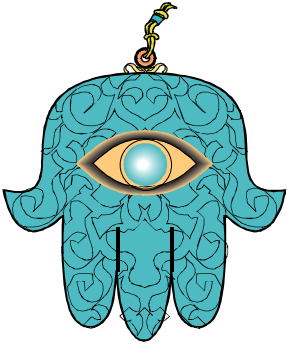
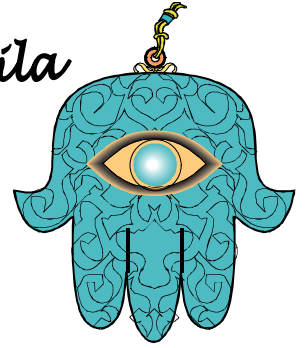


Spiritual Thought for the Week

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“Chasing Honor”

Parashat Noah (Genesis 6:9 – 11:32)

In the aftermath of the great flood, the Torah tells us the story of the first generation after Noah’s death. The entire chapter 11 of Genesis is devoted to the story of the generation who built the “Tower of Babel.” In its narration of this story, the Torah does not tell us whether or not this generation misbehaved as did the previous generations of Adam and Noah. It leaves it up to us to read and draw our own conclusions.

The story reads that the leaders of that generation said: **“Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top shall reach the sky. Let us make for ourselves a name, so that we will not be scattered all over the face of the earth”** (Genesis 11:4).

Many commentators point to the words **“let us make for ourselves a name”** as being the giveaway to that generation’s evil intentions. They did not say “Let us build for ourselves homes as refuge from rain,” or “let us build for ourselves cities for the benefit of our children, or for the advancement of our society.” Instead, “Let us build **ourselves** a city...let us make for **ourselves** a name.”

The history of humanity has seen palaces, monuments, pyramids and all sorts of large structures built by people who used these buildings simply as a means of glorifying their own names. What most of these self-proclaimed “builders” -- who are all victims of the “edifice complex” -- failed to remember is that people of quality do not judge an institution based on the external appearance of its structure, rather on the quality of what sits within it. They fail to realize what the rabbis teach us, that **“Those who chase kavod (self-honor), kavod runs away from them.”**

The generation of “The Tower of Babel” was ultimately replaced by Abraham, a man who’s “palace” was a tent. It was a tent always open to guests, and was filled with genuine warmth and hospitality.

Empires rise and fall; great buildings are erected and crushed. The only long-lasting legacy is not one of bricks and mortar, but one of **“Hesed” – loving-kindness.**