

## Joseph and Aseneth

Joseph was sixteen years old when he was sold into Egypt. He was of middle height, very slender and agile, active both in body and mind. He was indeed very different from his brothers, and all felt drawn to love him. Were it not for the marked preference shown him by his father, his brothers also would have loved him.

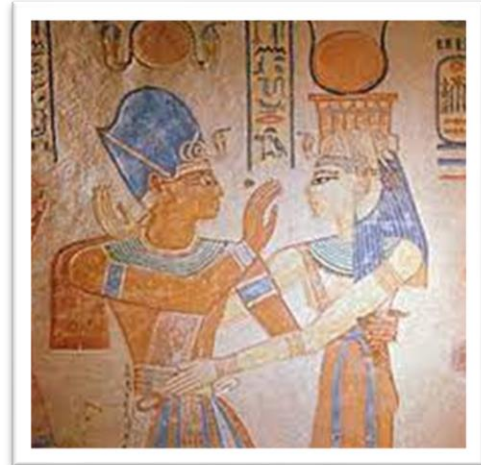
Reuben was of a more lively disposition than the others. Benjamin was a large, ungainly man, but very good-natured, easily led. Joseph wore his hair divided into three, one part on either side of his head, the third falling down behind in long curls. When ruler over Eg

ypt, he wore it short, but afterward allowed it again to grow.

When Jacob bestowed the many-colored coat upon Joseph, he gave over to him also some of the bones of Adam, without telling him, however, what they were. Jacob gave them to Joseph as a precious talisman, for he knew well that his brothers did not love him. Joseph carried the bones on his breast in a little leathern bag rounded on top. When his brothers sold him, they took from him only the colored coat and his customary outer garment, but left the band and a sort of scapular on his breast beneath which he had hung the little bag.

The colored coat was white with broad red stripes. It had on the breast three rows of black cord crossing one another, in the center of which were yellow ornaments. It was full around the breast. When bound at the waist, the fullness served as a pocket. It was narrower toward the lower part of the skirt and had slits at the side, to render motion easier. It fell below the knee, was somewhat longer in the back and open in front. Joseph's ordinary dress did not reach to the knees.

Joseph was known to Pharaoh and his wife before his imprisonment. Putiphar's affairs were so flourishing under Joseph's management, Putiphar himself was so blessed during Joseph's stay under his roof, since he conducted all things so well for Pharaoh, that the latter was eager to see the faithful servant. Pharaoh's wife, who was religiously inclined and very desirous of salvation and who had, at the same time, like all the Egyptians, a great hankering after new gods, was so astounded at the wise, intelligent, extraordinary young stranger, that she honored him interiorly as a divinity. She said repeatedly to Pharaoh: "This man has been sent by our gods. He is not a human being like ourselves." Hence it came to pass that he was thrown, not into the common dungeon, but into the prison reserved for the



nobility, and there he was made the overseer. Pharaoh's wife sincerely deplored his conviction as a malefactor, and thought that she had been mistaken in him. But when he was liberated and again appeared at court, she treated him with great distinction. The cup that Joseph ordered to be placed in Benjamin's sack was the first present the queen had made to him. I know it well; it had two handles, but no foot. It seemed to have been cut out of one precious stone or one solid transparent mass, I know not which, and was in shape exactly like the upper part of the Chalice used at the Last Supper. It was also among the vessels that the children of Israel took away with them from Egypt, and it was afterward preserved in the Ark of the Covenant. Joseph was seven years in prison. During his greatest affliction, he received the mysterious Blessing of Jacob in the same manner as the Patriarchs had done. He had a vision also of a numerous posterity.

I know all about Putiphar's wife. I saw how desirous she was to pervert Joseph, but after his elevation, she did penance and became chaste and devout. She was a tall, powerful woman, her skin of a yellowish-brown and shining like silk. She wore a colored robe over which was one of figured gauze. The lower one shone through it as if through lace. Joseph was thrown much with her, since his master's affairs were all entrusted to him. But when he became aware of the fact that she had grown more familiar in her manner toward him, he no longer remained in the house overnight during his master's absence. She often intruded herself upon him when he was busy at his writing. Once I saw her enter his presence in immodest attire. He was standing writing in one corner of a hall. (In those days, they used to write upon rolls of parchment which hung on the wall. The writer either sat or stood before them). She addressed him and he replied. Then she grew bolder, seeing which he turned hurriedly away. She grasped his mantle, but he fled leaving it in her hand.

