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## DUALISM MEANING OF TAT TVAM ASI CONCEPT: IMPLICATION TOWARD SOCIAL STRATIFICATION SYSTEM IN HINDUISM

By:

Syamsul Hadi Untung<sup>1</sup>, Harits Mu'tasyim<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Darussalam Gontor

E-mail : [1syams.untung@gmail.com](mailto:1syams.untung@gmail.com), [2haritsmutasyim@gmail.com](mailto:2haritsmutasyim@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Human always connected with other creations and God in his life. Besides, religion becomes the solution for connecting both are; include Hinduism religion. The concept of Tat Tvam Asi is one of the teachings in Hinduism implemented in daily life. This concept also called "Thou Art That" or that is you, which refer to God and human being. It becomes the proper teaching in Hinduism based on theology and philosophy of the worshipers. Besides, there is a social stratification system in Hinduism. This research purposed to reveal the definition, position, source and application of Tat Tvam Asi. Researcher uses the method of descriptive and analysis to explore this concept deeply. At least; this concept has the dual meaning; deity and social. Each meaning has different definition, position, and application except for the source both are referring to one source. The Tat Tvam Asi teaching is no-limit moral teaching which means "He is You" which refer to dual meaning of God or social with different position, application and it's implication toward social stratification system.

**Keywords:** Tat Tvam Asi, Thou Art That, Deity, Social

## I. INTRODUCTION

As hinduism is one of the biggest religion in the world after Christian and Islam. Hinduism also called by the oldest religion and still stood until now (Keene, 2006). The fact that a Hinduism is exist as biggest and oldest religion, shown that Hinduism religion is properly acceptable by world society, especially people across religions. Indeed, the teachings of social life in a religion become important thing. Hinduism also known with peacefullnes, absolutely shown by their daily activities. This peacefullnes based on the teaching of ethic or *dharma*. One of those various teaching of *dharma* in Hinduism namely *Tat Tvam Asi* (Atmaja, I Made Nada; et al, 2010). This research purposed to know the understanding of this concept deeply by deriving to the origin language, furthermore to get a clear definition, position, main source, and its' application in daily life. From those testament above, the researcher sees that this research very important to reveal, especially the teaching of *Tat Tvam Asi* in Hinduism, it's meaning, source, position and implication towards daily life.

## II. METHOD

The type of this research is library research (Nazir, 2000) and used the documentary technique by collecting data from books referred to other people who write about Hinduism especially *Tat Tvam Asi*. To reveal that problem, the researcher uses theological approach and philosophical approach, because of *Tat Tvam Asi* which refer to deity meaning couldn't be separate from theologic. In this research, the researcher uses descriptive method to explain anything about *Tat Tvam Asi*. Besides, he uses the method of analytic to analyze the implication of *Tat Tvam Asi* towards Hinduism's daily life. Descriptive method involves the description as basic information, action, behaviors look like from the perspective of researcher. While the analytical method encompasses the concept

and technique used in analyzing data and interpreting result for making estimation, hypothesis as possible (Lunenborg, Fred C.; Irby, Beverly J., 2008). Researcher formulates the phases of this article below by definition of this teaching in its' dual meaning, then the position, the origin source and application of this teaching.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 A Brief of *Tat Tvam Asi*

*Tat Tvam Asi* has dual referring mean, God and social (Atmaja, I Made Nada; et al, 2010). The understanding of this teaching and it's application in daily life must be. In human's daily life, he always needed another's help. Then the humans called social creature (Atmaja, I Made Nada; et al, 2010). He couldn't live alone, and always need another for life. The deeds used for implementation of the *Tat Tvam Asi* teaching by Hinduism. Such, if one needed to be done goodly, he has to do too towards others. The deeds would make the Hinduism worshipers peaceful as social creature. The understanding of *Tat Tvam Asi* will affect towards the unity of Hinduism especially and worshipers among religions generally.

