



# The eschatological traces in the cult of *maharsi markandeya* an interpretation of *samādhi*

Anak Agung Raka Asmari<sup>1,\*</sup>, Ni Wayan Sri Rahayu<sup>2</sup>, Arhana Lochan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brahma Widya Faculty, Hindu University of I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Denpasar, Bali, 80235, Indonesia;

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Dharma Duta, Study Program of Cultural and Religious Tourism, STAH Dharma Sentana, East Palu, Central Sulawesi, 94118, Indonesia;

<sup>3</sup> Research Fellow, Kalanidhi Division, IG National Centre for the Arts, Janpath New Delhi, 110001, India.

\*Correspondence: agungrakaasmari@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** This study explores the eschatological dimensions embedded in the veneration of *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan Bali, particularly through the interpretation of his *samādhi* (spiritual absorption) as a culmination of sacred life and transcendence. The aim is to analyze how the notion of moksha (liberation) is ritualized, spatialized, and narrated through cultic practices and collective memory within Balinese Hindu communities. Previous studies on Balinese religiosity have primarily focused on ritual systems, ancestral worship, and temple networks, but little attention has been paid to eschatological interpretations of *samādhi* shrines as sites of spiritual transcendence. **Methods:** This article adopts a qualitative approach using ethnographic fieldwork, textual interpretation of Hindu philosophical sources (particularly Vedānta and Yoga Sūtra), and spatial-symbolic analysis of the temple architecture and rituals associated with Pura Pucak Payogan. **Findings:** The findings reveal that *Maharsi Markandeya's samādhi* is perceived not merely as a memorial site but as an eschatological axis where the duality between life and death dissolves. This perception is enacted through pilgrimage practices, offerings, and narratives that position the site as a symbolic gateway to liberation. The integration of eschatological doctrine into living religious practices reflects a dynamic fusion of textual philosophy and local ontology. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that Pura Pucak Payogan functions as a liminal sacred space encoding the ideal of divine union, and that the cult of *Maharsi Markandeya* offers a living model of eschatological embodiment in the Hindu-Balinese tradition. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary interpretation of *samādhi* as an eschatological site and in highlighting the fusion of theological vision with ritual practice in contemporary Balinese spirituality.

**KEYWORDS:** Balinese hinduism; eschatology; maharsi markandeya; sacred space; *samādhi*.

## 1. Introduction

Pura Pucak Payogan, located in the village of Kedewatan, Ubud, Bali, is believed to be the site of *samādhi* (final spiritual absorption) of *Maharsi Markandeya*, a legendary sage in the *Nusantara Hindu* tradition credited with disseminating *Dharma* across the island of Bali. In Balinese Hindu belief, *samādhi* is not merely a physical death, but a spiritual transition towards union with Brahman, the ultimate reality. A *samādhi* site is considered a sacred axis (*axis mundi*), a liminal point that bridges the profane and the transcendent, the temporal

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world and the realm of mokṣa (liberation), thus positioning it as a key locus for the study of Balinese Hindu eschatology.

Eschatology, as a field within philosophy of religion and theology, refers to the study of end-of-life processes, death, rebirth, and the liberation of the soul (Morris, 2021). In Hinduism, particularly in *Vedānta* and the Yoga system of *Patañjali*, the attainment of *samādhi* is regarded as the highest state of consciousness, transcending dualities and serving as a prerequisite for mokṣa (Eliade, 2009; Saraswati, 2016). However, most Hindu eschatological studies have focused predominantly on normative Indian texts such as the Bhagavad Gītā, Upaniṣads, and Yoga Sūtras, while local interpretations of *samādhi*, such as those in Bali, have received limited scholarly attention (Surpi, 2024).

Previous research on *Maharsi Markandeya* in Bali has mostly placed him within the framework of religious or mytho-historical narratives, without engaging deeply with the theological or eschatological dimensions of his *samādhi* cult. In fact, the conceptualization of a *samādhi* site as a tīrtha mokṣa (a site of purification and liberation) bears significant implications for understanding how Balinese Hindu communities embody and enact eschatological teachings through spatial practices, rituals, and local narratives.

Drawing upon the *Vedāntic* and *Yoga Sūtra* framework, which defines *samādhi* as a state of suspended mental modifications (nirodha citta-vṛtti) leading to mokṣa (*Patañjali* in Bryant, 2009), alongside Eliade's (1959) theory of sacred space, this study seeks to examine how the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya* is understood and practiced as an eschatological realization in Balinese Hindu spirituality. Through an interpretive-hermeneutic approach to both texts and lived practices, this article aims to fill a gap in Hindu eschatology studies by integrating philosophical doctrine with ritual and spatial expressions in a local context.