I saw Joseph with Putiphar's pagan priests at Heliopolis. Aseneth, the daughter of Dina and the Sichemite, lived with them as a prophetess and a decorator of the idols. Seven other maidens were her companions. Putiphar had bought her from her nurse in her fifth year. This nurse had fled with her to the Red Sea by order of Jacob, that the child might not be murdered by his sons. Aseneth possessed the spirit of prophecy, and was esteemed by Putiphar as a prophetess. Joseph knew her, but he knew not that she was his niece. She was of a very earnest character, she sought seclusion, and in spite of her great beauty, she abhorred the society of men. She was favored with significant visions, was familiar with the Egyptian star worship, and had a secret presentiment of the religion of the Patriarchs. I saw no witchcraft connected with her. She saw in vision the whole mystery of life, the

transplanting, the coming to, and the departure of Israel from Egypt, even the long journey through the wilderness. She wrote many rolls on the leaves of a water-plant or on skin. The letters were strange-looking, they were like the heads of birds and animals. These writings were, even during her lifetime, misunderstood by the Egyptians and misconstrued into a sanction for their wicked abominations. Aseneth grieved deeply over this misconception brought about by the evil one, and she shed many tears. She had more numerous visions than any other of her time, and she was filled with wondrous wisdom. She conducted herself gravely, and refused advice to none. She could weave also and embroider. Her enlightened spirit detected man's corruption of truth, therefore was she grave, reserved, retiring, and silent.

I saw that the misconception of Aseneth's visions and writings led to her being worshipped under the name of Isis, and Joseph under that of Osiris. This perhaps was the cause of her abundant tears. She also wrote against their erroneous conception of her visions which had led to their proclaiming her the mother of all the gods.

When Putiphar offered sacrifice, Aseneth ascended a tower upon which she seemed to be, as it were, in a little garden. Here she gazed upon the stars by moonlight. She fell into ecstasy, and read all things clearly in the stars. The truth was shown her in pictures, because she was chosen of God. I have seen the pagan priests introduced into strange, diabolical worlds where they beheld the most abominable things. By such diabolical visions were the secret communications of Aseneth disfigured and made to contribute to the abominations of idolatry.

Aseneth introduced many useful arts and domestic animals into Egypt, among the latter, for instance, the cow. She taught the art of making cheese, that of weaving, and many others hitherto unknown to the inhabitants. She also healed many diseases. The plow was introduced by Joseph, who was himself skilled in its use. There was one thing that seemed truly wonderful to me. Aseneth ordered the flesh of the numerous animals slaughtered for sacrifice to be boiled down until it became a gelatinous mass, which served for food on campaigns and in times of scarcity. The operation was carried on in the open air and in caldrons in the earth. The Egyptians were rejoiced and amazed at this new mode of procuring food.

When Joseph met Aseneth at the pagan priest's dwelling, she approached to embrace him. This she did not through boldness, but impelled by the Spirit. It was in her a kind of prophetic action, and took place in presence of the pagan priest. Aseneth was looked upon as holy. But I saw Joseph keep her off with outstretched hand and address earnest words to her. Then Aseneth, deeply

agitated, retired to her own room where she remained in tears and penance.

I saw her in her chamber. She stood concealed by a curtain, her wealth of long and beautiful hair falling around her and curling at the ends. There was impressed on the skin of the pit of her stomach a wonderful sign. In a figure like a heart-shaped shell stood a child with outstretched arms, holding in one hand a small dish, in the other a cup, or chalice. In the dish, were three young ears of corn that appeared to be just breaking out of the husk, and the figure of a dove which seemed to peck after the grapes in the cup held by the child.

Jacob knew of this sign; but notwithstanding, he had to send the child away in order to shield her from the rage of his sons. But when he came down into Egypt, and Joseph told him all things, he recognized his granddaughter by this mark. Joseph, too, had a mark of the same kind upon his breast, a very full bunch of grapes.

Now I saw an angel appear in resplendent raiment, holding a lotus in his hand. He saluted Aseneth. She glanced at him and drew her veil around her. He commanded her to dry her tears, to adorn herself in festal robes, and he also requested her to bring him food. She left the room and returned adorned as directed, bringing with her a low table, small and light, upon which were wine and little flat loaves that had been baked in ashes. Aseneth evinced no fear. She was not shy, but simple and humble, just like Abraham and the other Patriarchs when treating with apparitions. When the angel now spoke to her, she unveiled. He asked her for some honey, but she replied that, unlike other maidens who are fond of it, she had none.

