

**“You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d”**

## **Parshas Nitzavim which Is Always Read before Rosh HaShanah Acts as a Barrier between the Curses and Rosh HaShanah**

Shabbas Parshas Nitzavim approaches auspiciously. It is the last Shabbas of this year, prior to the beginning of the new year, 5776. Hence, it is only fitting that we explore the connection between this week’s parsha and Rosh HaShanah. The parsha begins (Devarim 29, 9): **“אתם נצבים היום כולכם לפני ה' אלקיכם ראשיכם”** **“you are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d: Your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers—all the men of Yisrael.** Rashi comments (ibid. 12) in the name of an aggadic Midrash, based on the Midrash Tanchuma (Nitzavim 1):

**“למה נסמכה פרשת אתם נצבים לקללות, לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קללות חסר שתיים [פרשת כי תבא], חוץ מארבעים ותשע שבתורת כהנים [פרשת בחוקותי], הוריקו פניהם ואמרו, מי יוכל לעמוד באלו, התחיל משה לפייסם, אתם נצבים היום, Why הרבה הכעסתם למקום ולא עשה אתכם כליה, והרי אתם קיימים לפניו.”** **Why was the passage beginning “אתם נצבים” juxtaposed with the “Kelalos” (curses)? Because Yisrael had heard one hundred “Kelalos” minus two (in Parshas Ki Savo), besides the forty-nine in Torat Kohanim (sefer Vayikra). Their faces turned pallid and they said, “Who can bear these?” Moshe began to console them: “אתם נצבים היום”—“You are standing here today.” Although you have caused the Omnipresent much anger, nevertheless He has not annihilated you; and behold, you exist before Him.**

Indeed, the commentaries are puzzled, and much has been written concerning Moshe’s attempt to console the people. On the one hand, if they deserved to be punished by HKB”H with these curses, it is surprising that they weren’t punished. Clearly, Moshe would not console them by telling them that HKB”H did not intend to fulfill what He had written in His holy Torah. On the other hand, if they did not sin to the point that they deserved these curses as punishment, then how could Moshe console them with the words: **“Although you have**

**caused the Omnipresent much anger, nevertheless He has not annihilated you”?** They weren’t punished, because they had not transgressed to that degree.

### **Parshas Nitzavim Interrupts between he Body of Curses and Rosh HaShanah**

We shall begin to shed some light on the subject based on the writings of the Tur and the “michaber” (the author of the Shulchan Aruch) (O.C. 428, 4). They inform us that Parshas Nitzavim is read annually prior to Rosh HaShanah. The source for this practice is the Gemara (Megillah 31b). It states that Ezra HaSofer instituted the practice of reading the “klalos” in Parshas Ki Savo prior to Rosh HaShanah: **“כדי שתכלה השנה וקללותיה”—so that the year would end along with its curses.** Tosafos (ibid.) add that we also read Parshas Nitzavim prior to Rosh HaShanah: **“לפי שאנו רוצים להפסיק ולקרות שבת אחת קודם ראש השנה, בפרשה שלא תהא—מדברת בקללות כלל, שלא להסמיך הקללות לראש השנה”** **—because we want to create an interruption by reading one parsha, on the Shabbas prior to Rosh HaShanah, that does not contain any curses; so that the curses will not be associated with Rosh HaShanah.**

Let us interject a pleasant tidbit of our own. It is for this reason that HKB”H, the Giver of the Torah, began this parsha with the passuk: **“אתם נצבים היום כולכם לפני ה' אלקיכם”**. Many of our sacred sefarim—including the Zera Kodesh, the Ohr HaMeir, the Arvei Nachal, the Maor V'Shemesh, the Tiferet Shlomo, the Yismach Moshe, and others—write that in this passuk HKB”H alludes to Rosh HaShanah. For, regarding the passuk (Iyov 1, 6), the Zohar hakadosh teaches us: **“זיהי היום ויבואו בני האלהים להתייצב על ה' ויבוא גם השטן בתוכם, ויהי היום דא ראש השנה דקוב”ה קאים”** **—the term “היום”, “the day,” refers to Rosh HaShanah, the day on which HKB”H comes to judge the world.**

