

Aspects of Bali Culture And Religion: The Implementation Of Vedic Teaching As The Basis of Balinese Hindu Religious Life

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Abstract

Bali is one of Indonesia's thousand islands, and the Balinese are its inhabitants. Balinese culture is Hindu culture, as it is based on the essence of Hinduism. Then there is Bali Island, which is a Hindu territory. Because Hinduism has assimilated with Balinese culture, some people struggle to distinguish between Balinese and Hindu cultures. The majority of people are aware that Hinduism is practiced in Bali through various symbols and arts, including crafts, dancing, and singing, as a complement to the ceremonies. Bali is awash with ritual performances daily, so the island is also known as the island of rites. As a result of this reality, Balinese culture is one of a kind among Indonesia's a thousand cultures. That is why the Indonesian government has positioned Balinese culture as the country's most popular tourism destination. The idea of Balinese Hindus that all their ceremonies are founded on Vedic teachings but have been interpreted by local wisdom endows Balinese Hindus with a distinct personality that is quite diverse and unique among Indonesia's thousands of tribes. It evolved into the world-renowned island of Bali. Indonesians who reside outside the island of Bali believe that they must visit Bali before entering heaven; this makes the majority of people wish to visit Bali.

Keywords: Balinese, culture, religion, Vedic, Hindu

I. Introduction

What is critical in the first explanation, which serves as the background for this research, is Hinduism's uniqueness. The uniqueness of Hinduism is frequently a source of great anxiety for religious scholars, particularly those specializing in comparative religion. Numerous religious researchers who are also missionaries are profoundly wrong in their examinations of Hinduism. Hinduism, for whatever reason, cannot be studied through the lens of other religions. Since Hinduism is the world's oldest religion, a researcher must delve extensively into the religion's essential principles. Hinduism is unique in that it accepts ritual traditions from every ethnic group on the planet as part of its practice. As a result, many researchers are perplexed to learn about Hinduism, which has diverse traditions

despite its origins in the Vedas. To fully grasp Hinduism's distinctiveness in this article, it is required to refer to K.N. Tiwari's (2009) book *Comparative Religion*.

Hinduism is most likely the world's oldest living religion. It has no definitive date of origin and no identifiable originator. *Sanatana dharma* is the name given to this religion, which is transmitted to humanity via immortality. Hinduism is most likely the world's oldest living religion. It has no definitive date of origin and no identifiable originator. It is called *Sanatana Dharma*, and it is a religion transmitted to humankind by immortality. As such, it is a genuinely unique religion in one critical respect. Almost every religion in the world is associated with a particular human who is believed to be its founder or creator, and each religion has a particular scripture that is

considered the primary religion's text. However, Hinduism is devoid of it. It can be thought of as more natural growth aided at various phases of civilization by various forces than as a person's creation or building (Tiwari, 2009:11). As Sir Charles Eliot puts it, "Hinduism has not been made but has grown Eliot in. It is a jungle, not a building (Tiwari, 2009: 11)." Similarly, K.M. Sen observes in his book *Hinduism*, "Hinduism is more like a tree that has grown gradually than like a building that has been erected by some great architect at some definite point in time. It contains within itself the influences of many cultures and the body of Hindu thought thus offers as much variety as the Indian nation itself" (Sen in Tiwari, 2009: 11-12).

II. Literature Review

Bali is one of the most renowned islands in Indonesia's thousands of islands; notable for being

so unlike the hundreds of other islands in the country. A clear distinction is evident in the Balinese people's activities, which are replete with Hindu religious practices. As a result, the island of Bali has developed a reputation for being extremely appealing not just to international tourists but also to the Indonesian people. Individuals who have visited Bali will undoubtedly wish to return. Even though they have been traveling in Bali for a lengthy period, they are hesitant to go and wish they could remain longer. Because they are always discovering something unique that is not found anywhere else. This reality must be acknowledged candidly; Bali is unique. Many people are taken aback and wonder how the island of Bali, which is so little that it appears to be a dot amid a thousand islands on the map, can be so famous around the world. Due to the peculiarity of this question, it can be answered succinctly.



Figure 1. Indonesia Map

Bali is known by a variety of nicknames, the most well-known of which are Bali Island of the Gods, Bali Island of Heaven, Bali Island of Arts, and Bali Island of Rituals. All of Bali's uniqueness is Hindu in nature; so named because their rituals are founded on Vedic teachings, particularly those of *Manu Smriti*, which execute rituals in a variety of methods, including via the usage of animals. Although Hinduism originated in India, the majority of Hindus in India have abandoned

sacrificed animals. As a result, a significant issue emerges, namely, when did Vedic teachings reach Bali? Until recently, no historian has been able to accurately determine its age. As a result, some individuals make forecasts based on myths, such as the story of the Great Flood. Most faiths have a tale about the great flood, which is described in Hinduism's Puranas. According to the *Puranas* scriptures, due to the myth of the great flood in ancient times, the majority of people believe that

