

Turkey

Turkey with a population of sixty six million and the capital Ankara is a new state but an old country.

Nomadic Turkish tribes can be traced for four thousand years. Turks invaded Anatolia in Asia Minor in the eleventh century; Anatolia is a bridge connecting Africa, Europe and Asia.

Despite the diversity of its peoples and the constantly shifting borders Anatolia has a history characterised by remarkable continuity. Wave after wave of conquerors and settlers have imposed their language and other unique features of their culture on Anatolia, but they assimilated the customs of the peoples who preceded them.

The history of Turkey is the history of Anatolia but it includes the history of the Turkish peoples who brought Islam and the Turkish language to Anatolia during eighth century AD. A vast, cosmopolitan, Pan-Islam State developed from a small Turkish emirate in Anatolia and for centuries it was a world power. Turkish horsemen called *ghazis* (warriors of the faith) stormed into Anatolia in the eleventh century. Turks followed their tribal leaders to win booty and to take land as well as to spread Islam.

Turks were governed by principalities, which Ottoman united into Ottoman Empire during fourteenth century.

At the height of its power in the sixteenth century, Ottoman Empire under sultan Suleiman reached from Vienna to Persian Gulf. The Ottoman Empire, built on the conquests of the *ghazis*, was Islamic but not specifically Turkish.

The term *Turkey* was not assigned to a specific political entity or geographic area until the republic was founded in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), called Atatürk--the "Father Turk."

Atatürk's goal was to build on the ruins of Ottoman Empire a new society patterned directly on Western Europe by the introduction of technology, the modernisation of administration, and the evolution of democratic institutions. He abolished traditional code of dress, introduced international calendar and Latin alphabet and separated the government and religion. Atatürk abolished religious courts based on canon law of Islam Sheriat. Education for all children became compulsory.

Early Turkish nationalism saw a common destiny for all Turkish speaking peoples but Atatürk narrowed the focus to the Turks of Turkey.

Contemporary Turkey is relatively homogeneous linguistically but many people are of non-Turkish origin. Kurds are the biggest minority but there are also Armenians, Georgians, and Greeks. Majority of Turks accepted Muslim religion.

Turkey demonstrated a commitment to pluralist politics and peaceful transfer of power.

Turks are closely tied to their heritage and very patriotic. Despite the remarkable past of their nation, Turks consider their society European-thinking. Turks value a good education, secure employment, social status,

and an honourable heritage. Group orientation is preferred over personal assertiveness or aggression. Turks value loyalty, family, honesty, and cleverness. Turks prize a good sense of humour as it is often considered a sign of intelligence.

Sheref Sancar

I was born on 23.5.33 in a small East Turkish town Kelkit Alansa. Allah keeps me young and strong. I have never been sick. People often ask me what is the secret of my fine health and I tell them: believe, believe, and believe. Believe in justice and righteousness. Follow Allah. Look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself if what you are doing is right. My job is to do service to Allah.

I pray to Allah regularly and ask for his help to be righteous. Being rich means having a peace of mind, health, and the belief in God.

Australians don't believe any more. In the olden days Christians closed their shops and hotels for Christmas and Easter and worshiped God in their churches. Now the trade is best on feast days and the trade became more important than worship. They spend the feast days in the clubs and hotels.

I came to Lightning Ridge to bring Allah here. I have a model of a mosque on my table and I pray to the merciful Allah to change Lightning Ridge into the second Mecca. I believe that in not too distant future there will be a real mosque in Lightning Ridge.

I am from a leading Turkish family of shahs. My eleven brothers and sisters live all over the world. The World book of Sancars shows where the members of my great family live. There are 13 members of my family in Australia. I am listed in a book as living in Lightning Ridge. Most Sancars migrated to Germany but they can be found all over the world.

My father was a railway stationmaster. My two grandfathers were shahs of their villages with their own systems of government. They were upstanding men and also the religious leaders of the village. My family moved to the East of Turkey where traditions are still observed.

I learned from my grandfather never to be afraid because Allah is looking after us. Once during an earthquake people ran away but my grandfather told me to prostrate myself on the ground and pray to Allah. We were saved. People came from far around to seek the wisdom from my grandfather.

Many people in modern Turkey are not true Turks. True Turks came from Turkistan, which is a vast area now divided among many Asian nations.

I used to march on ANZAC day with the Turkish flag but some people did not like that. I wanted to show people that Turks also fought for peace. Young Australian boys came to Turkey to fight for England. Turkish boys were forced to fight for Germany who wanted to rule over Turkey. Now we both celebrate the memory and the peace.

I left Turkey in 1963 and went to Germany. I opened my mechanical workshop in Shlesgitter. Australia was recruiting migrants at the time and in 1972 I migrated to Australia.

