

## ĀTMĀNUTĀPAM

### A Staurological Understanding of 'Tattvamasi'

Jojo Parecattil CMI

**Abstract:** Jojo Parecattil CMI makes an Indian reading of ĀTMĀNUTĀPAM and in the lines of Chavara, he discovers a staurological understanding of 'Tattvamasi'. *Tattvamasi* is one of the greatest Upaniṣadic sayings found in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.7). The undivided supreme unity is the whole message of the precept. It is a vedāntic articulation of harmony. Parallels of the same vedāntic teaching can be seen in Christianity as well. Similar teachings are found in the book of Wisdom (Wis 7:25-27). In the staurological understanding of 'Tattvamasi', the cross of Jesus represents both the 'tat' and 'tvam' parts of 'Tattvamasi'. In the crucifix, Chavara read his own true and authentic autobiography. The self-criticism, before the crucifix led him to the self-realization of *tattvamasi*-consciousness. In *Ātmānutāpam* we see a *Tattvamasi*-consciousness, which is completely Christological and staurological. In *Ātmānutāpam*, Chavara is growing from the literal meaning of 'Tattvamasi' to its intended meaning. Before the crucified Lord, the Bible enlightens us to shed the limitations of humanity and grow into the self-realization. There, Chavara realizes this staurological dimension of *tattvamasi*.

**Keywords:** *Tattvamasi*, *Upaniṣad*, spirituality, *chāṇḍāla*, Advaita, philosophy, scripture, Śaṅkara, Wisdom, society, *Tattvamasi*, inclusivism, Sanskrit, revolution, Brahmin, school, Mannanam, philosophy, spirituality, religion, caste, religious, students, sacrifice, marginalised, Dalits, Vivekananda, dualism, non-dualism, Brahman, Hinduism, contemplation, meditation, ignorance, Confucius, Rāvaṇa, Joshua, Jericho, Bethel, Canaan, Bible, *Ātmānutāpam*, consciousness, Pilate, disciple, Sanskrit, testament, David, law, Nathan,, Israel, transgressions, prayers, compassion, crucifix, Gospels, priests, Pharisees, compunction, self-realization, Promised Land, Calvary.

#### 1. Introduction

*Tattvamasi* (you are that) that resonates from the sixth chapter of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.7) is one of the greatest Upaniṣadic sayings. The undivided supreme unity is the whole message of the precept. It is

the singular nucleus and essence of all Indian thoughts and spirituality. The maxim originates in the depth of the soul of India, proclaiming for all time that all beings are the makeover of the one and the same divine spirit. It is this same blissful word that taught humanity to see the divinity in human beings and respect them accordingly. But the malaise of the caste and class systems divided Indians and has left the unifying foundations of basic humanness neglected, ignored and abandoned. This is the sad plight of the glorious spiritual heritage of India.

## 2. *Tattvamasi*: A Vedāntic Articulation of Harmony

One day, Śrī Śaṅkara on a summer noon after a dip in the holy Ganges in Vāraṇāsi, was proceeding towards the Temple of Lord Viswanāth. His disciples went along with him. The Great *āchārya* saw an outcaste, a *chaṇḍāla*, coming along with his dogs in his way. According to the caste practices prevailing in the society, he told the *chaṇḍāla*, "move away, move away!" But to his great surprise, the *chaṇḍāla* responded with an unexpected question: "Move away, Move away! Do you wish to move matter from matter or you mean to separate spirit from the Spirit? You have established that the Absolute is everywhere - in you and me and yet you want me to get away from you, as if I were different. Is it this body, built up of food that you wish to keep at a distance from that body which is also built up of food? Or do you wish to separate Pure Awareness which is present here from the same awareness present there?"<sup>1</sup>

Even for Śaṅkara it was indeed a painful undertaking to bring the great ideals of the philosophy of Advaita especially like that of *Tattvamasi*, to the practical situations of daily affairs. That is why though he was a teacher of Advaita (Non-Dualism) who propagated the principle of one Infinite Self in all, he asked the *chaṇḍāla* to move away from his path. The fact was, in asking the outcast to move out of his path, he was disrespecting the indwelling divine spirit within him. It is one thing to proclaim the great gospel of indivisibility of the spirit and it is totally another thing to practice an attitude of accepting and