Accordingly, this article offers not only an interpretation of *samādhi* as an individual mystical experience, but also as a social and symbolic construction shaping Balinese understandings of death, immortality, and the path to liberation. The central hypothesis proposed is that the *samādhi* site of *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan serves as an eschatological locus that represents an integration of *Vedāntic mokṣa* doctrine with Balinese Hindu ritual-spatial praxis.

*Rsi Markandeya*, a revered Hindu sage from South India, played a pivotal role in the dissemination of Hinduism in Bali during the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. After receiving divine revelation during deep meditation on Mount Raung in East Java, he led a group of disciples across the Bali Strait toward the slopes of Mount Agung, which at that time remained an untouched forest. Prior to initiating forest clearing, *Rsi Markandeya* conducted a sacred ritual by planting the Panca Datu, five types of sacred metals; gold, silver, copper, bronze, and iron, alongside a principal gemstone as symbols of balance and protection. This consecrated site later became known as Pura Basukian, part of the Besakih Temple complex, now considered the spiritual epicenter of Balinese Hinduism. His spiritual journey extended beyond Besakih, as he also established several other temples such as Pura Gunung Raung in Taro and Pura Gunung Lebah in Ubud, each of which became significant centers of spiritual practice for the Balinese community.

Bali, recognized globally as a spiritual and cultural destination, possesses a profound and meaningful religious heritage. Among the central elements of its spiritual tradition is the practice of meditation, locally known as samadhi. Pura Pucak Payogan, a sacred temple located in the mountainous highlands of Bali, is deeply associated with the teachings and spiritual accomplishments of *Maharsi Markandeya*. As a revered figure in Hindu tradition known for his spiritual dedication, *Maharsi Markandeya* is acknowledged as a major proponent of the doctrine of samadhi the state of supreme consciousness attained through deep meditation (Widana et al., 2025).

In Hindu philosophy, samadhi represents the culmination of meditative practice, where the individual experiences inner peace and unification with the Divine or the cosmic source (O'Brien Kop, 2020). In the Balinese context, samadhi is not merely a meditative technique but forms an integral aspect of spiritual life that embodies a deep connection with the Divine, nature, and fellow beings. Pura Pucak Payogan, in its association with *Maharsi Markandeya*, is seen as a liminal space where the physical and spiritual realms converge.

This positioning elevates its status as one of Bali's most sacred sites (Sutrisna, 2018). Therefore, a deeper exploration of the spiritual significance of samadhi practiced at this temple and its relevance in the contemporary Balinese context is essential particularly amid the transformations brought about by globalization.

Historically, Bali has been a fertile ground for the flourishing of Hindu teachings, which have seamlessly integrated with local customs and beliefs. Spiritual practices such as *yajña* (sacred offerings), *dharma* (moral duty), and *bhakti* (devotion) have become part of the everyday life of the Balinese people. Despite the ever-changing socio-cultural landscape, Bali continues to uphold these spiritual traditions, one of which is the practice of meditation and samadhi. Pura Pucak Payogan serves not only as a space for attaining inner peace but also as a living symbol of the continued application of profound religious teachings handed down through generations.

Fundamentally, samadhi is one of the stages in the meditative system of raja yoga or the royal path of yoga aimed at achieving mastery over the mind and direct realization of higher truths. Within the Hindu tradition, samadhi is regarded as the ultimate spiritual goal (Iyengar, 2005). *Maharsi Markandeya*, through his teachings, encouraged adherents to cultivate spiritual discipline through deep meditation. In Bali, sacred spaces such as Pura Pucak Payogan have become centers for spiritual training and contemplation, offering refuge to those seeking inner tranquility and divine union.

However, in the context of modern-day Bali, it is vital to examine how these teachings adapt to contemporary realities. Once known as an island steeped in religious tradition, Bali is now part of an increasingly interconnected global world. The growth of tourism and economic development has introduced new challenges to the preservation of spiritual and religious traditions. At the same time, modern life has influenced how Balinese society perceives and engages in meditative practices. Thus, Pura Pucak Payogan, as a venerated spiritual site, must confront the tension between preserving its authenticity and remaining relevant to younger generations navigating the complexities of modernity.

The preservation of samadhi at Pura Pucak Payogan is crucial for sustaining the spiritual values embedded in the practice. This temple is not merely a sacred monument but a symbol of humanity's pursuit of ultimate consciousness and harmony with the universe. In practice, samadhi teaches inner peace, self-control, and a deeper understanding of human existence. These teachings are especially pertinent in an era marked by haste and materialism (Wiana, 2009).

Moreover, samadhi contributes to the cultivation of social harmony. The spiritual practice taught by *Maharsi Markandeya* emphasizes not only individual enlightenment but also the recognition of one's social responsibilities. In this regard, Pura Pucak Payogan functions as a reminder that spirituality is not confined to personal transcendence, but encompasses efforts to promote collective well-being and balance between worldly and sacred life.

