

## **2014—Tat**

The Tat People of the Caucasus Region possibly hold **both** the most complex ethnic history and the most complex present-day changing dynamic of any of the 45 people groups of the North Caucasus. Most experts conclude that the Jewish Tat (*also known as Mountain Jews*) and the Muslim Tat come from ancient separate origins[see *Wikipedia.org*], but over many centuries both function from the same Tat language—the Tat language is from the Persian family of languages and was originally spoken in southwest Persia (Iran).

The Judeo Tat dialect is based on the Tat language with many Hebrew-Jewish words mixed in. Tat Jews/Mountain Jews assert that they were originally Jews from the 10 Northern Tribes who were settled in the Assyrian Empire and eventually began utilizing the local language of the region where they lived. Muslim Tats hail originally from the same region, and were also part of a northward migration—or possible military resettlement by the Persian Empire—into the Caucasus Region starting in the early A.D. era. The situation was further complicated when the Soviets lumped these two groups together in one designation, due to their commonly-shared language.

Sources indicate that at the peak in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century there may have been at least 50,000 Tat Jews in Dagestan and 40,000 in Azerbaijan. For example, in the highlands west of Derbent in southern Dagestan, in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century era eight sizeable Jewish Tat villages were known to be flourishing in that region. Massive emigration to Israel by Tat Jews from both countries has picked up pace in the 1980's and 90's—leaving present estimates of Jewish Tat populations in the eastern Caucasus at approximately 25% of previous levels. The largest number of Muslim Tat people have for decades lived in north-eastern Azerbaijan, in multiple villages north of Baku.

For the Jewish Tat, there has been a slow-moving Bible translation project led by one faithful woman (now living in Israel)--over a period of 20 years Genesis and Ruth were translated and now the Gospel of Matthew is mostly finished. PRAY for additional team members to join her in Israel and in Moscow, who are gifted in Judeo-Tat and who can help catalyze this important work. In Azerbaijan an international linguistic team has begun Bible translation work into Muslim Tat. Most joyfully, in the past five years there are reports of major breakthroughs for Jesus in a circle of clans in Muslim Tat villages in northern Azerbaijan. Approximately 30 Tat people in the region have come to Jesus.

*PRAY for an active team on the Judeo-Tat Bible Translation (II Tim.3:15). PRAY for the new believers among the Tats of Azerbaijan to abound in the Fruit of the Spirit and in fruitfulness among their family and friends—Colossians 1:6. May their influence even reach across borders. PRAY for the Lord of the Harvest to continue to send the right servants at the right time into relationships in Tat culture in Dagestan, Moscow, Israel, the U.S., and Iran—Matthew 9:36-38.*

### **JEWISH TAT – approximate current population figures, by country:**

- |                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Russia(Dagestan, Nalchik,Moscow)-- | 10,000     |
| 2. Azerbaijan                         | -- 15,000  |
| 3. Israel                             | -- 70,000  |
| 4. United States (Brooklyn)           | -- 10,000? |

### **MUSLIM TAT – approximate current population figures, by country:**

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. Russia     | -- 2,300  |
| 2. Azerbaijan | -- 26,000 |
| 3. Iran       | -- 9,000+ |



*A century ago -- MOUNTAIN TAT JEWS*