

# **“Tough” Love**

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## **A Sacred Time – Tevet 2**

The Baal Shem Tov taught that everything that exists is vitalized by a permutation of the Divine Names. Even though this sounds abstract, what it really means is that Divine vitality fills all of creation at all times so that it can continue to exist—and this is true of people, places, things and circumstances. Including the painful and trying ones—they are all being given life by the Source.

The Kabbalists and Tzaddikim would speak about “sweetening” Divine judgments, which really amounts to touching base with the G-dly source of even the painful experience. While its external nature is a trial, the Divine Name within it is holy and good. When I’m aware of this, already the larger part of

the pain is “sweetened” or mitigated. I might be in pain, but I don’t have to suffer. I might not be able to escape the challenging situation, but at least I don’t have to feel abandoned by G-d.

Awareness of the Divine source of challenges can help me to endure them with grace and patience. This new month of Tevet sends us a message: there is *tov* [the first letters of Tevet are *tet* and *vav*, spelling “good”] in the “*taf*”—the final letter of the *alef bet*, symbolizing the greatest concealment of G-d’s presence, the harshest circumstance.

*Dear G-d, help me to remember that in every “taf”—in all of the **tough** places I have to walk through—Your love is still there with me, there is “**tov**.”*