

A Winter of Opportunity

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A Sacred Time – Tevet 4

The deeper works point out that the name of the month, Tevet, also means to set up the oil-lights of the Temple. While we know that the light of Chanukah continues to shine throughout this month to warm our hearts and souls, there is another message hiding in the letters. The harsh winter of a challenge is an opportunity; it's a process that prepares our light to shine. Hard experience gives us the insight to help those who suffer what we have endured in the past. Our rough edges are filed down and we learn to be patient with the failings of others. And we can become much more open to spiritual realities.

Reb Nosson brings the Zohar's parable about reception to

spirituality. "If a piece of wood does not take the fire, one must strike it." My body is like a tree, a block of inert wood, but when the fire of the spirit "takes," it begins to shine from joy and deep connection with my Source. Sometimes, to get that fire to take hold, I might have to be struck a bit—I might need to be shaken up. The Tevet-type experience is sometimes just what I need to get my light to shine.

Beloved G-d, please help me to realize that You always intend for my good, and that even harsh experiences are a hidden gift. Please provide me with the clarity and strength that I need so that my "shake-ups" help me wake up, rise and shine, and don't "break me up" instead.