

Submitted:
Nov 19, 2023

Accepted:
Nov 27, 2023

Published:
Dec 1, 2023

Paths of Spiritual Devotion: Investigating Urip Sejati Adherents in Onggosoro, Giritengah, through the Lens of Religious Moderation

Siti Robikah¹, Muhammad K. Ridwan²

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga, Indonesia

²Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada

Contributor e-mail: bikarobikah@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research delves into the phenomenon of Urip Sejati adherence among the community of Onggosoro in Giritengah. Urip Sejati is a religious concept rooted in Javanese spirituality, emphasizing a path of devotion that seeks inner enlightenment and harmony. The study employs a comprehensive lens of religious moderation to examine individuals' practices, beliefs, and attitudes to illuminate how Urip Sejati followers negotiate their spiritual pursuits within the context of contemporary religious dynamics. Drawing upon a qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of relevant documents. The research sought to explore the extent to which Urip Sejati adherents embody religious moderation in their daily lives, how their practices reflect principles of inclusivity, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue, and whether their spiritual journey promotes social cohesion within the broader community. Findings reveal diverse expressions of Urip Sejati devotion, with adherents navigating a balance between individual spiritual exploration and communal interconnectedness. Furthermore, the study uncovers various factors influencing religious moderation within the Urip Sejati context, including historical and cultural backgrounds, socio-political dynamics, and interactions with neighboring religious traditions. This research contributes to the existing discourse on religious moderation, highlighting the significance of local spiritual practices in fostering tolerance and coexistence. It underscores the need for nuanced understandings of religiosity beyond traditional institutional frameworks and posits Urip Sejati as a compelling case study for engaging with the intricacies of religious diversity in contemporary society. The findings not only enrich our comprehension of Urip Sejati as a religious phenomenon but also contribute to broader discussions on the dynamic interplay between devotion, moderation, and communal dynamics in the realm of faith..*

Keywords: *Urip Sejati, Spiritual Devotion, Religious Moderation*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menggali fenomena penghayat kepercayaan Urip Sejati di kalangan masyarakat Onggosoro di Giritengah. Urip Sejati adalah konsep kepercayaan yang berakar pada spiritualitas Jawa, menekankan jalan pengabdian dengan mencari pencerahan dan harmoni kebatinan. Studi ini menggunakan lensa moderasi beragama untuk mengkaji praktik, keyakinan, dan sikap individu untuk menjelaskan bagaimana cara para penganut Urip Sejati menegosiasikan pencarian spiritual mereka dalam konteks dinamika keagamaan kontemporer. Berdasarkan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen yang relevan. Penelitian ini berusaha untuk mengeksplorasi sejauh mana penganut Urip Sejati mewujudkan moderasi beragama dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka, bagaimana praktik mereka mencerminkan prinsip inklusivitas, toleransi, dan dialog antaragama, dan apakah perjalanan spiritual mereka mempromosikan kohesi sosial dalam komunitas yang lebih luas. Temuan mengungkapkan beragam ekspresi pengabdian Urip Sejati, dengan penganut menavigasi keseimbangan antara eksplorasi spiritual individu dan keterkaitan komunal. Selain itu, kajian ini menemukan berbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi terbentuknya moderasi beragama dalam konteks Urip Sejati, antara lain latar belakang sejarah dan budaya, dinamika sosial politik, dan interaksi dengan tradisi agama lain. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang ada tentang moderasi beragama, menyoroti pentingnya praktik spiritual lokal dalam menumbuhkan toleransi dan koeksistensi. Ini menggarisbawahi perlunya pemahaman bernuansa religiusitas di luar kerangka kelembagaan formalitas keagamaan dan menempatkan Urip Sejati sebagai studi kasus yang menarik untuk terlibat dengan seluk-beluk keragaman kepercayaan dalam masyarakat kontemporer. Temuan ini tidak hanya memperkaya pemahaman kita tentang Urip Sejati sebagai fenomena keagamaan, tetapi juga berkontribusi pada diskusi yang lebih luas tentang interaksi dinamis antara pengabdian, moderasi, dan dinamika komunal dalam ranah iman.

Kata Kunci: *Urip Sejati, Penghayat Kepercayaan, Moderasi Beragama*

INTRODUCTION

Adherents of the indigenous religions have been present in Indonesia since 1965, and since then, they have remained a minority group. Being a minority group makes them reluctant to express their beliefs openly, leading to limitations on their spiritual expression and an ongoing crisis over the recognition of their identity (Amin et al., 2020). Many adherents of this belief choose not to publicly display their religious identity. One such group of adherents that still exists today is the followers of the *Urip Sejati* belief in Onggosoro, Giri Tengah, Borobudur District. The existence of these *Urip Sejati* adherents has persisted for a long time up to the present day. Kamidjan is an elder among the adherents of "Kejawen *Urip Sejati*" of the Nusantara White Cross (PPN) belief. This group is one of the 12 beliefs present in

Magelang. In Onggosoro, there are approximately 100 adherents of the *Urip Sejati* belief who continue to hold onto Javanese culture and traditions. Despite their enduring presence, it is undeniable that they still face discrimination from various parties (*Duka Penghayat Kepercayaan: Rentan Diskriminasi Di Tahun Politik*, n.d.).

