

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*What is necessary for growth in devotion?*

Thinking of how best to serve that to which one is devoted, and working for it.

Devotion is a state or frame of mind toward a principle, cause, being or person, and a readiness to act in some capacity for that to which one is devoted. Growth in devotion depends on the capacity of one to do, to serve, and the capacity is increased by acting with intelligence. The devotional nature impels one to show his devotion by doing something expressive of his devotion. This impulse of devotion does not always produce the best results, yet, though the intention be of the best, what is done may be to the detriment of that for which it is done.

Devotional natures act from the heart. This action from the heart, though it is the right beginning, is not enough for real growth. Knowledge is necessary to wise action. A man with a devotional nature does usually not listen to reason before acting, but prefers to follow the dictates or impulses of his heart. Yet, only by the exercise of the mind can knowledge be acquired. The true test of one's devotion is to study, to think, to work the mind regarding the best interests of that to which he is devoted. If one falls back into emotional action and fails to think patiently and persistently, then he has no true devotion. If one with a devotional nature persists in exercising his mind and so acquires the power to think clearly he will add knowledge to his devotion and his capacity to serve that to which he is devoted will increase.

*What is the nature of incense, and how long has it been in use?*

The nature of incense is of the earth. Earth, as one of the four elements, corresponds to the sense of smell. Incense is an aromatic mixture of gums, spices, oils, resins, woods which during burning gives out pleasing odors from its fumes.

Incense was in use before man began to record institutions, customs, and events. Many scriptures speak of incense as necessary in acts of worship. Incense was used in sacrificial rites and as an

offering, an evidence of devotion by the devotee and worshipper, to that which was worshipped. In many scriptures the offering of incense as an act of worship is described at great length, and rules given for the kind of incense to be used, its preparation and burning.

*Are any benefits derived from the burning of incense, during meditation?*

Benefits may be derived from the burning of incense during meditation, concerning the physical and astral worlds. Incense burning will not reach beyond the astral or psychic world. Incense burning will not aid meditation on subjects concerning the mental or spiritual worlds.

If one gives allegiance to the great spirit of the earth and lesser earth spirits, or any of the beings of the astral world, then he may derive benefits from the burning of incense. He receives benefits for benefits given. The earth gives food to nourish physical man. Its essences also nourish the creatures of the earth and beings of the astral world. Incense burning serves a double purpose. It attracts and establishes communication with the beings desired, and it repels other beings to which the incense is unsuited. If one desires the presence of certain influences, then the burning of incense may help in attracting these influences and establishing rapport. However, if one does not know the nature of the incense which he would use and does not know the nature of the kind of influence or being he wants, then he may get instead of benefits, what is undesirable and harmful. This applies to meditation concerning the physical and astral or psychic worlds, and to sensuous objects.

For serious meditation on subjects of the mental and spiritual worlds, incense burning is not needed. Alone thought and attitude of mind decide what influences shall be around and what beings attendant in mental and spiritual meditation. Incense burning often holds the mind to sensuous objects and prevents it from entering a state of abstraction necessary to meditation concerning the mental and spiritual worlds.

*Are the effects of incense burning observable on any of the planes?*

They are. Depending on the power of the operator the information he has of his subject, visible and other sensuous effects will be apparent. The fumes and smoke arising from the incense offer the strength and the material body in which the beings desired and invoked may appear. This is one of the reasons why sorcerers and

necromancers used incense in their invocations and conjurations. By the burning of incense effects are produced on other planes than the physical, but one must have his psychic senses trained and under the control of his mind in order to see these. Then he will see how and know why influences and beings are attracted or repelled by incense burning, how they affect the one who offers the incense, and other results attending incense burning.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]

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