A Hindu is one who has faith in everythings comes from Hinduism, and one of many thing in Hinduism is *Tat Tvam Asi*. Then, should not be called a Hindu if he doesn't do and lean the teaching of *Tat Tvam Asi*. As explained above, *Tat Tvam Asi* refer to dual big meaning, first is deity meaning, and second is social meaning.

The researcher would like to define *Tat Tvam Asi* as etymology, it's took from Sanskrit which contain 3 main words, *Tat*, *Tvam* and *Asi*. *Tat* means That, *Tvam* means You, and *Asi* means Art. Then, *Tat Tvam Asi* means "Thou Art That", or that is you (Nath, 1998). Towards these meaning, *Tat Tvam Asi* sentence was a part of *mahavakaya* and *advaita* which known from Hinduism philosophy. *Mahavakaya* means the great sentence, while *advaita* means non-two (Nath, 1998). Directing these word into *mahavakaya* and *advaita* because *Thou Art That* was the way to realise one's own status

as the etymology meaning, and God-realization.

Meanwhile, the definition about *Tat Tvam Asi* as terminology that You were Me, What I am, so You, so I (Suhardana, 2010), these meaning refer to two sides, God and social. My soul, you, or he was the God, all over creation was Me, You, or He and none differences among creations (Suhardana, 2010). The declaration that God was in creature's soul, and all of creature equally in degree, none of differences among creatures it's what called by *Tat Tvam Asi*. Until, there are no two separate entities as Me and Him or Me and That (Nath, 1998). The entire universe is the part of the supreme reality (Brahman), because that is you. There are no two separate between man and another man. They are equal and same.

There was main thing to explain the *Tat Tvam Asi* as dual big meaning;

### 3.2 Dualism Meaning; Deity and Social a. Definition

As the Deity meaning, that *Tat Tvam Asi* means it is you, the essence of the word you refer to God (Putra, 2014). So that, every individual in this world in itself there was a part of God. It's strengthened by the proposition that *Tat Tvam Asi* refers to the meaning of God. As explained in terms of *Tat Tvam Asi* above, there is sloka in Hindu that describes more clearly about the essence of *Tat Tvam Asi* as deity meaning.

*Tvam va aham asmi bhagavo devate  
aham va tvam asi* (Suhardana, 2010)

The proposition means that in Hinduism, God was in every human being, God was a creature, He is in the soul of every creature. The statement above concludes that *Tat Tvam Asi* was affirmation that God's teaching is equally in best to the universe and creatures. This means that God has an individual atman or soul as his body.

In Jaiminiya Upanisad Brahmana, when human die and reach the door of heaven, the first question by *prajapati* (Lord of all born beings, see also *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*) (Jones

& Ryan, 2007) was, "who are you?" if answered by name belonged to a person or family name, he would get law of *karma* again. And if answered by "I am the rays of You (Suhardana, 2010)" *prajapati* would answer "Whom thou it is the same with me. Who I am it is the same with you. Come in." If one knock the door and questioned "Who are you?" if he answers "I am" then *prajapati* would answer "go". After suffering and separated for years, the he comes again and knocking the door. When given same questions he answers "it is you who is at the door" then *prajapati* answers, "cause you were me, come in, oh my self." (Suhardana, 2010)

The direct quotation above, explained about the questions when Hinduism was die, he would be asked by *Prajapati* (Lord of all born being) with a question "who are you?", and if he answers with the things except that he was a part or ray of the God, as long as he wouldn't come into *moksa* door, and get the *karma* continually. It can be defined, a Hinduism have to feel that deeply-inside his self was a part of God, this accumulated that in Hinduism there was God-realization and God-union. As physically the humans are different. But the *atman* which placed and contained in humans as the God's rays was the same with others (Suhardana, 2010). The God is one, but his rays as the *atman* is wherever, in humans' bodies, as the sun shines over universe.

