



## The Concepts of *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, and *Swatah* in Strengthening Magnanimous Character as A Preventive Strategy Against The Phenomenon of Suicide in Bali

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### Abstract

The phenomenon of suicide in Bali shows an increasing trend that raises a socio-religious paradox amid the strong traditional structures and Hindu spirituality. Various studies confirm that depression, psychosocial pressure, low self-regulation, and loss of meaning in life contribute significantly to the emergence of suicidal ideation. This study aims to analyse the strengthening of character through the concepts of *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, and *Swatah* as Hindu psychospiritual-based preventive strategies. The study uses a qualitative approach, grounded in a literature review, through critical analysis of scriptures, Hindu theological literature, and relevant psychological and mental health studies. The results of the study show that *Sāstratah* lays the foundation for meaning in life by understanding humans as *atman*, with a dharma-and mokṣa-oriented perspective. *Gurutah* presents a process of inner clarification through reflective dialogue and guided *yoga* practices that strengthen emotional regulation and self-awareness. *Swatah* marks the deepest stage of internalisation, when *yajña* transforms from an external ritual into an internal burning of the ego, giving birth to compassion and existential resilience. The magnanimous character formed through these three paths functions as a psychospiritual fortress that strengthens the meaning of life, self-control, and resilience to pressure. The scientific contribution of this article lies in the formulation of a tiered psychospiritual model that integrates classical Hindu texts with modern psychological theory as a contextual conceptual reinterpretation for Balinese society. This study is theoretical and literature-based, thus requiring further empirical research to test the model's validity and effectiveness in measurable terms. Thus, the concepts of *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, and *Swatah* contribute as a conceptual framework for Hindu-based character education in contextual and transformative preventive efforts to reduce suicidal ideation.

**Keywords:** *Sāstratah*; *Gurutah*; *Swatah*; Hindu Character Education; Magnanimity

### Abstrak

Fenomena bunuh diri di Bali menunjukkan tren peningkatan yang memunculkan paradoks sosial-religius di tengah kuatnya struktur adat dan spiritualitas Hindu. Berbagai penelitian menegaskan bahwa depresi, tekanan psikososial, rendahnya regulasi diri, serta hilangnya makna hidup berkontribusi signifikan terhadap munculnya ide bunuh diri. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis penguatan karakter berjiwa besar melalui konsep *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, dan *Swatah* sebagai strategi preventif berbasis psikospiritual Hindu. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan, melalui analisis kritis terhadap kitab suci, literatur teologi Hindu, serta kajian psikologi dan kesehatan mental yang relevan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *Sāstratah* membangun fondasi makna hidup melalui pemahaman keutamaan

*manusia sebagai atman yang memiliki orientasi dharma dan mokṣa. Gurutah menghadirkan proses klarifikasi batin melalui dialog reflektif dan praktik yoga terbimbing yang memperkuat regulasi emosi dan kesadaran diri. Swatah menjadi tahap internalisasi terdalam, ketika yajña mengalami transformasi dari ritual eksternal menjadi pembakaran ego internal yang melahirkan welas asih dan ketahanan eksistensial. Karakter berjiwa besar yang terbentuk melalui tiga jalur ini berfungsi sebagai benteng psikospiritual yang memperkuat makna hidup, pengendalian diri, dan resiliensi terhadap tekanan. Kontribusi ilmiah artikel ini terletak pada formulasi model psikospiritual berjenjang yang mengintegrasikan teks klasik Hindu dengan teori psikologi modern sebagai reinterpretasi konseptual yang kontekstual bagi masyarakat Bali. Kajian ini bersifat teoretis dan berbasis kepustakaan, sehingga memerlukan penelitian empiris lanjutan untuk menguji validitas dan efektivitas model secara terukur. Dengan demikian, konsep Sāstratah, Gurutah, Swatah berkontribusi sebagai kerangka konseptual pendidikan karakter berbasis Hindu dalam upaya preventif menekan ide bunuh diri secara kontekstual dan transformatif.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Sāstratah; Gurutah; Swatah; Pendidikan Karakter Hindu; Magnanimity*

## **Introduction**

Suicide is a serious, complex mental health issue affecting individuals globally. In 2019, an estimated 703,000 people died by suicide (Sukma et al., 2024). Alarmingly, it is the second leading cause of death among those aged 10-24 (Poorolajal et al., 2022). While this is a worldwide challenge, its impact is evident at the national and regional levels as well. Research consistently highlights suicide's connection to mental disorders, such as depression, and ongoing social pressures (Asih and Lesmana, 2019). The rising rate of suicide in Indonesia underscores the urgent need for focused attention.

Research on suicide prevention efforts in Bali indicates that the number of suicide cases in the province fluctuated between 2021 and 2024, with several periods showing an upward trend and an average exceeding 70 cases per year (Samodra et al., 2025). This trend suggests that suicide not only impacts victims and their families but may also contribute to the emergence of a social construct in which suicide is perceived as a solution to personal difficulties when individuals feel unable to cope. This observation aligns with Martínez et al., (2023) who, through social contagion theory, argue that suicidal behaviour can disseminate via imitation, social identification, and the normalisation of norms among peers and within the media.

