

MASTERS THESIS
THE HISTORY AND BASICS OF METAPHYSICS

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

M.Msc. THESIS

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I – Introduction

For centuries cultures around the world have used incense to appease and honor their Gods and Goddesses. It is a practice seen in every religion and in every region of the world. Today you can find thousands of books and resources giving guidance and direction for the use of herbs and oils to make soaps and creams for holistic purposes. You can find resources for using leaves of various plants to create medicinal teas. And countless *how to* reference books for creating your own incense or for use in aromatherapy practices.

Unfortunately not many of today's metaphysical resources touch on the history behind herbs and spices in incenses, or a historical look at how their aroma was used for healing or in devotional practices. But when we can find this information if we delve into the world of herbal and natural plant remedies.

According to Kylie Thompson (2006), one of the oldest surviving texts, (the Ebers Papyrus 2000 BC), defines a list of medicinal herbs in use around 1800 BC. From ancient texts like these, and Egyptian Hieroglyphs we know that burning incense was a big part of this early cultures spiritual life. Priests are depicted burning incense on street corners during festivals to appease the Gods. Writings from Egypt and Rome indicate that a healer would burn incense to cast out demons from an ill patient. Incense was always kept burning within temples to honor the gods and goddesses.

This is just one example of how herbs and spices have been used throughout the centuries for medical and spiritual purposes. In this essay we will briefly look into the past at the history of the incense, how it has been used, how they are created and the modern purpose or mystical energies assigned to the varying scents that tantalize the senses and inspire the soul.

II – Review Of Literature

In today's world, books have become only one method of resource for the metaphysical student. The more open and popular metaphysical insights have become, the more classes addressing these topics have been created and offered at colleges and universities, as well as, local spiritual stores and centers. This popularity has grown so much that one can even find their local park and recreation facilities offering classes in meditation, aromatherapy and other alternative healing practices.

Add to this the advent of the Internet and the resources available to the metaphysical student have become endless. But it has also provided great information for what was once seen as weirdo science to a general public thirsty for alternative medicines to reduce their insurance costs.

Capitalizing on this vast array of knowledge, the following is a brief review of the bibliographic resources used for this essay.

A historical look at incense would not be complete without reference of spiritual literature. The Cokesbury (1962) *Holy Bible* is one example of this. Translated from the original tongues set forth in 1611 A.D. and revised in 1881-1885 A.D., its translation was reviewed and revised to create this edition of Christian Scripture. Here we find insight into the historical use of aromas by the Hebrews and early Christians.

Jeanne Rose (1976) offers vast information about plants, their uses and provides a great deal of detail for how to create herbal remedies. Additionally, she provides her readers with information about harvesting, preparing and storing herbals for future uses. As with many writers on the subject, she also extends her view of the mystical energies assigned to various plants.

Ellen Evert Hopman (1995) provides a glimpse into the Druid and Celtic history of using herbals in magic rituals. Her knowledge of these ancient practices enhances her outlines for utilizing plants and flowers in spiritual activities to heighten one's awareness through their mystical energies. She provides not only excellent information about individual plants, but extends this into detail descriptions for which parts of a plant are used and how to prepare them for use.

A look into the history of incense in other cultures and religions come from several sources. Liu Zhongyu (2002) and Master Sheng Yen (2005) give us examples of the use of incense within Buddhist sects. Saurabh Bhattacharya (1998) lends her knowledge to share insight into the use of incense in Hinduism. Snorri Sturluson (2006) one of the prominent authors of Norse history, gives us a look into the mythology of the Vikings and the Nordic culture.

Scott Cunningham (1998, 2000) is one of the most renowned authors of pagan metaphysics today. His herbal books provide connections between mystical energies and magical practices. Expanding on the purpose and use of various herbals to enhance healing, well being and heightened awareness during spiritual connection activities.

The Healing Power of Herbal Teas by Ceres Esplan (1984) is a guide to growing, preparing and using herbs. While this resource focuses on using herbs for teas, it provides a correspondence definition for matching plant energy to mystical purpose. This is also a wonderful resource that delves into the cultivation of growing, harvesting and proper storage your own herbs.

Claire O'Rush (1996) has created one of my favorite resources in *The Enchanted Garden*. She not only provides her perspective on the healing properties of your garden, she also includes detailed descriptions for how to pull the mystical energies into your spiritual practices. She includes various

meditation exercises that can attune an individual's energy with the energy of the selected plant.

And she does so in beautiful words that paint a colorful picture in the mind's eye.

June Bletzer (1986) has provided the metaphysical community with an in-depth encyclopedia of spiritual terms. Her efforts help to add clarity to concepts such as incense, meditation and spiritual energy as it is used in spiritual practices.

Kyle Thompson (2006) covers a historical avenue of aromatherapy from the Egyptians to modern times. Along with Dr. Joshua David Stone take us into the world of the Divine Spirit and to teach us methods for centering our thoughts and emotions with the energies of nature and the mystical energies of plants and herbs to attain growth and enlightenment.