The formulation of Balinese Hinduism emerged during the period between 1945 and 1965, as Balinese religious leaders sought formal recognition from the Indonesian government. This period witnessed active debates among Balinese intellectuals concerning the relationship between religion (*agama*) and custom (*adat*), and between Balinese Hinduism and its Indian origins (Sudiana et al., 2024). The *Ajeg Bali* movement, often seen as both a cultural preservation initiative and a political response to external influences, played a key role in shaping the modern Balinese Hindu identity. Balinese Hinduism is characterized by its integration with local customs and cultural practices, resulting in a distinct yet fundamentally consistent form of Hinduism that diverges from its Indian counterpart while upholding essential philosophical principles (Ushamohan et al., 2020). This unique synthesis has endowed Balinese Hinduism with a flexible and universal character, capable of adapting to local traditions while maintaining its spiritual essence.

This study, therefore, seeks to further explore the spiritual meaning of samadhi as taught by *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan and its relevance to contemporary life. It also aims to investigate the temple's role in preserving Balinese religious traditions amid the growing challenges of globalization and modernity. Using a multidisciplinary

approach that encompasses historical, spiritual, and sociological dimensions, this article intends to offer a broader understanding of Pura Pucak Payogan's significance in the spiritual landscape of Bali.

Although numerous studies have addressed Balinese Hindu spirituality and the role of sacred sites on the island, there remains a gap in scholarship that critically connects samadhi as taught by *Maharsi Markandeya* with the preservation of Balinese spirituality in the modern era. Most existing literature tends to focus on ritual practices such as yajña and dharma, often neglecting how samadhi functions as a transformative spiritual discipline in daily life particularly in temples like Pura Pucak Payogan.

Furthermore, research that examines how modernization affects the practice of samadhi and how Balinese communities adapt to these changes is still limited. While some studies have explored Balinese religion within the context of tourism and cultural preservation (Irianto, 2017; Sutrisna, 2018), few have delved into the nuanced relationship between samadhi and the challenges posed by globalization. Therefore, focused research on the practice of samadhi at Pura Pucak Payogan, and its resilience in the face of modernity, would offer a significant contribution to the study of Balinese spirituality.

Current studies generally provide broad descriptions of samadhi as a meditative practice within Hindu traditions but often overlook the specific application of *Maharsi Markandeya's* teachings at Pura Pucak Payogan and their practical role in Balinese spiritual life. This research seeks to address this gap through a thematic investigation into the meaning of samadhi as taught by *Maharsi Markandeya* and its relevance in the contemporary Balinese context.

## 2. Methods

This study adopts an interpretive qualitative approach with a case study strategy focused on the cultic practice and veneration of *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan, located in Kedewatan Village, Ubud, Bali. This approach aligns with a constructivist ontological paradigm, which views religious reality as a socially and spiritually constructed phenomenon. It also draws on a hermeneutic epistemology that emphasizes the interpretive process in understanding symbols and meanings within local contexts. The research aims to explore the eschatological dimensions embodied in the religious experiences of the Balinese Hindu community through their reverence for the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya*. The site selection is based on local belief that Pura Pucak Payogan is the location where *Maharsi Markandeya* attained *samādhi*, a state interpreted as the union of the soul with Brahman. The temple is regarded as a sacred space imbued with high spiritual energy and serves as a significant destination in the *tīrtha yātrā* (spiritual pilgrimage) tradition.

Fieldwork was conducted from January to April 2025, coinciding with several holy days and ritual ceremonies that allowed for intensive participant observation. Key informants included the temple priests (*pemangku*), local spiritual leaders, customary community members from Kedewatan Village, and scholars familiar with the Markandeya tradition and Balinese Hinduism. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation during rituals, and visual documentation (photographs, field notes, and audio recordings). Secondary data were gathered from textual studies of Hindu scriptures such as the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, as well as academic literature on Hindu eschatology, Balinese religious studies, and sacred space. Data analysis followed a process of data reduction using open coding to identify emergent eschatological themes from narratives and ritual practices. The data were then presented in the form of thematic and visual narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretive reading of the symbolic meanings embedded in rites and sacred space. Conclusions were drawn using a reflective hermeneutic approach, linking empirical experiences with theoretical frameworks on sacred space and the doctrine of *samādhi* within Vedānta and Yoga traditions (Bryant, 2009; Saraswati, 2016). The entire research process adhered to ethical

standards for qualitative research, including obtaining informed consent from all participants and safeguarding the confidentiality of informants when necessary.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Understanding *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan

Findings from field interviews and participant observations indicate that *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan is perceived as a deep meditative practice that guides individuals toward higher consciousness, with the ultimate goal of achieving union with the Divine and the universe. Most informants described *samādhi* as a deeply respected form of spiritual devotion, commonly implemented through meditation techniques that emphasize focused concentration on spiritual objects such as mantras, breath regulation, or visualizations of the cosmos (Sutrisna, 2018).

