

# From Bitter to Sweet – The month of Marcheshvan

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Our sages tell us that the sweet-smelling incense used in the Temple contained one powerfully bitter component, the chelbenah or galbanum. Reb Nosson explains that this inclusion teaches us how essential it is to Divine service to know how to transform the bad into good. The one evil-smelling ingredient is necessary for the recipe; without that eleventh spice, it's not the incense.

We do this on the personal level by taking our knowledge of our own flaws and setting it against the “other ten”—our good and strong points. Instead of using our assets to highlight our failures—“I’m a good person...how could I have done such a terrible thing?” we reverse the dynamic.

“I’m a person with plenty of negative inside of me...what a

miracle that I was able to do such a good thing today!"

When we look at ourselves that way, we convert the "mar" of every bitter flaw into myrrh, the sweet smelling incense that G-d loves so much.

Now, the month of Marcheshvan, it's time to change the bitter into sweet.