



Religious Experience Of Sapta Darma Followers In The Temple Centre Sapta Rengga Yogyakarta City

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Abstract

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This research aims to understand the religious experiences of Sapta Darma adherents through the theoretical perspective of Joachim Wach. Sapta Darma believers are a group of believers who have spiritual views and practices that are 'unique' in Indonesia. In this study, researchers used Joachim Wach's theoretical framework, religious experiences were analyzed through three main components: experience dimensions, expression dimensions, and consequence dimensions. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to explore the religious experiences of Sapta Darma adherents. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with believers and participant observation of their religious rituals and practices. The results of the research show that the religious experience of Sapta Darma Sanggar Sanggar Candi Sapta Rengga, Yogyakarta City includes religious experiences which are often experienced through prostration, digging and special rituals. The expression dimension is seen in the form of prayers, mantras and symbols used in religious practices. Meanwhile, the consequence dimension includes changes in behavior and outlook on life of Sapta Darma adherents. Analysis based on Joachim Wach's theory reveals that the religious experiences of Sapta Darma adherents not only provide meaning and purpose in their lives but also form a strong spiritual identity. This study provides insight into how religious experiences can be articulated and internalized in local cultural contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Religious experience is one of the important aspects of human life that encompasses various dimensions, ranging from a sense of connection with the divine to changes in daily behaviour. In Indonesia, which is known as a country with a diversity of religions and beliefs, local belief groups such as Penghayat Sapta Darma have unique spiritual views and practices that are interesting to study. Penghayat Sapta Darma, which developed in Yogyakarta, offers a rich and different perspective in understanding spirituality and religion.¹

Sapta Darma is a faith that emerged in Indonesia in the mid-20th century. It sees the importance of harmony between humans, nature, and Sang Hyang Widhi or God Almighty. Sapta Darma believers often express their beliefs through various forms of spiritual practices, such as meditation, prayer, and special rituals (Sujud Penggalian).² The moral and ethical teachings always campaigned by Sapta Darma followers are aimed at achieving life balance and happiness. In the context of these diverse beliefs, the religious experience of Sapta Darma believers is a domain that deserves to be examined more deeply to understand how the beliefs of Yogyakarta Sapta Darma believers shape the spiritual lives of individual administrators and followers.³

Sapta Darma is a spiritual practice whose followers call themselves 'residents'. Sapta Darma is spread across 13 provinces in Indonesia and has thousands of followers, even overseas. It is said that the name Sapta Darma comes from a revelation that came down in a rhombus-shaped symbol. However, the symbol is not the symbol of Sapta Darma, but the meaning of the human

¹ Darmanto Suyono. *Penghayat Sapta Darma: History, Teachings, and Religious Practices*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017, pp. 27-30.

² Sutrisno Aris. "Penghayat Sapta Darma: A Study of Religious Practices and Experiences in Yogyakarta". *Journal of Belief Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2019, pp. 233-236.

³ Darmanto Suyono. *Penghayat Sapta Darma: History, Teachings, and Religious Practices*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017, pp. 45-48

symbol. Sapta Darma means "Sapta" which means "seven" and "Darma" which means "holy duty that must be carried out or holy obligation".⁴

Within the framework of the theory of religious experience proposed by Joachim Wach, religious experience can be analysed through three main components: the experiential dimension, the expression dimension, and the consequence dimension. The experiential dimension refers to the subjective experience of individuals who feel the presence of or interaction with the divine or transcendent. The expression dimension includes the ways in which individuals or groups express their religious experiences through rituals, symbols, prayers, and other forms of expression. The consequence dimension refers to the impact or changes that occur to individuals or groups as a result of their religious experience, both in daily behaviour, outlook on life, and spiritual identity.⁵ Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out the religious experience of Sapta Darma believers of Sapta Rengga Temple Studio in Yogyakarta City. Data collection was carried out using literature, documents, archives, interviews and observations conducted during this semester. Observations and interviews to Sapta Darma residents we carry out for a week or every two weeks.