Exposure to suicidal acts, whether directly or through news reports and social media, increases the risk of suicidal ideation and behaviour among vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents. The characterization of suicide as a 'trend in problem solving' can be further examined through the case of Tukad Bangkung in Bali, a location frequently associated with suicide incidents. This phenomenon demonstrates that suicide is shaped not only by individual psychological factors but also by broader social and environmental dynamics.

In response, the local government has implemented preventive measures, including area reorganization, the installation of safety fences, and the deployment of surveillance systems such as CCTV cameras on the bridge, to mitigate the risk of suicide attempts. These interventions were prompted by a series of suicides at the site that garnered significant public attention and concern. Research on the Badung Regency Government's initiatives indicates that physical security measures, such as fences and CCTV cameras at the Tukad Bangkung Bridge, have been adopted as preventive strategies to reduce the recurrence of such incidents (Sudharma et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, these structural interventions have not fully succeeded in deterring suicide, suggesting that the issue cannot be addressed solely through technical solutions and instead requires comprehensive interventions encompassing psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. In the context of Bali, the increase in suicide cases indicates that this issue is becoming increasingly urgent to be studied comprehensively. Wardana Yasa and Adisastra (2025) note that Bali is one of the regions with the highest suicide rates in Indonesia, which raises a socio-religious paradox, given that Balinese society is known to have a strong traditional structure and Hindu spirituality. Emile Durkheim asserts that suicide is a social fact, that is, an act influenced by the social structures and dynamics around it (Kustiani et al., 2023). This perspective is relevant in interpreting the reality in Indonesia in particular, where social and economic factors, academic pressure, family relationships, societal demands, and interpersonal conflicts contribute to the emergence of suicidal ideation.

Psychologically, various studies show that depression, stress, academic pressure, family conflicts, and negative social relationships are the dominant factors that trigger suicidal ideation (Fadila, 2025). During the COVID-19 pandemic, a national survey showed that 39.3% of respondents reported having thoughts of self-harm and suicide, which correlated significantly with loneliness and social inequality (Liem et al., 2022). These findings show that psychosocial pressures that are not balanced with strong internal capacity have the potential to develop into destructive actions.

However, recent studies confirm that suicide should not only be understood through risk factors, but also through protective factors. A systematic review of 70 studies shows that purpose in life, resilience, positive relationships, and self-regulation have a significant negative correlation with suicidal ideation (Ki et al., 2024). Other research indicates that resilience has a significant relationship with suicidal ideation in adolescents, making resilience enhancement an important strategy in prevention (Putri and Oktaviana, 2024).

Religiosity was also found to be negatively correlated with suicide intent, while perceived stress was positively correlated with suicide intent (Yuniaty and Hamidah, 2020). Kim et al., (2023) showed that suicide is closely related to mental health conditions, particularly depression which acts as the main mediator between psychosocial stress and suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. In line with this, Sun et al., (2021) found that 89.6% of incomplete homicide-suicide perpetrators were diagnosed with mental disorders, with major depression being the most dominant diagnosis, so that suicidal acts are often a manifestation of untreated psychopathological disorders.

On the other hand, Zhang and Hu (2024) proved that magnanimity (generosity of spirit) is negatively correlated with depression and mediated by adaptive locus of control and positive coping strategies, so that generosity of spirit has the potential to be a protective factor that reduces the risk of suicide by lowering depression levels and strengthening individual psychological resilience. These findings reinforce the assumption that an individual's internal capacity-particularly the ability to manage emotions, make sense of suffering, and maintain a meaningful life orientation plays an important role as a protective barrier.

The concept of a magnanimous character is worth examining. Being magnanimous does not simply mean being patient or accepting; rather, it reflects the integration of psychological resilience, emotional regulation, a sense of meaningfulness in life, and spiritual maturity. In this context, religion can be understood as a framework for human meaning and life orientation. Religion functions not only as a normative belief system but also as a source of social and spiritual support that strengthens individual mental resilience.

Research shows that religion provides emotional and spiritual support through religious communities, ritual practices, and the cultivation of constructive life meaning, thereby contributing to psychological stability and stress resilience (Alestika et al., 2025). In line with this, studies on student mental health confirm that religion functions as a regulator, calming agent, foundation of values, and guide when individuals face psychological pressure, thereby helping individuals manage emotions and make more adaptive decisions (Pribumi et al., 2024).

Even from the perspective of classical religious psychology, faith is understood as a source of inner peace that can reduce anxiety and restore psychological equilibrium in individuals shaken by anxiety (Masrur and Salsabila, 2021). Thus, religion not only functions as a theological system but also as a psychosocial structure that facilitates the formation of a magnanimous character, namely the ability to interpret suffering in a transformative way, maintain emotional balance, and maintain hope in crises.

Whitman's (2007) findings show that in the Hindu perspective, suffering is understood not as a destructive punishment, but as part of the law of *karma* and a spiritual learning process that can be accepted with detachment and an orientation towards dharma, so that religion functions as a source of meaning that helps individuals manage pain constructively, maintain emotional stability, and maintain hope for liberation (*moksa*). Meidiantari and Wijaya (2025) explain that, in Hindu teachings, humans are understood as a unity of body (*sarira*), soul (*manas*), and *atma*, the core of eternal consciousness.

