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PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH IN HINDU RITUALS IN BALI

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Abstract

Hindu rituals in Bali are not only religious in nature but also embody holistic health values, encompassing both physical and spiritual dimensions. This study aims to examine the relationship between the practice of Balinese Hindu rituals and efforts to maintain and improve community health. The method employed is a qualitative approach through literature review and in-depth interviews with ritual practitioners and traditional healers. The findings reveal that rituals such as melukat (purification), usadha Bali (traditional healing), yoga, meditation, and Bhuta Yadnya function as means of self-purification, disease prevention, and energy restoration. Physically, the use of natural elements such as holy water, herbs, incense, and fire provides antiseptic, relaxation, and detoxification benefits. Spiritually, the rituals strengthen the individual's relationship with God, ancestors, and nature, thus producing calming effects, reducing stress, and enhancing emotional balance. The concept of Tri Hita Karana serves as the philosophical foundation that integrates bodily, mental, and environmental health. These findings affirm that Balinese Hindu rituals hold significant relevance for contemporary holistic health concepts and have the potential to be developed as the basis for spiritual health tourism. Integration between traditional practices and modern medicine can further expand the benefits of rituals for both local and global communities.

Keywords: Holistic Health, Balinese Hindu Rituals, Physical Health, Spiritual Health, Tri Hita Karana.

I. INTRODUCTION

Health, both physical and spiritual, is a fundamental human need. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health not merely as the absence of disease but as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being” (World Health Organization, 1948). From this perspective, spiritual health constitutes an integral part of overall well-being. For the Hindu community in Bali, health encompasses not only the body but also the balance of mind, soul, and harmony with the universe.

Religion has a significant influence on shaping behavior and healthy lifestyles. According to Koenig (2012), “religious involvement is associated with better health behaviors, greater social support, and improved mental health.” In the Balinese Hindu context, participation in religious rituals is not only an act of worship to God but also a mechanism for health maintenance through dietary regulation, emotional control, and physical activity inherent in ceremonies.

In Hindu scriptures, the body (*śarīra*) is regarded as a “sacred vehicle” for the fulfillment of *dharma*. The *Bhagavadgītā* 6.17 emphasizes that balance in eating, sleeping, working, and resting is key to achieving happiness and spiritual health: “*Yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu, yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yoga bhavati duḥkha-hā*” (“For those who are temperate in eating, recreation, work, and sleep, yoga becomes the destroyer of suffering”) (Prabhupada, 1986).

Balinese society upholds the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, or the three causes of well-being: harmonious relationships with God (*parhyangan*), with fellow human beings (*pawongan*), and with nature (*palemahan*) (Windia & Dewi, 2011). Physical and spiritual health can only be attained when these three relationships are maintained in balance. Religious rituals serve to preserve this balance, both symbolically and practically.

Balinese Hindu rituals such as *melukat* (self-purification) and *usadha* (traditional healing) embody therapeutic dimensions that touch both physical and spiritual aspects. Holy water is believed to possess the power to cleanse impurities of body and mind, while herbal concoctions are employed to treat physical

ailments (Ardhana, 2013). These dual aspects intertwine to form a holistic health practice passed down through generations.

Modernization has altered the lifestyle of Balinese society, including its interpretation of health. According to Suwena (2017), there has been a shift in values from spiritual orientation toward material orientation, leading to a decline in the intensity of traditional ritual practices. This raises questions about the sustainability of rituals in maintaining physical and spiritual health in the modern era.

Spiritual health acts as a vital buffer in coping with stress, illness, and life crises. Pargament (1997) explains that “spirituality provides meaning, purpose, and connection that can buffer against life’s adversities.” In the Balinese Hindu tradition, prayers, mantras, and offerings serve as instruments to affirm life’s meaning and fortify mental resilience. Hindu Balinese health practices resonate with global trends such as yoga, meditation, and herbal medicine. Feuerstein (2008) points out that yoga is not merely a physical exercise but also an effective mental therapy. Bali, as a global spiritual destination, holds significant potential for integrating local wisdom with global health therapies.