Ed McGaa and Eagleman (1989) show us the history and nature of Mother Earth and her offerings through the eyes of an American Indian. Along with the insight of Kenneth Meadows (2002), one of my favorite authors on the Shamanic experience, we learn much about bringing the scents of aroma into your subconscious for vision quests, meditations and spiritual journeys.

Another one of my favorite resources comes from Martha White (1996) who created a resource in conjunction with the editors of the *Old Farmer's Almanac* for time-tested methods for staying well. She provides a wonderful walk through history to bring us insights into the ways of old and how we can use these methods in our lives today to be happy and healthy.

Richard Evans Schultes and Albert Hofmann (1992) provide us with the most valuable resource for plant usage. Using herbs, flowers and trees for remedies and incense do you no good if the plants chosen are dangerous to cultivate or harvest. Or if the plants are poisonous if used in herbal remedies or burnt as incense. There are few books for the laymen that describe this kind of

information in comprehensive terms. In their book *Plants of the Gods*, these gentlemen not only provide us with an insightful look at the history of plants and herbals, but they have created an invaluable resource to keep us safe as well.

III – Methods

I have been studying metaphysical practices for over 20 years. Taking classes, attending lectures and most importantly taking notes and maintain logs of my experiences. I'm thankful to be able to share the knowledge and the experiences I have gained over these many years. I have learned a great deal from teachers, other practitioners and of course my own research and practices. A good part of this essay is based on those two decades of study, from my own notes and experiences.

While I do share material from published works, you may notice that I choose to use resources that talk about herbs, flowers and trees more so than references specific to incense. There's a reason for this. Any of nature's gifts can be dried, ground into a powder and used as incense. Over the years I have collected information and learned from some very experienced herbologists. All of which encourage their students to take what they learn from using herbs as remedies and experiment with these to create other products, such as soaps and incense.

Understanding the use of plants through out history in herbal remedies for teas, salves, soaps and alike provides a greater depth of knowledge about the plant and the mystical energies it can provide to us. By doing this, we attain knowledge from a wider range of data about all the energies around us and not just the common ones we're used to seeing in stores or product lines. Everyone is aware of the use of patchouli or sage and cedar for creating smudge sticks or incense. But many over look the vast array of other plants and flowers that can also enhance our senses and health with their contributions.

In this essay I hope to bridge that gap and share a bit of what I've learned over the years, along with the vast knowledge provided by published authors.

IV – Findings

Ancient writings provide insight into how religions and cultures of old used the aroma of burning herbs, flowers, tree leaves and other natural sources in their spiritual practices. We can learn from the Hebrew and Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, Native American cultures and more about these types of ritualistic observances. All these cultures from around the world had access to various plants from which to develop a recipe for pleasing the nose and mind. They assigned mystical energies to these plants and learned over the ages which ones provided results and which ones failed. They also provided us with instructions for using aromas that were pleasing not only to the senses of the human nose, but also to the senses of the Divine forces in their lives.

In Exodus 30:34-36 of the Torah, God gives his first instructions to Moses for using and preparing incense. He says to Moses, “Take sweet spices, stace and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall be an equal part) and make an incense”.

In Luke 1:8 of the Bible (1962), we find an account of how Priests used incense in the temple of God. “Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.”

In Revelation 5:8 of the Bible, we find another description of the importance of incense and in particular its smoke. “And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

In Revelation 8:3-5 of the Bible, we find a description of how the Biblical Angels used incense. “And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to

mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth;"

Buddhists provide offerings of incense to spread its fragrance to remind practitioners to cultivate good conduct. This activity symbolizes the fragrance of pure moral conduct.

According to Liu Zhongyu (2002) of the Taoist Culture and Information Center, "The earliest known record of Daoist using incense is mentioned in the *History of Wu* in the *Annals of the Three Kingdoms*, which states that the Daoist Yu Ji taught people to burn incense and read Daoist books in the eastern reaches of the Yangtze River."

It is in the Chinese tradition of Chan Buddhism that we find the origin of the 'Incense Board'. In Chan meditation, the incense board is in the shape of a sword. Master Sheng Yen (2005) explains the shape of the board is used to symbolize the diamond wisdom cutting off ignorance and illusions. The board is lit and a prayer is said over the flames. A practitioner meditates in a seated position for a short time; they will then stand and continue their meditation while walking. In this manner, the length of the board and how long it takes to burn determines the length of the meditation.

Incense sticks are part of the 16 essential offerings during a Hindu ritual. According to Saurabh Bhattacharya (1998) each of these offerings has symbolic spiritual significance and is offered to the Divine in a particular order. In Hinduism, incense keeps the practitioner calm while performing ritual worship. The other offerings in these rituals are betel-nut, betel-leaf, cardamom, camphor, clove, cloth, diva (lamp) flower, fruit, grain, naivedyam (mixture of nine offerings), sandal paste, and water.