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative⁶ type to see the religious experience of Sapta Darma believers of Sapta Rengga Temple Studio in Yogyakarta City. As for research data using secondary and primary data. For secondary data, researchers get it from several literature studies related to the focus being studied. As for primary data, researchers get it by means of observations that directly plunge into the location under study, interviews

⁴ Surana, G. "The Sapta Darma Belief and its Spread in Indonesia". *Journal of Belief and Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, pp. 112-115.

⁵ Surana, G. "The Sapta Darma Belief and its Spread in Indonesia". *Journal of Belief and Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2017, pp. 66-68.

⁶ Sugiyono. *Qualitative Research Methods (Qualitative, Quantitative, and R&D Approaches)*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2018, pp. 12-15.

conducted with administrators and followers of Sapta Darma Sanggar Candi Sapta Rengga Yogyakarta City, and documentation obtained from such as newspapers, pictures, documents, and books related to the focus of research. As for data analysis, this research uses the concept of Miles and Habermes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of Sapta Darma

Sapta Darma is a mystical sect and one of the beliefs in Indonesia. This sect is believed to have originated from the revelation to Bapa Panuntun Agung Sri Gutama in the early hours of Friday Wage on 27 December 1952 at his residence in Koplakan Village, Pare District, Kediri Regency, East Java. This spiritual flow has three main teachings, namely prostration, Wewarah Tujuh, and sesanti. The worship of Sapta Darma adherents can be done privately at home or together in a place of worship called sanggar.⁷

Sapta Darma spiritual teaching is a teaching revealed by Hyang Maha Kuasa to all human beings, on 27 December 1952 with the first revelation being Sujud. Then on 13 February 1953, the Revelation of Racut was revealed. On 12 July 1954, the Revelation of the Symbol of the Human Person and the Seven Jewels and Sesanti was revealed. On 15 October 1954, the terms Sanggar and Guidance were revealed. On 27 December 1954, the Revelation of the 12 (twelve) brothers. On 13 February 1955, the Revelation of the Knot of Rope and the Testament was revealed. 33 (thirty-three). On 12 July 1955 the Revelation of Wejangan 12 (twelve) was revealed. On 27 December 1955, the Revelation of the Name of Sri Gutama and the Religion of Sapta Darma was revealed. On 17 August 1956 the Revelation of the Assignment of Bapa Panuntun Agung Sri Gutama to disseminate the teachings of Sapta Darma Spirituality was revealed and on 30 April 1957 the Revelation of the name Sri Pawenang alias Sri Pamungkas was revealed.⁸

⁷ Imam Budi Santoso, *Javanese Life Advice* (Yogyakarta: Divapress, 2010), 149.

⁸ Andriawan Bagus Hantoro and Abraham Nurcahyo, "Study of the Development of Sapta Darma Spirituality in Magetan Regency 1956-2011," *AGASTYA: JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND ITS LEARNING* 4, no. 02 (July 10, 2014): 54–73, <https://doi.org/10.25273/ajsp.v4i02.828>

Hardjosapoero was moved by a force that came from nowhere to wake up from his sleep then he sat cross-legged and faced eastwards this happened on 26 December in 1952. Hardjosapoero tried to control himself and resist but still could not control himself then he shouted." Allah Hyang Maha Agung, Allah Hyang Maha Rahim, Allah Hyang Maha Adil", then without control returned in a state of prostration to chant several sentences that read: "Hyang Maha Suci Sujud, Hyang Maha Kuwasa Hyangmaha Suci Sujud, Hyang Maha Kuwasa Hyang Maha Suci Sujud Hyang Maha Kuwasa.". Then in his third prostration Hardjosapoero cried out and said: "Hyang Maha Suci Mertobat Hyang Maha Kuwasa, Hyang Maha Suci Mertobat Hyang Maha Kuwasa, Hyang Maha Suci Mertobat Hyang Maha Kuwasa.". According to Waiman, the uncontrolled prostration was controlled and guided directly by Hyang Maha Almighty and this happened from 1am to 5am. This thing that happened was told to Hardjosapoero's close relatives and family, then this became info and news that shocked the local population precisely in Keplakan Village, Pare, Kediri, East Java.⁹

