

## The Race of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (Atropatgan)

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**Abstract:** Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) is one of the main and ancient places of Iran where it has Aryan residents. Its name has been taken from an old tribe namely Atropatgan. This area with the oldness of 2300 years has always been considered as one of the most famous historical spots and the most valuable geographical places in Iran and in the world as well. In this paper, attempt is made to study the race and people living there from the perspective of anthropology and ethnology. In fact, it is based on this question that whether or not, the people resided in Atropatgan have an Aryan race as other Iranians. To find the answer, first we have considered the race of people in the Iranian Plateau based on appearance, color, hair and skull regarding different zones, oldness and the presence of various nations as some factors making integrated races. Then racial groups including three special ones have been studied. The first group contains Persians, Lors, Kurds and people in the south. The second group includes people of Mazandaran and Guilan in the north and the third group includes Azeri people. Conducting the research based on field studies, we have considered the race of people in Atropatgan and measured their skulls. Moreover, we have done anthropological studies on items such as the color of skin and hair, head size, forehead, eyebrows and eyes in cities and villages of the eastern Azerbaijan. To do this, some measuring tools have been used like compasses to measure the head and skull-graduated compasses with a movable beam, graduated steel meter-metal graduated rod connected to a metal base for measuring the height and a video camera to record people's faces. Then, the researcher has compared racial characteristics in this area with other peoples of Iran. Thus, according to anthropological and ethnical criteria of people in Atropatgan, we came to this conclusion that they have the same race (i.e. Aryan) similar as other Iranians who are the reminders and grandchildren of Aryan and Parse Medes. Therefore, the opposite is completely rejected on the view of the racial characteristics and all documents accounts for their Aryan race.

**Key words:** Atropatgan · Ethnology · Anthropology · Nations · Aryan race

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### INTRODUCTION

The world is a place containing various racial and lingual groups. So that as far as this issue is concerned there is no difference between developed and developing countries. As if, among all existing countries and islands in the world, about 160 countries have an increasing situation regarding race and culture. Iran is not an exception, because it can be called a multi-national or multi-racial community. The Iranian plateau is a special geographical part of Asia continent containing Iran. This plateau is a mountainous and high place in the southwest of Asia with 2.600.000 Km or about 1.724.800 Km area. Iran is located in the southwest of Asia, in the Middle East with a 1.648.195 Km area. It is covered %63 of the Middle East (or two third) and the rest contains other countries.

Iran was called Aran Shotor in Sasanid dynasty. In Achaemenian dynasty, it was named Iria. It was the name of an Iranian tribe. This word was applied by Caucasian nation as Irvoun- Ir- Irou. Some words such as Arians, Aria, Iran and something like them are taken from that. Iran has been serving as an important bridge between the East and the West from many years ago and main highways were crossed there connecting the civilizations of two sides.

The great part of the Iranian plateau located between Indus and Oxus valley, Zagros and Caucasian mountains is Azerbaijan plateau (Atropatgan) in the north.

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Azerbaijan was covered by the Big Sea in the early of third era and called Titus. Consequently, great changes on the earth's crust, mountain-making movements and volcanic actions have made the final geographical form of Azerbaijan plateau (Atropatgan) [1].

The effect of the natural and geographical form has affected the fate and historical events of this place. As for the business, this area was placed on the way of Caucasian commercial road and also the east-west path joined to Black Sea. And, today, it is a gate to enter into the Europe. Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) is one of the main and ancient provinces of Iran with Aryan people. Its name is taken from an old tribe, Atropatgan. Atro is Avestan and old pronunciation of Azar who was one of the Old Iranian Goddesses and means the fire brightness. Patik means keeper and worshipper, too.

The name Atropatgan has been mentioned with other pronunciations in the ancient sources such as Atropaneh, Atropatkan, Azerbaiganan, Azerbadgan, Azer Abadegan, Azerbaigan (the pronunciation of people in the Sasanian dynasty) Azerboijan and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) is one of the main and old centers of human's life. It has always been one of the most famous historical names in Iran with the oldness of 2300 years and also one of the most valuable geographical places in Iran and the world. It has shone in different historical fields and produced famous figures, too. Atropatgan is a large area to connect nations; and a strong, patient and talented race have settled here from past. That is why, it is an important place on the view of anthropology, physiognomy and even genetics.