Harmony in life is achieved when these three elements are in balance. An imbalance among the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions can lead to deep inner turmoil. From a normative Hindu perspective, suicide (*ulah pati*) is seen as an act that is contrary to dharma and has serious karmic implications (Sasmita and Winiantari, 2024). Life is seen as a spiritual journey that must be lived with awareness and moral responsibility. If the phenomenon of suicide is understood not only as a psychological crisis, but also as a crisis of character and a spiritual crisis, then strengthening a strong character becomes an urgent necessity.

A strong character can be positioned as a protective factor that can mediate life's pressures so that they do not develop into suicidal thoughts or actions. In the context of Bali and Hindu society in general, strengthening the values of dharma and *atma* awareness, and building resilience are relevant preventive strategies grounded in religious wisdom. Therefore, research on the correlation between the phenomenon of suicide and a strong character is important empirically, theoretically, and normatively. Empirically, suicide rates show an upward trend. Theoretically, there is strong evidence that resilience and meaning in life play a significant role in reducing suicidal ideation.

Normatively, Hindu teachings provide a rich conceptual framework for building a strong and meaningful character. This study is expected to contribute scientifically to the strengthening of character education through the concept of Hinduism as a preventive measure against the increasingly alarming phenomenon of suicide. Thus, this study constructs how the concepts of *sāstratah*, *gurutah*, and *swatah* serve as a psychospiritual protective framework against suicidal ideation. This study is expected to contribute scientifically to strengthening character education through the concepts of Hinduism as a preventive measure against the increasingly alarming phenomenon of suicide.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The library research in this study uses systematic selection criteria, including: 1) conceptual relevance to the main variables (*Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, *Swatah*, Hindu character education, and suicidal ideation); 2) academic credibility through indexed scientific journal sources

and authoritative text editions; 3) the recency of the literature within the last 15-20 years without neglecting foundational classical works. In addition, the literature was selected based on its theoretical depth, clarity of conceptual definitions, and potential for integrating Hindu literary perspectives with modern thought, thereby supporting a coherent comparative analysis and conceptual synthesis. The analysis process in this study used theological-contextual hermeneutics techniques to interpret literary texts systematically and reflectively. The analysis was conducted in three stages: 1) textual understanding, which involved examining the lexical and conceptual meanings of key terms such as *yajña*, *atman*, *dharma*, and control of the senses; 2) philosophical interpretation, which places the text within the framework of Hindu anthropology and ethics to explore its underlying meaning structure; and 3) critical contextualization, which dialogues the results of this interpretation with modern theory to construct a conceptual synthesis relevant to the issue of suicide. This approach allows the text to be understood not in a normative, dogmatic way, but as a source of dynamic, contextual meaning.

## Results and Discussion

Wrahaspati Tattwa, specifically in sloka 52, explains that there are three paths to achieving *mokṣa*, namely *sāstratah*, *gurutah*, and *swatah*. This is explained more clearly in the following sloka.

*Apan alaksana ikan sang wisésa, tan kēna winastawan, salah winarahakēn, yata matangyan tiga ikang pramana, lwiryā, gurutah, sāstratah, swatah, gurutah ngaranya warah – warah sang guru, sāstratah ngaranya ikang warah maka sadhanang sastra, swatah ngaranya apan ri kawakan ira juga umangguhakēn ika sang hyang wisésa, upaya nira sang yogisvara ika, ndah yéki pusēr ning jala ngaranya, ikang winarahakēn kwi nguni ri kita.*

Translation:

Sang Yogiswara pursued a spiritual path based on the guidance of Sang Hyang Prayogasandhi. This was because Sang Hyang Wisesa did not have characteristics that could be perceived by the senses, could not be visualized in concrete form, and was difficult to express through language. Therefore, there are three means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), namely *gurutah*, *sāstratah*, and *swatah*. *Gurutah* refers to teachings conveyed through the guidance of a teacher. *Sāstratah* refers to understanding obtained through revelation or scriptures as a guide to teachings. *Swatah* means the attainment of consciousness through experience and self-reflection until one is finally able to realize the existence of Sang Hyang Wisesa in one's heart (Putra et al., 1998; Permana, 2023).

This explains that self-transformation does not happen instantly, but rather through three complementary epistemological and practical paths, namely *Sāstratah* (based on *sastra*/sacred teachings), *Gurutah* (based on the guidance of a guru), and *Swatah* (based on self-awareness and experience). The concepts of *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, and *Swatah* can be understood as a tiered transformation process aligned with Albert Bandura's theory of human agency, which asserts that humans are not merely products of their environment but active agents capable of directing their lives through cognitive, motivational, and reflective processes. In the *Sāstratah* stage, individuals build cognitive frameworks and value standards through an understanding of *sastra* which aligns with Bandura's dimensions of forethought and the formation of internal regulatory systems.