Thereupon the angel told her that she would find some among the idols that stood in the chamber. These idols were of various forms; they had heads of animals and for bodies serpents coiled downward.

Aseneth looked, and found a beautiful, coarse celled honeycomb, white as the Host of our altars. She set it before the angel, who bade her eat of it. He blessed it, and I saw it shining and flashing between them. I cannot now express the signification of this heavenly honey; for when one sees such things, it is just as they actually are, one knows all. But now, when I try to recall it, the honey appears to be what is called honey, yet I know not what the flowers, the bees, and the honey properly signified. I can only say this much: Aseneth really possessed in herself only bread and wine (or that which is typified by bread and wine), but she had no honey. By the reception of this honey, she issued from idolatry into the light of Israel, into salvation through the Old Law. It signified also that she should aid many souls, that many like bees should build around her. I heard her say that she would drink no more wine, for that now she was more in need of honey. I saw numbers of bees and vast stores of honey in Median near Jethro.

In blessing the honeycomb, the angel directed his finger toward all regions of the world, which signified that, by her presence, her types, and the mystery of its own, the honey's signification, Aseneth should be a mother and a leader. When later on she was honored as a divinity and represented with numerous breasts, it was in consequence of the misconception of her vision that she should nourish many.

The angel told her that she was destined to be united with Joseph, that she should be his bride, and he blessed her as Isaac had blessed Jacob and as the angel had blessed Abraham. The three lines that constituted the formula of the blessing, were drawn upon her twice, once to the pit of the stomach and once to the abdomen.

After this, I saw in vision Joseph going to Putiphar to demand Aseneth for his wife; but I can only remember that, like the angel, he carried a lotus in his hand. Joseph knew of Aseneth's wonderful wisdom, but their mutual relationship was hidden from both.

I saw that Pharaoh's son likewise was in love with Aseneth, on which account she had to remain secluded. He had persuaded Dan and Gad to espouse his cause, and all three lay in ambush to slay Joseph. But Juda (obeying a divine inspiration, I think) warned Joseph to take another route. Benjamin also conducted himself nobly in this affair, and defended Aseneth. Dan and Gad were punished by the death of their children; for even before it was known to anyone, they had been warned not to enlist in the murderous design.

When Joseph and Aseneth appeared in public, like the pagan priests of Putiphar, they bore in their hand a sign regarded as sacred and emblematic of the highest authority. The upper part was a ring; the lower, a Latin cross, a T. It served as a seal, and when grain was measured and divided the heaps were marked with it. It was used in the same way for the building of granaries and canals, also for the rising and falling of the Nile. Writings were sealed with it after they had first been marked with a red vegetable juice. When Joseph discharged any official duty, this symbol of authority, the cross being clasped in the ring, lay on a cushion at his side. It seemed to me also like a distinctive sign of the mystery of the Ark of the Covenant still enclosed in Joseph.

Aseneth also had an instrument like a wand. When in vision, she followed wherever it led. Where it quivered she struck the earth, and so discovered springs and water. It was made under the influence of the stars.

In the processions of high festivals, Joseph and Aseneth rode upon a glittering chariot. Aseneth wore an ancient shield which enclosed the whole person from below the arms. On it were numerous signs and figures. Her dress reached to her knees, below which the limbs were tightly laced. A wide

**mantle fell over the back, the sides of which were clasped together over the knees. The toes of her shoes were turned up like skates, and her headdress of colored feathers and pearls was shaped like a helmet.**

**Joseph wore a tight-fitting coat with sleeves, and over it a golden breastplate covered with figures. Straps with golden knots were crossed around the hips, and from his shoulders fell a mantle. His head ornament was of feathers and precious stones.**

**When Joseph went to Egypt, New Memphis was being built about seven leagues north of Old Memphis. Between the two cities, built on a dyke, was a highway with walks. Scattered among the trees were idols with grave, sad female faces and bodies of dogs. They sat upon stone slabs. There were as yet no beautiful buildings, only great, long ramparts and artificial stone mountains full of vaults and chambers. The dwellings were slight with a superstructure of wood. There were still great forests and morasses all around. At the flight of Mary into Egypt, the Nile had already changed its course.**