The ancient Greeks provided a scientific approach to the use of incense. Kylie Thompson (2006) tells us the father of medicine, Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.), is believed to be the first person to establish and set down a scientific system of medicine. In this system, the use of aromas through incense is said to play a significant role. Legend says Hippocrates freed Athens from the plague by burning aromatic plants throughout the city.

The Japanese came relatively late to the use of fragrances and incense compared to other parts of the world. But once the Nara and Kamakura Periods (710-1333 C.E.) stepped onto the bandwagon, they carried it to a fine art. According to the Japanese, incense purifies the mind and body, improves communication, acts as a companion in the midst of solitude, and brings moments of peace amidst chaos.

According to the Norse Poetic Eddas as described by Snorri Sturluson (2006), incense was used to honor the Norse Gods and to herald the coming of a Warrior into Valhalla. The Eddas contain many descriptions of a warrior being set upon a boat with his belongings, treasures and often times a maiden who would be killed as the ship was set ablaze and pushed into the sea. These tales describe great lanterns to light the way on the front of the boat and a fire of incense burning at the rear of the vessel to herald the great warriors arrival to Valhalla.

Native Americans throughout the Americas have long used smudge sticks for purification, honoring the Spirits and inducing psychic visions. Kenneth Meadows (2002) gives us a good look into the practices of Native American Shamans and how they utilize aromas to alter the consciousness and commune with the Great Spirits. A smudge stick is a bundle of dried herbs that are tied with sinew in the shape of a stick, or braided and tied together at its edges. When smudging, an individual

would hold the stick or place it in a bowl and use an eagle's feather to fan the smoke in an area or over a person for purification.

Using incense in a Sweat Lodge was one of the key practices for spiritual encounters by Native Americans. A fire would be built in a covered enclosure with stones placed over the fire to assist in raising the heat. Water is then poured over the stones creating an intense steam. Either placed in the fire or set to the side, a bowl of incense would be used to assist in altering the awareness of the individuals in the steamy enclosure. Between the heat, steam and aroma Natives would journey to the realm of the Spirits and commune with spiritual animals, warriors, and former family members who have passed on. Each vision quest or meditation would bring valuable information to the practitioner about their life, spiritual path and coming events they will have to face.

In Celtic legend, Leprechauns kept their prize possessions in large cauldrons made of brass, copper or iron. When anyone came along who might discover their store of gold or gems, the Leprechaun would throw a handful of powdered oak or pine into the cauldron releasing a great smoke and hiding his precious treasure. Other tales speaks of Leprechauns who sprinkle powdered clover over the head of a sleeping human who has earned the respect or compassion of the little people. The clover would bring the person luck in matters of their life, which were currently causing them trouble.

Incense slowly moved from the temples, restricted by Priests and Healers, to common every day uses. In the 10th century AD, an Arabian alchemist named Avicenna was discovering through experimentation the uses of plants for medicinal purposes. According to Kylie Thompson (2006), he is "credited as being the first person to discover the method of distillation, a process commonly used to extract the essential oil from aromatic plants. Essential oil of rose is thought to be the first oil ever extracted."

Incense was first brought to China around 200 AD. It slowly transitioned during the Tang dynasty (618 –607) from a spiritual or medical tool to an every day common item used by the general public. It was the Chinese who developed the first method of stick incense during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

It gained popularity in Japan to the point that an entire school system was created around its use. The school of Koh-Do or “way of incense” was established in the 1300s. Many attribute this school for inventing the cone shape of incense, which is so popular today in the west. It took another 500 years for this technology to reach the west when the cone incense was introduced at the Chicago World’s Fair in the late 1800s.

For European pagan practitioners of Witchcraft and Shamanism, incense has long been used to summon an individual's chosen deity, spirit guides or a specific type of energy needed in a spell or ritual. These practices have been kept secret since the “Burning Times” of the European Inquisitions. This secrecy was primarily used to protect practitioners from similar inquisitions on a local scale. But with the modern era of openness, many modern witches are coming out of the broom closet to share their knowledge. Bringing information from ancient family Grimoires that describe how the God, Goddess, or energy to be used within the ritual, will dictate the fragrance to be used during the ritual. Knowing this allows the Witch or Shaman to blend a variety of herbs and spices to meet their specific needs.

Each of these societies has looked upon the use of incense as a necessary part of their spiritual life and practice in honoring both their chosen Divine force. Thankfully this knowledge has been documented or shared through oral traditions and passed on to us.

Perhaps one could argue that the use of incense in the general public didn't reach its zenith until it became popular in the 1960s in the west. The explosion of spiritual evolution and the use of incense during this time have created a worldwide industry for cultivating and selling a huge variety of products available to the general public today. Many department, drug and even grocery stores now offer aromatherapy candles. Bringing the bringing the energy of the scent into one's home in an easy and effective way.

