



TORAH VEHA'ARETZ

INSTITUTE

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The Pomegranate #2

FOOD AND BEVERAGE IN TANACH AND CHAZAL

The pomegranate is one of the seven species, and appears in a few places throughout Tanach.

In antiquity, the pomegranate was eaten raw or preserved, and juice and wine were prepared from its seeds. The Gemara (*Shabbat* 144b) states that people from the house of Menashya bar Menachem would regularly juice pomegranates. *Shabbat* 115a states that it is permitted to remove pomegranate seeds in the late afternoon of Yom Kippur when it occurs on a weekday, to save time at the end of the fast.

AS THE NAME OF A PLACE AND PESON

In contrast to other trees from the seven species, many settlements bore the name of the fruit *rimon*: Ein Rimon was a city in the portion of Shimon (*Yehoshua* 19:7), today identified as Hurvat Rimon, located south of Kibbutz Lahav. Gat Rimon in Dan's portion (*Yehoshua* 19:45) was a Levite city. Today, Moshav Gat Rimon, near Petach

Tivka, bears its name.

Shaul sat “beneath the *rimon* at Migron” (*I Shmuel* 14:2); this probably does not refer to a pomegranate tree, which does not offer much shade. This is the name of

a place Rimon, identified with the village Ramon, located southeast of Ofra, where archeological findings dating back to the First Temple times were discovered. The Jewish settlement Rimonim is located nearby.

There is also the mention of a person in Tanach bearing the name of the fruit: Rechav and Ba'anah, sons of Rimmon of Be'erot

(*II Shmuel* 4:2).

POMEGRANATES AND BEAUTY

It seems that pomegranates are seen as a manifestation of beauty because of its symmetry, red luster, and many shiny seeds. It is also the largest fruit of the Seven Species. Its symmetrical crown also magnifies its beauty.

Rabbi Yochanan's beauty is compared to that of a pomegranate (*Bava Metzia* 84a): “One who wishes to see something



resembling the beauty of Rabbi Yochanan should bring a shiny silver goblet ... and fill it with red pomegranate seeds ... and position it between the sunlight and shade. That luster is a semblance of Rabbi Yochanan's beauty."

The Gemara (*Sukkah* 31a), in regard to the etrog which is called *peri eitz hadar*, says that if someone lacks an etrog it is forbidden to take a pomegranate in its place. From here we see that a pomegranate was also viewed as a magnificent fruit. ■

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