IT'S MORE THAN JUST A SNIP



Kitzur Minhogei Tispoiras HaTinokes HoRishona

Chana Gittel Goldstein



The Custom of the Haircutting – its source and importance:

It is the Minhag of Chassidim and Anshei Ma'ase in many Jewish Kehillos, not to cut their young sons' hair until they reach the age of 3. On their third birthday they make the first haircut and leave for the first time the Peyos.

In Eretz Yisroel this haircutting ceremony is called "Chalaka" ('haircut' in Arabic, and also derived from the word meaning 'smooth' as in Ish Cholok) and known in Yiddish as "Opsherenish."

The first allusion to this Minhag is from the Arizal who brought his son to the Kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai (Rashbi), and made the haircut there as did the Talmidim of Rabbi Chaim Vital. Rabbi Chaim Vital wrote concerning this Minhag that it is "a well-known Minhag," and from this we derive that this is an earlier Minhag going back to the Rishonim.

"The first haircutting or 'Opsherenish' of a baby boy is a Jewish custom of great importance. The essence of the custom is the educational act of leaving (uncut) the Peyot . . ." (Hayom Yom Iyar 4)

The Age Of The First Haircut – 3 Years – And The Reason:

Although there exist various Minhagim regarding the age of the first haircut (ranging from 9 months to 5 years old), there is a basis and a reason for the custom of making the first haircut particularly at the age of 3 as derived from the words of the Midrash on the Posuk (Kedoshim Perek 19, Posukim 23-24) – "And it shall be when you will come to the Land and you shall plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count as forbidden the fruit thereof; three years shall it be unto you as forbidden; it shall not be eaten. And in the fourth year shall all the fruit thereof be holy for giving praise to Hashem." The Midrash says: "This refers to the young child – for 3 years he shall be for you "ערלים" – for he is unable to speak, and in the fourth year all his fruits are holy, for his father (sanctifies) devotes him to Hashem."

From here we learn the Mitzva of leaving the Peyos (and other Mitzvos), and not to educate him in this regard until his 3 "Orlah" years have passed.

Others write that the reason is because Avrohom Ovinu was 3 years old when he recognized his Creator.

In Sefer HaTa'amim the Mitzva of the first haircut is equated with the Mitzva of "ראשית הגז" – giving the first shearing of the flock to Hashem. "Bnai Yisroel are called "צאן – Flock," and therefore when a child begins to speak and his father makes him holy to Heaven by teaching him to say "תורה צוה לנו משה" at that time we take his hair and give the value of its weight to Shomayim (ie. its equivalent in money to Tzedokah), we leave the Peyos and make him into a Yid – that is, that it is recognizable to everyone that he is a Yiddishe young boy."

Not To Postpone The Haircut After The Third Birthday

Once a child reaches his third Birthday his haircut should not be postponed for any reason. (Concerning Sefira and the Three Weeks see further on). There are several reasons for this:
1) It is written that "a Mitzva is more dear in its right time."

2) Since the reason for the haircut only after 3 years is because these years are considered "ערלה", we should not make him stay in this category of Orlah even for one extra day.

3) The Rema writes that *immediately* when he reaches his third year it is the custom to teach him the letters of the Alef-Bais and this is the Din with regard to educating him also in other Mitzvos, and in particular since according to the Minhag on the day of the haircut we bring him to "Cheder" where he is taught the letters of the Alef-Bais.

Preparations For The Opsherinish

It is the custom to take the young boy to be blessed by a Tzaddik. Chassidim request a Brocha from the Rebbe Shlita for this special occasion and the Rebbe Shlita responds with a letter.

There are those who have the Minhag to take their sons to the Mikva on this day – and particularly when he is also having the "Hachnoso LeCheder" on this day.

We dress the child in Yom Tovdik clothes.

Who Cuts The Boy's Hair?

1) The custom is to begin the haircutting with a Talmid Chochom or a Kohen and then we honor all the participants by inviting them to cut a lock of the boy's hair.

2) The boy's mother also cuts his hair and some have the Minhag to allow other women guests to cut also.

3) It is correct that the conclusion of the haircutting (after the Opsherenish celebration or the next day) be done either by his father or mother or a family member, or at least by a Yiras Shomayim, but certainly not by a non-Jewish barber.

4) It is improper to do the first hair-cut in a bathroom or washroom.

Minhogim For The Actual Haircut

1) It is necessary to stress that the essential Mitzva is to leave, ie., to "create" the Peyos, and therefore the boy should be given a decent haircut leaving only the Peyos and nothing else, ie., bangs etc.

