

3 Red Heifers Born in Israel as Rabbis Prepare for Biblical Purification

Three new red heifer candidates are now being raised in Israel under rabbinic supervision, marking a significant change in the effort to restore the biblical purification ritual connected to Temple service.

The calves were born this season on separate farms in the Galilee, Golan Heights and Jordan Valley. Rabbis with the National Institute for Red Heifer Research recently examined all three for blemishes and other potential disqualifications, according to Israel365 News.

The development comes more than a year after a Texas-born red heifer was burned on July 1, 2025, in a controversial ceremony that participants claimed produced kosher ashes. Israel365 News now reports that the ceremony failed to satisfy several halachic requirements.

Three Candidates Now Being Raised in Israel

The red heifer requirements come from Numbers 19:2, which commands Israel to bring a red cow without blemish or defect that has never borne a yoke.

The ashes are required for purification from *tumat met*, or impurity associated with contact with the dead. Without that purification, full Temple service cannot resume under Torah law.

Of the three new calves, the youngest, born at Shadmot Mechola in the Jordan Valley, currently appears the most promising. Rabbis reported finding no off-color hairs, injuries or other

visible blemishes.



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Rabbi Azaria Ariel, head of the Institute's Beit Midrash, said the arrival of multiple candidates represents something extraordinary.

"We have now merited to see three heifers born within a relatively short span of time, with the latest one appearing even more promising than the previous ones," Ariel told Israel365 News.

Another calf, Temimah, is being monitored after an identification tag pierced her ear shortly after birth. Rabbis are determining whether the healing injury constitutes a permanent disqualifying blemish.

The Golan Heights candidate was born as a twin to a male calf, creating questions about possible infertility, and several lighter hairs are also being monitored.

Why the 2025 Burning Was Not Kosher

The new strategy also addresses problems identified with the Texas red heifers and the July 2025 burning.

Among the primary issues:

- **No continuous Jewish oversight:** The Texas animals spent part of their lives under non-Jewish custody. The article argues that later rabbinic inspections cannot reconstruct an unbroken record proving the animals were never worked, yoked or otherwise disqualified.
- **Ritual purity requirements:** Those slaughtering and burning the heifer become impure, requiring another qualified, ritually pure person to collect the ashes.

- **Location and ownership:** The ceremony must take place at an appropriately situated and properly owned location facing the sanctuary. A symbolic or temporarily provided location is insufficient.
- **Improper use of the ashes:** Participants publicly attributed healing properties to ashes from the 2025 burning. The article also argues that the Torah designates red heifer ashes specifically for purification from corpse impurity—not as an independent healing substance.

The article nevertheless credited Texas rancher Byron Stinson's efforts with increasing awareness and contributing to the establishment of the Institute now overseeing candidates in Israel.

A New Approach From Birth

The greatest difference is that the new calves are being raised in Israel with Jewish oversight beginning at birth, allowing rabbis to establish the continuous record they say was missing from the Texas animals.

"There is still a long road ahead of us," Ariel told Israel365 News.

All three remain calves and must reach at least two years old while maintaining their qualifying status.

But Ariel said the larger objective is taking shape: Israel is moving toward "raising a herd of red heifers" and advancing the restoration of ritual purity after roughly 2,000 years.

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