*Samādhi* constitutes a central spiritual concept in Hindu philosophy, particularly within the Balinese tradition. In general, it refers to a meditative state or the union of the soul with the Divine, wherein one attains supreme awareness and experiences profound inner peace. In the context of Pura Pucak Payogan, the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya* functions not only as a spiritual practice but also as a symbol of devotion, self-purification, and the attainment of universal peace.

Located in Bali a land imbued with a rich history and profound significance within Balinese Hindu spirituality Pura Pucak Payogan is revered as a sacred site believed to possess extraordinary spiritual energy. The temple is directly associated with the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya*, a highly venerated rishi (*sage*) in the Hindu tradition, who is regarded as a spiritual exemplar of meditative realization and contemplative insight.

Several key dimensions emerged in understanding the meaning of *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan, each revealing its deep spiritual and cultural significance. Firstly, *samādhi* is viewed as a sacred pathway to divine union. In the Hindu tradition, it marks the culmination of intense meditation leading to *moksha*, the ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death. At this spiritually powerful site, devotees (*pemedek*) believe they can merge with the Divine through deep meditative states. Thus, *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan is more than a meditative technique, it is a profound spiritual journey toward inner peace and enlightenment.

Moreover, *samādhi* symbolizes spiritual perfection, particularly as associated with *Maharsi Markandeya*. This revered rishi is believed to have attained the highest level of spiritual realization through disciplined and intense meditative practice. His legacy serves as an inspiration for the Balinese Hindu community to follow a similar path of inner stillness, self-restraint, and heightened awareness in everyday life.

In addition to its personal spiritual dimensions, *samādhi* at this temple also functions as a means of spiritual education and community empowerment. Pura Pucak Payogan serves as a dynamic center where spiritual teachings are made accessible to practitioners of all levels, from novices to experienced seekers. The practice of *samādhi* thus becomes a tool not only for personal transcendence but also for deepening the communal understanding of Hindu philosophy grounded in meditation and self-reflection.

Finally, the influence of *samādhi* extends into the broader social and cultural life of the Balinese people. Rituals centered on *samādhi* strengthen the spiritual and communal fabric of society, fostering interpersonal bonds and reinforcing shared values. Through collective meditation and devotion, the community nurtures harmony and helps preserve the spiritual essence that lies at the heart of Balinese culture. In practice, *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan transcends the physical act of meditation; it is an embodied effort to internalize the teachings passed down by *Maharsi Markandeya*. The temple offers a conducive environment physically and spiritually for reaching states of *samādhi* through ritual, prayer, and immersive contemplation.

Laukkonen et al. (2023) explore the meditative rituals typically involve stages such as focused concentration, breath control, and attainment of inner tranquility. In the state of

*samādhi*, the practitioner not only turns inward but also recognizes their interconnectedness with the cosmos, ultimately leading to unity with the Laukkonen et al. (2023).

*Maharsi Markandeya* is a seminal figure in Hindu teachings, known for his extraordinary spiritual achievements. He is believed to have transcended death, attained deep wisdom, and realized life balance through meditation (Mahendra, 2024). The *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan is closely tied to his teachings and life story, serving as an inspiration for Balinese Hindus to emulate his spiritual journey and continue the meditative practices that foster wisdom and equanimity.

Thus, *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan is not merely a spiritual practice aimed at inner peace; it represents a deeper spiritual quest an existential bridge connecting humanity with the Divine and the universe (Vishnubhotla et al., 2022). Through this sacred site, visitors are not only invited to discover personal peace but also to understand the vital importance of balancing social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of life. *Samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan urges devotees to continuously pursue spiritual realization while preserving ancestral wisdom rooted in the noble values of Hindu dharma.

### 3.2 Pura Pucak Payogan as a center of meditation and the teachings of maharsi markandeya

Pura Pucak Payogan functions not only as a place of worship but also as a center for spiritual education, where the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya* on meditation and *samādhi* are transmitted to the Balinese Hindu community. The temple has emerged as one of the key sites for individuals seeking to deepen their understanding and practice of *samādhi*. It offers designated spaces for meditation and spiritual reflection, enabling practitioners to focus on attaining *samādhi* in a serene and contemplative setting.

Located in the mountainous region of Bali, Pura Pucak Payogan is among the most highly revered temples within the Balinese Hindu tradition. Beyond its role as a ritual space, it serves as a meditative sanctuary and a custodian of the spiritual teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya* an influential sage in Hindu tradition renowned for his profound insights into meditation and *samādhi*, aimed at spiritual enlightenment and the realization of supreme consciousness.

