



# IT SAYS WHAT?!

Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 9:2

Isaiah 41:14

אֶל־תִּירָאִי תוֹלְעַת יַעֲקֹב מִתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי עֲזָרְתִּיךָ  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְגֹאֲלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Fear not, O worm Jacob, O men of Israel: I will help you — declares the LORD— I your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.



Furthermore it says: Fear not, thou worm Jacob (Isa. 41:14). Why is Israel compared to a worm? To teach us that just as a worm has only a soft and tender mouth with which to strike at a hard cedar tree, so Israel has only its prayers. Idolaters are likened to a cedar, as Scripture states: Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon (Exod. 31:3). And yea, the Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars in Lebanon (Ps. 29:5). Whenever their enemies overpowered them, the Israelites would become penitent and would plead and pray. Hence it says: I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren which I took out of the hand of the Amorites, with my sword and with my bow (Gen 48:29). Did he actually seize it with his sword and his bow? Has it not already been said: For I trust not in my bow, neither can my sword save me (Ps. 44:7)? This implies that my sword refers to prayer and my bow to beseeching. Scripture says: And this for Judah, and he said: “Hear Lord, the voice of Judah,” etc. (Deut. 33:7). Similarly, David said: Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast taunted (I Sam. 17:45). It says also: Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will make mention of the name of the Lord his God (Ps. 20:8), and it is said: There is none beside Thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength; help us, O Lord our God; for we rely on Thee, and in Thy name are we come against this multitude. Thou art the Lord our God; let not man prevail against thee (II Chron. 14:10). Concerning Moses it states: And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom ... how our fathers went down into Egypt, and when we cried unto the Lord, He heard our voice (Num. 20:14–15). He said to them: Ye exalt yourselves because of your fathers’ legacy to you, but the voice is the voice of Jacob, and the hands are the hands of Esau (Gen. 27:40). Thus the verse The children of Israel cried out unto the Lord indicates that they followed the practices of their fathers. After they cried out to Him, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them, as it is said: But from thence ye will seek the Lord thy God; and thou shall find him (Deut. 4:29).”