

~MANDRAKE (67)

[Hebrew, *du-dha- 'im'*, plural]

- A perennial herb of the potato family, with large, ovate, or oblong, dark-green leaves. The leaves of the **mandrake**, *Mandragora officinarum*, appear to grow directly from the taproot, fan out in a circle, and lie close to the ground.
- From the center of this circle, the flower stalks grow, each bearing only one white, bluish, or purple flower. The yellowish-red fruit, about the size of a plum, ripens about the time of the Palestinian wheat harvest.
- Now Reuben went walking in the days of the wheat harvest and got to find **mandrakes** in the field. So he brought them to Leah his mother. Then Rachel said to Leah; Give me, please, some of your sons mandrakes. (**Genesis 30:14**)
- It has been described as smelling sweet and fresh like an apple.
- The **mandrakes** themselves have given their fragrance, and by our entranceways there are all sorts of the choicest fruits. The new ones as well as the old, O my dear one, I have treasured up for you. (**Song of Solomon 7:13**)
- The thick, frequently forked, taproot of the **mandrake** bears some resemblance to a man's lower limbs. This has given rise to numerous superstitious beliefs and the ascribing of magical powers to the plant.
- In ancient times the fruit of the **mandrake** was used in medicine as a narcotic and as an antispasmodic. Also, it was, and still is in some parts of the Middle East, regarded as an aphrodisiac and as able to increase human fertility or aid in conception.
- The Genesis record reports that Rachel agreed to exchange with her sister Leah an opportunity to have the marital due from her husband Jacob for some **mandrakes**.
- Now Reuben went walking in the days of the wheat harvest and got to find **mandrakes** in the field. So he brought them to Leah his mother. Then Rachel said to Leah; Give me, please, some of your sons **mandrakes**. (**Genesis 30:14**)

- **At this she said to her; Is this a little thing, your having taken my husband, with your now taking also my sons **mandrakes**? So Rachel said; For that reason he is going to lie down with you tonight in exchange for your sons **mandrakes**. (**Genesis 30:15**)**
- **While the Bible does not reveal her motive, possibly Rachel felt that these would help her conceive, thus ending the reproach of her barrenness. It was, however, not until some years after this incident that she actually became pregnant.**
- **Finally God remembered Rachel, and God heard and answered her in that he opened her womb. (**Genesis 30:22**)**
- **And she became pregnant and brought a son to birth. Then she said; God has taken away my reproach! (**Genesis 30:23**)**
- **So she called his name Joseph, saying; Yehowah is adding another son to me. (**Genesis 30:24**)**