

Introduction



The use of herbs for Magick and medicine has fascinated people for millennia—and for good reason. Herbs have been used effectively in Magick and religious ceremony for tens of thousands of years. The Healing Arts and the Magickal Arts developed together as our ancestors sought ways to control and sustain their survival in the days well before a pharmacy was located on every corner. Indeed, what our forebears discovered and experimented with was the fact that a pharmacopeia existed in every meadow, forest, and river bend—if you knew what to look for and what to do with the herbs once you found them.

As the compiled knowledge of our ancestors evolved, they developed complex, integrated systems of information in order to understand and affect the world around them. Based on their keen observations of the natural world's flows of energy, the movement of the stars and Planets, the cycles of the Earth's seasons, and the Waxing and Waning Phases of the Moon, the ancients could begin to predict the course of the weather and what its effects would be on their lives, as well as the paths that the herds would follow and therefore when to go on the hunt. They could foretell where the herbs that healed would grow and when they would be ready to harvest.

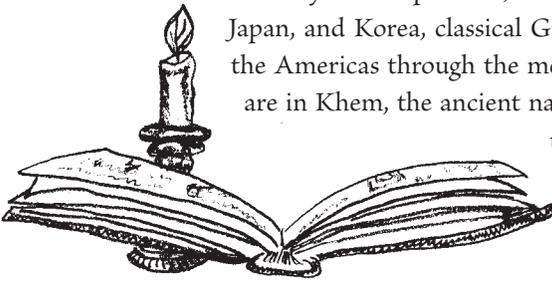
The components of herbs (roots, leaves, flowers, resins, and essential oils) were certainly used for their physical healing properties in the creation

of salves, poultices, tinctures, fomentations, and much more, but they were also extensively used Magickally in conjunction with their medicinal properties. Our ancestors knew that the value of the herb was not just in the physical ailments it could alleviate or heal, but also in the energy, the *spirit* of the plant. This energy/spirit could be harnessed to heal an individual or influence events and so could be used for Magickal purposes as well. This wisdom and understanding of the cycles of the natural world combined with knowledge of the effects of herbs, Magickal and medicinal, forms the foundation of Herbal Alchemy and Herbal Magick.

Alchemy (*al-kimia* in Arabic; or *al-khimia* in Hebrew) is a philosophy and practice that has as its goal the attainment of ultimate wisdom and connection with the Divine. Alchemy became known in the 16th century as the *spagyric* art with the Latin motto *solve et coagula*, meaning “to separate and to rejoin,” as one of its practices is the infusing of natural materials such as herbs or metals with spiritual and/or Magickal intention and then using the result to transform one’s life. Steeped in mysticism and mystery, Alchemy is also an ancient path of spiritual purification and the transformation of the spirit: the expansion of consciousness and the development of insight and intuition with the goal of uniting the Alchemist with her True Self and higher consciousness. Alchemy is the investigation of and joining with nature via a philosophical and spiritual discipline, combining elements of chemistry, metallurgy, Astrology, medicine, mysticism, and art—all components that when combined create a greater whole.

Alchemy is a science and philosophy that focuses on the innate character of the four Elements—Fire, Water, Earth, and Air—in conjunction with the energies of the Planetary bodies and the Planetary correspondences of organic materials abundant in nature such as metals, herbs, and stones.

Although it has been practiced worldwide—we find treatises on Alchemy in Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt and Persia, India, China, Japan, and Korea, classical Greece and Rome, and Europe and the Americas through the modern day—the roots of Alchemy are in Khem, the ancient name for Egypt (from which we get the Arabic word *al-kimia*), and in Taoist Chinese practice of creating medicines from combinations of herbs, stones, and



metals along with energy (*chi*) practices. Taoist Alchemy focuses mainly on the purification of one's spirit and body in the hopes of gaining immortality through the practice of Qigong and/or consumption and use of various concoctions—alchemical medicines or Elixirs, each of which serves different focused purposes.

