

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:

- 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