

ADF COOR Vedic Beltaine Night Ritual -- Ratri (Night)

The Ritual

1) Preparation

- Bathe. Dress. Layout altar items and tools.
- Meditate.
- Light the candle and incense. Ring bell.

2) Purification

- Pick up water with flower and sprinkle over head then in a circle around you and the altar while chanting the traditional vedic purification verse:

Om apavitrah pavitro vaa
sarvaa vasthaM gato'pi vaa
yah smaret pundariika-aksham
sah bhaaya-abhyantarah shuchih

Om - whether pure or impure
in all places and paths
those who remember the infinite
they are purified inside and out.

- chant Shanti invocation from Brihad-aryanyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda(5.1.1):

purnam adah, purnam idam, purnaam purnam udachyate;
purnasya purnam aadaaya purnam evavasisyate
That (origin of creation) is full. This (creation) is full. From fullness is fullness
brought forth. Taking fullness from fullness, fullness still remains.

Om Shanti Shanti Shantih
Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

-Outdweller invocation:

To the strong Rudra bring we these our songs of praise, to him the Lord of Heros with the matted locks... (offer incense)

O Rudra, harm us not -- neither great or small Be gracious unto us, O God, and bless us, and then guarantee us doubly-strong protection. (offer fire)

imá rudráya taváse kapardíne kṣayád vīrāya prá bharāmahe matíḥ

má naḥ mahántam utá má naḥ arbhakám

mṛḷá ca no ádhi ca brūhi devádhā ca naḥ sárma yacha dvibárhāḥ

(Rig Veda 1 :114: 1a, 7a & 10c)

(offer water)

3) Honoring the Earth Mother

11a: O Mother Earth! Be auspicious to us with thy snow-clad mountains and hills and woodlands!

giráyas te párvatā himávantó 'raṇyaṃ te pṛthivi syonám astu

(Atharva Veda 12.1.11a)

Offer rice.

***4) Statement of Purpose:

“I have come here during the evening fires of Beltaine to offer worship to Shrimati Ratri, the goddess of Night. May she protect and illuminate us throughout the night. May she introduce us to her sister, Ushas, the Dawn, at the end of the rite and bless us with fertility and happiness in the coming season.

4.5) Two Powers

- Take at least a few minutes to entrance the Two Powers. Then say,

May mighty Heaven and Earth, most worthy of honor, be present here with light and gleaming splendour

mahii dyaavaaprithivii iha jyesthe rucaa bhavataaM shucayadbhir arkaih

(Rig Veda 4.65.1a)

(offer flowers, incense, light and water)

5) Recreating the triad cosmos - Invoke cosmology - earth, air, heavens

- "Under my feet the earth stretches, surrounding me, broad and boundless, holding me.

Offer rice.

- About my body the air envelopes me, mists and cloud, lightning and wind, the abode of celestial waters enfolds me.

Offer incense and water and flowers.

- High above me, luminous space, sun and stars and moon, form the heavens. Where the gods and spirits rest, drawing me ever up and onward."

Offer light.

Chant: From earth's high ridge to middle air I mounted, and from mid-air ascended up to heaven. From the height of heaven's reach I came into the world of light.

ṛṣṭhāt ṛṭhivā́ ahám antárikṣam áruham antárikṣād dívam áruham
divó nákasya ṛṣṭhāt svàr jyótir agām ahám

(Atharva Veda 4.14.3)

6) Opening the Gates

Call Gatekeeper

While chanting, wave ghee lamp in circles around the altar:

agnim ile purohitaM yajñasya devam ritvijam hotaaraM ratnadhaaatamam
I worship Agni, the priest, the god of the ritual, the vibrant cosmic order (rtam vijam), the giver of delight. (Rg Veda 1.1.1)

Open Gates – make gate opening gesture – say “Swaha!”

7) Inviting the Kindred - Offerings to each as called

Ancestors - Offering: water

May the Pitris protect me at this invocation of the devas!

avantu maa pitaro devahuutau

(Rig Veda 6.52.4d)

Nature Spirits (Gandharva)¹- Offering: incense

gandharva itthaa padamasya rakshati paati devaanaaM janimaanyad bhutah

Gandharva verily protects the dwelling place; Wondrously guarding the generations of the Gods.

(Rig Veda IX.83.4a)

Gods - Offering: ghee lamp or candle

vishve devaasa aa gata shrunutaa ma imaM havam

O Devas - Hear this my invocation; come hither, O Universal Gods

(Rig Veda 6.52.7a)

¹ The term Gandharva has many meanings – it can refer to a particular class of nature spirits, to nature spirits generally, or even to the god Agni who is rather beyond and above most nature spirits – I use it here in the generic sense

*****8) Key Offerings - Call and offer to the Deity of the Occasion - Ratri**

Offering – wave light while chanting

1. WITH all her eyes the Goddess Night looks forth approaching many a place:

She hath put all her glories on.

2 Immortal, she hath filled space, the Goddess hath filled height and depth:

She conquers darkness with her light.

3 The Goddess as she comes hath set the Dawn her Sister in her place:

And then the darkness vanishes.

