

# Dattatreya Rite

by Vishvanath & Kalkinath

*This rite has been developed from the original format created by Lokanath. It has been found to be useful both as an opening rite, or as a daily practice.*

## PREPARATION

The leader should prepare by having all participants seated in a circle in the Temple Space. The Altar should be prepared and incense offered. The leader opens the working by hand-claps to the 8 directions. He then leads the group in the following guided visualisation:

Allow your breathing to become slow and regular. Be aware of your body and how it feels...

You are floating in darkness ... you feel safe and calm ... in the distance you can see a flickering light. Your eyes focus on the light, and you move towards it. As you move nearer to it, you begin to see clearer.

The flickering light is a fire. Seating in front of the fire, legs crossed in the lotus asana, is a naked man. His hair is long and matted. Upon his forehead, arms, legs and breast are smeared lines of tumeric and red paste. This is Dattatreya, Supreme Magician and Mahayogi. His body is still as a rock, his mind floats freely, like a leaf blown on the wind. He sits calmly, at the centre of the Universe.

You are taking on the form of Dattatreya. You are sitting before the Firepit. Aware of all that is around you. Calm, and detached.

You extend your awareness outwards to the Four Cardinal Points. Four shapes begin to coalesce - before you, behind you, to your left, and to your right. The shapes become Four huge, black hounds, facing towards you. You can smell their breath, the heat rising from their bodies, see their curving fangs as you look upon them...

The black hounds are your guardian protectors, wrathful and alert, yet you must offer them something for their vigilance.

You reach into yourself, and rip from your inner self a lump of bloodied flesh - this is your Ignorance, which you offer to the hound before you. What is Ignorance? it can take many forms - Thinking we know what is real when we have no basis for such a thought. Making Assumptions about things. Keeping experience at bay by maintaining a pride in our ignorance. Give your Ignorance to the Guardian Hound and watch it swallow it with one gulp.

And now you turn to the Hound on your left. You reach into yourself and pull out a lump of putrefying, rotting flesh - this is your Revulsion, which you offer to the hound. Nothing is horrible - it is our minds which make such distinctions. How many of the things which you dislike are the

result of unthinking conditioning. Conditioned by revulsion we set ourselves artificial limits. You offer your revulsion to the Hound at your left, and it swallows your offering greedily.

Now you turn to the Guardian-Hound to your Right. You reach into yourself and pull out a lump of cloying tissue, which trails cords of snot and mucus as you draw it forth. This is your Attachment, and you offer this Attachment to the hound at your Right. What is Attachment, but the false idea that we possess something. Identification with things, ideas, people, beliefs. You offer up your Attachment to the great black hound, and it rips the lump of flesh apart with relish.

Then you turn to the Guardian-Hound at your back. Reach into yourself and draw out a mass of stinking, decaying guts. This is that part of you which Clings to Life. What is "Clinging to Life" ? - it is the inability to give - to let go of a situation or ourselves; the refusal to surrender to anything or anyone. Refusal to accept that which is inevitable. Refusal to admit the obvious. Let go of this Clinging to Life and watch the Guardian Hound fall upon it with relish.

These four Black Hounds now guard you at each quarter, lest some noisome spirit or soul disturb your meditation. You stare into the flames before you, watching them crackle and leap, feeling the heat dance lightly across your limbs. What have you yet to let go? Your Ego. Take a deep breath, and as you breathe out, catch your ego in your cupped hands - ask yourself how you could have given birth to such a monster? Let go of your imaginary opinions of yourself and cast them into the firepit before you.

Feel your body to be an empty vessel. The flame before you also leaps within your breast. Each experience, each flicker of thought, each burst of emotion feeds this inner flame, which burns up the world. Meditate for a moment on the power of this flame, which sheds illumination as it incinerates your attachments.

Should the MT wish to close the rite at this point, have the celebrants meditate upon their inner flame until they are aware of nothing else. Then take them back into the void and from here, to the temple.