

[35] Its sound shall be heard...so that he not die: *The Baal Shem Tov was asked: why do your Chasidim gesticulate wildly and shout during prayer? He answered: Have you ever seen a person drowning? No one gesticulates more wildly than a drowning man. No one shouts louder than a man threatened by the thrashing waves of the sea. And no one mocks his motions or questions his cries.*

Someone who is at peace does not shout. Someone who feels hopelessly trapped where he is and far from where he wants to be raises a commotion. Similarly, the prayer of someone who feels close to God (a *tzadik*) is typically noiseless and calm, for such a person is not running away from anything. In contrast, the prayer of someone who feels distant from God is agitated and animated; this person is running, whether from his animal soul, from whatever makes him feel separate from God's oneness, even from his own spiritual strivings—for they are about him, not about God.

The Jewish people are compared to many fruits, each fruit reflecting another aspect of their common identity. The pomegranate is the symbol of the "empty" Jew, who, though seemingly "empty" of merits is in fact as filled with commandments he upholds as the pomegranate is filled with seeds. The noise of the bells at the bottom of the high priest's robe was the clamor of the people at the bottom of the spiritual ladder, the excitation of those compared to pomegranates.

Hence the critical need for these bells. A high priest who fails to include those at the bottom in his experience is unworthy of his title. If he enters the holy realm without them he will not live, for the completeness of our people demands that every member, righteous or not, be included.

On one day of the year, however, the high priest enters the inner precincts of the Tabernacle without the bells: Yom Kippur. On that day, we are all like angels; our inherent bond with God is revealed in the Holy of Holies, so bells are unnecessary

there. Even those at the bottom experience a oneness with their Creator that is silent and still.^{[35](#)}