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DISASTER AS COSMIC EQUILIBRUM: THE PHILOSOPHY OF BALANCE IN HINDU THEOLOGY AND BALINESE-INDONESIAN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Koliasa Olena Vasylivna
Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor
Odesa National Maritime University;
Visiting Scholar the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
The University of Sydney
Sydney, NSW 2009; Australia
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5301-480X

The paper examines the conceptualisation of disaster, calamity, and evil within Hindu theology and its lived expression in the religious cultures of the Indonesian archipelago, most fully elaborated in Balinese Hinduism. Against the prevailing Western tendency to frame disaster as pure negation, an interruption of cosmic order to be overcome or eliminated, this study argues that the Hindu-derived cosmological systems of Indonesia articulate a fundamentally different ontological position: that disaster, destructive forces, and expressions of what Western categories label "evil" are not aberrations to be eradicated but necessary, generative poles in a dynamic structure of cosmic balance. Drawing on the theological concepts of dharma, karma, maya, and the Balinese principles of Rwa Bhineda (the Two Indispensables) and Sekala-Niskala (the visible-invisible continuum), the paper undertakes a comparative cross-cultural analysis that situates Indonesian religious practice within the broader framework of Hindu cosmology while attending to its distinctive local elaborations. A close reading methodology is applied to primary theological and ethnographic sources, supported by qualitative interpretation of ritual practice, textual tradition, and philosophical argument. The findings suggest that within this cosmological framework, disaster functions not as rupture but as resonance – a dynamic that restores, sustains, and perpetually regenerates the equilibrium between humanity, nature, and the cosmos. The implications of this perspective for comparative religion, environmental philosophy, and cross-cultural understandings of suffering are discussed.

Key words: *disaster, cosmic balance, Hindu cosmology, dharma, Balinese religion, evil as equilibrium.*

Introduction. In the aftermath of the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami – the deadliest in recorded history, which claimed more than 220,000 lives and devastated coastlines across fourteen countries – observers noted a remarkable divergence in the frameworks through which affected communities interpreted the catastrophe. While global media and many Western commentators framed the event as pure tragedy, a rupture in the natural order demanding explanation and reparation, many communities along the affected Indonesian and South Asian coastlines, particularly those shaped by Hindu cosmological traditions, drew on a very different interpretive vocabulary. For these communities, the tsunami was not experienced solely as an exception to cosmic order but, to some degree, as an expression of it – a violent resynchronisation of forces whose long-term imbalance had accumulated to a point requiring dramatic correction (Wessing, 2006; Fox, 2011).

This response was not a rationalisation of suffering, nor a quietist acceptance of injustice. Rather, it reflected a cosmological architecture – elaborated across millennia of Hindu theological tradition and refined through centuries of distinctively Indonesian religious synthesis – in which destruction, disaster, and what Western moral philosophy typically categorises as evil are understood as structurally necessary constituents of a living cosmic order. To deprive the universe of these forces would not constitute salvation; it would constitute a different and more fundamental catastrophe: the collapse of the dynamic polarity through which existence sustains and renews itself.

The philosophical dimensions of this position are elaborated with particular clarity and sophistication in Balinese Hinduism, a tradition that developed from the meeting of Indian Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, indigenous Austronesian spiritual practice, and the courtly cultures of the Javanese Hindu kingdoms – above all the Majapahit empire, which flourished between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries CE and whose cultural legacy continues to permeate Balinese religious life (Geertz, 1980; Hooykaas, 1973; Zurbuchen, 1987). Balinese theology articulates a se-

ries of interlocking cosmological principles – most centrally *Rwa Bhineda*, the philosophical doctrine of the Two Indispensable Opposites, and *Sekala-Niskala*, the doctrine of the interpenetration of the visible and invisible realms – that constitute a highly developed metaphysical account of why cosmic polarity, including the polarity between order and disaster, is not merely unavoidable but ontologically productive.

