

***Bhakti* In New Normal Era**

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A. Introduction

The year of 2020 begin with unexpected pandemic which become big disaster for almost every country including Indonesia. This pandemic known as the COVID-19. It is not only paralyzed the world of health sector but affected the education sector also. With this condition the government continues to impose policies, starting from the central level to the regions, not least in the state of Bali.

The policies carried out by the state government of Bali which restrict to people for there activity, as everybody must follow social distancing and this are felt different by Balinese community. Bali actually famous for its religion and culture, which is full of ritual ceremonies in their daily lives, Balinese Hindu society performs rituals every day from the smallest level up to large ceremonies which of course often involve many people, both in terms of the ceremonies of *Dewa Yadnya*, *Manusa Yadnya*, *Rsi Yadnya*, *Bhuta Yadnya* and *Pitra Yadnya*.

The *yadnya* ceremony that is seen and often performed on a daily basis by Hindus is an implementation of the teachings of *Bhoutika bhakti*, namely *bhakti* which is done by making various kinds of offerings or visiting holy places. Especially during *pujawali/odalan*, Hindus will flock to visit the temple with relatives, as a form of devotion and love to God for omnipotence.

With the COVID-19, the Hindus is invited back to perform rituals that are simple but do not reduce the meaning of all the processions that occur in the implementation. The rituals performed simply are a form of the implementation of the teachings of *Ananya Bhakti*, where *Ananya Bhakti* is devotional service by completely surrendering to God alone. This is because humans feel they no longer have another savior. Only God depends on where, to ask for help. God has felt as a Friend, as a father, or mother. *Ananya Bhakti* is based on self-awareness about *atman*. (Suhardana, 2013).

Moving on from this discussion, there are several issues that need to be raised and examined including: 1) how to devotees in Hindu teaching in era new normal. 2) what is the level of devotion done by Hindus in the implementation of religious teachings.

B. Discussion

1. Ways of devotional service in Hinduism

The manifestation of trust, respect, loyalty and love to God is known as devotional service. There are many way to carry out the sense of devotion in Hindu teaching style, like in *Bhagavata Purana* VII.5.23 it is said that there are 9 types of devotion that Hindus can do. The *sloka* said:

*Sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam padasewanam arcanam
vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atmanivedanam*

Translate:

The nine forms of devotion to the *Hyang Wisnu* (God) are *Srawanam*, *Kirtanam*, *smaranam*, *padasewanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dasyam*, *sakhyam*, *atmanivedam*. (Deroy & Divapali 2001)

a. Srawanam

Bhakti in the way of *srawanam* is devotional done by listening to good things. *Srawanam* can be done by listening to spiritual splashes and lectures on religious teachings. In the teachings of Hindu discourse both called the *dharmawacana* (discourse things that are true). This is stated in *Bhagavad Gita* XVIII.71 which reads:

*Sraddhavan anasuyasa ca
srnyad api yo narah
So pi muktah subhamllokan
prapnyat punya-karmanam*

Translate:

People who have faith and are not blameworthy, even though just listening, he is also free, reaching the world of happiness of people who do good. (Pudja, 2005)

In *Agastya parwa* (Sura, 2002) it is said that, if today people are born deaf and ignorant. It is because in their previous birth they always covered their ears and were far away when there was talk of *dharmawacana* (truth), but always brought their ears close when there were people who gossiped, spread rumors and slanders.

b. Kirtanam

Kirtanam is devotional worship by chanting holy songs. In Indonesia, this type of song is very diverse according to the dialect in the area. This sacred song must be sung in all kinds of religious ceremonies, because Hindus believe that singing a sacred song will deliver religious rituals more quickly accepted by God.

