



ShalomBaby

And those who are to be redeemed from a month old shall you redeem, according to your estimation, for the money of five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

~Numbers 18:13-16

Pidyon Haben

An ancient custom is that of the *pidyon haben* or "redemption of the first born." This custom dates back to the rite of the first born being consecrated to G-d as a priest. The rite has evolved to the custom of a ceremony of "ransoming" a male baby, who is the first child born to the mother, by giving five pieces of silver to a descendant of the *Kohen* tribe. This ceremony takes place any time after the thirtieth day. A celebration follows the transaction. Some families like to conduct a similar ceremony for a girl. The *pidyon habat* can be accomplished through a symbolic gift of *tzedakah* in the child's name.

Shalom Zachar

In some families, the first Shabbat of a male child's life is marked with a special celebration. Friends and relatives gather at the baby's home to congratulate the family. A *d'var torah* is given and a light meal is shared. Lentils and chickpeas are traditional foods because of their round shape, symbolizing life's continuity. The same event for a baby girl is called a *shalom bat*, "greeting the daughter."



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