The *Gurutah* stage strengthens the capacity for reflection and self-regulation through dialogue and guidance, so that agents not only understand values but also learn to apply them in social interactions, representing the mechanisms of self-reactiveness and

social learning. Finally, *Swatah* is the stage of full internalization, when individuals autonomously embody these values as personal moral standards. Here, agency reaches a mature, reflective form in which external pressures no longer drive action but are guided by a conscious commitment to the meaning and purpose of life. Thus, these three concepts describe the dynamics of agency development: from value construction and strengthening regulation through relationships to the actualization of complete moral autonomy.

### 1. *Sāstratah*: The Virtue of Being Human in the Hindu Perspective As The Foundation of a Magnanimous Character

*Sāstratah* refers to the process of understanding oneself through sacred teachings. In śāstra, humans are viewed as *atman* undergoing a journey of *karma*. This awareness gives rise to the perspective that failure, suffering, and limitations are not the end, but rather part of the dynamics of spiritual learning. In Hindu teachings, birth as a human being is viewed as a very important and rare opportunity. The *Sārasamuścaya* text asserts that humans have a more noble position than other beings because they are gifted with a mind (*manah*) that allows them to understand the nature and purpose of life (Yasa and Sumartana, 2022). This is reflected in the following sloka from *Sārasamuścaya* 8.

*Ri Sakwehning sarwa butha, iking janma wwang juga wēnang gumayakēn ikang śubhāśubhakarma, kunēng panēntasakēna ring śubhakarma juga ikangaśubhakarma phalaning dadi wwang.*

Translation:

Among all beings living beings, only those born as humans can perform good deeds or bad deeds; let all bad deeds be dissolved in good deeds; such is the benefit (reward) of being human (Kadjeng et al., 1977).

Sloka *Sārasamuścaya* 8 can be read not merely as a normative statement about moral obligations, but as an ontological affirmation of human agency. The sloka asserts that humans have the conscious ability to choose between *śubha* and *aśubha karma*, as well as the regulatory ability to transform bad tendencies through virtuous actions. From the perspective of Bandura's theory of human agency, this capacity reflects the basic nature of humans as agents who possess intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Yoon, 2019). It is this ability to reflect on actions (self-reflectiveness) and regulate oneself (self-reactiveness) that makes humans moral beings, not merely creatures who react to instinctive urges.

Furthermore, this verse also implies that destructive impulses, including despair or suicidal ideation, are not inevitable psychological determinations, but rather the result of cognitive processes that can be redirected. Within the framework of moral agency, individuals possess self-regulatory mechanisms that enable them to suppress or activate internal moral standards. As explained in the special introduction on moral disengagement, individuals can deactivate their moral control through cognitive justification mechanisms, allowing aggression or destructive behavior to occur without guilt (Hymel and Perren, 2015). However, conceptually, this process is reversible because humans retain the capacity to re-activate their moral standards. Therefore, magnanimity is the actualization of the virtue of humans as moral beings who choose goodness and maintain the meaning of life amid pressure. *Sārasamuścaya* sloka 10 also affirms the same thing, as follows.

*Apan iking dadi wwang, utama juga ya, nimittaning mangkana, wēnang ya tumulung awaknya sangkeng sangsāra, makasādhanang śubhakarma, hinganing kotamaning dadi wwang ika.*

Translation:

Incarnating as into humans is truly the most important; because he can help himself from the state of suffering (birth and death repeatedly) by doing good deeds; thus, the benefit of incarnating as a human (Kadjeng et al., 1977).

The verse emphasizes that birth as a human being is a supreme blessing because only in human form does a person have consciousness, moral freedom, and the reflective ability to free themselves from the cycle of suffering (*samsara*) through good deeds (*dharma*). The phrase can help themselves suggests that humans are not deterministic but can direct their lives through ethical and spiritual choices. The virtue of humans lies not only in their physical existence but in their potential to improve themselves, refine their *karma*, and move towards liberation. This sloka means that people with a big heart are those who use their consciousness and moral freedom to overcome suffering constructively, rather than giving in to despair. Thus, actions such as suicide are contrary to the essence of human virtue, because instead of helping oneself through *dharma*, one cuts off the spiritual opportunity that can only be experienced through birth as a human being.

The virtue of humans in the perspective of *Sārasamuścaya* does not stop at the normative statement that humans must do good, but is rooted in the agentic capacity that allows humans to manage their inner urges reflectively. Theologically, the text asserts that doing good (*dharma*) is an essential virtue that leads to liberation from worldly attachments (Yasa and Sumartana, 2022). This is also emphasized by Wiraputra (2020), who states that *dharma* is the foundation of the *Catur Purusartha* structure, serving as the controller of *artha* and *kama* for the achievement of *moksa*. Thus, human life is not merely understood as biological survival, but as a purposeful and meaningful spiritual process.

In moral disengagement theory, Bandura shows that humans have cognitive mechanisms that can deactivate their internal moral standards, not only by reducing guilt, but even by changing the meaning of destructive actions into something that feels exhilarating or provides a certain intrinsic sensation (Brezina and Chen, 2026). This means that the human mind is not merely a medium for reflection, but rather a locus of moral regulation that can reinforce virtue or justify deviance. When reflective mechanisms are used to rationalize *aśubha karma*, individuals can experience a reversal of meaning: actions that should elicit moral correction are instead perceived as self-justification.

