

סדר  
הכנסה לחדר

מלוקט מספרי השיחות, מנהגים וכו'

אהלי מנחם, ברוקלין, ניו יארק

# Hachnasah L'Cheder (אריינפירעניש)

(PRACTICAL TIPS ARE ON PAGE 8)

## ITS SOURCE AND IMPORTANCE

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

Regarding the importance of this tradition, we would do well to learn from the words of the Ya'avetz:

**"One who observes the ceremony of the Hachnosa L'Cheder, will surely come to realize why the earlier generations succeeded in the Torah learning, . . . and nowadays, not even one in a thousand become Morah Horaah (a Rav who Paskens Shailos) [. . .] 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 it says: **"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 "פתיחת הלב" to Torah.<sup>1</sup>**

## When is the appropriate Age?

Many of the Seforim which mention this Minhag do not specify an age, merely saying "when a child begins to learn from his Rabbi," 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 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 Rabbi'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."**

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<sup>1</sup> לקוטי הלכות והנהגות בחינוך עשה"ק, (קרית מלאכי אה"ק ת"ו תשל"ו) ע' בה

The Rebbe concluded that therefore this **IS** the right time for Hachnosa L'Cheder <sup>2</sup>. See Hebrew text at end of this article.

### During the Day

There is a custom to do the Hachnasa L'Cheder in the morning because it is comparable to the day on which the Bnai Yisroel stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah, which was given in the morning<sup>3</sup>,

Another reason is that morning is an "Eies Ratzon" (propitious time).

### DETAILED PREPARATIONS FOR THE "ARAINFEIRENISH"

#### TO BE FOLLOWED ACCURATELY

#### THE HONEY CAKE :

A honey cake from white flour should be prepared, (Some Sefarim bring that, if possible, it is preferable to have the cake baked by an unmarried girl or by a woman who is Tehora).

The following two Pesukim<sup>4</sup> (without the Nekudos) are to be ENGRAVED<sup>5</sup> into the surface of the actual cake. Not written with cream or chocolate<sup>6</sup>:

א-דני י-הוה נתן לי לשון למודים לדעת לעות את-יעף דבר יעיר בפקר בפקר יעיר לי און לשמע פלמודים

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

There are those who add other Pesukim.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE EGG

After removing the shells of a hard-boiled egg, the following Posuk<sup>8</sup> (without Nekudos) is written on it:

ויאמר אלי בן אדם במנך תאכל ומעריך תמלא את המגלה הזאת אשר אני נתן אליך ואכלה ותהי בפי כדבש למתוק.

In addition, one should prepare other light refreshments.

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<sup>2</sup>In Sefer HaSichos 5700, page 67, it describes the Hachnosa L'Cheder of the TzemachTzedek at **age three**. Also, In Sefer Hasichos תרפח - תרצ"א (page 145) it says that the Friedrike Rebbe's Hachnasah L'Cheder was at age 3. See also (ח"ב) (page 679) concerning the Minhag of Hachnosoh L'Cheder at **age three**.

<sup>3</sup> As it says in Parshas Yisro: "And it was on the Third day when it was morning . . ."

<sup>4</sup> (ישעי, ג, ד-ה).

<sup>5</sup> Sefer HaSichos (5700), page 67

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps, it is so, in order to resemble the Luchos, into which the Aseress-HaDibros were specifically engraved.

<sup>7</sup> Such as: (תהלים קיא, ד): זכר עשה לנפלאותיו חטן ורחום די (תהלים קיא, ד).

<sup>8</sup> יחזקאל (ג, ג).

## THE DAY OF THE HACHNOSA L'CHEDER

On the day of the Hachnasa L'Cheder the boy should be bathed and dressed in clean clothes. (Some have the Minhag to take him – if possible and he is willing - to the Mikveh.)

The parents themselves should bring him to the Cheder or to a Shul. Also 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, he should offer praise and thanks to HaShem Yisborach that he has merited to bring his son under the wings of the Shechina.

When the boy is brought to Cheder (and on his return) we cover him with a Tallis in order that he should not see anything Tomay, such as a non-Jew, a dog or a cat<sup>9</sup>.

One should be careful about this during that entire day.

### WHY IS HE COVERED WITH A TALLIS?

1. The Hachnasa L'Cheder 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 Komatz Alef Aw, of the first letter of the first word of the Aseres HaDibros אָנֹכִי.

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.

### THE PROCEDURE TAKEN BY THE REBBI?

1. When the boy is brought to the Rebbi he is placed on his lap<sup>10</sup>. If the child refuses, then he may sit on his father's lap, next to the Rebbi.

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<sup>9</sup> At the very least he should not gaze at them.

2. The boy remains wrapped in the Tallis (over his shoulders) during the Hachnasa L'Cheder.
3. It is a known Chabad-custom to begin teaching a child Alef Beis from the letters on the Shaar Blatt of Tanya or in the beginning of Tanya.<sup>11</sup>

When the Friediker Rebbe learnt Alef Bais, for the very first time, he learnt it from the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya<sup>12</sup>, since it is this Sefer which is the Yesod of Chassidus Chabad, authorized by the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad.

This will therefore have a deep and everlasting effect upon his Chassidishe education throughout 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 a Siddur forwards and backwards, word by word.

The Rebbe then recites the Posuk "תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב" word by word and the boy repeats after him<sup>13</sup>.

Some honey is then placed on The Shaar Blatt, (and on the Nekudos) which the boy licks after saying the Beracha Shehakol<sup>14</sup>.

