

Republic Bank to them. This sale was joined by the Safra's' sale of the Swiss Bank, or the "Trade Development Bank," to American Express in 1983. Disputes broke out between the parties during this sale, but Edmond had the upper hand, and the court ruled that American Express must pay him \$8 million in compensation for harming his reputation. Edmond, as was his custom, donated this amount to charity.

Edmond was like that, and whatever he did, God granted him success. He was true to the spirit of Aleppo Jewish tradition, to Halab, in which he was raised. He was patient and respectful even to those who did not think as he did, and this is why he was loved and admired by Arabs, Jews, and Moslems alike.

He has a pleasant disposition, and was unpretentious and modest. Edmond shied away from publicity and exposure, so much so that Business Week magazine dubbed him the "Mystery Man of Finance." The Jewish values and universalism in which he was raised, along with his unique personality and the achievements to which he aspired, made of him an international personality familiar with presidents, writers, rabbis and people of renown.

In the spirit of the Aleppo tradition, Edmond combined Torah with labor, and strove for achievements of this world in tandem with gaining achievements for life in the world to come.

He was generous in his donations for establishing Torah study, charity for the needy, money for

newlyweds, youth, student scholarships—including the establishment of the I.S.E.F. Foundation, an international foundation supporting academic scholarship—providing for the sick and unfortunate; the list goes on and on.

In fact, he had a hand in every aspect of philanthropy. Edmond was a *tzaddik*, a righteous man who founded yeshivas and strengthened, erected, renovated and reconstructed synagogues across the world—from St. Petersburg, Rhodes, Paris, Cannes, Marseille, New York, to the distant countries of Latin America. He gave his supportive and generous hand to 300 centers of Torah learning in Israel. Hospitals were built at his initiative, retirement homes were founded with his donations and Zionist institutions developed with his support.

Edmond never forgot the members of his Aleppian-Lebanese community from Lebanon in Israel, for whom he built synagogues and Torah institutes in Bat Yam. For the Aleppo Jews in Jerusalem, as well as those in Baltimore, New York, and Brazil, he built splendid synagogues: Shaarei Zion and the Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn are merely examples of these.

Nor did he ignore academic and research institutes: he promoted cultural and art centers with a loving and supportive hand, including museums and institutes for medical research. He founded the Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University, with a parallel center at Harvard. The Hebrew University bestowed on

him an honorary degree for his extensive activities over the years.

Edmond was proud of his origin, showing off his Aleppo roots and boasting about his Sephardic origin. He never forgot where he came from. He named most of the public institutions he established after his father, Jacob. He was involved in everything; Elie Wiesel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, lamented Edmond at his funeral: "You did so much for so many people."

Edmond, z"l, passed away five years ago, on 24 Kislev 5759 (December 3, 1999) and was buried in Geneva, leaving his wife, Lily; two children, Adriana and Eduardo; two brothers, Joseph and Moise—brave, true and enterprising men in the spirit of family tradition; and three sisters, Arlette, Gabi and Huguette, May they all live long and good lives.

Edmond was a noble man of outstanding qualities: a leader; friend of Israel, compassionate Jew, proud of the heritage of his ancestors; banker of standing; unique personality. He invested in humanity, education and in helping others, he pursued and loved peace, loved people and people loved him.

We, the members, workers and management of the Aleppo Jewish Heritage Center, and Aleppo Jews in Israel and worldwide, bow our heads today in memory of the late Edmond Safra, on the fifth anniversary of his death. Blessed be his memory.