This is where the existential risk of humans as conscious beings lies. Conversely, the same reflective capacity can be directed toward the internalization of *dharma*. From the perspective of human agency, humans are active agents who shape the direction of their lives through reciprocal interactions between cognition, behavior, and the environment (Yoon, 2019). Agency is not neutral; it works in accordance with internalized value orientations. If *dharma* becomes the dominant value structure in a person's cognitive system, then the self-regulatory mechanism will direct the individual to transform negative impulses into constructive actions.

Thus, the command to do good in the *Sārasamuścaya* is not merely an external demand, but rather the actualization of an internal regulatory function inherent in the structure of human consciousness. This is in line with the Hindu theological view that humans consist of *stula sarira* and *sukma sarira*, which are driven by *atman* (Sarjana, 2012). Awareness of *atman* makes life appear as a series of karmic processes with consequences (Suadnyana, 2020). The moral dimension of life is not interrupted by death, but continues in the law of *karmaphala*.

Therefore, morality is not merely a social construct but an ontological reality with spiritual implications. The teachings of *jana kertih* emphasize that human qualities must

be developed through the internalization of *tattwa* and *susila* in both the *sakala* and *niskala* realms (Sarjana and Paramita, 2023). Psychologically, this aligns with findings that moral development contributes significantly to personality development and mental health (Srivastava et al., 2013). When moral structures are disintegrated, psychological stability is disrupted; conversely, strengthening *susila* reinforces self-integrity.

Therefore, Sanjaya et al., (2021) explain that in *Geguritan Niti Raja Sasana*, strengthening *dharma* begins with the ability to lead oneself. Self-leadership is not merely behavioral control, but rather the management of meaning orientation. Individuals who fail to manage themselves are prone to moral disengagement. Conversely, individuals who are aware of their true nature as *atman* have a broader framework of meaning in facing pressure and suffering. It is at this point that the concept of the greatness of the soul acquires its conceptual depth.

Greatness of soul is not passive patience, but rather an agentic capacity for self-regulation that affirms *dharma* as an orientation of meaning. This concept resonates with magnanimity (*megalopsychia*) in Nicomachean Ethics, where Aristotle views greatness of soul as a disposition of the soul that is aware of its dignity and worthiness towards noble things (Bartlett and Collins, 2000). Magnanimity is not arrogance, but rather a stability of moral identity that is not easily shaken by external pressures because it is rooted in a higher awareness of values.

The idea of suicide often arises when individuals experience a loss of meaning, low self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness. When self-dignity collapses, hope weakens, and a magnanimous spirit becomes a preventive measure. Tholen (2023) asserts that magnanimity in moral leadership is the courage to actualize virtue in difficult situations. This means that magnanimity is not merely passive resilience, but an active capacity to continue striving for goodness even under pressure. Therefore, magnanimity enables one to recognize one's own authority. This is in line with Salendra's explanation of the meaning of consciousness in humans in the *Katha Upanisad* as follows.

*Vijnana sarathir yastu manah pragrahavan na rah, Sodhvanah param apnoti tad  
Visnoh paramam padam.*

Translation:

One who makes wisdom the controller of oneself like a charioteer steering a chariot and is able to restrain and control one's mind with discipline, will reach the final destination of one's spiritual journey. One attains the highest state, namely the abode of *Viṣṇu*, the transcendental reality that pervades and permeates all existence (Salendra, 2016).

The verse on mind control asserts that humans are drivers capable of regulating inner urges through awareness of values and a transcendent orientation. Thus, a great soul is not merely passive resilience, but rather the actualization of regulatory capacity that maintains continuity between self-identity, moral standards, and spiritual goals. This shows that the concept of *sāstratah*, acting and giving meaning to life based on the guidance of literature, provides a normative and regulatory foundation for restoring the capacity for agency that is disrupted in a suicide crisis.

If the theory of human agency asserts that humans have the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life Yoon (2019) then *sāstratah* provides a compass of values that guides that control. Without a normative orientation, reflective function can turn into destructive rationalization; however, within a literary framework, reflection is directed toward assessing actions within the horizon of *dharma* and transcendent goals. Thus, *sāstratah* is not merely textual obedience, but an epistemic mechanism that maintains continuity between self-identity (*atman*), moral standards, and life goals (*moksa*).

From the perspective of moral disengagement, self-harming behavior becomes possible when individuals successfully deactivate condemnatory self-reactions through cognitive justification (Brezina and Chen, 2026). This is where *sāstratah* functions as a tool for moral re-engagement: it revives ethical standards that had previously been weakened by rationalization. When individuals re-examine their life experiences in light of teachings about *dharma*, *karmaphala*, and the intrinsic value of *atman*, the cognitive processes that initially justified despair are replaced by reflections that restore meaning. In other words, *sāstratah* acts as a cognitive corrector and existential buffer, inhibiting the process of moral disengagement before it develops into destructive decisions. Therefore, the practical implication that therapeutic approaches that focus on reconnecting individuals with their moral standards and reducing cognitive rationalizations for harmful behavior might help mitigate suicidal tendencies can be understood as a contemporary application of the principle of *sāstratah*.

