

# Numbers 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

## Analysis

For purification, 'they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel.' The red heifer's ashes mixed with 'living water' (mayim chayim) created 'water of separation' for cleansing. The Hebrew 'mayim chayim' (running/living water) suggests fresh, flowing water symbolizing life. This purification combined sacrifice (ashes) with life (water), pointing to Christ's death and resurrection providing cleansing. Jesus spoke of 'living water' springing up to eternal life (John 4:10, 14, 7:38). The mixture's dual components teach that cleansing requires both Christ's atoning death and resurrection life.

## Historical Context

This procedure required preserved red heifer ashes (v.9) available for ongoing purification needs. The running water (from springs or streams, not stagnant pools) ensured purity. Hyssop branches dipped in the mixture were sprinkled on the defiled person or object (v.18). This practice continued until temple destruction, with tradition claiming only nine red heifers were ever prepared from Moses to 70 AD, showing their rarity. The system demonstrated that God provided means for ongoing cleansing from unavoidable defilement. While the specific ritual ended, the principle continues - believers need regular cleansing through confession and appropriating Christ's sacrifice (1 John 1:9).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. Are you regularly appropriating Christ's cleansing through confession, or allowing spiritual defilement to accumulate?
2. How does the combination of sacrifice (ashes) and living water point you to both Christ's death and resurrection life?

## Interlinear Text

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וְلֹא תִּלְקַח	לְטָמֵא	מְעֵד ר	שְׁרֵפָת
person they shall take	And for an unclean	of the ashes	of the burnt heifer
H3947	H2931	H6083	H8316
בְּמִטְבֵּת אֹת	עַל י	מִם	אֶל
of purification for sin	shall be put	water	and running
H2403	H5414	H4325	H2416

כָּלֵי:  
thereto in a vessel  
H3627

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