

Plants of the Bible

By Michael Zohary

An accurate historical account drawing on the latest biblical research and a scientifically sound botanical description are, for the first time ever, joined under one cover in *Plants of the Bible*. The text is accompanied by original full-color photography that presents the plants in their natural habitat.

Part one stresses the role of plants in religion, the arts, agriculture, trade and daily life. The second part groups plants into natural agricultural and morphological units depicting the life history of each plant in terms of botany, geography and use. Two hundred photographs and five maps in full color.

Coriander

Coriandrum sativum L.

New the house of Israel called its name manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Exodus 16:31

THE Bible tells us that the famous heavenly bread of the Israelites in the desert - the manna - was like the seeds of gosh. To identify gosh as 'coriander' is difficult because of contextual and linguistic discordances. The Septuagint translates gosh as *akoria*, which is a different plant. Similarly, the Arabic *gidd*, cognate with gosh, refers to wormwood (*Artemisia*), not coriander. Most translators were probably guided by the Punic word for coriander, *gosh*, which is also cognate with gosh.

Coriander, moreover, is never found in the desert, and its brown grains cannot be compared with the white drops of manna, which should more appropriately be equated with any of a score of common desert plants with white round seeds or fruits, or with plants whose Arabic name is cognate with gosh.

The coriander is an annual herb of the Carrot family, with deeply incised leaves and umbels of white flowers. Its fruits are globose, 1-3 mm. across, and are crowned by a rudimentary calyx. All parts of the plant have a strong odor. It is native to Israel and occurs as a weed among winter crops. Once widely cultivated as a condiment, its leaves are sometimes used to flavor soups, puddings, curries and wines. It also has some medicinal value.



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