In 1973 I met a Frenchman who invited me to go with him to Coober Pedy. I was to look after his machinery and for that have ten percent of opal he found in the open cut. He had a huge open cut and he found much opal. Once he found a huge opalised fossil fish. When he came on big money he kicked me out so he did not have to share it with me. I met a full-blood Albanian Turk who is in charge of Coober Pedy and is a true believer of Islam.

I returned to Sydney where I opened a car repair business in Parramatta. I met Roman Bedenikovic there and he brought me to Lightning Ridge. Roman died before I moved to Lightning Ridge permanently in 1978. I opened the workshop and named my business the Wrestler because I used to be a wrestler.

In 1991 Bedenikovic boys drilled on the opal mining exploration lease in Corcoran field. This area was leased out five times before but nobody found opal. I prayed to Allah that Benos found opal. I pegged a claim on the lease and went to register the field as Allah's Rush but authorities insisted on naming the field Kelly three. Their representative came to inspect the field and rolled the car. Allah was not pleased. The mining department then agreed to register the field as Allah's rush.

My friend Victor drilled a hole and Eddy placed a sign Allah Rush in it with the crane. I put a plaque at the base of the sign to thank Allah for his goodness and generosity. People celebrated because Allah the merciful helped to find the richest opal field in Corcoran. There were buckets of opal in my claim but Peter and Marko jumped my claim, put the blower on it and sucked the opal out. The big court case followed and we agreed to split the claim in half. They gave me a bucket of opal to sell. I sold it to Linda for 2700. I gave them 2500 and for 200 I bought T-shirts with the sign Allah's rush printed on them to give to my friends.

I had a hole drilled into the solid ground but when it bottomed there was a ballroom underneath, A neighbour came from underneath and took all the opal out. I complained to the Mineral Resources office but my neighbour was a friend of the inspector and I could do nothing. The men in the office always come first. They cash on their knowledge.

I found a partner, Tom, and we used a tunnelling machine to dig. You can not check the dirt when you are tunnelling and the person who washed the dirt stole whatever opal was there.

Many got rich on Allah's rush but I didn't. The miners, who cheated me, were punished. Marko and Peter died but I am still here soldering for Allah. The wealth did not bring them happiness but my faith brought it to me.

I sponsored the Goodooga all girl touch football team called Allah's rush and they were the clear winners too.

Allah says that everybody has to do whatever little one can to destroy corruption and bring justice to the world.

Be careful whose hand you shake because there are few honest friends around. Your first friend is bread, the second friend is health, and the third is Allah.

Mohamed was a smart man. He was a fighter, a businessman and a teacher. He said: If you want to survive on Earth one hundred years as an animal you must try to live at least one day as a human being.

Criminals know how to use poor people. They elect their representatives and through them rule the world. The world is corrupted and Lightning Ridge is no exception. You feel sorry for a hungry little dog and feed him and it grows and bites you. We elect people to represent us but once elected they only represent themselves and look after their pockets and their greed. They search for you when they need your vote but forget you as soon as they are elected.

There are over 200 000 Turks in Australia. They meet in their clubs, restaurants, nightclubs and mosques.

Turks are not Islam but Islam grew with Turks. Turks spread Muslim faith. Mohamed himself said: I am Arab but Arabs are not for me.

Laurence of Arabia said: I can deal with Arabs but I can not talk to a Turkish soldier. It means that Arabs are treacherous and would deal with anybody, sell and buy without principles. One can trust a Turk but never an Arab.

Muslims produce hashish but they do not use it, Afghanis produce heroin but not use it. It is the dealers who are getting rich from it not the poor growers of cannabis or poppy seeds.

I was married six times. I married the first wife at the age of fifteen and had a child at sixteen. In Turkey a boy meets girl and then his parents go to the girl's parents to ask for the girl to be their son's wife. The boy and the girl can not meet on their own before they are married. The boy's parents have to give money or some other valuable thing like a sheep to the girl's parents so the girl's parents can buy a dowry for their daughter.

I don't tell the secrets about my marriages. As long as I keep the secret I control the secret but as soon as I tell it, my secrets control me. I only tell my secrets to people I trust. If I fail to tell the secret to the woman who becomes my wife, she will find out and my face will be darkness before her.

The Imam comes to your home and registers your marriage by the Koran but you can also register your marriage in a registry office. If you divorce your wife by Koran you just tell her that you are divorcing her. Muslim way is not to hit a woman but you divorce her if she does not obey or does not show respect. A

woman must never cross the path of the man. If she sees the man coming she must stop and let him pass.

A woman is also free to divorce her husband. If a woman is unfaithful to her husband he must kill her and her lover.

Most widows rarely remarry in turkey. The government looks them after.

If the couple has no children it is up to a man to establish whose fault it is. The wife must allow her husband to prove himself with another woman. If the second woman does not have children he can try it with two more women before it is established that the fault is with him. A man can have more than one wife if he can afford it but these days few men can afford it.

In the days before Islam women were sold on the bazaar but Islam teaches that women have to be protected and respected. Man can marry many women to take care of them.

In Turkey most girls go to girl's school. A Turkish woman is the boss in the house and she can do, as she likes as long as she shows proper respect for her husband.

The modern Turkey outlawed the fez, the head covering of a man and a pecha, the covering of a woman. Modern Westernised Turkish woman does not have to be covered but in my part of Turkey East of Ankara women still wear Pecha and thatch. Pecha is the covering of the mouth and thatch is the decorated covering of the top of the head. The eyes and the nose are always uncovered. Women wear a long modest dress.

Turkey has no pension or social security for unemployed. The family has to provide for their children, their old people and for those that have no work.

My two sons live in Sydney with their families. They are non-believers. I have more children in Europe but I never look back. You can not go ahead if you look back. People spend too much time thinking about the past. I believe in Allah and go forth. Allah gives me power to go straight. I pray five times a day in my special room. I pray for justice. Allah created the world for everybody and told men to rule the world. Allah said that it is better to work than to pray.

A couple of Pakistani shop owners and I are the only people in Lightning Ridge who pray regularly and follow Muslim faith. I observe religious laws, eat no pork, observe Ramadan and abstain from alcohol.

Muslims in Turkey celebrate Curbum Bajram, which is the remembrance of Abram's sacrifice on the mountain. God told Abraham to spare his only son Isaac and instead sacrifice the lamb. Muslims kill the lamb in remembrance of that day; they share the meat with their neighbours and friends. In Australia meat does not mean much because we can have it every day so we make other sacrifices. I make donations to the mosque in Sydney.

Every year Muslims observe a month of Ramadan. I don't eat or drink or smoke or make love during the daylight hours of Ramadan. At the end of Ramadan I feel rejuvenated, purified and happier.
To me belief is a very personal relationship to Allah. Muslims don't confess to a man we confess to Allah.

Every Muslim, who can afford it, should make Hajj, a religious journey to a holy place, once in a lifetime but Hajj is no good if you cheat someone or don't help someone near you first. Hajj 2001 was a pilgrimage to the mount Arafat from which Mohamed gave his last sermon before he died.

Muslims don't force their religion on others; we respect other beliefs. Christians, Jews and Muslims have one God, the God of Abraham. We believe in Ten Commandments and the life of Jesus. Muslims believe that Mohamed was a messenger from God.

Some religions say if you don't do something God will not love you. This is wrong because God loves you always. Some leaders of religions want to own God and use him to promote their power over people.

There is much trouble at present in the world. The international bankers manipulate the world affairs. They helped install Saddam Husein in Iraq and now they want to kill him. They installed Bin Laden in Afghanistan and now they are chasing him. They created Israel and now there is war in the Middle East. It is all CIA's work; they are all agents of CIA.

Palestinians and Jews are children of Abraham and should live in peace together. Hebrew religious Jews want to live in peace with Palestinians. They want to please God. The non-believing Jews and black money makers manipulate the innocent people. Arab oil magnates and American bankers are in charge of the world order and whatever they do, they do it to suit their purpose. Suicide bombers can not fight with inferior technology so they forsake their lives.

People did not have war for a long time so they became careless and they forgot that they need God.
I believe that Australia should not get mixed up in other country's problems. When I was young my sister came to complain about her husband beating her. My father told me to fix him. I hit him hard. My sister went back to him and both of them hated me forever because I got mixed up in their business.

The outsiders should teach and negotiate but stay out of what is none of their business. The big powers pretend to be doing something so they spend billions for security. They know very well if anyone wants to destroy the world they can do so despite their security.

I gave a child a dollar to ask his teacher this question.

Does a horse or a donkey run faster? Everybody says a horse but I tell you the one that is pushed the hardest runs fastest. The one that is hurting the most will keep on going.

Someone once asked a little bird: why do you fly up and down and this way and that.

There is a lot of shit falling all around and I try to avoid it, said the bird.

Mohamed once said: whoever conquers Constantinople will be a great leader.

When Ottoman's army advanced, the Sultan promised not to destroy Christianity but make it one with Muslims.

A wise Sultan was only eighteen but he was very popular and people brought him flowers. He pointed to an old man and said: Give flowers to my teacher.

Mohamed taught us that we must give credit to our teachers.