Sacred spaces such as Pura Pucak Payogan play a vital role in the spiritual life of Balinese society. As noted by Sadhasivam et al. (2021), Balinese temples often serve as centers of spiritual learning where Hindus can cultivate and expand their religious practice. These temples also provide environments conducive to the internalization of spiritual teachings particularly those concerning the attainment of higher states of consciousness through meditation and *samādhi*.

*Maharsi Markandeya* is widely recognized for his deep meditative insights, particularly with regard to *samādhi* a state of profound concentration and inner absorption through which one may attain heightened awareness and unity with the Divine and the cosmos. In Hindu philosophy, *samādhi* is considered the ultimate goal of meditative practice, leading to deeper understanding of reality and existential truth.

In Markandeya's teachings, *samādhi* is not merely a mental exercise but a form of spiritual devotion that brings the practitioner closer to moksha (liberation). His teachings link the discipline of meditation with the highest spiritual aim realization of the Ātman (true self) and its unity with Brahman (the Supreme Absolute) (Porandla, 2022).

As a site deeply connected to the spiritual legacy of *Maharsi Markandeya*, Pura Pucak Payogan plays a critical role in preserving and disseminating the concept of *samādhi*. According to Irianto (2017), meditative practices and spiritual education in Bali often integrate classical Hindu teachings with local traditions, giving rise to a unique form of practice that is deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual lifeworld of Balinese society.

The temple is equipped with several spaces specifically designated for meditation activities. As a sacred and tranquil site, Pura Pucak Payogan offers an environment that is secluded from worldly distractions ideal for immersive meditative engagement. Here,

devotees can practice meditation at a profound level, in alignment with the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya*.

According to Prabhupada (1972), meditation in the Hindu tradition functions as a means to purify the mind from worldly disturbances, elevate one's consciousness, and cultivate a deeper spiritual understanding. Meditation at Pura Pucak Payogan serves this same purpose guiding individuals toward inner peace and harmonious union with the Divine.

Furthermore, the temple plays an important role in safeguarding *Maharsi Markandeya's* teachings on meditation. Wiana (2009) emphasizes that Bali is home to numerous sacred sites that function not only as venues for religious ceremonies but also as centers of spiritual instruction that assist practitioners in their quest for enlightenment. Pura Pucak Payogan is evidently one of these centers, where teachings on *samādhi* and meditation are delivered in an authentic manner enriched by Balinese spiritual values.

Thus, Pura Pucak Payogan not only serves as a sacred site in the ritual sense, but also as an epistemological space where dialogue between classical Hindu teachings and the religious practices of the Balinese people takes place. The meditation experience at this temple confirms that *samādhi* is not merely an individual achievement, but a collective process that connects humans with the cosmic order (Bhushan & Garfield (2024). *Maharsi Markandeya's* teachings, which emphasize the union of Ātman with Brahman, reveal an eschatological trace: that every meditation practice ultimately leads the individual towards liberation (moksha) as the ultimate goal of spiritual life.

This interpretation confirms that the existence of Pura Pucak Payogan not only preserves Markandeya's spiritual legacy but also reconstructs the meaning of *samādhi* in the contemporary Balinese context. This place serves as a symbol of continuity between the past and the present, where teachings on self-control, inner silence, and spiritual union are practiced and transmitted across generations. In other words, Pura Pucak Payogan functions as an eschatological medium affirming the transcendence of worldly life toward the highest consciousness, while also serving as an educational vehicle for Balinese Hindus in internalizing the values of perseverance, purity, and cosmic interconnectedness.

### 3.3 The challenge of modernization in meditation practice at Pura Pucak Payogan

Amid rapid social transformation in Bali, sacred sites such as Pura Pucak Payogan face pressing challenges in preserving the relevance of spiritual teachings in a modern society. Globalization and modernization have significantly altered the daily lives of Balinese communities, increasingly influenced by external cultures, the tourism industry, and materialistic lifestyles.

Sutrisna (2018) observes that although Bali is renowned for its rich spiritual heritage, many members of the younger generation have begun to lose interest in traditional spiritual practices such as meditation and *samādhi*. This shift reflects a broader tension between the preservation of spiritual traditions and the realities of an increasingly material-oriented world. While efforts continue at Pura Pucak Payogan to uphold the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya* and promote meditative practices, religious leaders and temple caretakers face substantial challenges in ensuring these teachings remain relevant and accessible to a modern audience.

Findings from field interviews suggest that despite Pura Pucak Payogan's enduring significance as a center for *samādhi* practice, there is a growing need for more innovative approaches to engage the younger generation. Integrating digital technology such as online meditation classes or mobile applications featuring teachings inspired by *Maharsi Markandeya* may offer effective tools for revitalization.

