

# The Jewish Weekly

## Honoring One's Teacher; Honoring One's Student

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

He stood before his great teacher, known as 'the Ohr HaChayim,' Rabbi Chayim Ben-Attar, his heart bursting with emotions. It was now several years that Yinon ben Shlomo [not his real name] had heard Torah lessons from his master's mouth and poured water upon his hands [i.e. served him as his attendant]. Now he had decided that it was time to emigrate from Morocco, settle in the Holy Land, and there to wholeheartedly serve the Creator by dedicating his life completely to Torah study, sincere prayer and mitzvah fulfillment.

The Ohr HaChayim was pleased with his beloved student's decision, but because of the strong relationship between them, he requested that his disciple remain with him for another several days before making his final departure. Yinon was happy to agree.

It was well he did. During those few days he received from his master secrets of Torah and words of wisdom the depths of which he had never merited to hear before.

The day of parting soon arrived. Before leaving his teacher's home, the Ohr Hachayim asked of him a personal favor. He handed him a signed note and said, "Please, when you arrive in the Holy Land, go to the remnant of our destroyed glorious Temple and place this note in one of the crevices between its holy stones."

Yinon of course agreed to this special request and stuck the note deep into his pocket.

The wearying journey replete with difficulties lasted several months. Finally, he reached the target of his dreams - the holy Land of Israel. Immediately he headed in the direction of Jerusalem, filled with happiness and gratitude to G-d that he would be privileged to establish his residence there.

While still on the way, he made a firm resolution to himself that here in the holy land he would not try to earn a living through his Torah knowledge; rather, he would engage in physical labor in order to support himself.

Upon arrival in the capital, he set out to acquire a horse and wagon. Spending the last of his meager savings gained him a horse that was already old, and a wagon of similar vintage. Still, possessing them enabled him to eke out a bare living, by transporting the merchandise of businessmen from one place to another. After some time, he managed to establish a group of satisfied regular customers.

Each day, as soon as he earned enough money to cover his basic needs, he would enter a certain Beit Midrash ['House of Study'] of the Sephardim in Jerusalem, and spend the remainder of the day engrossed in Torah study. The Jews who studied there regularly, barely paid any attention to the visibly poor young man who tucked himself into a corner of the room and looked into one book or another. Yinon himself made every effort possible to not stick out. Anyone who happened to take an interest in who he was and where he came from, received a mumbled answer - or half-answer - that was not at all clear.



Grave of the Ohr Hachayim

And thus he conducted his quiet modest life for a length of time. But then, one day, tragedy struck. In the midst of pulling its usual heavy load, his loyal aged horse toppled to the ground, dead.

Yinon felt immense sorrow. In a single instant, his ability to support himself had vanished. He certainly had nowhere near the sum required to purchase another horse. What would he do now? Would he actually have to become dependent on the kindness of others? The thought distressed him greatly.

Yet, even more than worries about his financial situation, what pained him the most was the possible significance of the sudden loss of his horse and his parnassa. He was frightened that perhaps he had committed some sin, and because of that he was being punished from Heaven. For the next several days he closed himself in his house, studied and prayed intensely, all the while undergoing several fasts and other manners of affliction in the hope that he would gain atonement for whatever sin he had done, even though he couldn't figure out what it was.

One day, he 'happened' to be searching for something in the pockets of some old garments. In one of them he felt a piece of paper, folded. When he extracted the paper from the depth of pocket, his whole body began to shake. It was the note that his teacher, the Ohr Hachayim, had entrusted to him to place in a crack between the stones of the Western Wall.

He couldn't believe what he had done. Nor could he conceive of any possible excuse or justification for his lapse in fulfilling his revered master's personal request. How could he have totally forgotten his promise? It was incomprehensible. He was convinced that it was this unconscionable act of forgetfulness and failing to honor his great teacher that had brought about his current suffering.

He jumped up and hurried as fast as he could to the Kotel, and there inserted the note as deep as he could into a crack between two of the huge stones. After that he felt a bit less disgraced, and that it was permissible for him to return to his usual study location.

When Yinon appeared in the doorway, all eyes turned towards him. Some of the regular attendees rose from their seats and rushed to bid him welcome and shake his hand. They even asked him his name and what he was doing in Jerusalem.

## It Once Happened...

Yinon was so surprised at the attention that he didn't know how to react. The whole lengthy time that he had been sitting and studying in this Beit Midrash, hardly anybody had paid him any attention, and now, all of a sudden, everyone is interested in him?