In this book, we explore Herbal Alchemy as practiced in the West, through the uses of the plants and their Planetary signatures as developed by the 14th-century philosopher and Alchemist Paracelsus. Paracelsus said, "As Nature is extremely subtle and penetrating in her manifestations, she cannot be used without the Art."

A fascinating figure, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim was a philosopher, physician, Astrologer, mathematician, Alchemist, and more. This eminent gentleman took the title Paracelsus, meaning "equal to or greater than Celsus," who was an earlier botanist and a 1st-century Roman encyclopedist. Aulus Cornelius Celsus was famous for his writings on medicine and compilations of notes on plant life and its medicinal uses. Inspired by Celsus's work, Paracelsus traveled extensively in the Old World visiting the healers of villages, talking with the wise men and wise women in hundreds of hamlets about their uses of local herbs, their observations of the herbs' effects, and the best growing conditions for those herbs as well as their best gathering times. As he traveled, he kept a diary of what he was learning and gathered it into a large body of work. Up to this point, the lore, use, and history of each plant had been given to an apprentice only orally. Through the use of writing and the printing press, this information would make its way into the wider world.

Paracelsus's work with herbs utilized his experience as an Astrologer, aligning each known herb with the energy of a Planet. As an Astrologer, he organized his Doctrine using the system of the Planetary energies to designate the effects and disposition of each herb. The Doctrine of Signatures recorded each plant and its medicinal and Magickal uses. The way that Paracelsus used the term *signature* was to signify and organize each herb according to its specific appearance, geographical location, and the physical effects of the herb on the human system. The Doctrine of Signatures organized each herb in terms of its unique properties: what type of climate in which it grew, what time of day it bloomed, the form and color of its flowers and leaves, what type of physical ailments it addressed, what

type of Magickal uses for which it was customarily employed, whether it had a heating or cooling effect on the body, whether it was bitter or sweet tasting, sweet smelling or acrid, and more. For example, he placed herbs that affected the heart; were primarily golden in color; thrived in sunny areas; and promoted a sense of well-being, success, and confidence in an individual under the dominion or rulership of the Sun.

Paracelsus was also revolutionary in his work with plant life, as he combined spiritual alchemical practices with the herb's use in addition to traditional basic medicinal herbal concoctions. In subsequent centuries, Paracelsus's Doctrine was expanded and built upon by medieval herbalists like Nicholas Culpeper and John Gerard, and his Doctrine of Signatures continues to be the cornerstone of Western Magickal herbal practice today.

The aim of this book is to give you the knowledge and tools for your own personal transformation using readily available tools and herbal ingredients. Partnered with each chapter on Planetary/herbal energies you will find tried and effective rituals, meditations, and workings that highlight the use of Magickal herbs designed to improve your life in all its myriad aspects. Each working has been used in a real-life situation, and each one has manifested its purpose. These rituals and meditations include practical and Magickal techniques to solve and improve both physical-world issues and workings devoted to understanding and actualizing your spiritual goals.

A famous Hermetic axiom states, "As above, so below." Your spiritual life is reflected in your physical life, and your physical life mirrors your spiritual condition. If the problems you face in your mundane existence can be resolved and transmuted in ways that will change your challenges into opportunities, you will have much more time and energy to devote to your true work—your spiritual transformation.

