



SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Dr. Ugo Giachery (1896–1989) By Susan Engle

Ugo Giachery grew up in a wealthy family of nine children on the Italian island of Sicily. Their father, Uberto, loved teaching them about the solar system, plants, flowers, and trees. Ugo said, "It was for me a world of delights and wonders!" That may be why he earned a doctoral degree in chemistry and became a professor.

As a young man, Ugo was wounded in World War I. He moved to New York City and met Angeline, a Swedish Bahá'í he found "gentle, gracious, cultured, elegant and happy." In 1926, they married, and Ugo joined the peace-loving Bahá'í Faith.

Ugo exchanged letters with Shoghi Effendi, the leader and Guardian of the Faith. A relationship began which Ugo called "a unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience of the deepest spiritual import." When Shoghi Effendi asked Bahá'ís to assist the Faith, Ugo always responded.

Monumental Services

After World War II, the Guardian urged Bahá'ís to move from their home countries to help establish the Faith worldwide. Angeline and Ugo went to Italy and helped form local and national elected bodies called Spiritual Assemblies.

In 1948, Shoghi Effendi began to construct a magnificent outer structure for the Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel. He gave Ugo the giant task of finding marble, metal, and other supplies and shipping them to Israel. Building materials were hard to get, since they were needed to rebuild cities damaged in the war. For five years, Ugo spent many hours every day doing this critical work.

Shoghi Effendi made Ugo a "Hand of the Cause of God," a special person who helped to grow the Faith. He told Ugo, "The service you have rendered is not sufficiently appreciated today, but it will be fully appreciated in the future." He named one of the shrine's nine doors the "Giachery" door.

Teaching a King

After the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, Ugo continued to share the Faith around the world. One of his many adventures was visiting Malietoa Tanumafili II, the king of Western Samoa. Ugo brought him a book of letters written by Bahá'u'lláh to world rulers. The Malietoa later said, "I am a Bahá'í . . . I believe in Bahá'u'lláh." He was the first ruling monarch to join the Bahá'í Faith.*

On Ugo's fifth visit to Samoa at age 93, he was welcomed by the Malietoa for the last time. Ugo grew ill, and in July 1989, he took his last breath. He was buried near Samoa's Bahá'í House of Worship. The Bahá'ís of Hawaii wrote, "We will miss his regal bearing, his dignity, his wit and the twinkle in his eyes. We will miss his graciousness and his gentleness. We will forever remember the tears welling up in his eyes when he shared with us his deepest feelings for the two great loves of his life: his beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi and his dearly-loved wife Angeline."

Ugo accomplished many goals due to his love for the Bahá'í Faith. The Universal House of Justice, the Faith's global governing body, called him "VALIANT, INDEFATIGABLE, DEARLY-LOVED" and praised his "SPLENDID SERVICES."