Rupa, Manu get enlightened with the Pomegranate Story

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It was Rupa and Manu's Parsi friend, Kareena's 'Najjot' (sacred thread) ceremony for which they had come to Hyderabad. In this ritual, Kareena was to be initiated in the Zoroastrian or Parsi religion and she was looking lovely in the traditional white 'sudreh-kushti'. During the ceremony, Rupa and Manu observed the priest throwing pomegranate seeds over Kareena's head. Obviously, Manu was curious to know the secret behind this, and he asked his father to which he replied, "the pomegranate seeds are thrown to scare away the evil spirits". This was an amazing piece of information for both Rupa and Manu. Sensing their interest, Manu's father went on to tell them an interesting folk story about pomegranate tree which went as:

Once on a hot summer day, the king of a land, on a visit to the distant parts of his realm, came to a garden. The king was very thirsty. He got off his horse and entered the garden gate. He saw a gardener tending pomegranate trees. Each tree was laden with fruit. "May I have some pomegranate juice?" asked the king. The gardener plucked a ripe pomegranate fruit and took it to his hut in the corner. In a few minutes a beautiful maiden brought a cupful of fresh rich juice for the king.

The king, his eyes dazzled by the girl's fair face, drank the juice greedily. His thirst quenched, he looked around the garden and saw fruit trees growing wild everywhere. "How much profit do you make from selling this fruit?" he asked the gardener. "Three hundred rupees", replied the unsuspecting gardener. "And what do you pay the king's tax collector?" asked the king.

"The king only takes one-tenth of the cultivated grain. He does not take any money from the fruit", answered the gardener. The king saw the profusion of pomegranate trees. "I have so many trees all over my kingdom", he thought, "I must start taxing orchards as well."

Pleased with his plan, the king decided to return immediately to his capital. He swung onto his horse, but before leaving, he asked for some more pomegranate juice. The old gardener had recognized his king but he pretended ignorance. He could almost see the thoughts passing through the king's mind as his eyes roved greedily over the pomegranate trees. Both he and his daughter went back to the hut and came out with a cup. But this time the cup had only a few drops of juice in it. The king was puzzled. "Where is the juice?" asked the king.

"My lord, when you asked for pomegranate juice the first time, your heart was large and the pomegranate gave off its juice freely. But now I have squeezed five pomegranates and this is all I could get." The king turned to the gardener. "Can you explain this to me, gardener?" he asked. "It is simple, my lord. Our king has a large heart. He lets the fruit grow wild and everyone partakes of it. The fruit knows it has its blessing, so it gives of its juice generously. Today, the fruit has felt that the king wishes to impose a tax on it. So it feels that the blessing has passed from it. And its juice has dried up."

The king felt ashamed of his greedy thoughts. He banished the idea of imposing a tax from his mind and his brow cleared. The gardener watched his mood change. The king asked for more juice. This time his cup brimmed over with red juice. He thanked the gardener and his beautiful daughter and rode away.

With this, Manu's father ended his story and was equally amazed to find so many children, sitting around him, listening intently. He smiled at all of them, and for a brief second, visualized them as several pomegranate seeds filled with innocence and love. "Why don't the politicians of our country also become so pure and honest", he thought, but immediately remembered the Sanskrit adage, 'dadima mani dansh', to bite the pomegranate tree. This means a hard and unwelcome task. Coming back to reality, he gave the children some more information about the amazing pomegranate. Turn over...
Pip, Pip, Pomegranate
A Natural Pharmacy in a Single Fruit

Botanical Name: Punica granatum  Family: Lythraceae
Common Names: Pomegranate, Granada (Spanish), Grenade (French)
Vernacular Names: Sanskrit: Dadima or Dalimbe, Hindi: Anar

Where am I found?
I am a native from Iran and the Himalayas in northern India and am cultivated and naturalized over the whole world since ancient times. I am widely cultivated throughout India and the drier parts of Southeast Asia, Malaysia, the East Indies and tropical Africa. I prefer a semi-arid mild-temperate to subtropical climate and am naturally adapted to regions with cool winters and hot summers.

How do I look like?
I am a neat, rounded shrub or small tree that can grow to 20 or 30 feet, but more typically to 12 to 16 feet in height. I am usually deciduous, but in certain areas the leaves will persist on the tree. My trunk is covered by a red-brown bark which later becomes gray. The branches are stiff, angular and often spiny. I have glossy, leathery leaves that are narrow and lance-shaped. My attractive scarlet, white or variegated flowers are over an inch across and have 5 to 8 crumpled petals and a red, fleshy, tubular calyx which persists on the fruit. The flowers may be solitary or grouped in twos and threes at the ends of the branches.

The nearly round, 2-1/2 to 5 in. wide fruit is crowned at the apex by the prominent calyx. The tough, leathery skin or rind is typically yellow overlaid with light or deep pink or rich red. The interior is separated by membranous walls and white, spongy, bitter tissue into compartments packed with sacs filled with sweetly acid, juicy, red, pink or whitish pulp or aril.

What are my Medicinal Uses?
- For cough and wheezing, ginger juice and pomegranate juice mixed with honey taken internally every 3 hours (3-5 teaspoonful) brings quick relief.
- Make decoction of 20gms of the rind of fresh fruits. Take 1/2 cup of this decoction mixed with 1-2 teaspoon of honey thrice a day for seven days to cure acidity.
- Pomegranate taken first thing in the morning (empty stomach) every alternate day can strengthen your bones.
- Pomegranate juice is an excellent natural ayurvedic remedy for ulcers in stomach.
- The rind of the fruit and the bark of the pomegranate tree is used as a traditional remedy against diarrhea, dysentery and intestinal parasites.
- The seeds and juice are considered a tonic for the heart and throat, and classified as a bitter-astringent (pitta or fire) component under the Ayurvedic system, and considered a healthful counterbalance to a diet high in sweet-fatty (kapha or earth) components.
- The astringent qualities of the flowerjuice, rind and tree bark are considered valuable for a variety of purposes, such as stopping nose bleeds and gum bleeds, toning skin, (after blending with mustard oil) and treating hemorrhoids.
- Pomegranate juice is also used as eye drops as it is believed to slow the development of cataracts.
- Pomegranate taken every night (for 14 days) before going to bed can cure impotence.
- Pound the dried pieces of fruit rind to make a fine powder. Take 1tbs of this powder with water in the morning and evening for 3 days to expel worms from stomach.
Juice of pomegranate flower and tender grass (Cynodon dactylon) taken in equal quantity (10 ml) 3 times a day can stop nosebleeds.

Pomegranate name comes out from Latin pomum meaning apple and granatus, meaning grainy

Some Interesting Pomegranate Facts

- The tree bark has tannins that are used in the aging of leather. The tannins age the leather beautifully and impart a full rich colour.
- Dried pomegranate flower buds can be crushed and used in tea to ease bronchitis.
- Anardana is an Indian spice made by drying the seeds out in the sun for about 15 days. The slower the drying process, the richer the flavour. They can be mixed into marmalades and are also used in sauces to deepen the flavour of many dishes. Some dried seeds are chewy and some are tougher. The harder seeds can be dried, crushed, and used as a sprinkle on spice. The flavour is bright and complex and earthy, which blends well with Indian dishes. Anardana goes well with cloves, ginger paste and mixed into sauces and chutneys.

- Mexican natives use the flowers in a decoction (which means to boil the flowers down to their essence) and then make a drink or liquor for mouth and throat inflammations.
- Jewish lore says that the 613 seeds found in a fruit coincide with the 613 commandments of the Torah.
- The Chinese are said to believe that the seeds represent male babies who will go forth in the world and do many great and wondrous deeds.
- Indians thought of it similarly as both a sign of fertility and prosperity, as well as a medicinal plant which they used in the ayurvedic tradition.
- Some believe that the forbidden fruit in the Bible was the pomegranate and it was known as the "fruit of the dead" in Greek mythology.

Pomegranate Lemonade

Juice of half large pomegranate
Juice of 8 small lemons, 3 cups water
½ cup powdered sugar
Pour all ingredients into a pitcher and stir thoroughly. Serve over ice with a sprig of mint. Sip and enjoy your pomegranate lemonade at leisure!!!