Today we can find resources outlining the proper procedures to cultivate harvest and prepare plants for burning as incense. There are just as many resources to describe which plants are to be used in specific types of rituals for spiritual purposes. Or what energy a plant may add to a meditation, an alternative healing session or just to bring goodwill and harmony into a home.

Whither from ancient knowledge or modern practices, a great number of people use this information and incense for the sake of appeasing the Divine Spirit in their culture or religion so they may attain favor or for their own personal enlightenment.

V – Discussion

The Purpose of Incense

The concepts behind all these ancient cultures and practices are found today in modern society.

And not just in the societies descended from these cultures. As the west grew, so did the influx of immigrants bringing with them their cultural and religious practices. Some of these traditions were already known and some brought new concepts that inspired old practices.

Burning plants to release their aroma can enhance meditations or devotional activities as the fragrance of the incense lingers in the air. In meditation, an individual can pull in the aroma through their senses, allowing the energy of their chosen mixture to help carry their conscious thoughts to a higher state of awareness. In doing so, the consciousness turns its control over to the subconscious or Spirit Mind and provides an opportunity for Divine connection and communication.

For this reason, incense can be a valuable tool for any spiritual practitioner. Incense is used to heighten an individual's awareness, focus their thoughts, and bring about calm or healing energies during spiritual work. They are used for giving thanks and honoring spirits. Or they can be used to assist a practitioner during meditation to achieve a particular goal.

Lavender for instance, enhances devotion and virtue. Native Americans have combined lavender and sage in a smudge stick, to clear and cleanse an area for spiritual work. Burning lavender incense promotes communication in meditation between an individual and the Great Spirits. A practitioner simply sets their meditative space, lights the incense, walks around in a circle to clear the energy and breathes deeply to pull in its aroma and vibrational energy. With each inhale, the body relaxes, the mind transitions from a conscious level to a spiritual level, and the practitioner can imagine floating on the smoke upward to a heightened level of understanding and knowing. In this

state, an individual will often have communication with spirits, spirit guides and the collective Divine Consciousness.

When used to enhance energy, incense provides assistance to direct one's energy in a specified direction to work on self healing, Divine communication and even altering one's inner perceptions about the self to create a more positive and successful life. Pagans utilize herbs in this manner to enhance a spell of manifestation. Of course incense cannot do this alone. But it can help create or enhance the desired energies.

Yellow rose petals for instance are used for bringing success to any kind of venture. Such as a court case, a new business plan, looking for a job and so on. A witch may place a yellow rose incense onto their alter and light it while chanting an incantation they wrote for a specific venture. Closing their eyes, they will imagine their incantation floating on the waves of the smoke to the spirit realm where it will be manifest.

Many agree that lighting an incense starts this process of empowering an individuals thoughts or prayers into the blended herbs. And many agree that the smoke of the incense carries the prayers or desires up and into the spirit world for manifestation. This is seen in Hebrew, Christian, Pagan and Native American practices. The smoke itself is the instrument or vehicle that carries the desire energy to the Divine Spirit.

Whether walking clockwise in an area to clear and cleanse the energy for spiritual work, or using a feather to fan the smoke over a body or object, the smoke is an important component. But the fragrance also has an important role to play. If it didn't, than any mixture of herbs, flowers or trees would do the trick. But the focus on fragrance from the past shows us the first working knowledge

of aromatherapy for bringing about change. For thousands of years and into modern times, what we smell affects our views, perceptions and energies.

In his book “Incense, Oils and Brews”, Scott Cunningham (1998) describes how ancient people looked beyond the physical world of science and saw into the mystical connections of nature. Including the connection between humans and plants, their fragrances and medicinal uses. Learning about which incense can enhance or support certain energies is a key step to using incense for rituals and spiritual activities.

Choosing The Right Incense

For centuries there have been mystical properties associated with various herbs, trees and flowers. Apples for instance have long been associated with knowledge and wisdom. Used for love, healing, immortality and garden magic rituals. Knowing which herb or plant to use is an exercise in using the right energy with the right purpose.

Correspondence lists have been published in magazines, books and newspapers for centuries. The Old Farmer’s Almanac has often published a listing of herbs, flowers and their mystical meanings. Even the recent publication for the 2008 Almanac contains a listing of the Symbolic Meanings of Herbs, Trees and Flowers. Some of the oldest correspondence listings can be found in Benjamin Franklin’s “Poor Richards Almanac”, published from 1732 to 1758.

Of course there isn’t one set in stone correspondence listing. But a good search of resources and historical publications can give an individual a good listing and cross reference of mystical properties. I have placed an example listing in Appendix A of this essay to share my own research. People should read many resources and select those that seem to resonate with their own

experiences and perceptions. During the course of this research, you're liable to find some wonderfully entertaining stories as well.