This paper aims to analyze the relationship between Balinese Hindu rituals and physical as well as spiritual health. The discussion focuses on the philosophical foundation, forms of rituals, and their relevance in the modern context. It is therefore expected that this study will enrich the literature on holistic health based on Balinese local wisdom.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to explore the meaning and function of Balinese Hindu rituals in maintaining physical and spiritual health. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth explanation of phenomena through the perspectives of practitioners and their cultural context (Creswell, 2014). Data were collected through participant observation of the performance of *melukat* (purification), *usadha* (traditional healing), and *Bhuta Yadnya* rituals

at several temples in Bali. In-depth interviews were conducted with *pemangku* (temple priests), traditional healers, and Hindu practitioners actively engaged in rituals. In addition, documentation studies were carried out on the *Usadha Bali* palm-leaf manuscripts, inscriptions, and secondary literature related to health in Hindu teachings.

Data analysis was conducted thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Data validity was maintained through source and technique triangulation, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observation notes, and written documents to ensure consistency of findings (Denzin, 2012). The analysis was then interpreted using the theoretical framework of holistic health and the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* to understand the interrelation between physical and spiritual health within Balinese Hindu rituals. Thus, this method enabled the researcher to present a comprehensive picture that integrates both empirical and philosophical dimensions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical Foundations of Health in Balinese Hinduism

According to I Ketut Rinten, a healing practitioner in Gianyar, the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* is the principal foundation of health in Balinese Hindu tradition. He emphasized that “Illness arises because of imbalance. If our relationship with God, with others, or with nature is disturbed, our body or mind will inevitably suffer as well” (Rinten, interview, August 5, 2025). Within this framework, *Parhyangan* sustains spiritual connection through prayer and *yajña*, *Pawongan* builds social harmony that reduces stress, while *Palemahan* ensures care for the environment so that the body remains healthy. Windia and Dewi (2011) likewise affirm that *Tri Hita Karana* perceives health holistically—encompassing physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects.

Rinten further explained that in Balinese Hindu teachings, the body (*śarīra*) is considered a divine gift that must be maintained for the fulfillment of *dharma*. He stated, “The body is a vehicle for performing good karma. If the body is

damaged, it becomes difficult for us to carry out *yajña* or help others” (Rinten, interview, August 5, 2025). This view resonates with *Bhagavadgītā* 3.8, which emphasizes the duty of work (*karma yoga*) in sustaining life. In daily practice, bodily maintenance is carried out through a *sāttvika* (pure) diet, sufficient sleep, and sensory discipline, as taught in Ayurvedic texts (Lad, 2002).

For Rinten, health cannot be separated from the balance of physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. He illustrated this point by saying, “Sometimes people come to me with physical pain, but the root of the problem lies in the mind or the spirit. When that is healed, the physical illness disappears” (Rinten, interview, August 5, 2025). This principle aligns with the yogic perspective in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, which holds that suffering (*duḥkha*) stems from inner imbalance, ultimately affecting the body. Therefore, rituals such as *melukat* and meditation serve not only to symbolically cleanse the body but also to restore the equilibrium of inner energy. The *Atharva Veda* (3.11.6) declares as follows:

*Ārogyam me astu, balaṁ me astu, prāṇah
me astu prajāḥ me astu.*

Translation:

May I be blessed with health, strength, life, and descendants.

This verse reflects a prayer for comprehensive health—covering the physical body, vital strength, and continuity of life—which aligns with the aims of Balinese Hindu rituals such as *melukat*, *usadha Bali*, yoga, meditation, and *Bhuta Yadnya*. In the Balinese context, mantras like this are often integrated into prayers and worship preceding purification or traditional healing rituals, affirming that health is regarded as a sacred gift that must be preserved through the balance of body, mind, and harmonious relationships with nature and divine powers.