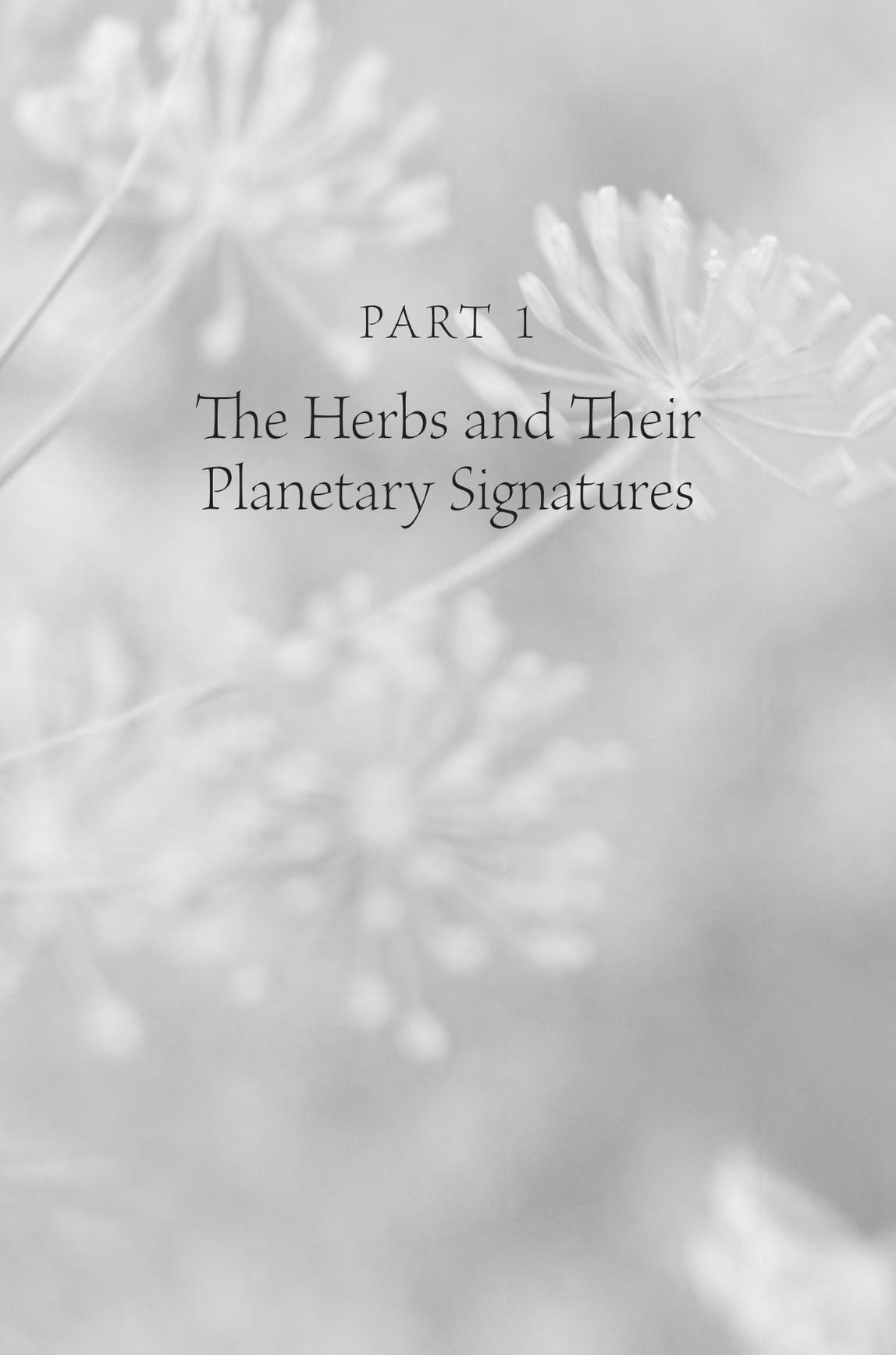
The Herbal Alchemist's Handbook is eminently practical. The use of it will teach you the energies and Magickal properties for each herb and how to use each singly or in combination. In most herbal Magickal applications, combinations of Planetary/herbal energies are utilized. In part 1 of this book, we explore each Planet and consider very specific applications for each Planetary energy and its corresponding herbs. In each chapter, we

apply the Planet's energy in a ritual, energy working, or meditation as an example of its practical use.