the world was created as a single unit of land without division. Given that the planet was originally a single continent and that the Vedas are widely accepted as the world's oldest scriptures, it seems to sense that the Vedas, particularly *Manu Smriti*, was practiced in ancient times and continue to be performed in Bali to this day. This fact distinguishes Balinese Hinduism from Indian Hinduism; although Indian Hindus rely on Parasara Smriti to guide their lives, Balinese Hindus continue to rely on *Manu Smriti*. At the moment, and particularly with the advent of information technology, everyone receives an abundance of information from all directions. Because information is ubiquitous and an increasing number of individuals are unable to distinguish between correct and incorrect information, it becomes a source of societal strife. This time, many people are taking a serious look at the discrepancy between Indian Hindu rites and Balinese Hindu customs; this topic is gaining traction on a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, newspapers, and a variety of websites. However, their conversation is not intended to deepen their comprehension of Hindu traditions. They incite severe divisions among Hindus, but they have a secret motive, namely tourism's political objectives. Because tourism's political objective is to maximize revenue from the industry, several tourism service sectors contribute to attempts to expand the sector. They all recognize that Hindu rituals are the first capital required to establish a viable tourist industry. Numerous Hindu leaders, including Hindu priests, were involved. Their rationale is that the island of Bali lacks the natural resources that might be used as raw materials for manufacturing like some other Indonesian islands do. This debate resulted in the formation of numerous extremely strong tourism service businesses in Bali, which is now controlled by a variety of agencies. Whatever content is discussed about tourism, it is invariably connected with Hindu rites. This is because Hindu ritualism is at

the heart of Bali's tourism service industry. It makes no difference if Hindu rites become the capital of the tourism service industry; the change of Balinese Hindus' understanding will not stop. Because, as Donder (2019) explains in *Glimpse of Hindu Ritual in Logic Perspective – An Analysis of Theology, Philosophy, Science and Technology Approach*, Hindu rituals serve as a temporal tool and not as the Hindus' ultimate and everlasting purpose. teaching. This is critical information for anybody interested in studying Hinduism. In sum, viewing Hinduism just through the lens of its rituals implies viewing it through a lens that has not been well researched.

Thus, to understand Balinese Hinduism properly, it must be seen from a very old time, as traditional Balinese life is extremely similar to the life of ancient Indian traditions as Hinduism's homeland. So named because many Indian academics claim that when they visit Bali, they feel as if they are in ancient India. We must have the freedom to agree or disagree, but we must do so logically. With so many possible logical viewpoints, mythology may be utilized to investigate occurrences that appear to be associated with extremely ancient traditions or stories.

According to some, the island of Bali has been inhabited by Hindus since time immemorial (possibly since the time of the fabled *Matsya Avatar* during the Great Flood or the *Tretayuga* period). This tale is connected to the name of the island of Bali, which is similar to the name of the King of Bali, who is recorded in the *Matsya Purana*, unique mythological literature describing the Great Flood. Apart from that, the Sanskrit term '*Bali*' means sacrifice blood,' which is quite similar to the Balinese Hindu practice of '*care*', which involves animal sacrifice. Without a thorough grasp of *care*, discussions concerning it can become a cause of tremendous contention, especially if the criticism originates from inside the Balinese Hindu community. This is because they will regard Balinese Hindu criticism as being

detrimental to Hinduism. As a result, Hinduism in Bali is mostly confined to ritual practice.

Whatever is shown as a ceremony, it is the Balinese Hindu concept that the ritual is identical to the sacred script without the letters that enable Balinese Hindus to truly appreciate the foundation of their lives. This is the most fundamental aspect of Balinese religious life; it is both the physical property of Bali and the life force of Balinese Hindus. If other islands in Indonesia have mining resources, such as gold, nickel, bronze, silver, and iron, but Bali has not, the Balinese create the ritual equal to mining materials. Researchers must have a thorough understanding of this.

The Balinese Hindu community's ritual-based way of life has a significant effect on the majority of interfaith communities. Thus, Balinese Hindu ceremonies contribute materially and spiritually to Bali's interreligious existence. Numerous Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and Hindus sell a variety of ceremonial supplies. From this vantage point, Hinduism in Bali has made several contributions to mankind as a whole, regardless of faith. Hindus in Bali do not have religious zealots. As a result, a large number of individuals from all over the world travel to Bali to establish spiritual activities, tourism services, and arts activities (ie, yoga, Balinese dance, Balinese orchestra, and some traditional arts). This fact has won the island of Bali the attention and love of people the world over. Thus, while Bali's population is just 4.5 million, the number of visitors visiting the island in 2020 will be 1,050,060, a decrease from prior years. Australian visitors made the most visits to Bali in 2020, with 222,359 individuals. According to tourism data, the ratio of visitors to Balinese locals is around 1:4, which means that there is approximately 1 tourist for every 4 Balinese residents.

