

"A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe all around." (28:34)

Peninim Yekarim suggests that the golden bells were symbolic of wealth, while the pomegranates represented *mitzvos* and good deeds. Indeed, *Chazal* in the *Talmud Berachos* 57 state that every Jew is as full of *mitzvos* as a pomegranate has seeds. The bells were alternated with the pomegranates all around the hem of the *Kohen Gadol's* tunic. We derive from this *pasuk* that only when wealth is integrated with *mitzvos* and good deeds does it serve a purpose and benefit the world.

In *Shir Ha'Shirim* 6:7, *Shlomo Ha'Melech* says, "As many as a pomegranate's seeds are the merits of your unworthiest." The *Midrash* explains that even the illiterate Jew performs *mitzvos* and is as replete with merits as a pomegranate has seeds. Let us think about this. If they are filled with *mitzvos*, why are they considered empty and unworthy? Also, what is the analogy of the pomegranate? **Horav Y.D. Povarsky, Shlita**, distinguishes between an apple and a pomegranate in order to demonstrate the concepts of synthesis and unity. An apple is a single entity in which the entire fruit is unified together. The pomegranate, on the other hand, is a conglomerate of seeds, each seed exclusive of the other, "wrapped" individually, but amalgamated into one outer shell/fruit. This is analogous to one who performs a *mitzvah*, but does not fuse that *mitzvah* into his being to the point that he and the *mitzvah* become melded together as one. The essence of *mitzvah* observance is to change us so that we become consecrated. This occurs when we perform *mitzvos* with the proper *kavanah*, intention, and the right attitude. True, the *reikim*, unworthy ones, have *mitzvos*. They are, however, still viewed as vacuous and unworthy, since these *mitzvos* were not performed *I'shem Shomayim*. The performer does not intend to merge himself with the *mitzvah* to become a single unit.

As the outer skin of the pomegranate serves only as a container for the separate seeds, so, too, does an individual who simply performs *mitzvos* without "connecting " with them remain unworthy. These *mitzvos*, like the skin of the pomegranates leave no

lasting impression on the individual.