
Chapter 21

Victory

Heading Home

WELL, the time for my check-in had arrived and after my tickets were confirmed, I picked up my boarding pass. My tickets were First Class, which was a surprise to me! I found out later that when my wife called to make my reservation, it was all they had left for that flight, and as she told them the story, talking to several different agents, they gave it to me for the same price as coach! Another small miracle!

I received a free breakfast pass to use at the VIP lounge in the airport before boarding, so my officer friends and I took the opportunity to go and have a good breakfast together. After we ate, I bought them both a souvenir and gave them any extra Turkish money I had. We had been through a lot together and they had truly become my friends. They were right there with me the whole time making sure I was safe and did not encounter any problems.

When it was time to board the plane, the officers and I gave each other a hug and said goodbye. They also asked me to call them when I arrived safely in America. I told

them I would. Then I boarded the airplane to Amsterdam, Holland.

When I arrived in Holland, there was a four hour layover until my next flight to Detroit, Michigan. In Amsterdam, every passenger was required to go through an interview before he or she could board the plane to the USA, and I was the first person in line for that interview.

The airline security asked me, "Where are you coming from?"

"Turkey," I answered.

"Were you in another country besides Turkey?"

"Yes sir, I was in Iran visiting my family."

"Do you have an Iranian Passport?"

"Well sir, I did, but they took it away from me."

I then proceeded to tell him the truth about what had happened. I showed him my American passport and showed him where there was an exit stamp, not an entry stamp.

E-TICKET TRIP SUMMARY AND RECEIPT		KLM		CPN:01 OF:01	
ENDORSEMENTS:		ISSUED 26MAY05 BY: NORTHWEST AIRLINES-US F ULFILLMENT CENTER			
NAME:RADIIPOUR/SAIIDMR					
BOOKING REF:KL JDCBSU					
FROM:	TO:		FLIGHT:	CL:	DATE: TIME:ST:BAG:
ISTANBUL	1ST	AMSTERDAM	AMS NW 8510	C	26MAY 0550 OK
AMSTERDAM	AMS	DETROIT	DTW NW 35	C	26MAY 1300 OK
DETROIT	DTW	ASHEVILLE	AVL NW 4729	Y	26MAY 2112
FARE:EUR1679.00		FORM OF PAYMENT:VIXXXXXXXXXXXXX9848			
TAXES/FEES/CHARGES:65.31					
TOTAL:USD2186.69		*** PLEASE SEE REVERSE FOR ***			
E-TICKET NUMBER:012 2117952478		*** IMPORTANT NOTICES ***			

Then he consulted with his supervisor about my case. The supervisor came and asked a few of the same questions. He smiled at my interesting story and then he let me pass through without asking any more details.

Months later after my return to the USA, an FBI agent came to my workplace to check on me. I do not know the real reason why he came to see me, but I volunteered any information he asked about my ordeal. I suppose there must have been something that triggered an investigation for security purposes, but his visits didn't bother me at all. He returned several times and eventually we became friends.

Our airplane was an airbus. It was very nice and appeared to be new. In First Class, all the seats were far apart from each other with plenty of leg room. They would turn from a seat to a bed with a push of a button! Each seat also had a private TV and a massager built right into the seat. All of these comforts were so nice after all I had been through!

As the airplane took off, I dozed off, dreaming of the events of the past few days. I was resting so comfortably when suddenly the Captain came over the loudspeaker and informed us that we had to go back because one of the instruments on the plane was not working properly. He considered it a minor problem, but didn't want to take any chances. So we went back to the airport in Amsterdam so the technicians could fix the problem.

After they realized the problem would take longer than expected to fix, we disembarked the plane and relocated to another gate to wait for another plane. All of this delayed my trip for four hours, but I was okay with it all. I didn't

mind a delay as long as I was safe. And as it turned out, there was a 7 hour layover in Detroit and I was able to make that flight with no problem!

I was now in the air to my final destination! I was going home where all my family and friends would be waiting for me. Although I had no idea how many there would be! I arrived in Asheville at about 10:15 pm. As I started down the escalator, I could see the large crowd, many holding welcome signs and American flags. It was a marvelous sight! There were at least 35 or 40 of them and I was humbled to see so many people there to greet me!

