

A Real Friend

written by Yehudis Golshevsky
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The three letters that form the month of Tevet—*tet*, *vav*, *tav*—are an acronym for, “*tireh tov b’chaverchah*”—“see the good in your friend.”

Reb Nosson explains that most of us have a hard time when we see a friend do wrong since we can’t understand how a person with so many positive qualities could have blown it so badly. We need to reverse direction and start by focusing on the error. Clearly, when a person makes a bad mistake it demonstrates that he or she has a real problem. Which means that, if my friend—who certainly has a real character defect, if not more than one—generally acts in a much better way, I really ought to appreciate it more. It can’t be that it comes

so easily, otherwise the bad behavior wouldn't have cropped up.

Breslover Chasidim would say that one way to tell a true friend is one who stays a friend even after seeing our insecurities and weaknesses. Those who remain our friends are real. The rest are not genuinely interested in our good. If I have even one true friend, I can consider myself very fortunate. And if I have many, I am really blessed.

Dear G-d, please show me how to be a true friend! Let me think of my friends' better interests and overlook any hard edges. Let me consider the genuine goodness that's inside them and stick with them. Show me the right angle so I will understand that the good is so much more precious when I'm aware that my friend has real weaknesses...just like I do. Help me to cut my friends some slack just like I would want them to do for my weaknesses. Let me see that only one who is a genuine friend can stay close to others.