

סדר הכנסה לחדר

מלוקט מספרי השיחות, מנהגים וכו'.

SUMMARY OF THE CUSTOM OF HACHNOSOH L'CHEDER"

ITS SOURCES AND IMPORTANCE

By Rabbi Levi Goldstein. TheLivingsidrah.com

It has always been the custom in Kehillos Yisroel, that when the time comes for a young boy to learn with other children, we take him to "Cheder", and arrange a special "Seder Hachnosa L'Cheder" as is brought down in Sifrei Rishonim.

Regarding the importance of this tradition, we would do well to learn from the Ya'avetz: One who sees these things (the Hachnosa L'Cheder) will surely come to realize why the earlier generations succeeded in the Torah learning . . . and now it should not come as any surprise that not even one in a thousand choose to become Morah Horaah (a Rav who Paskens Shailos) . . . and how has it come to this (situation) to uproot such a pleasant and beautiful Minhag for no reason, this is only due to a lack of contemplation on the importance of good and upright Torah study . . . but a wise father looks to the future. . . "

In the Sefer Migdal Dovid: "in the days of the earlier generations and the Gaonim this was the Minhag and it is a tested and proven way for opening up the heart "Psichas HaLev."

WHEN IS IT CUSTOMARY TO MAKE THE HACHNOSA L'CHEDER?

Many of the Seforim which mention this Minhag do not specify an age, merely saying "when a child begins to learn from his Rebbi," or "when the time comes to bring a child to school to learn from a Melamed." Many celebrate the Upsherenish and the Hachnosa L'Cheder (also known as "Arine-firenish") on the same day or in close proximity to each other, (as was the custom in Poland).

In Russia, the Minhag was to wait until the boy was 4 - 5 years old and ready to enter a Rebbe's class.

A Chassid from Crown Heights addressed the question of the correct time to the Rebbe, and also mentioned that it is customary here (in Crown-Heights) to bring a child to a "Gan Yeladim" (kindergarten) at the age of three. but - mainly to play. The Rebbe commented on the word "Gan Yeladim" and wrote that **"THIS IS A CHEDER"** and corrected the words "mainly to play" and wrote **"TO SAY BROCHOS, ETC."** The Rebbe concluded that therefore this **IS** the right time for Hachnosa L'Cheder. See letter (attached).

In Sefer HaSichos הש"ת (5700), page 67, it describes the Hachnosa L'Cheder of the Tzemach Tzedek at **age three**.

also, In Sefer Hasichos תרפ"א - תרפ"ב (page 145) it says that the Friedike Rebbe's Hachnasah L'Cheder was at age 3. (also see ספר התועודיות תשמ"ג (ב') (page 679) concerning the Minhag of Hachnosoh L'Cheder at **age 3** as well as in Sichos Kodosh 5752, Vol. 1, page 343).

MAKING THE HACHNOSA L'CHEDER DURING THE DAY

There is a custom to do so in the morning because the Hachnosa L'Cheder is comparable to the day on which the Bnai Yisroel stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah which was given in the morning, as it says in Parshas Yisro: "And it was on the Third day when it was morning . . ." Another reason is that morning is an "Eies Ratzon" (propitious time).

PREPARATIONS FOR THE "ARAINFEIRENISH"

THE HONEY CAKE :

- **WITH THE PESUKIM ENGRAVED** - (Not written with cream or chocolate)

A honey cake from white flour should be prepared, preferably by an unmarried girl (or, by a woman who is Tehorah).

In the Sicha (ספתי"ש תשי"א) it says that the Pesukim were **engraved** into the surface of the cake. The following are the Pesukim (from ג, ד-ה) engraved into the cake:

**א-דני י-הוה נתן לי לשון למודים לדעת לעות את יעף דבר יעיר בבקר בבקר יעיר לי און לשמע
כלמודים:**

א-דני י-הוה פתח לי און ואנכי לא מריתי אחר לא נסוגתי :

(There are those who add other Psukim. such as:(.ד.) (תהלים קיא, ד.)

THE EGG

After ushelling a hard boiled egg, the following Posuk (יחזקאל, פרק ג' פסוק ג') is written on it:
ויאמר אלי בן אדם בטנך תאכל ומעיך תמלא את המגלה הזאת אשר אני נתן אליך ואכלה ותהי בפי כדבש למתוק

In addition, one should prepare other light refreshments.

THE DAY OF THE HACHNOSA L'CHEDER

1. On the day of the Hachnos L'Cheder the boy should be bathed and dressed in clean clothes. (Some have the Minhag to take him to the Mikvah.)
2. The parents themselves should bring him to the School or Beis HaKnesses. Even if the father is elderly or a respected member of the Community or a Rov, he should not be embarrassed to bring his son for his first day of Cheder, but should offer praise and thanks to HaShem Yisborach that he has merited to bring his son under the wings of the Shechina.
3. When we bring the boy to Cheder (and on his return) we cover him with a Tallis in order that he not see anything Tomay, such as a non-Jew, a dog or a cat (and at the very least he should not gaze at them). One should be careful about this that entire day.

WHY IS HE COVERED WITH A TALLIS?

here are several beautiful reasons:

1. The Upsherenish is compared to bringing him before Har Sinai for so we find with Moshe that he followed this routine with the B'nai Yisroel, as it is written: (Yisro 19:17) "And Moshe brought out the People to meet The L-rd from the camp and they stood beneath the Mountain" - it

appeared as if they were covered over by the mountain when they were brought in to receive the Torah.

There HASHEM alone began to say the Kometz Alef Oh of the first letter of the first word of the Aseres HaDibros אָנְכִי.

2. We do so because we are educating him in the way of Modesty and Humility, for so we find in regard to the Giving of the Torah (Yisro 20:17) "In order that there should be His fear upon their faces so they will not sin."

3. This is necessary so as not to create a public spectacle for passersby so that there will be no harm caused by Ayin Horah.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE TAKEN BY THE REBBI?

1. When the boy is brought to the Rebbe he is placed on his lap, since it is written "כֹּאשֶׁר יֵשֵׁא הָאוֹמֵן" (הושע יא, ג) "ואנכי תרגלתי לאפרים קחם על זרועותיו" (את היונק) (בהעלותך יא, יב).

The boy should remain wrapped with the Tallis around his shoulders during the Hachnasa L'Cheder.

2. "It is a known custom to begin teaching a child Alef Beis from the letters on the Shaar Blatt of Tanya or in the beginning of Tanya." (sefer HaSichos 5749, vol. 2 page 620). When the Frierdiker Rebbe learnt Alef Bais, for the very first time, he learnt it from the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya (Likutei Sichos, vol. 2 page 476) since it is this Sefer which is the Yesod of Chassidus Chabad for it is authorized by the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad.

This will therefore have a deep and lasting effect upon his Chassidishe education for his entire life.

The Rebbe points to the letters and says them in the order of the Alef-Bais א till ת and the boy repeats after him. This routine is then repeated (backwards) beginning from ת to א.

The Nekudos are then recited from the Siddur forwards and backwards, word by word.

The Rebbe recites the Posuk "תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב" word by word and the boy repeats after him. (some add the the words: "תורה תהא אַמנותי וא-ל שד-י בעזרתי")

Some honey is then placed on The Shaar Blatt, (and on the Nekudos) which the boy licks after saying the Beracha Shehakol.

(in a Reshima Protis of a Yechidus by the Rebbe: the Rebbe told Rabbi M. H., that in order to show the child that Torah is "sweet", a toothpick should be dipped into honey and a drop (of the honey) should be placed on the Shaar blatt. and when the child will be taught the Alef Beis, he should lick it, so that he should see that Torah is sweet.

In this Yechidus, the Rebbe told R.M.H. that the length of the Peyos should be: a little bit over (passed?) the bone)

This is to symbolize that the Torah should be as easy for him to learn and teach to others as it is easy to lick these words, and that Divrei Torah should be sweet in his mouth like honey - as it says in Tehillim "ומתוקים מדבש"

3. The boy then repeats after the Rebbe the words from the first Pesukim of Sefer Vayikra (some add: **פרק ג' פסוק יז**.)

It is written "יבואו טהורין ויתעסקו בטהורין" that those who are pure should come and learn that which causes purity (KORBANOS), and HaShem will consider it as if he offered up a Korban before Him. Sefer Vayikra discusses the Dinim of Korbanos (the order of the Sacrifices).

4. **The engraved honey cake** is then brought before them and the Rebbe reads each word and the boy repeats after him. The Rebbe then cuts off the top layer of the cake in which Psukim have been engraved and gives it to the boy to eat after saying the Beracha Mezonos.

5. **The egg:** The Posuk from the hard boiled egg is also recited word by word and is given to the child to eat. (He was Yotze the Beracha Shehakol on the honey). These foods are beneficial for 'opening his heart' to Torah.

6. Mal'ach Michoel Candies:

At some point during the above procedure candies (and coins (see ספר השיחות תשמ"ח ח"א ע' 163)) are thrown at the boy and we tell him that these candies are from Mal'ach Michoel, in order that he will learn with enthusiasm (Cheshek) . . .

The Rebbe mentions a story which happened with the Rebbe Rashab who **saved** his "Mal'ach Michoel candies", and did not want to eat them up, until his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, who found the candies in his (the Rashab) pocket while cleaning for Pesach, and instructed him to eat them up, since they were Chametzdik.

the Rebbe also explains how it is possible to tell the child that it is Mal'ach Michoel who threw them when actually this is not true, for his father or the Rebbi actually threw them. However, they are acting as his agents (Shluchim) to encourage or reward the child. (see sicha: Shabbos Parshas Pinchos 5734).

7. Other refreshments should be distributed to all the children there.

It is brought down in Seforim that we bring other delicacies as a remembrance of the delicacies that the Yidden were given by HaShem in the Midbar, such as the Mon, the Slav, and Be'era Shel Miriam (Miriam's Well).

GIVING TZEDAKAH

It used to be the custom for the parents to fast on this day. However, the custom now is to give **extra** Tzedoka, say Tehillim and Daven that their son should be successful in Torah study and be healthy, etc.

THE SEUDAS MITZVA

Due to the Simcha of the Mitzvah it is the custom to celebrate by inviting relatives and friends to a Seudas Mitzvah.

In the Sicha (mentioned earlier, about the Tzemach-Tzedek's Hachnosoh L'Cheder) it says that The Alter Rebbe said that everyone should wash for the Seudas Mitzvah.

Also, in ספר השיחות, תשי"ג (page 144) it says: The Seudah that one makes, in connection with the bringing of a Jewish child under the wings of the Shechinah .. by bringing him to Cheder, is a Seudas Mitzvah.

To conclude with the holy words of the Rebbe Rashab: " This Seder HaLimud was given to us from the great Rishonim ... and it is all with a special Kavonna that is hidden from the eyes of the majority and there lies within it a G-dly Kavonna known to our Gedolim and Rebbeim (in order) to give a child both a hidden and a revealed Koach..

PRACTICAL TIPS AND CHECKLIST FOR HACHNOSA L'CHEDER

Prepared by Raizel Bas Sara

Make arrangements with the Yeshiva and Rabbi in advance. Prepare the following ahead of time:

1. Honey cake - The honey cake is baked and the Pesukim are engraved by using a toothpick or a plastic knife or so. (There's a lot to engrave, so it's better to start off with small letters - you can always continue on bigger if you see you will have room).
2. Egg - After removing the shell from a hard boiled egg, write - not engrave - the Posuk using a toothpick dipped in food coloring or a thick coffee paste. (it's tricky! So allow plenty of time.) You can also do this the night before as long as you put back onto the egg some of its shell or salt the egg, since the Halacha prohibits eating an egg that was left unshelled overnight. (See main article for Psukim for honey and egg.)
3. Nosh Bags - Prepare some Nosh for the children in the class. (note: many teachers prefer **no candies** and no "Home-made" food for their class.

(Check with the teacher beforehand for more details (and as to how many children are in the class, and as to which Hechsher is acceptable)

4. Coins for Tzedokah - Bring a coin for each child in the class to give for Tzedokah. You can bring your child's own Pushka or use the class Tzedokah Box.

5. "Mal'ach Michael Candies" - Prepare a few handfuls of candies (and coins). These will be thrown at your child by his parents or the Rebbe and will be saved to be eaten **by your son** from time to time.

In addition, bring to the Yeshiva the following:

6. A **BIG** Siddur - preferably your son's own.

7. A **BIG** Tanya - your son's (preferably - one he (or someone else) has received from the Rebbe.)

8. A **BIG** Chumash Vayikra.

9. A small jar of honey (check Hechsher). 10. A toothpick. 11. A knife.

The Rebbe uses a toothpick to place the honey over the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya (as well as over the Nekudos in the Siddur). The knife is to cut the top layer of the honey cake where the Pesukim are engraved to give your son to eat.

TIPS:

1. On the day of the Hachnosa L'Cheder keep your son away from the windows so he will not see any Tomeh creatures or Goyim.

2. He should not eat too much before(especially - not sweets), in order that he be able to eat the honey cake etc..

3. In case your son does not eat all the cake (i.e. the Psukim part), take it home and freeze it. You can then give him some of his "special cake" whenever he wishes. The rest of the cake is served to family and friends at the Seudas Mitzvah celebration and is known as the "Holy Honey cake." (Heilikeh Lekach). Any leftovers from the egg could be mixed into an egg salad for your son to eat.