---

<sup>1</sup>annamayādannamayamathavā caitanyamēva caitanyāt  
yativara dūrīkarttuṃ vāñ-chasi kīṃ brūhi gaccha gacchēti.  
pratyagvastuni nistaraṅgasahajānandābōdhāmbudha  
viprōyaṃ śvapacōśyamityapi mahān kōśyaṃ vibhēdabhramaḥ?  
kiṃ gaṅgābuni bimbitēśbaramaṇa caṇḍālavīthīpayah  
pūrēvāntaramasti kāñcanaghaṭī, mṛtakumbhayōrvāmbarē?

acknowledging the same spirit in all human beings especially in India. Any conception and practice that is opposite to it, is not appropriate for the one who adheres to the doctrine of *Tattovamasi* or to the philosophy of Advaita. According to the ruling of the scripture, there should be always consistency between the thoughts, words and deeds.<sup>2</sup> Hence, in order to instruct Śaṅkara, Lord Śiva appeared to him in the guise of a *chāṇḍāla* and taught him how to practice his own Vedānta philosophy. It was only when he saw God in the form of a *chāṇḍāla* that he could actually succeed in living the great Vedāntic philosophy of solidarity and harmony.

Parallels of the same Vedāntic teaching can be seen in Christianity as well. According to the noble teachings of the Bible, impurity has no place in true knowledge: “She is a breath of God’s power - a pure and radiant stream of glory from the Almighty. Nothing that is defiled can ever steal its way into Wisdom. She is a reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God’s activity and goodness. [...] She makes everything new, although she herself never changes. From generation to generation, she enters the souls of holy people, and makes them God’s friends and prophets” (Wis 7:25-27). In the same way, impurity and divisive attitude are not proper for the pure and sacred wisdom of *Tattovamasi*. Apparently this understanding cleansed the caste based isolations and impurity of thoughts of Śaṅkara. This eventually made him a great prophet and proponent of unity and companionship between various castes of the society.

### 3. Saint Chavara’s Innovation of an Inclusive Approach

*Tattovamasi* is basically the deep conviction of the Ṛṣis about the divinity that is rooted at the core of human existence by which God and man become one. This vision of unity and harmony teaches one to see everything as one, undivided reality, which is ultimately divine in nature. The evil thoughts of division and disharmony separate people of God by isolating matter from matter and spirit from the Spirit; caste from caste country from country etc., just because of mere human considerations and calculations. This is undeniably an offence to humanity. By practising the great wisdom of *Tattovamasi* in various

---

<sup>2</sup>yathā cittam tathā vācaḥ yathā vācastathā kriyāḥ |  
cittē vāci kriyāyām ca sādhunāmēkarūpatā ||

The subject of thinking, speaking and working must be same and similar in human life. In the life of saints and great persons, we do not find the difference among the objects of thinking, talking as well, as working.

spheres of life, one should be able to go beyond all the dividing factors of caste and creed.

It is significant here to note that Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara initiated a social and cultural revolution in the Kerala society, which introduced a new era of inclusivism. O. N. V. Kurupp, a prominent poet of the South who was awarded '*Patmabhūṣaṇ*,' testifies to it as follows: "In this great land of Advaita (Non-Dualism), Saint Chavara is one who by his holy deeds has written in golden letters the truth that the Christian faith is not indifferent from that."<sup>3</sup> Saint Chavara was a great apostle of *Dalit* movements. On the Mannanam hill, attached to the mother house of the CMI Congregation, he opened a Sanskrit school for children from all castes at a time when Sanskrit was considered to be the language of the Brahmin elite. He also collected funds from various parishes and beneficiaries to buy a plot of wet rice field nearby and ordered that the monastery must cultivate it in order to meet the expense of the school.