Part 2 explains in detail how to compose your blend or formula in any form you deem the most efficacious for it, such as Incense, Fluid Condenser, or blended essential oil. Part 3 discusses creating custom formulas based on Numerology and Astrology. Also included are appendixes of herbal materials, Planetary energies, and suggested formulas making use of their natural affinities.

The blending of Incense, ceremonial oils, Bath Salts, Herbal Amulets, Fluid Condensers, and Herbal Philtres, along with a multitude of recipes, are here at your fingertips. I hope you will enjoy the recipes and find them useful, but my main goal is to show you how to create your own Alchemical combinations using natural substances so that you claim this work and make it your own.

This book is a culmination of the decades of medicinal and Magickal experience I have with herbs. I was raised in a family that was considered strange at the time, which I have realized over the years was quite fortunate for me, as I am certainly their product . . . they prayed to the Moon, talked to trees, communed with spirits, called to the lightning, and used natural things like herbs, rocks, and bird feathers to contain power and make Magickal changes in their lives. Just as I live today.

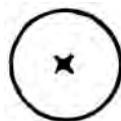


PART 1

The Herbs and Their
Planetary Signatures

The Herbs of the Sun

Personal Power, Health, and Success



Energies: self-confidence, success, vitality, courage, authority, dignity, fame, self-knowledge

Colors: gold, orange

Number: 1

Metal: gold

Stones/materials: diamond, citrine, yellow jasper, topaz

Deities: Ra, Apollo, Helios, Lugh, Isis, Diana, Brigit

Herbs: angelica, ash, bay, calendula, chamomile, celandine, eyebright, frankincense, juniper, mistletoe, rosemary, saffron, safflower, Saint-John's-wort, sunflower, tormentilla, walnuts

In Astrology, the Sun and Moon are called “Planets” for ease of interpretation, but they are obviously not Planets in the scientific sense. In medicinal terms, the Sun could be considered the great restorative. Even as the returning Sun allows plant life to flourish on the Earth, the herbs attributed to the Sun act to restore health and vitality. They stimulate and balance the human health system that suffers from either excess or deficiency. Many of the plants attributed to the Sun may be considered Solar simply on the basis of their appearance, of course. For example, chamomile, celandine, Saint-John's-wort, and calendula all produce bright yellow flowers, many of which blossom around the summer solstice. The sunflower follows the path of the Sun during the day, facing the East as the Sun rises and bending its head to the West as the Sun sets. Saffron produces a dye that may be considered Solar because of its bright yellow-gold appearance.

It is in healing, however, that the Solar herbs really “shine” in their diverse healing efficacy. Solar herbs restore equilibrium to the entire physical system, often serving as tonics to the heart and promoting the free flow of vital energy. The heart is commonly considered the Solar center of the body (the organ ruled by Leo, the Astrological Sign associated with the Sun), and many effects of Solar herbs center around this organ. Angelica relieves circulatory conditions, such as gout, when used as a compress. It works well to alleviate fever, inflammations, and headache (all conceivable symptoms of excess heat or high blood pressure). Saint-John’s-wort relieves headaches, and chamomile and celandine reduce fever. The restorative Solar heat of chamomile, celandine, juniper, and Saint-John’s-wort relieves swellings, inflammations, and rheumatic conditions; eyebright and Saint-John’s-wort alleviate symptoms due to colds, such as rheumatic joints and congested lungs. Angelica and Saint-John’s-wort also have restorative properties that recommend them for use in cases of weakness and anemia. In addition, Saint-John’s-wort is known to balance the effects of mental depression, leading to more confidence and the ability to take action toward personal and professional goals and responsibilities.

Another herb of the Sun, mistletoe is a parasite/symbiote to the oak, a tree attributed in a wide variety of cultures to Solar Deities. Mistletoe produces a drastic and often fatal effect on the heart and circulatory system. The berries are never used, but the leaves and twigs can be made in a weak Infusion to reduce bleeding by lowering blood pressure, and the leaves can be used to reduce uterine bleeding after parturition. As one of the few spots of green in the forest in the dead of winter, the mistletoe is often viewed as a symbol of the Sun and returning life.