Kamijan recounted that in 1994, the studio they used for worship was intentionally set on fire by unidentified individuals. This incident left a lasting traumatic impact on the followers of the *Urip Sejati* beliefs. However, this event did not mark the end of the believers' journey; they have continued to uphold their teachings to this day. Kamijan explained that there are nine core teachings that adherents of this faith still hold dear. These teachings encompass various aspects, including personal culture, society, economics, politics, art, knowledge, divinity, philosophy, and mystical culture (Robikah, 2022).

Adherents of this belief have faced significant discrimination, including the inability to accurately represent their belief in the religion column of their National Identity Card (KTP). Despite having the option to do so since 2016, there remains a sense of apprehension when utilizing this designation for bureaucratic purposes. This apprehension is exemplified in the political realm, where they are often denied opportunities for representation by legislative candidates. Similarly, within the realm of education, there is a noticeable absence of a curriculum that introduces students to this particular belief system. Educational discussions typically focus solely on the major religions practiced in Indonesia (*Duka Penghayat Kepercayaan: Rentan Diskriminasi Di Tahun Politik*, n.d.).

Diversity in Indonesia frequently gives rise to various conflicts within society. These conflicts often culminate in humanitarian disasters and necessitate protracted conflict resolution processes, marked by alternating social, economic, and political setbacks. Multiple approaches have been employed to address the religious conflicts that have arisen in Indonesia. In the realm of education, for instance, efforts have been made to integrate peace education into the curriculum of schools. Moreover, conflict resolution courses have been introduced across various academic programs, along with training in mediation and negotiation techniques tailored to religious conflicts (Akhmadi, 2019). Such initiatives reflect a commendable openness that needs to be nurtured within Indonesia's multicultural and multi-religious society. This proactive approach is indispensable for maintaining unity among the diverse segments of the population.

The continued presence of adherents of the faith in Onggosoro, Central Giris, has sparked a range of opinions, both in favor and against. While certain groups acknowledge and accept their existence, there are also numerous groups that categorize adherents of this belief differently, often rejecting their classification as a religion. These divergent viewpoints serve as the primary motivations for conducting this research. In evaluating the *maslahah* (benefit) or *mafsadah* (harm) associated with the existence of adherents of this belief, the authors of this study employ the theory of religious moderation as an analytical framework. Notably, previous articles addressing adherents of the faith include the works of Hamka Husein Hasibuan, Nazifatul Ummi et al, Kristina Viri, and Zarida Febriany. However, none of these articles have approached the subject from the perspective of religious moderation, making the current study a pioneering endeavor in this regard.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research resulted from an empirical study with a qualitative approach. Data was obtained from an in-depth interview process, participant observation and analysis of relevant documents. To strengthen the analytical data, this research also uses several research results and articles obtained from various journals with the aim of making the analysis sharp.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Religious Moderation Revisited

In the Indonesian context, the term "moderation" is elucidated in two primary senses within the Big Indonesian Dictionary. First, it pertains to the reduction of violence and the avoidance of extremes. Second, in English, "moderation" can be interpreted as denoting an average or nonaligned stance. The concept of being "moderate" encompasses a focus on achieving balance in terms of beliefs, morals, and virtuous conduct when interacting with other individuals and one's country. In Arabic, moderation is referred to as "*wasath*," meaning a state of being middle or balanced (Apriani & Aryani, 2022). From a religious standpoint, moderation involves adopting an attitude and behavior that is positioned equitably, avoiding extremes, and acting in a just manner within the context of faith (Apriani & Aryani, 2022). Quraish Shihab elaborates on "*wasathiyyah*" (moderation) by highlighting how Islam thrives in a pluralistic society, emphasizing human values and justice, without imposing itself on those who reject it. Those who embrace Islam are encouraged to progressively implement its principles according to their capabilities (Akhmadi, 2019). Within the realm of religion, moderation entails a balanced stance, steering clear of radical ideologies and excessive fervor. Given the numerous conflicts that arise in the name of religion, the importance of conveying the concept of religious moderation across all faiths and societal strata becomes evident. Virtually all religions acknowledge the significance of religious moderation. Christianity, for instance, employs moderation to mediate against extreme interpretations of its teachings. Hinduism's emphasis on preserving human relationships highlights the importance of religious moderation. Similarly, Buddhism embodies moderation in the enlightenment of the Buddha, as demonstrated through the concept of the four *prasteyas*. Confucianism incorporates the Yin Yang principle and the Middle Way attitude as expressions of moderation. In Islam, the concept of "*wasathiyah*" underscores the significance of following the middle path, or "*tawasuth*." (Mustafidin, 2021).