Claire O'Rush (1996) tells us about the right use of energy for Apples as an example. In northern myths, the goddess Freya, dispensed golden apples to the gods so that they might partake of her calm, reflective wisdom and understanding. The Bible certainly shares its view of the apple as a fruit of knowledge when Eve ate the apple and shared the knowledge with Adam. The Druids believed the apple tree was the custodian of all knowledge.

Stories from Celtic Shamanism explain that burning apple incense in a temple helps bring the knowledge of the Gods to the practitioners within the temple. In this way the divine knowledge is shared with the Shaman who can in turn share it with his clan to better the lives and spirit of the entire community.

The right use of energy is one of the most important steps in choosing a scent for complementing a ritual or meditation. The first step is to define what the activity is going to be. If an individual is preparing a meditation to heighten their psychic abilities, then there maybe a combination of scents that should be used. These can be combined into one item, or selected and burned individually. Sage and Cedar combined in a smudge stick would be an excellent selection for this type of meditation. The Cedar clears the meditative space and sets protection in the area. The sage can enhance divine wisdom that aids in the use of developing one's psychic abilities. An alternative selection can be lemon grass or purple rose pedal incense. Both aid in the development of psychic abilities and can enhance any meditation activity designed for this purpose.

Using An Incense

There are many ways to incorporate incense into an individual's practice. Again the first step is deciding what the activity is going to be and how incense can be incorporated to help create a good positive flow of energy.

Clearing and cleansing a space can be done by holding the chosen incense in the center of the space. Lighting it and citing a prayer structured to set the intent of the activity. If the space is small, an individual can simply turn slowly in a clockwise direction, moving the incense up and down through the space. Then placing what's left in a proper incense holder to complete burning.

If the space is large, an individual can begin in the same manner lighting the incense and citing a prayer. Then walk the incense around the area, by spiraling out from the center to the edge of the space.

Individuals, who like to follow a Native American practice, might use a feather fan to wave the smoke around an area while moving in a clockwise direction. They may use the same practice to clear a person from negative energy, using the feather to fan smoke onto, over and around the person to ensure the smoke from the incense touches their entire physical body.

For a meditation, an individual might select the desired incense and light it on an altar or table near their meditative space. As they begin their meditation, they breathe in the scent of the smoke and allow its aroma to enhance the intent of their meditation.

How incense is incorporated into an individual's practice often all depends on how elaborate or simple a person wants to be. Incense is a tool to help an individual focus their thoughts on the purpose of their activity. The incense alone cannot make someone psychic, or set a protective

shield around a spiritual space. But it can help to enhance the energy established by the practitioner and assist in achieving the desired goal.

Creating Your Own Incense

For my efforts, I prefer knowing where my tools came from and how they were handled. Of course this doesn't mean that purchased tools are bad, or can't be used. There are many items that cannot be cultivated in all areas and the only way to acquire them is through commercial means. To me growing and preparing your own items for creating tools, such as incense, is a practice of respect for the natural world around us. The process is also a method to practice my beliefs in something similar to a moving meditation, which allows me to empower the mixture as its combined and formed. Here we will briefly cover the ways to collect, store and create incense for spiritual work.

I believe creating energy for a ritual, meditation or service starts with the tools an individual selects to use. If you believe that energy is inherent in all things, then how a thing is created or manufactured starts the process of embedding energy into an object or tool. Using tools made from nature is a good place to start. Which suggests staying away from chemically manufactured tools such as plastics and various metal alloys. For this reason I suggest practitioners use a mortar and pestle made of marble. They are durable, hold up against hard seeds or woods that damage a wooden mortar and pestle. And there are many lovely marble sets available at local kitchen stores.

There are various rules of thumb for harvesting materials to create incense. Ellen Evert Hopman (1995) provides an excellent guideline in her book "A Druid's Herbal". Such as picking tree leaves before midsummer to avoid the high concentration of natures own insecticide in the trees. Picking leaves and flower petals on a dry day. For flowers the petals should be taken just as the bloom begins to open. Small amounts of roots are gathered in the early spring when they can do little

damage to a plant that has started to show signs of coming out of it's winter sleep. Or in late fall, just as the plant is about to enter it's sleep for the cold snowy months. And tree bark is harvested in small amounts during the summer and late fall, so as not to cause infestation and disease to the tree. The medicinal component of the bark is held in the soft cambium layer between the sap and the dead hard outer shell. My Cherokee teachers always taught me that herbs, such as sage, must be gathered in late afternoon when they have dried under the Sun from the evening mist or morning dew.

Everyone seems to agree that drying one's harvest of herbs and plants is the second key step. To ensure bacteria does not develop on your stash, they should be laid out on a cotton cloth, old newspaper, an old window screen that has been laid flat and raised on boards, or a crossed wooden lattice that will allow air to pass through the plants and leaves. And of course this area should be kept in a dry place, lightly shaded place. Each plant has its own length of drying time. Flower petals and leaves do not require as long periods of drying, as cambium will require as an example. Once an item has been dried, it can be used in the creation of an incense, smudge stick or various types of sachets.