Therapy not only manages psychological symptoms, but also facilitates reconnection with a deeper value structure, namely *dharma* as a life orientation. This means that *sāstratah* becomes a framework for psychospiritual intervention, helping individuals reinterpret suffering not as an ontological failure but as part of a karmic process within a transcendent purpose. Thus, recovery from a suicidal crisis is not merely emotional restoration, but the reactivation of moral consciousness and meaning in life rooted in scriptural teachings.

## **2. Gurutah: Guided Yoga Practice as Strengthening of Character with a Great Spirit**

The *Gurutah* approach in Hindu tradition places the guru as a guiding figure who facilitates inner transformation through dialogue, exemplary behavior, and spiritual discipline. From a Vedānta perspective, the guru has epistemic authority to guide students in understanding the nature of the self and spiritual reality more clearly (Gupta, 2022). However, this authority is pedagogical and emancipatory, not domineering; the guru does not replace the student's consciousness, but rather helps them rediscover their own center of authority. This principle is reflected in the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā*, where the teaching process takes place through reflective dialogue that guides the student to rediscover his *dharma* (Calvert et al., 2024). Nadkarni explains that the *Bhagavadgītā* is taught to lift him up from the deep dejection into which he has fallen and that the causes of this crisis are *moha* (confusion) and *śoka* (sorrow). Kṛṣṇa's answer is not only addressed to Arjuna personally, but is universal in nature regarding what is *śreyaḥ* (the best) for humans in general (Nadkarni, 2019).

This means that Arjuna is positioned as a representation of humans in moral conflict. This dialogue serves as a model for ethical reflection: when humans are in doubt, they need to engage in an honest question-and-answer process to rediscover their *dharma*. The concept of *Gurutah*, which reflects the *Bhagavadgītā* dialogue, is that Kṛṣṇa does not force Arjuna, but says: *vimṛśyaitadaśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru* (*Bhagavadgītā*, XVIII.63), which means to contemplate it fully and then do as you wish (Pudja, 1986). This can be interpreted as the non-dogmatic and rational attitude of *Gurutah*, while still respecting the reflective freedom of the student.

Furthermore, the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna in *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 64-65 mentions *iṣṭo'si me* and *Priyo'si me*, which means you are truly My beloved. This emphasizes that the relationship in the concept of *Gurutah* is not vertical, but rather one of trusted friends. The relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā* is not merely vertical in nature as teacher-student or God-devotee, but is rooted in the friendship (*sakha*) that had been established previously in the *Mahābhārata*. Minnema asserts that the *Gītā* dialogue stands on a layer of friend-friend relations that have a basis in the eternality and perfection of their friendship (Minnema, 2011).

Similarly, studies on the Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna alliance highlight the dimensions of male bonding and *maitrī bhāva* as forms of intimate and equal closeness in classical Indian tradition (Amin, 2024). This means that even though in reality the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna is vertical, in a narrower context, they are friends bound by mutual trust and loyalty. This horizontal friendship actually opens up space for deeper dialogue. Because their relationship is based on trust, Arjuna can openly express his doubts, fears, and confusion without feeling belittled. Kṛṣṇa can also reprimand, guide, and even correct him without damaging the emotional bond between them. In the context of spiritual education (*Gurutah*), transformation does not occur through hierarchical pressure but through safe, empathetic conversation. Horizontal relationships foster inner openness, making the process of searching for meaning and affirming dharma more authentic and profound. The pedagogical process in the *Gurutah* concept is essentially reflective rather than authoritarian. Teachers do not transmit dogma but rather facilitate a process of inner clarification, enabling students to reconnect with moral standards and their agency.

Within the framework of sociocognitive theory, humans are not passive organisms driven by impulses or environmental determinants, but rather subjects who auto-organize, activate mechanisms of self-reflection and self-regulation (Guerrin, 2012). This means that strengthening big-hearted character is a process of reactivating the mechanisms of self-reflection and self-regulation that enable individuals to restore their sense of meaning. In the context of an existential crisis such as suicidal ideation, the main problem is often not just negative emotions, but the fragmentation of moral agency. Gaier (2022) shows that in severe depression, there can be a fragmented sense of moral agency that obscures an individual's capacity to assess themselves holistically and compassionately.

Therefore, reflective dialogue in *Gurutah* serves a diagnostic and transformative function, it helps reintegrate moral consciousness without stigmatization. In the tradition of *yoga*, the transformation of consciousness does indeed require the guidance of a teacher, and it is emphasized that the teacher's role is of utmost importance in ensuring that the process runs correctly (Suamba, 2022). However, the integration of *yoga* in the context of suicide prevention needs to be understood proportionally. *Yoga* is not a substitute for psychotherapy or clinical intervention, but rather a complementary approach that is preventive and promotive. Rashedi and Schonert-Reichl (2019) position *yoga* as mental training that improves self-regulation and embodied awareness, not as a single therapy for severe disorders.