Religious moderation should be comprehended as a religious attitude that aligns with respect for both diverse religious practices (inclusive) and individual religious experiences (exclusive). Embracing religious moderation serves as a pivotal catalyst for achieving harmony and peace across various facets of life. It entails an active process of assessment to ensure adherence to established norms and principles. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin emphasizes that religious moderation does not seek to moderate the essence of a religion, but rather the way it is practiced (Nisa et al., 2021). While all religions harbor moderate teachings, the interpretation

and application of these teachings can differ significantly among their followers. Therefore, it is imperative to explore how each religion perceives and interacts with other belief systems.

The understanding of religious moderation also intertwines with the concept of "*maqashid sharia*," elucidated by previous scholars. Religious moderation ultimately aligns with the objectives encapsulated within "*maqashid sharia*." These objectives encompass "*maslahah*" (benefit) and "*mafsadah*" (harm). "*Maqashid sharia*" classifies these objectives into three tiers: "*dharuriyat*" (necessities), "*hajiyat*" (needs), and "*tahsiniyat*" (completions). Consequently, it culminates in the five primary principles known as "*al-kuliyah al-khamsah*": safeguarding religion ("*hifz ad-din*"), protecting life ("*hifz al-nafs*"), preserving intellect ("*hifz al-aql*"), upholding progeny ("*hifz al-nasl*"), and ensuring property security ("*hifz al-mal*") (Husein Hasibuan, 2019). The presence of "*al-kuliyah al-khamsah*" underscores the rationale behind shaping public policies in favor of the welfare and benefit of the community, which in contemporary times can translate to upholding human rights and facilitating development. This shift in focus can potentially facilitate the fulfillment of rights for minority groups.

The Indigenous Religion of *Urip Sejati*

Onggosoro, located in Giritengah, Magelang District, is situated approximately 4 kilometers away from the Borobudur temple complex. Within this hamlet, a multitude of religious adherents reside, including followers of various beliefs. Despite the diversity of religions present, the community in Onggosoro lives harmoniously, coexisting without any partitions or divisions. Despite their differing faiths, residents frequently visit one another and partake in religious observances and commemorations together. The daily lives of the Onggosoro residents are deeply rooted in four fundamental principles of humanity: tolerance, justice, balance, and equality (*Belajar Toleransi Dari Dusun Onggosoro Magelang*, n.d.).

Tolerance serves as a cornerstone, fostering mutual respect among individuals despite their varying affiliations. For instance, during Eid al-Fitr celebrations, adherents of different religions, including *Urip Sejati* followers, visit Muslim households to extend their well wishes and seek forgiveness. Similar acts of inclusiveness are demonstrated during Christmas celebrations. This culture of understanding and respect is consistently nurtured by adherents of all faiths. The value of justice is particularly evident within the realm of education. Kindergarten establishments, founded by *Urip Sejati* adherents, embrace a diverse student body and faculty encompassing individuals from different religious backgrounds. This commitment to justice ensures equal opportunities and access for all, irrespective of their beliefs (*Belajar Toleransi Dari Dusun Onggosoro Magelang*, n.d.).

In the spirit of balance, each religion within the community is provided the space to express its unique beliefs without infringing upon the rights of others. This coexistence allows for a harmonious atmosphere where diverse faiths flourish side by side. The principle of equality is evident in various aspects of Onggosoro life, such as the selection of village officials. In village elections, all citizens are granted equal access and the freedom to elect their preferred representatives based on individual preferences. The Onggosoro community exemplifies the profound impact of upholding these values – tolerance, justice, balance, and equality – which

collectively contribute to their harmonious and cooperative way of life, showcasing an inspiring model of peaceful coexistence amidst religious diversity.

The adherents of the *Urip Sejati* belief group are part of the Kejawen belief system, existing as a minority group. The teachings of this group underscore the core objective of leading a purposeful life. The term "Urip" translates to "life," while "Sejati" signifies "true" or "real." The focus of this belief system centers on establishing a harmonious connection between humans and their deities. The *Urip Sejati* group has maintained its existence since 1955. However, throughout the New Order era, they encountered significant external pressures. Unlike the Old Order era, where they faced no significant hindrances, the New Order period witnessed extensive reforms that often marginalized and disregarded ancestral cultural practices, thereby neglecting those who continued to follow such traditions (Al-Amin, Nazifa & Taufik, Egi & Mufidatunrofiah, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the adherents of *Urip Sejati* persevered in their struggle for recognition. In matters of population administration, they were initially denied the opportunity to specify their belief in the religion column of their identity documents (KTP). Instead, they were required to choose a recognized state-sanctioned religion. The *Urip Sejati* adherents asserted their autonomy as a distinct group, separate from other established religions, and resisted conforming to the state-designated religion on their KTPs. Their efforts eventually bore fruit in 2016 when the Constitutional Court rendered a pivotal decision. With registration number 97/PU-XVI/2016, the court ruled that adherents of belief had the right to accurately represent their belief identity on their KTPs and Family Identity Cards (KKs), akin to adherents of recognized religions. This landmark decision aimed to grant equal rights to adherents of various beliefs (Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 97/PU-XVI/2016, 2016).

Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court's decision prompted mixed reactions from different quarters. Some rejected this ruling, arguing that recognizing adherents of belief as a distinct category went against established religious norms. Critics feared potential misuse of this recognition, suspecting that it could be exploited to evade religious affiliations altogether. In essence, the journey of the *Urip Sejati* adherents epitomizes a resilient struggle for acknowledgment and validation, culminating in a significant legal victory that acknowledged their right to represent their belief identity while also sparking debates regarding the broader implications of this recognition within a diverse religious landscape. In other words, the counter-group is afraid that in the future many will abuse adherents to not embrace any religion.

However, contrasting sentiments emerge in response to the Constitutional Court's decision, with a considerable number of individuals finding solace in the expanded scope for Human Rights (HAM) in Indonesia. This faction perceives the decision as a positive step that aligns with the petitioner's call for reform in population administration. Article 61, paragraph 1, and Article 64, paragraph 1, stipulate that adherents of belief are not accommodated within the religion column of official documents. This exclusionary provision potentially hinders believers' access to critical services like education, healthcare, and social support.

Beyond the issue of the religious column, the presence of adherents of belief also generates a spectrum of opinions within society. Adherents of belief are

characterized as sects originating from the "kebatinan" (spiritualism) movement, which fundamentally differs from mainstream religions. In simpler terms, adherents of belief are individuals or groups who follow faiths outside of the officially recognized state religions. Consequently, this divergence from established religious norms leads to varied reactions within the broader community. Many religious groups are not in favor of the presence of adherents of this belief, viewing it as a deviation from the recognized religious landscape (Husein Hasibuan, 2019). This dichotomy of opinions underscores the multifaceted nature of the impact brought about by the Constitutional Court's decision, as it not only addresses the practical concerns of religious identification in official documents but also delves into broader social and philosophical debates about the recognition and coexistence of diverse beliefs within the Indonesian context.

Apart from that, as followers of the *Urip Sejati* belief, this group adheres to fundamental principles that guide their way of life. These teachings manifest as moral messages, encapsulating concepts such as "*ojo waton omong*," which emphasizes the importance of avoiding harmful gossip and unnecessary chatter, "*neng omong nganggo wewaton*," urging communication that is gentle and considerate, and "*ojo rumongso biso, neng biso o rumongso*," promoting humility and reminding members not to judge others. These principles serve as a cautionary guide for members of the *Urip Sejati* group in their interactions with adherents of other religions. The teachings emphasize treating everyone with kindness, regardless of social status, and encourage a sense of mutual assistance and respect among fellow members of society. The philosophy discourages retaliation for wrongdoing and promotes kindness even towards those who may not exhibit virtuous behavior.

The *Urip Sejati* belief group navigates their existence within the context of a pluralistic society. The group is relatively small, comprising around 50 families within the Onggosoro hamlet. Despite its modest size, the hamlet's remote location away from the urban center of Borobudur showcases its unique charm. Visitors are greeted by residents, both young and old, dressed in traditional Javanese attire, exuding warmth and hospitality. Mr. Kamidjan, the leader of the followers, welcomed the visitors into his home. He shared the story of the group's origins and its enduring presence over time. Mr. Kamidjan recounted these details in eloquent Javanese, offering insights into the followers' perspectives and practices.

One notable aspect discussed by Mr. Kamidjan was the followers' approach to prayer. He emphasized that prayers do not necessarily require a language unfamiliar to the practitioners. Instead, he exemplified how the followers communicate with their creator using prayers that are accessible and meaningful to them, irrespective of external understanding. This encounter with Mr. Kamidjan and the *Urip Sejati* adherents provides a glimpse into the beliefs, values, and practices that define this unique group within the cultural tapestry of the Onggosoro. It underscores the significance of preserving traditions while engaging harmoniously with the broader pluralistic society in which they coexist.

During the visit, the guests were treated to a variety of traditional village-style foods that are becoming increasingly rare in modern times. These included dishes like "tiwul," "puli kecer," and cassava porridge, served in the traditional manner using leaves (*suru*) as eating utensils. The food was shared among the visitors, fostering a sense of togetherness. Following an insightful explanation by Mr.

Kamijan, the leader of the *Urip Sejati* adherent group, the guests were invited to explore the areas where adherents gather for communal activities. The visitors were introduced to the gamelan instruments, which are integral to these collective endeavors. Such activities are scheduled for every Tuesday for male adherents and Thursday for female adherents (Robikah, 2022). In the unfortunate event of an adherent's passing, the entire group assembles at the funeral to offer prayers and pay their respects.