Choosing the mixtures to use is up to the individual. What smells great to one person may not be appealing to someone else. Knowing which plants hold what mystical properties is a good place to start as well. Consider what type of energy needs to be created and select plants to support that energy. Smell each one in it's raw form to ensure it will compliment any other plants chosen to use in the mixture.

Once the ingredients have been selected, they can be twisted into a smudge stick, crushed by hand for a sachet or ground into a fine powder for combustible or non-combustible incense. Some people believe that simply crushing a leaf and gluing it to a stick with resin will create burning

incense. That's not the case. Scott Cunningham (1998) has one of the best descriptions about combustible or non-combustible incense in *The Complete Book Of Incense, Oils and Brews*.

Reciting a chant over the combination of herbs being mixed is a common theme from the past and present. The chant is both a thanks to the Divine for providing these gifts and a method to empower the ingredients for the purpose they are to be used for.

There are many types of sticks to use as a base for an incense stick. But the most common base is a sliver of bamboo. I suggest to my students to drive around their neighborhood and find someone who has bamboo growing in the yard. You're bound to find it. Knock on the door and ask your neighbor if you can take a stake or two that have fallen on the ground. These must be dried just like the other components of incense. But once dried they can be easily cut into small thin sticks.

Additionally there are many resins that can be used to glue the incense powder to the bamboo sticks. Mucilage or gum tragacanth glue are the common basic ingredients of all molded incense. But other natural resins can be used. The stick is coated with the resin, and then rolled into the chosen powder mix.

Or you can mix the resin and powder together and fashion it into a small mold to create a solid incense piece. In either case, the newly molded incense is set aside and allowed to dry for at least 24 hours before use.

VI – Summary and Conclusions

Whither you follow Metaphysics, Christianity, Paganism, Buddhism or some other path, we all seem to incorporate the use of herbs, trees and flowers into our practices. Utilizing the energy of the aroma to honor our Divine Spirits, invoke protection, or as a means to clear an area from bad feelings, emotions or spirits.

From the Christian Bible, The Torah, The Norse Eddas, Celtic Legends, and Oral traditions of the American Indian, we find the first articles of evidence concerning the value and spiritual influence that incense has played in spiritual life and practice. It's not just the exercise in lighting the incense, or the smoke that carries your prayers to the Divine Spirit. But it's also the first sign of how aromatherapy has been utilized in all religions for centuries.

It's not just the spiritualists who are looking to incorporate aromas into their temples, ritual space, or spiritual activities. Today the use of aromatherapy can be found in candles, oil air filters air fresheners designed to enhance the home.

Whither it's used to clear an area for ritual work, to honor the Divine Spirit, or to enhance an individual's focus during spiritual meditation, or just to 'redecorate' a room, the aroma of the incense has long been the prized result. Producing an altered conscious and subconscious energy that can impact a practitioner in meditation, or the average visitor to a new home.

Through this examination we have discovered that the world's religions really do share commonalities. And incense is just one of those items and practices we share. Perhaps we are a lot more alike than we are different. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could focus on our similarities instead of fighting over our differences?

A – Appendix

The following is a correspondence listing that I have developed over the years. It is a culmination of similar tables from Buddhists, Native Americans, Celtic Pagans and my own personal experiences.

Incense	Usage
African Violet	Enhances spirituality and protection. Used to create attraction and harmony in love and friendship.
Almond	Used for prosperity and wisdom.
Aloes wood	Used for luck, love and to strengthen other incenses. It is considered to be one of the most precious and rare incense on earth. From the time of antiquity it has been so prized and difficult to find, that it was often traded on an equal level of gold.
Amber Powder	Considered to be an emotion balancer. Used for healing and meditation. It's intoxicating aroma blends well with everything. Because of it's divine fragrance, it has been considered as a sacred temple powder often referred to as "Nectar of the Gods" or "Ambrosia".
Anise, Star	Used for psychic pendulums and good luck charms. It is used to drive away negativity and to bring good luck. Long used as a sacred Japanese temple incense for cleansing and attracting good luck.
Apple	Enhances knowledge and wisdom. Used for love, healing, immortality and garden magik rituals.
Balsam Fir Needles	Enhances breath work or breathing in life. Used for respiratory work and for grounding.
Bamboo	Enhances Divination and protection. Used for luck, protection and hex-breaking rituals. Bamboo is the stick used to hold the herbs and resins in most stick incense. It has magikal uses of it's own and was used for divination in Chinese Temples.
Banana	Enhances prosperity. Used for fertility, potency and prosperity rituals.
Benzoin Gum Resin	Used for purification and prosperity. Often used as a base for incense blends. An antiseptic used to cleanse the lungs and strengthen the mind. Promotes knowledge, peace, and psychic protection. Considered to be a fine "clearing" resin.
Cedar	Used for purifying, protection and to banish bad dreams. Used by Native Americans in sweat lodges to release heavy emotional energies. Often included with Sage in smudge sticks for clearing and cleansing an area.
Champa	Used for clearing and protection. Used for meditation and for creating your sacred space. It is known to bring an individuals energies into harmonious balance.
Cherry	Enhances divination and attraction. It has long been used to stimulate or attract intament love.
Cinnamon Powder	Enhances spiritual consciousness and protective energies. Cinnamon has long been used for healing and money rituals. As well as, a stimulant and aphrodisiac. It was used as a Holy anointing oil by ancient Hebrews.
Coconut	Long been used for protection rituals, especially in chastity spells.
Coal. Black	Enhances eneraies of the heart. Used for healing the heart. either physical or

