Summer Solstice (Usually June 21)

Summer Solstice again turns the Wheel. Where at winter, the light of spring returns and the sun is turned back, at summer waxing ends and winter is reaffirmed. This is the shortest night of the year, Midsummer’s Night, and from here the circle wanes toward darkness and winter’s mystery, though winter is still far away, In the Hopi Road of Life, the time Is Niman Kachlna, the Home Dance, when Kachina spirits leave the earth for the underworld until Winter Solstice's Soyal." Summer Solstice is also the beginning descent of Inanna to the underworld in her Jewels, and the sacrifice of Tammuz to death in her place. in the Persephone. Demeter story, It's the maiden Persephone's coming of age at menarche (Beltane) and her entrance to Hecate's realm. The earth at her greatest fulfillment consummates and embraces the other side, the death and ending that approaches but is not yet real. In this time of the year's greatest bounty, the opposite polarity to winter, birth and death are linked again as one.

Women design rituals that reflect fulfillment, fulfillment, abundance, consummation, the turning of the Wheel turning Wheel of love and fortune and women's and the goddess' mature reign. This Is a season of magical mystery, of the aspect of the Mother, of entrances Into the unknown. The fulfillment of wishes Is the theme of a Brazilian Summer.Solstice ritual for Lamanja (Yemaya), based on Merlin Stone's poetry " and adapted for coven work.

The coven meets near water on the night of Summer Solstice, by the sea, a pod or flowing stream. They make a bonfire at the circle's center. Where women meet for this Sabbat Inland, a large water filled cauldron is used to represent the ocean, placed In the center of the circle and banked with flowers. Red and green are the colors of the ritual. A basket of red roses waits near the cauldron or by the shore, and there are seashells onthe altar.

Purification is done with water from the sea or center cauldron sprinkled from a rose. A similar rose, but not the same one, can be usedfor an athame. A red candle for each woman of the coven Is placed to surround the cauldron or line the shore of the water. These are lit after casting and Invoking the circle. The meditation and theme of the ritual are on fullness and abundance, the height of the earth’s bounty, on love and on the goddess as Yemaya, the Mother. The circle is cast and directions invoked, thanking each direction for her many prosperities and gifts. .

Women meeting at the seashore or stream bank bring wishing boats, the boats of Yemaya, and float them in the water. These are made of bark, driftwood or large leaves, woven straw, tied sticks or flat shells; any buoyant, organic non-polluting material. Logs from the center fire their upward surfaces kept dry, are set upon the waters and lit as torches to illuminate the drifting boats. The women of the circle, each carrying red candle and several roses, wade out to the fragile rafts before they move too far to reach. Their cares are washed *away* In the moving waters, given to the goddess' waves and shifting sands. Each woman wishes on a rose, one rose for each of her wishes, and sets the flowers on a raft to float to sea. When each woman has placed her wishes, she returns to shore, to the cauldron fire on the beach.

Women doing this ritual on land first dip their hands in the water-filled cauldron at the circle's center to wash away their cares. They visualize their worries leaving them, floating away and dissolving. Then they place their wishing roses, stems removed and without rafts, to float in the cauldron’s water. The women’s wishes, dreams, and desires travel to the goddess of oceans, to Yemaya, gentle mother of birth and the Solstice. , stems removed and without rafts, to float In the cauldron's water. An aura of magical beauty accompanies the flame-lit, candlelit ritual, the flowers, wishes and dreams.

Yemaya, ocean mother,

We give you our wishes.

Our dreams and our hearts.

Protect us and comfort us,

Wash away our cares.

See our desires fulfilled,

Our lives accomplished.

With your love.

Chanting is used to raise power, "She shines for all, She burns in all, or the women move silently in a spiral dance. The energy of Solstice Night is vital and very strong. The cone Is directed to the fulfillment of the wishes, and women at the beach ground by going into the water, on land by sitting and placing their hands on the earth. The women leave the Sabbat refreshed and renewed, knowing their wishes are fulfilled, even as Yemaya's boats float to sea.

,•Frank Waters. Book of Vie Hoot. p. 242.

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(Boston, Beacon Press Reprint. 196/1. p. 9697.