From Bandura's perspective, strengthening self-regulation and belief in personal effectiveness is the foundation of human agency in controlling life events Bandura in Guerrin (2012), not to replace psychiatric intervention when needed. Neurobiologically, findings that *yoga* balances the excitation-inhibition system and reduces stress responses are relevant not only to general emotion regulation but also in the context of suicidal ideation, which is often characterized by stress hyperactivation, hopelessness, and disintegration of self-meaning (Mehta and Gangadhar, 2019).

If major depression can erode moral agency integration Gaier (2022), then interventions that strengthen self-regulation, body awareness, and affective stability have the potential to be protective factors against suicidal ideation when positioned as part of a multimodal approach. Therefore, *Gurutah*, through guided *yoga*, can be understood as a preventive strategy that stabilizes cognitive-emotional conditions, while reflective dialogue with teachers helps reconstruct internal meaning and moral standards. This integration does not replace clinical therapy but complements it with a psychospiritual dimension that strengthens existential resilience and restores a dignified orientation toward life.

### 3. *Swatah*: Internalizing Awareness Through *Yajña* Media as Meditation for Ego Dissolution

*Swatah* is the deepest stage of internalization in the process of spiritual character formation after an individual has passed through the phases of *Sāstratah* (understanding of teachings) and *Gurutah* (guidance from a teacher). At this stage, the teachings no longer remain at the cognitive or normative level, but undergo a transformation into existential awareness. *Swatah* is the process whereby values are no longer learned but lived. It is here that magnanimity does not arise as an external moral requirement, but as an authentic inner quality.

This is what is meant by ego dissolution in this study. Ego dissolution is a process of consciousness transformation in which narrow self-identification based on the self as the center of interest, control, and judgment is loosened or transcended, so that individuals are no longer rigidly attached to their self-image, personal ambitions, or psychological wounds. This internalization requires conscious and honest self-reflection. Individuals begin to observe the motivations, attachments, and egos that drive their actions. In this context, the teachings of *yajña* take on new meaning. Etymologically, *yajña* comes from the root word *yaj*, which means sacred sacrifice or worship.

In religious practice, *yajña* is often identified with ritual offerings. However, theological studies show that *yajña* has a much broader dimension, namely as human participation in cosmic harmony. *Yajña* is not merely understood as a ceremonial religious ritual practice, but has developed into an ethical principle that animates the whole of life (Witarni, 2024). This sincere sacrifice manifests as a form of total devotion that is realized through concrete actions in leadership, self-discipline, and willingness to sacrifice for the greater good. Sacrifice that stems from spiritual awareness not only maintains individual inner balance but also contributes to social order and cosmic harmony. Suparta (2025) explains that *yajña* is an effort to shake the universe by synchronizing natural waves with human thought waves, thereby creating resonance between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Thus, *yajña* is not merely a symbolic act, but a *sadhana* to harmonize individual consciousness with cosmic energy. At this point, *yajña* can be understood as existential meditation, which is a conscious act of dissolving the ego into the totality of the universe. The *Bhagavadgītā* legitimizes this inner transformation in sloka XVII.20.

*dātavyam iti yad dānam,  
dīyate'nupakāriṇe,  
deśe kāle ca pātre ca,  
tad dānam sātṭvikam smṛtam*

Translation:

Generosity performed as a duty, at the right time and place, to the deserving, without expectation of reward, is called *sattvika* generosity (Pudja, 1986).

This verse emphasizes that the inner quality of the performer determines the spiritual value of a *yajña*. If performed without self-interest and ego, it will be *sattvika*, but if accompanied by ambition, and self-interest, it will become *rajasika* or *tamasika*. Thus, true *yajña* does not lie in the magnitude of the offering, but in the purity of consciousness. Dixit (2024) emphasizes that *yajña* comes from actions without attachment. This means that *yajña* provides individuals with an awareness that everything, without exception, originates from the universe, so that essentially nothing truly belongs to an individual.

The concept of *Dravya Yajña* in the *Bhagavadgītā* also broadens the meaning of sacrifice, that sacrifice is not limited to material things, but can also be non-material, such as knowledge and sincere service. Even the selfless sharing of knowledge is a noble form

of *yajña* (Sari, 2022). This perspective shifts the focus from the object of sacrifice to the transformation of the subject performing the sacrifice. In the *swatah* stage, the *dravya* sacrificed is no longer just material possessions, but the ego (*ahamkāra*), sense of ownership (*mamatā*), and material attachment. *Yajña* undergoes an interiorization from external sacrifice to internal burning. Individuals realize that the root of suffering is not material deprivation, but attachment to an egoistic identity.

The meditative dimension of *yajña* becomes clearer when linked to the practice of mantra and *yoga*. Mantra *yoga*, as explained by, serves as a means of transcendental communication and a tool for self-control to achieve spiritual balance. In this context, *yajña* is no longer understood as a periodic ritual obligation, but rather as a continuous state of consciousness. Every action becomes an offering, every breath becomes a prayer, and every relationship becomes a space of compassion. Individuals no longer act for recognition or reward, but for cosmic harmony. Even Barman (2023) explains that human life itself is referred to as *yajña*. This is in line with the following verse from Bhagavadgītā IV. 27.

