

Moshe commanded the Leviim... take the Book of the Torah and place it at the side of the Aron of the Covenant of Hashem, Your G-d, and it shall be there for you as a witness. (31:25,26)

Why were the *Leviim* the ones commanded to place the *Sefer Torah* next to/or inside the *Aron*? While it may be true that a *Yisrael* was not permitted entry into the *Kodesh HaKodoshim*, Holy of Holies, where the *Aron* was situated, neither were the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* permitted entry. Indeed, the only one who was allowed into the *Kodesh HaKodoshim* was the *Kohen Gadol* on *Yom Kippur*. Otherwise, it was off-limits to everyone. As such, why were the *Leviim* singled out? Obviously, this was a one-time dispensation. If so, our question still stands. Why was *Shevet Levi* chosen above anyone else?

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, cites the *Rambam* in his preface to *Seder Zeraim*, and also in his preface to the *Yad Hachazakah*, that Moshe *Rabbeinu* actually wrote thirteen *Sifrei Torah* and gave one to each tribe. He gave the thirteenth scroll to *Shevet Levi*. He then told them, "Take this scroll and place it in the *Aron*." The question is obvious: What about Efraim and Menashe, who were the two *Shevatim* that comprised Yosef's *Shevet*? If so, he should have written fourteen scrolls – thirteen for the tribes and one for the *Aron*. We must posit, explains the *Brisker Rav*, that he wrote fourteen *Sifrei Torah*, but one of them, the scroll belonging to *Shevet Levi*, was placed in the *Aron*. This is why *Shevet Levi* was charged with placing the scroll in the *Aron*; after all, it was their *Sefer Torah*.

We now understand *Rashi's* explanation concerning the nation's complaint regarding the choice of *Shevet Levi* receiving a Torah. What was their problem? Everyone, each of the tribes, received a Torah from Moshe. We must say that they each took umbrage with *Shevet Levi's sefer Torah* – and not theirs – being selected to be housed in the *Kodesh HaKodoshim* next to/inside the *Aron*. It was this Torah that remained pristine – never leaving the Sanctuary's environs. Thus, when a question arose concerning a Tribal Torah scroll, such as spelling, etc., it was checked against the scroll that remained in a pristine environment.