**The Race of People Settled in the Iranian Plateau:** "Race is applied to a group of people who have maintained a common physical or biological characteristic in successive generations." [2] or "a group of natural people inherited a common physical feature; they have the same race even with different languages and customs" [3]. According to this definition, what makes difference between two races is physical inherent characteristics and nothing else.

The early anthropologists tried to determine the multi types nature of human by classification under the title of race based on geographical location and apparent characteristics as color and the other outward marks.

In 1350 B.C., the scientists found physical differences among human populations and classified them into three groups with regard to the color (black, white and yellow). The experts of heredity and biologists do not have a common idea about the reasons of variety in races. It means some of them know this difference resulted from heredity and others believe in environmental effects [4].

In fact, the people of different places in the world are so mixed and it seems unlikely to determine the exact racial location. It is not indeed out of ambiguity because the most anthropologists and scientists believe that human has always been exposed to immigration and racial integration. Racial integration is not only a historical reality, but also in this active world, it is more intensive than the past. The nations' relations and repetitive marriages of different races during centuries and their continuous changes have caused no fixed race remains. It means that we can not point to only one factor like color of skin to determine the race of a group. Other factors are considerable such as stature, the form of skull, head, hair, face, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose and size of cheek, jaw and also scattering of people on the base of blood group (genetics). Meanwhile, particularly the white race has had much integration with other races.

It is difficult for anthropologists and ethnologists to determine the race of people settled in the Iranian plateau. The reason is that it has been as an invasion field bilaterally from many years ago. On the other hand, it is as a bridge between the Far East, Middle East and Mesopotamia. Therefore, many different nations with various races have entered this plateau and placed under a unite ceiling of language. Anthropologists who study physical features are sure that some individuals with long heads have settled in Iran before the Nordic. But the related documents are few and imperfect. It seems that they have had a little relation with India. They had been Sumerians or related to them. It is still possible to find the sign of old Sumerians faces among people inherited in the southeast of Iran and Indus valley.

Generally, the main factors of Iranians are Mediterranean's. Moreover, there are some considerable varieties and deviations. In the Iranian plateau, people with extended heads are of two kinds: Those with erect nose and some with big

curved nose (every curved nose, less or much). The first group is probably related to Bedouins of the north Arabia and the second have grown in the Iranian plateau. With the exception of this group, people with small heads used to live in Iran, too. They are classified in three groups: The first group with erect nose, the second with so much curved and high parting of head and the third with curved nose and extended faces and heads. Given the researches, the most important characteristic of people inherited in the plateau is that they have round head with ellipsoid faces. Now among people who live, especially in the east, there are individuals with round heads and extended faces. They live in heights and mountains more than valleys and plains. Some of them can be related to the Indian Dravidians, because there are some people with round heads and ellipsoid faces. Tall stature and light color are their important features. It is resulted from intercourses with Nordic tribes. But regarding their light color, they can be known as Alp race. Moreover, today in Iran, there are northern and southern European kind, Mogul, Black and Hamite. The presence of these people in the form of Asian, European and African shows the physical relations between Iran and the other three continents. There are some documents that indicate Iran has been a living place from the Stone Age. There were considerable amalgamations among different races resulted from extensive cultural relations and connections. Excavations and comparative studies have clarified it.

It seems that the present residents in this plateau are more related to people in the west and the northwest of Iran. As a result of anthropological studies and measurements in Iran, one basic branch called 'the white race' has been determined. It is the race of people in the Iranian plateau.