In the context of weddings, adherents of *Urip Sejati* have the autonomy to conduct ceremonies in accordance with their beliefs. The wedding ritual is officiated by local elders and witnessed by both families and followers. Following the Constitutional Court's decision (No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016), marriages among adherents are now legally recognized, and they are provided with a marriage record book like those of other recognized religions (Robikah, n.d.). After exploring various significant sites within the adherent community, the guests were invited back to Mr. Kamijan's residence, where they were served "tumpeng." This ceremonial dish symbolizes sincerity, brotherhood, tolerance, and gratitude towards the creator. Adorned with a variety of decorations, each carrying distinct meanings, the tumpeng embodies the group's values. Mr. Kamijan led a prayer for the safety and well-being of the *Urip Sejati* adherents, joined by fellow adherents gathered for the occasion. He also extended an invitation to the guests to offer prayers in accordance with their respective faiths, illustrating the respect and inclusivity the adherents hold for those from different backgrounds.

In his prayer, Mr. Kamijan employed the Javanese language, such as using the term '*Gusti*' instead of God (Allah) during the prayer (Robikah, n.d.). The use of traditional language, attire, and cuisine by the *Urip Sejati* adherents reflects their deep-rooted appreciation for and commitment to preserving customs and culture. It is also depicted that the rituals of *Urip Sejati* are characterized by their simplicity and profound symbolism. Rather than elaborate displays of devotion, adherents often engage in modest acts of worship that carry deep spiritual significance. This unpretentious approach reflects the *Urip Sejati* emphasis on humility and moderation, transcending ostentation and excessiveness commonly associated with certain religious practices. For instance, Kamidjan states that *Urip Sejati* adherents do not engage in prayers using foreign languages; instead, they offer their prayers in their native language. This practice aims to ensure that the prayer conveys their wishes accurately, as they believe it is the most effective way to communicate with the Divine. Within this framework, praying is not seen as a monologue; rather, it is regarded as a dialogue between humans and God.

Ritual and Religious Relations in the Community of *Urip Sejati*

Rituals within the *Urip Sejati* community hold a profound and multi-layered significance. Rituals are not merely routine actions; they are symbolic expressions of the community's deeply ingrained beliefs and values. Durkheim argues that through meticulous choreography of movements, chants, and offerings, these rituals bridge the gap between the physical and the spiritual realms (Emile, 2001). The believers engage in these practices not merely as a routine but as a means to access higher realms, seeking guidance, blessings, and protection from spiritual entities. For instance, the act of offering food during communal gatherings signifies not only

sustenance but also communion between the earthly and divine. According to Mulder, such symbolism underscores the interconnectedness of life and spirituality, and how rituals serve as a conduit for this connection (J. A. N. Mulder, 1970).

From the mystical perspective, rituals provide a medium for communion with the Divine, enabling believers to seek guidance and blessings from their forebears. The interactions with ancestral spirits are considered sacred and are believed to bestow wisdom and protection upon the community. The mystical connection to these spirits reinforces the continuity of lineage and the interconnectedness of past, present, and future (N. Mulder, 1978). In the context of *Urip Sejati* adherents, ritual traditions are characterized by their simplicity and deep symbolism. Adherents engage in acts of worship that carry profound spiritual significance, emphasizing the intrinsic connection between personal devotion and the shared values of humility, compassion, and service. These rituals create a bridge between individual expressions of faith and the collective identity of the *Urip Sejati* community.

In addition, religious rituals serve not only to sustain the continuity of traditions but also to safeguard the cultural identity of the adherents (Ricklefs, 2012). Rituals are vital to the preservation of the cultural identity of the *Urip Sejati* community. Rituals serve as a tangible link to the community's historical roots, acting as a living repository of ancestral knowledge and wisdom. In a rapidly changing world, where cultural homogenization threatens to erode unique traditions, *Urip Sejati*'s rituals become a source of resilience. By actively participating in these rituals, community members reinforce their sense of belonging and reassert their cultural distinctiveness (Muttaqin, 2012).

Wilfred C. Smith explains that consecutive rituals have the power of a cohesive force that can foster a strong sense of community (Smith, 1996). As individuals gather to partake in these communal rituals, they collectively forge shared experiences. As individuals come together to collectively engage in these rituals, shared experiences are created. This shared experience cultivates a sense of unity and solidarity, as participants feel connected not only to the spiritual realm but also to each other. The act of communal prayer, for example, amplifies the sense of togetherness and reinforces the idea that the community is bound by a common purpose beyond the material world. Rituals act as catalysts for social interaction and interpersonal relationships. In the context of *Urip Sejati*, rituals provide occasions for community members to come together, engage in conversations, and strengthen social ties. The communal nature of these rituals encourages open dialogue, the exchange of ideas, and the forging of new connections. The very act of planning and executing these rituals necessitates cooperation and collaboration, further deepening the interpersonal bonds among the community. Rituals serve as conduits for establishing and nurturing religious relations within the *Urip Sejati* community. These rituals provide a sacred space where individuals can connect with the divine, seek spiritual guidance, and express their devotion (Schweizer, Thomas, Elmar Klemm, 1993). The interactions with deities or ancestral spirits during these rituals create a reciprocal relationship, wherein community members offer reverence in exchange for protection, blessings, and guidance. This dynamic enhances the sense of interconnectedness between the human and spiritual realms (Ricklefs, 2006).

