



## A SICK DAY FOR AMOS MCGEE

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*Have you ever noticed that when you're not feeling well, it helps to have someone by your side? When Amos McGee didn't go to work, his animal friends knew he must be feeling really crummy, so they hopped on the bus to visit him. This made Amos so happy he started feeling a bit better – well enough to play chess, hide and seek, even make a pot of tea.*

According to Jewish tradition, visiting sick people really does help them feel better -- just a little bit. As with all the *gemilut chasidim* (acts of loving-kindness), visiting sick people is a meaningful way to show people that you care about them.

Of course, as Amos McGee clearly understands, compassion extends beyond people; animals are worthy of our care, too. Judaism places great importance on *tz'ar ba'alei chayim* (literally, preventing the suffering of animals). It's no accident that some of the greatest Bible heroes were shepherds -- King David, for example, and Moses. The Talmud (the Jewish book of oral law) states that we should feed our animals before we feed ourselves. And just as with people, when we see an animal is sick or in danger, Jewish law expects us to do what we can to help it.

The next time people you care about are sick, think about how you can help them feel better. If they aren't contagious, maybe you can visit. Think of how Amos McGee's friends spent time with him. Bringing someone soup, reading a story to them, playing cards, or even just giving them a gentle hug are all ways to help people feel better. If your friends aren't well enough for a visit, sending brightly decorated cards can cheer them up a lot. Many people find it comforting to say a traditional prayer for the sick, called *Mi She-Berakh*, in synagogue. In this prayer, we ask that a sick person be restored to wholeness of body and spirit. If all your friends are (thankfully!) healthy, consider going to a nursing home, where people you don't know may be hoping for visitors.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN READING

- Why do you think a visit from a friend helps a sick person feel better?
- All the animals in this story had different ways of showing Amos how they care.
- How do you show your friends and family that you care?
- What are other ways to show people you care, whether they are sick or healthy?