Saint Chavara believed that great ideals - like *Tattvamasi*, which is the summit of the Advaita philosophy - are the common heritage of Indians irrespective of their religion and spirituality. By opening a Sanskrit school, where students from both the high class and low class could sit together as children of God and learn the sacred language, he showed how this common heritage can be made available to all Indians. O. N. V. Kuruppu admires this initiative of St Chavara as follows: "He opened an institution for those who were condemned as having no right to learn Sanskrit. Noteworthy is the fact that it was done by a Christian who was a religious priest; it was made possible in that caste ridden society, only because of his great determination."<sup>4</sup> There is a beautiful logic that Saint Chavara placed before the teacher who came from Thrissur to teach Sanskrit when the teacher had some reservations to teach the students of low cast people in the beginning: "If the religion does not have any stipulation, for the rice that is to be used for the most sacred sacrifice, which is prepared by the trampling of a low cast person's feet, then why there is such stroppy reservations only for studying Sanskrit, sitting together with him?" Definitely people who are close to God are also close to the poor and the least ones who are treated as outcast and are marginalised by the society.

Being a great apostle of Dalits, perhaps Saint Chavara is among those who realised the lessons of *Tattvamasi* and practised it in his life.

---

<sup>3</sup>*Karmalakusumam*, 9 January 2014.

<sup>4</sup>O. N. V. Kurupp, "Adānapradānañṇaḷuṭe Suviṣēṣakan," 38.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the love and mercy that *Tattvamasi* contains is the basis of all Indian moralities.<sup>5</sup> Paul Doyens also considers it as the foundation of one's love for the neighbour: "It is highly impossible to love one's neighbour as oneself, without the base of *Tattvamasi*."<sup>6</sup> When man started to love man as God his love became divine as "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8).

#### 4. God and Man Become One in *Tattvamasi*

St Chavara is one, who avoided any form of split mentalities and realized the essence of *Tattvamasi* in himself, in the socio-historical context of his time. This revolution initiated by Saint Chavara caused rapid socio-cultural changes. Those changes in turn resulted significantly in creating conducive atmosphere for the overall growth and development of the state. There is also a transpersonal and Christological or better a staurological implication for that realization of *Tattvamasi* in his life, which is very well reflected in the lines of *Ātmānutāpam*. This poem, which is the essence of his spiritual realization, can be viewed as a compunctional pilgrimage from *dvaitam* (dualism) to *advaitam* (non-dualism), i.e., his sinful nature of dualism (*dvaitam* - where God and one's soul are two realities) to that perfect state of non-dualism (*advaitam* - where God and one's soul become one reality). When he recognized his own divine and human nature in its wholeness in the naked form of the crucifix, the great Indian saying "You are that" echoed also in his soul. *Ātmānutāpam* is the poetic expression of that spiritual tension of St Chavara, which he had to undergo as he identified himself with the crucified Christ.

#### 5. The Literal and Intentional Meaning of *Tattvamasi*

Upaniṣad is the peak of Indian philosophical and theological thinking. Sukumar Azhikod regarded it as the spiritual Himālaya of India. The relation between *Ātman* (Individual soul) and *Brahman* (Supreme Soul) is the main theme of all the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara has summarised the entire teachings of Upaniṣads into four great sayings, and they are generally known as *mahā-vākyas* (great-sayings). They are "*prajñānam brahmaṁ*" (Brahman is consciousness - Ita. Up. 3.5.3), "*ayaṁ ātma brahma*" (This soul is Brahman, Braha. Up. 2.5.19), "*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*" (I am God, Braha. Up. 1.4.10), and "*Tattvamasi*" (You are that, Chāndo. Up. 6.8.7).

<sup>5</sup>Azhikod, *Tattvamasi*, 128-129.

<sup>6</sup>Azhikod, *Tattvamasi*, 141.

