: الكرم. أو حاجة ممكن يحب إن هو يتصف بيها، يمكن تفتكري إنتي من أيام الجاهلية وبعد الجاهلية كان في حاجة إسمها الجوار أو حق الجوار، كان حدج مثلاً ممكن شخص ضعيف يجي جنب واحد في قبيلة عربية في شبه الجزيرة، كانت حياتهم حياة البدو، حياة قائمة (...) مينفعش الفرد يعيش لوحده، غدغ حتى جاء واحد غريب بيلتجأ لواحد ليه شهرة وسيط ويقول له مثلاً، عايز يكون لي عندك حق جوارن بيحس إن هو يحيمه ويعتبر إن هو من العيلة، بيحس إن هو لو حد اعتدى عليه في واحد وراه، بضره، بيعتبره منه... في دي برضوا حاجة فيهم، يعني طبعاً مع اختلاف الوقت مفيش حاجة اسمها مثلاً أو مش بالمعنى الأصلي كلمة الجوار بس جيرانهم يعني فيها شيخ البلد إلي هو أمير البلد نحنا برضوا... هو عربي.. بدوي يعني...

**English translation:**

**Naglaa:** Ah, you are originally Bedouin.

**Amal:** Ummm.

**Naglaa:** But ... first, what does it mean to be Bedouin? I don't know what it means.

**Amal:** Look, I, based on the history that I've heard, and that's being told to me whenever I ask someone to tell me because there is no one that talks about ... I mean, we live a Bedouin life as life, but we don't consider it, for example, what? Ah, I mean, history that we must learn or everyone, for instance, must know. Ah, the Bedouins ... I mean, are tribes, about 73 tribes or 72 tribes that used to live in the Arabian Peninsula.

**Naglaa:** Hmmm..

**Amal:** Between Yemen and Saudi and the like. I mean most tribes were in Saudi.

**Naglaa:** I mean, they are tribes located originally in Saudi.

**Amal:** Their roots, I don't know. They had ... they still exist until today, and they changed places and went to every place, I mean. Ah ....

**Naglaa:** They moved after that to ....

**Amal:** Ah .... They move by nature, I mean. Just as we learn from the history that the life of the Bedouins depends on the places of water ....

**Naglaa:** Ummm.

**Amal:** And on the places of the *kala*,<sup>1</sup> which is the grass, I mean.

**Naglaa:** Yes, I was about to tell you, to ask you. The desert, the relation of Bedouins to the desert, what is it?

**Amal:** Ah, Bedouins mean the desert. Their place and life are in it, and I think it's the best environment for them.

**Naglaa:** Hmmm.

**Amal:** Even, even their movement [changing places] after that and ... now, currently, the people, the Bedouins, even those who live in the urban areas ....

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<sup>1</sup> *Kala* is the Arabic colloquial word for grass. There is more than one word to describe grass in Arabic, based on its environment and where it's found.

**Naglaa:** Hmmm ....

**Amal:** You look and find, May God be glorified, that they have a tendency ... that they are connected to the places around them; around them, there is a desert, a desert climate ....

**Naglaa:** Hmmm.

**Amal** [clearing throat]: even in the beginning, when they moved, of course, from the Arabian Peninsula, there are people who spread all over the place. They also have moved to Libya ....

**Naglaa:** Hmmm.

**Amal:** ... and from Libya, from the desert of Libya, they also moved to Egypt's desert and dwelled there ... [clearing throat].

**Naglaa:** Ah, I don't know why I feel that there is ... I mean even the color, I mean, I mean, I could see the color of the desert in the Bedouins. I mean, God Knows, but it's merely an idea that crossed my mind.

**Amal:** Heba, my friend used to also tell me. Your face, your appearance is desertish or... you could be a lizard [laughing].

**Naglaa:** There is also, I mean also, the desert, its nature; I mean, the life over there, life in the desert is a dry life, I mean -- not an easy life, I mean. I mean, you feel that the nature of the desert also causes ....

**Amal:** In its nature and in a person's nature.

**Naglaa:** Yes.

**Amal:** People's nature. I mean ....

**Naglaa:** I mean if I tell a person .... Tell me for example, if I tell someone ... you ... if someone is introducing himself, "I'm Bedouin" -- what would the first thing to cross my mind about his features, for instance?

**Amal:** Ah, Bedouins are similar to any people. It won't work out for you to put a specific feature on them or a category for them to be put in. But they also have features; there are general things, I mean ... that they appreciate, and they don't like to be characterized under different ones.

**Naglaa:** Like?

**Amal:** Generosity ... ah ... the first thing that he likes to be featured [associated] with. Ah you might remember that from the days of the pre-Islamic period, and the days after the pre-Islamic period, there was something called neighborhood.

**Naglaa:** Hmmm.

**Amal:** Or the right of neighborhood.

**Naglaa:** Yes.

**Amal:** If someone was, for example ... a weak person could come near [associate with] someone in an Arab tribe, the Peninsula ... [clearing throat] their life was a Bedouin life. Ah, a life based on groups ....

**Naglaa:** Ummm.

**Amal:** It doesn't work out for an individual to live alone.

**Naglaa:** Yes.

**Amal:** Even if a stranger comes, he resorts [goes] to a person with fame and tells him, for example, "I want to have ... the right of neighborhood with you," so that he would be protected and considered a family member.

**Naglaa:** Yes.

**Amal:** In a way so that if someone attacks him, ah, there is someone behind him ....

**Naglaa:** Ummm.

**Amal:** At his back, who considers him family.

**Naglaa:** Yes.

**Amal:** This is called "the right of neighborhood." And this is also a feature in them ... of course there is nothing today as ... its name, for example is ... ah, or the original meaning of the word "neighborhood," ah ... but their neighbors, ah ... there is, I mean there is ... the sheikh of the town ....

**Naglaa:** Ummm.

**Amal:** ... whom we also have in our town, an Arab person, a Bedouin I mean ....

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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