

## **Time Zone**

**By Mohammad Tajik**

I came from Iran. The city where I lived, called Karaj, was a beautiful city. I always had a pleasant time with my friends, until the day I moved to another country. I felt so upset about leaving all of my friends and my memories that I had of that city.

I remember when I left Iran, it was the end of the summer. I communicated to people who helped me find a way to go to another country. I decided to move to Turkey. I went with many other people. We started marching for almost 20 hours; it was so hard, and I remember it was a frosty night when I moved. I didn't bring a lot of clothes, which made me feel so cold. We were marching so fast that after a couple of hours, I didn't feel the cold anymore. After a while, we arrived in a city in Turkey. I went to bed because I was very tired from marching.

After one day, we moved to another city in Turkey called Van. Everyone separated; some went to Europe and some stayed in Turkey. I decided to move to either America or Canada. I went to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to sign my name for another country.

I had to stay for a long time until they decided which country picked my case. My case was in process during that time, and I lived in a camp in Turkey because I was too young to live on my own they said. I had a lot of both amazing and unpleasant times in the camp anyway, and I had to fight with it. Turkish food was pretty good, so I liked most of the food. I lived there for three years, and I went to school. I started at grade nine in a public school named Kamber Demi Lisesi. I found a lot of friends, and talking with my friends helped me to practice my new language and new culture.

After three years, the UNHCR told me the U.S. accepted my case. I was glad. It took about 20 days to get my tickets to go from Istanbul to Germany, and from Germany to New York. It took almost seven hours to arrive in New York City. I went to a hotel to stay, and one morning a guy came to me and informed me, "You are going to Fargo, North Dakota." I didn't like North Dakota because people said it was a very frozen place and was very windy. Anyway, I went to the airport and flew to North Dakota. When I arrived, it was so windy and cold. I wasn't that unhappy because we have the same weather in my old country that I came from.

My journey to America was important because I'm an atheist, and my life was in danger in Iran. They could have killed me if they understood that I don't believe in gods. I thought that the best decision that I had to make was leaving my country. At least here, I have a little bit of freedom to say who I am.

## **Turkish Language Glossary**

**“Turkiye hosgeldiniz.”**

“Welcome to Turkey.”

**“Benim adin...”**

My name is ...

**“Acim”**

“I’m hungry.”

**“cok guzel”**

“very beautiful”

**“Kamber Demir Lisesi”**

“Kamber Demir High School”

### **About the Author**

Mohammad Tajik is from Iran. He likes ping pong, swimming, and chess. He likes to learn about science and the universe. He would like to spend his time walking around a tropical place.