

BIOTECH FIRMS GET PROTECTION OF THEIR OWN

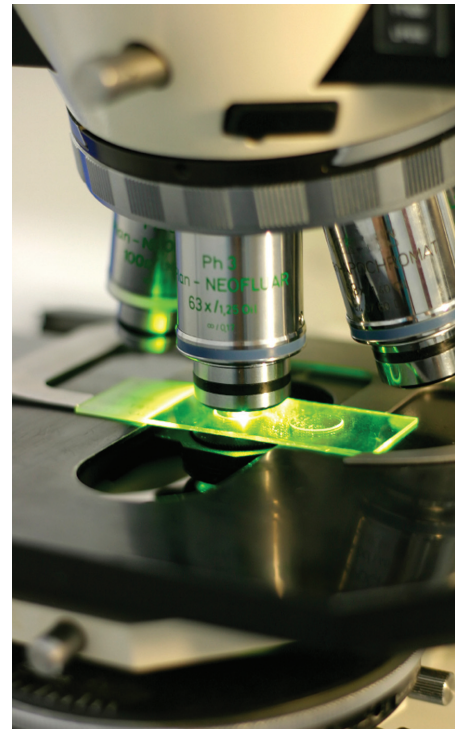
The biotechnology industry received a shot in the arm from new health care legislation granting firms twelve years of exclusivity from competition by generic pharmaceutical companies. As a result, new avenues of cooperation are expected to open between American and Israeli biotech firms.

Dr. David Block, CEO of Gliknik — a Baltimore-based biotechnology company — was one of the first visitors to arrive in Israel following passage of the new legislation. “My interest is to build stronger ties between American and Israeli companies in terms of medical devices,” said Dr. Block, in a telephone interview with **Mishpacha**. “Israel is one of the two or three epicenters of the world right now in terms of device development for biotech.”

Dr. Block spent six days in Israel as part of a delegation under the auspices of the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast, in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, represented in Israel by Jerusalem-based consulting firm Atid EDI Ltd.

Maryland is one of America’s most investor-friendly states when it comes to biotech, as the state will refund 50 percent of the money invested in a biotechnology firm, subject to certain limits. Gliknik has been one of the beneficiaries. Located at the University of Maryland BioPark’s Bioinnovation Center, it was recently named Best New Incubator Company for 2009. Its main focus is research on new drugs to fight cancer and autoimmune diseases. One platform under development is a recombinant version of intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) that can be produced in a laboratory instead of using blood samples, which carry the risk of spreading infectious diseases. Another platform would prime people’s own immune systems to fight cancer, instead of subjecting them to toxic chemotherapy drugs.

In another new development, Gliknik is working on a drug that would prevent the adverse reactions caused by certain surgical implants, such as coronary stents. “Our drug appears to prevent that in animal models,” he said, “so



we’re looking for some Israeli device companies that want to differentiate themselves by incorporating our drug with their devices.”

business & technology

If your smart phone is making you feel stupid, and you call technical support, chances are getting better you’ll get an American on the line. The US home-based call sector, or “phone-sourcing,” is growing faster than companies that outsource to India and the Philippines, proclaims *Time*. The rationale is that a techie in Paducah, who knows the local lingo, can handle American customers’ calls better than somebody in Bangalore. Moral: Cheap labor is not the answer to everything.

Harvard *Business Review* says the study that showed that counting money “gives people an inner strength and can reduce their physical and emotional pain” is for real. Handling credit cards, jewelry, or lottery tickets has the same effect. Subjects who put their hands in hot water after counting money felt less pain than those who had not. What about *marbeh nechasim*, *marbeh de’agah*, the more possessions, the more worry?

The District of Columbia’s five-cent tax on supermarket plastic bags may save the Anacostia River, now clogged with the 200 tons of plastic bags thrown into it each year. The tax drove down the number of bags handed out from 22 million to 3 million, and revenue will go to river cleanup. Other cities are taking note.

From the “You think *you* have financial problems” department: The current drought in southern China is the worst in nearly 100 years. About 30,000 square miles of farmland is too dry to plant crops, 24 million people are short of water, and agricultural losses already total \$3.5 billion. The *New York Times* reported the plight of farmer Huang Jianxue: his average annual winter wheat income has fallen from \$585 to \$30. The government is rationing water, digging 1,600 emergency wells, and seeding the clouds to bring rain.

— Nehemiah Horowitz