The ancient Iranians (Homo Iranicus) are the genius brothers of original mankind (Homo sapiens) grown in the southwest of Asia physically and culturally, namely the cradle of direct ancestors of Aryans. The Iranians are among the oriental race called Indo-European who have immigrated to this plateau from Axus and Caucasian mountains in the late of the second thousand B.C. They were called Aryan in the history. It took 1000 years for Aryans to enter into this plateau in different small and large groups. Finally in the first millennium B.C., they were replaced and then made various sovereignties.

Some sects of oriental races entered Iran on the way of Caspian Sea has settled in the central Asia and Iranian plateau. The Parthians are among this group. A group of vanguards moved toward Indian valley. The western branch who passed into the north of Caspian Sea and entered Atropatgan on the way of Caucasian had a main role in the political and social life of the Iranians. They are the founders of Aryan Media and Achaemenian dynasty [5].

The Iranian plateau started a new life with fresh Aryan tribes and made the ancient age of Iran which lasts 1000 years. This time is regarded as the golden period in the history of Iran.

**Ethnic Groups in Iran:** "At the present time, a nation can settle in a country with clear boarders or can be separated for historical events. Their races can be divided among some countries or can be scattered in different areas for immigrations" [6]. There are some examples for the first and second types in the Middle East such as Iranian as a big nation in the past, Arabs and the Turkish people. In Iran, with these geographical boarders, there are several nations in which their characteristics are presented in their race and language. Considering lingual dialects and geographical scattering, they have several branches.

According to lingual dialects, they are Turkish, Baluch, Kurd, Hyrcanian, Larestani, Lor, Azeri and some others. Thus, this collection is applied to the Iranian nation. All of them have an Aryan and Iranian ethnical root, common past of one thousand years, history, culture, land inherit and common language. None of them can be known as a separate nation. Although there are some differences between their dialects and languages, but lingual similarities are such that the collection of their dialects has made a common language as Persian language. This language can not be related to any Iranian branch. It belongs to all Iranian people. Generally, there are three special races in Iran:

1. Persians who have settled in Alborz and Zagros mountains in the south and the north to Sepid River. The Lors live in the west parts of Iran and have thick hairs and lighter skin physically. Most of them are tall. Their skulls are

pressed and round. They have an extended and a thin face. Their foreheads are a little big, have thick and semicircular eyebrows. Also the big, wide, lowly noses inclined to the ground. Their chins are inclined down and seem a little big. They have small cheeks with more distance between them. The hair color is as same as chestnut and have thick beard, unmixed race on the view of quality and they are accounted among the Aryan race. The Kurds are the other group of Iranian nation settled in this area. There are three theories about their origin:

The first theory: They are among Indians and European races immigrated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The second theory: It emphasizes on their native and lingual nature as if they know Kurds as the relatives of other Asian nations like Khaleds, Georgian and Armenians.

The third theory: Kurd race is the diagram of Zagros, Gouti, Lolubi, Kasi, Orartouie and other tribes who settled in Zagros or Kordestan in the past. They joined Indo-European nations and have the same race [7]. People in the southern parts of Iran have darker skin than usual Arabs in Iraq. Perhaps, they have the most rate of similarity with early people of the northern Arabia and desert of Syria regarding the color of skin. Evidently, there are individuals with dark skin, too; but it does not cause any mistake with black people.

2. People of Mazandaran and Guilan who are settled in the Caspian seaside villages separated from the Persians in Alborz valleys by the northern climate condition of Alborz. They are original Iranians. Their difference with Persians is resulted from the separation on the side of Alborz and geographical climate condition and not for race. They have medium stature with dark and pale appearance, black eyes, black and thick hair and beard.
3. Azeri people who form all population of the northwestern and west of Iran are settled in a place called Azerbaijan (Atropatgan). Although there are some people with Persian language among them, but most of them are Turkish. It is worth mentioning that there are many differences between Iranian Turks and other Turkish nations. The Iranian Azeri people are not Turkish unlike common beliefs, but they are original Iranians with Aryan race. Anthropological, genetics and historical studies have proved this matter.