By chanting the holy name of God, it is expected to provide a vibration of purity in awakening the power of God. *Wiana* (2007) states that with *kirtanam* will be able to form an

ideal spiritual structure, namely the existence of *atman* who controls the *buddhi*, *buddhi* controls the *Manah*, and *Manah* who controls the senses. This is contained in the Vedic holy in Bhagavad Gita VI.19 which reads:

*Yatha dipo nivata-stho
Nengate sopama smrta
Yogino yata cittasya
Yunjato yogam atmanah*

Translate:

Like a lamp in a windless place, the light does not flicker "This is a parable for the controlled mind of a *yogi* who practices concentration. (Pudja, 2005)

c. Smaranam

Smaranam is worship of God which is done by remembering the greatness of God. *Srawanam* is done by continuously chanting the holy name of God, the human self is trained to be able to concentrate and concentrate on the holy name of God. The names mentioned by each person will certainly vary depending on themselves from each. Some are comfortable with thinking about *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, *Ganesh*, *Laksmi*, *Saraswati*, *Durga*, *Krishna* who are believed to be manifestations of God.

The mention of these names in the *Vedic* holy library is justified. This is stated in the *Bhagavad Gita* IX.22-23 which states:

*Ananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate,
Tesam nityabhiyuktanam yoga ksemam vahamy aham
Ye py anya-dewata-bhakta yajante sraddhayanvitah,
Te pi mam eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-purvakam*

Translate:

Those who only worship Me (God), without thinking of others, who are always devoted, to them I (God)

bring everything they do not have and protect what they have. Even those (devotees) who worship other gods, with full faith, actually also worship Me (God), O son of Kunti (Arjuna), even though it is actually not according to the law taught (determined). (Pudja, 2005)

The Balinese Hindu community believes that the stronger the remembrance of God's greatness and omnipotence, the stronger the holy vibrations of God will affect humanity. If God's power has become an integral part of the totality of human beings, the vibration of holiness will be able to move all activities of human life. Balinese Hindu community believes that human beings who have fully received protection from the omnipotence of God, live without obstacles to get true happiness. (Wiana, 2007). To remember the holy name of God at all times and conditions, of course it is very difficult, this happens because one's mind is very difficult to be focused to one particular object. In *Sarascamuscaya sloka* 81 it is stated that the state of mind cannot be determined and is very difficult to control. If there is a human being who is able to control his mind, then that human will be happy. (Kajeng, 2005)

d. Arcanam

Archanam is a devotional service carried out by using sculpture/padmasana/ pelinggih/ statues as a form of worship. The purpose of using the sculpture media is that one can concentrate more on worshiping because imagining God the creator would be very difficult for ordinary people to do, and mostly only people who have reached the highest level of holiness are able to imagine and know the form of God.

Balinese Hindus believe that if someone fixes or makes an *arca/pelinggih*, then the pure soul will get to live like in

heaven. Therefore many *pelinggih* /*arca* /temples in the Bali region, and in this new normal era, worship activities using *arca* /*pelinggih* /statues began again.

Wiana (2007) said, Hindus in Bali believe that the high purity of statues according to Hindus is also used to purify the village environment where they live. The purification ceremony in the village environment is carried out during the *melasti* celebration. The sacred statue is around the village and then taken to the sea. The purpose of this *melasti* ceremony is explained in the *lontar sundarigama* and the *lontar hyang aji swamandala*, in both *lontar* explain that *melasti* ceremony aims to purify the village.



Picture 1: Arca



Picture 2: Pelinggih

e. Sewanam

Sewanam is a concept of service to God's creatures. This is done because in Hindu teachings there is a *sloka* that says "*aham Brahmana asmi*", in fact I am the *Brahman* (God) itself. So that by serving other creatures, it will be the same as serving God, because God resides in other creatures.

This serve, for example serving the sick, helps the poor. Especially in the COVID 19 we can see solidarity was carried out by humanity. Some provide food, or raise aid to form health posts.

f. Vandanam

Vandanam means grateful. Gratitude for one's own existence, grateful for the fortune given, grateful for being blessed with children, and grateful for having a life partner. Because the Balinese Hindu community believes that all the events that occur there must be wisdom behind all of that. For example, humans are put to the test, even when they do not have possessions, we must always be grateful for the tests given by God. During the pandemic COVID-19, many Balinese people were laid off because most of the population was involved in the world of tourism. So that when the airport is closed automatically all sectors are affected, starting from hotels, tourist attractions, trade and so on. But even though the Balinese are in a bad condition, they are still able to give thanks for their health, so that many people are laid out to innovate and have the creativity to do business that can provide additional income.

