

Khorasani Turk in Iran



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Map: Bethany World Prayer Center

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

People Name	Khorasani Turk
Country	Iran
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	200,000
Language	Khorasani Turk
Religion	Islam - Sunni
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	No
Jesus Film	No
Gospel Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	4
Workers Reported	0

BACKGROUND

The Khorasani Turks live in the northern part of the Khorasan province of Iran. Their language, Khorasani, is very similar to Azerbaijani. Most of the Khorasani are bilingual, speaking both Khorasani and Farsi, the official language of Iran.

In ancient times, Khorasan province encompassed a vast tract of land that now lies within Central Asia and Afghanistan. It was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century, then overrun by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century and Teymur in the fourteenth century. From 1722 until 1730, Khorasan was occupied by the Afghans. In 1978, Khorasan experienced a massive earthquake that killed 25,000 people and destroyed the entire village of Tabas. In addition to the Khorasani Turks, many other ethnic groups inhabit this region, including the Aimaq, the Kurds, and the Baluch.

WHAT ARE THEIR LIVES LIKE?

Khorasan is the largest province in Iran, and is an important agricultural area. Therefore, most of the Khorasani Turks are farmers. Both irrigated and dry farming methods are used on nearly every farm. Wheat, barley, rice, cotton, sugar beets, potatoes, alfalfa, melons, and caraway are the major crops.

There are various levels of land ownership among the Khorasani Turks. Some of the

farmers own their own land; some rent land; and others are share croppers. Farm work is done mostly by the men, although the women usually help by feeding and milking the livestock. Sheep, goats, and cows are the only livestock the Khorasani Turks raise. These animals provide the families with milk, butter, oil, and meat.

Most farm plots are small and lie scattered around the villages. However, some of the farms are quite large and cannot be maintained by the family alone. Extra workers are often hired, especially during wheat and barley season.

The Khorasani Turks are skillful crafters of jewelry, furs, dolls, and glassware. They also weave beautiful carpets, rugs, and cloth. Their Khorasani carpets are well known for their exquisite designs.

In the past, the Khorasani Turks had no access to education except the traditional schools, or maktab. Reading, writing, and traditional Persian arithmetic were taught by a single teacher in each maktab. In most cases, this teacher was also the religious leader of the community. Recently, more modern schools have become available in the villages. However, the literacy rate among women and girls is still extremely poor, a problem throughout all of Iranian society.

WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS?

The Khorasani Turks are virtually all Muslim, and their society is organized around traditional Muslim rules. The family, led by the father, is the major social unit. Although the Khorasani maintain the equality of women in Islamic society, the reality is that they are treated as second class citizens and have little or no political freedom.

WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

The Khorasani Turks are a forgotten people, living in a very remote corner of the world. At the present time, there are few, if any, Khorasani Turk believers.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 has made it very difficult to gain access to the people of Iran. However, modern technology may provide some inroads through satellite television and radio.

PRAYER ITEMS

- * Pray that God will open doors for Christian businessmen to share Christ with the Khorasani Turks.
- * Pray that laws in Iran which restrict the preaching of the Gospel will be changed.
- * Ask God to raise up strong local churches among the Khorasani Turks.
- * Pray that Christian television and radio broadcasts will be made available in Iran.