

## The Pomegranate

Long ago, wise men used to say that all trees must generate fruit and if they didn't, that would be a symptom of an imperfect world. For them, producing fruit was the major accomplishment of a tree. In the Torah, seven were the fruit and the grains that crowned the human harvest as an example of the Holy Land fertility: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, olives, dates, and pomegranates. For Hebrews pomegranates had a mystical meaning. That's why it was so important for them.

For Assyrians, pomegranates symbolized life and for Phoenicians, Romans and Carthaginians, they were sacred fruit. Syrians, in Damascus, idolatrized "Rimmon", which meant Pomegranate in Hebrew and Syrian. In Mount Cassius, between Canaan and Egypt, there used to be a temple where a statue dedicated to Jupiter held a pomegranate. During the festivities dedicated to the goddess Ceres, the Roman version of the Greek goddess, Demeter, women abstained from eating pomegranates.

Pomegranate trees originated in the Middle East, and more specifically in Israel. The first references to this fruit will be found in the sacred history. For instance, in Exodus 28:31-35, Numbers 13:23, 20:5, 1 King 7:20, 2 Chronicles 4:13, Jeremiah 52: 22-23, 1 Samuel 14:2, Song of Solomon 4:13, 6:7, and 8:2.

Pomegranates have been interpreted to represent the union between brethren. However, it should be seen as something deeper than a simple symbolic union. It represents the union of soul and hearts, based on solidarity and fraternity. It means to do good, united by love to the unfortunate ones, whoever they might be. It is to work with pleasure, and to resist ignorance, selfishness and hypocrisy.

Remember that the columns with pomegranates and lilies were in the atrium and in the temple itself. Eight were located where the high priest prepared to enter the sanctum sanctorum where he would clean himself up from human vanities and weaknesses.

The pomegranate tree is part of the "*Punica Granatum*" family. In Southern Spain there is a beautiful city named Granada which was capital of the Castile and Aragon kingdoms. It is situated at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The word pomegranate comes from the French word "Grenade" and the Latin word "Granata".

In the XVII century, a deadly war weapon was invented and given the same name. It is a small shell containing an explosive and it is not at all similar to the pomegranate this text proposes to describe. By analogy, we can ask ourselves; what kind of pomegranates do we want to be, the first who aims at congregating or the second whose intention is to destroy? If you think it is the second, then please leave! Masonary is not a place for you!

I pray to the Great Architect of the Universe to make each of us the sweetest pomegranate seed.

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