The Quest for Inner Harmony

Within the *Urip Sejati* tradition, individual spiritual exploration is celebrated as a path toward inner illumination. Adherents are encouraged to embark on personal journeys of self-discovery, introspection, and connection with the divine. This process allows them to cultivate a profound understanding of their faith and its application in their lives (Muttaqin, Ahmad, 2022). The practice of meditation, prayer, and reflection forms a cornerstone of this individualistic approach, enabling adherents to attain a deep sense of inner balance and spiritual fulfillment. Koentjaraningrat explains that this connection to the divine helps individuals to find their purpose in life and to strive for a more meaningful existence (Koentjaraningrat, n.d.). Ultimately, adherents are able to live according to their faith in a more meaningful and fulfilling way. This joy and contentment are linked to the idea of living in harmony with the divine and following the will of the divine. This connection to the divine brings adherents closer to their faith and helps them to understand the divine's expectations of them. This understanding of expectations gives adherents clarity on how to live their lives in a way that is pleasing to the divine and is ultimately more rewarding and joyful. This connection and understanding leads to contentment and a sense of peace, which is often the goal of living according to one's faith (Illiy, 2015).

Despite their emphasis on individual spiritual exploration, *Urip Sejati* adherents also engage in communal worship and shared rituals that bind them together. Regular gatherings, prayers, and festivals provide a platform for collective expressions of devotion, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. The communal aspect of these practices not only strengthens the bond among adherents but also reinforces the communal interconnectedness at the heart of the *Urip Sejati* philosophy.

This shared spiritual experience is essential to the practice of *Urip Sejati*, and serves to remind adherents of their commitment to the principles of the faith. The communal rituals also serve to bring people together, creating a space for connection and mutual understanding. In addition, the communal rituals serve to reinforce the religious values that are essential to the practice of *Urip Sejati*. Through these rituals, adherents are reminded of their obligations to uphold the teachings of the faith and to be mindful of the importance of communal relationships. According to Andrew Beatty, these rituals also create an atmosphere of respect and understanding, allowing people to come together and share their beliefs in a safe and supportive environment (Beatty, 1999).

Within the sacred space of these rituals, the air becomes charged with a palpable sense of unity. The rhythmic chants and melodic hymns carried on waves of collective devotion, resonate deeply in the hearts of all who gather. A feeling of serenity settles over the assembly as if the barriers that often divide humanity are momentarily dissolved (Anderson, 1996). As the rituals unfold, each gesture and action serves as a testament to the shared commitment to *Urip Sejatis'* teachings. The lighting of candles symbolizes the illumination of inner wisdom, while the offering of incense wafts a fragrant reminder of the fragility and impermanence of existence. Through these symbolic acts, adherents are guided to reflect on the imperceptible threads that tie them to one another and to the greater universe. These communal rituals also serve as a reservoir of strength, fortifying the moral compass of each

participant. As they recommit themselves to their faith, a renewed sense of purpose surges forth, guiding their interactions beyond the sacred space and into their daily lives (Geertz, 1960). The values of compassion, empathy, and integrity, which lie at the heart of *Urip Sejati*, become more than abstract concepts – they become living forces that shape every decision and action.

In this interconnected web of shared experience, the practice of *Urip Sejati* thrives. Its adherents, bound by the tapestry of their communal rituals, emerge not only as individuals who seek spiritual growth but as a harmonious collective that radiates light into the world. Through these rituals, they have not only deepened their understanding of the faith but have also forged unbreakable bonds of unity, ensuring that the essence of *Urip Sejati* lives on, generation after generation. Therefore, the community's commitment to preserving these practices illustrates their unwavering dedication to their cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs. This resilience is a testament to the enduring power of rituals in fostering a sense of identity, unity, and connection among the members of the community.

Urip Sejati's Doctrine and the Path of Balance: Moderation from the Edge

The doctrinal foundations of the *Urip Sejati* tradition encapsulate a philosophy deeply rooted in the pursuit of equilibrium—a delicate balance between spiritual ardor and societal harmony. Central to their belief system is the notion that genuine devotion is forged not through extremes, but through a harmonious integration of faith into all facets of life. The *Urip Sejati* doctrine encourages a holistic approach to spirituality, intertwining religious practices seamlessly with daily routines. In this way, they have nine religious tenets that resonate with how they practice their belief. These tenets are intertwined with their life and cannot be separated from each other. These are: (1) inner-harmony; (2) transcendency; (3) social interactions; (4) philosophy; (5) economics; (6) politics; (7) arts; (8) knowledge; (9) mysticism. Adherents perceive their devotion as a continuous journey, where acts of worship and introspection are interwoven with mundane activities. This integrative approach fosters a sense of mindfulness and connection, allowing adherents to strike a balance between the material and the metaphysical.

