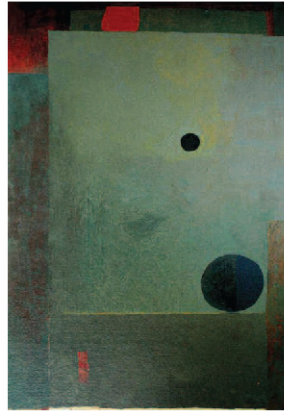


The following story is from the book

*The Central Figures*  
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*Volume Two*



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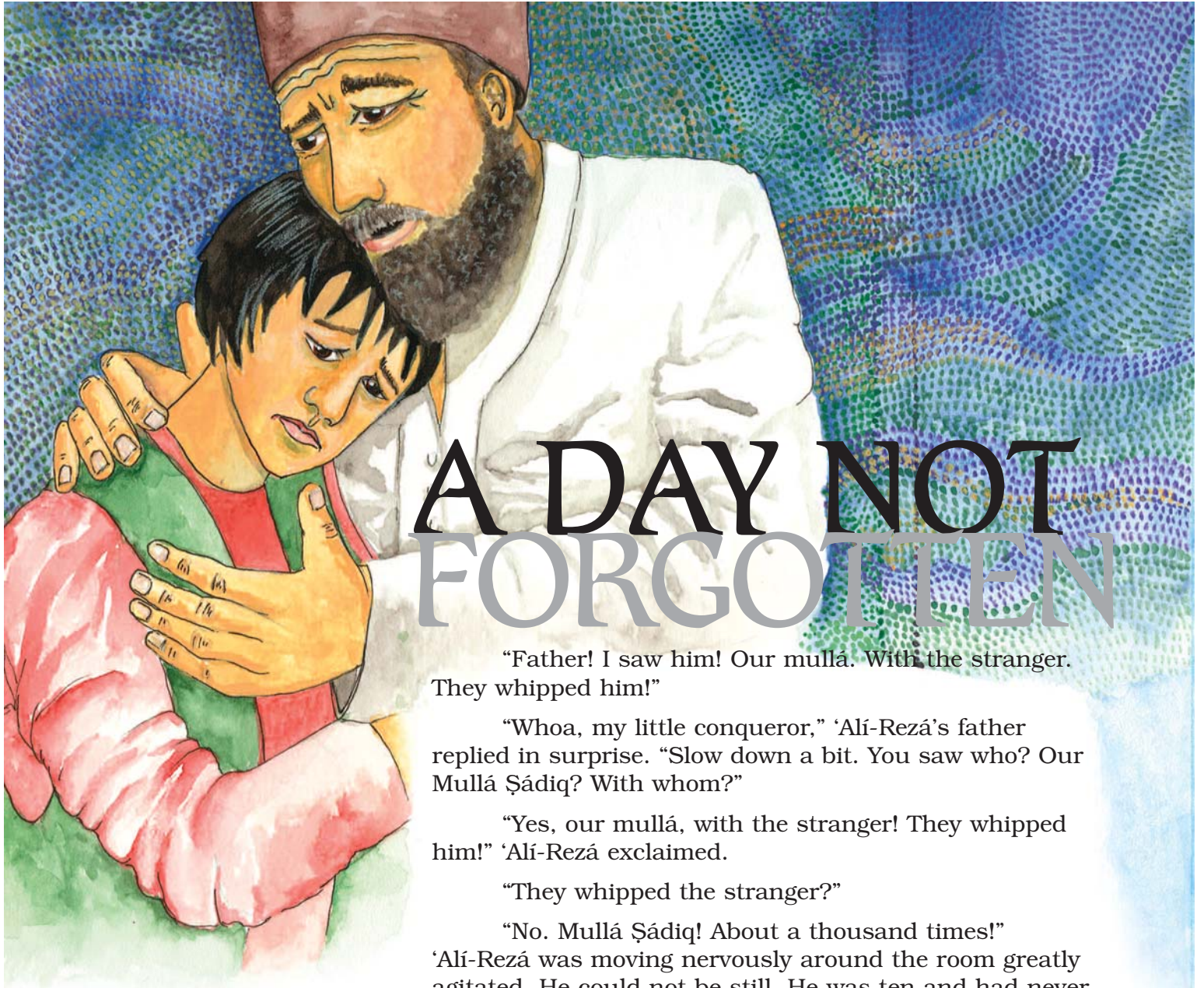
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# A DAY NOT FORGOTTEN

“Father! I saw him! Our mullá. With the stranger. They whipped him!”

“Whoa, my little conqueror,” ‘Alí-Rezá’s father replied in surprise. “Slow down a bit. You saw who? Our Mullá Şádiq? With whom?”

“Yes, our mullá, with the stranger! They whipped him!” ‘Alí-Rezá exclaimed.

“They whipped the stranger?”

“No. Mullá Şádiq! About a thousand times!” ‘Alí-Rezá was moving nervously around the room greatly agitated. He could not be still. He was ten and had never before seen a public punishment of such severity; and this was a person he knew, so it was worse. The

*Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*



thoughts would not hold still in his head, neither would the memories of what he saw: the man tied to the post, the clothes ripped from his back, the whip hitting him again and again, the bloody lines on his back increasing until his whole back was solidly covered with blood. Hopping from one foot to the other while he talked, 'Alí-Rezá looked wildly around the room, not seeing anything but the images in his head.

"It is too much," his father said, and walked to him and wrapped his arms around him. "You are too young to have seen such things."

"It was awful!" 'Alí-Rezá burst out and began to cry.

His father held him tightly for a time.

