

Davide Sala

CARMEL AWARD OF MERIT



University of Haifa

May 10, 1984

יקיר הכרמל

CARMEL AWARD OF MERIT

In the עליה לתורה, according to our time-honoured tradition, a special place of honour is given to the הפטרה — the winding up of the reading of the Torah portion.

The special event of our bestowing a singular and unique honour upon an outstanding honoree is the הפטרה of the Board of Governors three-day meeting — and Davide Sala is our unanimous selection for the מפטיר.

In the twelve years of our existence as a fully-fledged university, only four distinguished recipients were chosen for this award — Davide is the fifth —

חמישה מי ידע — חמישה חומשי תורה.

Davide Sala is a worthy scion of גלות בבל — the great diaspora which has made such indelible impact on our history, such outstanding contribution throughout the ages to the progress and continuity of Jewish life and culture — balancing wisdom, erudition and practical affairs.

בבל, wherein uninterrupted Jewish life, tradition and culture pinnacled in the Amoraic compilation of the תלמוד בבלי — the greatest post-biblical edifice of Jewish learning — that voluminous commentary on the Tanaic Mishna — far outstripping the תלמוד ירושלמי — the Jerusalem Talmud — thus reflecting the shifting of the centre of gravity of Jewish survival from Jerusalem of those days to Sura and Pumbedita in בבל.

But, albeit that our people — the people of the Book — were traditionally taught to venerate erudition and men of learning, the Jewish way of life is underpinned by a three-tier foundation of which the Torah is only one.

על שלושה דברים העולם עומד: על התורה, על עבודה ועל גמילות חסדים.

In Davide these three components — wide learning, creative business achievements and philanthropic enterprises, have come to converge in his personality and in his deeds.

Davide is a modest man, shunning titles. He holds a doctoral degree in economics, but prefers to be addressed as Mr. Sala or better still, Davide. In this he follows the saying of our sages — גדול מרב רבן, וגדול מרבן — שמו.

In his productive and variegated business life, he has been outstandingly successful in applying knowledge to practice — to become very innovative in his ventures and enterprises. Thus — תורה ועבודה.

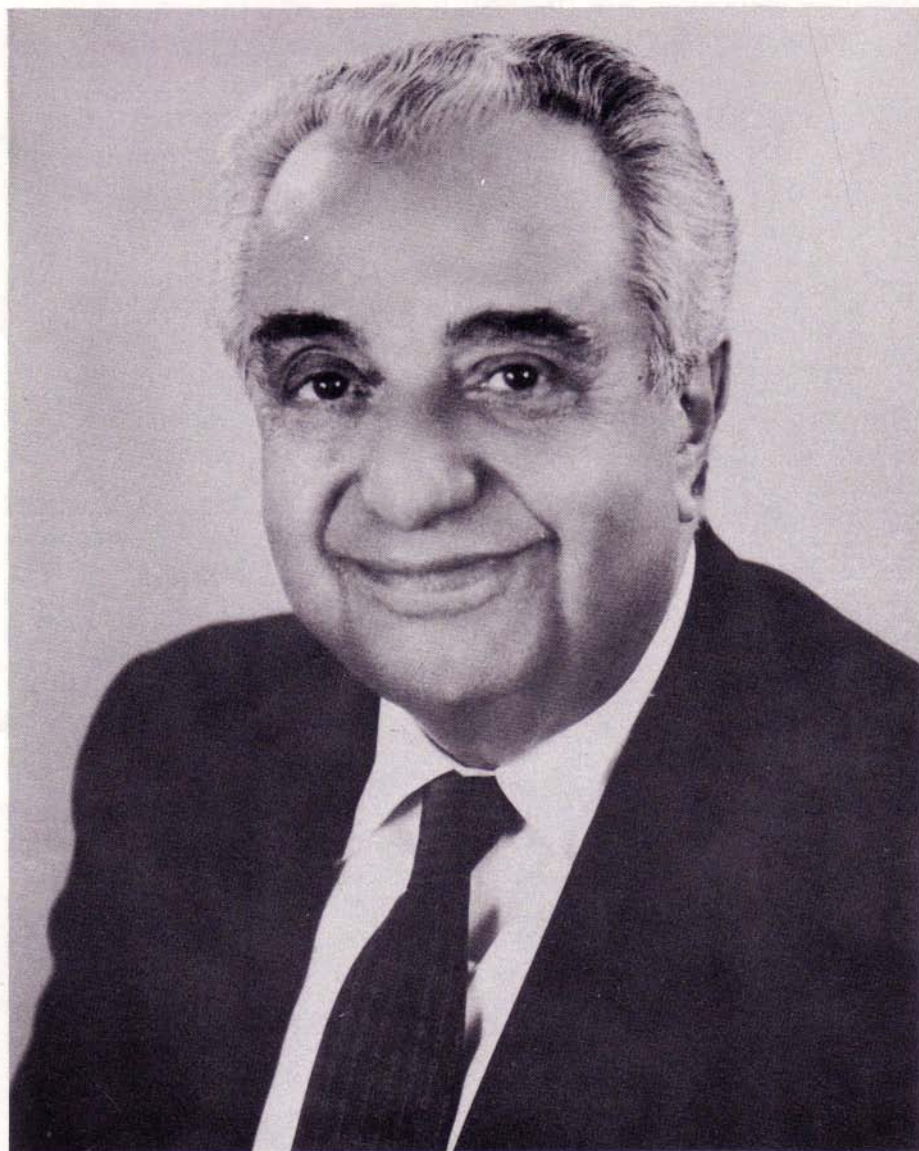
But in bestowing upon him the Carmel Award of Merit — יקיר הכרמל — the University of Haifa has taken cognizance of his outstanding track record in גמילות חסדים — his exemplary devotion to Israeli, Jewish and humanitarian causes, his effective leadership on behalf of these, and his steadfast and generous support of numerous projects germane to the welfare of Israel and of the Jewish communities in his land of birth and countries of his adoption — Italy and now England.