Presentation of the main material. The scholarship most directly relevant to this paper spans several intersecting fields: the history and philosophy of Hindu religion, the anthropology and theology of Balinese and Indonesian religious cultures, comparative religious philosophy, and – at a broader disciplinary horizon – environmental humanities and the cross-cultural study of disaster. The following review maps the principal theoretical coordinates that inform the analysis, attending to both the foundational conceptual resources that Hindu cosmology provides and the ethnographic and theological scholarship that has illuminated their Indonesian elaborations.

Hindu cosmology, in its classical Vedic and Upanishadic formulations, conceives the universe not as a static creation but as a dynamic, rhythmically self-renewing process – a vast oscillation between poles of manifestation and dissolution, order and chaos, creation and destruction. The fundamental metaphysical concept of *Brahman* – the ultimate, undifferentiated ground of all being – differentiates itself into the manifest world through a process of *maya*, the creative power of appearance and illusion, producing the world of phenomenal duality (Radhakrishnan, 1953; Deutsch, 1969). Within this framework, what appears as opposition – *good and evil, order and disaster, creation and destruction* – is ultimately understood as the play of a single underlying reality expressing itself through complementary poles. The Vedantic concept of *lila*, the divine play of the cosmos, is particularly significant here: it frames the entire process of cosmic manifestation, including its most violent and destructive episodes, not as a tragedy or an error but as the joyful, self-delighting activity of Brahman.

The concept of *dharma* – cosmic and moral order – provides the ethical and ontological framework within which disaster acquires its meaning. Dharma is not simply a moral code; it is the structural principle by which the cosmos maintains its coherence, the pattern of right relationship between all levels of existence: divine, cosmic, social, and individual (Doniger, 2009). Crucially, dharma is understood as dynamic rather than static: it requires continuous effort, renewal, and – at cosmic scale – periodic crisis and restoration. The great Hindu epics, above all the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, are fundamentally narratives of dharma under threat: cosmic order becomes so severely disrupted that catastrophic intervention – including war, death, and large-scale destruction – becomes the necessary instrument of its restoration (Biardeau, 1989).

The concept of *karma* further elaborates this structure at the individual and collective level. Karma – the law of moral causation – ensures that no action, whether virtuous or destructive, passes without consequence. Within this framework, disaster is never random: it is the manifestation of accumulated karmic weight, the outworking of causes set in motion across individual lives and cosmic cycles. This does not imply that disaster is deserved in any simple retributive sense – classical Hindu theology is considerably subtler than this – but it does imply that disaster is intelligible, that it participates in a causal structure that ultimately serves the maintenance and renewal of cosmic order (Filliozat, 1991; Klostermaier, 1994).

The Shaivite tradition within Hinduism offers what is perhaps the most developed theological account of destruction as a cosmologically productive force. *Shiva* – the Destroyer within the Hindu trimurti – is not understood as evil but as the indispensable agent of dissolution that enables regeneration. His cosmic dance, *Tandava*, simultaneously represents the annihilation of the old world and the creative energy from which a new world emerges. The *Shiva Purana* and the broader *Shaivite* philosophical tradition develop this insight into a systematic theology of creative destruction, one in which Shiva's most terrifying manifestations – Bhairava, Mahakala, the destroyer of worlds – are understood as expressions of the same divine reality that is also the most tender and beneficent (O'Flaherty, 1976; Davis, 1991). It is this Shaivite theological heritage that exerted perhaps the most direct influence on the Hindu cultures of the Indonesian archipelago.

The Indianisation of the Indonesian archipelago, which proceeded from approximately the first century through complex processes of trade, cultural exchange, and political patronage rather than conquest, produced a series of highly original religious syntheses in which Hindu and Buddhist cosmological frameworks were integrated with indigenous Austronesian spiritual traditions to produce what scholars have variously called "Indic" or "localised Hindu" cultures (Coedès, 1968; Wolters, 1982; Hall, 1985). These syntheses were not superficial: they represented sustained philosophical and theological engagements with

Indian cosmological ideas, mediated through Sanskrit learning, court patronage, and the translation of Indian textual traditions into local literary and ritual forms.