As previously stated, while Hindu Dharma is everlasting truth, it may be practiced in a variety of ways depending on the teachings of the *desa* (place), *Kala* (time), and *patra* (condition). This is a cause of confusion for outsiders regarding

Hindus; they become perplexed when they observe any sort of distinction among Hindus. Non-Hindus are unaware of Hinduism's fundamental nature, which embraces all religious diversity among human beings. If people understand what Hindu doctrine teaches, they will understand that disagreements across religions are not always bad since disagreements are *fitnah*, and everything originates from God. It is the same with lovely garden flowers that come in a variety of floral hues. From this vantage point, Hindu Dharma is the most tolerant of all religions, prompting Donder (2006) to coin the term "Theology of Universal Affection" for *Brahmavidya* or Hindu Theology.

In summary, despite the form of Hindu practice, which varies globally, the substance is the same, which leads Hindus to embrace any faiths or beliefs with equal respect. Among the many distinctions that distinguish Hindus is their belief in pantheism. This indicates that Hindus who believe in God disseminate and permeate the cores of all the universe's atoms. Hindus believe that God resides in each of the *panes bhutas* (the ether, air, water, fire, and earth). As a result, Hindus revere and worship all of the universe's material as a material incarnation of God. This basic doctrine of Balinese Hinduism converts Balinese Hindus to monotheistic pantheism, which results in the Balinese being extremely ceremonial.

Three questions emerge from the description above, namely:

1. What distinguishes Hindu teachings on the island of Bali from those in India, their homeland?
2. Why do Indians transition more readily from ritual to spiritual practices, whilst the Balinese maintain ritualistic, though not overly ceremonial, traditions?
3. What are the beneficial consequences for Balinese Hindus in terms of safeguarding Hindu teachings through ceremonial practices?

III. Methods

This is a qualitative research method; the term "qualitative" refers to the fact that no statistical techniques or other calculations are used to get the findings. This study generated descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words, as well as observations of various elements of human behavior during data collecting. Data were gathered daily throughout the research, even before the research proposal specified the data to be collected, because the researchers, being Balinese, met regularly to perform Hindu rites. Again, this research may be classified as qualitative. This qualitative research aims to elucidate and comprehend the significance of many social activities and other impediments that are either unknown or just known to a small number of individuals. This qualitative research is meant to give a full picture of speech, writing, and behavior seen in people, groups, and communities on an integrated and holistic level. The technique taken in this study is consistent with Hindu Philosophy and Hindu Theology.

IV. Result and Discussion

It is exceedingly difficult to create a chronological history of Balinese culture because it relates to the Indian subcontinent in very ancient periods. Although no artifacts exist to give historical proof, there are several ideas that Balinese civilization is quite ancient. One of the assumptions that Balinese civilization is the same age as *Tretayuga* is that it predates the presence of the King of Bali, who is mentioned in great detail in the *Matsya Purana*. As a result, the island of Bali bears the same name as the Bali King who reigned during the *Tretayuga* period.

Another hypothesis that differs from the previous one is that the island of Bali alludes to the name Bali, which is Sugriwa's elder brother. According to this opinion, some Balinese think that Bali, Sugriwa's older brother, actually traveled to Bali in search of Dewi Shita, who Rahwana kidnapped. This notion implies that Balinese culture predates King Rama's presence as described in the

Ramayana epic, which is extremely popular in Indonesia. Putra et al. (1987:32) claimed that "In the Ramayana text, particularly in the *Kiskenda Kandha* portion, it is reported that Sugriwa led the *Banaras* to *Java-Dwipa* (Java island) and other locations in search of Dewi Sita." Hanoman also landed on another island, *Suwarna-Dwipa* (Sumatra island), and the Ramayana text mentions *Sisira-private*, which translates as Snow Peak, as a very high mountain in Irian Jaya, one of Indonesia's easternmost islands, which is covered with snow.

Because Bali's history spans such a long period, several writers encounter problems and misunderstandings when writing about the island's past. Because their study findings are not easily comprehensible. Thus, when we read about Balinese culture's past, we must consider who authored it. This is critical to note since certain historians occasionally manipulate their subjective importance to suit their purposes.

Covarrubias (1973:259) wrote in his book, *Island of Bali*, that the primitive Balinese transformed their island into a magical world populated by Gods, human beings, and demons, each occupying a level determined by rank: the deified spirit of their ancestors resides at the summits of the island's volcanoes; ordinary human beings live in the middle world, the land that lies between the mountain peaks; and ordinary human beings live in the Between these two poles, from which opposing forces emanate (the positive from the mountains and the negative from the underworld), the calm and sensitive Balinese live their entire lives – their daily routines, social organization, ethics, manners, and art; in short, the entire island's culture – under a system of traditional rule subordinated to religious beliefs. They regulate every act of their lives through this system to maintain harmony with the natural forces, which they eternally divide into pairs: male and female – the creative principle; right and left; high and low – the principles of place, direction, and rank; strong and weak, or healthy and unclean, clean and

unclean; sacred and powerful, or unholy and dangerous; in general, Good and Evil, L and R.