Unlike dogmatic or rigid religious paradigms, the *Urip Sejati* tradition places a premium on individual spiritual experiences. Adherents are guided to cultivate inner harmony, which is seen as a precursor to harmonious interactions within their community and the wider world. Hendrastomo et.al., discovers that the focus on inner equilibrium serves as a buffer against religious extremism and intolerance, encouraging followers to introspect and moderate their beliefs (Hendrastomo, Grendi, Nur Endah Januarti, 2019). At the heart of the *Urip Sejati* philosophy lies an unwavering commitment to interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Adherents actively engage with neighboring religious communities, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. This engagement not only enriches the religious landscape of Onggosoro but also serves as a testament to the power of moderation in bridging gaps between diverse belief systems.

The *Urip Sejati* tradition's emphasis on individual spiritual experiences sets it apart from dogmatic or rigid religious paradigms, fostering a culture of introspection and personal growth. Within the folds of this faith, the journey towards inner harmony becomes a sacred pilgrimage, a path paved with self-

discovery and profound connection. As adherents delve into the depths of their souls, they learn to attune themselves to the rhythms of existence. The teachings encourage a symbiotic relationship between the self and the universe, where one's inner state is intricately woven into the fabric of the cosmos. Through mindfulness practices, meditation, and contemplation, individuals learn to become attuned to the whispers of their own hearts, gaining insights that transcend the boundaries of language and dogma. It is mirrored in Javanese culture, *mati sakjroning urip* (dead in life, live in death) where they seek to reach the highest form of true life (Picard, Michel, 2011).

This focus on inner equilibrium does not just stop at personal transformation—it ripples outward, creating a ripple effect of empathy and compassion. Adherents, having nurtured their own inner gardens of serenity, find themselves better equipped to navigate the complexities of their relationships and interactions. The interpersonal harmony that flourishes within the *Urip Sejati* community serves as a testament to the profound connection between individual well-being and collective cohesion. Central to the *Urip Sejati* philosophy is an unwavering commitment to interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Adherents, guided by the light of their introspective journeys, extend their hands in friendship to neighboring religious communities. Through shared discussions, cultural exchanges, and collaborative initiatives, the barriers that often separate belief systems begin to crumble, revealing the universal human longing for meaning and connection.

The *Urip Sejati* devotion emphasizes humility as adherents seek a balance between their personal spiritual journeys and their role within the community. This humility fosters an atmosphere of equality and shared values, minimizing hierarchical divisions. Adherents recognize the interconnectedness of all beings, fostering a sense of kinship that transcends religious boundaries. Their teachings emphasize the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, irrespective of their faith, ethnicity, or social status.

In the bustling tapestry of Onggosoro, this spirit of interfaith engagement weaves a vibrant mosaic of harmony. The dialogues that take place serve as bridges between disparate worlds, reminding everyone involved that beyond the surface differences, there lies a shared human experience, a common quest for transcendence and understanding. In a world often fractured by religious divides, *Urip Sejati* emerges as a radiant exemplar of how the power of the human spirit, when nurtured by inner equilibrium and guided by the principles of interfaith unity, can transcend boundaries, dissolve prejudices, and forge a path towards a more harmonious and interconnected global tapestry.

Furthermore, a hallmark of religious moderation is the ability to accept and tolerate differing viewpoints. *Urip Sejati* followers embody this principle by showing respect for others' beliefs, even if those beliefs diverge from their own. This tolerance is evident in their interactions with people from various religious backgrounds, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. *Urip Sejati* emphasizes ethical behavior and compassion towards all living beings. Adherents strive to embody these principles in their daily lives, promoting kindness, empathy, and social responsibility. This commitment to ethical conduct extends

beyond religious boundaries, showcasing their dedication to a moderate and balanced approach to spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of spiritual devotion among Urip Sejati adherents in Onggosoro, Giritengah, through the lens of religious moderation has provided valuable insights into the intricate interplay between indigenous religious practices and the promotion of religious moderation within the Indonesian context. As a non-official religious faith in Indonesia, Urip Sejati's adherents, who have experienced significant discrimination, wholeheartedly embrace their spiritual paths as a means to foster harmony and inclusiveness. Through their beliefs and actions, the adherents strive to maintain harmony and respect toward others, even those with differing religious beliefs. They navigate their spiritual paths while simultaneously fostering an environment of religious tolerance and understanding, as a commitment to life balance between deep spiritual connection and receptivity to diverse perspectives.

Being rooted in ancestral teachings (Javanese culture and mysticism) and built upon a foundation of virtuous values, this belief system significantly influences individuals' lives by embodying essential principles in daily existence. Through their engagement with the mystical, Urip Sejati followers not only strengthen their cultural identity but also nurture a profound sense of interconnectedness with the cosmos and the spiritual forces that shape their existence. While they engage in spiritual practices, they also recognize the importance of fulfilling worldly responsibilities. This balance reflects a paradigmatic and moderate approach to integrating faith into their lives without neglecting other important aspects. Ultimately, the Urip Sejati adherents have demonstrated that a commitment to religious moderation can be a unifying force, transcending traditional divides and fostering a shared sense of humanity.

