

A Narration for the Martyrdom of the Báb

Cast:	Narrator
Scene 1	Guard Old priest Prince's tutor Head of the religious court
Scene 2	Hasan Khan Anis Siyyid Husayn, the Báb's secretary Sam Khan

Scene 1 – the Báb's trial

NARRATOR	In the four years that followed, thousands of people believed in the Báb. Then the prime minister decided that the Bábí movement must be stamped out. He arranged for a meeting of the Muslim clergy to be held in Tabriz, to question the Báb and devise a suitable punishment for Him.
GUARD	I was one of the Báb's guards. It was our job to bring the Báb into the city for His trial. It was difficult to get through because there was a large crowd in front of the building. The people were blocking our way and we had to force our way through.
OLD PRIEST	I was one of the oldest and most respected men in the meeting. From the moment the prisoner entered I could tell we were in for trouble. The only remaining seat was the one reserved for the crown prince, who was the governor. The prisoner, of course, should have remained standing, but – can you believe it? – He immediately sat down on the chair and said hello to everyone. It was as if he was taking charge of the meeting. Everyone was too amazed to say anything.
PRINCE'S TUTOR	I am the crown prince's tutor. I was quite impressed by the Báb, and decided to speak to Him respectfully. I asked Him Who He claimed to be, and what His message was. He said, "I am, I am, I am the Promised One." The whole room was awestruck. I noticed that some became pale and others bowed their heads.
HEAD OF COURT	I am the head of the religious court in Tabriz. Like most of the men in the hall, I didn't like the effect the Báb was having. Some of them seemed to be bewitched. I was beginning to get angry.
OLD PRIEST	I too was angry. I asked the wretched youth, "What do you think you're doing stirring up trouble in this region?"
PRINCE'S TUTOR	He replied, "Your honour, I have not come here of My own accord. I

have been summoned to this place.”

OLD PRIEST I was furious. “Hold your peace,” I retorted “you perverse and contemptible follower of Satan.”

PRINCE’S TUTOR We had quite a discussion about the claims of the Báb and how He could justify them. But unfortunately the divines were impatient to punish Him, and stopped our discussion.

GUARD They asked us, the guards, to take the Báb away and punish Him with the bastinado. This is tying up the prisoner and beating the soles of his feet with a rod. But we refused. We didn’t think the Báb had done anything wrong, and we were afraid that God might punish us.

HEAD OF COURT I wasn’t afraid of the consequences. I said I would carry out the punishment myself. They took the Báb to my house and I beat him eleven times on the soles of his feet. Once I hit him in the face and wounded him. But I regret it now. God punished me for what I did to the Báb. Soon after that I became paralysed, and a year later I died.

Scene 2 – The Báb's Execution

- NARRATOR The Báb was sent back to His prison in the castle of Chihriq, where He received many visitors. But the news was bad. Many of the Bábís had been killed. After two years the Báb was once again brought to Tabriz.
- HASAN KHAN I am the prime minister's brother, Hasan Khan. He was determined that the Báb should be executed. The governor refused to carry out the order, so my brother asked me to do it. The day before the execution I ordered the Báb to be taken on foot to the citadel. There were crowds all along the route, wanting to catch a glimpse of the Prisoner.
- ANIS I am Anis. The Báb had promised me in a vision that I would share His martyrdom. As soon as I heard that the Báb was being taken to the citadel I rushed through the crowd and threw myself at His feet. He graciously allowed me to remain with Him.
- SIYYID HUSAYN I am Siyyid Husayn. Anis and I were with the Báb on the night before His martyrdom. That night the Báb was full of joy. He told me to say that I was not a Bábí, so that I would not be executed with Him and could carry the news of His martyrdom and His instructions to the believers.
- SAM KHAN I am Sam Khan. I am the colonel of the regiment instructed to execute the Báb. But I am a Christian, and I had nothing against the Báb. When the Báb was handed over to me I said to Him, "If you are from God, find a way to relieve me of the duty to shed Your blood." He said, "Follow your instructions, and if your intention is sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity."
- SIYYID HUSAYN On the morning of the execution, the Báb was still talking to me when the chief attendant came in and told Him off for holding them up. The Báb said, "Not until I have said to him all I wish to say, can any earthly power silence Me." This puzzled me, as I wasn't expecting to see Him again in this world.
- SAM KHAN I went on, and fixed the Báb and Anis to the wall with a rope. My 750 soldiers took up their positions in three lines, and I ordered them to fire.
- ANIS The noise of the shots was deafening, and the square filled with smoke. But none of the bullets hit us. When the smoke cleared, the Báb had disappeared and I was left standing in full view of the astonished crowd and the soldiers.
- HASAN KHAN We found the Báb in His cell, talking to His secretary.
- SIYYID HUSAYN When the Báb had finished His conversation with me He turned calmly to the chief attendant and said; "Now you may proceed to fulfil your intention." The poor man was so frightened and bewildered that he left the barracks square and resigned his job.

SAM KHAN As the Báb had promised, He had saved me and my regiment from the shame of shedding His blood. I was very relieved. I ordered my men out of the square, and refused to have anything more to do with the execution.

HASAN KHAN We got another regiment to replace Sam Khan's. Once again the Báb and His disciple were suspended against the wall.

ANIS The crowd was quiet and the soldiers were ready to fire. The Báb spoke to them and said, "Had you believed in me, O wayward generation, every one of you would have followed the example of this youth... The day will come when you will have recognised Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you." Then the soldiers were ordered to fire.

(GONG – STRIKES TWELVE TIMES)

NARRATOR As the shots were fired, a great wind arose and swept over the city. A whirlwind of dust came with it, a dust so dense that it hid the light of the sun and blinded the eyes of the people. A violent storm broke over their heads and the strange darkness lasted from noon until nightfall. The bodies of the Báb and Anis were shattered by the 750 bullets; their flesh was blended together and could not be separated. The face of the Báb had not been marked by a single bullet; it was calm and serene.