*Sarvāñīndriyakarmāṇi prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare,  
ātmasaṃyamayogāgnau juhvati jñānadīpīte*

Translation:

Others offer all sensory actions and the breath of life (*prana*) into the fire of self-control ignited by knowledge (*jñāna-yajña*) (Pudja, 1986).

This verse affirms that true sacrifice (*jñāna-yajña*) is offering the activities of the senses and life energy into the fire of self-control illuminated by knowledge, so that impulses do not run rampant but are consciously directed. This means that spiritual transformation occurs through inner discipline and an understanding that purifies actions and reorients life toward *dharma*. This awareness gave birth to the universal prayer *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah*, which translates to may all beings be happy (Surada et al., 2025). This prayer is not merely a verbal expression, but an ontological expression that the happiness of other beings is one's own happiness.

In this framework, generosity is not merely kindness, but the capacity to live without claims of ownership and without ego domination. The concept of *yajña* as the melting of the ego does not refer to the elimination of the self, but rather to the transformation of motivational orientation from egocentricity to a focus on values that transcend the self. In Abraham Maslow's final formulation of the hierarchy of needs, self-transcendence is placed above self-actualization as the stage in which individuals seek to further a cause beyond the self and to experience communion beyond the boundaries of the self (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

This means that the most mature human development is no longer centered on the actualization of personal potential, but on connection with transpersonal meaning. Within this framework, *yajña* as an inner sacrifice for *dharma* can be understood as a motivational process towards self-transcendence: identity is no longer limited by the threatened self, but expanded into a self-oriented towards higher values and meanings. This dimension becomes more operational through C. Robert Cloninger's psychobiological model of personality.

He explains that self-concept develops to the extent to which a person identifies with being an autonomous individual, an integral part of humanity, and an integral part of the universe as a whole, each of which is related to self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence (Cloninger et al., 1993). Self-transcendence, thus, is an expansion of the self-concept toward a broader unity. Internal *yajña* can be read as a character practice that facilitates the expansion of identity from a narrow ego toward a broader, transpersonal value orientation. Within modern psychology, this transformation aligns

with the idea that the fulfillment of basic needs for autonomy, connectedness, and competence strongly influences psychological health. Research by Tucker and Wingate (2014) shows that basic need satisfaction (autonomy, relatedness, competence) is related to suicidal ideation through the mediation of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness. This means that when individuals fail to feel autonomy and connectedness, they develop perceptions of disconnection and burden, which in turn increase suicidal ideation. In this context, *yajña*, as the melting of the ego, is not self-negation but rather a reorganization of self-orientation so that the need for autonomy and meaning no longer depends on external validation but rather on a more stable internal value (*dharma*). This transformation becomes even more relevant when linked to the findings of Hill and Pettit (2013), which show that satisfaction of autonomy needs has an indirect effect on suicidal ideation through perceptions of alienation and self-burden.

In other words, the loss of autonomy and personal meaning contributes to the emergence of destructive thoughts. In this perspective, the dissolution of the defensive ego, which is often tied to fragile self-esteem, failure, or social recognition, actually strengthens moral agency by fostering the internalization of transpersonal values. Internal *yajña* shifts the center of regulation from the reactive ego to a reflective consciousness in harmony with *dharma*, so that individuals no longer identify themselves completely with failure or feelings of worthlessness. At the *Swatah* stage, this process reaches full internalization. Individuals realize that they are not the center of reality, but rather part of a cosmic flow that gives and receives meaning.

The release of the ego through internal *yajña* gives birth to magnanimity as a stable inner quality, compassion, and a focus on universal welfare. At this stage, *yajña* becomes a living meditation: namely, burning attachments, reorganizing the self-regulation system, and restoring identity cohesion. If suicidal ideation is often associated with feelings of isolation and burden, then the self-transcendence manifested in *Swatah* expands identity from a disconnected self to a connected self. Thus, magnanimity is not the result of external moral pressure, but rather the fruit of a mature consciousness that strengthens autonomy, connectedness, and the meaning of life a psychospiritual foundation that has the potential to protect against destructive tendencies.

## Conclusion

The increasing phenomenon of suicide in Bali shows that this issue is not only a psychological crisis, but also a crisis of meaning in life and spiritual resilience. From a Hindu perspective, human excellence lies in the moral-reflective capacity to choose *dharma* and transform suffering, which is conceptually formulated through the framework of *Sāstratah*, *Gurutah*, and *Swatah*: *Sāstratah* builds the foundation of meaning through a literary understanding of *atman* and spiritual goals; *Gurutah* facilitates inner clarification through reflective dialogue and guided *yoga* practice; while *Swatah* is the stage of internalization when *yajña* transforms into the melting of the ego, giving birth to compassion and existential resilience. The magnanimous character formed through these three stages is positioned as a contextual psychospiritual preventive strategy. This study is based on literature and conceptual analysis without empirical field testing, so these findings remain theoretical and require further research to test their validity and effectiveness.

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