The result of Covarrubias's study should be carefully considered, as it is mostly based on basic belief without reference to the Vedantic school of thinking. He recounted how he discovered that the extraordinary conglomeration of traditions, beliefs, and philosophies that comprise the Balinese religion, one that is as intricate and convoluted as any religion found today, is the island's most potent motivating factor. The Balinese character, as manifested in their imaginative interpretations of religious concepts from India, China, and Java. There were moments when practical reasoning was internalized, and times when it was misinterpreted, but the outcome was a healthy and completely Balinese mode of belief. Despite Hinduism, religious symbols and concepts kept a great deal of their original, primal simplicity, and fanaticism and idolatry did not obliterate the old animist worship of nature and the elements.

Additionally, he was regarded as practicing the instruction as a ritual by Hindus. In the majority of religious civilizations, ritual is extremely external to the form of their religion; by witnessing their ritual performed by their communities, it became obvious how to learn about their religion. Hinduism is based on three fundamental frames: *tattva* (philosophical), *social* (ethical), and *ācara* (religious acts). Respect for and prayer to the God who created the water and the soil to get fertility is an integral element of the *ācara*. These rites were not performed out of blind faith; they all have a philosophical and religious basis. According to Prof. Bansi Pandit, each religious act or event in Hinduism has a distinct logical foundation, and no ritual is based on dogma or blind faith (Pandit, 2010: 129).

Discussing the relationship between Hinduism and Tantric Buddhism as Prof. Shinobu has defined it, and its significance to Balinese culture and religion, it is critical to include the resultant study conducted by Suamba (2016). *Javanese-Saivism – A Philosophical Study of Tattva Texts* has been

released as a book. He said that the Javanese version of *Saivism* is related to the other varieties of Saivism found throughout the Indian subcontinent. It cannot be reduced to any other branch of Saivism, or any other Indian philosophical school, particularly *Samkhya*, *Advaita Vedanta*, Yoga, and Buddhism (Suamba, 2016:296). He also mentioned that Bali Island is located just a few kilometers east of Java Island, divided by the Bali Strait. It has historical and cultural ties to Java dating back to ancient times. Javanese Saivism in the post-Majapahit (15th A.D.) period was not only successfully preserved in Bali, but also in practice in Java, where some metaphysical notions were sought to be integrated into Bali culture. Saiva's philosophical concepts have evolved through degrees of complexity. The remarkable feature of this Saivism is that worshipping *Parama-śiva* as the Supreme Principle becomes necessary. The lack of any picture in *Padmasana* is represented as a sanctuary in religious worship. While in Java, the medium of focus was *Liṅga* (an image of Siva) or another picture. In Bali, it takes on the meaning of the term '*Sunya*', even though *Liṅga* was probably more popular in ancient Bali. This may be founded on the belief that when one worships Him through a particular medium, such as *Liṅga-prana*, *Mūrti*, *Pratima*, *Ārca*, the mind's concentration is entirely focused on that medium. However, when *Acintya-pujā* (formless-worship) is conducted, His presence penetrates everything, even the most delicate element of our bodies. As a result, the shrine of *Padmāsana* becomes the most significant temple shrine in Bali for worshipping the formless and inconceivable Lord *Parama-śiva* (*Acintya*). This philosophical principle had not yet taken shape in Java, even though its seeds were already present. Samba (2016:299).

Samba continues, he wrote that while in Java, a present *Saivism* faded away – due to the sway of Islam – and only a few followers of it are remained at the Mountain slopes, like Teṅger, Bromo, and Semeru, on the contrary, in Bali this form of

Sivaism still is a living religion professed by the majority of Balinese and preserved through *Nyāstra* (*Sāstric* tradition). It becomes the guiding principle/value of Balinese and the core of its culture. The external appearance of it now differs from that of the Old Javanese period, since on this island Balinese who have gifted an art has shaped it into their cultural identity. Due to a heavy blend of Balinese culture, Javanese elements are overshadowed or even not seen properly, Javanese spirit can only be felt when one indulges in the inner realm of Balinese culture. However, the philosophical principles are revealed in Tutor *Tattva* texts of Sanskrit-Old Javanese remain, even though some developments had taken place. It gives further inspiration/ideas to develop it according to *Deśa* (locality), *Kāla* (time), and *Patra* (situation/condition), which makes the practice flexible. Not only the philosophical principles are preserved, but the Sanskrit-Old Javanese language is also preserved well and continues its existence even though the quantity of it is lesser than that of the Old-Javanese period. Some culture *Tattva* texts are conjured to be created in Bali. And also, other genres like *Kāvya*. Sanskrit-Old Javanese language is still used in the art form and religious life of Balinese (Suamba, 2016:300). Through the views of Shinobu and the resulting research of Samba, it becomes clear that the Balinese culture mixed harmoniously among some of the isms surrounding Hinduism and Buddhism. The form of the mixed harmonious becomes the base of the natural life of Balinese harmony and tolerance. It is the source of Balinese potential property that has been explored by the government as the main tourism destination.