Because the Sun is seen in Astrology and Magick as the Planet of the ego or personality, the Magickal/energy effects of Solar herbs are to promote self-confidence and personal success. The energies of Sun herbs are represented and expressed by people in the public eye: rulers and authority figures, as well as people in successful, self-expressive endeavors that bring them pleasure. Sun herbs impart a sense of purpose and a strong will. Just as the Sun Sign in one’s Natal (birth) Astrological Chart indicates the ways that a person presents himself to the world and tends to apply his energies, Sun herbs help to draw power toward self-expression and personal success in whatever endeavor toward which a person is directed. Utilized in Solar

Incenses, oil blends, Philtres, and other herbal formulas used in ritual, Sun herbs give vitality, health, creativity, dignity, success, and authority.

When used in ritual and Magick, Solar herbs help us to define and understand our true purpose and Will in any specific endeavor. They inform our thought processes and how we wish to harness our motivation and energy toward the success of any given goal. Sun herbs strengthen our self-expression (the expression of our True Will), impart the confidence to embark on actualizing our goals, and give us the power to manifest our visions into the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual realm toward which we are aiming this energy. With the self-expression of our Astrological Sun Sign, we each have our own gauge of what success means to us. The various areas of interest and aspiration a person has at a given time, how success will express itself in the final outcome of the manifestation of a goal, and what life is presenting to an individual at the diverse stages of her life will all have a bearing on the ways that a person defines success at that particular juncture. We all have personal definitions of success that can never be defined solely by the outside world.

Because of their extensive benefits to physical health, as well as the emotional, mental, and spiritual levels of being, Solar herbs are excellent for use in ritual to balance and maintain your system for optimal energy and enthusiasm leading to success in any area you choose. In this exploration of the energies of the Sun, we create a Health Philtre (a Magickally charged Herbal Infusion), which you can use now for any health issues or save for later use when the need arises.



Health Philtre

A Philtre is an Herbal Infusion that has been charged with your intention and sometimes, depending on the type of ritual, by the energies of the Sun or the Moon. An Infusion is created by adding dried or fresh herbs to room-temperature water and allowing them to steep for a time, releasing their properties into the liquid.

For the creation of this Health Philtre we utilize the herbs of the Sun as well as the energy and heat of the Sun. Gather calendula, Saint-John's-wort, chamomile, and juniper berries. At sunrise, place approximately one tablespoon of each of these herbs into a chalice, bowl, or cauldron that

can hold at least sixteen ounces of liquid. As you place each herb in your container, focus on the healing properties that each one brings to your Philtre:

Calendula for the intake of vital force and energy;

Saint-John's-wort for confidence and mental/emotional equilibrium;

Chamomile for calmness and serenity;

Juniper for expelling any negativity or imbalance.

If you wish to include the dynamic, natural qualities of a gemstone of the Sun, now add one sunstone, one diamond, or one gold topaz to your herb mixture.

Sit for a few minutes, meditating on health, energy, and vitality as you consciously direct your slow, quiet breathing over the mixture. Next, pour spring or distilled water over your ingredients until your container is three-quarters full, focusing on the blending of these energies into a synergistic, balanced whole. Begin to stir clockwise (the direction of growth and activation) as you charge or vitalize the Philtre with your focused intention. You may visualize your aura radiating and pulsing with life and energy or recite a mantra or incantation as you stir and activate your mixture to add additional focus and energy to the brew.

Now place the Philtre mixture in an area where it will absorb the rays of the Sun all day, and let the ingredients steep together until sunset. Cover your container and allow your blend to continue steeping overnight. The next day at sunrise, strain the herbs out of the water (bury the spent herbs in your yard or in the woods) and pour the Philtre into a sterilized bottle that has a cap. You can sterilize your bottle beforehand by running it through the dishwasher with the drying element on high or by microwaving it for thirty seconds. Store the Philtre in the refrigerator and add one tablespoon of it to a cup of herbal tea at any time you feel fatigued or suspect you are getting sick. You may also wish to use some as a wash for a burn, cut, insect bite, or sprain to hasten the healing process.