**The Egyptians worshipped all kinds of animals: toads, serpents, crocodiles.**

**They looked on quite coolly while a person was being devoured by a crocodile. At Joseph's coming, the worship of the bull had not yet come into practice. It was introduced in consequence of Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat and the seven lean cows. They had numerous kinds of idols; some like swaddled children, others like coiled serpents, some of which could be made longer or shorter at pleasure. A great many of the idols were adorned with breastplates on which the plans of cities and the course of the Nile were curiously inscribed. These shields were made in accordance with the pictures which the pagan priests traced in the stars, and after whose plan they built cities and canals. New Memphis was founded in this way.**

**The evil spirits at that time must have possessed a different, a more material power, for I saw that Egyptian sorcery came out of the earth, out of the abyss. When a pagan priest began his enchantments, I saw figures of all kinds of ugly animals arise out of the ground around the sorcerer and enter his mouth in a current of black vapor. He became thereby entranced and clear-sighted. It was as if, at the entrance of each spirit, a world hitherto closed was opened up to him and he saw things far and near, the abysses of the earth, countries, human beings, in fine, all things over which each particular spirit exerted an influence. Modern witchcraft always appears to me to be more under the influence of the spirits of the air. What the wizard saw by the aid of these spirits appeared like a delusion, a mirage, which they conjured up before him. I could see far beyond these pictures, for they were like shadows. It was as if one looked behind a curtain.**

When the Egyptian pagan priests intended to read the stars, they fasted as a preparation, performed certain purifications, clothed themselves in sackcloth, and sprinkled themselves with ashes. While they gazed upon the stars from their tower, sacrifices were offered. The pagans of those times had a confused knowledge of the religious mysteries of the true God which had been handed down from Seth, Henoah, Noe, and the Patriarchs to the chosen people, therefore were there so many abominations in their idolatry. The devil made use of them, as later on of heresy, to weave the pure, unclouded, authentic revelations of God into a snare for man's destruction. Therefore God enveloped the Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant in fire in order to preserve it.

The women of Egypt in Joseph's time were still clothed like Semiramis. When Jacob went into Egypt to Joseph, he pursued the same route through the wilderness by which later on Moses journeyed to the Promised Land. Jacob knew that he would see Joseph again; he always had a presentiment of this in his heart. He had even on this journey to Mesopotamia at the place upon which he erected the altar (not where he saw the ladder) a vision of his future sons. One he saw, in the region where Joseph was sold, sink from sight and like a star rise again in the south. He exclaimed therefore when they brought him the bloodstained coat, the foregoing circumstance almost forgotten recurring to him: "I shall weep for Joseph until I find him again." Jacob had, through Reuben, made many inquiries as to whom Joseph had married, but had not yet been entirely enlightened on the point that Joseph's wife was his own niece. Reuben and Putiphar were old acquaintances. Owing to the influence of the former, the latter received circumcision and served the God of Jacob.

Jacob dwelt about a day's journey distant from Joseph. When he fell sick, Joseph drove in a chariot to see him. Jacob questioned him closely about Aseneth and, when he heard of the sign on her person, he exclaimed: "She is flesh of thy flesh. She is bone of thy bone!" and he revealed to Joseph who she was. Joseph was so deeply affected that he almost lost consciousness. On his return home, he told his wife, and both shed tears to their heart's content over the news.

Some time after, Jacob grew worse, and Joseph was again by his side. Jacob put his feet from the couch to the floor, and Joseph had to lay his hand under his father's hip, and swear to bury him in Canaan. While Joseph swore, Jacob adored the Blessing hidden in him, for he knew that Joseph had received from an angel the Blessing that had been withdrawn from himself. Joseph bore this Blessing in his right side until death. Even after death, it lay enclosed in his body until the night before the departure of the Israelites,

when Moses took possession of it and placed it in the Ark of the Covenant, together with the remains of Joseph, as the Sacred Thing of the chosen people.

Three months after his visit, Jacob died. Both Jews and Egyptians celebrated his obsequies and sounded his praises, for he was greatly loved.

Aseneth bore to Joseph first Manasses and Ephraim, then other children, in all eighteen, among them several twins. She died three years before Joseph, and was embalmed by Jewish women. As long as Joseph lived, her body stood in his own monument. But the ancients of the people had taken some part of her intestines which they preserved in a little golden figure; and as the Egyptians also aspired to its possession, it was entrusted to the Jewish midwives. One of these women placed it in a reed box smeared with pitch and concealed it in the bulrushes near the canal. On the night of the Departure, a nurse of the tribe of Aser brought this secret thing to Moses.

The woman's name was Sara.