Resin	emotional illnesses. It has long been used as an incense during "Day of the Dead" Celebrations.
Copal, White Resin	Enhances energies of the heart. Used primarily for emotional matters of the heart, for love and purification. It is the cleanest and purest of the Copals. Is has long been considered to be a sacred "Food of the Gods".
Clove Powder	Enhances banishing rituals. Used to drive away hostile, negative forces. It is also used to attract positive spiritual energies and to purify a negative area.
Desert Sage	Enhances protection and purification to bring about wisdom and health. Traditionally used to drive out bad spirits, feelings and influences. An important Native American Plant.
Dragon's Blood Resin	Red Resin from a palm tree. It enhances rituals involving love, protection and exorcism. Used for consecration, protection, and good luck. It is also thought to increase the potency of other resins.
Eucalyptus Leaf	Enhances good health and protection. Used for healing and sickness rituals.
Frankincense Resin	Used for purification, spiritual growth, knowledge and meditation. Long used by the Catholic church to release powerful positive energies and to drive away evil and negativity.
Frankincense & Myrrh Resin	Enhances spirituality, healing, protection and exorcism. Used for purification, spiritual growth, knowledge and meditation. Two most popular blessed resins of the kings.
Gardenia	Enhances Moon energies, it is a must for Esbat rituals. Often used for love spells and to attract good, peaceful spirits during rituals.
Geranium Leaf, Nutmeg	Enhances prosperity and fertility. Used for luck, prosperity, fidelity, love and fertility
Geranium Leaf, Orange	Citrus Geranium is burned for luck, love, fidelity, money and weddings.
Geranium Leaf, Rose	A beautiful rose fragrance that is used for in love & healing sachets. It promotes calm and relieves stress.
Ginger Root	Used to promote psychic growth and success.
Gum Arabic Powder	Used for psychic purification and protection. It's a sweet, light vanilla scent which has often been used for making scents and adhesives.
Honeysuckle	Enhances psychic protection for clairvoyance. Used for clairvoyant growth and focus. It's honey sweet smell was used in Victorian times to promote mental and emotional attraction. It was often used in a small sachet worn around a woman's wrist.
Hyacinth	Enhances love, protection and happiness. Guards against nightmares.
Jasmine Flowers	Enhances relaxation and dreams. Used to create prophetic dreams if burned in the bedroom or in a sachet pillow.
Juniper Berry Powder	Enhances healing and healing rituals. Used to guard against evil forces and energies, hexes and sickness. It has long been used throughout Europe in rooms of the sick.
Juniper Leaf	Enhances healing and healing rituals. Used to guard against evil forces and hexes. It has long been used throughout Europe in rooms of the dying.
Lavender Flowers	Enhances healing rituals for love and compassion. Used for bringing compassion to intimate relationships and to protect relationships.

Lavender	Enhances spiritual communication. Used by Native Americans with Sage in a smudge stick, to clear and cleanse an area for spiritual work. Promotes communication in meditation between an individual and the Great Spirits.
Lemon Balm	Used for compassion and gentleness.
Lemon grass	Enhances psychic awareness. Used for psychic meditations.
Lilac	Enhances protection. Used to bring peace and harmony into an area. Lilac has long been planted over garden gates to ensure peace and harmony is maintained within the gates.
Lotus	Enhances good fortune and love while promoting long life. Used for protection and as a sacred offering to the Gods. The Lotus has been long revered in the East as a mystical symbol of life, spirituality and the center of the universe.
Magnolia	Enhances relationship commitment. Used for fidelity and love. Magnolia trees have long been planted around a house in the south to promote love of the family and home.
Musk	Enhances self-confidence, determination and a strong will to succeed. Used for sexual attraction and to promote sensuality. Musk has long been used in mens colognes to promote attraction.
Myrrh Resin	Enhances meditation and contemplation. Used to release and banish negativity, to promote spiritual enlightenment and progression. It was often used in the temple of Isis.
Nag Champa Powder	Enhances energies into harmonious balance. Used to clear and cleanse an area for ritual work. Especially good for setting space for meditation, group rituals or gatherings.
Osha Root	Used to treat respiratory and rheumatic complaints. Long used by Native American healers for it's powerful healing abilities. Incredible butterscotch and celery scent promotes health.
Orange Peel	Enhances weddings and unions. Used for luck, love and money.
Orange Blossom (Neroli)	Enhances attraction and sexual magnetism. Used to attract love and romance.
Patchouli Powder	Enhances prosperity. Used for fertility (love) or prosperity (all areas of prosperity such as personal relationships, careers, finances etc.).
Peppermint Leaf	Used for growth and renewal.
Pineapple	Used for luck and chastity. Pineapples have long symbolized success in the south and were used to bring luck and money to the home and family. Or when used as a head piece on a bed, to symbolize luck and fertility, as well as chastity.
Pine Needles and Cones	Used for healing, money, exorcism and protection rituals. Often placed in the home during the winter to promote protection and health through the cold season.
Rose Petals	Yellow rose petals are used for bringing success to any kind of venture. Such as a court case, a new business plan, looking for a job and so on. Red rose petals are used for matters of love and protection. Pink rose petals are used for matters of protection and compassion. White rose petals are used for protection and any general spiritual matter. Such as