*Tattvamasi* is composed of three parts, i.e., 'tat' + 'tvam' + 'asi' (that + you + are), respectively. The word 'tat' (that) in *Tattvamasi* indicates Brahman, who is the Supreme Soul; 'tvam' (you) signifies Ātman (Individual soul); the last part 'asi' means 'to be' and here it is translated into 'are.' Literally, thus, *Tattvamasi* means "You are that." When we critically analyse this literal meaning, the identity between Ātman and Brahman is something, which is impossible, as the Ātman who is the individual soul is having many limitations in himself in contrast to Brahman, who is beyond all kinds of limitations. Hence, it is through the intentional meaning that identity between them is established. The Supreme Soul, who is pure, infinite and beyond all limitations, guides and controls everything. Ātman, who resides in each individual, is bound to limitations and always is in bondage of ignorance and sin. By the saying "You are that," the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul is established by the Upaniṣads. That they are not two ('*dvaitam*' - dualism) but one ('*advaitam*' - non-dualism), is the essence of *Tattvamasi*.

*Tattvamasi* is a *mahā-vākya* of realization; the human search for self-realization and God-realization culminates in *Tattvamasi*. The first *mahā-vākya*, i.e., "*prajñānam brahmaṁ*" is an answer to the question of the disciple, 'who is God?' The answer is "Brahman is consciousness," as it is the level of God-realization, it is only a theoretical knowledge about God. In the second level, the guru, who takes his knowledge into realization, tells the disciple that this God is the soul within the soul, "*ayaṁ ātma brahma*" (this soul is Brahman). The third *mahā-vākya* represents a deeper level of the guru's God-realization, in which he concludes that he is that God as the divine spirit is indwelling in him, "*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*" (I am God). And in the last *mahā-vākya*, the guru invites the disciple to become God; *Tattvamasi* (you are that). Among these four great sayings, *Tattvamasi* is regarded as the greatest among the four great sayings.

### 6. Ātmānutāpam: A Staurological Understanding of *Tattvamasi*

Hinduism is a religion that gives utmost importance to experience, and the ultimate purpose of any intellectual discussion on religion here is to take one eventually to the realization of God. But in the case of *Tattvamasi*, to realize it, no practical steps are seen in any of the Upaniṣads. In the opinion of Sukumar Azhikod, it may be because of the fact that they might not have been recorded.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless,

---

<sup>7</sup>Azhikkod, *Tattvamasi*, 129.

regarding its realization, there are differences of opinions among the scholars. According to one version, the great sayings provide only intellectual knowledge and only through deep contemplation one can realize them. There is an opposite view that just by listening to the great sayings, one gets experiential knowledge.<sup>8</sup> As the great sayings are only the advice of the guru, there should be some practical steps to realize them. Mediating them through signs and symbols are against the Upaniṣads.<sup>9</sup> Seeing that in *Tattvamasi*, what is contemplated on is neither sign nor symbol, rather God Himself, even the great *Praṇava Mantra* (*Oṃkāra*) has got its own limitations.

### 7. *Ātmānutāpam: An Avidya-dhyānam* (Meditation on Acts of Ignorance)

All the books of Hindu revelation teach that knowledge liberates one. But, in the *Kena Upaniṣad* we see a view that contradicts this general perception: "One, who thinks that he does not know, indeed knows, and one, who thinks that he knows, actually does not know it."<sup>10</sup> That is to say, both *vidya* (knowledge) and *avidya* (ignorance) blind and delude the person keep him from true Reality. Therefore, both should be transcended to reach the highest state of Knowledge. For Confucius, "the greatest knowledge of life is the knowledge of one's own ignorance."<sup>11</sup> In the *Bṛhadāraṇya Upaniṣad*, we see a similar teaching, which leads human minds into shade of misunderstandings: "One who ponders on ignorance plunges into darkness, and one who ponders on knowledge, plunges into still greater darkness, and hence by ignorance, one should overcome death and experience eternity by knowledge." The implication of such sayings is that together with

<sup>8</sup>Azhikkod, *Tattvamasi*, 162.

<sup>9</sup>"na pratikēṣu ātmadṛṣṭiḥ kriyatē."

<sup>10</sup>"avijñātāṃ vijñātāṃ vijñātāṃ avijñātāṃ" (*Kena Up.* 2:3).