"And what did our mullá do?" Father asked.

"What did he do?" 'Alí-Rezá was confused.

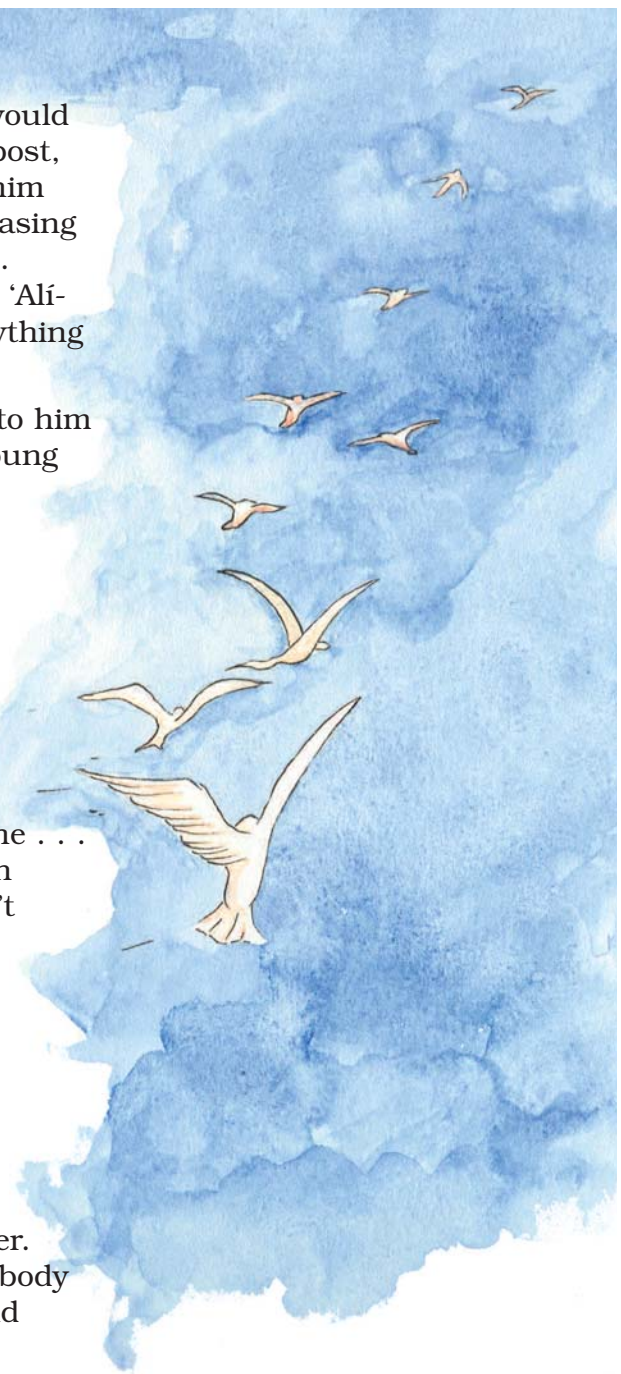
"What did he do while he was whipped?"

"Oh." 'Alí-Rezá had to think a moment. "He, he . . . he chanted prayers." 'Alí-Rezá's eyes opened wide in wonder as he recalled the man's reaction. "He didn't cry or anything," 'Alí-Rezá said softly. "He just chanted prayers."

"Mullá Şádiq is a holy man," said 'Alí-Rezá's father softly. "A very holy man."

"How could he do that, Father?" 'Alí-Rezá asked. "How could he chant prayers while he was in such pain?"

"He was beyond the pain," answered his father. "He was not in this physical world at the time. His body was here, you saw that. But his soul was far beyond this world, so he didn't feel a thing."





“He didn’t feel it?” ‘Alí-Rezá asked in amazement.

“I’m sure he didn’t,” replied his father with certainty. “I’m sure of it.” He was thoughtful for a moment, then asked, “What happened next?”

“They burned their beards!” ‘Alí-Rezá exclaimed. “Their faces were black and bloody. Then they put a ring in their noses! Then they put the rope through the rings and led the men through the streets like animals!”

“And you followed?”

“Everyone followed. We ended at the city gate. The men were told to leave the city or they would be killed. Then they were pushed out.”

“What did the men do during all this?” his father asked.

“They didn’t seem to notice.” ‘Alí-Rezá got a far-away look in his eyes as he began to remember this detail. “They didn’t seem to notice at all,” he said slowly. “They praised God the whole time.”

His father was very thoughtful on hearing this news.

“You know there are two worlds,” he said gently to his son. “One world is the normal, physical one; the world of things we can see, touch, and hear. The other world is not physical—it is the spiritual world. Usually we cannot see it or touch it, but sometimes we can know it is there. The physical world is like a mask that hides the spiritual world, which is the real world. When we die we will leave our bodies and will be in the spiritual world.



“Our Mullá Şádiq and the stranger—I think I heard his name was Quddús —experienced the spiritual world. Their bodies were in this world, but their souls were unaware of the world. The wind blew on their faces, but they did not feel it. Their bodies were hurt, but their souls were unaffected. You have seen this.

“I’ve heard of such things happening, my son, but I’ve not experienced it. You have been granted a special privilege by God to witness such things. It was painful to watch, but you must know that they were not in pain. They must be very holy men; I will have to learn more about them. This has been a very special day for our family, and you have the honor of bringing this news to our home. May God bless you and your children for that. Such things happen but rarely. You have been honored.

“And,” his father concluded with new determination in his voice, “I must learn all I can about why this happened—what is special about this Quddús.” ★

