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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Sorcery with Cucumbers

The *Mishna* had stated: Rabbi Akiva says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: If two gather cucumbers (*through sorcery*) - one gathers and is exempt, and one gathers and is liable. The one who performs an action is liable, but the one who deceives the eye (*by creating an allusion that he is gathering*) is exempt.

The *Gemora* asks: But did Rabbi Akiva learn this from Rabbi Yehoshua? Surely it has been taught in a *braisa*: When Rabbi Eliezer fell sick, Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues went to visit him. He was seated in his canopy bed, while they sat in his parlor. It was before *Shabbos*, and his son Horkanos went in to him to remove his *tefillin*. But his father rebuked him, and he retreated in shame. Horkanos said to them: It seems to me that my father’s mind is deranged. But Rabbi Eliezer said to them: His mind and his mother’s mind are deranged: How can one neglect a prohibition which is punishable by stoning (*kindling lights and preparing the hot food*), and turn his attention to something which is merely Rabbinically forbidden (*wearing tefillin on Shabbos*)? The Sages, seeing that his mind was clear, entered his chamber and sat down at a distance of four *amos* (*for he was in excommunication*). “Why have you come?” he asked them. They replied, “To study the Torah. He asked, “And why did you not come before now?” They replied, “We had no time.” He told them, “I will be surprised if these (*referring to the Sages*) die a natural death” (*for they neglected to come study by him*). Rabbi Akiva asked him, “And what will my death be?” He answered, “Yours will be worse than theirs.”

He then put his two arms over his heart, and said to them, “Woe to you, two arms of mine, that have been like two Torah Scrolls that are wrapped up. I have studied much Torah, and I have taught much Torah. I have studied much Torah, yet I have not diminished from the knowledge of my teachers as much as a dog laps from the sea. I have taught much Torah, yet my disciples have only diminished from me as much as an applicator stick from its tube (*of eye powder*). Moreover, I have learned three hundred laws on the subject of a deep white spot (*of tzaraas*), yet no man has ever asked me about them. Moreover, I have studied three hundred, or as others state, three thousand laws about the planting of cucumbers (*through sorcery*) and no man, excepting Akiva ben Yosef, ever questioned me about them. For it once happened that he and I were walking together on a road, when he said to me, ‘My teacher, teach me about the planting of cucumbers (*through sorcery*).’ I made one statement, and the entire field became filled with cucumbers. Then he said, ‘My teacher, you have taught me how to plant them, now teach me how to uproot them.’ I said something and all the cucumbers gathered in one place.”

His visitors then asked him, “What is the law of a ball, a shoe-form, an amulet, a leather bag containing pearls, and a small weight of leather?” [*Are they considered receptacles, for they are made to be permanently closed?*] He replied, “They can become *tamei*, and if they become *tamei*, they may be restored to their purified state (*through immersion in a mikvah*) just as they are (*without being emptied*). Then they asked him, “What of a shoe that

is on the form?" He replied, "It is *tahor*," and in pronouncing this word, his soul departed (*in purity*).

Then Rabbi Yehoshua arose and exclaimed: The vow (*of excommunication*) is annulled, the vow is annulled! On the conclusion of *Shabbos*, Rabbi Akiva met his bier being carried from Caesarea to Lod. He hit his flesh until the blood flowed down upon the ground. Then Rabbi Akiva commenced his eulogy by the funeral line, and said: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen; I have many coins (*Torah questions*), but no moneychanger to accept them."

It emerges from this story that he learned this (*the producing of cucumbers by sorcery*) from Rabbi Eliezer!?

The *Gemora* answers: He learned it from Rabbi Eliezer, but did not understand it. He then learned it from Rabbi Yehoshua, who made it clear to him.

The *Gemora* asks: how was Rabbi Eliezer permitted to perform sorcery?

The *Gemora* answers: It is permitted if it is being done to teach the law to others. (68a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU ARBA MISOS

Ben Sorer Umoreh

A stubborn and rebellious son (*ben sorer umoreh*) is subject to stoning. When does he become a *ben sorer umoreh*? From the time he produces two (*pubic*) hairs until a beard will grow around - the lower (*pubic hair*), and not the upper (*beard*) - the Sages spoke in a clean language (*to avoid stating explicitly "the pubic hairs"*). It is written: *If a man will have a son*. We derive from here that a son can become a *ben sorer umoreh*, but not a daughter. We also derive - a son and not a man (*if he is more developed*). A minor is

exempt, for he has not come within the scope of the commandments.

The *Gemora* explains why we would have thought that a minor could become a *ben sorer umoreh*. It is because he is not executed for sins already committed; it is rather on account of his eventual outcome (*based upon his current behavior*). Accordingly, perhaps a minor should be punished as well. This is why a verse was necessary to exclude him.

Rav Chisda said: If a minor fathered a son, the son cannot become a *ben sorer umoreh*. He cites the Scriptural source for this.

Rabbah disagrees with this possibility, for he maintains that a minor cannot father a child. (68b)