

# Bikur Cholim Facts

- 🗣️ Definition: *Bikur cholim* means “visiting the sick.” The Torah tells us it is a mitzvah to visit and help the unwell people in our community.
- 🗣️ When we hear the word “sick,” we think of someone who has the flu, a cold, or is in the hospital. *Bikur Cholim* can be anyone who is unwell: someone who has a broken bone, someone who has a mental illness, someone who is sad and needs help getting through the day.
- 🗣️ The mitzvah to visit the sick extends to people of all ethnic and religious groups. The purpose of this mitzvah is to lighten someone’s suffering.
- 🗣️ Jewish tradition teaches that when we visit someone who is ill, we relieve 1/60th of their suffering.
- 🗣️ A few reasons we visit a sick friend or relative (feel free to add your own!):
  - We bring them hope.
  - We remind them they are not forgotten.
  - We help them in their healing.
  - We make their day feel special.
- 🗣️ When we visit someone who is sick, we traditionally recite a prayer called a *Mi Shebeirach*. *Mi Shebeirach* means “May the One who is blessed...” In this prayer we ask for healing for the person who is unwell.
- 🗣️ *Bikur cholim* is one the mitzvot mentioned in our daily prayer *Eilu Devarim*. *Eilu Devarim* is a list of ten mitzvot (commandments) that were compiled by the rabbis in 200 C.E. We are supposed to recite *Eilu Devarim* at the beginning of each day. *Eilu Devarim* focuses on the ways we can improve the world, and one of these ways is *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick).
- 🗣️ There is a classic midrash (a story written to help explain or highlight parts of the Torah) which portrays God as modeling this *mitzvah* (commandment). Just after Abraham’s circumcision in Genesis 18, God appears to Abraham. The midrash teaches that God is visiting the recovering patient.