2) The custom is to begin the haircut from the place where the Tefillin rest, or at a place near the Peyos. At the end of the Opsherenish there are those who have the custom to recite a Tefilla authored by the Talmidim of the Arizal (which is as follows:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוקי האלקים ואדוני האדונים, שבזכות כל הצדיקים והחסידים מיום שנברא העולם ועד סופו ובזכות תורתך הקדושה והטהורה, ובזכות תורתך ושמותיך הקדושים שבה, ובזכות מצות פאת ראשכם, ובזכות הצדיק הקדוש הזה מורינו ורבינו ועטרת ראשנו ר' פלוני וכמו שזכה הנער לפאת ראש כן יזכה לתורה ולחופה ולמצות ולמעשים טובים, ויורה הוראות בישראל בחיי אביו ובחיי אמו. אנ"ס.

This Tefilla was written to be recited at the Kivrei Tzaddikim where it is customary to perform the Opsherenish, therefore the words ובזכות ר' פלוני are omitted if the haircut is done elsewhere. (One could also mention the name of his Rebbe).

3) After the Opsherenish some people have the custom to weigh the hair and give its value in silver or gold to Tzedokah. This is a Segula that his son should become a Chochom, a Ben Torah with Yiras Shomayim, and have a good long life.

4) It is customary for those who cut a lock of the boy's hair to give him money to put into a Tzedokah box whilst his hair is being cut.

5) One should be careful not to throw away the hair (from a haircut in general and in particular) of the first haircut, but to store it.

Simcha And Seudas Mitzva

On the day of the Opsherenish we make a Seuda because of the love for the Mitzva that on this day we are educating the child in the Mitzva of Peyos. We serve wine, Mashke and other refreshments and say L'Chaim, and bless each other that we should raise our children to Torah. This Seuda is considered a Seduas Mitzva.

There is a traditional Dvar Torah that many boys have the custom to say whilst their hair is being cut:

הייגט ווער איך דריי יאר אלט, ב"ה, ווי אברהם אבינו זאגט צו דריי יאר דערקענט דעם אויבערשטען אזוי איך דערקען אויך דעם אויבערשטען און איך לאז זיך אפשערן די פערעלער אן לאז איבער פיאות'ן אזוי ווי דער אויבערשטער זאגט נעהייסן. איך הויב אן גיין אין חדר צו לערנען די חילוקע תורה כסדר.

Educating Boys In Covering The Head And Wearing Tzitzis And Saying The Brocha

From the age of three we are particular for a boy to wear a Yarmulka and Tzitzis. At this time we also teach him to say Birchos HaShachar (as outlined in the first page of the Tehilla Hashem Siddur entitled Morning Tefillos for the Small Child) Brochos for food, and the child should also become accustomed to preparing his own "Negel Vasser" by his bed.

When Is It Permitted To Make The Haircut?

It is correct to do the haircut in the morning for it is written in the Kisvei Ha'Arizal that one should not cut after Chatzos (midday) and all the more so at night since this is a time of Dinim (Judgment).

*Concerning other times when it is Minhag Yisroel not to cut Hair such as Rosh Chodesh, Sheloshes Yemei Hagbolah one should consult their Rav.

Opsherenish At The Kever Of Rashbi And Other Kivrei Tzadikim

In a letter from the Rebbe Shlita (Elul 1 5722) it is written that it is fitting to travel to Meron to fulfill there the "Taspora Mitzva" (Mitzva of the haircutting). It is a Segula for Yiras Shomayim and longevity. The Arizal came specially from Mitzraim to Meron to perform the Mitzva of making the Peyos in this holy place. There is a Minhag to dress the young boy

Hachnosa L'Cheder

Chana Gittel Goldstein

Summary of the custom of 'Hachonsa L'Cheder and the beginning of learning Chumash

Minhogei Hachonsa L'Cheder – its source and importance:

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 Le'Cheder] will surely come to realize why the earlier generations succeeded in their Torah learning . . . and now it should not come as any surprise that not even one in a thousand choose to become מורה הוראה (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 . . . and therefore the words of Chazal are fulfilled concerning why the Talmidei Chachomim are not Zoche to raise sons who are Talmidei Chachomim . . . 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 – "פתיחת הלב."

