

# The silicon wadi

From board games to weaponry to life-saving technology, Israel's hi-tech industry is second to none

• BY JIM FLETCHER

Stephen Hawking's recent decision to boycott an Israeli conference, in protest over what he refers to as the occupation, raised the eyebrows of some astute observers who noted that Hawking uses Israeli technology in the computer equipment that allows him to communicate.

The whole affair recalls other charges of hypocrisy in recent years, as Israel's technological wizardry allows her fiercest critics to spread anti-Semitism via social media, cellphones and computers developed in Israel.

All this makes a new book by Marcella Rosen, *Tiny Dynamo*, a thoroughly absorbing read. The subtitle is not tiny, but says it all: "How One of the World's Smallest Countries is Producing Some of Our Most Important Inventions."

Highlighting several stories of invention and medical breakthroughs that benefit mankind, Rosen makes an astute observation: "If tiny, beleaguered Israel can generate these kinds of results under its current circumstances, imagine what would happen – imagine what it could achieve – if it were released from the shackles of warfare."

It is an important point in a book so fascinating, readers will be begging for more.

Rosen is one of those people who prefers to see the possibilities in our often-scarred and scary world. In fact, she says that the stories in *Tiny Dynamo* "fill me with hope."

"According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," she writes, "about 43,000 people are killed in auto accidents every year in the US alone. There's no doubt – we have room for improvement."

"Amnon Shashua has moved into that room," she continues. Rosen then goes on to describe Shashua's triumph: the

chairman of Mobileye has helped develop a way to reduce traffic accidents.

Or, rather, she lets Shashua tell it: "We use a forward-facing camera mounted on the windshield, and the video from the camera is processed by our technology to produce driving systems that directly aid a driver."

As a result, this technology can help a driver see if he or she is drifting out of a lane, determine a pedestrian's body language if that person is unwittingly turning into traffic, or track a forward vehicle and calculate the time to a collision.

This kind of striking technology is constantly being developed in Israel, and Rosen and the staff at her organization Untold News are alerting a wide audience to the fact.

Untold News's website offers a plethora of positive stories about Israel, such as the life-saving medical treatment offered to anyone and everyone, including Palestinians. It's the kind of story that is both uncommon and rarely told, at least by Western media.

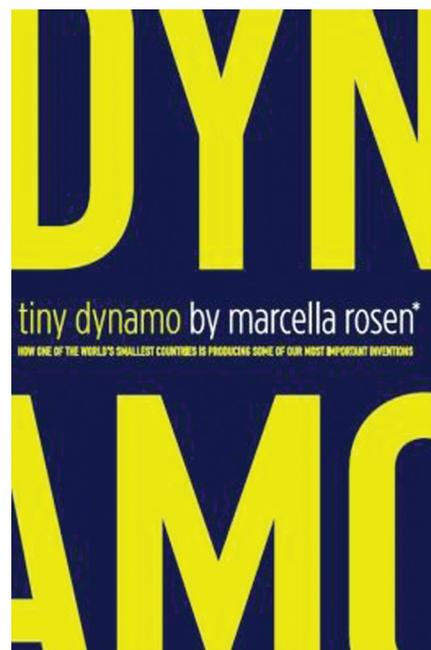
Right from the get-go, *Tiny Dynamo* offers big stories:

- Each year in America, a staggering 90,000 people die from hospital infections. That was unacceptable to Aharon Gedanken, who has developed a method for making anti-bacterial fabrics.

- It's not easy, of course, but Yoram Oren is working at Ben-Gurion University's Department of Desalination and Water Treatment to separate salt from sea water.

- For those parents who endure the grim tragedy of SIDS, Hisense – an Israeli company based in Rishon Lezion – has developed an alarm device to alert when a baby is having difficulty.

Each story fascinates, but the timeline section of her book is riveting. Here we read of Israeli inventions since the



## Tiny Dynamo

By Marcella Rosen

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founding of the state, the sheer scope of which boggles the mind, ranging from board games to life-saving treatments.

In the 1940s, Ephraim Hertzano created the super-popular board game "Rummikub." In the year of statehood, Maj. Uzi Gaf developed the world-famous Uzi machine gun. An early cancer screening method was developed in 1954 by Ephraim Frei; drip irrigation was developed in 1965; drone aircraft were created in the wake of the Yom Kippur War; Copaxone, the world's top-selling MS treatment, was developed in 1996; and flash drives in 2000.

Israel, remarkable in countless ways, stands as a singular nation in the myriad ways it improves the quality of life for all people, everywhere. *Tiny Dynamo* is a breakthrough book capable of changing perceptions of those who have, to date, been hostile to the Jewish state or, perhaps worse, indifferent.

In an age when the battle over ideas, facts, philosophies, and competing narratives rage – especially regarding tiny Israel – *Tiny Dynamo* is a giant leap forward in disseminating an unflinching truth: Israel is one terrific country. •