He asked them, "Ma nishtana hayom hazeh mikol hayomim?" - "How does this day differ than all the other days" [parallel to the immortal question at the Passover Seder]? They replied that indeed his face was familiar to them, but now he looked like a completely different person. "A special light is shining on your face. Now we are certain that you are not just a regular someone who wandered in from the marketplace, but a special person who is 'head and shoulders above all' [a biblical expression of superiority - first used about King Shaul].

At that hour, 'happened' to be sitting in the room the Chacham Bashi, [the title of the Chief Rabbi of Sephardic Jewry in each region of the Ottoman Empire]. He was among those who had left his seat to go greet the young Yinon, because he too was impressed by the shine of his face. After the other men had dispersed and returned to their seats, he turned again to Yinon and asked him to explain what had he done to merit this special light.

Yinon, who was as surprised as everyone else about the matter - or even more so! - didn't know what to respond. Finally, he related to him about how he had failed in the mission the holy Ohr Hachayim had given him to deliver a note to the Kotel. Apparently his rectification of finally placing the note had led to his dramatic spiritual change of appearance.

As soon as he completed his recital, the chief rabbi expressed his interest in seeing with his own eyes the holy handwriting of the Ohr Hachayim. He asked Yinon to guide him to the spot where he had placed the note into the Kotel.

Yinon was reluctant to agree. He feared that he would again be degrading the honor of his teacher. But when the chief rabbi pleaded with him again and again, he finally felt that he had no choice and he agreed to go with him.

Together they descended to the Western Wall. Yinon indicated the location and the chief rabbi inserted his hand and gingerly removed the note. Just a few words were written on it: "I request that You come to the aid of my holy student at the time of his dire need."

The very next day, HaRav Yinon ben Shlomo was crowned as an official Halachic [Jewish Law] authority and Rabbinical Court judge for the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings.

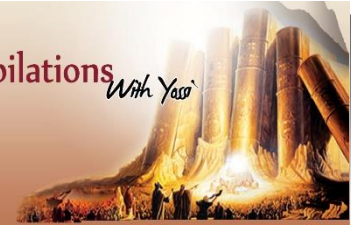
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**Y-GRAPHICS**

Shabbat Times - Parshat Matot

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:07	8:23	8:59
Tel Aviv	7:22	8:25	
Haifa	7:15	8:27	
Be'er Sheva	7:24	8:24	



## The Shabbat of Missed Opportunity

By Rabbi Shmuel Butman

Once during his travels, Rabbi Aharon of Karlin arrived at the town of Zarowitz close to the Shabbat. He saw a small cottage situated on the edge of the town and he knocked on the door, hoping to find some hospitality there. A small woman opened the door and listened to his request to remain there for the Shabbat. "You are welcome to stay," she replied simply, "my husband, will be home soon," and she ushered him into the house.

As soon as he set his foot inside the door, Rabbi Aharon felt himself enveloped by an overwhelming sense of holiness, and he realized that there must be something unique about the occupants of this house. R. Aharon prepared himself for the Shabbat and was about to go out the door to the synagogue when he met Reb Yitzchak, the owner of the house, just returning from his workday. The man was dressed in simple peasant garb, and there was nothing to distinguish him from any other worker. He introduced himself as Yitzchak and greeted his guest warmly, but his features disguised any emotion.

Aharon of Karlin was accustomed to celebrate the Shabbat with enthusiastic singing and prayers, and he followed his usual rituals. His host, however, rushed quickly through the prayers, hurriedly said kiddush over the wine and then sat down to eat his simple meal. But even in this plain food, R. Aharon could detect an undeniable holiness, although he couldn't figure out what it stemmed from. He studied the man and woman, but there was nothing special about anything they said or did that would set them apart from any of ten thousand other poor Jews.

When the Shabbat ended R. Aharon thanked his host and hostess and continued on his journey, the mystery unsolved.

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The following week, a woman turned up in the Study Hall of the nearby city of Premishlan and spoke to the members of the local burial society requesting that they come with her. "Please come with me to Zarowitz now, for my husband is dying and he has asked that you be with him in his last moments."

The men immediately followed her to her home, but when they entered the house, her husband wasn't even there. "What is this, some kind of joke? Have you brought us all this way for nothing?"

"No, of course not, gentlemen," she replied. "My husband is on his way and will be here shortly."