The Ritualistic Character of the Balinese Hindu

The fundamental foundation of Balinese Hindu activity is the ritual, which is carried out through the offering, sacrifice of various materials. Every day, the majority of Balinese Hindus are quite occupied with their rituals. No Balinese Hindu day is complete without rituals. At the height of the

ceremonies, the Balinese Hindus resemble an ocean of rituals. That is why Bali Island attracts travelers from all over the world. Each year, more than four million visitors visit Bali, bringing the tourist population to parity with the local population. Bali Island became a worldwide town as a result of the tourist sector.

To ensure that tourists are not perplexed, the Balinese rites must be explained in their entirety. Donder (2013:39) explained that the use of diverse components in Hindu ceremonies serves as a symbol of self-surrender or self-sacrifice. Outside ritual elements as external instruments are primarily employed spiritually by novices. External factors are critical for novices since they have a tough time focusing their brains without a tool. As a result, novices select a few exterior factors to assist them in guiding their minds down the spiritual path. As a result, they are reliant on rituals and are dissatisfied when worship is conducted without them. On the other hand, certain people who have advanced spiritually do not require any tool and can direct their minds using their internal tools. The ultimate purpose of the ritual performance is self-realization via self-sacrifice. They attain God-consciousness at this stage of self-realization.

Because the majority of Balinese are still in the *bhakti* and *karma marga* stages of spiritual development, they continue to conduct rituals. They acquire fulfillment, delight, and a nice mood through rituals. As a result, rituals became an integral part of Balinese Hindu life. Nobody can refute this fact; moreover, the tourism industry has appropriated and investigated Balinese customs. The Balinese ceremony eventually became increasingly elaborate; as a result, Bali Island, which has the most Hindu customs, earned the moniker 'Bali as the island of ritual'.

2.4 Using Yantra, Mantra, and Tantra as the Foundation for Balinese Rituals

Tantras describe ceremonial procedures, sacred formulas (*mantras*), mystical diagrams (*yantras*),

gesture (*mudrās*), postures (*āsanas*), initiation (*dikṣā*), yoga or mystic practices (Singh, 2006:x). Yantra is a technical term that refers to an instrument, a tool, or a mystic diagram. Through the use of technique and training, one can swiftly attain 'Siddhi' (exceptional power) and desire. In ancient times, the *Rsis* or followers of truth practiced the *Yantra* and therefore attained full mental peace, which is critical in the current era. The *Sastra* (Old Script) described the *Yantra's* potency as an excellent instrument for achieving God's consciousness in life. If the *Yantra* is composed of images and scripts, then *Mantra* and *Tantra* are intrinsically linked, since both are media *Yantra*. Various *Yantras* are associated with various gods and goddesses and are coupled with various mantras. Five elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, and ether, are connected to the *Yantra*, and with the practice of *Puja* or specific prayer, one may control or govern the five elements as a tool of one's choosing. *Yantra*, according to the *Śastra*, is the science of controlling the five elements through repeated mantras. Several of the *Devas* in various forms, each one associated with a certain mantra. Additionally, it was stated that each planet had both positive and negative influences.

In Balinese Hinduism, the *Yantra* instruction serves as the foundation for the ceremonial form and performance. When rituals are done, the *pandit* employs the mantra, and the advantage of this is referred to as *Tantra*. This resulted in the three components of *Yantra*, *Mantra*, and *Tantra* merging into a single set in Balinese Hindu ceremonies. According to the rituals associated with the *Yantra* as a sign or holy symbol, as cited by Donder (2013:45), a Balinese Hindu priest and religious philosopher, in his book *'Philosophy of Rsigana'* describes in the *Yajña Prakṛti* script, it is stated: "*Banten, pinaka regatta two* (offerings as a symbol of self), *Banten pinaka running Ida Bhatara* (offerings as a symbol of the manifestation of God), *Banten pinaka andabhuwana* (offerings as a symbol of the

universe)". In addition, in the *Widhisastra Tapini mss*, states: "*kalingannya Tikanga beaten juga Reka rupa warnanira Bharara Nilekani rupa kadi tingkahing Tawang*"(essentially the *Banten*, is a means of ritual as a symbol of the manifestation of God, the Almighty, depicted as a human embodiment).

The Yantra Concept's Application in Balinese Hindu Rituals

Rituals are inextricably linked to God's belief, as all rituals should be offered to God and His manifestation. The common people of Balinese Hinduism thought that rituals and *Yantra* were synonymous. This is because the *Yantra* is a mystical diagram, but the ritual is a collection of symbols representing God, the cosmos, and the human body. It is highly dependent on God's theology and philosophy. Bhaumik (2005:30) detailed numerous rituals, gods, and demi-gods in his book *Code Name God – The Spiritual Odyssey of a Man of Science*, yet Hinduism, that kaleidoscope of belief systems that once characterized Asia, is fundamentally no less monotheistic than Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Those who study the *Vedas*, the basic teachings of Indian spirituality, understand that all deities are expressions of a single Godhead, *Brahman* and that *Brahman* is undivided, unchanging, and all-pervading — much like the fabric of the cosmos. The world initially learned about God's unity in India, specifically through the *Vedas*. All distinctness, including the distinctness of our own identities, is only a way of indicating the underlying oneness of things. This sense of cosmic connection — which pervades every cloth in India, every boiling curry, and even the air itself — is concisely described by the Vedic credo: *Aham Brahmsmi*, I am *Brahman*. The notion that each of us completes creation and, thus, that God is incomplete without us is at the heart of Indian existence and may help explain, along with the principles of *karma* and *Maya*, why Indians can suffer a certain amount of adversity with serenity.