On this special day, HKB”H, King of the Universe, sits on the throne of judgment to judge all of mankind, as we have learned in the Mishnah (R.H. 16a): **“בראש השנה כל באי עולם עוברים לפניו כבני מרון—on Rosh HaShanah, all of creation pass before Him like sheep.** This then is the interpretation of the passuk: **“אתם נצבים היום”** **“אתם נצבים היום”**. On this day, **“היום”**, namely Rosh HaShanah, all of creation stand (**“נצבים”**) before HKB”H and are held accountable for all of their actions. This concludes his remarks.

Now, recall that Tosafos taught us that we always read Parshas Nitzavim prior to Rosh HaShanah, in order to create a separation between the curses in Parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah. Accordingly, we can suggest that this is why HKB”H opened Parshas Nitzavim with the passuk: **“אתם נצבים היום”** **“אתם נצבים היום”**—alluding to Rosh HaShanah, the day on which all of creation stands before HKB”H. He is alluding to the tremendous chesed that He is performing on our behalf. HKB”H placed Parshas Nitzavim precisely in this spot in Torah she’b’chtav as a separation between the curses in Parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah.

Furthermore, this enlightens us as to Moshe Rabeinu’s words of consolation to Yisrael. After hearing the **“tochachah”**—the litany of curses—in Parshas Ki Savo, they turned pale with fear, and said: **“Who can withstand these?”** Moshe began to appease them: **“You are standing here today (“היום”). Although you have angered Him immensely, the Omnipresent has chosen not to eliminate you. Lo and behold! You still exist before Him.”** In other words, it should be apparent to you that HKB”H added an entire parsha, Parshas Nitzavim, in order to create a separation between the body of curses and Rosh HaShanah.

For this very reason, He began the parsha with the words: **“אתם נצבים היום”**, indicating the reason He inserted this parsha as a separating barrier. Because on Rosh HaShanah, **“היום”**, you are to stand in judgment before HKB”H. For this reason, He does not want to juxtapose the curses with Rosh HaShanah. This should serve as proof to you that HKB”H does not wish to punish you with these terrible curses. On the contrary, due to His infinite mercy, He placed an iron curtain, so to speak, between the curses in Parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah.

Now, however, it behooves us to explain the practical significance of this barrier for each and every one of us. What benefit is it to us to have Parshas Nitzavim separate between the curses in Parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah? How does this separation negate these awful curses, which HKB”H promised

to visit upon Yisrael, chas v’shalom, if they failed to abide by the precepts of the Torah? Furthermore, if it is truly not HKB”H’s desire to punish us with these terrible curses, then why did He write them in His Torah?

### The Purpose of the Shofar Is to Awaken “Yirah” Transforming the Attribute of Din into Rachamim

I was struck by a wonderful idea. Let us begin with an illuminating idea regarding the mitzvah of shofar-blowing on Rosh HaShanah. Our blessed sages reveal to us in various Midrashim that the purpose of blowing the shofar is to sweeten and mitigate the force of din directed against Yisrael and to transform into into rachamim. We have learned in the Midrash (V.R. 29, 3):

**“יהודה ברבי נחמן פתח, (תהלים מז-ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה ה' בקול שופר, בשעה שהקב"ה יושב ועולה על כסא דין בדין הוא עולה, מאי טעם, עלה אלקים בתרועה [אלקים הוא מדת הדין], ובשעה שישראל נוטלין את שופריהן ותוקעין לפני הקב"ה, עומד מכסא הדין ויושב בכסא רחמים, דכתיב ה' בקול שופר [הוי"ה הוא מדת הרחמים], ומתמלא עליהם רחמים ומרחם עליהם, והופך עליהם מדת הדין לרחמים, אימתי בחודש השביעי.”**

**Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rabbi Nachman opened with the following passuk (Tehillim 47, 6): “Elokim has ascended with the sound of ‘teruah’; Havaya with the sound of the shofar.” At first, HKB”H occupies His throne of justice, embodying the attribute of din; hence, the passuk (Tehillim 47, 6) initially employs the name “Elokim”—indicating justice. Yet, when Yisrael take their shofars in hand and blow, He vacates the throne of justice and moves over to the throne of mercy; hence, the passuk changes to the name Havaya—the name of mercy. Full of mercy, He treats them mercifully, transforming the attribute of justice into the attribute of mercy—during the seventh month.**

We find a wonderful explanation for this phenomenon in the Sefas Emes (Rosh HaShanah 5658). Why, in fact, is the blowing of the shofar capable of transforming midas hadin into midas harachamim? We will elaborate on his explanation based on the concept—appearing in many of our sacred sources—that the purpose of the mitzvah of blowing-shofar on Rosh HaShanah is to stimulate Yisrael to perform teshuvah out of trepidation. We have a passuk in the navi which states (Amos 3, 6): **“אם יתקע שופר —is the shofar ever sounded in a city and the people do not tremble?** The holy sefer Bris Kehunas Olam emphasizes this association with the shofar by means of the

following amazing allusion. The numerical value of the passuk (Tehillim 96, 9): “חיל”ו מפני”ו כ”ל האר”ץ”—**tremble before Him everyone on earth**—equals שופ”ר (586). We must endeavor to explain why it is advantageous and desirable to elicit trepidation on Rosh HaShanah rather than love of Hashem.

The matter can be explained based on a statement from the wisest of all men (Koheles 3, 14): “והאלקים עשה שיראו מלפניו”—**and Elokim has acted so that man should revere Him**. The Maor Einayim (Noach, Yitro) provides an explanation in the name of the Baal Shem Tov hakadosh, zy”a. He explains that HKB”H created midas hadin in the world—represented by the name “אלקים”—not for the sake of actually punishing the sinner. Rather, its main purpose is to cause a person to revere and fear Hashem, so that he will be motivated to perform teshuvah. If he does so, there will no longer be any need to actually punish him. This then is the message conveyed by the passuk: “והאלקים עשה שיראו מלפניו”. HKB”H made midas hadin—the name Elokim—for the express purpose that people should revere and fear Him and would thereby refrain from sinning.

The sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh (Vayeishev) brings from the teachings of the Chiddushei HaRim, citing the Yehudi HaKadosh, the great Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Peshischa, zy”a, the following interpretation of the words of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (Tehillim 76, 9): “משמים השמעת דין ארץ יראה ושקטה”—**from heaven You have proclaimed judgment; the earth feared and subsided**:

“החידושי הרי”מ זצ”ל אמר בשם היהודי הקדוש זצללה”ה זי”ע, משמים השמעת דין ארץ יראה ושקטה, שהדינים הוא רק ליראה מפניו, שנאמר (קהלת ג-יד) והאלקים עשה שיראו מלפניו, ולאחר שירא נתבטל הדין ושקטה. וזהו ממתיק הדינים בשרשן, שהדין הוא רק לצורך החסד, וכזה שאדם מתירא הוא ממתיק הדבר.”

**The elements of din exist solely so that people will fear Him, as it states: “And Elokim has acted so that man should revere (fear) Him.” Once man fears Him, the din is nullified and everything subsides. This is the way to sweeten the forces of din at their roots; for din is only for the sake of chesed; by fearing G-d, man sweetens the matter.**

How wonderful is the hallowed explanation of Rabbi Shmelkeh of Nikolsburg, zy”a, regarding the passuk (Tehillim 119, 161): “שרים רדפוני חנם ומדברך פחד לבני”—**princes have pursued me without cause, but my heart stood in awe of Your word**. Occasionally, when HKB”H sees that a person does not sufficiently fear Hashem, He devises princes that will pursue him, causing him to fill with fear and trembling. This will make

him realize that this is how he should fear and revere HKB”H. This is the lesson conveyed by David HaMelech: “**Princes have pursued me without cause**”—they do so without cause and it serves no purpose; because “**my heart stood in awe of Your word**”—even without this device, I stand in awe and tremble at the thought of Your word.

