



Pidyon Haben

The Pidyon Haben ceremony is when a first born baby boy is 'redeemed' by his parents from a 'Cohen' (descendent of the priests who served in the Temples in Jerusalem when they stood), thereby exempting him from the initial Biblical obligation on firstborn boys to serve in the Temple in Jerusalem, when it is standing. Its source is in the Torah (Shemot/Exodus 13:2)

The ceremony takes place from the third or fourth day of the boy's life, with the calculation starting on the first day of the Pidyon Haben from the time of the birth. If the boy's birthday falls on Shabbat or Yom Tov then the ceremony is postponed until the following Sunday or weekday after Yom Tov respectively.

This 'redemption' process involves payment by the father to the Cohen of five grains (in ancient times they would have been silver) as to how this takes place and the Cohen will often provide the coins for the father.

The ceremony begins with a sit-down meal including making a blessing (hamotzi) over bread. This is followed by platters of bagels and other food for this occasion. You can find a list of these bakeries [here](#) [1].

One custom in some communities but not a law is for the baby to then be carried on a silver tray by the Cohen. Finally, the Cohen blesses the child and hands him back to the parents.

There are certain circumstances in which a first born baby boy will not require a Pidyon Haben. Your rabbi will be available to guide you through the process and answer any questions you may have.

For the full service see pages 810 - 814 in the green edition of the Singer's Siddur.

We wish you Mazaltov and every happiness with your new son! Don't forget to apply for a [baby gift pack](#) [2] as well!

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