**The Race of Atropatgan People:** Today, there are a few nations whose ethnical amalgamation is not affected by immigrant nations. Since long time ago, different tribes have immigrated to find a better living place for various reasons such as: looking for pastures, increasing population, natural revolutions, economical changes, or because of forces. They settled in a newer places and it was likely that they had to change their places more than once. The northwest of Iran has been inhabited since the age of primitive people; some tribes emigrated from here to other places and sometimes returned to this place again. Therefore, it can be said that this area has been a passageway and a residential place for different nations. This unique situation supports this opinion that Turkish people were among nations who have settled here from many years ago and the beginning of their settlement is remained in the darkness of 1000 years. Consequently, in other words, we can consider them among the native people of this land. With the exception of native Turkish people, immigrant Turks have often passed here in subsequently periods and some of them have settled in some parts. They have intermingled with their homo-lingual people and after a while some of them immigrated for invasions. In the present historical sources, it is often talked about Turkish nations who sometimes passed from Caucasian passageway from the 5<sup>th</sup> century and came to south lands and Azerbaijan (Atropatgan). The subject discussed here is that some writers and archeologists called them as Turk race in their studies and believe that the present inhabitants in Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) are from a Turk race. Their only reason is the language of these people. But their Turkish language is not a reason to be superior, because race and culture are factors to make identity of the community and language is itself a part of culture that is always changing. Thus, it has an insignificant role. In other words, language can never indicate race or nationality and ethnical union is only based on common race, history and culture.

One of the main ways to determine race is skull. "Skull is a bone case contained brain and special senses and is responsible to keep them. Skull itself is made of different bones including frontal, back of head, temporal and molar bones [8]. It is possible to determine the race of a person completely by the exact studying of skull by different tools comparison and contrast with others skull and even with the Skeletons remained from past. Measuring the parts of the body and skull is completely practical and we can determine the form of the body by obtained numbers. Certainly, the numbers to classify the race depend on the individual's desire and invention, for example, a skull can be measured 10 or 1000 times. The recognition of racial characteristics is a little difficult, because there is no information related to craniology of early inhabitants in Atropatgan, unless there are some ancient documents.

Given the explorations and discoveries of bones from early people in Atropatgan, we can discuss about individuals' skulls in this area. These bones belong to native inhabitants. As a result of studies and measuring these skulls and also based on anthropological studies, it is obtained that people in this area have a rather round heads. It means that the upper part of skull called tinsel in medical is round and has no special projection. Thus, frontal bone is begun from its attachment place to forehead bone and then inclined as semicircle with  $100^\circ$  or  $105^\circ$  downward and to the back of skull and attaches to the forehead bone. The state of semicircle in obtained bones in mentioned area has proved that this matter that inhabitants' skulls are round and it is one of the main characteristics of Aryans. The state of being round affects on the form of face bones particularly on the cheek, eye, socket and nose. It has caused that face bone becomes big, extended and ellipsoid. Forehead bone is a little big, protuberant, extended and smooth. Eye socket is big, square, semicircle or round. Of course in some skulls, eye sockets are different on the view of smallness and bigness. The nostrils are wide and big. The width between the arches of molar bones is one of the main characteristics; especially that much width may show intermingling with the Moguls and Turks. Therefore, cheek can be one of the other differences between Turks and resident people in Atropatgan (Azerbaijan of Iran) namely Aryans. Molar bone (OZ ZYGOMATICUM) is placed on the sides to make protuberant. After studying the cheek of inhabitant people in Atropatgan, it was determined that they have delicate and narrow cheeks. But the Moguls and Turks have wide and big cheeks. This difference is clearer in Aryans and Turks by the color of skin. Chin bone is lowly and extended and face is ellipsoid. Thus, it has a great effect on the chins and cheeks. It means that superior maxilla bone is big and lowly because of cheek smallness. This bigness is completely observable in the inferior maxilla bone. Now we proceed to apparent characteristics of inhabitant people in this area. As a result of field studies in Atropatgan, the following outcomes have been obtained.