	communicating with spirit, working on raising energies for meditation or bringing a greater sense of Divinity into your spirit. Purple rose petals are used for matters of divination. Such as working to identify your psychic ability, developing your talent and learning the wisdom of divination.
Rosemary Leaf	Enhances cleansing and purifying energies. Used for love, healing and mental rituals. Stimulates memory and clarification. Use of Rosemary has been documented to ancient Egyptian times.
Saffron	Used for happiness and healing sadness.
Sandal Wood Powder	Used for spiritual awareness, meditation and psychic development. It has long been used as a base to hold incense sticks to help add it's energies to the incense being burned.
Strawberry	Enhances tenderness, friendship and love. Strawberries have long been associated with love and celebrations as a food. Such as chocolate covered strawberries used as an aphrodisiac, or strawberries and champaign as a symbol in the celebration love.
Sweet grass	Used to purify spaces and to attract positive influences.
Tea, Green	Used for healing to promote health and physical strength.
Vanilla	Enhances prosperity and dedication. Used to promote dedication of home and hearth, and to bring about prosperity in all areas of one's life, of the family unit and of home. Every home seems much happier and cozy when some type of food is baking with vanilla in it. Such as cookies or cakes.
Verbena, Lemon	Used carried for protection of love. In the Victorian era, women would often stuff a small sachet of lemon verbena and slip it into the coat pocket of their husband or intended.
White Sage Leaf (California)	Used to purify and protect objects, places and people. Sage has long been sacred to Native Americans and were incorporated in most smudge sticks.

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THESIS EVALUATION REPORT

Name: Vickie L. Carey

Date: June 2, 2008

Degree: M.Msc.

Title: THE HISTORY AND BASICS OF METAPHYSICS

Comments on the Introduction: An important part of an introduction to a thesis is to present the author's basic concepts. With this knowledge, readers can best evaluate results. You have done this effectively with these words: "Unfortunately not many of today's metaphysical resources touch on the history behind herbs and spices in incenses, or a historical look at how their aroma was used for healing or in devotional practices. But when we can find this information if we delve into the world of herbal and natural plant remedies."

Comments on Review of Literature: You present a valuable list for your chosen subject. Among your reviews is the following that is certainly of historical interest: "A historical look at incense would not be complete without reference of spiritual literature. The Cokesbury (1962) *Holy Bible* is one example of this. Translated from the original tongues set forth in 1611 A.D. and revised in 1881-1885 A.D., its translation was reviewed and revised to create this edition of Christian Scripture. Here we find insight into the historical use of aromas by the Hebrews and early Christians."

Comments on Methods and Findings: Among your findings you present many practical thoughts and solutions, but it is the fundamentals that you express that are the most important. The following is most interesting as it relates to meditation: "It is in the Chinese tradition of Chan Buddhism that we find the origin of the 'Incense Board'. In Chan meditation, the incense board is in the shape of a sword. Master Sheng Yen (2005) explains the shape of the board is used to symbolize the diamond wisdom cutting off ignorance and illusions. The board is lit and a prayer is said over the flames. A practitioner meditates in a seated position for a short time; they will then stand and continue their meditation while walking. In this manner, the length of the board and how long it takes to burn determines the length of the meditation."

Comments on Discussion: Again a notable fundamental: "Burning plants to release their aroma can enhance meditations or devotional activities as the fragrance of the incense lingers in the air. In meditation, an individual can pull in the aroma through their senses, allowing the energy of their chosen mixture to help carry their conscious thoughts to a higher state of awareness. In doing so, the consciousness turns its control over to the subconscious or Spirit Mind and provides an opportunity for Divine connection and communication."

Comments on Summary and Conclusions: You present a critical analysis and have an excellent finale: "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could focus on our similarities instead of fighting over our differences?" Yes indeed!

Overall Comments: Congratulations on a fine thesis submission. You have presented a worthy study and offered much insight into your subject matter. Good luck in your future endeavors.