

# SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

## Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir (1923–1979)

By Gail Radley



**B**lood-sucking leeches and waist-deep muddy water didn't stop Dr. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir from seeing his patients in the jungle villages of Indonesia.

Rahmat was born in Persia (now Iran) in 1923 and was one of eight children. His family had been Bahá'ís almost since the Faith's beginning. As he grew up, his home bubbled with Bahá'í activity. Guests often visited to learn about the Faith. Watching and listening, Rahmat discovered that being a Bahá'í meant serving others and creating a better world.

As an outgoing youth, he brought friends to hear these ideas. He often spent vacations visiting Iran's Bahá'í holy places. After high school, he taught classes for children and youth for two years. Then he began studying medicine.

But Rahmat believed that the Bahá'í teachings were the best medicine for a troubled world. He interrupted his studies several times for Bahá'í projects. He also encouraged others to be pioneers and move to places without Bahá'ís. In 1951, before graduating, he married Írán Furútan.

### Passion to Serve

In 1953, they met with Shoghi Effendi, the Faith's leader, in Israel. The visit stirred Rahmat's passion to pioneer.

Soon, he learned that the Mentawai Islands, Indonesia, needed a doctor. The couple settled there, on the island of Siberut Selatan. There he discovered jungle living firsthand. He caught severe malaria, an often-deadly illness. Rahmat provided desperately needed medical care with few supplies. He joined in villagers' healing ceremonies

and wore traditional face paint when treating patients. He sat on the ground with them and slept on a mat. He showed respect for the islanders' culture, and he earned their trust.

During four years in the Mentawai Islands, Rahmat treated devastating illnesses and eliminated some. Villages used healthier practices. Many islanders learned to read and write, 4,000 became Bahá'ís, and 12 Bahá'í schools were created.

In 1957, Shoghi Effendi named Rahmat a Hand of the Cause of God, so he could guide Bahá'í work around the world.\* That year, Shoghi Effendi died, and the Muhájirs returned to Israel.

### Offering His All

Rahmat traveled to all national Bahá'í communities over his remaining years. He shared the Faith with large numbers of people. He aided teaching efforts in India, where some 64,500 people became Bahá'ís in two years. Rahmat helped start schools and Bahá'í centers, and he encouraged Bahá'ís to pioneer. When India's extreme dust and heat caused him asthma and rashes, he told his wife, "I might have had these problems anyway. At least now I can tell God that I got them in His path."

"I beseech God," he wrote, "to make me pure so that I may burn like a candle in His path." Like a candle, he "OFFERED HIS ALL" to humanity, wrote the Universal House of Justice, the Faith's global governing body. In 1979, though exhausted, he attended a conference in Ecuador. On the second day, he had a heart attack, praising God as he died. The House of Justice said that around the world, people would miss his "GENTLENESS" and "ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH."