

Story 1948 (1997 Tape 1

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Taste of Pomegranates Not in Fruit
but in Character of Consumer

Once in the old days the shah of Persia went walking with one of his viziers. After awhile they grew very thirsty, but they had brought no water with them, and they could find no source of water along their route. A bit later they came upon a pomegranate orchard, and decided to ask the owner of that orchard for some water.

In the orchard they found not the owner but only a boy who worked there. "Can you give us some water to drink?" the shah asked that boy.

"I have no water here with me," answered the boy, "but there are juicy pomegranates on these trees, and if you wish, I can give you some." After this offer had been accepted, the boy went and picked a large, juicy pomegranate for the shah. The ruler found the pomegranate both juicy and delicious. After he and the vizier had eaten it, he asked for another.

While the boy went to pick another pomegranate,

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shah thought, "I could take this orchard from its owner and make it mine." Of course he said nothing about this to the vizier or to the boy, who soon returned with a second pomegranate

The boy cut the second pomegranate in half and handed it to the shah, but when the ruler bit into that second pomegranate, he found it to be sour--so sour that it made his face pucker up. He asked the boy, "Where did you get this second pomegranate?"

"Your Majesty, I got it from the same orchard and the same tree that bore the first one."

The shah asked, "But how can it be possible that the first one was so juicy and sweet while this one is dry and sour?"

"My dear shah, it came from the same orchard and from the same tree, but perhaps you had different feelings or thoughts while you were eating the two pieces of fruit."

"You may be right," answered the shah. "When you brought the first pomegranate, I was very grateful to you for giving me something so juicy and sweet. But while you were going after the second pomegranate, I gave some

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thought to confiscating this orchard for myself."

The boy said, "Your Majesty, a person with good thoughts may enjoy whatever comes to him, but a person with less generous thoughts may find things distasteful.

"That may well be," said the shah. "Go and get me another pomegranate. I am not asking for your orchard but for just one more pomegranate. I want to test the accuracy of what you just said."

The boy went and picked a third pomegranate from the same tree and took it to his guest. The shah found it to be juicy and sweet--just as the first one had been. He then said, "My son, you were right! In life he who has benevolent thoughts is usually rewarded, but the person with ungenerous thoughts gets what he deserves."