REFERENCES

- Akhmadi, A. (2019). Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia Religious Moderation in Indonesia's Diversity. *Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan*, 13(2), 45–55.
- Al-Amin, Nazifa & Taufik, Egi & Mufidatunrofiah, S. (2020). Kejawen, Multiculturalism, and Principles of the Qur'an: Transformation and Resupposition of QS. al-Kafirun (109): 6 in Urip Sejati Community of Yogyakarta. *Esensia; Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 21(1), 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v21i1.2195>.
- Amin, N. U. Al, Taufik, E. T., & Rofiah, S. M. (2020). Transformasi Negosiatif dan Resuposisi Qs. Al-Kafirun: Studi Living Qur'an atas Resepsi Penghayat Kejawen "Urip Sejati" terhadap Ayat. *Researchgate.Net*, February.
- Anderson, B. R. O. (1996). *Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese*. Project Cornell Modern Indonesia, outeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- Apriani, N. W., & Aryani, N. K. (2022). Moderasi Beragama. In *Kalangwan Jurnal Pendidikan Agama, Bahasa dan Sastra* (Vol. 12, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.25078/kalangwan.v12i1.737>

- Beatty, A. (1999). *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account*. Cambridge University Press.
- Belajar Toleransi dari Dusun Onggosoro Magelang. (n.d.). <https://womenandcve.id/blog/2023/01/09/belajar-toleransi-dari-dusun-onggosoro-magelang/>
- Duka Penghayat Kepercayaan: Rentan Diskriminasi di Tahun Politik. (n.d.). Retrieved August 3, 2023, from <https://tirto.id/duka-penghayat-kepercayaan-rentan-diskriminasi-di-tahun-politik-gMUK>
- Emile, D. (2001). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1960). *The Religion of Java*. Free Press.
- Hendrastomo, Grendi, Nur Endah Januarti, and N. H. (2019). *Who is the most tolerant: Minority or majority? In Research for Social Justice*. Routledge.
- Husein Hasibuan, H. (2019). Moderasi Islam Pencantuman Penghayat Kepercayaan di Kolom Ktp/Kk Dalam Nalar Maqasid. *Jurnal Aqlam-Journal of Islam and Plurality*, 4(2).
- Illiyy, N. N. (2015). *Dinamika Kehidupan Kelompok Minoritas di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Pengalaman Bermasyarakat dan Bernegara Warga Kerokhanian Sapta Darma*.
- Koentjaraningrat. (n.d.). *Javanese Culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 97/PU-XVI/2016, 136 (2016).
- Mulder, J. A. N. (1970). Aliran Kebatinan as an Expression of the Javanese Worldview. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 1(2), 105–140. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463400020282>
- Mulder, N. (1978). *Mysticism & everyday life in contemporary Java: Cultural persistence and change*. Singapore University Press.
- Mustafidin, A. (2021). Moderasi Beragama Dalam Islam Dan Relevansinya Dengan Konteks Keindonesiaan. *Jurnal PROGRESS: Wahana Kreativitas Dan Intelegualitas*, 9(2), 208. <https://doi.org/10.31942/pgrs.v9i2.5713>
- Muttaqin, A. (2012). *Hybrid Spirituality and Religious Efficacy of Yogyakarta Spiritual Centres* (Dissertation).
- Muttaqin, Ahmad, and N. M. N. (2022). Local Islam and Javanese Culture Penetration: Muslim Alif Rebo Wage (Aboge) Negotiations in Identity Formation. *Ibda': Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya*, 20(1), 110. <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v20i1.6386>.
- Nisa, M. K., Yani, A., Andika, A., Yunus, E. M., & Rahman, Y. (2021). Moderaasi Beragama: Landasan Moderasi dalam Tradisi berbagai Agama dan Implementasi di Era Disrupsi Digital. *Jurnal Riset Agama*, 1(3), 79–96. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15100>
- Picard, Michel, and M. R. (2011). The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, Orthodoxy, and Religious Contention in Java and Bali. In *Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series*. Routledge.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (2006). *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries*. EastBridge.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (2012). *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, C. 1930 to the Present*. NUS Press.
- Robikah, S. (n.d.). *Kunjungan bersama Kelompok Penghayat Kepercayaan*.

Robikah, S. (2022). *Wawancara bersama Bapak Kamijan*.

Schweizer, Thomas, Elmar Klemm, M. S. (1993). Ritual as action in a Javanese community: A network perspective on ritual and social structure. *Social Networks*, 15(1), 19–48. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733\(93\)90020-L](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(93)90020-L)

Smith, W. C. (Ed.). (1996). *The Meaning and End of Religion*. Fortress Press.