FIRSTS (REISHIT)

INTRODUCTION TO FIRSTS (REISHIT)

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Jews thank God for His blessings by giving Him the "first" (<u>reishit</u>) of various products (as well as a tenth/ *ma'aser* of agricultural and other wealth).

"First" applies to:

- First-Born/Petter Rechem
 - First-born male children/<u>petter rechem</u> (redeemed with money; see <u>Introduction to <u>Pidyon</u> <u>HaBein</u>).</u>
 - First-born male *kosher* domestic animals (calf, lamb, kid)/*petter rechem* (in *Temple* times: sacrificed on altar; now, permanent holy status--see Selling Mother Animal before Birth of *Petter Rechem*.
 - First-born male donkeys/<u>petter rechem chamor</u> (redeemed with sheep/goat; holiness of both the donkey and the sheep or goat then disappears).
- Dough/Challa

In Temple times, given to cohen; now, see When To Separate Challa (Hafrashat Challa).

• First Fruits/Bikurim

In <u>Temple</u> times, the Jew (<u>man</u> or woman) brought the <u>bikurim</u> fruits to the area between altar and <u>Temple</u> building; only the <u>man</u> said the

• First Shearing/Reishit HaGeiz

Portion of sheep's wool (reishit ha'geiz) (given to cohen).

NOTE All of the above have holy status except for the wool and the human *petter rechem*.

REISHIT: KOSHER DOMESTIC ANIMALS

PETTER RECHEM

Selling Mother Animal before Birth of Petter Rechem

SITUATION The first-born male baby of a female *kosher* domestic mammal or of a female donkey, if completely owned by a Jew, is a *petter rechem* (which may not be used for any purpose).

WHAT TO DO Before the mother has her first baby, sell part of her to a non-Jew so the firstborn will not be wholly owned by a Jew and, if male, will not become a <u>petter rechem. Rabbinic</u> guidance is recommended!

REISHIT: PIDYON HABEIN