We can now appreciate the message of the Sefas Emes. He explains that the purpose of blowing-shofar on Rosh HaShanah is to instill fear and trepidation in us out of awe for the Day of Judgment, in the sense of: “**אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו**”—**is the shofar ever sounded in a city and the people do not tremble?!** If it serves this purpose, then it will no longer be necessary for HKB”H to actually punish us.

### The Amazing Suggestion in Parshas Nitzavim to Negate the Curses of Parshas Ki Savo

Continuing onward on this path of enlightenment, let us explore the practical significance of Parshas Nitzavim acting as a barrier creating a separation between the “Kelalos” in Parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah. The Rama in the very first section of the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 1, 1) cites the language of the Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim. He suggests that the way to achieve “yiras Hashem” is to imagine at all times that you are standing in the presence of the King of Kings, HKB”H:

“שויתי ה’ לנגדי תמיד (תהלים טז-ח), הוא כלל גדול בתורה ובמעלות הצדיקים אשר הולכים לפני האלקים, כי אין ישיבת האדם ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לבדו בביתו, כישיבתו ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לפני מלך גדול, ולא דיבורו והרחבת פיו כרצונו והוא עם אנשי ביתו וקרוביו, כדיבורו במושב המלך, כל שכן כשישים האדם אל לבו שהמלך הגדול הקב”ה אשר מלוא כל הארץ כבודו עומד עליו ורואה במעשיו, כמו שנאמר (ירמיה כג-כד) אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאום ה’, מיד יגיע אליו היראה וההכנעה בפחד השי”ת ובושתו ממנו תמיד.”

**“I have set Hashem before me always.” This is a fundamental principle in the teachings and conduct of the righteous, who walk in the presence of the Lord. One should always have in mind that he is in the presence of HKB”H and should act and speak accordingly. Surely, a person’s actions and speech when he is at home alone or with his family are not the same as his actions and speech in the presence of an important person like a king. All the more so, if a person has in mind that HKB”H, in all of His glory, is standing over him and observing all that he does . . . he will be overcome immediately with fear and submission toward the Almighty and will always be embarrassed to act inappropriately.**

This is precisely the function of Parshas Nitzavim and is alluded to by HKB”H in the opening passuk: **“אתם נצבים היום כולכם לפני ה' אלקיכם”**. In the merit of blowing-shofar on Rosh HaShanah-- referred to in the passuk as **“היום”**--which serves to arouse fear and trembling in human beings, you all stand before Hashem, your G-d, and are able to picture in your minds that you are in the presence of the almighty King, HKB”H. As a result, there is no longer a need for HKB”H to actually punish you. For, as we have learned, the ultimate goal of all the punishments and curses is merely to instill in Yisrael **“yiras Hashem,”** in keeping with: **“והאלקים עשה שיראו מלפניו”**—**and Elokim has acted so that man should revere Him.**

Thus, after the faces of Yisrael drained of color upon hearing the **“Kelalos”** in Parshas Ki Savo, Moshe consoled them with the words: **“אתם נצבים היום, הרבה הכעסתם למקום ולא עשה אתכם כלייה, והרי אתם קיימים לפניו”**—although you have angered Him immensely, you are still alive and standing in His presence; He has not chosen to wipe you out. As we have explained, Moshe was giving Yisrael critical advice as to how to spare themselves from the brunt of these **“Kelalos,”** chas v’shalom. He was teaching them to follow the advice presented by the Rama in the name of the Rambam—to picture in their minds, at all times, in all their activities, that they are standing in the presence of Hashem. In this manner, they will acquire the appropriate level of yirah and they will be spared the severity of the din.

### One Hundred Sounds of the Shofar to Confuse the Satan

In honor of the upcoming Rosh HaShanah, I would like to present upon the royal table a noble idea. I would like to expand our understanding regarding the heartfelt words of consolation that Moshe Rabeinu offered Yisrael. In addition, I would like to elaborate on the notion that Parshas Nitzavim constitutes a barrier separating the curses from Rosh HaShanah. We shall begin by referring to the Gemara (R.H. 16a): **“למה תוקעין ומריעין: --כשהן יושבין ותוקעין ומריעין כשהן עומדין, כדי לערבב השטן”** **why do we sound the shofar both while sitting and while standing? in order to confuse the Satan.** Tosafos provide the following clarification (ibid.):

**“פירש בערוך כדאיתא בירושלמי, (ישעיה כה-ח) בלע המות לנצח, וכתב (שם כז-יג) והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול, כד שמע קל שיפורה זימנא חדא, בהיל ולא בהיל, וכד שמע תניין אמר, ודאי זהו שיפורה דיתקע בשופר גדול, ומטא זימניה למתבלע, ומתערבב ולית ליה פנאי למעבד קטגוריא.”**

Tosafos cite the Aruch and refer to the following two pesukim: (1) Yeshayah 25, 8: **“He will eliminate death forever,”** and (2) Ibid. 27, 13: **“It shall be on that day that a great shofar shall be blown.”** They explain that when the Satan hears the first set of shofar sounds, those prior to the set blown in the standing Mussaf service, it is bewildered; however, when it hears the second set during the standing part of the service, it is certain that this represents the blowing of the great shofar le’atid la’vo. It is certain that its time in this world has come to an end. Due to its confusion and agitation, it is no longer able to prosecute. The commentaries have struggled and suggested many explanations as to why the Satan isn’t thoroughly frightened by the first set of shofar-blowings; it is only bewildered. Whereas, the second set causes it to panic, certain that its existence in this world has finally come to an end.

Additionally, it is worth explaining why we follow the custom of the Arizal to sound the shofar one hundred times on Rosh HaShanah. The source for this custom comes from Tosafos (R.H. 33b), once again citing the Aruch. The custom is to blow thirty sounds referred to as **“mi-yu-shav”** (literally: while seated), thirty sounds while standing (**“mi-oo-mad”**) during the silent devotion, thirty sounds during the Chazan’s repetition of the service and an additional ten sounds during the kaddish recited after the conclusion of the Chazan’s repetition. In all, the shofar is sounded one hundred times, corresponding to the one hundred sobs that came from Sisera’s mother, when he failed to return from the battlefield.

It appears that we can explain the matter based on a precious introduction from the incredible teachings of the Yismach Moshe (Eikev). In his own sacred way, he addresses the Gemara’s statement (Menachos 43b): **“חייב אדם לברך מאה --ברכות בכל יום, שנאמר (דברים י-יב) ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך”** **a person is obligated to recite one hundred blessings every day, as it says (Devarim 10, 12): “And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you.”** Rashi interprets this statement by employing the following methodology: **“אל תקרי מה אלא מאה”**—he instructs us to read the word **“מה”** in the passuk as **“מאה”**; so, instead of meaning **“what,”** it means **“one hundred.”** A similar interpretation and methodology is suggested by the Midrash Tanchuma (Korach 12) and the Midrash Rabbah (ibid. 18, 21): **“ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך, קרי ביה מאה אלו מאה ברכות”**—adding that this is an allusion to the requirement to recite one hundred berachos every day.

The Yismach Moshe ponders: If the passuk explicitly says: “מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם”, employing the word “מה”, how is it possible to expound that the word should be read as “מאה”? He provides an explanation based on the Rama presented above citing the Rambam. He taught us that the way to achieve “yiras Hashem” is to always picture yourself as standing in the presence of the King of Kings, HKB”H. Seemingly, however, this, too, is perplexing. For, we see with our own eyes that there are many individuals, who know and believe that HKB”H is omnipresent, that the world is filled by His glory. Nevertheless, they are not overcome with the yirah one would expect of someone standing in the presence of the King of Kings.