I do not imagine 'I know him well', and yet I cannot say 'I know him not.' Who of us knows this, knows him; and not who says 'I know him not'. And what of us who say 'I know not whether I know him well, little, or at all'?

<sup>11</sup>yastu sarvvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyēvānu paśyati

sarvvabhūtēṣu cātmānaṃ tatō na vijugup satē.

yasmin sarvvāṇi bhūtāni ātmaivābhūdviñātataḥ

tatra kō mōhaḥ kaḥ śōkaḥ ēkatvamanupaśyataḥ (*Iṣa Up.* 6-7)

A *sādhaka* (spiritual aspirant), who sees all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings, feels no hatred by virtue of such realization. There is neither sorrow nor delusion for that seer of Oneness.

contemplating on God and virtue, he should also contemplate on himself and his limitations.

The concept of *Tattoamasi* is given a divine interpretation in the Upaniṣads, and accordingly it means, 'You are God.' But a human interpretation of the ideal is found in the *Ātmānutāpam* of St Chavara. In the poem, Chavara beautifully combines these two meditations, as they mutually enrich each other. As captured in the refrain of its lines, Chavara meditate on both God and His virtues, as well as on himself and his limitations.

O Lord of all, sinless, pure  
Behold your slave, a miscreant  
It makes me wholly heavy and sad,  
As on your and virtue I muse! (V.143-146)

You my father, you my maker,  
And ever changeless, I know, is your love  
But when of my heavy sins I think  
How could I stand thus before you! (V.147-150)

O furnace of love, ardently I thirst  
For the treasure of your mercy even though  
Hindered by sin; when your eyes benign  
Oft I've felt, chasing my doubt (V.159-162)

When your bright visage I see  
My gloom effaced, love glows  
In your look of mercy I behold  
A gentle saviour, not a judge (V.163-166)

The great Hindu epic *Rāmāyaṇa* is written so that one may become like god Rāma, and not like Rāvaṇa; *Rāmādivad varttitavyam na Rāvaṇādivat*, is the declaration of the scripture. Then, why does it contain the story of Rāvaṇa? It contains Rāvaṇa so that listening to it one can identify, one's evil deeds in it. As the story of Rāvaṇa helps one to become aware of one's own true state, so also, the story of Rāma helps one to become conscious of the state he or she is supposed to be in. It is only when one gives up one's own ways and permits God to dwell in that, *Tattoamasi* becomes a reality in life. Therefore, it is only when *Tattoamasi* is interpreted taking into consideration both the positive and negative elements of human life that it can lead one to realisation. When *Tattvamasi* is interpreted positively or divinely, only the idyllic

'*tat*' part, which one supposed to become, is realized. The '*toam*' part of *Tattoamasi* actually indicates one's true nature at the present moment. For this reason, the great saying *Tattoamasi*, requires, a holistic interpretation, taking into consideration both the human and divine elements of an individual. The Crucifix of Jesus represents both the '*tat*' and '*toam*' parts of *Tattoamasi*, i.e., the human state in which one is, and the divine state that one is supposed to achieve.

In the Book of Joshua, we see Joshua sending two men from Jericho to Ai, "which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Bethel," as part of his strategy to conquer Canaan. According to the scriptural interpretation, these two names - "Beth-aven" and "Bethel" have a deeper significance: "Beth-aven" means, "house of vanity," or "house of idols"; "Bethel" means, "house of God." For a long time, the Bible scholars considered them as two different names of the same place, but later they realized that they were two distinct places. The tussle between good and evil is always going on in the human soul from the time immemorial, and these two biblical names indicate this great fight between good and evil. Man is both Beth-aven, 'the house of vanity,' and Bethel, 'the house of God' at the same time. On one side man is kind, gracious, trustful, benevolent; and yet often he comes upon a vein of the purest selfishness that ever perverted a character. And this we find throughout history. Contrarities face us every day, and make us wonder why they should be. If we look at human person only from one of these perspectives, we get only a partial view. When both these aspects of human life are taken into consideration, we get a complete picture.