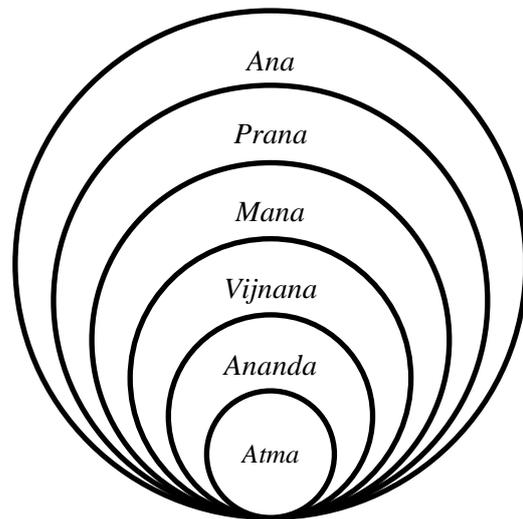
As the Social Meaning, There was a meaning of *Tat Tvam Asi* as social meaning refer to human equality degree, and ethics (Suhardana, 2010). This has a mean that every human being was born with the same degree. Because of it, the humans must love each other, and appreciate each other. Hinduism very concern with love of God's creation and teach that all creations was created with equal degree. the equality degree based on *atman*. *Atman* in human's selves was same with another *atman* inherent in

other selves (Suhardana, 2010). Thus, indeed every human was a big family of the world, live with harmony, safely, and peacefully. The equality degree is shown from human's attitude. So, the others should know how's one do to another. It's also has meaning of ethics, because the equality degree shown in ethics and deeds which inherent in human self.

The definition of Tat Tvam Asi in both meaning; deity and social was contrary to each other. Deity meaning refer to God's rays which placed in every human soul. But for the social meaning, it refer to ethics and equality.

#### b. Position

The position of Tat Tvam Asi as deity meaning refer that the Hinduism is a religion of single belief to the Brahman as oneness God. This oneness in Hinduism is called by *advaita*. *Advaita* literally consists of two words "a" and "dvaita". Word "a" means non or not, and word "dvaita" means non dualism, or not to be separated. It means the oneness and not dualism (Putra, 2014). As terminology can be said that Hinduism is a religion of belief towards one reality, it is Brahman. This understanding of *advaita* continues and develops into the beliefs to God and Goddess. According to Hinduism, Brahman was an absolute, without the second. In *Tat Tvam Asi* teaching, the oneness of Brahman exists in every *atman* or soul which is the rays of God (Putra, 2014). It's necessary to know the position of it. According to Hinduism the Brahman and atman was *sat cit ananda* or the truth and existence, awareness and happiness. If Brahman was in every *atman*, the coordinate of position must be held to know which where the atman if equalled by Brahman. To coordinate it, the Hinduism gives the scheme about position of atman similar toward God.



For Hinduism worshipers, to know the self is to know the God. Cause it, the *Tat Tvam Asi* taught. The *atman* or soul have five covers, the outsider was *ana* (material), then *prana* (vitality), *mana* (mind), *vijnana* (ethics), and *ananda* (happiness) (Putra, 2014) as shown in graphic above. All human's soul even physic and psychic will get the *karma*, reincarnation, and *samsara*. But, the eternal and everlasting was atman, and it'll unite with the God (Putra, 2014). From that, it is understood that the *atman* or soul which means the God and not mind, feeling, moreover physic. It's the main core as the essence and real existence. It also indicates that in Hinduism, especially in the teaching of *Tat Tvam Asi* the only one atman is rays of God, not the body and mind.

