

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל



Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was born on 23 Tammuz, 5670 (1910), in Sha'arei Chessed, Yerushalayim, where he lived all his life. His father, Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach, was rosh yeshivah of Sha'ar HaShamayim, a yeshivah for *mekubalim*. Young Shlomo Zalman and his siblings grew up in a home filled with the *simchah* of Torah, despite their absolute poverty. Often, all they had to eat was one slice of dry bread each – and many times Shlomo Zalman would give away

his bread to a hungry sibling and then throw himself into his learning to forget his hunger. Soon he became the top student in Yeshivas Etz Chaim and grew close to the rosh yeshivah, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, and to many other great *geonim* of Yerushalayim.

After Rav Shlomo Zalman married, he learned in *kollel* for several years and then became rosh yeshivah of Yeshivas Kol Torah. He was offered the positions

of Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and Chief Rabbi of Israel, but he turned both down because he wanted to continue teaching. Even when he became well-known as the *posek hador*, he maintained his humility. He refused to let anyone give him *kavod* and insisted on taking city buses to and from yeshivah until he grew too frail to continue.

Rav Shlomo Zalman was *niftar* 20 Adar I, 5755 (1995).

Did You Know?

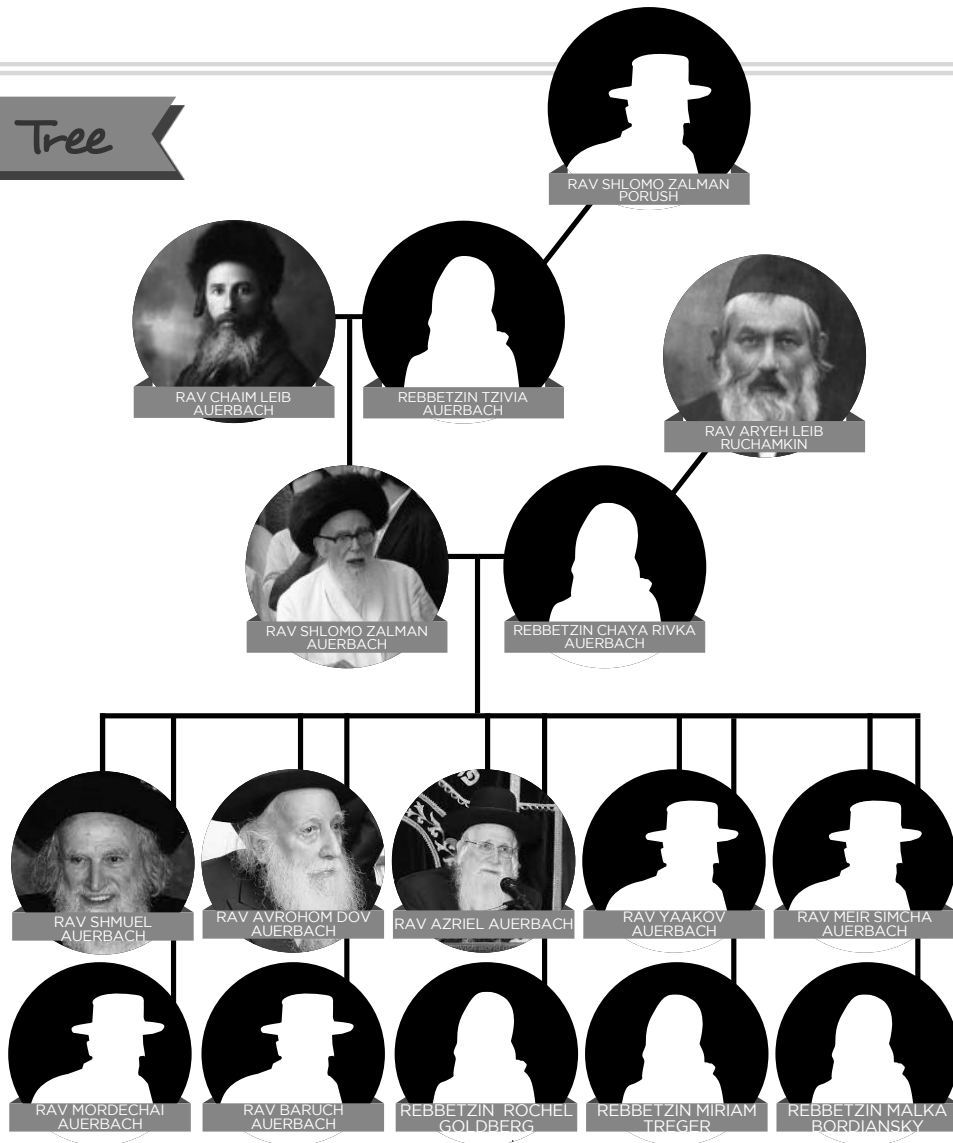
All the chairs in Rav Shlomo Zalman's house were made of hard wood, so a relative once gave him an upholstered chair so he could sit in comfort. Rav Shlomo Zalman deemed the chair too fancy for regular use. He would only sit in it once a year, at the Pesach Seder. During the rest of the year, the chair was used to hold stacks of *sefarim*.

