



## MY NAME IS HELPER

When I was only 12 years old, my uncle came into our yard and, in a friendly way, asked me if I would like to take a trip with him. Since my mother was drunk, she was happy that she would not have to worry about me. I did not know my father. My older brother was somewhere with other street boys. So, I took the outstretched hand of my uncle and ran with him to the bus stop. Many hours later we arrived in a place totally foreign to me. I stumbled sleepily into a house of Tajik-speaking women and men. Then my uncle disappeared. Only later did I realize that they had kidnapped me.

Other girls in the house were being trained as Muslim fighters. They taught us the teachings of the Sunnis, and we had to wear a burka. For a year I was held captive, hiding under the full-body veil, until one day the police discovered this hiding place and allowed the girls to go home.

I returned home to a mother who was never sober and a brother who had somehow changed. He often ran over to the neighbors and returned home very late. Then he told me that while I was away, he had prayed to God for me. Neighbors and a number of children and adults had prayed throughout the year. And God had answered their prayer. They all believed in Jesus and called themselves Christians.

Then I met the neighbor, Aunt T\_\_\_\_\_. Again and again, she spoke to me kindly and invited me to eat lunch with them. There I could also do my homework. But I did not trust this woman and kept to the teachings of the Sunnis and continued to wear the burka.

I soon noticed how children ran in droves right after school to this neighbor. My brother told me there was always enough soup and pita bread for all. After lunch, the children read the Bible and completed questionnaires. Then they were allowed to do all the homework this neighbor lady was there for anyone who needed help. If there was anything to clarify in school, she spoke with teachers and sorted out the problems. After the homework, the boys went with her husband outside and worked in the garden or built wooden items. Aunt T\_\_\_\_\_ was cooking dinner with the girls, baking bread and showing them how to wash clothes.

One day I left the burka at home and went along with other children to the house next door. No complaining, no crying, and no arguments – everyone was sitting peacefully on the floor and listening to what this neighbor told them about Jesus. Most kids I recognized from the street; I knew how they had often broken into surrounding houses

to steal. Countless windows had been broken because street kids viewed that activity as a game. But some of these children I hardly recognized; they lived at the dump, but now looked so clean and tidy..

The neighbor lady tried to speak with the small Tajik children, but they did not understand Russian. Then I realized that I was needed here. I started translating, taking care of the little kids ,comforting them as I carefully listened to the stories of Aunt T\_\_\_\_\_. Soon I joined teens who were reading the Bible with the help of textbooks from the Bible Institute/

Time went by. I studied courses about "The Good News, " "The Bible says," "Life of Jesus Christ," and " Gospel of John." I learned a lot about who God is, and I began to believe. With the help of the courses I could learn how to live as a Christian. God changed my life. I want to thank the Lord every minute that He died for me, even if I do not deserve it. Now I try to tell other people about God. Whatever I have learned about the Bible from the courses I pass on to people who do not know God. I learned a lot through these courses and also hope to be able to teach others.

I am now 16 years old. I was baptized and joined the church congregation led by MY neighbor's husband. My relatives tried to intimidate me and talk me out of my faith in the God of the Bible, but I told them that I have chosen Jesus Christ as my Savior and I will never renounce Him.

God has given me gifts, and I want to use them for His glory. I love to sing and do it at every opportunity in the Tajik language. These neighbors have fulfilled my very secret desire. They pay for the music school for me, so I can take singing, piano and guitar lessons.

I think my neighbor Aunt T\_\_\_\_\_ and I make a good team. I tell the stories of Jesus to the young children in Sunday school and in daily prayer meetings in Tajik. She needs me also in the summer children's camps. She allows me to cook lunch for the 20 children who come to her house every day. I like to do laundry, the cleaning, and bread baking, because we have become such a large Christian family.