On 13 February 1953 Hardjosapoero received another revelation to perform a worship called racut, which is experiencing death in life (mati sajroning urip) 10 Hardjosapuro interpreted this as life is our mind dead but what lives is our sense or spirit. Hardjosapuro recounted the incident of receiving the revelation he experienced, that he had left the body (badag) to go up (another realm) beyond the human subconscious. Hardjosapuro entered a large and beautiful sanctuary. He prostrated himself at the priesthood then someone came with a very bright light and brought him to two wells that had very clear water, the wells were named Sumur Jalatunda and Sumur Gumuling.¹⁰

On 12 July 1954 revelations of the human symbol wewarah seven and sesanti descended, this was witnessed by Hardjosapoero's friends. This symbol

⁹ Hantoro and Nurcahyo, "Study of the Development of the Spirituality of Sapta Darma in Magetan Regency 1956-2011.

¹⁰ Hantoro and Nurcahyo, "Study of the Development of the Spirituality of Sapta Darma in Magetan Regency 1956-2011.

reads: 'Ing ngendi bae lan marang sapa bae warga Sapta Darma kudu sumunur pindha baskara' which means "anywhere at any time the citizens of Sapta Darma always shine like the Sun". This implies that anyone who adheres to Sapta Darma must be an example or role model for anyone, helping and treating fellow human beings without having to look at them and differentiate. Then in the same year on 15 October some relatives of Hardjosapoero prostrated together at his house then according to the followers of Sapta Darma a revelation came down that appointed Parto Sarpan as the guide of the Pare studio. Since then Sarpan has been the one who guides the prostration of Sapta Darma followers. In December, another revelation came down through the movement of uniting two palms on the chest, leading to the crown, forehead, left shoulder, right shoulder, left chest, middle chest, right chest, continuing towards the navel, left stomach, right stomach, towards the tailbone, then uniting the palms and fingertips back in front of the chest. This movement is the vibration of the human person.¹¹

Sapta Darma has a holy book as a guide for its adherents and as a guide to guide the adherents of this religion, this holy book contains the revelation of the Sapta Darma holy book called Wewarah. Sapta Darma believes that there is a division of three realms, namely: Natural Realm, Eternal Realm and Subtle Realm. The Natural Realm is what has been experienced or lived now by mankind, the Eternal Realm a realm of permanence or keswargan and the Subtle Realm is the place of curious spirits, because they are unable to go directly to the realm of keswargan. People who sin a lot, according to them, the spirits when they die become curious and cannot return to Hyang Almighty in a place that is lasting and eternal. Sapta Darma believes that humans have certain characteristics as creatures created by Hyang Almighty on Earth, according to Sapta Darma humans have five characteristics or known as Panca Sifat Manusia, namely: (1) The nature of virtue towards fellow human beings, (2) The nature of compassion towards fellow human beings, (3) Feeling and acting fairly

¹¹ Arifin, "Motives for Joining the Sapta Darma Sect of Followers of the Great Sapta Rengga Temple Yogyakarta," 35.

means not differentiating between humans, (4) Awareness that humans in the primeval wasesa of God, (5) The human spirit comes from light that is eternal.¹²

During the process of propagation, Panuntun Agung Sri Gutama was accompanied by Soewartini Martodiharjo S.H who was titled Panuntun Wanita Sri Pawenang. The Great Panuntun then died on 16 December 1964 and his body was burned and thrown into the sea near Surabaya. This funeral ceremony was carried out because Sapta Darma followers only worship God Almighty, not the Great Panuntun Sri Gutama. Then Panuntun Wanita Sri Pawenang replaced Agung Sri Gutama. As a result of the process of spreading, Sapta Darma now has a population of 1,200 followers. This data shows a growth since the beginning of Sapta Darma. Then the original centre in Pare was moved to Yogyakarta in Surokasan village and has the name Candi Sapta Rengga.

