

Parashat Vayera

- In the daily Amidah, G-d is presented as *Somekh HaNof'lim*, the one who supports the fallen, and in the larger context from which this phrase is taken, Psalm 145, verse 14, it reads, *Somekh Adonai l'khol hanoflim, v'zokef l'khol hak'fufim* / The LORD upholds all who fall, And raises up all those who are bowed down.
- In the Book of Luke, Chapter 13, we find a demonstration of HaShem's compassion for people who medically or physically may be in such a condition because of spiritual oppression. While teaching in a synagogue on Shabbat, Yeshua healed a woman who suffered from an infirmity that caused her to be permanently weighed down for eighteen years, until Messiah miraculously straightened her posture.
- Shim'on Kefa / Simon Peter learned a lesson of Hashem's universal love for people of all the nations in a story that is recorded in the Book of Acts, Chapter 10: After Cornelius, a Roman army officer, is directed by G-d to seek out Shim'on, the latter says to a group gathered in the home where he was staying, "You are well aware that for a man who is a Jew to have close association with someone who belongs to another people, or to come and visit him, is something that just isn't done. But God has shown me not to call any person common or unclean; so when I was summoned, I came without raising any questions. Tell me, then, why did you send for me?"
- Cornelius answered, "Three days ago around this time, I was at *minchah* prayers in my house, when suddenly a man in shining clothes stood in front of me and said, 'God has heard your prayer and remembered your acts of charity. Now send to Yafo and ask for Shim'on, known as Kefa; he is staying in the house of Shim'on, a leather-tanner, by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now all of us are here in the presence of God to hear everything the Lord has ordered you to say."
- Then Kefa addressed them: "I now understand that God does not play favorites, but that whoever fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him, no matter what people he belongs to."
- As we will hear in our Scripture selections today, whether it is Hagar, Avraham's Egyptian slave who, with her son, is sent out from the camp; or a wealthy Jewish woman of the city of Shunem who extends hospitality to the prophet Elisha; or a Syro-Phoenician mother whose daughter had an unclean spirit; G-d receives the prayers of all, whether Jew or Gentile, who call on His name, and He raises up all those who are bowed down.