

# A Midrash for Monday (#5)

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## A Midrash for Monday

Rendered from *Midrash Tanchuma, Masei #8*

“He teaches us from the beasts of the earth and makes us wise from the birds of the sky” (Job 35:11).

God tells the Jews, “Learn from Elijah’s cow.”

*What did Elijah’s cow do? “When the Prophet Elijah challenged the worshipers of Baal (1 Kings 18:25), ‘Choose the one cow and go first to make an offering’ 450 prophets of Baal and 450 prophets of Asheirah gathered. Despite working together, they couldn’t get the cow to lift one foot! Why not?*

*“Elijah told the Baal worshipers, ‘Go find twin cows, from one mother, who grew up in the same barn. Cast lots, one for God and one for Baal. Then choose whichever one you want.’ They did all that. The cow that was left to be Elijah’s came with him right away. But the other, the one that the Baal worshipers wanted, wouldn’t move. Even when all 900 (!) prophets tried to push it toward the altar, it wouldn’t budge! Finally, Elijah said to the cow, ‘Go with them.’*

*“Right in front of all those people—the prophets and everyone else—the cow answered, ‘My friend and I come from the same*

womb. We grew up eating the same fodder, in the same barn. He was chosen to be to be in God's portion. God's Name will be sanctified through him. Why was I chosen to be Baal's and to anger my Creator?!'

"Elijah responded, 'Go with them and don't give them an excuse to avoid my challenge. Just as God's Name will be sanctified through my cow, so will it be sanctified through you.' The cow was not mollified. 'This is the advice you give?! I'm not budging from here unless you hand me over to them!' And Elijah did."

God tells the Jews, "Learn from Elijah's cow. Don't even think of worshiping idols."

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