Let me mention but a few highlights from his very impressive curriculum vitae, erstwhile active leadership in the Jewish community of Baghdad and political adviser to the then president of the Jewish community, and member of the committee supervising the exodus from Iraq in 1951.

Davide and his charming and capable partner in life, Irene, who is a qualified archaeologist, then moved to Italy, established home base there, developed great international business enterprises and eventually moved to London in 1978.

There they both resumed very active involvement with Jewish community affairs, manifesting supreme concern for the welfare of Israel. Thus, Davide became co-chairman of the Sephardi section of the Joint Israel Appeal. But more than anything, their joint efforts were and are directed to numerous projects relating to the provision of education to the young, and the enhancement of academic and cultural institutions in Israel.

Thus, Davide is a Governor of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem — and a Governor of Ben Gurion University and has been a great benefactor to both institutions. He established a Chair in Nuclear Engineering at the Ben Gurion University.



As the advancement of underprivileged youth in Israel is the prime concern of the Salas, Davide was attracted to the University of Haifa some years ago, to become one of our most cherished pillars of strength in lay leadership by personal example. He is a Governor of the University, a very active co-chairman of British Friends of the University of Haifa and an outstanding supporter, guide and counsel in our Bridging the Gap activities, wherein he spearheaded in a most substantial manner the Adopt-a-Student programme, having imparted to it his unique personalised stamp which has become a model for other benefactors to follow. Irene and Davide's "family gatherings" with their adopted students have become a regular and uplifting event in the life of our University.

The intimate homogenising of the coming generations in Israel — מיוג גלויית originating from the various diasporas, blending the various time-hallowed heritages of each to create a viable synergetic new society in Israel in the true Jewish, democratic and humanitarian traditions — is the ultimate goal that is dear to the hearts of our great and true friends — Davide and Irene Sala.

In making the outstanding Carmel Award of Merit, let us rededicate ourselves to redoubling our efforts towards achieving this most inspiring goal and look ahead with confidence and hope to a bright future for our beloved Israel.

Personal and private observations of
University of Haifa President,
Joseph Teicher about Davide Sala —
as related to members of the University's
Board of Governors during the bestowal
of the Carmel Award of Merit.

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