The following is one way for classifying the five elements: *Vyoma*, *ākāśa/Marut*, *Teja*, *apah*, and *kṣiti/ prithivī* (ether, air, fire, water, and earth). One may conclude that the spirit of Hinduism is contained in the right knowledge and application of these tattvas. Water is symbolized by a silver crescent of the moon; the air is symbolized by a blue circle; fire is symbolized by a red triangle; the earth is symbolized by a yellow diamond, and spirit is symbolized by indigo of egg. The five-tattva names are also equivalent to the five deities' names. In the ceremony, the proper tattva may be invoked to call one of the deities (Buckland, 2005:138).

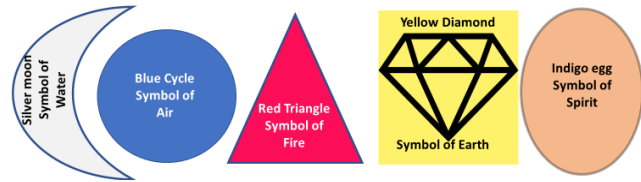


Figure 2. Symbol of Five Elements

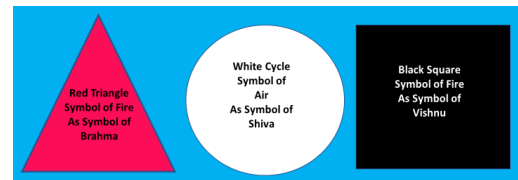


Figure 3. Symbol of Three Elements

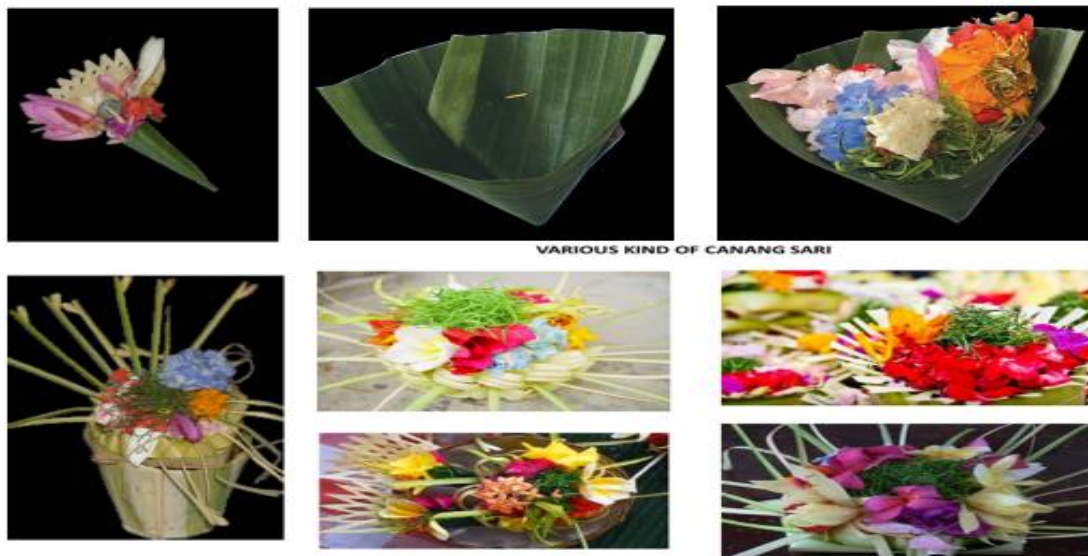


Figure 4. Many kinds of Offering according to Balinese Hindu Dharma based on the Sloka Bhagavadgita IX.26



Figure 5. All of the artistic forms contained within Ritual are another manifestation of *Yantra*

The common people follow the same procedure, but instead of repeating the Sanskrit mantra, they recite it in their tongues. Finally, they purify all ceremonial components with this holy water or *tirtha*. Each ingredient utilized in rituals carries a

symbolic meaning. In a spiritual sense, water is required as an external element for novices; nevertheless, spiritual professionals employ water within themselves to worship God.



