

Excerpt from "Sage & Smudge: The Ultimate Guide"

The White Sage Wand she is holding is about eight inches long and almost two inches around at its thickest point. The wand is tightly wrapped at the base with brightly colored thread. The thread has been wound in a pattern that continues up and around the Sage twigs and leaves, the entire length of the wand. It has helped to bind the Sage leaves firmly in place as they dried.

She holds that brightly bound base of her wand now firmly in her left hand as she lights the top of it with her lighter and watches the flames burn hungrily for a few moments as they ignite the dried White Sage. Then the flames recede to an even glow, as the Sage wand and she become ready to do the clearing work. Smoke rises from the wand into the air with every move she makes - dancing with the movement of the air in the doorway where she is standing.

Placing the lighter in the pocket of her vest, she picks up a small ceramic bowl. She will use it to catch any ash that might fall from the wand during the process of her clearing ceremony. She glances quickly around to check that the matching ceramic pot with sand in it is placed outside the entrance-way to the room she is about to clear. And then she turns her attention to the process of clearing her personal space.

As you read this introduction to a Sage and Smudge ritual, you have an image of a woman who is about to take charge of the energy in her environment, to clear it from any negativity, and to call in supportive and helpful spirits (angels or other spiritual essences or representations she believes in) to clear, protect and heal her personal space. In a way, you are "watching" someone involved in "active prayer". This is the most common way individuals use the process of their personal Sage and Smudge Rituals - to talk to their God, the Essence of Good they believe in, and ask for support and protection in the course of their daily lives.

The use of herbs for healing and to enhance well-being was a common practice in the past, and still is part of the lives of many people in every culture today. Burning herbs for their pleasant aroma is a very ancient practice. Down through the ages man and women have sought to call the attention of their gods to an offering or a prayer they make. The image of smoke rising towards the heavens is symbolic of their prayers rising to the ears of their gods.

In ancient Babylon, in the temples of Egypt, in the various Mediterranean religious centers, in Ancient Greek and Roman religious ceremonies, in the days of Abraham and the prophets of the Bible and the wandering tribes of Israel,

among the Celts and the Ancient Britons and the Vikings, people burned offerings to their gods. All believed that the smoke rising into the heavens called these gods' attention to the prayers of their believers. In other parts of the world, China, North and South America, Africa, India-each culture had its rituals and ceremonies, and each of them believed in the power of sacred smoke to lift their prayers into the heavens.

Our own culture has its roots in these ancient customs and the beliefs that were carried from one part of our world to another by the powerful nations and religions of the past. Each time a nation met another nation, whether for purposes of battle or trade, they came into contact with each other's beliefs. Prayers, blessings and offerings were observed; customs and practices of the different societies and individuals were tested by each. Any parts that fit with what either society believed were incorporated into their own practices, eventually becoming part of their ceremonies and rituals.

In our times, the use of burning incense, or smoke rising from the altar in some form, is still part of all of the major religions' practices. Many other less mainstream spiritual groups have incorporated the use of herbs in various ways into their practices, their rituals and ceremonies. Even those who do not follow a particular form of religious observance enjoy the customs of the culture they live in, the herbs and the scent of the "perfumes" of our earth. Many "pray" in their own way, or wish, or hope or believe that some form of positive thinking can help create the future they envision.

Use this book like you would any guidebook, to create your own sacred smoke rituals. You will find tips on how to select Sage and Smudge herbs and a variety of sacred smoke "tools" commonly used in personal ceremonies and rituals. Use all of this information to enhance your spiritual and metaphysical connection to your Universe, to the Power you believe in.

Find out how to cleanse negative energy and clear your personal space. Heal your relationship to the world you live in and share with those you love. Use any of the ceremonies described in this book to enhance your own focus on the issues in your life, on your "prayers", your vision, your hopes and your wishes. Empower yourself by creating your own rituals and ceremonies as you become more familiar with the benefit of personal Sage and Smudge rituals for clearing and healing your personal space.

Remember that all ritual and ceremony helps us examine our beliefs, to explore the possibilities of our journey on earth and the fears that stop us from becoming all we can be. They help us visualize the lives we want to live, and to understand our connection to the Whole. The very process of carrying out a ritual or participating in a ceremony is your response to an invitation to visit the place of spirit, of vision, of the creative force within - to share a moment with the Creator.