Rinten views Balinese Hindu rituals as having dual functions: preventive and curative. He explained, “*Melukat* can be used to prevent illness, so that our energy remains clean. But if illness has already appeared, the ritual also helps in the healing process” (Rinten, interview, August 5, 2025). This perspective is supported by Ardhana’s (2013) study, which found that

melukat helps reduce stress levels and enhances tranquility, both of which physiologically strengthen the immune system.

The philosophy of health in Balinese Hinduism, as elaborated by Rinten, positions humans as the center of energetic harmony connected with God, fellow beings, and nature. Any disturbance in one of these relationships will disrupt the entire health system. As he expressed, “Health means that our energy flows smoothly. If the relationship with God, humans, and nature is balanced, that energy automatically flows” (Rinten, interview, August 5, 2025). This understanding places health not only in the medical domain but also within spiritual and ecological dimensions.

Balinese Hindu Rituals Related to Health

Balinese Hindu rituals are closely tied to health, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. Among the most prominent practices are *melukat*, a purification ritual using holy water to cleanse the body and mind; *usadha Bali*, a traditional healing system based on palm-leaf manuscripts and medicinal plants; yoga and meditation, practiced within a distinct Balinese spiritual atmosphere to maintain bodily and mental balance; and *Bhuta Yadnya*, a ritual offering to natural forces aimed at maintaining environmental harmony and preventing health disturbances caused by ecological imbalance. Together, these four practices form a framework of holistic health that unites medical, spiritual, and ecological aspects. Each of them is elaborated below.

Melukat is one of the sacred rituals in Balinese Hinduism, performed with holy water (*tirtha*) to purify both external and internal impurities. Philosophically, this practice is rooted in the doctrine of self-purification (*śuddhi*), believed to restore the balance of energies within the body and mind (Ardhana, 2013). *Melukat* is usually carried out at holy water sources such as fountains or *beji*, whose waters come from mountain springs. These waters are not only religiously significant but also contain minerals beneficial to physical health, such as magnesium and calcium, which can aid muscle relaxation and help maintain metabolic balance.

Beyond the physical dimension, *melukat* also plays an important role in mental and emotional

health. The holy water used in this ritual is often accompanied by prayers and mantras, which create a meditative and calming atmosphere. According to psychoneuroimmunology, the state of peace and serenity experienced during *melukat* can trigger the body to produce endorphins, which act as natural pain relievers while also enhancing feelings of happiness (Koenig, 2012). Thus, *melukat* can be understood as an integrative therapy that combines physiological, psychological, and spiritual effects.

According to I Made Doster, a *pemangku* and traditional therapist in Tabanan, “*Melukat* is not only about cleansing the body from visible impurities, but also about releasing burdens of the mind, fear, and negative energies attached to us” (Doster, interview, August 7, 2025). He added that *melukat* is often performed prior to herbal treatments or energy therapy, as it is believed to make the body more receptive to the healing process. This is consistent with holistic healing principles, in which the cleansing of energy and mind serves as an initial stage to prepare the body for receiving the benefits of physical therapy.

The *melukat* ritual is also closely related to the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, particularly the aspects of *parhyangan* (harmonious relationship with God) and *pawongan* (harmonious relationship with fellow humans). In undergoing *melukat*, devotees not only purify themselves but also seek blessings from God and renew their intentions in social interactions. By cleansing the mind of anger, resentment, or anxiety, *melukat* can help improve the quality of social relationships, which in turn positively impacts both mental and physical health (Windia & Dewi, 2011).

From a public health perspective, *melukat* can be seen as both a preventive and promotive practice. Preventive, because it helps prevent illnesses that originate from prolonged stress or mental burdens; promotive, because it enhances quality of life through the cultivation of positive energy and spiritual awareness. Integrating this ritual with healthy lifestyle practices may serve as a model of local wisdom relevant to the development of culture-based health programs in Bali. Thus, *melukat* is not only a religious

heritage but also a health asset with great potential to be preserved and developed.

