

“Rejoice, O Zevulun, in your excursions, and Yissachar in your tents.” (33:18)

H orav Shlomo Heyman, z.l., related that when Rabbeinu Saadya Gaon left Egypt to become Rosh HaYeshivah in Sura, the people of Sura took it upon themselves to build the yeshivah building. Rabbeinu Saadya sent out a proclamation, urging all communities to join in support of this project.

A certain wealthy Egyptian Jew decided to contribute a considerable sum to sponsor the Aron Kodesh. When he arrived in Sura, he discovered — to his chagrin — that someone had already preceded him in dedicating the Aron Kodesh. He was extremely upset that he would not be able to sponsor the holiest component in the yeshivah. He went to Rabbeinu Saadya and expressed his feelings to the Rosh HaYeshivah.

Rabbeinu Saadya responded as follows: “You should know, my son, that our nation possesses two Toros — the Torah Shebiksav, Written Law, and the Torah SheBaal Peh, Oral Law. The place designated for the Written Law is the Aron Kodesh. The Oral Law, however, which is transmitted anew each generation from rebbe, teacher to talmid, student has no designated place. Every place that a Torah student sits and learns, that is the Torah’s Aron Kodesh. His chair is an Aron Kodesh; his shtender, lectern, is an Aron Kodesh; indeed, the entire yeshivah is a veritable Aron Kodesh.