The Herbs of the Moon

Dreamwork and the Inner Self



Energies: psychic knowledge, dreamworking, childbirth, fertility, past life recall, imagination, the subconscious mind

Colors: lilac, silver

Number: 2

Metal: silver

Stones/materials: pearl, abalone, moonstone, selenite

Deities: Selene, Nuit, Luna, Artemis, Sin, Inannur, and Khonsu

Herbs: almond, anise seed, cabbage, camphor, cucumber, fennel, iris, jasmín, lettuce, lily, lotus, moonwort, mugwort, pumpkin, violet, watercress, white sandalwood

The energies of the Moon affect the activities of the subconscious mind, the intuition and psychic centers, reproductive system, dreamwork, and the emotions. The plants attributed to the Moon act principally on the major fluids of the body and on the stomach (attributed to Cancer, ruled by the Moon). Their fluidic action is primarily regulatory and eliminative. Much of digestive activity seems also to influence an individual's moods—the effect of one's emotions on digestion and the actions of the stomach are well-known and universally experienced, so this dual action of many of the Lunar herbs makes a great deal of sense.

Several Lunar herbs bear marked resemblances to the Moon in her various phases, both in color and shape of plant, fruit, and flower. The white fruits of fennel grow in pairs of curved, oblong shapes that resemble the waxing and waning Lunar crescents. The lily, long associated with Lunar Goddesses, has round, bell-shaped flowers that are frequently bright

white, and its leaves are oblong or crescent shaped. The fruit of the almond generally is also pure white and ovoid or crescentic.

Those Lunar herbs that deal with fluidity generally act upon water and blood most specifically just as the Moon herself controls the tides and the flow of blood. We are all aware of how the Moon cycles affect the rhythms of the female system and the menses. It is also known by healers involved with surgery that treatments involving the cutting of the body are best scheduled around the New Moon period, when blood flow during operations has been documented to be decreased.

Cucumber helps eliminate excess water from the body and is both laxative and diuretic, particularly effective in dissolving uric acid accumulations such as kidney stones. Fennel and lily are eliminators, laxatives, and diuretics. The lily acts as a digestive antispasmodic, and fennel is commonly used to stimulate the flow of milk in nursing mothers. Mugwort is particularly apt in its Lunar attribution (note the presence of the Moon Goddess Artemis in mugwort's scientific name, *Artemisia vulgaris*). In addition to its digestive and purgative qualities, a decoction (herbal tea created by steeping the herbs in cold water for twenty-four hours) of mugwort can be used quite effectively to regulate the flow of menstrual blood.

Moon herbs and plants can also aid the female reproductive system, which depends on the Moon for the pituitary gland's signals in releasing estrogen and progesterone, the female hormones. Anise, fennel, flaxseed, and cucumber all contain phytoestrogen, a natural estrogen. So does brown rice (ever wonder why the bride and groom are pelted with rice? For fertility, of course!).

Several Lunar herbs act on other fluids of the body (generally to eliminate excess) and serve as digestives. Camphor, by reducing fluid accumulation in the lungs and pleural sac, is an excellent remedy for whooping cough and pleurisy. Bitter almond is used as a cough remedy, while sweet almond is used internally as a soothing syrup and externally as an emollient. White sandalwood is used to reduce inflammation of mucosal tissue and is also a diuretic—a decoction of the wood can be used for indigestion.

Myrrh and sandalwood share both astringent and stomachic properties, but along with jasmin and bitter almond, they share qualities attributed to the Moon that surpass the simply medicinal. Bitter almond and jasmin both have sedative effects, calming the nerves and allowing a more

intuitive, psychic Lunar mode of brain function to manifest. Almond, jasmine, sandalwood, and myrrh, when used in Incense, also can trigger the subtle, Lunar mode of perception that is so effective in meditative work involving intuition, psychic awakening, and meditative pathworking through the sense of smell.

