# FIRSTS (REISHIT)

### **INTRODUCTION TO FIRSTS (REISHIT)**

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

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- First-Born/Petter Rechem
  - First-born male children/*petter rechem* (redeemed with money; see Introduction to *Pidyon HaBein*).
  - 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/*petter rechem chamor* (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 *Temple* times, the Jew (*man* or woman) brought the *bikurim* fruits to the area between altar and *Temple* building; only the *man* 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 *petter rechem. Rabbinic* guidance is recommended!

## **REISHIT: PIDYON HABEIN**