g. Dasyam

Dasyam is a way of devotion by assuming his idol as an employer and yourself as a servant. In Balinese Hindu society, this can be seen from the Hindu stakeholders (priests) who serve the community without being determined, because the holder (pastor) realizes that he himself is a servant of God. These stakeholders serve in ceremonial processions conducted in the community, guiding and giving spiritual splashes so that humans are able to do what is right and not right, in accordance with religious teachings.

h. Sokhyam

Sokhyam means treating his idol as a friend. Hindus believe that God resides in the souls of every human being, therefore the Balinese Hindu community applies the *Tri Hita Karana* teachings, which is to foster good relations between human beings. One of the good relations carried out by mankind is to establish a good relationship with fellow human beings. Treating someone like a friend, in Hinduism will have the same meaning as treating a god.

The native Balinese Hindus rarely commit acts of violence against each other, besides believing in *karma* (the law of cause and effect), Hindus Balinese believe that if humans are able to respect each other and respect will bring good things on this small island so that God's blessings will continue to come.

i. Atmanividanam

Bhakti with surrender to God. In this type of *bhakti*, humans assume that God is the determinant of life, humans are required to give up their lives, but that does not mean without trying. This was very clearly seen in the Balinese Hindu community when the COVID 19 Pandemic attacked. Balinese Hindus submit their lives to God, because they believe that death, life and birth have been determined. But on the other hand, they keep trying, this can be proven by the behavior of the Balinese people who obey every rule imposed by the government, without staging a demonstration. The Balinese Hindu community is surrendering, but continues to work in accordance with the health protocol provided by the government. Therefore, if seen from the table of the death of the Hindu Balinese people with other communities in the provinces in Indonesia experienced a death that is not so fast, especially if associated with Bali which is very wide open

access for local and foreign tourists to enter and exit Bali before the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Data spread of corona Virus in each province in IndonesiaProvince	Confirmed	Get well	Died
Nusa Tenggara Timur	145	110	1
Kalimantan Utara	268	214	2
Kepulauan Bangka Belitung	193	173	2
Jambi	154	115	2
Sulawesi Barat	201	125	3
Kalimantan Barat	381	355	4
Papua Barat	413	265	5
Sulawesi Tengah	207	188	7
Riau	415	288	12
Aceh	312	91	12
Lampung	252	195	12
Sulawesi Tenggara	776	455	13
Kepulauan Riau	370	321	17
Bengkulu	214	118	18
Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta	587	368	19
Maluku	1.069	697	22
Kalimantan Timur	1.307	858	27
Papua	2.988	1.362	32
Sumatera Barat	891	750	33

Gorontalo	957	450	34
Maluku Utara	1.524	328	46
Bali	3.360	2.788	48
Kalimantan Tengah	1.677	1.116	88
Banten	1.801	1.309	89
Nusa Tenggara Barat	1.986	1.252	108
Sulawesi Utara	2.502	1.189	129
Sumatera Selatan	3.33	1.714	155
Sumatera Utara	3.759	981	185
Jawa Barat	6.314	3.615	208
Kalimantan Selatan	5.884	3.144	280
Sulawesi Selatan	9.251	6.324	314
Jawa Tengah	9.281	5.139	606
Jakarta	20.572	12.614	798
Jawa Timur	21.484	13.619	1663

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Indonesia akses 31 Juli 2020

2. The level of devotion that is practiced by Hindus in the implementation of religious teachings

Bhakti conducted by humans carrying out their quality *yadnya* in Hindu teachings can be classified into three namely *Bhakti* in *Sattwika*, *Bhakti* in *rajasika* and *Bhakti* in *amasika*. The following is an explanation of the service:

a. *Bhakti in Sattwika*

Bhakti in *sattwika* is devotion done by humans without consideration of imbalances and all forms of prayer that are proclaimed to God without asking God for a favor. Everything that is done without motivation to worldliness. This type of devotion is devoted to the highest quality. These official guidelines for *Bhakti* teachings are contained in the Bhagavad Gita XVII.11 which reads:

*Aphalakansibhir yajno
Vidhi-drsto ya iyyate
Yastavyam eveti manah
Samadhaya sa sattvikah*

Translate:

Yajna according to the instructions of the holy books, which are carried out by people without expecting reward and fully believe that this ceremony as a duty of duty is *sattvika*. (Pudja, 2005).