In this connection, it is also good to reflect on other two names that we find in Joshua 7:24, i.e., "Achan" and "Zerah." "Achan" means *trouble*; "Zerah" means *the rising of light*. These are two names of the same family. And we see the beauty of conjunction in Hosea 2:15, where God says, "And I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope." IT implies that God would make the valley of trouble the door of hope. Certainly, the message of Bible touches life at every point and in the pages of the Bible we find our own history, a mirror in which we see ourselves.

### **8. Crucifix: An Autogenic Self-Image of St. Chavara**

In the crucifix, St Chavara read his own true and authentic autobiography. The self-criticism, which he made by standing before the crucifix led him to the self-realization of *tattoamasi-consciousness*. It is from that awareness, he confessed before Jesus: "I, the cause of your

death," (VIII.108). As he recognized his own self-image in the crucifix, it gave him a deep conviction about his true identity. While spending long hours before the crucifix, a surge of memories about the sinful deeds of his past life flooded to his mind. In that process of looking back, he realized the true picture of his own feeble nature, which was identical with that of the crucifix. Gradually, the cross, which was folly for the gentiles became the cause of self-knowledge and *tattvamasi-consciousness*, for him. The crucified Jesus, the artist, sketched his image on the canvas of St Chavara's soul, with the brush of nails that fastened his body to the cross and with the paint of the blood of his wounds. From the crucifix, he learned the truth of all theologies - 'Jesus has died for my sins.'

My soul in perdition sends forth a foul stink!  
 Say but the word with your sacred tongue  
 And my renewed spirit shall its virtue win back  
 Cleansed in the blood, from your body streaming  
 My sins and sorrows shall be cleansed  
 Alas! I see before me huge crowd (VII.289-294)

The '*tattvamasi-consciousness*' is always echoed in lines of *Ātmānutāpam*.

"Let it fall on us and our off-spring!"  
 Alas, why do I elaborate their vice,  
 Their ingratitude, I describe?  
 In sinful pride haughtily you behaved.

Rue your own wicked passions, my soul  
 True it was my sins that caused you to blood  
 O woeful, it was I, who sorely  
 Through my hearing and looks caused your heart.

Long sharp thorns I rudely pressed on you  
 Had I my eyes and ears held bridled  
 The pricks less sharp and painful had been  
 Loving Father, me with eyes you gifted.

(VII.522-532)

In *Ātmānutāpam* we see a *Tattvamasi-consciousness*, which is completely Christological and staurological. Of the three parts of *Tattvamasi*, the word '*tat*' indicates God and for Chavara, the crucified Christ is that God. It is in that crucified form of Christ, in which each human person is supposed to find himself, that Chavara too found his original identity. By self-kenosis he transcended his individuality into that of

Crucifix. He was blessed with the consciousness of "Tattovasi" as he gave up his ego consciousness. In order to give force to that truth, Chavara has employed the Syriac term *Hāgourā*<sup>12</sup> ('Behold the Man') to point out Jesus who was presented before Pilate.

Pontius on this throne seated Him in pomp  
And showed Him to those gathered the sight to see  
And said "Ecce Homo" - 'Behold the man'!  
Like angry blood hounds the crowd screamed.

(VII.505-508)

Pointing to Jesus, when Pilate declared 'Behold the man,' actually, he was confessing a truth for the entire humanity that it is in that humanized divine form, each person should find his individuality as he is the humanized divine form for our sins. When Chavara knelt down before that crucified divine form, he was enlightened with the *Tattovasi-consciousness*.

