
Introduction

What you are about to read are three separate excerpts from this book:

It was Tuesday, May 31, 2005, three days after my return from my incredible journey. I felt like I had escaped from the land of no return! “*The land of Ayatollahs*”

I definitely did not intend for it to end like this. I wanted to be able to visit Iran again one day. But, it is one thing to lose a loved one to eternity, and another thing when you cannot be with the ones you love here on this earth, ever again. To have never been able to see my family again was more than I could bear.

It was in the afternoon and I was home alone. I was exhausted, so I decided to lay down on the couch in my living room for a nap. I quickly fell into a deep sleep and began to dream.

My dream took me back to my journey as I traveled over the mountain ranges of Iran and Turkey; my link to my wife and children back in the U.S.A.

The two men that accompanied me were like two angels of God and were in charge of delivering me out of harm’s way to safety.

The path was narrow and rocky, but the horses were surefooted and knew their way. It was still daylight when we began the trip and there was not a single cloud in the sky.

A gentle and cool breeze was touching my face as if it was the hand of God. It was very pleasant!

As the sky turned to darkness, the moon appeared with her beautiful smile. She was complete and bright, and her reflection lit our path; another reminder that God was with me. Everything was peaceful as we waited on top of the mountain in the cold night to cross the border. At times I wanted to give up my fight, but then I would feel God's presence and incredible strength, helping me to overcome my weakness.

Suddenly I woke up. As I opened my eyes, they were focused on some photographs which happened to be pictures of my family back in Iran. I slowly raised my head, and a fear like I've never known before overcame me! My body started to shake as I uttered these words to myself:

"Oh no, this can't be happening! I'm back in Iran. I didn't make it through!"

Then I asked myself, "Who brought me to this house?

Whose house is this and what will they do to me now?

Will they torture me or put me in prison?"

Confused and terrified, I got up slowly, my heart beating rapidly. I began to look around wanting to know where I was and how I got there.

As I was trying to get my bearings, I slowly walked from the living room to the kitchen. It was then I realized that I was safe in my own home and this was just a dream. Then, all the events of my dream flashed through my mind like a filmstrip. My entire being was filled with such an

emotion, mixed with praise and thanksgiving. I realized at that moment that more than ever, we serve a God who loves and cares for us no matter who we are or where we are! I was so thankful to be home.

As our airplane approached the Mehrabad airport in Tehran, a big commotion took place within. Almost everyone in the plane started talking and it sounded like a swarm of bees; very hard to understand. People started to move around and change their clothes, especially the women. The dress code had to be Islamic for all who lived in or visited Iran, whether you were Muslim or not. You were required to change your attire to match the expectation of the country and its ruling.

Everything felt frightening. The plane landed, and silence and stillness took over the atmosphere. You could hear a pin drop. The air was so tense and stressful, and my stomach was curled up in a knot!

We were then taken to the terminal where we had to have our passports checked. Hamid, my brother, was in line ahead of me. As we went through a small gate, one by one, an officer with a stern face checked us in. He entered my Iranian passport number into a computer and stamped my entry.

Then suddenly, I spotted a man with his upper body stuck out of a window on the second floor, calling with a loud voice, "Saiid!" His voice was echoing all over the terminal and it did not sound pleasant at all.

The security man who was on the floor signaled the guy who was calling aloud through the open window, using his

two-way radio, and asking, “Is it number one or number two?”

The voice responded that it was “two”.

1) Meaning serious 2) Not so serious

I wondered what they wanted from me. I had no dealings with this Islamic government. Then why are they calling out my name? Why was I being singled out? Was I in trouble?

All kinds of strange things were going through my mind. I was surprised by what was happening. I was not sure if it was a dream, an illusion or what!

As soon as I got home to my parents house, I called my wife. She was very concerned and so was I.

“As soon as I heard his voice on the phone, I knew something was wrong. My heart sank as he told me what had happened at the airport. Everything had gone so well on his first trip, but this time was different and I heard the concern in his voice.”

(My wife, Ursa)

The thought of being locked up and away from my family and grandchildren was my worst nightmare and brought many tears to my eyes.

The day came when I had to make a very important decision, the decision to escape from Iran. I knew there would be no one to blame no matter what happened. I did

not even tell my wife since she was sensitive to this option. She made it clear to me from the beginning not to do anything that would jeopardize my life. Deep within my heart, I knew that she would not approve of what I was about to do. But I felt I had no other option if I wanted to see my wife and children anytime soon, if ever.

Besides, God was giving me the peace I needed about this decision, and was providing the means. He was with me all the way through this dangerous escape. All I had was my faith in Jesus Christ to carry me through these mountains. I was giving up my logic for faith.

I did not want to stay in Iran anymore with its unexpected surprises. I knew that if I died, I would go to heaven to be with the Father, and if not, God would use me for His glory.

Honestly, I was not sure how I would have responded if I had been caught. Would I be bold enough to confess my new faith, which could result in severe punishment or even death, just like the early Christians? Or would I lie just to save my neck? Then I would be lying to myself and my God by denying Him. This is something no Christian ever hopes to be confronted with and I was not ready to be tested.

When a soldier is tested, he has had much training before going to war. They prepare themselves mentally and physically to face those tough challenges, even death as war sometimes demands. But I had never been in that type of situation before and I was not sure how I would have reacted. I pray that I would have made the right choice with the help and strength of God above!

These are three short excerpt of my story. Now I am going to take you back to the time when I was born and raised as a Muslim boy. I want to show you how God the Father called for the transformation of my soul to the Truth of His Son, Jesus Christ, and for my **“Farewell to Islam”**.

I hope that you enjoy it and are blessed by it.

Saaid