In its journey, Sapta Darma has thousands of believers spread not only domestically but also in foreign countries such as Suriname, the Netherlands, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore. Singapore. Despite a number of licensing problems, there are now hundreds of centres in Indonesia, including 27 centres in Surabaya. These centres function as places of worship and gatherings for Sapta Darma members.

Duties of the Association of Sapta Darma Citizens (Persada) of Yogyakarta City

Persada is the only organisation of Sapta Darma citizens that aims to maintain the unity of citizens, as well as to protect and support the activities of citizens in implementing the appreciation of the teachings of Sapta Darma spirituality. Persada has the task of assisting the Supreme Guide (the highest leader in the institutional structure of Sapta Darma spirituality and domiciled

¹² Mawaza and Manese, "Sapta Darma Followers in the Midst of Limited Plurality," 49-64. 28 Mawaza and Manese, 67.

in Sanggar Candi Sapta Rengga Yogyakarta) in carrying out its duties.¹³ In carrying out its duties, Persada organises functions:

1. Implementing the policies set by the Guidance (A person who is elected/appointed as a Guidance according to the mechanism established by the Sapta Darma Spirituality to be a servant/servant of the Sapta Darma Spiritual Teachings for the benefit of all Sapta Darma Spirituality Citizens).
2. Implement the work programme that has been determined in the National Sarasehan.
3. Realising a sense of security for citizens in improving their understanding, appreciation and practice of the teachings of Sapta Darma spirituality purely.
4. Increasing awareness in the life of society, nation, and state for citizens by increasing the appreciation, practice of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution
5. Increase understanding in the field of organisation
6. Improve the quality of Human Resources in supporting organisational activities
7. As a means of communication and liaison between Sapta Darma citizens with the community, government, and other institutions
8. Submitting proposals and suggestions to the government about everything related to Persada's main task in an effort to explore and preserve the nation's spritual culture.

Persada has the following main tasks: 1) To realise a sense of security for citizens in improving their understanding, appreciation, and practice of Sapta Darma spiritual teachings in a pure manner. 2) Increasing awareness of social life, nation, and state for citizens by increasing the appreciation, practice of

¹³ Secretariat of the Supreme Guide of Sapta Darma Kerokhanian, History of the Sapta Darma Revelation and the Journey of Panuntun Agung Sri Gutama, First Edition (Yogyakarta: Publishing Unit of Sapta Rengga Temple Studio, 2010).

Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. 3) Improve good relations with the government and other institutions that support Persada activities.

Persada functions as a protector and supporter of citizen activities in terms of: 1) Improving the understanding, appreciation, and practice of the teachings of Sapta Darma spirituality in a pure manner. 2) Increasing the appreciation and practice of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. 3) Submitting proposals and suggestions to the government about everything related to the main task of Persada, as well as the results of efforts to explore and preserve the spiritual culture of the nation. 4) As a means of communication and liaison between Sapta Darma spiritual members and the community, government, and other institutions. 5) Submitting proposals and suggestions to the Guidance Institute in certain matters.

Sapta Darma teachings

The teachings of Sapta Darma have a simple meaning at first glance, but are actually very broad because they cover all aspects of life in the world of humans, spirits, jinn, and demons. The essence of this teaching is derived from prostration, Wewarah Tujuh, and sesanti.¹⁴

1. Sujud

Sujud is the worship ritual of Sapta Darma adherents. This ritual is performed once a day, the rest is considered a virtue, either individually or together in the centre.

2. Wewarah Tujuh

Wewarah Tujuh, which means 'seven advices', is a life guideline that must be followed by every Sapta Darma adherent. In general, the contents of Wewarah Tujuh are as follows. 1) Be faithful and surrender to the Pancasila of God, namely that God has five absolute noble qualities. 2) Willing to carry out the laws and regulations that apply in their country. 3) Participate in the defence of the country and the nation. 4) Help anyone selflessly. 5) Dare to

¹⁴ A.S.Mufid. 2012. The Dynamics of the Development of Local Belief Systems in Indonesia. Jakarta: Center for Research and Development of Religious Life of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

live based on one's own strength and confidence. 6) Be moral and ethical in family and society. Believe that the world is not eternal and is always changing.