Shortly after, her husband walked through the door, holding a bunch of straw. He spread the straw on the floor and laid down upon it, on his back. Then he began speaking to the burial society officials:

"My friends, it is now time for me to leave this world. I have lived a secret life as a hidden tzadik (perfectly righteous person) all my life, but the time has come for me to reveal myself. The moment that I die, go with all speed to Premishlan and bring back as many scribes as you can gather. Have them bring pens and paper, for here they will copy over my secret writings. This must be done while I am still lying here on the ground, before I am buried. Watch me, and when you see a change in my face, all writing must cease at once."

R. Yitzchak finished speaking, closed his eyes, and for a moment his face burned like a fire. Then, his lips which had been moving in silent prayer became still, and he was gone.

Scores of scribes were hurriedly brought to the cottage where the tzadik lay. Each one was given a leaf of paper to copy and they raced against time to complete their holy task. The officials' eyes were fixed on the face of the tzadik, looking for any change. Suddenly, the face lost all of its color and the box which contained his writings mysteriously closed by itself. The scratching of pens stopped abruptly, and preparations were quickly begun to ready Yitzchak the tzadik for burial.

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When Rabbi Aharon of Karlin heard of the death of the tzadik and the circumstances which surrounded it, his heart was filled with bitter regret. What wondrous Torah secrets he might have learned from the deceased! He went to pay his respects to the widow and perhaps to glean some bit of knowledge from her husband's secret life.

"Well, there's nothing I can really tell you," she said. "I'm sorry, but my husband wouldn't permit it."

R. Aharon was bitterly disappointed. He wished her comfort, among all the mourners of Zion, and turned to leave. But just as he reached the door, the widow called out to him, "Wait, there's one small thing I can show you. Do you see those candlesticks there on the shelf? Well, from the day I married until the day my husband died, the candles that were lit in them burned constantly, all by themselves."

Rabbi Aharon left the cottage deep in reflection. The wondrous accomplishments of the hidden tzadik would remain one of G-d's many secrets, perhaps to be divulged only by Mashiach, himself.

Reprinted from an email from lchaimweekly.org.



This week, we read the parshah of Matot where we read how two and half tribes of the Jewish people were allowed to settle east of the River Jordan outside of the Divinely-ordained boundaries of the Holy Land.

What intrigues me is the tribe of Menashe – why was it divided, half this side of the border, and half that side of the border? We know that Reuven and Gad preferred to be east of the Jordan, but what about the tribe of Menashe?

I came across three great commentaries given over by the Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis. The first is Ramban. Ramban says simply, Moshe realized that the land of Israel is a tiny land, more space was necessary and so it would be helpful if he had more volunteers to settle east of the Jordan.

The Netziv in his commentary Ha'emek Davar, says as follows: the tribe of Menashe boasted the best teachers within the nation. Moshe knew that outside of the borders of the Holy Land, Reuven and Gad were geographically separated from the spirituality, the holiness of that territory and therefore they desperately needed to be educated. So that they could appreciate their roots, they required the best of teachers and that is why half the tribe of Menashe was allocated to them.

My favorite commentary is that of the Degel Machaneh Ephraim. He explains that Moshe was afraid that once Reuven and Gad would be geographically separated from the rest of the people in the course of time, they could attain a separate independent identity, which could then lead to a split in the nation. Consequently he created a bridge, half of Menashe on this side, half on the other side, and as a result there was a constant flow of people.

Everybody knew they might be separated, but it was one nation. This is such a pertinent commentary at this time of the year. As we approach Tisha B'Av, when we recall how we lost our Temple because of Sinat Chinam, causeless hatred, because of the unnecessary divisions within the Jewish people. From Moshe we learn how important it is to always create and maintain bridges within the Jewish people to guarantee our togetherness and unity at all times.

So let's try to love every individual for who they are and let's pray with all our hearts, for those suffering from the current situation in Eastern Europe, as well as for the recovery of all the sick, our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, for peace and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet Shabbat.

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 2  
MITZVOT ASEH: 1  
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 1

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 112  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1484  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5652

Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3 Divrei Yirmiyahu  
(The three Haftorot of the three weeks preceding the Ninth of Av, are called the — שלש דפורעונא — the "Three (Haftorot) of Punishment").

Shabbat Mevarchim Menachem Av  
Rosh Chodesh and the 9 days begins - Friday, July 29, 2022

This week in Israel, we study Chapter 2 of Pirkei Avot (outside Israel one studies Chapter 1).

**מטות**  
**פינחס**

This edition of The Jewish Weekly is dedicated to Zev Yaakov Ben Tsipora Esther in honor of his birthday. May Hashem bless him בכל מכל כל From his wife and children