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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)

It should take place on the thirty-first day of the boy?s life, with the calculation starting the first day for this purpose from the time that the baby is born. Even if the Brit Milah has been postponed, the Pidyon Haben will still go ahead on time, unless that day falls on Shabbat or Yom Tov in which case the Pidyon Haben 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 coins (in ancient times, they would have been a Selah), which is the approximate value of 100 grams of silver. The Cohen or your rabbi will advise 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 does not have to be a full-blown party. Many London Beth Din licensed kosher bakeries can provide 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 in on a silver tray adorned with jewellery. Then, the baby is redeemed by his parents, as they hand the Cohen the coins. 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 local 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 [ababy gift pack](#)^[2] as well!

Date Uploaded:

Friday 20th December 2013

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