I was first greeted by my wife and then my children and their husbands, and my grandson, Roman. It was a wonderful reunion! Then I went around to each one of my friends who were there and gave them hugs and kisses and expressed my gratitude for their love and support for me and my family while I was away. I was so fortunate knowing that so many of my family and friends were on their knees praying for me. I truly rejoiced in the Lord, offering Him praise and thanks for the way He and His children showered me with so much love! This outpouring of love will remain in my memory for the rest of my life, and it will be shared with many as part of my testimony. It was especially wonderful to hold my wife in my arms again; my gift from God who now completed my soul.

Saiid Rabiipour

“Finally, the day of Saiid’s homecoming was here! I had been tracking his journey with the airlines from the time he left Istanbul till now. I knew he should be on that plane, but after all we had been through, I was afraid to get too excited until I saw him with my own eyes!

So many of our family and friends gathered at the airport to welcome him home. And because of the crowd, I think the airport employees thought that there was someone famous about to get off the plane!

The plane landed and we all stood in the waiting area anxiously waiting. Person after person came down the escalator until finally, there he was! It was a wonderful sight to see my husband for the first time coming down that escalator. I knew he was weary and worn from all he had been through, but when he saw the crowd that had gathered, he knew why he was home, safe and sound. All those people, and so many more, had diligently prayed for him.

During the time he was away, he had many opportunities to share and he took advantage of every one. God had him in His hands every minute, guiding his steps and protecting him from harm.

I think I knew in my heart that ultimately everything would be ok; that God would take care of him and bring him home to us. I knew He had a plan and a purpose for him being in Iran; it was just hard to

see sometimes. It was hard not to be afraid, or to question why, but now I know that this was an opportunity God gave us to learn to depend on Him, to trust Him, and to have the kind of faith that moves mountains! A passage from James says it well: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James: 2-4)

Saiid and I both now have a new appreciation for what it means to be loved and cared for and to see God's love in action. So many were there for us, supporting us, loving us, and most importantly, praying for us! If I tried to make a list and mention each one, the list would go on forever! We want you to know we love you all and pray God's richest blessings on you and your families!

And to God we give ALL the Praise, ALL the Honor, and ALL the Glory for who He is and for how He loves and cares for His children!"

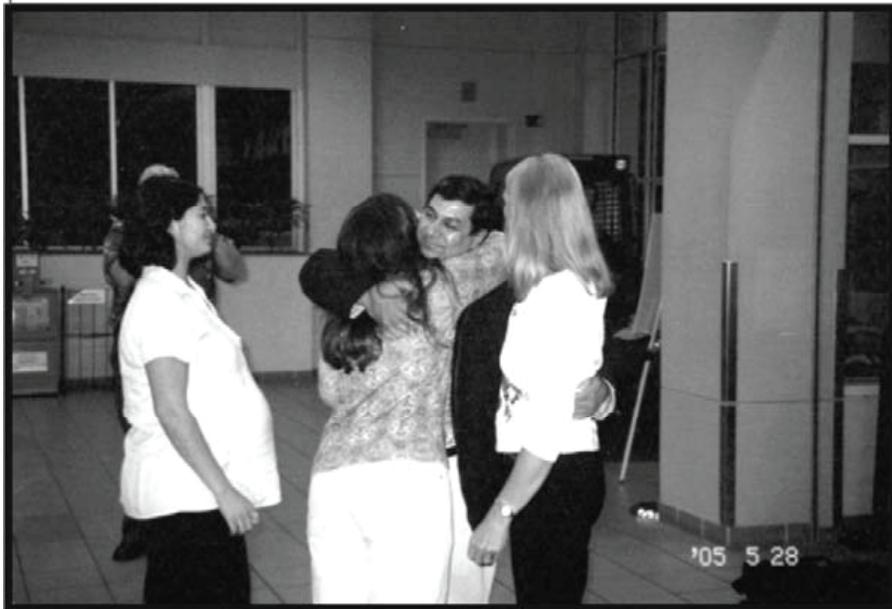
Ursa



Arriving at the Asheville airport



Greeted by my dear wife, Ursa



My daughters Alyson, Elizabeth and my wife, Ursa

It was wonderful when I was finally able to see and kiss the faces of my daughters. When I was away, I was very emotional, and could not speak to them over the phone without tears running down my face.

And there he was; my grandson, Roman! I proudly showed off his picture to everyone during my adventure. At the time, he was the only grandchild I had, but now I have five! What a blessing they are.

I hugged my son-in-laws, and all those who were there to welcome me. All of them had been such an encouragement while we were under so much pressure.

Most of all I want to thank GOD for being my deliverer twice.

For I am twice born and twice saved!



My grandson, Roman, at age two

**GLORY BE TO GOD
FOR HE IS GOOD**