Timing of Giving

Property may be given away in any manner and amounts desired during a person's lifetime. A Jew must give his property away before death if he does not want to make the inheritance according to Jewish law (such as double portion to a father's first-born son, etc.--consult a *rabbi* for details). A person should reserve some money to fulfill the *Torah* commandment of inheritance. Consult a *rabbi* .

NOTE In inheritance issues, the first-born son means the first-born son of the father (although *pidyon ha'ben* refers to the first-born son of the mother).

NOTE A mother can leave whatever she wants to her children without being required to give twice as much to a son who is the first-born of his father.

American Will

Since a person cannot give away property after his/her death (since he/she does not own it anymore), an American will has no *halachic* validity. An American will should be written to keep the inheritance out of the hands of the government and lawyers. In order for a secular will to be effective under *halacha*, an acquisition should be made that starts to take effect beginning at the time of the *kinyan* and finalize one hour before the person's death.
Rabbinic guidance is recommended.

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