As the social meaning, *Tat Tvam Asi* which refer to social meaning was placed as ethics or *susila*. In Hinduism, the ethics called by "susila", the word "susila" was derived from two words namely "su" and "sila" (Suhardana, 2010). *Su* means good and *sila* means good habit and behavior of human. Ethics itself is the rules of doing or good action sometimes called sila. In "Etika Hindu" book, explained that *tatasusila* was a rules and good and noble behavior for being the guidelines to human being (Atmaja, I Made Nada; et al, 2010). While the goal of it, is to build a relationship between someone surrounding another beings. The Hinduism has a religious basis, known as the three basic frameworks (Suhardana, 2010), where the one by another are connected and was a single

entity. The three basic frameworks are; *tattwa*, *susila*, and *upacara*. Then, the *susila* or ethics as *Tat Tvam Asi* was a part of ethics placed and implemented as three main pillars of Hinduism. Hinduism has been classified the *susila* or ethics according objection into three divisions. They are; *Samiya Dharmasastra (applicable ethics)*, *Naimitika Dharmasastra (ethics that applies for special conduct)*, *Kamiya Dharmasastra (provision of conduct which is obligated usually applies at ceremonial agenda)*. (Suhardana, 2010) At least, the *Tat Tvam Asi* as social meaning was included and placed into *Samaniya Dharmasastra* or the obligated and applicable ethics which everyone would do it in Hinduism daily life.

### c. Source

The source of *Tat Tvam Asi* as deity and social meaning was same;

“*Sa ya eso ’ nima aitat atmyam idam sarvam, tat sasatyam, sa atma; tat tvam asi*” (Suhardana, 2010)

The first proposition was on the book of the Chandogya Upanisad. In that *sloka* mentioned that the God was the core of everything in this universe, the core of everything was the *atman* or the soul which is the Brahman. There was another *sloka* contained in Jabala Upanishad that explains about the *Tat Tvam Asi* which refer to the deity and social meaning,

*Tvam  
vaahamasmibhagavodevateahamv  
atvamasi* (Suhardana, 2010)

The *sloka* above explained that beings was the God, and the God was the beings. Besides, the *sloka* was confirmation that every being was equal. Then, *sloka* as the source of *Tat Tvam Asi* in social meaning same with the God meaning, and all the being in this universe was the part and ray of the God. Then, the understanding of it impact that all beings are equal in degree with the others, it’s also interpreted by Gede Pudja in his book, Bhagawadgita. He said that *Tat Tvam Asi* is your soul was my soul, or the beings’ souls are another beings’ souls (Pudja, 1982). It’s signed that between beings

and another beings there was similarity, equality, and family.

The interpretation of *sloka* in Hinduism shown that this religion has teachings of *susila* and ethics which showed by one’s deeds will reflect to his self, because thou art that or *tat tvam asi*.

### d. Application

The application form of *Tat Tvam Asi* in daily life refer to the God meaning and can be symbolized by concern towards self and another (Putra, 2014). There were some deeds which can be done such as, saying the truth, helping others, mind quietness, and free of hate (Putra, 2014). As the explanation above, that the position of *atman* or the soul in the reality was same with the God, which covered by five layers. To implicate it, a Hinduism have to pay attention to the five layers, until the deeds reach the *atman* or soul.

As the social meaning, there was many deeds should be done for Hinduism worshiper towards *Tat Tvam Asi* as social meaning, such policy and generosity, harmonious, human brotherhood, speaking only for the truth (Suhardana, 2010), don’t get angry and say rude (Atmaja, I Made Nada; et al, 2010), operate the thoughts, words, and deeds, decency or doing goodly (Suhardana, 2010), and another deeds which beneficial for humanities and social (Perbowosari, 2019). From these testament and script above, Hinduism is not only provides a way to attain *moksa* and perfection, but also provide a way to pass that way. Thus, the Hindus can easily accept and practice.

The Hindu knows social stratification system or social system that divide citizens into any layers (Supratikno Raharjo, Agus Aris Munandar, , 1998). Thus, in the implementation of the *Tat Tvam Asi* toward social stratification system encounter many problems. One example, the marriage between Brahma and Sudra not permitted in the Hindu religion, as the group of Brahman should be married to the compatriots. (Sudantra) However, according to the teachings of *Tat Tvam Asi*, adherents of

Hinduism should equate the dignity and position of the other.