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 Opsherenish and the Hachnosa L'Cheder (also known as ,אריינפירערעש) 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 Chossid from Crown Heights addressed the question of the correct time to the Rebbe Shlita, and also mentioned that it is customary here at 3 years old when the children are enrolled in a -a Kindergarten, mainly to play. The Rebbe Shlita commented on the word "Gan" and wrote that THIS IS A CHEDER, and corrected the



words 'mainly to play' and wrote: "to say Brochos etc." The Rebbe Shlita concluded that therefore this IS the right time for Hachnosa L'Cheder. In Sefer HaSichos ת"ש page 67 it describes the Hachnosa L'Cheder of the Tzemach Tzedek at age three.

Making The Hachnosa L'Cheder During The Day

It is the 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 עת רצון

Preparations For The "Arainfeirenish"

The Honey Cake – *Engraved* Similar To The Luchos – Not Cream or Chocolate:

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

The following Pesukim should be engraved on to the surface of the cake:

ה' אלקים נתן לי לשון לימודים לדעת לעות את יעף דבר יעיר בבוקר בבוקר יעיר לי אוזן לשמוע כלימודים. ה' אלקים פתח לי אוזן ואנכי לא מריתי אחור לא נסוגותי" (ישעי' פרק נ' פסוקים ד'-ה')

(There are those who add many other Pesukim)

The Egg

After unshelling a hard boiled egg the following Posuk is written on it:

ויאמר אלי, בן אדם, בטנך תאכל ומעיך תמלא את המגילה הזאת אשר אני נותן אלך, ואוכלה ותהי בפי כדבש למתוק (יחזקאל ג' ג').

In addition one should prepare other light refreshments.

The Day Of The Hachnosa L'Cheder

1) On the day of the Hachnosa L'Cheder the boy should be bathed and dressed in clean clothes. (Some have the Minhag to immerse him in a Mikva.)

2) The parents themselves should bring him to the School or Bais 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 School 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 Tomey 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?

There are several beautiful reasons:

1) The ארייגפיר־ענגיש is compared to bringing him before Har Sinai for so we find with Moshe that he followed this routine with the Bnai 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 the Aybishter alone began to say the Kometz Alef Oh of the first word of the Aseres HaDibros.

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 Rebbi he is placed on his lap, since it is written: (Behaloscho 11:12) "כאשר ישא ואנבי תרגלתי. דאומן את היונק" לאפרים קדם על זרועותיו" (Hoshea 11:3)

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

2) We have the custom to use the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya to read the letters of the Alef Bais. When the Frierdiker Rebbe learnt Alef Bais he learnt from the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya (476 (לקו"ש חלק ב' ע'), since it is the Sefer which is the Yesod of Chassidus Chabad for it is authored 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 Rebbi points to the letters and says them in the order of the Alef-Bais, and the boy repeats after him. This routine is repeated beginning from Tov to Alef. The Nekudos are then recited from the Siddur forwards and backwards, word by word. The Rebbi recited the Posuk "Torah Tziva" and the Posuk "Torah Tehai Emunosi" word by word and the boy repeats after him.

The Shaar Blatt and the card with the Pesukim written upon it is then lightly smeared with honey which the boy licks after saying Birchas Shehakol.

This is to symbolize that 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 Rebbi the words from the first three Pesukim of Sefer Vayikra. And then Perek 3:17. It is written, "יבואו טהורין ויתעסק בטהרין" – that those who are pure should come and learn that which causes purity, 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 Rebbi reads each word and the boy repeats after him. The Rebbi then scrapes the top layer of the cake which has the Pesukim engraved in it and gives it to the boy to eat after saying Birchas Mezonos.

5) **The Hard-Boiled 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 Birchas Shehakol on the honey). These foods are beneficial for 'opening his heart ' to Torah.

6) **Malach Michoel Candies**

At some point during the above procedure candies are thrown at the boy and we tell him that these are from Malach Michoel in order that he will learn with enthusiasm (Cheshek) . . . The Rebbe Shlita mentions a Ma'ase which happened with the Rebbe Rashab, who saved his Malach Michoel candies, and in a Sicho (Shabbos Parshas Pinchos 5734) the Rebbe explains how it is possible to tell the child that the Malach Michoel threw them when actually this is not true, for his father or the Rebbe threw them. However, they are only acting as his agents 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 the Be'er (Miriam's Well).

Fasting And 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 Mitzva it is the custom to celebrate by inviting relatives and friends to a Seudas Mitzva. The Rebbe Rashab writes that when one begins the education of a child through Hachnosa L'Cheder, the Seuda is a Seudas Mitzva. The Tzemach Tzedek writes that one should serve bread (Hamotzi).

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 . . ."

This article was the inspiration of Rabbi Levi Goldstein, מרצ at Oholei Torah

Practical Tips And Checklist For Hachnosa L'Cheder

Prepared by Raizel Friedfertig

Make arrangements with the Yeshiva and Rebbi in advance.

Prepare the following ahead of time:

1) Honey Cake

The mother bakes a honey cake and engraves the Pesukim using a toothpick or pointed sharp knife. (There's a lot to engrave, so it's better to start off with small letters – you can always make them bigger if you see you will have room).

2) Egg

After removing the shell from a 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 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 cake and egg).

3) Nosh Bags

Prepare small individual bags for each child in the class. (Check with the teacher beforehand how many).

4) Pennies for Tzedokah

Bring a penny for each child in the class to give for Tzedokah. You can bring your child's own Pushka, or use the class Tzedoka Box.

5) "Malach Michoel Candies"

Prepare a few handfuls of candies. These will be thrown at your child by his parents or the Rebbi and will be saved to be eaten by your son from time to time.

In addition, bring to the Yeshiva the following:

6) A Siddur – (preferably your son's own.)

7) A Tanya – (your son's)

8) A small jar of honey

9) A spoon

10) A knife

The Rebbi uses the spoon to spread the honey over the Alef Bais chart in the Siddur and also on the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya. The knife is to cut the top layer of the honey cake where the Pesukim are engraved to give your son to eat.

Seudas Mitzva

To celebrate the child's first exposure to Yeshiva and learning from a Rebbi, family and friends get together afterwards to enjoy a festive meal.

Tips:

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

2) In case your son does not eat all the cake (ie. the Pesukim 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 Mitzva Celebration and is known as the "Holy honey cake." הייליקער לעקאוח.

3) Any leftovers from the egg could be mixed into an egg salad for your son to eat.

A Sach Nachas!!

from head to toe in entirely new clothes. First they would bring him to the Kever of Rabbi Yochanon HaSandlar accompanied by singing and musical instruments, and then they would return to the courtyard of the Kever Rashbi and cut the hair there. The Ceremony is accompanied by a festive meal, singing and dancing.

Many barren women were blessed with children after they promised to perform the Opsherenish at the Kever Rashbi, and there are countless stories of miracles that occurred with children who were brought to the Kever Rashbi on Lag Ba'Omer for their Opsherenish.

Yidden from Yerushalayim traveled to the Kevorim of Shimon HaTzaddik, Kalba Sabua and the Sanhedrin Caves. Yidden in Tuveria went to the Kever of Rabbi Akiva (The Rebbi of the Rashbi), Kever of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Ness to perform there the Opsherenish. Some have the custom to perform the Opsherenish at the Kever of Shmuel HaNavi in Kfar Romo near Yerushalyim.

Cutting The Hair In A Bais HaKnesses Or By Kivrei Tzadikim

Even though it is usually forbidden to cut hair in a Bais HaKnesses out of respect, nevertheless, since the first haircut of a three year old is a Mitzva, and out of love for the Mitzva "It is good to do something holy in a Bais HaKnesses or a Bais HaMedrash . . . since there is an extra Kedusha adding to this Kedusha" (Sicho Shoftim 5733), such is the Minhag.

It is likewise permitted to perform the Opshernish at Kivrei Tzaddikim in Eretz Yisroel.

"נר ה' נשמת אדם" – "The light of Hashem is the Neshama of Man".

As soon as a Yiddishe boy is born, a "נשמה אלקית" ליבטיקע נשמה, enters, and continues to "grow" in stages until it reaches its "fullness" by Bar/Bas Mitzva. The age of three and the Haircutting Ceremony mark a major milestone in the child's life as another stage in the development of the Neshama is achieved. As the child grows, the light from his Neshama grows stronger and brighter as he "lights the Aybishter's lights" – through performing His Mitzvas – "כי נר מצוה ותורה אור".

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בלתי מוגה

ב"ה

סדר הכנסה לחדר

SUMMARY OF THE CUSTOM OF "HACHONSA L'CHEDER" AND THE BEGINNING OF LEARNING CHUMASH

MINHOGEI HACHONSA L'CHEDER - ITS SOURCES AND IMPORTANCE

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 Le'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 . . and therefore the words of Chazal are fulfulled concerning why the Talmidei Chachomim are not Zoche to raise sons who are Talmidei Chachomim . . . 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 Rebbi's class.

