
Chapter 6

TURMOIL IN IRAN

The end of Shah Reza Pahlavi dynasty

The Shah of Iran visited Washington in November 1977 toward the end of Jimmy Carter's first year as president. I saw many people carrying placards, and demonstrating against the Shah while it was being broadcast on national television. Some of the demonstrators even had their heads covered with grocery bags to prevent being recognized by the Iranian "Savak", the secret police. The welcoming ceremony was held outside on the lawn of the White House. However, the opposition and demonstrations were held against the Shah on the opposite side of Pennsylvania Avenue. There were two groups. One was pro Shah and the other against him. Fights flared up between these two groups and as a result tear gas was used by the police to keep them under control.

The Shah's personal photographer, who was also a good friend of my Dad, came to the USA when the Shah came for this formal visit with President Jimmy Carter. While he was here, he telephoned me to let me know that things were getting bad in Iran. Without going into details he assured me that my decision to stay here was a good one. He also wanted to know if I was okay or if I needed him to tell my

Dad anything. He also assured me that he would tell my Dad not to worry about me. As the time passed, I learned that the state of affairs in Iran was worsening. People were being killed and shots fired almost daily. Demonstrations were occurring in different parts of the city of Tehran as well as other major cities in Iran. Finally since the bloodshed was not achieving any progress, the Shah ordered his military to stop. Consequently with relieve of the military, not retaliating against the people, a revolution escalated across the country.

Later, the Shah of Iran, who called himself “Shah-han-shah, meaning king of kings” and his wife Empress Farah, left Iran. It was indeed a sad day for many who loved him but at the same time many were glad to see him go. Many people in Iran began to celebrate and dance on every corner of the country without realizing that their dance and celebration was only temporary and soon would turn to tears. The Shah said in an interview that he left Iran in order to prevent further bloodshed since he loved his people and what took place after he left was also a shock to him. American television of course was broadcasting all the events as they unfolded before our eyes, including the return of Ayatollah Khomeini later in 1979.

My Dad’s friends and coworkers who were familiar with the western cultures and often traveled to Europe on business trips, assured him not to worry about me. Then another call came from one of our relatives who was a technician in the Iranian Air Force and was stationed in England. He also wanted to know if I was okay, but did not discourage me about my plans. He too expressed his concern about the situation in Iran at that time. Those phone calls

gave me more peace and comfort about my decision and I felt the presence of God within my mind and soul.

Not long after I graduated in the summer of 1977. Someone from the Iranian Navy's personnel office called my Dad to ask him to come by his office. He did just that.

They asked him about me and wanted to know where I was.

My Dad simply told them "I gave you my son; I am the one who should ask you what you have done to my son; for you are responsible for him, not me."

Suddenly his tone changed and he replied that perhaps, Saiid is sitting next to a blonde lady right now and having a good time.

Dad answered: "I have no knowledge as to where he is or what he is doing. All I know is that I gave him to you and you lost him."

My Dad left his office without any retaliation or pressure from them, but the Navy kept a watch on my Dad's home for two months before they realized that I was not coming home. My family was well respected in our community and everyone knew us well. One of the storekeepers in our community was the one who alerted my family about them watching our house. But, my Dad was not concerned about their spying activities.



Azadi Circle in Tehran, Iran

Meanwhile, in September of 1977, Ursa and I got married and we became “one flesh” according to the teachings of the Christian Holy Bible. I also accepted my new faith, called Christianity, and was baptized in the water by its symbolic tradition and declared it publicly.

Though I was assured of my decision to stay here, there were still some strange and uneasy feelings in the back of my mind. The reason was this; since Iran had been a close ally to the United States, I was afraid that the Shah may ask for his men back and the USA might honor his wishes and we would be sent back to Iran against our will. As a result, during our marriage ceremony and before the exchange of our vows, my mind and eyes were searching all through the congregation for a possible objection from an Iranian naval representative. Then when the pastor asked the usual “Does anyone have any objection to this marriage? Speak now or forever hold your peace.” My stomach knotted up for a few moments, until I heard no response from the congregation and I breathed a sigh of relief! Then he continued with the rest of the ceremony.

“I whispered to myself, you didn’t have to ask that question, but Thanks to God, no one was there to object and everything turned out all-right.”

Although, I understood the very basic doctrine of Christianity, I still had a long way to go in my spiritual growth. I was like a baby in this new faith, yet eager to learn and understand everything about this religion.



Unfortunately, early on in my faith and before Ursa and I were married, the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church who baptized me did a very deceitful thing. He talked me into giving him \$1000 to invest in a made-up investment firm, and told me that whenever I needed that money he would give it back to me with interest added to it. At that time, I had no reason not to trust him, but it turned out he was nothing more than a con-artist. When I asked for the money back to use for our honeymoon, he put me off and avoided me.

I ran into him by accident a few weeks before our wedding, as we passed each other on the road. I motioned him to stop and he did. He wrote me a check and asked me not to cash it until the next day since he was on his way to the bank to deposit a certified check. Well, that check bounced like a rubber ball and I never saw him again. We were not able to go on a honeymoon right after our wedding,

but we were fine with that and went to our home we were going to rent to start our new life together.

I learned a very valuable lesson in my new faith. We may come in to contact with many good and bad individuals during our lifetime; but when it comes to our faith, always remember that the only perfect person who ever lived and now lives in Heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the best role model for those who are seeking the **Truth**.

The same year I applied for my permanent residency to the United States of America. I had made up my mind that I would pursue everything legally so I could be free from any obstacles here or when I travel outside of this country.

In the year 1978, a year after our marriage, my Mom and Dad informed me that they were planning to come to the USA. My older brother Parviz died in a car accident and left behind his wife with a six-month old baby. I was here far away and my parents felt as if they had lost me too. These two events back to back killed my Mom's spirit. She had never flown in an airplane before; in fact she was very uncomfortable, and would get migraine headaches very easily, but was willing to do whatever that was necessary to see me. They did not tell me anything about my brother's death because they did not want to upset me or make me feel guilty. They wanted to tell me in person. This had happened before I got married so they had hoped that when I returned to Iran I would take care of my brother's wife and child. But by this time they knew this was not possible and that God had other plans for me.

We met and welcomed them at the New York J.F.K. Airport. They met my wife and her Mom, Molly, who

traveled with us, for the first time. Ursa, my wife was also expecting our first child, Crystal, when they arrived.

They stayed with us for a few months, and this gave us lots of time to catch up on everything that had happened in our lives. It also gave them an opportunity to get to know my wife and her family whom they approved of very much. They saw that I was safe and happy and when they left, they were satisfied I had made the right decision.

They came back several more times after that visit and it was during one of those visits several years later when they brought my younger brother, Hamid, for me to take care of here in the USA.

God indeed answered my prayers when I poured my heart out to Him the day that I was in my dormitory, asking Him to make me a robot, wishing to have the blessings of my parents in my marriage. God is faithful and true.