In fact, the teachings of *Tat Tvam Asi* is equating the degree of human, not affected by social stratification system. However, in the days of colonial rule in the past, colonialism Netherlands had succeeded in dividing the nation into the various social stratification and give a specific title or designation (Suhardana, 2010). That was splitting the unity of the faithful to the interests of the Dutch Netherlands. Grouping was done by colonial rooted and gave a very devastating impact on Hindus especially, so the impact on the community system is still exist at this time.

In addition to the Netherlands colonial strategy to break up the people by grouping the people, the nature of an old-fashioned and run is also one of the aspects that must be considered in tracing the effects of *Tat Tvam Asi* against social stratification system. There are Hindus who took a stance that division of it has been enforced long enough and therefore need to be permanent only and not to be changed. It does not mean that Indonesia after independence from colonial then later Hindus did not return on the teachings of the classical, but it is caused by following and old-fashioned to something and in fact even be fanatics towards their social stratification system.

In conclusion, the author states that the effectiveness of the *Tat Tvam Asi* against the social stratification system which opposition caused to two factors, internal and external. External influences originated from Netherlands with a very dominating its possessions, especially in community grouping strategies through social stratification and the family. Meanwhile, its internal factor is, the thought of an old-fashioned to a social stratification and fanaticism.

The end basic concepts of Hinduism is *moksha* and stopping ones from karma and reincarnation. When connected with the social stratification system that exists, it turned out to have no impact at all against day after. His deed which will be the provision

for him, and not his title during his lifetime. The ultimate goal of Hindus in fact is the same, *moksa* and merges with God. The deaths of a Hindu ceremony are different but the (ashes) everything is going towards the same sea. Eventhough a Brahma died and his crematory used batch of eleven, his ashes will go towards the Ocean as well. All the layers of social stratification in the Hindu and their crematory will be the same, due to the sea and the same place. The sea will be a reflection, that all creatures are a family of the world, which in his lifetime had groups and a different social stratification.

With the concept and the way of thinking as mentioned above, *Tat Twam Asi* will make man more human. The creation of tolerance, cares will be created and eliminate the sense of division and grouping.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

*First, Tat Tvam Asi* is the base of the highest teaching of *susila* in Hinduism. It's the no-limit moral teaching in Hinduism. It's taught by philosophy meaning. "He is You" or "That is You" those were the meaning of *Tat Tvam Asi*. To understand it, Hinduism has putted into teaching of *susila* and ethics. Not only became the philosophical teaching, but implemented in the daily life.

*Second, Tat Tvam Asi* as Deity meaning is equality degree with the Brahman as the God of Hinduism. A creature was the ray and part of Brahman. It's also the way to know the true self, by recognizing the self. While in Social meaning, it is refer to creatures for the similarities among creations and how's a worshiper socialize to another. *Tat Tvam Asi* as Deity meaning placed as the *atman* or soul of creatures. Which covered by the five things, namely (from outer cover); Ana or material, Prana or vitality, Mana or mind, Vijnana or ethics, and Ananda or happiness. In social meaning placed as *susila* or ethics teaching. It's placed at the last of 23 *susila* teaching. Both the source of *Tat Tvam Asi* as deity and social meaning was the same source. But the context is different, for the deity meaning, *Tat Tvam Asi* refer to Brahman. While *Tat Tvam Asi* for social

meaning, refer to creatures and humans. The application of Tat Tvam Asi as deity meaning, is to do goodly for the *atman* or the soul. For the meaning of social, this placed as *susila* or ethics. Doing ethics means doing this Tat Tvam Asi teaching. This teaching is a way to find the real self. Then, the Hinduism gives *Tat Tvam Asi* to bring the worshipers into knowing selves. Regarding to Society, it's the moral and ethics concept that can give harmonist and tolerance.

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