The most important vehicle of this synthesis in the Indonesian context was the Javanese Hindu-Buddhist court culture of the Majapahit empire (c. 1293–1527 CE), which produced an extraordinarily rich tradition of Sanskrit-derived Kawi literature, including adaptations of the great Indian epics and the development of distinctive Javanese cosmological and theological frameworks. The Majapahit cultural synthesis was distinguished by its integration of Shaivite, Vaishnava, and Buddhist elements within a single cosmological framework – a theological pluralism that became characteristic of Indonesian religious cultures and that continues to inform the philosophy of *Pancasila*, the secular-pluralist foundation of the modern Indonesian state (Pigeaud, 1962; Zoetmulder, 1974).

When Majapahit culture was transmitted to Bali – largely through waves of emigration following the Islamisation of Java in the sixteenth century – it became the foundation of a tradition that, protected by Bali's geographical and political distinctiveness, preserved and continued to develop Hindu cosmological ideas in forms that remained largely continuous with their pre-Islamic Javanese antecedents while simultaneously developing distinctive local elaborations. The result was Balinese Hinduism as it exists today: a living religious tradition of extraordinary complexity, depth, and vitality, which constitutes one of the world's richest surviving expressions of Hindu cosmological philosophy in ritual practice (Belo, 1953; Covarrubias, 1937; Eiseman, 1990).

The principle of *Rwa Bhineda* – literally "the Two that are Different" or, in its philosophical elaboration, the Two Indispensable Opposites – constitutes the central organising principle of Balinese cosmology and the most important indigenous philosophical resource for understanding the Balinese conception of disaster. *Rwa Bhineda* holds that reality is constituted through the dynamic tension of binary opposites: *bhuta* and *kala* (demonic/chaotic forces and temporal flow), *sekala* and *niskala* (the visible and invisible realms), *dharma* and *adharma* (order and its dissolution), and, most relevantly for this study, *dewa* (divine beneficence) and *bhuta-kala* (destructive, chthonic power). Crucially, none of these polarities is understood as a conflict between good and evil in the Abrahamic sense; rather, both poles are understood as equally necessary constituents of a living, dynamic totality (Eiseman, 1990; Hobart et al., 1996).

The philosophical depth of *Rwa Bhineda* is evident in its ontological claim: it is not merely that the cosmos happens to contain both order and disorder, both creation and destruction. It is that neither pole can exist without the other – that each is constituted by and through its opposite. This is a position that contemporary Western philosophy would recognise as structurally similar to the Hegelian dialectic or to the process-relational metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, but which has deep roots in Hindu cosmological thought and in the indigenous Austronesian concept of paired complementarities that anthropologists have documented across the Indonesian archipelago (Fox, 1980; Barnes, 1974). The Balinese articulation of this principle in ritual practice is particularly explicit: major ceremonial cycles such as *Tawur Kesanga* (the New Year purification ritual held before Nyepi) are specifically designed to propitiate and rebalance the *bhuta-kala* – the destructive, chthonic forces – not by eliminating them but by honouring, acknowledging, and ritually integrating them within a restored cosmic balance.

Closely related to *Rwa Bhineda*, the principle of *Sekala-Niskala* articulates the Balinese understanding of the relationship between the visible, material world (*sekala*) and the invisible, spiritual world (*niskala*). These two realms are not understood as separate ontological domains – a material world and a supernatural world – but as two aspects of a single, continuous reality, interpenetrating at every level of existence (Eiseman, 1990; Connor et al., 1986). What happens in the *sekala* realm always has *niskala* dimensions and causes; and events in the *niskala* realm – the movement of spiritual forces, the accumulation of ritual imbalances, the activity of ancestral spirits and divine powers – always have consequences in the *sekala* realm.

Within this framework, disaster occupies a peculiarly double status. At the *sekala* level, disaster is real, painful, and demands practical response: houses must be rebuilt, injuries treated, and communities reorganised. However, at the *niskala* level, disaster is simultaneously a communication – a message from the invisible realm about the state of balance or imbalance between human communities and the cosmic forces within which they are embedded. The task of the Balinese priest (*pedanda*) and the ritual specialist (*balian*) in the aftermath of disaster is precisely to read this *niskala* dimension: to diagnose the spiritual imbalances that have allowed or necessitated the disaster, and to prescribe the ritual responses – purifications, propitiations, offerings, and renewed commitments to *dharma* – through which cosmic balance can be restored (Wiana, 2004; Subagia, 2011).

The Hindu-Indonesian conceptualisation of disaster as a vehicle of cosmic balance acquires its full significance through comparison with other religious and philosophical traditions. The Western monotheistic traditions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – have developed complex theodicies: philosophical accounts of how the existence of evil and suffering is compatible with an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God. The problem of theodicy, as Leibniz classically formulated it, arises precisely because monotheism posits an absolute opposition between divine good and the evil and suffering that permeate the world. Sophisticated theodicies – Augustinian, Irenean, process-theological – have attempted to resolve this tension, but the tension itself is constitutive of the monotheistic framework (Hick, 1966; Griffin, 1976).

No analogous problem of theodicy arises within the Hindu-Indonesian cosmological framework, for the simple reason that the framework does not posit an absolute opposition between divine goodness and cosmic evil. The forces associated with disaster – Shiva's destructive aspect, the *bhuta-kala* of Balinese cosmology, the demonic *asuras* of the Puranas – are not understood as the negation of the divine but as expressions of it. This has significant implications for the phenomenology of suffering: within these traditions, the sufferer of disaster is not confronted with the existential crisis of divine abandonment (the "dark night of the soul" of Christian mysticism, or the radical questioning of divine justice in Job) but with the challenge of discerning and restoring balance within a cosmos that is, at every level, suffused with divine energy, including its most violent manifestations (Klostermaier, 1994; Kinsley, 1975).

Instructive parallels can be drawn with East Asian religious and philosophical traditions, above all Daoism, which similarly conceptualises the cosmos as a dynamic field of complementary forces – *yin* and *yang* – whose interaction generates all phenomena, including those experienced as catastrophic. The Daoist concept of *wu wei* – non-coercive action in harmony with the natural flow of things — implies an orientation toward disaster not of passive resignation but of intelligent, non-resistant alignment with cosmic processes that operate on scales and with purposes that exceed human planning (Girardot, 1983). The resonance between this Daoist perspective and the Balinese concept of *tat twam asi* – the recognition of the self in all things, which motivates the ethic of ritual responsibility toward the entire web of life – suggests that the Hindu-Indonesian framework is not an isolated cultural particularity but part of a broader family of non-dualist cosmological philosophies that have generated structurally similar responses to the problem of disaster.

The most fundamental dimension of the Hindu-Indonesian conceptualisation of disaster is its status as cosmic communication. Within the framework of *Sekala-Niskala*, disaster is never merely a physical event – a seismic tremor, a volcanic eruption, a flood or epidemic – but simultaneously a message from the invisible realm, a sign that the relationship between the human community and the cosmic forces within which it is embedded has fallen out of balance. This communicative dimension of disaster does not deny its material reality or diminish its horror; it situates both within a broader ontological context that transforms their meaning.

The Balinese volcanic landscape makes this framework existentially immediate in a way that is difficult to overstate. Mount Agung – the highest peak on the island and the abode of the supreme deity Ida Sang Hyang Widi Wasa in Balinese theology – erupts with some regularity, most catastrophically in 1963, when the eruption killed approximately 1,700 people and devastated large areas of the island. The 1963 eruption coincided with the great centennial *Eka Dasa Rudra* ceremony – a massive purification ritual held at the Besakih Mother Temple on the slopes of the mountain – and Balinese theological reflection on this coincidence produced a rich and nuanced account of the relationship between ritual action, cosmic balance, and natural catastrophe. The eruption was understood not as a punishment for the ceremony but as a manifestation of the same cosmic forces that the ceremony was attempting to address: a sign that the imbalances accumulating in the island's spiritual ecology were more severe than had been recognised, and that a more thorough reckoning was required (Eiseman, 1990; Hobart et al., 1996).