4 So favour us this night, O thou whose pathways we have visited

As birds their nest upon the tree.

rAtrI vyakhyadAyatI purutrA devyakSabhiH |

vishvAadhi shriyo.adhita ||

orvaprA amartyA nivato devyudvataH |

jyotiSA bAdhatetamaH ||

niru svasAramaskRtoSasaM devyAyatI |

apedu hAsatetamaH ||

sA no adya yasyA vayaM ni te yAmannnavikSmahi |

vRkSena vasatiM vayah ||

At end offer incense, water and flowers

9) Prayer of Sacrifice

Offer ghee lamp to all areas of altar

When thou art praised with words and decked with brightness, accept this song,
the singer's worship.

yác chasyáse dyúbhir aktó vácobhis táj juṣasva jaritúr ghóṣi mánma
(Rig Veda 6.5.6)

10) Sacrifice Offerings to the Three Kindred

Mighty Kindred! O Pitris, Gandharvas and Devas! I offer this rite in your honor and
ask that all mistakes or incompleteness be overlooked. I ask that this rite be
received in the same love and honor in which it is given. Kindreds accept my
sacrifice!"

Offer Water to the Pitris

Fathers who sit on sacred grass, come, help us:
these offerings have we made for you; accept them.

bárhiṣadaḥ pitara ūty àrvág imá vo havýá cakṛmā juṣádhvam
tá á gatávasā sámtenáthā naḥ sám yór arapó dadhāta
Rig Veda10:15:4

Offer incense to the Nature Spirits

Accept in friendliness my hymn, and prosper him who offers gifts.

práti sūktáni haryatam bhávataṃ dāsúṣe máyaḥ
(Rig Veda 1.93.1c)

Offer light to the Devas

With Holy Thoughts and with munificence may all Gods, knowing the Law
immortal, Manu's Holy Ones, Boon-givers, favourers, finders of light, and Heaven,
with gracious love accept my songs, my prayer, my hymn.

vísve deváh sahá dhībhīḥ púramdhyā mánor yájatrā amṛtā ṛtajñāḥ
rātiśáco abhiśácaḥ svarvídaḥ svàr gíro bráhma sūktám juṣerata
(Rig Veda 10.65.14)
(bow)

11) Omen

Om! O Earth, Sky, Heaven!
I meditate upon the divine brilliance
Of the exalted Lord of the Sun
May he enlighten our minds!

Om bhur bhuvah suvah
tat savitur vareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yó naḥ pracodayāt

Make me your friend: show us some little mercy.
mitráṃ kṛṇudhvam khálu mṛḷáta naḥ
(RV Hymn to dice: 10:34:14)

Cast Vedic dice three times and interpret the omen

12) Calling for the Blessing - Call for a gift in return for your gift

O Indra! Give us a share in the divine light and waters, purity, and reputation.
sá tvám na indra súrye só apsv ànāgāstvá á b^haja jīvaśaṃsé
(1:104:6)

Blessings - Water.

Calling -

"I request now that the spirits give to us their blessings. Offer to us as we offer to you, a gift for a gift. Honored Ones give us the Waters!"

13) Hallowing the Blessing - Acknowledge that the blessings are in the cup

Ye Visvedevas, who protect, reward, and cherish men, approach Your worshipper's drink-offering.

ómāsaś carṣaṇīdhr̥to víśve devāsa á gata dāśvám̐so dāśúṣaḥ sutám
(Rig Veda 1:3:7)

- "Behold the Waters of Life!" (drink)

14) Affirmation of the Blessing

O Lord of disciplined senses I drink of the twofold draught, the bright celestial mingled with the earthly.

ád̐hā niyutva ubháyasya naḥ piba śúciṃ sómaṃ gávāśiram
(Rig Veda 8:90:10)

- Drink! :)

15) Workings (if any)

16) Thanking the Beings – IN REVERSE ORDER

"I have honored the gods, given sacrifice, received blessings in return, and now it is my turn again, this time to be grateful.

Visvadevas and Lord Indra, I thank you! Shri Indraaya Namah!
Lord Savitri, I thank you! Shri Savitreh Namah!

Shrimati Ratri, I thank you! Shri Ratryai Namah!
Shining Visvadevas, Nature Spirits and Pitris, I thank you!
Shri Visvedevebhyah Namah, Shri Gandharvebhyah Namah, Shri Pitribhyah
Namah!
O Heaven and Earth, I thank you! Shri DyaavaaPrithiviibhyaam Namah!
Lord Rudra for your protection, I thank you! Shri Rudraaya Namah!

17) Closing the Gates -

"Agni through you the gods have received my offerings. I thank you also, and ask
now for you to shut the ways between the worlds here. Agni let the gates be
closed!"

Shri Agnaye Namah!
(offer fire and water)

18) Thanking the Earth Mother

"Prthivi, I thank you and once again honor your beauty and bounty."
Shri Prithiviyai Namah!

19) Closing the Rite –

Om ! Bhadram Karnebhih: Shrinuyaama Devaah:
Bhadram Pashyemaakshabhir Yajathraah: |
Sthirairangai Stushtuvaagum Sastanoobhih:
Yashema Devahitham Yadhaayuh: |
Svasti Na Indro Vriddha shravaah:
Svasti Nah Pooshaa Vishva Vedaah: |
Svasti Nastaakshyo Arishtanemih:
Svasthi No Brihaspathir Dhadhaathu ||
Om ! Shaanti:, Shaanti:, Shaanti:. Om !

O' Ye Gods ! May we hear with our ears only what is auspicious.
May we see with our eyes only what is auspicious.
May we, who sing your praise,
Live our allotted span of life in perfect health and vigor.
May Indra who is praised by the devotees,
vouchsafe to us safety and well being.
May the all known Pushan grant us safety.

May Garuda and Brihaspathi grant us well being.
-from Maandukya Upanishad of Atharva Veda

"The rite is ended."

Bow