### 9. *Tattovasi*: The Divinity That Man Is Yet to Become

Man by his existential nature, is in the process of becoming. '*Eksīstre*' is the Greek work used to indicate human existence, and it literally means 'to go out.' It is only when a human being comes out of the self, his existence gets its true meaning and worth. The intention of the "*Tattovasi*" advice given by the guru is that the disciple gradually imbibing the spirit of this great teaching, should become 'that' namely, the disciple should get identified with God through daily *sādhana*. Even though, in the phrase "*Tattovasi*," as the verb '*asi*' is in the present tense form, and accordingly has the meaning that 'the disciple is already a god,' in reality, it implies a future reality, that is to say, the disciple by his attempt eventually should realize that he is a god. The disciple, however, is never a god, but tries to become one. Hence, when an apprentice who is in the pursuit of learning self-knowledge, listens to this great advice, has to understand its meaning not in the present tense, but in the future sense, since according to the grammatical rule of Sanskrit, a present tense verb has also a future connotation.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>bhaṅgiyāḷ siṁhāsanēyiruttipontiyōsum  
māniccamānaṁ kāṅmān mōhicca janattine  
kkāṅniccucolliyavan 'hāgarā' kāṅmin niṅṅaḷ  
kruddharāy janamuṭan kruddhiccaśvākaḷ yathā (VII.505-508).

<sup>13</sup>Dattaswami, "God Incarnates in the Human Form for the Sake of Humanity" [Online].

Among the parables of Jesus, at least few of them are his own autobiographies. The audience recognised them as their own stories. This is a characteristic feature of Jesus' teachings. In the parable of the wicked tenants, he is speaking about himself, as he is the son of the owner of the vineyard. The audience heard it as their own story: "When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew, he was talking about them" (Mt 23:45). And that was indeed the purpose of Jesus. They recognized themselves as the wicked tenants: "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him" (Mt 21:38-39). Instead of repentance, it was a negative response that was given by the chief priests and the Pharisees who were the listeners of the story. "They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet" (Mt 21:46).

We see a precedence of this in the Old Testament in prophet Nathan. He tells David a story that is the story of the king: "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him. David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan: "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity" (2 Sam 12:1-7).

David's verdict of death penalty was in fact exceeding what is stated in the law: "Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep" (Ex 22:1). "Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul (2 Sam 12:9). That 'right verdict' (Ps 51:4) of Nathan penetrated into the heart of David. He recognized 'his own transgressions, and sins' (Ps 51:3). Pained by that dreadful reality, descending from his throne and kneeling down before the Lord, he prayed, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my

sin... Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight... Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow... let the bones you have crushed rejoice" (Ps 51:1-19). Listening to those prayers, the Lord redeemed his life from the pit and crowned him with love and compassion ... and renewed his youth like that of eagle's" (Ps 103:1-22).

The demand of the crucifix is that we judge ourselves instead of judging. The story that Nathan told David is indeed a story that God tells each individual. The Gospels are written not to cry out against others to crucify them, but to realize the salvific *tattvamasi* truth that "You are the man!" or "You are that!" As modern listeners of Gospels, when we listen to the stories of how the chief priests and Pharisees responded to Jesus, we are invited to identify ourselves with them and examine how we are responding to Jesus in day today affairs.

The Gospel is also an invitation is to see the log that is there in one's own eye before spotting the speck in other's eye (Mt 7:3). In such words of the Bible, we recognize the literal meaning of the '*tvam*' of *Tattvamasi*, i.e., "You are that." It takes self-criticism and self-purification in order to grow into the intended of meaning of *Tattvamasi*.

In *Ātmānutāpam*, by the compunction (*atmānutāpam*) of his soul, St Chavara achieved this target of growing from the literal meaning of "*Tattvamasi*" to its intended meaning. Before the crucified Lord, the Bible enlightens us to shed the limitations of humanity and grow into the self-realization. The ideal of *tattvamasi* also invites us to the same realization; to grow from "Beth-aven" to "Bethel"; from the "house of vanity" to the "house of God"; from "Achan" to "Zerah"; from "trouble" to "the rising of light." Human life is a salvific-exodus from 'what is' to 'what is supposed to be.' It is a holy journey from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land, a journey to Calvary. On the way the traveller meet the human face of God and his divine face. Both these aspects are united in Christ on the cross in Calvary, and in the lines of *Ātmānutāpam*, St Chavara realizes this staurological dimension of *tattvamasi*.