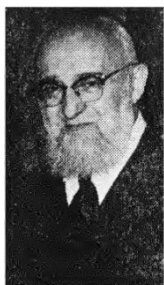


Reb Szlojme Zalman Shragai (originally Fajwlowicz)



He was born on 25th Kislev [1st day of Hanukah 5660 - 1899] in the small *shtetl* of Gorzkowice (near Piotrków Trybunalski) in Poland. His father was Reb Mojsze Fajwlowicz (one of the old Radzyń *Chassidim*), who was descended from the *Shach*¹ and the *Maharsha*². His mother was Frymet, the daughter of Elio Szmul Wajngort from Warka ([also] one of the old Radzyń *Chassidim*), who was descended from the holy Jew, Reb Duwid *Lelówer tz"l*. His father was a lover of Zion. He belonged to the *Ha'Mizrachi* movement and it was from him that his son was inspired with a love for the Land of Israel and religious Zionism. Once Mr Shragai had reached *bar-mitzvah* age, his father gave him the task of collecting funds for "settling the Land of Israel", which was then [through] *Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael*.

Thus, from his father, he received both the love of Torah and that of the Land of Israel. Mr Shragai has remained loyal to Radzyń Chassidism and he [therefore] wears *tzitzit* with [one] blue-violet [string]³.

He received his education in *cheders* and *yeshivahs* and learned secular studies from private tutors. Already in his youth, he thought much about the Land of Israel and the building thereof. He joined the "Torah and Work" movement, which was the beginning of the *Tzeirei Mizrachi* and *Ha'Poel Ha'Mizrachi* movement. He was appointed a member of the movement's main leadership and was one of its activists propagating the Zionist cause amongst religious Jewry. He also dedicated himself to the work for the national funds and was given power of attorney on behalf of his movement for the *Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael* and the *Keren HaYesod* council.

When he was still quite young, he tried his hand at writing and publishing articles and notes in the movement's brochure *Der Mizrachi Weg* [The Mizrachi Way], *Unser Leben* [Our Life] and *Częstochower Zeitung*.

In 5684 [1923/24], he married Miryam, the daughter of Reb Szyja Szpilberg from Częstochowa and, that same year, he emigrated to Palestine and began his public work on his party's behalf.

His dedication to the movement's affairs and the building of the Land [of Israel], in the spirit of the Torah and tradition, elevated him to the [movement's] primary ranks and he was elected to *Mizrachi's* World Centre and to *Ha'Poel Ha'Mizrachi's* executive committee.

From the 15th Zionist Congress onwards, he participated as a representative in all Zionist Congresses and was also voted as his movement's delegate to the Zionist Worker's Council. Mr Shragai progressively grew in his Zionist and public activities and he occupied a prominent position in central, public and national institutions as president of The Maritime League for Israel (which was

¹ [TN: Acronym of the book title "Sifsei Cohen" ("Lips of the Priest"), by the renowned 17th century Talmudist and Halakhist Reb Shabse HaCohen.]

² [TN: Acronym of "Our Teacher the Rabbi Shmuel Eidels" – a famous 16th century rabbi and Talmudist.]

³ [TN: The Rebbe of Radzyń claimed he had discovered the true blue-violet colour stipulated by the Torah for certain uses, namely in tassels. Other religious factions use plain white tassels, not accepting the Radzyńer Rebbe's opinion.]

created by David Remez z''l) [and of] The Centre for the Production of the Land [of Israel]⁴ [and] Chairman of the public council for Hebrew programmes on the broadcasting service *Kol Israel* [Voice of Israel] during the British Mandate period. From 5689 [1929], he was a member of the Jewish National Council's Board of Directors.

At the 22nd Zionist Congress, he was chosen to head the Jewish Agency in London, where he lived for two years in 1946-1948. While living in London, he established connections with British clerics and their institutions and succeeded in securing the support of many of them for the Zionist cause. He also took part in the conference of Scottish churches, where he carried out his mission successfully.

With the establishment of the State [of Israel], he returned to the country and served as a member of the Jewish Agency Executive without portfolio.

In 5711 (1951), he was appointed Mayor of Jerusalem. He was the first elected Mayor [of Jerusalem] after the establishment of the state and served in this position until 5713 (1953).

In 1954, he was again elected to the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem, as head of the Immigration Department. In this capacity, he did many great things during the period of The Great *Aliyah* and, to this purpose, he made many visits to different countries and was the living force behind everything that was done in this area.

Mr Shragai is endowed with literary talents and, as a thinker, he also published several books and booklets most noteworthy of which are *The Teachings and Faith of Israel*, *Religious Zionism*, *Working Relations in Israel*, *Domains*, *The Process of Transformation and Redemption*, *An Hour and an Eternity*, *Portents of Redemption*, *In the Struggle for Judaism* (Yiddish) and others. He has also written, and continues to write, articles on current questions in the newspapers *Ha'Tzofe* [The Observer] and *Letzte Nayas*, as well as in various compilations, such as *Netiva* [Path], *Sinai* and others.

He came to Częstochowa in 1918. His uncle, his father's brother, lived there. This uncle, Reb Szraga Fajwel Fajwlowicz, was a school headmaster there (before that, he had opened a school together with the poet Ch. N. Bialik in Sosnowiec) and he was the grandfather of his wife Miryam, the daughter of Reb Szyja Szpilberg and Sara, who was the daughter of Reb Szraga Fajwel Fajwlowicz.

Upon his arrival in Częstochowa, he was, at once, introduced to the work of *Tzeirei Mizrachi*, *Ha'Chalutz Ha'Mizrachi*, *Bnei Mizrachi*, and *Ha'Mizrachi*⁵. Together with Mr Jakób Leslau and others, he established the *Ha'Chalutz Ha'Mizrachi* [training] farm. He was active in the community's life - in the works of Zionism, education and culture - [both] religious and secular.

In the month of Av 5684 (1924), together with his wife, he emigrated (about six months after their wedding) to the Land of Israel, with Jakób Leslau and others.

While he was living in Częstochowa, he was invited, for one year, to head the *Ha'Mizrachi* School in Wola Wiązowa, not far from Częstochowa. In a short period, he had managed to improve the level and to double the number of pupils.

⁴ [TN: An association promoting goods manufactured by Jews in Palestine.]

⁵ [TN: The first three were youth groups affiliated with the HaMizrachi movement.]