

## Who's the Mystery Man

Parashat Vayeishev - Rabbi Jay Weinstein

All the Torah tells us is that his name is "Ish" (man). We don't know who he is but we don't know is that he is responsible for Jewish history taking its course. Allow me to explain.

Yosef was just charged with the mission of going to check up on his siblings and report back to his father, Yaakov. On his journey, the Torah tells us - *Vayimtzahu ish vehinay to'eh basadeh*- A man found Yosef lost in the field. *Vayish'aleihu ha'ish leimor mah tevakesh*- the man went over to him and asked him - Yosef- what are you looking for? So Yosef responds: I am looking for my brothers- tell me where they are. The "Mystery Man" tells Yosef to head to go to the city of Dotan and Yosef, following the man's tip, eventually meets up with his brothers and the rest is history.

Who was this mystery man and why does the Torah tell us this detail of the story?

The Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, 1085 - 1158) explains that this Ish was no one special, it was simply a person in the street.

However, this incident is included in the Torah as praise to Yosef. Yosef already knew that his brothers were jealous of him and they would not be happy to see him. Yet, he attempted to follow his father's wish and check up on his brothers. In the process he got lost. Yosef could've reported back to his father that he tried to find his brothers but had simply been unable to complete it. He had a perfect excuse. The situation was beyond his control. Would you have blamed Yosef for failing his mission?

Yet, Yosef did not give up so easily. The Torah wanted to describe how he was willing to go SO far to follow his father's command. He looked all over and sought help. As much as he may have wanted to give up, and rightfully so, he searched around and investigated until he could find his brothers.



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The lesson we can learn from the Rashbam's understanding of this story is an important one. We often have missions in life that we are not excited to accomplish. Sometimes, they are challenging and we could have every right to give up on it. Yet, if we know it's the right thing to do than we have to put forth every effort



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