In 1996, the birth in Israel of Melody, a Red Heifer, sparked controversy the world over due to the conflict over the fate of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Some called this young calf a *tick ing time bomb* and a *catalyst for World War III*. A Boston Globe article titled *Heifer's Appearance In Israel Stirs Hopes, Apocalyptic Fears*, described the heifer as a sign of the coming Messiah:

"This rust-colored six-month-old heifer is hailed as a sign of the coming of the Messiah and decried as a walking atom bomb."

But, most people are totally unaware of the significance of the Red Heifer in the unraveling of biblical prophecy.

The Mishnah [a Jewish Bible commentary] states that there have been a total of nine red cows burned in the history of Judaism. It was taught that the tenth heifer would be burned in the time of the Messiah. Thus, the Red Heifer is a harbinger of the coming of the Messiah.

Melody's birth was truly miraculous. Although Rabbi Richman of Jerusalem's Temple Institute and Mississippi cattle rancher Clyde Lott have been genetically engineering a Red Heifer strain for several years, Melody was not one of them. Instead, she was born to a black and white Holstein mother and a brown bull father making her distinct red color not just unlikely, but extraordinary!

The ancient sages taught that the Red Heifer used for religious rituals had to be born in Israel to be acceptable. This heifer, of a variety believed extinct for centuries, was born in northern Israel in June of 1996. If she had proven to be acceptable (no white hairs), she would have been ready for burning as early as June 1999. Some feared that her existence might provoke fanatics
to attempt destroying the Dome of the Rock in order to prepare the Temple Mount for the rebuilding of the third Temple. Therefore, Melody was placed under armed guard in order to protect her from possible assassination attempts before she was ruled to be an unfit candidate.

According to the biblical mandate, the ashes of a Red Heifer are necessary in order to carry out religious rituals in a rebuilt Temple. The ashes of the Red Heifer mixed with water from the Pool of Siloam become the *waters of separation*. The Temple Mount, the Temple itself, and everything connected with it, including the Priests, have to be sprinkled with the *waters of separation*. This mysterious liquid, the Bible records, takes away the defilement of death from everything on which it is sprinkled; it separates the holy from the profane. If there are no Red Heifer ashes, there can be no *waters of separation*, no Temple worship, and no qualified priesthood.

*(SEE ARTICLE ON THE WATERS OF PURIFICATION, THE RED HEIFFER RIDDLE)*

In ancient times, a pure red, native-born heifer would be led through the Eastern Gate over an arched roadway (bridge) that spanned the Kidron Valley to the *Place of Burning* located just below the northern summit of the Mount of Olives. This *Place* was *on a line from the entrance to the Temple through the Eastern Gate*. The Heifer would be bound and thrust into a pile of firewood prepared for the ritual.

The priest would then slay the cow with his right hand, catching some of the blood in his left hand; and seven times he dipped his finger in it to sprinkle the blood towards the Most Holy Place, which was supposed to have been in full view through the Eastern Gate. As soon as the fire of burning was lit, cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool were bound together and thrown upon the burning Heifer. Later, the ashes were divided into three parts: one of which was kept in the Women's Court of the Temple as a memorial, another on the Mount of Olives at the *Place of Burning*, and a third was distributed to the priesthood for their service in the Temple. While it cannot be documented by Scripture, some rabbis believe that whenever a heifer was burned, its ashes were mixed with the remaining ashes of the previous heifer to assure purity. They are searching, therefore, for the ashes of the ninth Red Heifer to be mixed with the ashes of the tenth red heifer in preparation for the cleansing of a new Temple.
A number of biblical scholars have used the information about *The Place of Burning* in their attempts to locate the exact place where the Temple once stood. Based upon some calculations, the Holy of Holies was situated to the northwest of the Dome of the Rock, making possible the rebuilding of the Temple without disturbing the Muslim holy site. Others, however, believe the evidence is strong in favor of the Holy of Holies being placed directly under the Dome. Dr. Ernest L. Martin, however, has recently published a book, *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot,* that contains evidence that places the site of both previous Temples on Mt. Zion, to the southeast of the Dome of the Rock. This is in keeping with the many scriptures linking the two. It would also make rebuilding the Temple much more feasible.

When a red heifer is found acceptable for burning to produce the ashes for the *waters of separation,* the problem arises as to where she will be burned since much of the Mount of Olives is currently a Muslim area, making the possibility of burning the Red Heifer in that place highly unlikely. Further, the Eastern Gate is closed and, according to the interpretation of Ezekiel 44 by the sages, will not be opened again until the Messiah comes.

"Then He [the L-rd] brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the L-rd said to me, 'This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the L-rd G-d of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.'" (Ezekiel 44:1-2)

(The Muslims have placed a graveyard directly outside the Eastern Gate and have sealed it shut.)

Beyond the obvious barriers to the Red Heifer burning above stated, there are other formidable obstacles as well. Primary to them all is the threat of violent reactions by Muslim and Jewish fanatics, which would result in pressure from world leaders to avoid any additional confrontations that would interfere with the Middle East ‘peace’ process. There is also fear in the Nation’s secular population that it will spark yet another war. And lastly, of course, are the protests from the animal rights activists.
Despite all the monumental difficulties, the Bible records three specific things that will occur before the return of Jesus, relating to the resumption of Israel's religious rituals:

- The rebirth of the nation of Israel (Ezekiel 37; Isaiah 66:8)— fulfilled in 1948
- Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1-2; 2 Thes. 2:3-4
- The resumption of sacrifices and grain offerings in Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27; Joel 1:9, 13)

(It has been reported that during the summer of 2004, the newly formed religious/legal body known as the Sanhedrin met for the first time in almost 2000 years to discuss where the Third Temple should be built.)

By G-d's own instruction, the ashes of the Red Heifer must be used to produce the *waters of separation* that will purify everything in preparation for the coming of Messiah. In light of biblical prophecy, it seems that the future of the entire world depends on the likes of Melody.

Barukh HaShem (Blessed is the Name of the L-rd)