This interpretive framework has direct parallels in classical Hindu theology's account of *pralaya* – the periodic dissolution of the cosmos at the end of each cosmic cycle (*kalpa*). In the Puranic cosmological scheme, the universe passes through vast cycles of creation (*srishti*), maintenance (*sthiti*), and dissolution (*samhara*) – the last of which is presided over by Shiva in his aspect as Mahakala, the Great Time. The *pralaya* is not experienced as a cosmic failure but as a cosmic necessity: the accumulated impurities and imbalances of a completed cycle require dissolution before a new cycle of creation can begin (O'Flaherty, 1976; Lochtefeld, 2002). The scale is different, but the structural logic is identical to the Balinese interpretation of

the 1963 eruption: disaster as the cosmic process of clearing the accumulated weight of imbalance to restore the conditions for renewed flourishing.

One of the most striking expressions of the *Rwa Bhineda* principle in Balinese ritual life is the practice of *caru* – the ritual offering to the *bhuta-kala*, the demonic, chthonic forces associated with disaster, disease, and cosmic disruption. Unlike the offerings to the gods (*dewa yadnya*), which are directed upward and associated with elevation, light, and spiritual aspiration, the *caru* offerings are directed downward, to the earth and its dark forces, and are associated with appeasement, acknowledgement, and the restoration of balance. The practice of *caru* makes theologically explicit what *Rwa Bhineda* implies philosophically: that the destructive forces are not to be rejected, suppressed, or destroyed, but recognised, honoured, and integrated within a balanced cosmic order (Wiana, 2004; Subagia, 2011).

The Balinese ceremony of *Tawur Kesanga* – held on the eve of Nyepi, the Balinese New Year – represents the most elaborate and publicly visible expression of this principle. The ceremony involves the construction of elaborate *ogoh-ogoh* – giant demonic effigies, often of terrifying appearance – which are paraded through the streets in a great procession before being destroyed or ritually dispersed. The *ogoh-ogoh* represent the *bhuta-kala*, the accumulated negative energies, spiritual imbalances, and destructive forces of the past year. Their parade is not an expression of celebration of evil but an act of acknowledgement: the community formally recognises the existence and reality of these forces, honours them in their proper sphere, and then symbolically disperses them through the destruction of their physical representation, in preparation for the day of Nyepi – a day of complete silence, stillness, and inner renewal that represents the restored cosmic balance toward which the entire ceremonial cycle has been oriented.

This ritual logic has no direct equivalent in the monotheistic traditions, for which the demonic is always already the opponent of God and therefore to be rejected, exorcised, or overcome. It does, however, have structural resonances with certain heterodox currents within Western traditions – the Jungian concept of the "shadow" as the dark aspect of the psyche that must be acknowledged and integrated rather than repressed, the process-theological account of God as including within the divine life both order and creativity in its most turbulent forms, and the ecological philosophy of deep ecology, which insists on the value of what appears destructive and chaotic within natural systems as a necessary dimension of ecosystem health and resilience (Jung, 1959; Griffin, 1976; Naess, 1973).

The conceptualisation of disaster as a vehicle of cosmic balance does not imply passivity or fatalism in the face of catastrophe. On the contrary, the Hindu-Indonesian framework generates a distinctive ethics of disaster response that is at once cosmologically grounded and practically demanding. The key conceptual resource here is the relationship between *dharma* and *karma*: if disaster arises from accumulated karmic imbalances – whether individual, communal, or cosmic – then the appropriate disaster response is not merely practical reconstruction but karmic and dharmic renewal. This means not only rebuilding houses and restoring communities, but also examining and correcting the patterns of action, relationships, and ritual responsibility that contributed to the imbalance in the first place.