People in this area have white or wheaten or to some extent brown and a little dark skin. According to this research, 95% of residents in mountainous areas, specially in Shand Heights have a white or light color as if we can point to Kandovan village in south of Azerbaijan (Atropatgan). In the northwest of this area, white or even dark and wheaten people are observed. In Ahar Township in the west of Azerbaijan, the white and yellow races are observed among men and women. They are often mongrel. Certainly there are individuals who are dark black and green, but most of them are immigrant and have come here from other areas. However, generally, Atropatgan inhabitants are white.

The size of head is the most important difference between people in Azerbaijan and other races. In other nations, head is round. It has caused ellipsoid faces in this area as if the length of face is a little more than its width. People of Azerbaijan have small and semicircle heads on the view of length. The width of their head is less and narrow. The width and length of the head are a little different in cities and villages, but it is not significant.

In the course of the researches, some people with extended heads in the northwest of Iran have been observed. Thus, given this point, we can classify the present inhabitants into two types: Those with long and round heads and those with round head.

#### **Their Characteristics Are as the Following:**

##### **Characteristics of Those with Extended Heads:**

1. Extended head and long hair, big curved and narrow nose (every curved nose, less or much), narrow face.
2. Extended head and face of Mediterranean, erect nose, square maxilla.

3. Extended head, small face of Mediterranean, erect and a rather wide nose and square maxilla.
4. The intercourse of 1 and 2 that may be Nordic.

**Characteristics of Those with Round Head:**

1. Round head, square maxilla with curved or erect nose of early Alp.
2. Long parting of head and smooth centre of Armenia with curved nose.

Samples and measurements of head for size and form in Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) approve this point that two third of individuals have round head and the rest, medium and ellipsoid. Those with ellipsoid heads have round face, too. They are probably resulted from intercourse with Turks. Others who have round head are accounted among Aryans regarding to head criteria.

In the north of Azerbaijan, people have brownish black hair. Gray hair can be observed rarely before 40 years old. The color of hair in %60 of Azeris' (Atropatgan) is between black and brown. 90% of those people have thick hair and generally it is straight. Given to hair tissue, %40 has soft and others, medium and minority bristles. There are a few bald ones, resulted from old age or illness. Most of people have full-beard faces. Their beard is black or dark brown. In the east of Azerbaijan, people have generally black or dark brown hair. Concerning color and given to the type, there is any kind of hair from soft to bristles, but most have soft.

People have high, wide, big, smooth and extended foreheads. The length of forehead is to some extend more and its width is not completely extended. Most of the time, it is wrinkled and have grown well.

People in these areas have mostly thick eyebrows and even sometimes it has covered top of the nose. But there are separate eyebrows, too. They have had semicircular, extended and a little curved form. %95 have curved, %80 thick, %15 ordinary and %5 have separate eyebrows. But these features (curved and round) are seen among people.

Eyes are to some extent round and generally brown. A few of them have brown-green and most of them have brown-blue eyes, too. Only a few ones have had reddish brown eyes. The light colors indicate the factor of blond among them. Totally, it can be said that 84% have dark brown, 15% conical and some have lighter eyes. White part of the eyes is clear in most and a few have albugo. The distance between eyes vertically and also the distance of eyebrows with eye horizontally is small. During the researches, some individuals who have had extended and long eyes were observed. They are a few but are not accounted among Aryans ethnically and perhaps have Mogul or Turk race affected by ethnical intercourse during the time.

One of the most important physical features to determine a race is the length, width and a profile of nose. With regard to the size, nose is big and a little smooth. It means that %80 of people have big and extended noses. Tip of nose is wide and lowly inclined to ground and others have medium and a few have small and delicate noses observed in women more. However the nose size makes unusual appearance especially when it is seen sideways. People settled in the south of Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) have medium noses and about half of them have curved and more than one third have erect noses. In the west, the profile of nose has a considerable variety. But most of them are curved and big and a few are erect. In the studies, some people with erect and small noses are seen, too. They are short and have more extended head, round face, narrower forehead, wider maxilla and smaller nose. People with extended heads, on the contrary with round head ones have small, narrow and delicate noses. On the opposite, round head ones have big, extended, lowly and broken noses that are a feature of Aryans.