Figure 6. The Offerings are called *Banten* as the Artistic Form of Yantra
 As a Tool to Focus the Mind

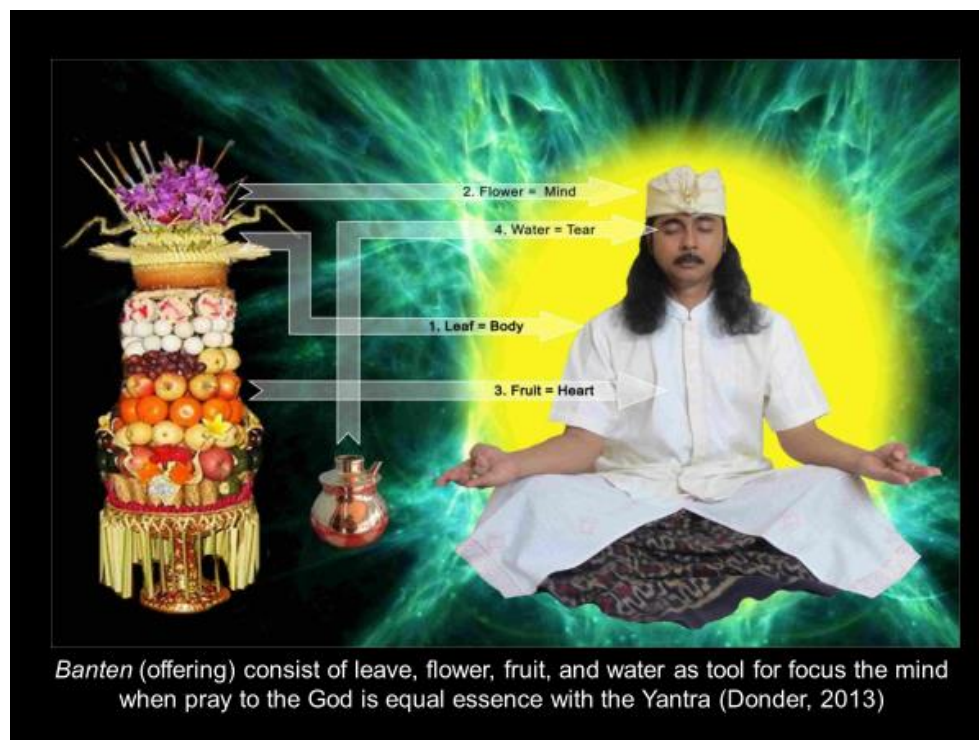


Figure 7. Various Offering Materials as a Symbol of Devotion Within Humanity to Offer Return to God

According to the images and explanations above, there are several pathways or ways to worship God. While the majority of devotees worship God using outward material objects, the spiritually enlightened present themselves as gifts to God without using any instruments. Both techniques need varying degrees of faith and commitment to God. Diverse forms and ways of worship should not pose difficulties in achieving God's awareness. This depiction is extremely pertinent to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's remark that: (1) Offer on the leaves, your body; (2) Offer on the blossom, your mind; (3) Offer on the fruit, developed inner spiritual asceticism; and (4) Offer on the water, welling tears of pleasure (Donder, 2013:166).

Ritual as the Symbol of Universe

According to Donder (2013, 2014, and 2019), the *Royal Yaja Prakti* states *sahananing beaten pinaka Anda Bhuvāna*, which translates as 'every element utilized in the Banten (offering) is a representation of the universe.' The *Banten Sarad* is used in Balinese Hindu ceremonies to represent the

Universe. *Banten Sarad* has three symbolic meanings: (1) it represents the vertical relationship between man and God, (2) it represents the horizontal relationship between human beings, and (3) it represents the horizontal relationship between human beings and nature. Thus, *Banten Sarad* is a metaphor for the cosmos (macrocosm) and all included inside it (*Anda Bhuwana*). *Banten Sarad* is also a representation of the world's governing gods (*Dewata Nawa Sanga*). Moreover, *Banten Sarad* serves as a symbol for several gods' metaphorical qualities (*pinaka running Ida Bhatara*). *Banten Sarad* is made up of several fruits and cakes arranged in a way that resembles the human body or microcosm (*pinaka regatta two*). Thus, the Hindu believed that by presenting the *Banten Sarad* to God, they were symbolically returning to God all things in the cosmos, including themselves.

According to the foregoing explanations, *Banten Sarad* is a representation of humans, God, and the cosmos, as well as everything included inside it. As a result, Hindus in Bali see *Banten Sarad* as a

vehicle for achieving heavenly experience via confidence in it and adhering to Hinduism's teachings. The core of the notion of the Universe-symbolism as given in the *Yaja Prakti* text concerning *Banten Sarad* is comparable to the concept of *Asvamedhayajña* as mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I.1.1-2.



Figure 8. *Banten Sarad*, made of rice flour cakes, is a symbol of the Universe including human beings and all the ruler Gods.