3. Sesanti

The Sesanti or motto of Sapta Darma adherents in Javanese reads "Ing ngendi bae, marang sapa bae, warga Sapta Darma kudu suminar pindha baskara." Meaning: "Anywhere, to anyone, Sapta Darma members must always shine like the sun.". This sesanti means that every Sapta Darma member is obliged to always be ready to help anyone who needs help.

Interview Results to Sapta Darma devotees of Sapta Rengga Temple Studio Yogyakarta City

1. Interview Method

Interviews were conducted face-to-face at the Sapto Darmo Yogyakarta cultural centre with several respondents individually, with a duration of about 5 minutes per person. b. Selection of. Respondents were selected based on the time of joining Sapto Darmo, with the criteria of 1 year down to above 1 year. c. Interview Questions

- 1) Where do you know Sapto Darmo from? Mr Herman (67): "I got to know Sapto Darmo from a neighbour who follows its teachings and I was interested because it promised effective treatment for my illness." Mr Tresno (65):** "I heard about Sapto Darmo from a friend who was cured through the practice of digging prostration. I then routinely took the train from Solo to Yogyakarta to participate in this activity." Mrs Suratmi (50): "I know Sapto Darmo through my family who are active in the practice of digging prostration." Mrs Rita (55): "I learnt about Sapto Darmo from my mother." Mr Bambang (60): "I have practised both Catholicism and Islam, but I chose and felt a special 'flavour' when I had a spiritual experience in Sapto Darmo. This experience became a turning point in my life since college."
- 2) What was your religion before? Mr Herman: "I am still a Christian until now." Mr Tresno: "I was previously Catholic." Mrs Suratmi: "I was also

Catholic before." Mrs Rita: Respondent did not provide information. Mr Bambang: "I had Catholicism and Islam, but I chose and found the 'flavour' in Sapto Darmo.

- 3) How is the religious experience of Sapto Darmo residents? Bapak Herman: "I found effective treatment for my illness in the teachings of Sapto Darmo" Bapak Tresno: "I regularly take the train from Solo to Yogyakarta to attend the digging prostration once a month, and also have a small studio at home for prostration every day." Mrs Suratmi: "I was encouraged to join the sujud dig" Mrs Rita: "I feel the "FEEL" when I do sujud penggalian" Mr Bambang: "The religious conversion experience feels a special "rasa" or feeling when experiencing spiritual experiences or prostration digging in Sapto Darmo. This experience may be a turning point in my life"

2. Analysis

The data from the interviews was qualitatively analysed to identify common patterns in the respondents' responses, such as diverse religious backgrounds, information channels through social networks, deep spiritual experiences, and interesting alternative medicine goals. The qualitative analysis of the interviews with Sapto Darmo Yogyakarta residents revealed various interesting patterns related to spiritual experiences, religious backgrounds, information channels, and alternative medicine goals within this community.

One of the key findings from the interviews is the diversity of respondents' religious backgrounds in Sapto Darmo. There is representation from various religious traditions, including Christianity, Catholicism and Islam. This reflects the inclusive character of Sapto Darmo which is able to attract individuals with different religious backgrounds. For example, Mr Herman and Mrs Suratmi, who were previously Christian and Catholic, found a new spiritual path in Sapto Darmo's teachings without having to abandon their previous religious identity. This indicates that Sapto Darmo is able to act as a platform for individuals who seek additional spiritual dimensions beyond their previous religious practices.

Introduction to Sapto Darmo often occurs through interpersonal channels of information, such as from neighbours, friends or family. For example, Mr Tresno heard about Sapto Darmo from his friend who was healed through the practice of prostration digging. This then shows that social networks play a crucial role in the spread of teachings and practices within the Sapto Darmo community. Sapto Darmo's success in attracting attention and increasing participation of its members may be closely related to the effectiveness of social networks in conveying information and related positive experiences.

