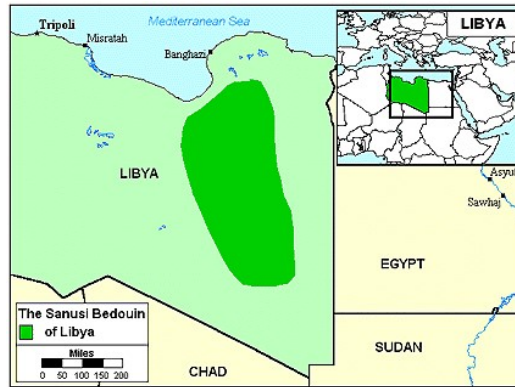


# Bedouin, Sanusi in Libya



Photo: Anonymous



Map: Bethany World Prayer Center

*"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*

<b>People Name</b>	Bedouin, Sanusi
<b>Country</b>	Libya
<b>Status</b>	Unengaged Unreached
<b>Population</b>	600,000
<b>Language</b>	Arabic, Libyan
<b>Religion</b>	Islam - Sunni
<b>Written Scripture</b>	Yes
<b>Oral Scripture</b>	No
<b>Jesus Film</b>	No
<b>Gospel Recordings</b>	No
<b>Christ Followers</b>	No
<b>Churches</b>	No
<b>Workers Needed</b>	12
<b>Workers Reported</b>	0

## BACKGROUND

The Sanusi are one of the most unique groups of Bedouin. They have been influenced by both the traditional nomadic Bedouin lifestyle and the religious teachings of a prophet known as Sayyid Muhammad ibn' Ali as-Sanusi. This particular Muslim influence has made them one of the more gentle of the Bedouin tribes.

The Bedouin fall into two basic social classes. One class is known as the "true" Bedouin, and they live as nomadic shepherds. The other group has embraced farming and is known as the fellahin. Due to the fact that the Sanusi usually settle in villages, most of them are of the fellahin type. They speak Badawi (Bedouin Arabic).

## WHAT ARE THEIR LIVES LIKE?

Despite being more settled than the nomadic bedouin, the Sanusi Bedouin still have a relatively harsh existence. Those who herd goats and sheep stay close to the desert's edge, and the harsh environment makes farming a difficult task with a poor yield. As in most Bedouin societies, the women do most of the work, while the men tend to socialize and plan for the group.

The material culture of the Bedouin is limited. Tents are their main possessions, and animals are very important for their nomadic lifestyle. Camels are their main

means of transportation, while sheep and goats are bought and sold.

Dairy products are the main food source for the Bedouin. Milk from camels and goats is made into yogurt and a type of butter known as ghee. Most of their meals consist of a bowl of milk, yogurt, or rice covered with ghee. Round loaves of unleavened bread are served when available. Meat is only served on special occasions such as marriage feasts, ceremonial events, or when guests are present.

To endure the extreme heat of the desert, the Bedouin wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. It is very loose-fitting, allowing for the circulation of air.

## WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS?

Almost all of the Bedouin in Libya are Sunni Muslims of the Malikite school. Islam is a religion of works that is centered on five basic teachings or "pillars." (1) A Muslim must affirm that "there is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." (2) Five times a day he must pray while facing Mecca. (3) He must give an obligatory percentage (very similar to tithes) on an annual basis. (4) He must fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year. (5) He must try to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in his lifetime.

Islam has greatly influenced the Bedouin. For example, to preserve their people, the Bedouin are only allowed to marry those inside their own group. Also, the society is patrilineal, which means that inheritances are passed down through the males.

## WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

Conversion by Muslims to other religions is forbidden and is termed apostasy which equates to treason. The penalty for apostasy is usually death. Perhaps this explains why there are only a few known Sanusi Bedouin believers in Libya at the present time. Evangelization efforts among them are challenging due to the harsh and unsettled nature of their lifestyle.

## PRAYER ITEMS

- \* Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to reach out and share the love of Christ with them.
- \* Ask God to strengthen, encourage, and protect the few known Sanusi Bedouin believers living in Libya.
- \* Pray that their traditional Muslim culture will soften, creating open doors for the Gospel to be preached among them.
- \* Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the Sanusi Bedouin towards Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- \* Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Sanusi Bedouin.