Usadha Bali is a traditional healing system that combines herbal knowledge, prayer, and spiritual healing practices, transmitted through both oral tradition and palm-leaf manuscripts. One of its main sources is the *Lontar Usadha Taru Pramana*, which contains hundreds of herbal recipes for various ailments, ranging from digestive disorders and skin diseases to respiratory problems (Sudharta, 2001). *Usadha* does not rely solely on the pharmacological aspects of medicinal plants but also incorporates spiritual dimensions through specific rituals performed before, during, and after treatment, with the aim of restoring the balance of energy within the body.

Scientifically, the active compounds contained in several plants used in *usadha* have been studied and proven to provide health benefits. For instance, turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) contains curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory properties, while betel leaves (*Piper betle*) contain essential oils with antiseptic and antimicrobial effects (Winarti & Sugiharto, 2011). This demonstrates that *usadha* is not merely a cultural tradition but also has a scientific foundation relevant for development as a form of complementary medicine in the modern era.

Yoga and meditation in Bali possess unique characteristics, as they are deeply integrated with Balinese Hindu religious values. Beyond their modern presence in fitness centers or wellness retreats, these practices also serve as part of spiritual discipline carried out at home or in family temples. Within this tradition, yoga sessions often begin with *japa mantra* and prayers intended to purify the mind and focus energy before physical movements commence. This integration of spiritual and physical elements creates a deeper experience compared to secular yoga, as it involves cultivating a harmonious connection with *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*.

In addition to spiritual benefits, yoga and meditation in Bali have also been shown to provide positive impacts on physical and mental health. According to Feuerstein (2008), yoga encompasses physical postures (*āsana*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), and mental concentration

(*dhāraṇā*) to achieve holistic balance. This combination enhances flexibility, strengthens muscles, reduces stress, and improves sleep quality. In the Balinese context, the calming effects of yoga are often amplified by meditation practices conducted in spiritually charged locations, such as riverbanks or temple courtyards, which are believed to radiate positive vibrations.

Meditation practices in Balinese Hinduism are also closely linked to inner purification and self-control. Meditation is not always performed in silent sitting postures but may also be integrated into ritual activities such as *puja stuti* or daily offerings. These practices help individuals cultivate mindfulness in thought, speech, and action. Thus, yoga and meditation in Bali serve a dual function: as a means of maintaining physical fitness and as a spiritual path toward harmony with oneself and the surrounding environment.

Bhuta Yadnya is one of the five types of *yadnya* in Balinese Hinduism, focusing on offerings to unseen beings and natural forces, with the aim of maintaining environmental harmony (*palemahan*). This ritual is grounded in the belief that ecological balance is key to the survival of humans and all living beings on earth. In the modern context, the meaning of *Bhuta Yadnya* can be related to concepts of ecology and sustainability, where maintaining environmental balance helps prevent ecosystem disturbances that may trigger the emergence of diseases. Windia and Dewi (2011) affirm that environmental preservation through this ritual aligns with the principles of preventive health, as a clean and balanced environment is one of the main factors in preventing both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Beyond its spiritual and ecological significance, *Bhuta Yadnya* also carries practical aspects directly related to health. Offerings in this ritual typically involve plants, flowers, and spices with natural antiseptic and antimicrobial properties, such as betel leaves, ylang-ylang flowers, or citronella. These materials, aside from symbolizing purity and reverence, contain active compounds that help purify the air, repel disease-carrying insects, and maintain

environmental quality. In this way, *Bhuta Yadnya* can be regarded as a form of local wisdom that integrates spiritual values, environmental conservation, and public health efforts in a holistic manner.