It is religious experience that is the main motivation for some respondents to remain actively involved in Sapto Darmo ritual practices. For example, Mr Bambang noted that his spiritual experience in Sapto Darmo had been an important turning point in his life, influencing his religious choices and providing a special "taste" experience. This suggests that intense and personal spiritual experiences may be a key factor in maintaining and expanding Sapto Darmo teachings.

In addition to the spiritual dimension, the alternative medicine aspect is also an attraction for some Sapto Darmo residents. Some respondents, such as Mr Herman, come to Sapto Darmo in the hope of getting effective treatment for their illnesses. This shows that Sapto Darmo is not only a place to seek spiritual peace, but also offers solutions to health problems faced by its members.

The religious experiences of Sapto Darmo residents show a variety of different motivations and outcomes in following this teaching. An analysis of the responses given by respondents Mr Herman, Mr Tresno, Mrs Suratmi, Mrs Rita, and Mr Bambang provides a complex picture of how Sapto Darmo's teachings affect their lives.

Mr Herman stated that he found a powerful treatment for his illness through Sapto Darmo teachings. This suggests one of the main attractions of the teachings is the healing aspect. In many spiritual traditions, physical healing is often associated with religious or spiritual practices. Mr Herman's

experience reflects the belief that there is healing power in the practice of prostration digging taught by Sapto Darmo. It also shows that physical needs can be an entry point for individuals to explore the spiritual dimension.

Bapak Tresno demonstrates a high commitment to Sapto Darmo's teachings by regularly travelling from Solo to Yogyakarta for the once-a-month digging prostration. In addition, he also has a small sanggar at home for daily prostrations. This suggests that the teachings not only provide spiritual significance, but also form daily and monthly routines that provide structure and discipline in her religious life. These routine practices may also reflect the importance of community and places of worship in living the teachings of Sapto Darmo.

Ibu Suratmi and Ibu Rita both acknowledged the spiritual impetus they felt to participate in the digging prostration. Ibu Suratmi states that she is compelled to join the digging prostration, while Ibu Rita feels a "FEEL" when doing the digging prostration. Both responses indicate that Sapto Darmo practice provides a profound and transformational spiritual experience. The "FEEL" felt by Ibu Rita can be interpreted as a spiritual experience that provides emotional and mental satisfaction, which may also signify the attainment of a meditative state or enlightenment.

Mr Bambang described his religious conversion experience as a turning point in his life, where he felt a special "rasa" or feeling while experiencing the digging prostration in Sapto Darmo. This suggests that for some individuals, Sapto Darmo is not just an addition to their previous religious experience, but a sea change that provides new meaning and a deeper understanding of spirituality. These conversion experiences may indicate that Sapto Darmo's teachings offer something that is felt to be more authentic or fulfilling than the religious teachings previously followed.

Overall, the qualitative analysis of the interviews with Sapto Darmo residents illustrates a community that is heterogeneous in terms of religious background, but united in its spiritual quest and desire to improve quality of life through spiritual practices and alternative medicine. Sapto Darmo's

success in retaining and attracting members can be attributed to its inclusiveness, social networks and the religious and wellness experiences it offers to its followers.

CONCLUSIONS

The research in the context of community development finally concludes that the religious experience of Sapta Darma believers of Sapta Rengga Temple Studio Yogyakarta City includes religious and transcendental experiences that are often experienced through digging prostration and special rituals. The expression dimension is seen in the form of prayers, mantras, and symbols used in religious practices. Meanwhile, the consequence dimension includes changes in the behaviour and outlook on life of the believers who become more in line with the teachings of Sapta Darma. Analysis based on Joachim Wach's theory reveals that the religious experiences of Sapta Darma believers not only provide meaning and purpose in their lives but also form a strong spiritual identity. This study provides insights into how religious experiences can be articulated and internalised in the context of local culture.

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