Magickally speaking, herbs of the Moon affect the subconscious mind. They aid in the development of intuition and psychic gifts. Since they are so useful in accessing the subconscious, they are excellent for dreamwork, recalling past lives, and breaking old ingrained habits. Moon herbs are often white or pale in color, night-flowering, and soothing to the senses.



Moon Incense and Meditation for a Dreamworking

Gather your mortar and pestle, a dropper bottle half filled with alcohol, a small scoop, and the following herbs and essential oils:

jasmin flowers

white sandalwood powder

jasmin oil

cucumber oil

white sandalwood oil

myrrh gum

Place one small scoop of jasmine flowers and two small scoops of white sandalwood powder in your mortar. Gently crush the flowers into the white sandalwood powder with the pestle. Squeeze any alcohol out of your dropper and shake it well to expel any droplets. Draw up into your dropper the jasmine oil and disperse twenty drops of it into the flower-sandalwood mixture. Clean out your dropper with the alcohol and shake it out again, then draw up the cucumber oil. Disperse thirty drops of the cucumber oil into your mixture. Repeat again with the white sandalwood oil, dispersing forty drops into the blend. Combine well with the jasmine flower-sandalwood powder mixture. Last, stir in a half scoop of your myrrh gum.

In your bedroom, prepare a simple altar. Cover a nightstand or other small table with a cloth. Center an Incense burner on the altar and surround it with a circle of jasmin flowers. Fill your Incense burner halfway with sand to insulate the burner from the heat of the Incense charcoal that you now nestle on top of the sand. Place a lighter or matches by the Incense burner along with a journal and pen. Turn on a soft night-light.

Go draw yourself a comfortable bath. If you like, add a few drops of your jasmin, cucumber, or sandalwood oil to the water (or all three, if you prefer). Relax into the water, slowing your breath. With each exhalation, imagine that you are dispelling any negativity or stress, letting your body melt into the water. With each inhalation, imagine that you are awakening your mind, expanding it, and encouraging your subconscious to emerge. Bathe as long as you like, doing your mindful breathwork throughout.

After your bath, dry off and don comfortable sleeping attire. Go back to your bedroom and light your Incense charcoal. Hold it between your thumb and forefinger and light the end farthest from your fingers. When its sparks are almost to your fingers, place it back on the sand in your burner. Let the coal ignite completely across, then place a small bit of your Incense in the center of the coal. Waft some of the smoke up toward your face and breathe deeply as you greet your subconscious. Tell your inner mind that you will be listening closely tonight. You may ask a specific question or just let your subconscious show you something you need to know.

Leave the Incense burning (if you have an active cat or dog, you may wish to put it in another room for the night so that your burning coal doesn't get knocked onto the floor). Pick up your journal and place it in a convenient spot by your bed along with a writing utensil. Retire into your soft bed and let yourself drift into sleep. During the night you may be half awakened by active dreams—write down any images, impressions, themes, or characters in your journal any time you wake. Go back to sleep for more dreams. You may be awakened by some of your dreams, but it is not uncommon to sleep the night through.

Before you get up in the morning, while you are still in that half-sleep state, write down any dreams and their major symbols, people, emotional qualities (joy, fear, freedom, amusement . . .). Over the next few days and nights, you may find that additional dream memories rise to the surface of your conscious mind or that you get psychic impressions that *feel* impor-

tant. Keep your journal handy wherever you go so that you can jot down these memories as well.

Later the next day, you can dispose of the charcoal and Incense ashes by simply stirring them into the sand in your Incense burner. As you use your burner in several different sessions over time, you can bury the sand or sprinkle it into your yard, but you don't have to use new sand each time. Just dispose of the sand when it gets too much Incense debris in it and reuse it until then.