Who taught rabbi Obadia Yosef?

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Yesterday, Rabbi Obadia Yosef was buried in Jerusalem. More than 800,000 people attended his levaya in what is considered the largest funeral in the history of modern Israel.

From a avery early age Rabbi Obadia Yosef showed the two most important signs of a great Tora luminary: a passion for Tora studying and an exceptional memory. But that was not enough in Israel 1930's. In those days of financial depression the economic situation of the world was chaotic and Israel (in those days: Palestine) was obviously no exception. The Yosef family was not able to afford having one son out of the job market. For a while Rabbi Yosef was allowed to study in the most prestigious Sephardic Yeshiba, Porat Yosef, in the Old City of Jerusalem. But now, he was forced to leave his studies and work in his father's store in the impoverished Bucharian quarter (shekhunat habukharim) in Jerusalem.

The Yeshiva Porat Yosef was lead by a great Rabbi born in Aleppo, Syria. Rabbi Ezra Attie (or Attia 1887-1970 □□□□□ □□□□). Who besides being a very pious man and one of the greatest Tora scholars of his generation had also the skills to identify leadership in his students. In the short time that rabbi Yosef studied in Porat Yosef Rabbi Attie discovered in him the qualities of a leader: his charisma, his expectational mind and his character. And now, he was heartbroken to find out that the young Obadia had to leave his studies. He did not give up and did the unexpected. Rabbi Attie approached rabbi Yosef's father and begged him to let the boy return to the Yeshiba. He said to Mr. Yosef: "If you need help in the store, I'll stay and work for you. Keeping me away from Tora study matters less than keeping your son away." The father couldn't say no. And realizing the potential of his son as a great Tora scholar he allowed him back into the Yeshiba. That was probably the most important turning point in rabbi Yosef's life.

Rabbi Ezra Attie was the teacher and permanent mentor of rabbi Yosef. He also discovered and trained other important rabbinical leaders of our times. Among his students are: Rabbi Mordekhai Eliyahu z"l, Rabbi Benzion Abba Shaul z"l and Rabbi Iytzhaq Qaduri, z"l.

THE INSTALLATION OF RABBI OBADIA YOSEF
AS THE RISHON LETSION (1973)