

The entire People responded together and said, “Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do.” (19:8)

When the **Kesav Sofer** was *Rav* in Budapest, Hungary, a group of lay people complained concerning a certain Jewish banker who refused to close his bank on *Shabbos*. They considered this an affront to the entire community. “The *Rav* must take action,” they demanded. The *Kesav Sofer* was visibly depressed. Such an act of disgracing Hashem could not be countenanced in his community. This man was making a mockery of the Jewish religion and openly insulting the Jewish community. He sent for the banker to appear before him.

The banker had no qualms about coming to visit the *Rav* – but he refused to change his position *vis-à-vis Shabbos*. “*Rebbe*, I am *kofer b’ikar*, heretic; I deny the very existence of G-d. Why should I bother with *Shabbos*, of all things?”

“If you will not do it for yourself, at least act on behalf of the *achdus*, unity, of our nation” the *Kesav Sofer* pleaded. “Why should you be a *poreitz geder*, “breach the fence,” act outside of the community circle? You are part of the Jewish People. Why disenfranchise yourself from them?”

“I could care less,” was the man’s retort.

“If this is the case,” began the *Kesav Sofer*, “Clearly your ancestors did not stand at the foot of *Har Sinai*. They did not experience the Revelation.”

“*Kavod haRav*, with all due respect,” the banker responded in a much softer, subdued tone, “You may humiliate me and speak of me in the most derogatory manner, but this has nothing to do with my ancestors. They were good people who believed in everything which you extol. I will not allow you to defame my forebears – regardless of my sins of faith!”

“I am not slandering your ancestors,” the *Kesav Sofer* began. “I am only reiterating what appears to be an established verity. If such is the case, there is no slander.”

“How do you know this? How can you prove that my ancestors were not actively present at the Revelation?” the banker asked.

The *Kesav Sofer* was not going to give in to this man unless he was prepared to make a commitment. “I will tell you exactly what I mean. I will prove that your ancestors did not declare *Naase v’Nishma*, “We will do and we will listen”! as did the rest of the Jewish People. But first you must promise to close your bank on *Shabbos*.”

Surprisingly, the banker agreed, promising to shutter his bank the following *Shabbos*. “Now, the banker demanded, “Give me proof that my ancestors were not at *Sinai*.”

The *Kesav Sofer* began, “In the *Talmud Nedarim* 20a, *Chazal* make the following statement. ‘One who does not manifest *boshes panim*, shyness, inhibition, self-consciousness; it is clear that his ancestors did not stand at *Har Sinai*.’ How can the *Talmud* make such a strong statement? How can they be so “clear” about it? We must say that included amongst the many Jews who were willing to accept the Torah, were members of the *erev rav*, mixed multitude. These men were the habitual complainers, malcontents, and heretics, who wanted no part of the Torah. They clearly would have wanted a way out of accepting the Torah. Surely, they would have sown the seeds of disfavor in the hearts and minds of the people – but they could not. Why? Because the Jewish People all answered in unison, “*Naase v’Nishma*”! Once this took place, those derelicts could not exclude themselves from the group. It just did not speak well for them. Thus, because of their sense of embarrassment, not wanting to be humiliated, they, too, declared, “*Naase v’Nishma*.”

“This indicates that anyone who does not manifest a sense of *boshes panim*; if he has no qualms about separating himself from the community, then clearly he descends from forebears who did not “attend” the ceremony of the Giving of the Torah. For, otherwise, where is your sense of shame? If you do not have it, apparently you descend from a family that was not at *Har Sinai*.”