The four practices discussed above complement each other in forming a holistic health system within Balinese Hinduism. *Melukat* purifies both body and soul, *usadha* provides physical healing, yoga and meditation strengthen the balance of body and mind, while *Bhuta Yadnya* ensures harmony with the environment. This approach resonates with the concept of integrative health, which combines physical, mental, spiritual, and ecological dimensions (Koenig, 2012).

Physical Health Aspects in Rituals

The use of natural materials in Balinese Hindu rituals plays an important role in maintaining the physical health of the community. Holy water (*tirtha*) used in purification ceremonies contains natural minerals—especially when sourced from mountain springs—which can refresh and nourish the body. In addition, herbs such as betel leaves, frangipani flowers, and various spices are often included in *banten* (offerings) or herbal mixtures, providing antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and aromatherapeutic benefits. Incense and fire used in offerings also serve dual functions: beyond their symbolic role, incense smoke can repel insects or act as a natural fragrance, while fire helps sterilize food or ritual spaces.

According to Wayan Suma, a ritual practitioner and *banten* maker in Gianyar, “The natural materials we use are not only symbolic but also help maintain cleanliness and health. Holy water taken from certain springs is usually clean, fresh, and believed to carry good energy. Incense with specific aromas can also repel mosquitoes or unpleasant odors” (Suma, interview, August 7, 2025). This statement highlights that the selection of ritual materials is based not only on spiritual considerations but also on their practical health benefits.

Dietary practices and restrictions (*vrata* or *upavāsa*) in the Balinese Hindu ritual calendar also positively impact physical health. For instance, partial fasting during *Siwaratri* or avoiding red meat on certain days allows the body to undergo natural detoxification. Plant-

based diets consumed during *odalan* or other holy days also promote fiber, vitamin, and mineral intake beneficial for digestion. This aligns with Longo and Mattson’s (2014) research showing that periodic dietary restriction can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Beyond nutritional benefits, *vrata* cultivates self-control and discipline, which affect overall physical and mental health. When individuals restrain themselves from eating or drinking in accordance with ritual rules, the body is given the opportunity to reset its metabolic system. In the Balinese context, ritual fasting also becomes a moment to consume simpler, more natural foods, thereby reducing the burden on the digestive system.

Wayan Suma further explained that some dietary restrictions in *desa adat* (customary villages) are linked not only to holy days but also to seasonal conditions. “During the rainy season, we are usually advised not to eat foods that spoil quickly or that may cause colds. This does have a health connection, even though it is framed as an adat (customary) rule” (Suma, interview, August 7, 2025). This demonstrates that ritual rules often have an empirical basis tied to environmental conditions and community health.

The physical health aspect is also reflected in activities carried out during rituals, such as preparing *banten*, performing sacred dances, or walking to temples. Making *banten* requires precision and fine motor coordination, while dances performed in ceremonies such as *Rejang Dewa* or *Baris Gede* involve bodily movements that strengthen muscles and joints. Walking to temples, especially those located in mountainous areas or at great distances, provides a form of physical exercise that benefits cardiovascular and respiratory health. Physical activities associated with rituals are carried out in a context full of meaning and togetherness, motivating people to move without feeling burdened. According to the Cultural Physical Activity Theory, participation in physical activities that carry social and spiritual value increases adherence and consistency in maintaining such practices (Holt et al., 2013). In other words, Balinese rituals

naturally encourage regular physical activity that is beneficial for health.

By integrating the use of natural materials, regulated dietary practices, and meaningful physical activities, Balinese Hindu rituals indirectly function as mechanisms for maintaining public health. The continuity of these traditions not only preserves cultural identity but also contributes to public health through a holistic approach that has stood the test of time.

Spiritual Health Aspects in Rituals

Balinese Hindu rituals not only nurture physical health but also cultivate spiritual well-being, which is closely connected to an individual's mental and emotional state. One important element is the purification of the mind and emotions through the chanting of mantras and symbolic gestures known as *mudra*. Mantras serve as vibrations of positive energy that calm the mind, while *mudra* are used to direct the flow of energy (*prāṇa*) within the body. According to Sharma (2015), mantra repetition can activate alpha brain waves, which are associated with relaxation and inner peace.

