Parsha Questions

1. What was symbolized by the fat cows being eaten?

2. How did Pharaoh’s recollection of his dream differ from Nebuchadnezzar’s recollection of his dream?

3. What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly?

4. Pharaoh gave Yosef the name “Tsafnas Panayach.” What did that name mean?

5. What happened to the Egyptians’ grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine?

6. What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?

7. Did Yaakov and his family still have food when he sent his sons to Egypt? If yes, why did he send them?

8. What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov’s choice of the word “redu” — “descend” (and not “lechu” — “go”)?

9. Why does the verse say “Yosef’s brothers” went down to Egypt (and not “Yaakov’s sons”)?

10. When did Yosef know that his dreams were being fulfilled?

11. Under what pretext did Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies?

12. Why did the brothers enter the city through different gates?

13. Who was the interpreter between Yosef and his brothers?

14. Why did Yosef specifically choose Shimon to put in prison?

15. How does the verse indicate the Shimon was released from prison after his brothers left?

16. What was Yaakov implying when he said to his sons: “I am the one whom you bereaved?”

17. How much more money did the brothers bring on their second journey than they brought on the first journey? Why?

18. When the brothers were accused of stealing Yosef’s silver goblet, they refuted the claim with the logical principle known as kal v’chomer. What did they say?
**Answer**

“The verse says that Pharaoh gave Osnas to Yosef as a wife. Why was it Pharaoh himself who gave her as a wife?” asked Sherlox.

“What do you mean?” asked Watstein.

“Wasn’t it generally accepted back then that the father gave his daughter in marriage? Surely Poti Fera, Osnas’ father, should have been party to the decision? Why was it Pharaoh who gave her in marriage?” asked Sherlox.

“I see,” said Watstein. “Well, perhaps Poti Fera objected, but Pharaoh, being the despot he was, could force the marriage despite the father’s objection.”

“But what father in his right mind would oppose such a match!” said Sherlox. “Yosef was the most handsome, wise, and powerful person in Egypt! He made Prince Charming look like the Hunchback of Notre Dame.”

“I see your point,” said Watstein. “Since the verse emphasizes that Pharaoh gave Osnas in marriage, it implies that her father opposed the match. Only one person in all Egypt would oppose such a match: Potifar! Potifar’s wife, with her slanderous accusations, might have soured Potifar from wanting any future relationship with Yosef.”

*(Based on Maskil L’David; Sherlox” is by Reuven Subar, inspired by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s “What’s Bothering Rashi”)*

**I Did Not Know That!**

Pharaoh’s dream had five indications that it was a true portent of the future:

- It was a repeated dream (once with cows, once with wheat).
- It was a dream explained within a dream — i.e., the vision of wheat explained the vision of cows: Wheat clearly represents the harvest, which clarified that the cows represented plowing, the first step towards harvest.
- He dreamed it close to morning.
- During the dream, Pharaoh experienced it as real; he didn’t realize it was a dream until he woke up.
- Pharaoh was disturbed by the dream even after waking.  

*Malbim*