

# 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

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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

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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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וְלָקְחוּ person they shall take H3947	לִטְמֵה א And for an unclean H2931	מֵעֹפֹרֶת of the ashes H6083	שֶׂרֶפֶת ת of the burnt heifer H8316		
הַחֹטֵא אֶת of purification for sin H2403	וְנָתַן   shall be put H5414	עַל יוֹ H5921	מַיִם water H4325	חַיִּים and running H2416	אֶל H413
כָּלִי: thereto in a vessel H3627					