

The Merit of a Mitzvah

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Reb Aharon of Kiblitsh had been feeling fine when, suddenly, he fell ill. Fever and weakness quickly followed, and his health began to fail. Reb Aharon's situation deteriorated so rapidly that his family was afraid it would soon be the end, and so did everyone else who saw him. Many heartfelt prayers were offered, but none seemed to help. His life-force continued to ebb until it became obvious that the end was near.

Reb Aharon had instructed his household and his entire family—including his son-in-law, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Bender—to gather round and prepare for his imminent demise. His death throes began and the family quickly summoned the burial society. These dedicated volunteers quickly left their respective jobs and came to guide Reb Aharon's final moments, as was their privilege and duty.

Strangely, the moment they walked into the room, Reb Aharon seemed to stabilize. After a short time, his final struggle abated and the Angel of Death seemed to retreat from the room. This was so unusual that the members of the burial society remained to observe his condition. As the color returned to Reb Aharon's face and he relaxed into restful sleep, the burial society felt that they could leave him to recover.

By the very next day, Reb Aharon was well enough to walk around.

Everyone was astounded at his amazing recovery and they wondered what had caused it. One of the members of the burial society spoke up. "Obviously, we cannot know the mysterious ways of Heaven. But I think I may have an idea as to why he began healing the moment we entered the room.

"As you know, I am a wagon driver by trade. What you probably don't know is that after my wedding, I didn't have any way to support myself and my young bride. I approached Reb Aharon and poured out my heart to him, explaining that if I only had a horse and wagon, I thought I could make a decent living.

"Reb Aharon took me around town and helped me collect the entire sum I needed to get started earning a living. I believe that the moment I entered the room, the merit of this great mitzvah was aroused and sparked his rapid recovery."

Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh, IV:341