This aligns with Irianto's (2017) assertion that many sacred sites in Bali function not only as ritual spaces but also as spiritual education centers. Pura Pucak Payogan exemplifies this dual role, where the depth of Hindu teachings is preserved and transmitted through contemplative practices aimed at cultivating inner peace.

The concept of *samādhi*, as taught by *Maharsi Markandeya*, also resonates with the meditative path described in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, wherein meditation serves as a method for attaining spiritual enlightenment and realizing the deeper dimensions of the self (Prabhupada, 1972). The practice of meditation at Pura Pucak Payogan serves this very function facilitating union with the Divine and the cosmos.

Table 1. Summary of community perceptions and practices of *samādhi*

Aspect	Key findings
Understanding of <i>samādhi</i>	Seen as a profound meditative state to attain unity with God and the cosmos
Role of the Temple	Serves as a center for spiritual education and meditation for Balinese Hindus
Key Challenges	Modern lifestyles, tourism influences, and declining youth interest

Nevertheless, Wiana (2009) underscores that globalization and the expansion of tourism have transformed patterns of everyday life in Bali, contributing to a noticeable decline in youth participation in traditional practices. This underscores the urgency of sustaining traditional spiritual teachings amid modern pressures. The following Table 1 summarizes key insights from field interviews regarding the understanding and practice of *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan.

Despite these challenges, *samādhi* remains an integral part of Balinese spiritual life, particularly in its role in cultivating inner peace and divine alignment. While *Maharsi Markandeya*'s teachings continue to be respected and practiced by many, there is a marked shift in how such practices are engaged with, especially among the younger generation.

The data indicates that *samādhi* is not merely a meditative technique but a profound spiritual conduit through which individuals come to deeper self-understanding and awareness of the surrounding world. This aligns with Prabhupada's (1972) interpretation of Hindu meditation as a vehicle for transcending duality and achieving moksha (liberation). At Pura Pucak Payogan, *samādhi* is regarded as a means to realize *Ātman* (the true self) as a manifestation of Brahman (the Supreme Being).

However, the pervasive influence of modernization continues to shape and, at times, hinder these spiritual engagements. The younger generation, increasingly drawn to pragmatic and material pursuits, may find abstract spiritual practices such as *samādhi* less immediately relevant. This reflects similar findings by Sutrisna (2018), who noted growing disconnection between youth and traditional practices, even in a society that remains outwardly committed to spiritual continuity.

The results of this study reinforce the findings of earlier literature Wiana (2009) emphasizes the centrality of meditation in Balinese spiritual traditions, while Sutrisna (2018) affirms the vital role of sacred spaces such as Pura Pucak Payogan in preserving these traditions. However, this research also reveals a generational gap in spiritual practice that has not been fully addressed in prior studies.

Irianto (2017) similarly noted that globalization and tourism pose critical threats to spiritual continuity in Bali. Yet the present findings also highlight that local communities especially religious leaders are actively seeking ways to adapt *samādhi* teachings to contemporary realities.

This study thus contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it affirms that *samādhi* is not solely a meditative technique but a form of profound spiritual relationship between the self, the Divine, and nature. Practically, it provides insights that can inform efforts by religious leaders and educators to preserve *samādhi* traditions particularly through digital tools that make such teachings more accessible to modern youth.

As a spiritual state in Hindu tradition, *samādhi* signifies the transcendence of worldly distraction and the attainment of supreme consciousness (Prabhupada, 1972). In Bali, it is



not merely a private activity, but an integral part of a collective spiritual ethos. *Samādhi* is regarded as a path toward purification, inner harmony, and realization of higher truths.

Pura Pucak Payogan functions as a gateway for experiencing closeness with the Divine. According to Wiana (2009), *samādhi* is understood in Bali as the apex of the spiritual journey, culminating in a transcendental experience of deep existential insight. In this sense, *samādhi* becomes a sacred offering an act of devotion toward the Divine and the natural world, embodying the non-dual philosophy taught by *Maharsi Markandeya*.

The temple's architecture and spatial layout are intentionally designed to harmonize with its natural surroundings, providing tranquil spaces for silent contemplation. Sutrisna (2018) notes that meditation at Pura Pucak Payogan involves not only breath control or concentration techniques, but also a holistic awareness of the human-nature-Divine relationship.

As a spiritual education center, the temple also offers instruction on meditation and mental discipline according to Markandeya's teachings. This underscores the temple's dual function as a sacred site and a pedagogical space for sustaining Balinese Hindu spirituality.

Nevertheless, the rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape of Bali driven by tourism and globalization poses substantial risks to the sustainability of *samādhi* practices. Many youth, immersed in modern lifestyles and consumer culture, feel increasingly alienated from the spiritual values upheld by previous generations. Thus, Pura Pucak Payogan must remain adaptive and proactive in serving as a relevant spiritual sanctuary.

