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## **Book Review: Was Yosef on the Spectrum by Samuel J. Levine**

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**BOOK REVIEW: WAS YOSEF ON THE SPECTRUM BY  
SAMUEL J. LEVINE**

*Ian Hale\**

Samuel Levine is a prominent New York Law Professor and foremost Judaic scholar. He has written a unique and important book. It conjoins both factual Biblical history with modern neuroscience and psychology to tell us part of the yet unacknowledged story of the history of Autism. This book is special, it must be read.

Titled *Was Yosef on the Spectrum* published by Urim Publications, the book combines his extensive knowledge of Rabbinical commentary up to the present day, with the Torah, the Talmud, and Autism, producing a unique insight linking our past with the future.<sup>1</sup> The Yosef referred to is the one from the book of *Genesis*.

Yosef was the next youngest son of Jacob, also known as Israel. He is best known as the wearer of The Coat of Many Colours, given to him by his father as a mark of his special status of wisdom from his youngest years and as the interpreter of dreams, much to the envy of his older brothers who plotted against him and sold him into slavery. After enduring many hardships, Yosef rose to find favor with Pharaoh to become his chief adviser and wisest counselor. He was the visionary who saw the significance of his dream of seven lean cows consuming seven fat ones. He told Pharaoh it prophesized seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine throughout the lands of Egypt. Taking his advice, Pharaoh was careful to store the seven years of good harvests which saved his Kingdom from the famine Yosef had foretold.

During his life, Yosef showed many of the now-recognized characteristics of an Autistic person. His determination, his special ability to identify and focus on important things, while being poor at

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<sup>1</sup> SAMUEL J. LEVINE, *WAS YOSEF ON THE SPECTRUM* (2019).

the mundane and social aspects of life, which caused him many problems—but he never gave up, eschewing love of power, always thinking of the common good above himself. His strong sense of compassion (he forgave his brothers and made sure his family was looked after), his love of nature, and care for people and animals, his fearlessness; his strong sense of justice and total unfailing loyalty to friends, even in adversity, and perhaps most tellingly, his “different brain” which allowed him to see what others couldn’t. It is precisely those characteristics which, today are so sought after by major corporations like Microsoft, IBM, and SAP. Autistic people are special with their special “mystic” skills and non-standard hyper connection to creation and intelligence.

In recognizing this, we all owe a special debt to Professor Levine. This is not just an account of the past, but a proven understanding of the present and a prophesy of Professor Levine himself to us all, here and now, of a potentially glorious future. It is also a warning against ignoring what God has given to us with his gift of Autism to those He has chosen.

It is with real joy that I recommend this book without reservation to every reader who seeks true knowledge on many of the subjects covered. It is a story of triumph against seemingly impossible odds (something all too many autistic people and their families face today) and a message of hope. Truly one of the most outstanding reads of this new century, it deserves seven stars.