

# **Sam Khan's Story**

**A Short Dramatic monologue**

*by David Hoffman*

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My name is Khan. Sam Khan. I want to tell you my story.  
*(Pause)*.

I grew up in Armenia. My father was a military man. My mother was a tailor. Ours was a very proper Christian home, a loving home. My parents completed each other. My father was a disciplined man, a man of excellence. And quite strict! My mother was a gentle, compassionate woman, a trait my father struggled with at times. She was always dragging some down-on-their-luck stranger through the doors; feeding them, giving them shelter. My father didn't approve but he loved my mother deeply and usually gave in to her generosity. My mother was of strong moral character. So was my father. In his own way.

When I was seven, we moved to Tabriz where my father trained young army recruits. It was such a beautiful place.

As a youth, I studied all of the military arts – drilling, swordsmanship, and marksmanship. By the age of sixteen I was thought of as one of the finest marksmen in the country and so I joined the army's infantry division. It wasn't long before I was promoted to sergeant, earned my commission as a first lieutenant and later as Captain.

I was given my own regiment at twenty-one. It was a regiment of seven hundred and fifty strong. What wonderful men!

Heroes they were. They'd have given their lives for me and I loved them for it. I served in this post for many years and then something happened that made it impossible for me to carry on.

It was early July in 1850 when I received the news that my regiment had been chosen to execute a political prisoner who had supposedly mounted an effort to destroy the security of Persia and to overthrow the King. Of course, this was all a fabrication! A complete untruth!

He was a man named 'Siyyid Ali-Muhammad. He had taken the title of the Bab, meaning the Gate in Arabic.

At first I was anxious to discharge my duty, to rid the country of such an evil. Then I saw Him. (*Pause*). The Bab. (*Pause*). He was so beautiful. I can never describe the power and majesty that sat on His brow. Nor can I place into words the sensation of fear that overtook me as I contemplated the issuing of the order to my men, an order that would take His life in such a violent manner.

I was torn in agony about this when I was finally able to attain His presence. I will never forget the brief exchange that we had. I entreated Him as such,

“I profess the Christian Faith and entertain no ill will against you. If Your Cause be the Cause of Truth, enable me to free myself from the obligation to shed Your blood”.

I stood motionless, studying the exquisite features of His face. (*Pause*). Then he spoke to me in a most melodious voice. He said, “Follow your instructions, and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity”.

What happened next changed my life forever. It was impossible and yet I witnessed it with my own eyes. And if that is not enough, you can ask any of the 10,000 who were there and witnessed the scene!

The Bab was suspended with ropes hung by a nail from the exterior of the prison wall together with a valiant youth who had the title Anis. That youth had, of his own accord; chosen to die alongside the Bab, another phenomenon that defies imagination!

Reluctantly I followed His instruction to carry out my mission. I assembled my men in three ranks. Each rank comprised of two hundred and fifty men.

I was trembling when I gave the order. As was customary procedure, each of the three ranks discharged their weapons, one after the other.

I stood frozen... *(Pause)* ...Watching the scene unfold. The musket smoke was so dense that it took sometime to clear. When it did I could not believe my eyes! *(Pause. He is reliving the scene)*.

Young Anis was standing on the ground directly under the nail. He was unharmed! I mean to say that there was not the least trace of injury on his person. It took me a moment to realize that the Bab was gone. I think it was a voice in the crowd crying 'The 'Siyyid-i-Bab has gone from our sight' that brought this fact to my attention.

Now mark you this. I know my men. They have been well trained. It is a rare occasion that one of them misses their mark. But, my God! All seven hundred and fifty of them had missed!

More, an examination of the scene discovered that some of the bullets had actually severed the ropes that had bound the Bab and his young companion to the wall!

I felt as if I was dreaming. The crowd began to grow very restless on beholding this site. “Where has the Bab gone?” some exclaimed. “He has ascended to the heavens!” others were heard answering.

But soon the guards discovered that the Bab had merely returned to his prison cell. I learned later that before my men made that failed attempt; when the guards had come to take Him to the place of execution; the Bab who was dictating a Tablet to his secretary had proclaimed that He was not yet finished. The guards mocked Him, scoffing at the Prisoner Who dared to be so bold as to attempt to determine the very time of His own execution!

They insisted but as they led Him away He assured them that until he had completed His earthly business no power would be capable of subduing Him!

And, so there he was found. Back in His cell finishing His earthly business. Now, the Bab informed the guards, He was finally ready to meet His destiny!

The spectacle of my regiment’s failed execution was plenty enough for me. There was something beyond extraordinary, even beyond mystical; something glorious about this Person, the Bab. And I am forever grateful to Him for allowing me to escape the fate of being His executioner.

Without hesitation I ordered my men in the most forceful manner to cease their activity and to quit the premises immediately! (*Pause. Musing*).

(*Speaking directly to the audience*). Now, my friends - I had occasion to follow the sad fate of the Bab and His youthful companion and to learn of those who had a hand in His suffering.

First, the Farrash-Bashi who had employed my services was later directed to assemble another regiment. But, he declined that order and fled his post, never to return!

So Aqa Jan Khan-I-Khamsih and his Nasiri regiment were ordered to replace my men and to perform the gruesome task. Another seven-hundred fifty men, this time a Muslim contingent, was assembled just as my men had been - three ranks of two-hundred fifty each.

I later learned that while the bodies of the Bab and His companion were mutilated beyond recognition, the Bab's face was unmarred. It is said that the Bab addressed the crowd before His execution and referring to His brave young companion, Anis, said to them, "Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation, every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and would have willingly sacrificed yourselves in My path. The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."

I know, too, that the instant the second round of shots were fired a sand storm of such magnitude the likes of which Tabriz had

never known blotted the sun's rays from sight until the sun herself set and rose on the following day.

That night, the bodies of the Bab and Anis were dragged through the streets and left to lie unceremoniously beside a moat at the outskirts of the city.

Now, here is yet another mysterious occurrence! Everyone who signed the death warrant or had played any part in the execution of the Bab soon died horrible deaths.

The entire Nasiri regiment, all seven hundred and fifty men, perished soon thereafter. That's right. I know it's hard to believe but it's the truth. Two hundred fifty died in an earthquake that occurred within that very year. The remaining five hundred were done all put to death some three years hence, as a result of a mutiny in which they had engaged. The irony is palpable for they died by firing squad even as they had executed the Bab!

*(Addressing the audience)*. Now, you tell me, my friends – could this be some strange series of coincidences? The result of mere sorcery? Or could all this have been driven by the hand of God, Himself? *(He stares heavenward)*.

**CURTAIN**