### One Hundred Forces of Tumah Separate a Person from His Maker

The Shela hakadosh (Chayei Sara) writes that the name of the yetzer—סמאל—contains two distinct components. The letters ס”ם emanate from the side of tumah; whereas the two letters ל”ל emanate from the side of kedushah; as such, it is sustained by the latter. This then is the meaning of the statement in the Gemara (Succah 52a): “לעתיד לבוא מביאו הקב”ה ליצר הרע ושוחטו”-- **le’atid la’vo, HKB”H will bring the yetzer hara and slaughter it.** HKB”H will extract the evil component from the yetzer hara—the two letters ס”ם; all that will remain will be the name ל”ל; thus, it will be transformed into a holy malach.

Based on this information, the Yismach Moshe answers the questions posed above. The two letters ס”ם, the evil component of the yetzer hara, possess a numerical equivalent of one hundred. They endow the yetzer hara with one hundred forces of tumah. The function of these evil forces is to separate a Jew from HKB”H. As a result of this separation and detachment, it becomes difficult for a Jew to actually picture himself standing in the presence of HKB”H. Thus, he fails to attain the desired level of yirah.

To counteract this situation, our blessed sages devised a wonderful solution. A Jew is instructed to bless Hashem daily with one hundred berachos, uttered with sincerity and proper intent. This practice effectively negates these one hundred forces of tumah, eliminating the barrier they create between a Jew and his G-d. With the barrier gone, we are able to picture ourselves standing in the presence of HKB”H, the King of Kings. As a consequence, the desired fear and reverence of Hashem will prevail upon us.

Now, Chazal’s elucidation regarding this passuk makes perfect sense. The passuk states: מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם **—what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you but merely to fear Hashem, your G-d.** The language of the passuk seems to imply that achieving an appropriate level of yirah of Hashem is a simple matter; the word “מה” suggests an attitude of “what” of it—it’s a piece of cake. Yet, we see with our own eyes that it is not a simple matter at all. In fact, in the Gemara (Berachos 33b), Chazal express their disbelief and shock at the implication of the passuk: **אטו יראת שמים מילתא—“is “yiras shamayim” (fear of Heaven) really such a small matter?!**

So, to resolve this difficulty, they expound: אל תקרי מה אלא “מאה”. In other words, we cannot read this word simply as “מה”, because that would imply that yirah is indeed a simple matter. Therefore, it is imperative to recite “מאה”—one hundred berachos every day to subdue and counteract the ס”ם’s one hundred forces of tumah, separating us from Hashem. Thus, achieving a satisfactory level of yiras Hashem will be a simple matter, as suggested by the passuk: “מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה”. For, picturing ourselves as standing in Hashem’s presence will not be a problem. This is the gist of his holy words.

### The One Hundred Sounds of the Shofar Negate the One Hundred Forces of the ס”ם and the One Hundred Kelalos

Let us now accept the exalted task of providing a rationale for our custom to produce one hundred sounds with the shofar. As explained, the purpose of these sounds is to arouse in a person yiras Hashem, in keeping with the passuk: **“Is the shofar ever sounded in a city and the people do not tremble?!”** With this yirah, we will no longer need to be actually punished, chas v’shalom. Yet, as pointed out, there are one hundred forces of tumah emanating from the letters ס”ם standing in our way, trying to prevent us from attaining yiras Hashem. Therefore, we have adopted the custom of sounding the shofar one hundred times on Rosh HaShanah, in order to eliminate these one hundred barriers of tumah--thus allowing us to attain yiras Hashem with relative ease.

We have pointed out previously that the one hundred sounds of the shofar are comprised of sounds produced while the congregation is sitting (even though this is not the current practice), sounds produced while the congregation is standing

(during the silent “amidah” and the Chazan’s repetition), and the additional ten shofar-blowings sounded during the kaddish recited after the Shemoneh Esreh. This enlightens us as to the meaning of the Gemara’s statement: **“Why do we sound the shofar both while sitting and while standing? in order to confuse the Satan.”** For, the total of all of these shofar sounds adds up to one hundred—the requisite number to counteract and nullify the one hundred forces of the ס”מ.