Religious educators suggest that the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya* can be translated into more accessible formats for the modern world, such as open meditation classes, structured workshops, or digitally mediated practices that align with contemporary learning preferences (Sutrisna, 2018).

Through thematic analysis, this study concludes that *samādhi*, as taught by *Maharsi Markandeya* and practiced at Pura Pucak Payogan, represents an essential dimension of Balinese spiritual tradition. However, modernization particularly through globalization and tourism necessitates strategic adaptation to sustain the practice and relevance of *samādhi* in a changing world. Education, innovation, and a renewed cultural pedagogy are crucial to ensuring the survival and regeneration of this sacred tradition.

Considering the various challenges of modernization, it is clear that the preservation of the practice of *samādhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan cannot rely solely on tradition. An adaptive strategy is needed that can bridge the spiritual values inherited from *Maharsi Markandeya* with the dynamics of contemporary Balinese life. Modernization should not be seen solely as a threat, but also as an opportunity to expand the reach of *samādhi* teachings. For example, the use of digital media can open access for younger generations who are more familiar with technology, allowing them to learn about *samādhi* teachings through formats that are compatible with modern lifestyles without losing their spiritual substance (Das, Singh, & Mittal (2023).

Furthermore, the practice of *samādhi* also needs to be contextualized with current issues relevant to the current generation, such as mental health, environmental crises, and the search for meaning in life amid materialism. In this context, *samādhi* can be positioned not only as a path to moksha, but also as a practical means of cultivating inner peace, emotional balance, and ecological awareness (Negribs, 2023). Thus, the spiritual values inherited from *Maharsi Markandeya* remain relevant and resonant for modern generations.

In addition, the role of religious educators, traditional leaders, and spiritual leaders in Bali in general is crucial (Jero et al., 2025). They are not only protectors of tradition, but also facilitators who can rearticulate the teachings of *samādhi* in language and approaches that are easily understood by the younger generation. The continuity of these teachings depends heavily on the ability of local communities to balance the authenticity of tradition with pedagogical innovation.

Thus, the existence of Pura Pucak Payogan as a spiritual center not only provides a space for individual contemplation but also serves as a dialectical arena between tradition and modernity. If it can creatively harness the challenges of modernization, Pura Pucak Payogan has the potential to strengthen its position as a relevant spiritual laboratory across

generations while preserving the continuity of *samādhi* teachings in an ever-changing global landscape.

Based on the above description, it can be understood that Pura Pucak Payogan is not just a religious site, but a spiritual and pedagogical center that reinforces *Maharsi Markandeya*'s teachings on *samadhi*. Its existence affirms the continuity between tradition, sacred space, and the spiritual learning process of the Balinese people. However, modernization presents serious challenges in the form of lifestyle changes, the penetration of global culture, and a decline in the younger generation's interest in traditional contemplative practices (Vishnubhotla et al, 2021; Nguyen, 2023)

Nevertheless, these challenges also open up new opportunities to expand and contextualize the practice of *samādhi* (Lunstroth, 2021). Efforts to integrate digital technology, link meditation teachings to contemporary issues such as mental health and ecological awareness, and strengthen the role of spiritual leaders in transmitting cultural values are important strategies for maintaining the continuity of *Markandeya*'s teachings. In other words, modernity does not have to be positioned as a threat, but can also be used as a creative vehicle to renew and strengthen the relevance of tradition.

Therefore, it must be emphasized that *samadhi* at Pura Pucak Payogan is a spiritual practice that has eschatological, pedagogical, and transformative meanings. It is not only a personal practice towards *moksha*, but also a collective medium for building self-awareness, social harmony, and cosmic connectedness. This finding provides both conceptual and practical foundations that the teachings of *Maharsi Markandeya* can still be revitalized in a modern context, provided there is a willingness within the community to innovate without losing the essence of the noble values that have been passed down.

#### 4. Conclusions

This study concludes that the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan, Kedewatan Village, Ubud, is not merely understood as the final resting place of a sacred *ṛṣi*, but rather as a sacralized space that embodies eschatological principles within the Balinese Hindu tradition. The temple functions as an axis mundi a spiritual axis linking the profane and the sacred, mediating between human existence and the ultimate goal of *mokṣa*. The narrative of *Maharsi Markandeya*'s union with Brahman is not confined to oral tradition; it is also materially inscribed in ritual practices and temple architecture. This illustrates that eschatology in the Balinese context is not simply a theological abstraction, but a lived, enacted, and sacralized reality experienced collectively by the religious community.

