

Dr. Heshmat Shariary

1934 - 2018



Dr. Heshmat Shahriary was a staunch supporter of the 'Irfán Colloquium. Accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Farideh Shahriary, he regularly participated in the annual sessions of 'Irfán Colloquium held at Bosch Bahá'í School in northern California. As long as his health condition allowed it, he was presenting the outcome of his research and studies at the 'Irfán Colloquium. Some of his research-based articles are published in the volumes of *Safíni-yi-'Irfán*.

Heshmat Shahriary was born on May 1, 1934, in Kashan, Iran. He was a fourth-generation Bahá'í. His great-grandfather Mulla Rida of Zavareh and his grandfather Assad'ulláh, both were Bahá'í Martyrs and were honoured by receiving Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

He moved to Tehran at the age of 17, attended Alborz High School, then moved to Shiraz to continue his higher education at the

Pahlavi University's Medical School. During his first year at that university, Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan visited Shiraz and spent four months delivering a series of lectures aimed at deepening the knowledge and understanding of the friends in the verities of the Bahá'í Faith. Sensing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, Heshmat decided to temporarily leave his medical studies and become available fulltime to accompany Mr. Furútan during that period. This decision would turn out to be pivotal and Heshmat looked upon this time as one of the most life-changing and significant experiences of his life. His transcriptions of Mr. Furútan's talks during that time in Shiraz filled three volumes, some of which can be found on the *Ayeneh-e-Jahan* website.

Heshmat went on to complete his education and become a renowned orthopaedic surgeon. He moved to the United States at the onset of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, where he successfully continued his practice as a physician. He authored two widely-regarded textbooks on the subject of arthroscopic surgery, one of which was translated into Chinese.

Heshmat had a burning desire to teach and serve the Faith. It was his dream to visit the country and the people of Romania, the country of Queen Marie, who, at her time, was the only monarch to recognize Bahá'u'lláh and become a Bahá'í. He travelled to Romania six times and successfully acquired a great number of copies of Queen Marie's letters as well as relics from the Museum's archives which he then donated to the Bahá'í World Center. The greatest honour of his life was when during his visit to that country in December 1990, he was presented with the official written pronouncement of recognition of the Bahá'í Faith in Romania by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Dr. Shahriary then turned his attention to China, which is referred to by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as "the country of the future." He travelled many times to China and achieved great results in his efforts over there. The crowning achievement of his work in China was undoubtedly the establishment of the Center for Bahá'í Studies in Beijing, through the support of Pride, a non-profit organization. The establishment of this Center was a-dream-come-true for Heshmat.

In both Romania and China he organized seminars in the field of orthopaedic medicine where he shared and taught the techniques of arthroscopic surgery, a field in which he was widely acknowledged to be one of the original pioneers.

In addition to his travels, Dr Shahriary developed a genuine relationship with the Persian media, opening channels of communications that would clear up common and widely-held misunderstandings about the Bahá'í Faith. He worked towards this goal tirelessly and passionately until the end of his life.

He retired from his medical practice in 2007 after a car accident. Guided and encouraged by the Universal House of Justice, he embarked on what would be his last great service to a Faith he loved and served his entire life: publishing a magazine entitled *Ayneh-e Jahan*.

The last decade of his life saw him participating actively in the 'Irfán Colloquium. He devoted many joyful hours pouring his energy and scholarship into studies and research for preparing scholarly presentations for annual sessions of that colloquium until fatigue and poor health prevented him from pursuing his research. On April 19, 2018, he left his earthly life as he lived it: peacefully and with great dignity.