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"<sup>15</sup>

3. The boy then repeats after the Rebbe the words from the first few Pesukim of Sefer Vayikra<sup>16</sup>.

The reason is as follows:

10 As it is written (בהעלותך יא,יב) "כאשר ישא האומן את היונק" (הושע יא,ג) "וואנכי תרגלתי לאפרים קחם על זרועותי" and "כאשר ישא האומן את היונק" (בהעלותך יא,יב). If the child refuses, then he may sit on his father's lap, next to the Rebbe.

11 Sefer HaSichos 5749, vol.2 page 620.

12 Likutei Sichos, vol. 2 page 476.

13 Some add the words: "תורה תהא אמתית וא-ל-ש-ד-י בערתה".

14 In a Personal Diary 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 drops of honey should be placed on the Shaar blatt. When the child will be taught the Alef Beis, he should lick it, so that he should see that Torah is sweet. In this particular Yechidus, the Rebbe told R.M.H. that the length of the Peyos should be: a little bit over (passed) the bone that's near the ear.)

15 תהלים, יט, יא.

16 Some add: פרק ג' פסוק יז.

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

4. The honey cake is then brought before them and the Rebbe reads each word of the Pesukim, and the boy repeats them 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 procedures, candies(as well as coins<sup>17</sup>) are thrown at the boy and we tell him that these candies are from Mal'ach Michoel. This is in order that he will learn with more enthusiasm (חשק).

In a Sicha<sup>18</sup>, the Rebbe mentioned a story which happened with the RebbeRashab who **saved** his "Mal'ach Michoel candies", and did not want to eat them up, until his grandfather, the TzemachTzedek, who found the candies in his (the Rashab's) 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 it is the father who threw them, for he is acting as his agent (שליח) to encourage or reward the child.

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'eraShel Miriam (Miriam's Well).

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17 ספר השיחות תשמ"ח ח"א ע' 163

18 לקוטי שיחות חלק טז, פרשת פינחס

## GIVING TZEDAKAH

It used to be the custom for the parents to fast on this day. However, the custom nowadays 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<sup>19</sup> (mentioned earlier), about the Tzemach-Tzedek's HachnosohL'Cheder) it says that The Alter Rebbe said that everyone should wash for the Seudas Mitzvah<sup>20</sup>.

To conclude with the holy words of the RebbeRashab: **"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-dlyKavonna known to our Gedolim and Rebbeim (in order) to give a child both a hidden and a revealed Koach.."**

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<sup>19</sup> Sefer Hasichos 5700 p. 68.

<sup>20</sup> In Sefer Hasichos 5703 p. 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. See also Sefer Hasichos 5705 p. 104.

## PRACTICAL TIPS AND CHECKLIST FOR HACHNOSA L'CHEDER

Prepared by Raizel Bas Sara

Make arrangements with the Yeshiva and Rebbe 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** (no need to engrave) the Posuk using a toothpick dipped in food coloring or a thick coffee paste. (it's tricky! So allow plenty of time.) alternatively, you can use a food-coloring marker ("**Color-A-Cookie**"™ markers are very good and are available in many stores).

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 Pesukim 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, as well as to how many children are in the class.

4. **Tzedokah** - Bring a coin for each child in the class to give for Tzedokah.

5. "**Mal'ach Michael Candies**" - Prepare a few handfuls of candies (and some coins) to be thrown at the child, as mentioned earlier, and will be eaten by the child 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 (or, if possible - one that has been received from the Rebbe.)

8. A **BIG** Chumash Vayikra.

9. A jar of honey.

10. A toothpick.

11. A knife.



The Rebbi uses the 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 have an appetite 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.

**The following is a copy of the letter written to the Rebbe about the proper age for HachnasaL'Cheder, followed by the Rebbe's answers.**

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ב"ה

כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

ביום ל"ג בעומר הבעל"ט, תהי' האפשרעניש של בנינו התאומים יחיאל אלטער יהושע מנחם

מענדל. שיחיו, בעזה"י (יום הולדתם – ח"י ניסן).

והננו לשאול עצת כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א בנוגע להכנסתם לחדר (אריינפירעניש), דהנה, הרב רו"ש שליט"א דווארקין אמר לי שאין בזה דבר ברור, דבפולין היו עושים ההכנסה לחדר בהמשך להאפשערעניש, משא"כ ברוסי' היו מכניסים לחדר בגיל 5 (או 4).

בס' השיחות קיין ה'ש"ת ע' 67 מסופר אשר במחרת יו"כ תקנ"ג הכניסו את כ"ק אדמו"ר הצ"צ ג"ע לחדר (ואולי זוהי הוראה פרטית לבית רבי).

עוד, בכאן נהוג (ברובם ככולם) שמכניסים הילדים לגן ילדים וכיו"ב בגיל 3 בערך, (בעיקר לשחק וכו').

ועפי"ז הננו לבקש עצת כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א בזה, א) האם כדאי להכניס התאומים שיחיו לגן ילדים כעת; ב) מתי לעשות חגיגת ההכנסה לחדר וכו'. "ע"כ. מענת כ"ק אד"ש:

הרבי מחק את מה שכתבתי: "לשחק וכו'", וכתב במקומו "לומר ברכות וכיו"ב" ולמילים "לגן ילדים" הוסיף הרבי: "היינו חדר".

הרבי גם העיר והדגיש את המילים שכתבתי: "עוד, בכאן נהוג (ברובם ככולם) שמכניסים הילדים לגן ילדים וכיו"ב בגיל 3 בערך", וסיים וכתב: - "וא"כ מהי השאלה!?"

לזכות

יוסף בן חי' מלכה

לבריאות הנכונה ולאריכות ימים ושנים טובות