The implications of these findings are wide-ranging, particularly in the fields of Hindu theology, the anthropology of religion, and sacred space studies. The research demonstrates that the doctrines of *mokṣa* and *samādhi* are not exclusively interpreted as individual and transcendental goals, but are communally and ritually embodied by the Balinese Hindu community. Thus, *samādhi* emerges not solely as a philosophical discourse but as a practical and ritual structure through which devotees negotiate their relationship with death, divinity, and the eternal.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, integrating Hindu eschatological theory with the lived religious practices of the Balinese. It is the first scholarly investigation to analyze the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya* as an eschatological locus within the context of Pura Pucak Payogan. Rather than focusing merely on the historical or mythological aspects of *Maharsi Markandeya*, the study positions the cultic practices surrounding him as an embodied model of the *mokṣa* doctrine realized through space, ritual, and symbol. This research further expands the understanding of eschatology as a socially and culturally embedded experience, rather than as abstract theological speculation. In doing so, the study offers a significant contribution toward contextual and hermeneutic engagement between Vedāntic theology and Balinese religious praxis.

This study reveals that the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya* at Pura Pucak Payogan holds profound significance in the spiritual life of Balinese Hindus. It serves not only as a

sacred space for meditation but also as a powerful symbol of spiritual attainment and the harmonious connection between humans and the cosmos. The presence of this *samādhi* becomes a medium for transmitting essential teachings on self-discipline, purity of life, and the pursuit of inner peace. Therefore, it is an integral part of religious practice that reinforces the spiritual identity of Balinese Hinduism.

Findings also suggest that *Maharsi Markandeya's samādhi* represents a vital cultural and educational resource for Bali's younger generation. The site is not only a place of worship but has the potential to become a spiritual learning center that enhances youth understanding of Balinese Hindu values. A practical recommendation emerging from this study is the development of educational programs based on this sacred site to facilitate the transmission of traditional knowledge and spiritual teachings to future generations. This would significantly contribute to cultural preservation in the context of modernity.

This research underscores the need for proper management and preservation of Pura Pucak Payogan as a spiritual site of historical and cultural importance. The temple holds great potential to attract spiritually and culturally motivated visitors. As such, sustainable and culturally sensitive management is essential to maintain its authenticity. A recommended policy measure is the enhancement of supportive facilities surrounding the site, while simultaneously ensuring the continuity of rituals and spiritual practices associated with it.

This study has several notable limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, there are geographical and contextual constraints, as the research was confined to a single sacred site Pura Pucak Payogan. As a result, the findings may not be entirely generalizable to other spiritual locations across Bali or Indonesia. The research focused specifically on the spiritual and cultural meanings surrounding the *samādhi* of *Maharsi Markandeya*, without delving into the socioeconomic dynamics or the potential pressures posed by tourism on the site's sustainability.

Secondly, methodological limitations are inherent in the qualitative interpretative approach adopted in this study. Data collection through interviews and participant observation, while rich in depth, carries the possibility of subjective bias, particularly in the interpretation of symbolic and spiritual meanings. Consequently, the conclusions drawn may be influenced by the personal views and experiences of the informants. Future research could benefit from employing mixed methods or integrating quantitative data to enhance the robustness and triangulation of the findings.

Lastly, the analysis offered limited engagement with issues of modernity and globalization. The study did not extensively examine how contemporary global forces influence spiritual practices at Pura Pucak Payogan. Given Bali's prominence as an international tourist destination, it is crucial for future investigations to address how global cultural and economic dynamics are reshaping religious expressions and the sanctity of sacred sites, particularly the *samādhi* associated with *Maharsi Markandeya*.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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### Biographies of Authors

**Anak Agung Raka Asmariyani**, Brahma Widya Faculty, Hindu University of I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Denpasar, Bali, 80235, Indonesia.

- Email: [agungrakaasmariyani@uhnsugriwa.ac.id](mailto:agungrakaasmariyani@uhnsugriwa.ac.id)
- ORCID: N/A
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: N/A
- Homepage: N/A

**Ni Wayan Sri Rahayu**, Faculty of Dharma Duta, Study Program of Cultural and Religious Tourism, STAH Dharma Sentana, East Palu, Central Sulawesi, 94118, Indonesia;

- Email: [niwayansrirahayu@gmail.com](mailto:niwayansrirahayu@gmail.com)
- ORCID: 0000-0002-7403-8357
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: N/A
- Homepage: N/A

**Arhana Lochan**, is currently working as a Research Fellow at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi. She holds a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Delhi, where her doctoral research examined the cultural and religious presence of Brahmā in Buddhist Southeast Asia: With Special Reference to Thailand and Cambodia. Her broader research interests include the cultural, historical, and religious landscapes of South and Southeast Asia, with a focus on transregional linkages, sacredgeographies, and Indic religious traditions.

- Email: [lochan.arhana@gmail.com](mailto:lochan.arhana@gmail.com)
- ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1374-3968>
- Web of Science ResearcherID:
- Scopus Author ID: