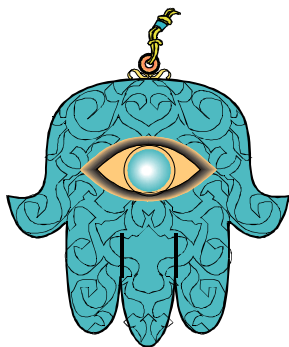
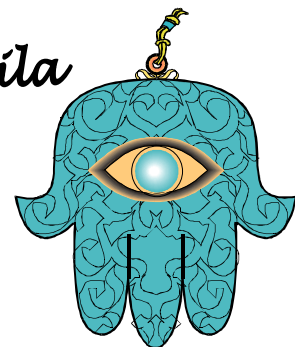


Spiritual Thought for the Week

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December 18/19, 2009

“Nobel Prizes, Start-Ups, Etc” *Parashat Miketz (Genesis 41:1-44:17)*

On November 23, 2009, the following introduction to a book review appeared in the Wall Street Journal:

“There are more new innovative ideas . . . coming out of Israel than there are out in [Silicon] Valley right now. And it doesn’t slow during economic downturns.” The authors of Start-Up Nation, Dan Senor and Saul Singer, are quoting an executive at British Telecom, but they could just as easily be quoting an executive at Intel, which last year opened a \$3.5 billion factory in Kiryat Gat, an hour south of Tel Aviv, to make sophisticated 45-nanometer chips; or Warren Buffett, who in 2006 paid \$4 billion for four-fifths of an Israeli firm that makes high-tech cutting tools for cars and planes; or John Chambers, Cisco’s chief executive, who has bought nine Israeli start-ups; or Steve Ballmer, who calls Microsoft “as much an Israeli company as an American company” because of the importance of its Israeli technologists. “Google, Cisco, Microsoft, Intel, eBay . . . ,” says one of eBay’s executives. “The best-kept secret is that we all live and die by the work of our Israeli teams.”

Where does this small “Start-Up Nation” come up with so many creative ideas? How has such a small population set the trailblazing path for 21st Century technology and economic success? Perhaps it began a few thousand years ago, with a young Hebrew dreamer named Joseph. Through his talent to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams, Joseph saved Egypt – and the entire Middle East – from economic disaster. Joseph’s economic plan was not rooted in bailouts and excessive spending, but in vision, foresight and planning ahead. Had he lived today, Joseph would have certainly won the Nobel Prize in Economics, and, like Israeli Chemist Ada Yonath, who last week picked up Israel’s 9th Nobel Prize, nobody would have questioned it.