In pursuing devotional service according to Murba (2007) states that all activities carried out must be based on faith (*sraddha*), sincerity (*lascarya*), based on the *Vedas*, accompanied by high respect, using *mantras* and done not to show off. So that the motivation of filial people is worship by serving God or its symbols, know as *Mukhya Bhakti*, so that the service he does has a higher quality because he does not have religious motivation.

If it is associated with the human condition at the time of the Pandemic, humans who are at the level of *sattwika* will act according to the will of nature, this type of human will not blaspheme God, but take lessons from every event that occurs, because with COVID 19 Pandemic condition there are positive things that he do it. For example before COVID 19 Pandemic, communication within the family was very rarely done, with COVID 19 Pandemic requiring work from

home, so that he would begin to establish an even more intense relationship with family.

b. *Bhakti in rajasika*

Bhakti which is performed in a *rajasika* is devoted to being accompanied by certain desires by making requests to God. For example: asking for the loss of pain due to illness (*artha bhakta*), wanting to gain divine knowledge (*jignasu bhakta*), so that his request becomes rich to be fulfilled (*artharh bhakta*), merely to get closer to God so he can improve himself (*jnani bhakti*). These official guidelines for *Bhakti* teachings are contained in the *Bhagavad Gita* XVII.12 which reads:

*Abhisandhaya tu phalam
Dhambhartham api caiva yat
Ijyate bhārata-sreṣṭha
Tam yajnam viddhi rajas am*

Translate:

But what is done by hoping for reward, and solely for sheer splendor, you know, O' Arjuna, that *yajna* is *rajas* (Pudja, 2005)

In the teachings of Hinduism, *bhakti* is still justified in *rajasika*, because Hinduism believes that humans are born into a world in a state of suffering (*papa*). The Balinese Hindu community believes that when a new baby is born, the baby cries, this indicates that there is a fear felt by the baby because it must be born into the world, therefore, when humans live their lives in the world always asking for prayer to God as a life guide and blessers. If it is associated with the COVID 19, humans at the *Rajasika* level will have the behavior of praying for safety and health to be free from the plague that is undermining the country.

c. *Bhakti in Tamasika*

Bhakti in Tamasika is the most devastating quality of devotional service and is not justified in Hinduism. For example, devotional service is carried out by humans to harm others, insult and refuse to give to those in need, especially when COVID 19 is where many people lose their jobs and are unable to buy decent food, which will adversely affect their health. Besides that, the *Tamasik* devotional service according to the Balinese Hindu community is to perform the *yajnya* without any *mantra* in the implementation of the *yajna* ceremonies, and not believing in the activities of the *yajna* performed. These official guidelines for *Bhakti* teachings are contained in the *Bhagavad Gita* XVII.13 which reads:

Vidhi-hinam asrstannam
Mantra-hinam adaksinam
Sraddha-virahitam yajnam
Tamasam paricaksate

Translate:

It is said that, *yajna* which is done without rules (refutes), where food is not served, without spells and alms and without faith is called *tamas* (Pudja, 2005).

C. Conclusion

The existent of the COVID 19 Pandemic affect the rituals performing by Hindus, especially in Bali which becoming simpler than before. With the simplicity that is done does not mean eliminating the quality of *yadnya* as *Bhakti* which are perform by Hindus. This is because the devotional service performed must be based on sincere devotion conducted by Hindus and in this new normal period, the nine forms of devotion to the God by way of *srawanam*,

kirtanam, smaranam, padasevanam, vandanam, acharyam, dasyam, sokhyam, and atmanividam seem to be more practical now. When viewed from the quality of *yajnya* performed by Hindus can be divided into three, namely: *yajna sattwika, rajasika yajnya, and tamasika yajnya*.

In get closer to *God* is done by carrying out the path of *Bhakti*, which is based on love, and deep surrender (*Anannya Bhakti*) pure without showing to all creatures. In full surrender to *God*, Hindus use various symbols as a way to realize the devotion. The higher level of one's devotion, the better practice of devotion they become. So that whatever that person does in his life is only used as an expression of devotion and gratitude for the gift of *God*.

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