According to I Ketut Rinten, "A mantra is like medicine for the mind. When we chant it sincerely, its vibration enters the heart and cleanses the fear, anger, or sadness we carry" (interview, August 5, 2025). He further explained that *mudra*, when performed alongside mantras, helps open or close certain energy channels, thereby making the process of inner healing more effective. This statement affirms that spiritual practices in Balinese Hinduism are not merely symbolic but also possess tangible therapeutic dimensions.

The process of inner purification through mantras and *mudra* is usually conducted in temples, which are regarded as centers of positive energy. The serene temple environment, the sound of bells, and the fragrance of incense create a meditative atmosphere that supports mental relaxation. According to environmental psychology theory, a conducive setting can accelerate mental recovery and reduce stress (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Thus, ritual spaces serve a dual purpose: as venues of worship and as natural therapeutic environments for the psyche. Beyond self-purification, spiritual health is also

strengthened through connections with ancestors and deities. In Balinese culture, honoring ancestors is not only intended to preserve tradition but also to maintain the continuity of family energy. The *pitra yadnya* ceremony, for instance, is believed to connect prayers and blessings from ancestors to their descendants, providing inner strength to face life's challenges. This aligns with perspectives in medical anthropology which suggest that belief in ancestral support can enhance an individual's sense of security and psychological resilience (Keller, 2002). The *Bhagavad Gītā* 6.6 states:

*Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya
yenātmaivātmanā jitah,
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva
śatru-vat.*

(Bhagavad Gītā 6.6)

Translation:

For one who has conquered the self, the self is a friend; but for one who has not, the self becomes an enemy.

This verse emphasizes that spiritual health greatly depends on one's ability to control thoughts and emotions. In Balinese Hindu rituals, this control is cultivated through mantras, *mudra*, meditation, and worship, which function as means of inner purification from anger, fear, and anxiety. Sustained spiritual health ultimately has a positive impact on physical well-being, since a peaceful mind optimizes the body's energy for natural healing processes.

Prayer and offerings (*mebanten*) to the ancestors also serve as a form of inner therapy, as they provide a profound sense of connectedness. In modern psychotherapy, this is comparable to the concept of *family constellations*, which emphasizes the importance of understanding and honoring family roots for emotional health (Hellinger, 2001). Thus, ancestor veneration is not only a religious obligation but also carries a therapeutic function for mental restoration.

I Ketut Rinten emphasized, "If we forget our ancestors, our mind and heart will feel empty. By remembering them and asking for their blessings, the heart becomes more peaceful, and we no longer feel alone in facing life's

problems" (interview, August 5, 2025). He likens this spiritual connection to a tree being nourished by water: the roots (ancestors) provide strength to the trunk and leaves (descendants), enabling them to thrive. This perspective shows that spiritual belief can serve as a solid foundation for mental health.

Energy healing through worship and meditation also plays a vital role in the spiritual health of Balinese society. Worship of the deities is not merely understood as an act of reverence but also as a process of aligning individual energy with cosmic energy. Meditation—whether practiced in stillness or in motion (*moving meditation*)—helps reduce stress hormones such as cortisol, while simultaneously increasing happiness hormones such as serotonin (Pascoe et al., 2017). Meditation combined with prayer directs the mind toward higher purposes, thereby reducing the burdens of everyday thought. In Bali, meditation is often performed after prayer rituals, when silence prevails and the mind has been prepared through the chanting of mantras and the practice of *mudra*. This strengthens the effects of relaxation and allows for deeper inner healing.

Uniquely, meditation in Bali is often accompanied by natural elements such as the sound of flowing water or the whisper of wind among the trees. These elements provide additional mental health benefits, as Ulrich et al. (1991) explain that exposure to natural environments can accelerate recovery from psychological stress. In other words, Balinese meditation integrates spiritual practice with therapeutic support from the natural environment.

