

completing his studies in accounting, he became integrated in the family trade business - "Commission" - commerce in the community's language.

He completed his religious studies independently, daily, from the crack of dawn, with Hacham Itzhak Btsh Zasa'f. "Infected" by the atmosphere prevailing in the family for public service, he joined the community leadership as president of the "Keter Torah Committee", and became one of the founders of social aid in Halab - from the "Infant Welfare Center", through the Community Hospital and up to the "Charity and Healing Center" ("Sedaka Ve Marpe").

As a person for whom educating youth was a top priority, he ensured that the Talmudic students studying at Midrash "Beit Nassi" complete their education in additional subjects besides religious studies. He also hired Jewish and Gentile teachers to teach these students languages, accounting and further topics so that they could comply with the Syrian matriculation requirements.

Me, the eldest son, he sent, at my request and as customary among the Jewish families of Jamilya (the fashionable Jewish neighborhood), to complete my matriculation



מייז כהן ורעייתו טירה (אסתר לבית דוויק) עם
בניו: אדמונד (אדמונד), זקי (זחק) ורשל. התמונה
משנות השלושים.

Moise Cohen and his wife Tera
(Esther - nee Dwek) and the
Children Rachel, Edmond and
Zaki.

Picture taken in the thirties.

studies at the European "Frères Maristes" School, run by nuns. By order of the authorities, the nuns were prohibited from influencing their non-gentile students to convert to Christianity. My sisters, too, Stella and Alice, were sent to pursue their education with the Franciscan nuns from Europe. From there, the path to Halab University was easy, and my sisters and I continued our studies there until our escape from Syria.

However, acquiring a European and university education must not come at the expense of religious studies. Therefore, my father along with my mother made sure that on my return, each day, from the school, I would attend religious studies at the Beth Midrash. It was the customary practice for the community to pay each student a monthly allowance for studying at the Beth Midrash. Thus, both I and the rest of my friends succeeded in having a monthly allowance paid to us. Eventually, I discovered that my father insisted on secretly refunding the money to the community each month. In reaction to my surprise at this act, he explained that a person must never accept payment for learning the Torah, particularly if he wasn't in need of the money.

As the hardships of Halab Jews intensified, when Syria's Ba'ath regime began to 'punch above its weight' in our community, we - four of my father's sons and daughters - escaped to Israel via Beirut, and from there to Haifa on an Israel Navy boat. Shortly afterwards, my sister Eva (eventually Haya) also escaped to