When Rav Shlomo Zalman was a young man, his mother, Rebbetzin Tzivia, lost her hearing. Rav Shlomo Zalman saved up money to buy his mother a hearing aid, but then realized there was a *sh'eilah* on whether she could use it on Shabbos. This led to him delving into the halachos and in 1936, he published his first *sefer*, *Me'orei Aish*, one of the first *sefarim* discussing electricity. It bore the *haskamah* of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski all the way from Vilna!

At age 10, young Shlomo Zalman insisted on repeating a grade, because his *rebbe* that year had taught the Gemara so clearly that Shlomo Zalman felt his learning would improve if he remained there for another year, despite his being the *ilui* of the class!

Rav Shlomo Zalman had a kind word for everyone in Sha'arei Chessed. For many, his warm greeting was the highlight of their day. When he passed away, a local beggar sobbed, "Who will wish me a good morning now...?"

Family Tree



Rav Shlomo Zalman's father was Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach, a well-known *talmid chacham* and one of the leaders of the Yerushalayim community. His mother, Rebbetzin Tzivia, was the daughter of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush (for whom Rav Shlomo Zalman was named), one of the saintly *gabbai tzedakah* of Yerushalayim. They merited sons and sons-in-law who became great tzaddikim, and their children included Rav Shlomo Zalman, Rav Avrohom Dov, Rebbetzin Leah Schwadron (wife of Rav Shalom Schwadron), Rebbetzin Malka Hurwitz, Rebbetzin Rochel Leizeron and Rebbetzin Sara Prague.

Rav Shlomo Zalman married Chaya Rivka Ruchamkin, daughter of Rav Aryeh Leib Ruchamkin, one of the *melamdim* in Etz

Chaim. Rabbi Ruchamkin supported Rav Shlomo Zalman for many years so he could finally learn in comfort.

Rav Shlomo Zalman's sons were Rav Shmuel Auerbach, rosh yeshivah of Ma'alos HaTorah; Rav Avrohom Dov Auerbach, rav of Teveria; Rav Azriel Auerbach, rav of Bayit Vegan; Rav Yaakov of Beit Shemesh, Rav Meir Simcha of Beitar Ilit, Rav Mordechai of Tel Aviv, and Rav Baruch, who was *niftar* young. Rav Shlomo Zalman's sons-in-law were the renowned *posek* Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg; the rosh yeshivah of Antwerp, Rav Yehuda Aryeh Treger; and the *mashgiach* of Kol Torah, Rav Yitzchak Bordiansky.

SOME OF RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:



Rav Shlomo Zalman was rosh yeshivah of Kol Torah for almost 50 years. He was known for the clarity of his *shiurim* and would teach his students how they could apply the principles of the Gemara to everyday halachah. He gave personal attention to each student and insisted on keeping his *shiur* small so he could make sure everyone understood it.

Rav Shlomo Zalman published several *sefarim*, including *Me'orei Aish* on electricity, *Ma'adeni Eretz* on *hilchos Eretz Yisrael* (*terumos, ma'asros* and *shemittah*) and *Minchas Shlomo* on halachah. He also collaborated with his disciples on several halachic works, including *Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa* by Rabbi Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth and *Nishmas Avraham* on medical halachah by Rabbi Dr. Avraham S. Abraham.





RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN was known for his compassion, understanding of human nature and firm adherence to the truth. When he was being considered for the position of rosh yeshivah of Kol Torah, he had to give a sample Gemara

shiur to the founders of the yeshivah. In the middle of his *shiur*, one of the founders, Rav Yonah Mertzbach, interrupted with a pointed question, one that challenged the premise of the whole *shiur*. Rav Shlomo Zalman paused and then admitted, “*Ta’isi* – I made a mistake.” He then went on to develop a different way to explain the Gemara.

Rav Shlomo Zalman went home and told his wife that he had failed the tryout and wouldn’t be getting the job. He added that he’d had several answers to refute Rav Yonah, but since he wasn’t sure if any were the absolute truth, he’d just said that he had been mistaken.

Soon, they heard a knock at the door. Rav Shlomo Zalman opened it and saw Rav Yonah, who said, “A person who can admit that he made a mistake is exactly the person we want for the position of rosh yeshivah! The job is yours!”

Rav Shlomo Zalman had a keen understanding of human nature. Once, two anguished parents came to see him. They had a son with severe developmental disabilities and since they were getting older, it was no longer possible to keep him at home. They wanted to ask Rav Shlomo Zalman if they could send him to a special home. As the parents and Rav Shlomo Zalman discussed the pros and cons, Rav Shlomo Zalman asked, “And what about your son? What does he think of the matter?” The parents were dumbfounded. “Our son? He doesn’t have enough intellectual understanding to make a decision like this!” Nev-

ertheless, Rav Shlomo Zalman persisted, “You can’t just send your son away from his home without explaining it to him on his level. You don’t want him to feel abandoned! Bring him to me.” The parents brought their son to Rav Shlomo Zalman, who gently stroked the boy’s cheek and said, “Yingeleh, my name is Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and I help appoint rabbis for different places. There is a special institution that needs a rabbi, and I’d like to appoint you as the rabbi in charge of this home. Please can you go and be my representative there?”

Even though Rav Shlomo Zalman was very busy, he was always the first to see a need and do a chessed. There was an old lady in Rav Shlomo Zalman’s neighborhood who ran a grocery. Every

morning, she would get deliveries of milk and eggs deposited on the sidewalk, and she’d have a hard time dragging the cartons to her store. One morning, she came and saw that the cartons had been deposited at the entrance to her store, making things much easier for her. She was so thankful that the deliveryman had become so considerate! This continued for a while, until one day, the lady came to the store extra early and saw that the deliveries had been deposited on the sidewalk again. Then along came Rav Shlomo Zalman on his way

to Shacharis and the lady watched him drag the cartons all the way to the store. Now she knew who had been helping her all along!

“A person who can admit that he made a mistake is exactly the person we want for the position of rosh yeshivah! The job is yours!”

RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN’S DVAR TORAH

Rising Through Wine

In *Parshas Va’eira* (6:6-7), Hashem uses four different words to describe how He will take us out of Mitzrayim, and we are taught that the four cups of wine that we drink at the Pesach Seder correspond to these four words (see *Midrash Rabbah, Vayeishev*, 88:5). The *Rishonim* ask: Why did *Chazal* choose four cups of wine to parallel those four words? Why didn’t they instead require us to eat *matzah* four times?

It seems each of these four words refers to a different level of *Geulas Mitzrayim*, each one higher than the next.

The first word is *v’hotzeisi* – “I will take [you] out,” which is the first level of going out. The second is *v’hitzalti* – “I will rescue [you],” meaning that we will then have even more *simchah*. The third is *v’ga’alti* – “I will redeem [you],” that we will be completely distanced from the Egyptians. The fourth is *v’lakachti* – “I will take,” right after which is written: *es’chem li l’am* – “you to Me for a nation.” This is an additional level of being taken to Hashem to be His nation.

To correspond to these four expressions of *Geulah*, *Chazal* wanted to pick an action that, when doing it multiple times, each time adds something to the previous one. When it comes to other food and drinks, the more you have of it, the less enjoyment you get and the less you desire more. The exception to this is wine, because drinking one cup after another lifts a person higher and higher and brings him more and more joy. Therefore, we drink four cups of wine at the Seder because only that can match the four ascending levels of *Geulah*.

(*Minchas Shlomo, Pesachim, perek 10, p. 614*)

Try This!

Think of a chessed you can do discreetly, like Rav Shlomo Zalman would do. It can be something like refilling the water pitcher, putting away the groceries without being asked, or putting away the sidurim and Chumashim in shul.