Thus, we can appreciate the deeper significance of the Yerushalmi cited by Tosafos: **“Upon hearing the first set of shofar-sounds, it is confused and it is not confused (בהיל ולא בהיל).”** When the Satan hears the thirty sounds of the shofar sounded while the congregation is permitted to sit, it is only affected partially. Why? Because thirty of its forces of tumah have been counteracted and weakened. Nevertheless, it is not thrown into a total frenzy and panic, because it still has seventy remaining forces of tumah at its disposal. [It is worthwhile interjecting an incredible allusion from the divine kabbalist, the Rama of Pano. He notes that the words בהיל ולא בהיל (used to describe the Satan’s confusion and uncertainty) possess the same numerical value as its name סמאל.]

**“When it hears the second set of shofar sounds, it says to itself: ‘This is without a doubt the blowing of the great shofar le’asid la’vo.’ It is certain that its time in this world has come to an end. Due to its confusion and agitation, it is no longer able to prosecute.”** When it hears the second set of sounds from the shofar, with which we complete the total of one hundred sounds, all of its forces derived from the letters ס”מ have been weakened. This throws it into a state of panic and confusion, thinking that the time of the geulah has arrived. It is well aware that at that time, HKB”H will slaughter it and the two letters ס”מ will be extracted from it and eliminated.

How nicely this explains why Parshas Nitzavim constitutes a barrier creating a separation between the “Kelalos” and Rosh HaShanah. For, when we scrutinize the wording of Rashi, we find that he does not state explicitly that there are ninety-eight curses in the “tochachah.” Instead, he writes that there are **“one hundred curses minus two.”**

Addressing this curiosity, the Kli Yakar explains that, in truth, the “tochachah” in Parshas Ki Savo contains one hundred Kelalos; because two curses are alluded to in the passuk (Devarim 28, 61): **גם כל חלי וכל מכה אשר לא כתוב בספר—also every illness and every plague that is not written in this book of the Torah, Hashem will bring them upon you.** Since, however, they are not spelled out explicitly, they are not counted among the actual “Kelalos”; hence, the tally of one hundred minus two. This is the rationale underlying our custom to sound the shofar one hundred times; it is our intent and desire to mitigate and nullify the one hundred curses.

This enlightens us as to why Parshas Nitzavim constitutes a barrier intervening between the one hundred Kelalos and Rosh HaShanah. This is alluded to by the very first passuk of the parsha: **“אתם נצבים היום”—you are standing here “today,”** on Rosh HaShanah; **“כולכם לפני ה’ אלקיכם”—without any barrier intervening between you and your G-d,** due to the one hundred times you blow the shofar. By adopting this practice, you have effectively eradicated the one hundred forces of the ס”מ which separate a Jew from HKB”H. This has allowed you to picture in your minds that you are standing in the presence of the Supreme King, HKB”H. Consequently, we are assured of attaining the qualities described by the Rama in the name of the Rambam: **“מייד יגיע אליו היראה וההכנעה בפחד השי”ת ובושתו ממנו תמיד”—awe, submission, and fear of the Almighty, and a sense of constant shame.**

This yirah will ensure that we will be spared from the one hundred “Kelalos” depicted in Parshas Ki Savo. As explained, HKB”H merely wrote these “Kelalos” in His Torah to instill in us the appropriate level of yirah. Once we are overwhelmed with yiras Hashem, as a result of the one hundred sounds of the shofar, which cause us to tremble, it is no longer necessary for HKB”H to actually punish us, chas v’shalom. In this merit, the uplifting words of the Gemara will be fulfilled: **תכלה שנה—let the previous year end along with its curses.** Instead: **“תחל שנה וברכותיה”—let the new year begin with its blessings.** May we merit a **“כתיבה וחתימה טובה”**, a year of geulah and salvation, swiftly, in our times. Amen.

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