

## Summer Seasonal Feature

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Welcome to Summer - the season of maximum closeness to our star, maximum light, and maximum warmth. Alchemical Fire rules here, imparting its inspiration, vigor, intensity and speed to the essence of the season. Summer's magickal exercise is *awareness* – observation without thought, pondering or judgment. It's enjoying life without debating it, worrying about it or contemplating what to do with it.

It's no wonder that summer is the universal vacation season. Not only is the weather good; the genius of summer lends itself to travelling – to moving with the flow; to finding one's inspiration in the simple acts of living, of exploring, of experiencing. Summer is the season to become aware of the joys we usually ignore.

Being the season of Fire, – that same simplicity hides the most complicated notion in Magick – the *magickal Will*. Much has been written about it, yet it's usually picking apart the trees and avoiding the forest. That's not Fiery, and I won't do so here. Let's look at the forest called Magick.

There are two actually – depending upon your belief structure. If you're a Nature religion fan, then you understand that dualism is a heuristic notion, helpful for explaining to children, but leaving adults deeply questioning. Dualists conceive of Magick as an exercise in control. The Will, for them, is how that control receives expression. We all know that view, the one with the megalomaniac waving a wand, or the deformed person concocting some vile stew. I've never been able to distinguish that controlling will from simple volition. Volition is not the same as the magickal *Will*.

Here's another view. Imagine the universe contains a river flowing through eternity, into which all actions are contained. Imagine sitting on the bank of that river. You can watch it, put your hand in it, step into it, toss a stone into it, go swimming; the actions are many fold. Yet each action will affect the flow of the river, your experience of that flow, and ultimately how you experience yourself.

The magickal *Will* is choosing to interact with the river. It's not a means of control; it's a means of interacting. Holistic Magick views control as an illusion. Actually we all interact with the river unconsciously by our very existence. What differentiates the magickian is conscious interaction with intent to affect a part of the flow.

The easiest and most pleasurable way is to act in harmony with the overall flow. It is to have the patience and awareness to discover not only what portion we can change but how we can change ourselves to achieve our goal. Remember the alchemical mirror metaphor from earlier features? It applies here. The magickian is not just an external actor, but also an internal one.

You see, I only put us on the river bank to make understanding easier. We're actually already in the river. This is a much more complex and sophisticated view of Magick than what is popularly perceived. It means that we have to admit we're not the all-powerful, ultimate creation. We're one of many. We are blessed with one very sneaky ability up our sleeves however, the *Will*.

That *Will* allows us to interact with the flow, to alter it, to accept it, and to watch it alter us – all catalyzed by our specific intent. Such purposeful interaction does require immense discipline and a lifetime of practice. Being a practitioner in this system is not for the faint of heart, the indecisive or those who lack humility.

An alternate metaphor used to explain this perception of Magick is the Cosmic Dance. Therein the Will is the ability that enables us, as practitioners, to join the Dance and even to change partners within it. Once again, we control nothing. We are free to interact, to change and modify, but never to control. Control, in this view, is an illusion.

Now that I've lit everyone's Fire, let's have an exercise:

#### AWARENESS 101:

Let's go out into the world – take a stroll, visit a favorite outdoor restaurant – or one you've never tried, go on a summer adventure. Go for a kayak ride, a trail ride, a walk along the beach, visit a zoo, go to an arboretum. The choice is entirely yours but, it must be outdoors – even a concert or an outdoor play.

Become aware of the color white. Where do you see it? Notice when someone is wearing it – or if it's on a tablecloth, a napkin, a license plate, a car, a canoe, the reflection off a lake, the churning waters in a creek, a horse, a dog, a flower. I even saw a white spider once.

Don't look for it though, just be aware when it's there. That's a different observational quality. You'll be recognizing your surroundings, but not scrutinizing them. It's Fiery, not Watery, observation. I actually saw it used once in a spy movie by a handler training an apprentice. It made me giggle – the multiple uses of Magick indeed.

You can do this same exercise with other colors. Yet do it quickly. Once for each separate environment you're in. Don't do it continuously all day long. It will burn out, no pun intended.

You can also vary it by using the eye colors of those you interact with - or their hair colors. Do you see lots of silver jewelry? Or gold, etc.

Do you smell barbeques, or pine trees, or the sea, or fresh water, or sweat, or sun lotion, or dish soap?

Try the exercise with all your senses. But be quick, don't obsess, or bore yourself. You'll notice it will make you feel lighter and brighter – as though you've removed a burden. The burden you'll remove is our shared obsession with living in our own little worlds and shutting everything else out. We think doing that will make our lives easier to live. In fact it makes them harder.

Why? We start drowning in too much alchemical Water. *Awareness* then is a great liberator. Alchemy I believe is the best, entirely overlooked, balancer for the soul.