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

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

also, In the רשימות (ד) of the Rebbe MH"M it says that the Frierdike Rebbe's Hachnasah L'Cheder was at age 3.(also see ספר התוועדויות תשמ"ג חלק ב' (page 679) concerning the Minhag of Hachnosoh L'Cheder at age 3)

MAKING THE HACHNOSA L'CHEDER DURING THE DAY

It is the 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 Eitz Ratzon.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE "ARAINFEIRENISH"

THE HONEY CAKE

- ENGRAVED,

SIMILAR TO THE LUCHOS -

NOT CREAM OR CHOCOLATE

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

The following Psukim (ישעי' פרק נ' פסוקים ד'-ה') should be engraved into the surface of the cake:

אֲדֹנָי יְ־הוִה נָתַן לִי לְשׁוֹן לִמּוּדִים לָדַעַת לָעוּת אֶת יָעֵף דָּבָר יָעִיר בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר יָעִיר לִי אֹזֶן

לִשְׁמֹעַ כַּלְּמוּדִים: אֲדֹנָי יְ־הוִה פָּתַח לִי אֹזֶן וְאָנֹכִי לֹא מָרִיתִי אָחוֹר לֹא נְסוֹגֹתִי :

(There are those who add other Psukim, such as תהלים פרק קיא, פסוק ד':

וְכִי עֲשָׂה לְנִפְלְאֹתָיו חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם ד': etc.

THE EGG

After unshelling hard boiled egg, the following Posuk (יחזקאל, פרק ג' פסוק ג') is written on it:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֶּן אָדָם כָּאֵנֶךָ תַּאֲכֵל וְגִלְיָךְ תְּמַלֵּא אֶת הַמְּגִלָּה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן אֵלֶיךָ וְאָכַלְתָּה

וְתִהְיֶה בְּפִי כִּדְבַשׁ לְמָתוֹק

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 immerse him in a 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 School 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 Tomey 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?

There 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 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.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE TAKEN BY THE REBBI?

1. When the boy is brought to the Rebbi he is placed on his lap, since it is written "ואנכי תרגלתי לאפרים קחם על זרועותיו" (הושע יא,ג). and "כאשר ישא האומן את היונק"(בהעלותך יא,יב.)

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

2. We have the cusom to use the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya to read the letters of the Alef Bais.
When the Frierdiker Rebbe learnt Alef Bais, he learnt from the Shaar Blatt of the Tanya (Likutei Sichos, vol. 2 page 476) since it is the 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 Rebbi 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 Rebbi 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 אמנותי ואל שדי בעזרתי")

The Shaar Blatt and the Nekudos are then lightly smeared with honey which the boy licks after saying the Beracha Shehakol.

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 Rebbi the words from the first three Pesukim of Sefer Vayikra. And then פרק ג' מסוק ז'.
It is written "יבואו מהורין ויתעסקו במהורין" 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 Rebbi reads each word and the boy repeats after him. The Rebbi then cuts off the top layer of the cake which has the Psukim engraved in it and gives it to the boy to eat after saying the Beracha Mezonos.

5.The hard boiled 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. Malach Michoel Candies

At some point during the above procedure candies are thrown at the boy and we tell him that these are from Malach Michoel in order that he will learn with enthusiasm (Cheshek) . . .

The Rebbe MH"M mentions a story which happened with the Rebbe Rashab who saved his Malach Michoel candies and the Rebbe MH"M also explains how it is possible to tell the child that the Malach Michoel threw them when actually this is not true, for his father or the Rebbi threw them. However, they are acting as his agents 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).

FASTING AND 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. The Rebbe Rashab writes that when one begins the education of child through Hachnosa L'Cheder, the Seudah is a Seudas Mitzvah.

In the Sicha (נשמ, 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.

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 nna Friefertig

Make arrangements with the Yeshiva and Rebbi 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 os 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 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 small individual bags for each child 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).
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. "Malach Michoel Candies" - Prepare a few handfuls of candies. These will be thrown at your child by his parents or the Rebbi 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 MH"M)
8. A BIG Chumash Vayikra. 9. A small jar of honey. 10. A spoon. 11. A knife.

The Rebbi uses the spoon to spread 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.

SEUDAS MITZVAH

To celebrate the child's first exposure to Yeshiva and learning from a Rabbi, family and friends get together afterwards to enjoy a festive meal.

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 to 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).
4. Any leftovers from the egg could be mixed into an egg salad for your son to eat.

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד !