



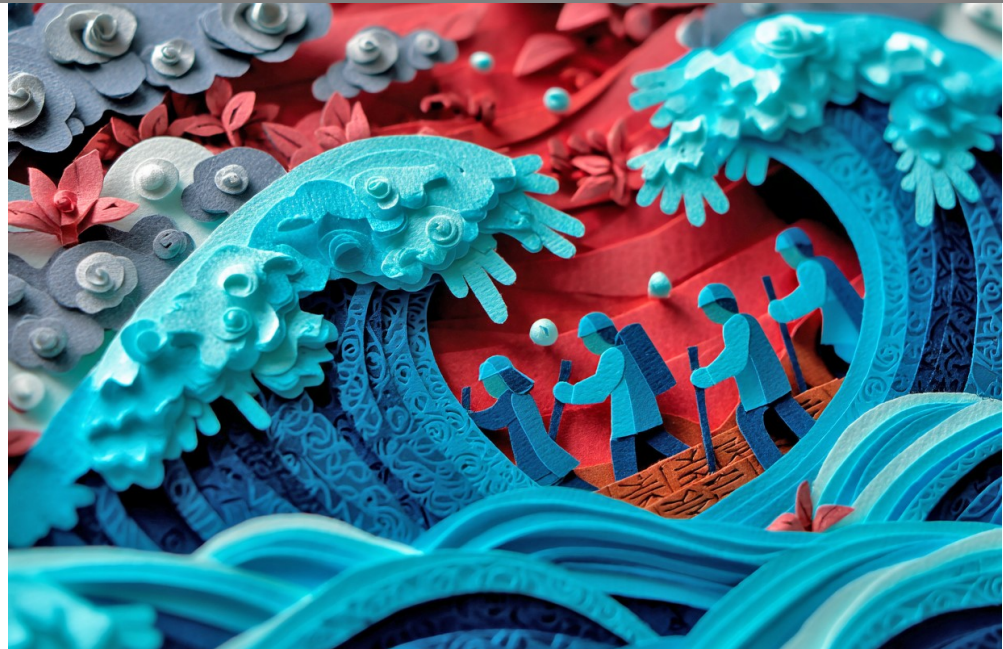
A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE POTHOLE FILLER

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Chaim lived in a neighborhood in Israel where there were many potholes on his street. He called the municipality to fix them, but no one ever came. Whenever cars passed by and went over the potholes, they made a tremendous amount of noise, and the damage to the vehicles greatly bothered him. Chaim, who had a background in construction, decided one day to take initiative. He asked everyone on the block if they would mind if he filled in the potholes himself. They all agreed. He then rented a jackhammer and all the necessary tools. He paid for asphalt out of his own pocket and set about expanding the potholes to make them symmetrical, so they could be properly filled. This is a standard practice in road repair, as cutting the potholes into clean, even shapes al-



THIS TIME WE EARNED IT

We left Egypt the morning of the 15th of Nissan and traveled undisturbed with nobody chasing us. On the third day HaShem instructed Moshe to have the people turn around and head back towards Egypt in order to tease the Egyptians into chasing the people and HaShem would then destroy them and our people would be free from ever seeing them again.

When our people did, in fact, reverse their direction and the Egyptians came chasing after us, as planned, they were terrified and cried out to Moshe for leading them back. The question is why did they cry out to Moshe? They anticipated this happening. This was the plan. Moshe, as well, cried out to HaShem. Why? He certainly knew that Hashem would save them as per the plan?

Furthermore, what was missing from our redemption? Why was it necessary to entrap the Egyptians?

The Sefas Emes explains that although our people demonstrated their commitment to HaShem with the mitzvos of Pesach and Milah, nevertheless, those mitzvos were not sufficient to make them worthy of redemption. HaShem took them out from Egypt on the merit of our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov. It was in their merit that we were taken out.

HaShem, however, wanted that our redemption should be on our own merit also. Specifically on the merit of emunah. He therefore ordered us to reverse

lows the new asphalt to bond better and last longer—irregular or crumbling edges can cause the patch to fail prematurely.

He enlarged the holes, filled them all with fresh asphalt, and put warning tape around the area to make sure no one would fall into the pits he had dug before they fully dried. Everyone was happy with what he did.

However, shortly after Chaim left, some kids on the block played with the warning tape and took it down. The next day, Dovy was driving down the street and drove right into one of the freshly dug pits, damaging his car.

Dovy got out of the car and asked the neighbors who had created the pits. He was directed to Chaim, and Dovy told him he should pay for the damage, since he was the one who had dug and expanded the holes.

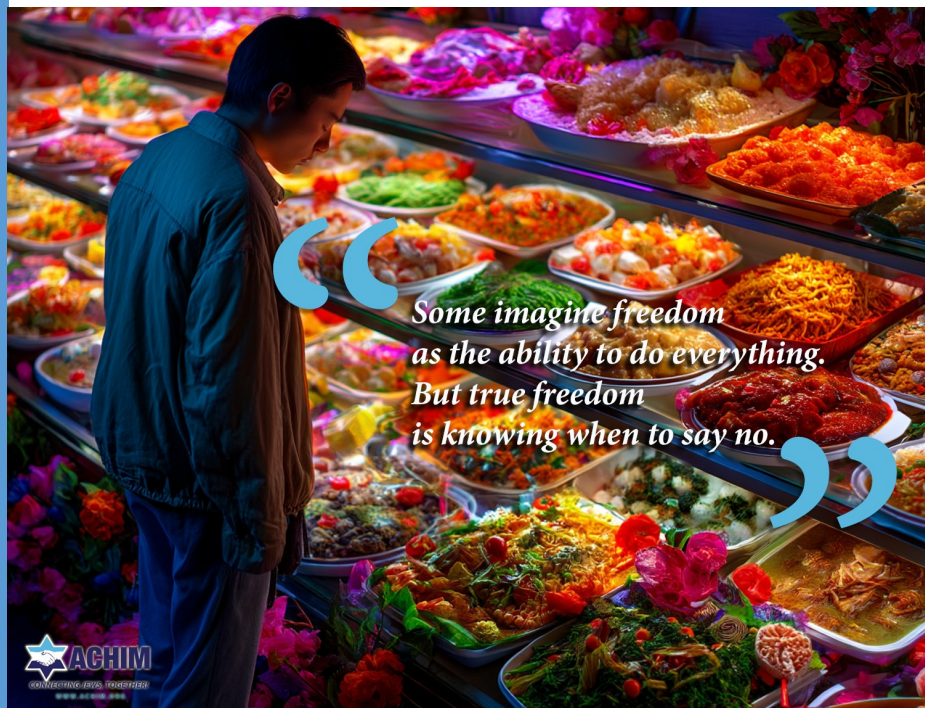
Chaim replied that he had done so with the agreement of everyone on the block, that he had taken steps to secure the area with warning tape, and that it was only removed by children without his knowledge. He insisted he did what he could.

They agreed to bring this question to a Rav (rabbi or halachic authority): Does Chaim have to pay for the damage caused to Dovy's car?

On one hand, we can argue that Chaim had the right to take action and did so with the approval of the neighborhood. On the other hand, who gave Chaim the authority to dig deeper holes in the street? He never got official permission from the municipality. Perhaps he should be held liable for the damage to Dovy's car.

What do you think?

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our direction and tease the Egyptians to chase us.

It must be appreciated that to switch direction and head towards Egypt required great trust in HaShem. The notion of heading back to Egypt and teasing the invincible Egyptian military machine to chase them was quite a daunting prospect. Without incredible emunah, incredible trust in HaShem they could never do this. When our people followed the order and followed Moshe back towards Egypt our people achieved a monumental accomplishment; they embedded within their psyche a natural sense of trust in HaShem. That achievement earned them the necessary merit to split the Sea and to drown the Egyptians.

The question remains why did they cry out when they saw the Egyptians chasing them? Was this not the plan?

The Sefas Emes continues, when our people saw how great the Egyptian military was and when they saw the angel of Egypt joining in the chase against them, they feared that since this redemption was to be earned in their own merit, perhaps they had not generated enough merit to earn them the zechus of being saved. Moshe, as well, was concerned that they had not reached the level of emunah needed to be deserving. He was praying to HaShem to please intercede and save them irrespective of their worthiness.

HaShem therefore responds to Moshe's cry "Why do you cry out to Me, speak to the people and they should go forth into the Sea." HaShem was telling Moshe that once they go forth into the Sea with the reliance that HaShem will save them, they will have achieved that heightened level of emunah which was needed.

May our celebration of Shvii shel Pesach inspire us once again with this heightened level of emunah and may we arrive at our final redemption.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a beautiful Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE BOXER CRAB

It's Pesach—the time of year when we remember our journey through the Red Sea. But did you know that this very sea, is also home to some of the most extraordinary creatures on the planet? Hidden in the shallow, sun-dappled waters of the Red Sea lives a tiny marvel that seems almost too strange and wonderful to be real.

If you were to dip beneath the surface today, you might be lucky enough to spot one of the ocean's tiniest—and flashiest—performers. With a stained-glass shell, pom-poms in its claws, and a spring in its step, the Boxer Crab is a creature that dazzles in both looks and lifestyle. Also known as the Pom-Pom Crab, this pint-sized crustacean turns heads not just for its colorful beauty, but for the clever way Hashem helps it to survive. This pint-sized crustacean has been given a way to turn its vulnerabilities into strengths. While many animals use claws, teeth, or speed to defend themselves, the Boxer Crab has taken a different route. It doesn't just carry sea anemones in its claws—it wields them like living, stinging weapons. And as strange as that may sound, the beauty of this relationship tells a much bigger story about the wonders of cooperation and creativity in nature.

Measuring only about an inch wide, the Boxer Crab (*Lybia tessellata*) isn't what you'd call intimidating at first glance. Its delicate claws are too dainty for pinching, and its body is small enough to be gobbled up by many hungry predators. But this crab comes prepared. In each claw, it holds a sea anemone, usually from the species *Triactis producta*. These anemones pack a powerful sting and act like portable jellyfish—ready to zap anything that gets too close.

Wave after wave, the crab twirls and flourishes its anemone “pom-poms” like a tiny marine cheerleader trying to rally its defense. When danger approaches, it lifts its claws and performs a boxing-like dance, swinging its anemones to fend off attackers. This unusual defense not only makes the crab look fierce (despite its small size) but also provides an extraordinary example of a natural partnership.

From above, the Boxer Crab's body looks like it was crafted by a mosaic artist. Its carapace is covered in dark-lined patterns that divide its shell into colored segments—pinks, yellows, browns—that glimmer against the seafloor like stained glass. This isn't just for show. These patterns help the crab blend in with its surroundings. When hiding among gravel, coral crevices, or the sandy seabed, its coloration becomes camouflage, masking it from the prying eyes of predators like fish and octopuses.

But perhaps the most magical aspect of the Boxer Crab's life is its symbiotic relationship with its anemones. This isn't just a one-sided deal where the crab gets all the benefits. These anemones also profit from the partnership. Usually fixed in one spot, a sea anemone lives a slow-paced life, depending on food particles drifting by on ocean currents. But when attached to a crab, the anemones suddenly become part of a mobile feast patrol. They're carried through food-rich waters, and the crab often shares

food particles with them. It's a win-win.

In some cases, the crab may even groom its anemones, keeping them clean and functional. They seem to know how important the anemones are to their own survival—and they treat them accordingly. Crabs are even born with specialized claws made just for holding their symbiotic buddies.

If a Boxer Crab loses one of its anemones—whether during a fight, a molt, or by accident—it has a remarkable backup plan. Using a behavior called “fragmentation,” it can tear the remaining anemone in half. Each half regenerates into a fully functional mini-anemone, and the crab goes right back to waving two pom-poms instead of one. Essentially, the crab turns one anemone into two.

This ability is especially important because finding replacement anemones in the wild isn't always easy. Though Boxer Crabs prefer *Triactis producta*, they aren't too picky. In a pinch, they'll carry sponges or bits of coral instead—anything to wave around and look more intimidating.

There's even evidence that Boxer Crabs sometimes steal anemones from each other. If one crab is anemone-less, it might sneak up on a fellow crab and snatch one of its stinging partners.

During the day, Boxer Crabs are shy and elusive. They tuck themselves into rock crevices or nestle beneath corals, staying as hidden as possible. But when night falls, they spring into action. Under the cover of darkness, they roam the seabed, foraging for bits of food. With their pom-poms constantly at work, they catch tiny plankton and food particles drifting in the current, which they then guide toward their mouths. It's a graceful process, like underwater farming, where the anemones act as both nets and forks.

Despite their energy, Boxer Crabs aren't aggressive. They usually avoid conflict, except when defending territory or fighting over anemones. Even then, their battles are more about display than destruction—a flurry of waving arms and pom-poms rather than pinching or biting.

Like all crustaceans, Boxer Crabs outgrow their shells and must molt to survive. But for them, molting comes with a special challenge. They can't molt with the anemones in their claws, so they have to let them go. For a short time, they're defenseless—just a soft, vulnerable crab with no stingers to shield them.

Once the molt is complete, the crab retrieves its anemones from its old shell—or, if they've wandered off, it goes looking for them. It's an anxious moment in the crab's life, one that underscores just how essential those stinging sidekicks really are.

So next time you dive into the Red Sea, keep an eye out for this flashy little crustacean. You might just catch a glimpse of the ocean's smallest—and perhaps most spectacular—boxer.

WHAT IF THEY ARRIVE WHILE WE'RE OUT, KNOCK ON THE DOOR, AND WAKE HER UP?

Like many Chassidim, Rabbi Dr. Avraham J.

Twerski cherished the custom of baking matzah on Erev Pesach. These matzos are incredibly special—the preferred matzos for the Seder—and the experience itself is almost magical. In Rabbi Twerski's family tradition—Hornisteipel—they would even say Hallel with a bracha while baking them. It's a spiritual high.

One year, they were in Eretz Yisrael. Rabbi Twerski had spent weeks preparing with his grandson to make sure he could bake those special Erev Pesach matzos. He rearranged his schedule to ensure he'd be free for just those few precious hours to go to the bakery. His grandson pulled up to pick him up. Rabbi Twerski came out of the house, got into the car—and just as they were about to leave, he said, "Wait. We can't go."

His grandson was surprised. "What do you mean? We did everything! We planned it all, let's go!"

Rabbi Twerski said, "No. I just remembered—my wife went down for a nap. And my granddaughter and her family are planning to come for Yom Tov. What if they arrive while we're out, knock on the door, and wake her up? I can't let that happen. I'm staying home."

You can imagine the shock. After all the preparation, he was willing to give it all up. Then Rabbi Twerski turned to his grandson and said, "It's not about Erev Pesach matzah. It's about one thing: What does Hashem want from me right now? Not what seems special or spiritual. Not what I planned. What does He want right now?"

And with that, he walked back inside. He didn't say a word to anyone. He simply let go of the matzos. His wife never even knew he gave it up. Years later, a grandchild told the Rebbetzin the story, and she was stunned. She had no idea.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the woman who stopped short and got into an accident, Rav Zilberstein said that because the person in front had no right to drive without a license, the front car would be held responsible

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of
Mrs. Rosalie Kallner
Shaina Rochel bas Ephraim Fishel a'h
whose Yartzeit is Shivi Shel Pesach.

by Yossie & Hinda Davis and Family



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