There are hundreds of different types of Balinese Hindu Rituals, many of which have significant consequences for the Balinese way of life. Since rituals have evolved into an integral part of the Balinese social structure, they are comparable to social demands. Numerous social activities have been associated with rituals. Every day, Hindu householders are obligated to serve their meals to all forms of God. They serve only a small portion of their food in particular locations as a sign of reverence, dedication, and thanks to God Almighty. This must be described plainly so that the Balinese Hindu rites are understood by everybody. Many people have a misunderstanding

of Balinese Hindu ceremonies, believing that Balinese Hindus feed devils. Even if they claim they are not clever, their perspective has a negative influence on Hinduism since the majority of people believe their misconception is genuine. This truth is extremely difficult to convey because the majority of people only observe the rituals performed by Balinese Hindus and have no idea what is going on behind the scenes. As a result, Hindu academics should make a concerted effort to elucidate the fundamental nature of Hindu rituals.

They can use deductive reasoning to determine whether there is a demon that appears when Balinese Hindus donate their food somewhere. There are no demons who come to eat and offer food, and no food is lost after it has been offered. Therefore, why would anybody assert that Balinese Hindus feed demons? To dispel this widespread misperception, particularly among those outside Hinduism, the importance of rituals in Balinese Hinduism will be highlighted, emphasizing how they benefit all Balinese people equally. It also benefits the Indonesian government's tourist sector. The following chronology will illustrate the link between Balinese Hindu religious practices and their interests:

1. Because Balinese Hindus require a variety of ceremonial items, many individuals will prepare them.
2. Because Balinese Hindu ceremonies necessitate the use of a large number of flowers, leaves, and fruit, many individuals would cultivate flowers and trees to prepare and sell to Balinese Hindus. Numerous non-Hindus arrive in Bali from Java and other parts of Indonesia to plant flowers and trees in preparation for Balinese Hindu rites.
3. DBecauseBalinese Hindus require a variety of animals for ceremonies, many individuals from outside the island of Bali come to raise and sell animals to Balinese Hindus. Thus, regardless of one's religious views, everyone on the island of

Bali will benefit from Hindu ceremonial practices.

4. Because ritual is central to Balinese Hindu culture, several companies have sprung up to provide Balinese Hindu ceremonial facilities. Along with the ceremonial business created by Hindus, there are others founded by non-Hindus. This is a distinct industry from the others. This makes the island of Bali extremely distinctive, ancient, and uncommon, piquing the world's curiosity in visiting the island. The Government of Indonesia then uses this occurrence as a source of money.
5. After the Indonesian government acquired Bali Island as a tourism asset, several tourism firms were formed, and Hindu rites were introduced into the industry. This sector fosters the establishment and development of ceremonial facilities. As a result, numerous ritual facilities continue to grow in size daily creating an atmosphere of competitiveness in ritual activities.
6. According to some Hindu religious authorities, this arrangement confines Balinese Hindus at the ceremonial level and prevents them from developing spiritually. Then, over time, it develops into a source of conflict of interest amongst authorities that is extremely difficult to address.

Conclusion

Based on the research context, research questions, data, and data analysis according to research methods and many theories, the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. Hindu teachings on the island of Bali are distinct from those in India, even though Hindu teachings are found throughout the world. Due to the adaptability of Hindu teachings, which can be implemented in various methods depending on location, period, and circumstance (*desa, kala, patra*)Kalanduism appears different everywhere, yet its essence remains the same. Hinduism is not a strike in terms of outward uniformity but rather an inner essence. Thus, individuals already familiar with Hindu principles will not be perplexed by the distinctions between Balinese and Indian Hindu rites.
2. Indians have undergone a more significant transformation from ritual to spirituality than the Balinese, who adhere to ceremonial traditions and even make them highly ritualistic. This is because India is home to numerous specialists on the Vedic teachings that serve as the foundation for Hinduism. Moreover, India's qualities as the world's largest democratic country enable Indians to develop their beliefs and authority without fear of opposition from others. Indians are free to choose anything they choose, and they will not be bullied. This is because religious organizations in India do not follow rigid, non-negotiable regulations. Each devotee is free to execute his or her rites, and so each temple will have unique rituals, yet none of them are offensive; instead, they all respect one another. Their natural harmony develops due to their freedom to disclose their true character, which no one can refute. India and Bali are distinct in that while religious activities in India are motivated by individual inner needs, religious activities in Bali are motivated by a variety of internal and external norms. In short, the many types of rituals conducted in India and Bali are determined by their respective religious and social systems.
3. There are numerous good connotations associated with Balinese Hinduism's ritual activities that safeguard Hindu principles. It encourages many people to cultivate various sorts of flowers, trees, and animals, among other things, for use as offerings through their ceremonies. This will benefit both social and economic growth. As noted previously, among Indonesia's thousand islands, Bali Island is the most famous and well-known. Due to the Balinese's practice of rituals to maintain Hindu

teachings, the island of Bali is teeming with ceremonies. This is the source of the island of Bali's distinctiveness, which subsequently becomes an opportunity for something interesting. Recognizing this, the majority of Balinese Hindus wish for the ceremony to continue in its current form. Even Balinese Hindus construct new temples in a variety of unusual locations to perform extraordinary rituals. These are just a few of the significant aspects about the island of Bali that pique everyone's interest in visiting the island. This is the Balinese people's primary capital and soul.

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