The Lip and mouth: Concerning the size, the lips are medium but in some cases large and a little turned. Through researches, someone with turned lips has been observed. It was seen among the inhabitants of villages more or less.

Seemingly, length and width of ear does not have ethnical importance. The size of the ear in different cities is not the same. In some cases, nose was very small, big or extended, but in an overall view, it can be said that resident people in this area have short and smaller ears as compared with other ethnical groups like Turk and Mogul. A few had big ears observed in the studies. But this bigness was not so much as if we account them among other races. The maximum width of external ear has a close relation with its length and that is the fact that both will increase by age.

We can not give a special opinion about stature. Maximum is between 160 or 190 cm. and more than half are classified as medium. Moreover, there was a considerable variety. It has no unusual variety while sitting and it indicates the equal size between body and foot length.

Regarding the body, those who live near mountains are often thin, but they have strong muscles. Their hands and legs are elegant and a little big and rough because of job and particularly farming.

Let it not remain unsaid that there are Arab Iranian race among Azeri, too. In the year 21 A.H., when Arabs came into Iran, the first ethnical amalgamation was happened. Azerbaijan (Atropatgan) and original Aryan Iranians in this area were not deprived from this ethnical amalgamation. As if %25 has this race, but %5 has unmixed Arab race and %15 mongrel (Arab Iranian). They have special genealogies for themselves. They have the same typology with people settled in this area. Although this amalgamation took place, but Aryan race has been superior because of being a dominant race. Moreover, they may have insignificant differences with Aryans. Their most important features are: white color, blue and bluish green eyes, bond hair, black eyes with high forehead, curved eyebrows, extended and lowly nose and black hair.

## **CONCLUSION**

Considering the studies about unique features of people in Atropatgan, we came to this conclusion that Atropatgan inhabitants have Aryan race like other Iranians. As a result, if they were from other race like Turks, so they would be yellow as same as Turkish people. In fact, the investigation clarifies that they are not yellow. The reason is that among people settled in Atropatgan, none of the features related to yellow race in north is observed such as yellow skin, thin and extended eyebrows, oval eyes and big protuberant cheeks. They are the most obvious characteristics of Turkish people.

All of the characteristics are observed in all groups of Turks and yellow race in the north as Kyrgyzstani, Cossak, Uzbek and mostly in Turkmen. But on the opposite, not only the features of white race are observed in Atropatgan like big eyes, white skin and non-protuberant cheeks, but most of them still have special characteristics of Aryan, such as light eyes and hair even after many years of Arab and Turk invasions.

It is worth noting that because of the history of the region, political changes in different parts of Iran, invasion of Turk, Mogul and Arab Atropatgan inhabitants are homogeneous as race is concerned. The invasion of nomads into Iran and Mogul penetration, hostility and long fighting with Ottoman and their penetration to Atropatgan have caused changes in the nature of this Aryan country concerning its history and its identity. Therefore, the manifestation of the change appeared in the language of people in this area and not in their race. In fact, they have remained original Aryans because of the lack of human actions and reactions.

According to 2500-year-history of Iran, Atropatgan inhabitants have been considered as Iranians and united with all of them. They are known as Iranian nation and we can not consider any new race for these people. The race of people in Atropatgan has been the same as Iranians from the beginning. Azerbaijan inhabitants (Atropatgan) are among the most original and the oldest Iranian families namely Aryan race. They have kept all Iranian characteristics in Achaemenidae, Arsacides and Sassanid dynasties and so far kept their ethnical nobility. Through history, particularly in the contemporary history, Atropatgan has been the pioneer of progressing social and political movements and intellectual events in Iran. Therefore, knowing them as non-Aryan on the view of ethnical characteristics is completely rejected. Moreover all of the documents indicate that they are Aryan. They are the reminders and grandchildren of Aryan and Parse Medes. All Kurds, Lors and Iranian races are their reminders. Atropatgan inhabitants are the real generation and heritors of their ancestors' race, namely Aryans.

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