These rituals also foster mindfulness, which, according to Kabat-Zinn (2003), has been proven effective in reducing anxiety, depression, and chronic pain. In the Balinese context, mindfulness is not simply a modern technique but an organic part of spiritual practice handed down for generations. This is what makes spiritual health an integral part of everyday life in Bali.

The spiritual health benefits of Balinese Hindu rituals are not only experienced individually but also collectively. When communities gather in ceremonies, an exchange of positive energy takes place, strengthening social bonds and mutual support. Strong social connections have been

shown to contribute to better mental health and a reduced risk of stress-related illnesses (Umberson & Montez, 2010).

Thus, mental purification through mantras and *mudra*, strengthening ties with ancestors and deities, and energy healing through worship and meditation together form a comprehensive system of inner healing. This system does not rely solely on faith but also engages psychological and biological mechanisms that can be explained scientifically.

Integration of Physical–Spiritual Health

Balinese Hindu rituals serve a dual role as both preventive and curative practices. From a preventive perspective, rituals such as *melukat*, *bhuta yadnya*, and yoga help maintain the balance of body and mind, thereby preventing illnesses rooted in stress, unhealthy lifestyles, or disharmonious environments. Research by Astuti (2019) shows that regular spiritual practice can strengthen immunity by reducing cortisol levels and increasing endorphins. In other words, consistency in ritual functions as a natural vaccine that fortifies both physical and mental resilience.

From a curative perspective, rituals complement healing processes when individuals experience health disturbances. For instance, Balinese *usadha* healing often begins with an energy cleansing ritual through *melukat*, which is believed to make the body more receptive to herbal therapies. This principle aligns with the concept of holistic healing, in which treatment addresses not only physical symptoms but also the emotional or spiritual root causes (Dossey, 2009).

The integration of physical–spiritual health in Bali does not imply rejecting modern medical treatment. On the contrary, many communities combine the two approaches. In cases of chronic illness, patients may undergo medical care in hospitals while also participating in *penglukatan* ceremonies or special prayers to seek inner strength. According to Suprapti (2021), this dual approach provides patients with a greater sense of control and hope, which in turn contributes to improved quality of life. This pattern of integration is also evident in mental health care. Modern counseling and psychotherapy may be carried out alongside

meditation in temples or ancestor worship. Such an approach resonates with the biopsychosocial model, which emphasizes that health is determined by the interaction of biological, psychological, and socio-spiritual factors (Engel, 1977). Thus, Balinese society has intuitively practiced principles of modern health within the framework of their traditions.

The balance between medical treatment and Balinese Hindu traditions is also reflected in community-based healing. In villages, the *banjar* often becomes a forum for discussion and coordination regarding the treatment of sick members, including decisions about when to seek medical facilities and when to perform specific ceremonies. This shows the existence of social mechanisms that support the integration of both systems, resulting in complementarity rather than conflict.

However, such integration requires mutual understanding from both sides. Medical practitioners working in Bali need to understand the meaning and function of rituals in order to provide treatment recommendations that respect patients' beliefs. Conversely, traditional practitioners must also recognize the boundaries and necessity of medical interventions, especially in emergency situations. This collaboration can prevent delays in handling diseases that may carry fatal risks (Wibawa, 2020).

The benefits of physical–spiritual integration are increasingly relevant in today's stressful modern era. In the context of wellness tourism, for example, many visitors seek healing experiences in Bali that combine yoga, herbal remedies, and purification rituals. This trend shows that the modern world is beginning to acknowledge the importance of spiritual health as an integral part of overall well-being. This aligns with WHO (2018) recommendations that emphasize the need for holistic approaches in health systems.

Thus, Balinese Hindu rituals not only serve to preserve cultural heritage but also act as a bridge between physical and spiritual health, functioning as both preventive and curative mechanisms. Their integration with modern medicine enables communities to draw strength from both approaches, creating a more complete, relevant, and sustainable health system.