Joseph, at his death, was embalmed by the Jews in presence of the Egyptians. Then were placed together the remains of Joseph and Aseneth in compliance with the notes that the latter had made from her visions and had left to the Jews. The Egyptian priests and astrologers had placed Joseph and Aseneth among their own divinities. They had some inkling of the notes left by Aseneth and a presentiment of the high influence, the blessing that she and Joseph would be for Israel. But that blessing they coveted for themselves, and therefore, they sought to oppress Israel. It was on this account that the Israelites, who multiplied astonishingly after Joseph's death, were so harassed by Pharaoh. The Egyptians knew well that the Israelites would not leave the country without the bones of Joseph; consequently at several different times they stole some of the remains of Joseph and at last got entire possession of them. The Jewish people at large knew only of Joseph's corpse, but not of the Mystery that it contained. That was known to only a few. But the entire nation grieved deeply when the ancients found out and made known to them that the Holy Thing upon which the Promise rested had been stolen. Moses, who had been reared at Pharaoh's court in all the Egyptian wisdom, visited his people and learned the cause of their grief. When he murdered the Egyptian, God ordained that as a fugitive he should go to Jethro, since the latter by his connection with Syble Segola would be able to help him to discover the purloined Mystery. Moses had, also, at the command of God, married Sephora in order to incorporate that family into the house of Israel.

Segola was the natural daughter of Pharaoh by a Jewish mother. Although reared in the Egyptian star worship, she was very fond of the Jews. It was she



that had divulged to Moses while still at court that he was not a son of Pharaoh.

Aaron, after the death of his first wife, had to marry a daughter of this Segola, in order that the mother's influence with the Israelites might be increased. The children of this marriage went with the Israelites at their departure from Egypt. But Aaron was obliged to separate from his wife that the Aaronic priesthood might spring from a purely Jewish stock. Segola's daughter, after her separation from Aaron, married again. Her descendants, at the time of the Saviour, dwelt at Abila whither her mummy had been brought by them.

Segola was very enlightened and possessed great influence over Pharaoh. She had on her forehead a bump such as many of the Prophets had in olden times. She was led by the Spirit to procure numerous favors and gifts for the Israelites.

On the night upon which the angel of the Lord struck the firstborn of the Egyptians, Segola, wrapped in her veil, accompanied Moses, Aaron, and three other Israelites to two sepulchral mounds which were separated by a canal over which lay a bridge. The canal flowed between Memphis and Goshen into the Nile. The entrance into the mounds was under the bridge and below the surface of the water. Steps led from the bridge down to it. Segola descended alone with Moses. She cast into the water a scrap of paper upon which was inscribed the name of God. The water retreated and left the entrance to the monument free. They struck on the stone door and it opened inward. Then they called to the others to come down. When they did so, Moses bound their hands together with his stole and made them swear to protect the Mystery. After the oath, he loosed their hands, and all entered the vault where they struck a light, which showed all kinds of passages with images of the dead standing therein.

Joseph's body, with the remains of Aseneth, lay in an Egyptian tauriform, metal coffin, which shone like polished gold. The back formed a cover. This they lifted off, and Moses took the Mystery out of the hollow body of Joseph, wrapped it in cloths, and handed it to Segola who carried it in her arms concealed under her garments. The remaining bones were placed together upon a stone, wrapped in cloths, and carried away by the men. Now that they had gained possession of the Sacred Thing, Israel could depart from the country. Segola wept, but Israel was full of joy.

Moses concealed a relic of Joseph's body in the top of his staff. This top was in form like a medlar, or persimmon; it was yellowish and surrounded by leaves. It was different from the shepherd's staff that Moses was commanded to cast on the ground before God and which was there changed

to a serpent. It was a reed, the upper and the lower end could be pushed in and drawn out. With the lower point, which appeared to me to be of metal and which was in form like a sharp pencil, Moses touched the rock as if tracing words upon it. The rock opened under the point, and water gushed forth. Water flowed also from the sand wherever Moses made signs upon it with this staff. The upper part of the reed staff, in shape like a medlar, could be pushed in and drawn out; before it the Red Sea divided.

From Joseph's death to the departure of Israel from Egypt, there were about one hundred and sev-enty years according to our manner of reckoning. But they had at that time another way of reckon-ing, other weeks and years. This was often explained to me, but I cannot now recall it.

While the Israelites lived in Egypt, they had no temple, but only tents. They piled up stones, poured oil over them, sacrificed grain and lambs, sang, and prayed.