Preface

This thesis is a comparative study of the writings of Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-saint of India, and Walt Whitman, the well known poet-prophet of the United States of America. This thesis focuses light on the confluence of their philosophies in terms of societal, national and spiritual levels which merge into *tat-tvam-asi*, the nucleus of *Advaita* Vedanta. This study unravels the fact that the philosophies of Vivekananda and Whitman have been sprouted from the main root of *tat-tvam-asi*, the basic tenet of the *Advaita* Vedanta.

History of the world reiterates that great men with perfect vision and mission are born and shape the world at times of need. Their presence, completion of mission and disappearance happen continuously and thus the world exists. Their spiritual presence sheds light and inspires people to get fresh outlook on life. Many researches have been made to evolve a compendium of values which recognize the fact that every individual should be spiritual and must be committed to universally acceptable moral, social and ethical values. Every spiritual individual can contribute a part to encompass a spiritual world since “all parts make a whole”. Spirituality brings humans and nature together. Every human has an inherent urge for truth which integrates each and every element of the universe. A spiritual aspirant involves in the seeking of knowing oneself, knowing one’s consciousness, understanding the unseen Force which has created this Universe.
It should not be a mind’s travel of error to truth but from truth to another truth, probably from a lower truth to a higher truth.

Hence the need for spirituality is highly essential in the present challenging world of Science and Technology. A society or a nation or the world cannot be perfectly a full-fledged one unless there is purity in each human living there. Every spiritual human makes society pure, then a nation and then the world and thus it envelops the total universe. Each individual can enjoy one’s own normal pleasures of life besides maintaining pure thoughts, words and deeds. This is what is interpreted as “spiritual” by Vivekananda and Whitman. This spirituality has been emphasized by them in their philosophies which stand for the test of time. Since such spirituality is the need for the present world scenario I have selected such a topic of study for my research.

This comparative study has given the essential details of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the three Schools of Philosophy, Advaita doctrine, and its nucleus tat-tvam-asi, an account of the life and teachings of Adi Shankara etc. An interesting note has been given on American Transcendentalism and Whitman’s unconscious imbibing of this Advaitic trait. Having enunciated the philosophical unities in the right context, I dealt with the biosketches of both the luminaries. Their mental incubation of spiritual ideologies have grown with the added ingredients of life’s experiences and impacts. Then their Vedantic social attitudes and Vedantic nationalism have been discussed. Their spiritual views with their insistence to bring the total humanity under the canopy
of universal brotherhood is brought forth. This has been achieved through Comparative Literature, the right tool adapted for this purpose.