Challenges and Opportunities

The transformation of modern lifestyles in Bali has had a significant impact on the spiritual health of its people. Urbanization, technological advancement, and increasing work intensity have left many individuals with less time to engage in rituals regularly. Research by Adnyana (2020) indicates that younger generations in Bali tend to replace daily meditation and prayer with digital entertainment activities, thereby reducing opportunities for inner reflection. This condition may potentially lower the quality of mental and spiritual health if not balanced with proper adaptation.

Furthermore, modernization poses challenges to the understanding of traditional values. Some rituals that were once performed communally are now shortened or simplified for the sake of efficiency. While such efficiency may provide convenience, it carries the risk of fostering a superficial interpretation of the spiritual essence of rituals (Putra & Dewi, 2019). This, in turn, may weaken the function of rituals as a means of mental purification and social bonding.

On the other hand, there are great opportunities for revitalizing Balinese Hindu-based health practices. Revitalization can be achieved through documenting, teaching, and adapting rituals to be more relevant to modern contexts without losing their philosophical essence. Programs such as integrating yoga and meditation into school curricula or providing *usadha Bali* training for younger generations can serve as strategies to preserve and enhance the health benefits of these traditions (Suryani, 2021).

The potential of spiritual health tourism in Bali also represents a major opportunity that is increasingly attracting international visitors. The wellness tourism trend, which combines purification rituals (*melukat*), yoga, herbal medicine, and meditation, appeals to the global market seeking holistic healing experiences (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). Bali's unique combination of cultural richness, natural beauty, and authentic spiritual practices allows it to compete with global health destinations such as India and Thailand.

However, the development of spiritual health tourism must be carried out with caution to

avoid excessive commercialization. Tourism that prioritizes economic gain alone risks obscuring the spiritual values and diminishing the depth of experiences sought by visitors. Therefore, policies and regulations are needed to maintain a balance between cultural values, public health, and economic sustainability (UNWTO, 2018).

By understanding these challenges and capitalizing on these opportunities, Bali can preserve its unique role as a global center of spiritual health. Approaches that combine the preservation of Hindu Balinese values with relevant innovations will ensure that the physical and spiritual well-being of its people remains intact amidst modernization. Such strategies not only benefit local communities but also strengthen Bali's image as an authentic and sustainable healing destination on the world stage.

IV. CONCLUSION

Balinese Hindu rituals play an essential role in maintaining both physical and spiritual health in an integrated manner. Practices such as *melukat*, *usadha Bali*, yoga, meditation, and *Bhuta Yadnya* demonstrate that health is not merely understood as the absence of disease, but as the balance of bodily, mental, and environmental energies. This integration reflects the holistic philosophy deeply embedded in Balinese culture for centuries.

The relationship between rituals and physical health can be seen in the use of natural elements such as holy water, herbs, incense, and fire, all of which hold physiological benefits. Meanwhile, the spiritual dimension is manifested through mental purification, strengthening connections with ancestors and deities, and energy restoration through worship. This combination highlights that rituals are not only cultural heritage but also preventive and curative methods that complement modern medical treatments.

Balinese Hindu teachings, particularly the concepts of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Dharma*, remain highly relevant to holistic health in the present day. These values, which emphasize balance between one's relationship with God (*Parhyangan*), fellow humans (*Pawongan*), and nature (*Palemahan*), provide a strong foundation for addressing health challenges brought about by modernization, stress, and environmental

degradation. By integrating these teachings, society can cultivate a healthy, balanced, and sustainable lifestyle.

Thus, the preservation and development of Balinese Hindu health rituals are not only crucial for safeguarding cultural identity but also hold great potential as contributions to the global field of holistic wellness. The integration of traditional knowledge with modern medical approaches will create a more comprehensive health system, capable of addressing both physical and spiritual needs for local and global communities alike.

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