The Balinese concept of *Tri Hita Karana* – the Three Sources of Well-Being – provides the most explicit formulation of this ethic. *Tri Hita Karana* holds that human well-being and cosmic balance depend on the maintenance of harmonious relationships in three directions: between humans and the divine (*parahyangan*), between humans and other humans (*pawongan*), and between humans and the natural environment (*palemahan*). Disaster, within this framework, is frequently interpreted as a symptom of the breakdown of one or more of these relationships: a volcanic eruption may indicate a failure of ritual responsibility toward the divine; a community conflict may indicate a failure of *pawongan*; an environmental catastrophe may indicate a failure of stewardship toward the natural world. The ethics of disaster response is therefore simultaneously a restoration of right relationship in all three domains (Subagia, 2011; Pitana & Gayatri, 2005).

The *Bhagavad Gita*'s doctrine of *nishkama karma* – desireless action, action performed as a duty without attachment to its fruits – provides the underlying philosophical framework for this ethic. Krishna's instruction to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is, among other things, a teaching about how to act rightly in the midst of disaster without being overwhelmed by grief, rage, or despair. The appropriate response to catastrophe, within this framework, is neither emotional suppression nor uninstructed reaction, but clear-sighted, dharma-guided action: doing what is right without grasping at outcomes, maintaining one's orientation toward cosmic order even when the immediate situation appears to have plunged into chaos (Deutsch, 1968; Minor, 1982). It is precisely this orientation that Balinese communities – whose sophisticated familiarity with the *Gita* tradition is mediated through centuries of Kawi literary and ritual culture – bring to the interpretation and management of disaster.

One of the most significant implications of the Hindu-Indonesian philosophy of cosmic balance for contemporary thought concerns its understanding of the relationship between human communities and the natural world. The concept of *Tri Hita Karana* places the human-nature relationship at the centre of cosmic ethics: the maintenance of *palemahan* – right relationship with the physical environment – is not an optional ecological sensitivity but a fundamental religious obligation, the neglect of which disrupts the cosmic balance and creates the conditions for disaster. This is not, however, an environmental ethic of preservation for its own sake; it is an environmental ethic grounded in the understanding that the natural world is itself permeated by divine forces whose health and vitality are inseparable from human spiritual and communal well-being.

The traditional Balinese system of water management – the *subak* system of cooperative irrigation, recognised as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage – is perhaps the most concrete and practically sophisticated expression of this ethic. The *subak* system integrates agricultural management with ritual practice and cosmological philosophy: the irrigation of rice fields is understood as a participation in the cosmic flow of water and life, governed by the goddess of rice and fertility Dewi Sri, and managed through cooperative ritual institutions that express both the *pawongan* (human community) and *palemahan* (nature) dimensions of *Tri Hita Karana*. Research has shown that the *subak* system, guided by the ritual calendar of the water temples, achieves sophisticated ecological outcomes – including the management of pest cycles – that purely technical agricultural systems have struggled to replicate, demonstrating that the cosmological philosophy of balance has direct and productive implications for environmental management (Lansing, 1991; Lansing & Kremer, 1993).

The *subak* example illustrates a broader principle: that within the Hindu-Indonesian framework, the philosophy of balance is not merely a metaphysical abstraction but a practical guide to living in right relationship with the complex, dynamic systems – ecological, social, and cosmic – within which human communities are embedded. Disaster, from this perspective, is what happens when these relationships fall out of balance; and the appropriate disaster response is not the assertion of technical mastery over nature but the restoration of the right relationships – ritual, ethical, and ecological –that constitute the conditions of sustainable coexistence between human communities and the living cosmos.

The Hindu-Indonesian philosophy of disaster as cosmic balance raises fundamental questions for contemporary cross-cultural dialogue about the meaning and management of catastrophe. The dominant global framework for disaster response – embodied in international humanitarian law, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), and the technical apparatus of disaster risk management – operates within an implicitly Western conceptual framework that understands disaster as pure negation: as a deviation from a desirable state of order and security that technical and institutional measures can and should seek to minimise or eliminate. This framework has produced important practical achievements, but it has also generated significant limitations: it tends to treat disaster-affected communities as passive victims rather than as bearers of sophisticated cultural knowledge; it systematically undervalues the cosmological and ritual dimensions of disaster response that local communities themselves regard as central; and it implicitly pathologises cosmological frameworks – including the Hindu-Indonesian framework examined in this paper – that attribute positive significance to destructive events.

Conclusion. This paper has argued that the Hindu-Indonesian conceptualisation of disaster – most fully articulated in the Balinese Hindu principles of *Rwa Bhineda* and *Sekala-Niskala*, and grounded in the broader theological resources of Hindu cosmology – constitutes a philosophically sophisticated account of why catastrophic events are not violations of cosmic order but expressions of it. Within this framework, disaster does not rupture the cosmic balance; it resonates with and seeks to restore it. Destructive forces are not the enemy of the divine but one of its necessary faces. The task of human communities in the face of disaster is not to eliminate it – an impossible project that would itself constitute a cosmic imbalance – but to read its meaning, acknowledge its necessity, and restore the right relationships – ritual, ethical, and ecological – through which the dynamic equilibrium of cosmos, nature, and humanity can be sustained.

The implications of this perspective extend well beyond the specific cultural and religious context in which it has been elaborated. In comparative religion, it challenges the universalisation of the theodicy problem as the central philosophical question about evil and suffering. This universalisation reflects the dominance of monotheistic frameworks in the Western intellectual tradition. For environmental philosophy, it offers a cosmologically grounded account of the value

of what appears destructive and chaotic in natural systems, an account that resonates with contemporary ecological science. For disaster studies and humanitarian practice, it offers a reminder that disaster-affected communities are not merely victims requiring assistance but also bearers of sophisticated cultural knowledge about the meaning and management of catastrophe, which technical frameworks risk systematically misunderstanding and devaluing.

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КАТАСТРОФА ЯК КОСМІЧНА РІВНОВАГА: ФІЛОСОФІЯ БАЛАНСУ В ТЕОЛОГІЇ ІНДУЇЗМУ ТА РЕЛІГІЙНИХ ПРАКТИКАХ БАЛІ Й ІНДОНЕЗІЇ

Коляса Олена Василівна
кандидат філологічних наук, доцент
Одеський національний морський університет;
запрошений дослідник факультету мистецтв та соціальних наук
Сіднейського університету,
Сідней, Новий Південний Уельс 2009; Австралія
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5301-480X

У статті досліджено концептуалізацію понять «катастрофа», «лихо» та «зло» в індуїстській теології та їхнє практичне втілення в релігійних культурах Індонезійського архіпелагу, найповніше представлених у балійському індуїзмі. На противагу панівній західній тенденції трактувати катастрофу як чисте заперечення – порушення космічного порядку, що підлягає подоланню або усуненню – у цьому дослідженні стверджується, що індуїстські за походженням космологічні системи Індонезії артикулюють принципово іншу онтологічну позицію. Згідно з нею, катастрофи, руйнівні сили та прояви того, що західні категорії класифікують як «зло», є не відхиленнями, які мають бути викорінені, а необхідними генеративними полюсами в динамічній структурі космічного балансу. Спираючись на теологічні концепти дгарми, карми, маї та балійські принципи Рва Бхінеда (дві невід'ємні протилежності) і Секала-Ніскала (континуум видимого й невидимого), у роботі проведено порівняльний кроскультурний аналіз, що вписує індонезійську релігійну практику в ширші межі індуїстської космології, водночас акцентуючи увагу на її самобутніх локальних інтерпретаціях. Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на методі «пильного читання» (close reading) першоджерел – теологічних та етнографічних праць – у поєднанні з якісною інтерпретацією ритуальних практик, текстових традицій та філософської аргументації. Результати дослідження свідчать, що в межах цієї космологічної моделі катастрофа функціонує не як розрив, а як резонанс – динаміка, що відновлює, підтримує та безперервно регенерує рівновагу між людством, природою та космосом.

Ключові слова: *катастрофа, космічний баланс, індуїстська космологія, дгарма, балійська релігія, зло як рівновага.*

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