The Spiritual Paradigm

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“Each soul is potentially divine; the goal is to manifest this Divinity within, . . .”

--- Swami Vivekananda

1.1 Introduction

Each of us has an ‘inner world’, which is unique and distinct. When we observe the external world – the happenings, events and episodes – the facts are interpreted in the backdrop of our own inner world. While this inner world perspective is different, and unique for each of us, the abstract conceptual frame of this world – how the world is created, the law that governs this universe, the purpose of life etc. – is derived from our cultural background, which is here termed as the ‘paradigm’.

A child starts its ‘learning’ from the world around it, by interpreting each new experience, the vague model of the world around it is already formulated, based on the cultural milieu created by the parents, family, community and society. As a child grows, the details of this model are filled – the ‘paradigm’ – becomes increasingly clearer. The formation of the conceptual model (paradigm) is largely involuntary; as we continue to grow, we start filling this model with details derived from the senses, but interpreted using the value system already available from the cultural background. Scriptures (religion texts) contribute significantly to define the paradigms.

As we grow in filling details of our model – sometimes the ‘experience’ may demand modification in the paradigm – usually in bits, but sometimes quite drastically. Drastic revision in one’s own paradigm (caused by internal or external compulsions) can be a severe experience, often termed as ‘identity’ crisis.

Philosophy begins with the study of paradigms, and helps us to understand the cultural basis of a society, possible challenges to its existence and preparations to cope with them.

1.2 Spiritual Paradigm

The Indian model of the Universe – the abstract basis of Indian thought and culture – is a belief that this Creation – the animate and inanimate world, including the Cosmos – is the manifestation of the Divine (Spirit). The concept of ‘Dharma’ – the ethical value system of India – stands on this platform.

There are other paradigms in the world – which have given rise to distinct cultures – followed by significant sections of humanity.

The Indian, Spiritual paradigm – assumption that the Divine Spirit is the substratum of all Creation – sees man as potentially Divine. Man’s spiritual quest ultimately makes him seek divinity
within himself; the quest is directed inwards. This has given rise to what are known as Yogic religions, where the touchstone of progress is experience; the essence of religion is ‘Anubhuti’ – realization of the all pervasive Spirit in the cave of one’s own heart.

According to the Semitic paradigm – the basis of religious systems of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – God created Man and the World out of ‘nothing’ (the concept of man and nature being of divine origin is alien to Semitic paradigm) and gave Man dominion over all Creation (animate and inanimate Nature). According to Semitic paradigm, man has only one life – no reincarnation, and no ‘karmic’ bindings. Here, ‘salvation’ implies admission to paradise, which may be granted by God (on the intervention and recommendation of Prophets) as a reward for one’s ‘belief’ and loyalty to the only ‘True God’.

Thus, Semitic religions are essentially ‘Credal systems’, where ‘Creed’ is defined by a set of norms to be obeyed by the believer, set out by the Prophets, as directed by God.

The Semitic religions have no Spirituality (do not subscribe to ‘spiritual quest’ or Yoga), nor the consequent ‘Anubhuti’ (Realization of God); but seek the goodwill of the Only God, and at the end of the world (the Judgment Day) seek to enter the Heaven (or Paradise), for their loyalty to the Only God – and enjoy till eternity the sensual pleasures they have been seeking in this world.

During the last few centuries, a new model – known as the Mechanistic Paradigm emerged in Europe – initially as a revolt against Christianity (Church – the domination of temporal as well as the religious life of the masses by the Pope) – which subsequently rejected all religions as sham, and evolved into a Materialistic Paradigm – that the world is essentially matter (‘Mind is a manifestation of matter’- Karl Marx) – that there is no ‘God’ behind Nature and Man!

The culture and value systems of the societies are traceable to the perspectives offered by their respective paradigms (world views).

If we need to understand the Indian ‘Dharma’, we need to understand the paradigm on which it is based. This will lead to the differences in the perspective of Indian ‘Dharma’ and Semitic ‘Religions’, Indian ‘Shraddha’ and Semitic ‘Faith’.

### 1.3 Base of Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy and culture – its Dharma, the value system – stand on the abstract frame – that is, its paradigm. The larger, overarching purpose of life is to realize god in one’s own heart. The path to this goal are many – grants freedom to choose different paths – freedom to facilitate the quest within. The quest implies a target – a sense of the target, and an emotional commitment to reach the target is known the ‘Shraddha’.

Shraddha is the lamp that guides the seeker in his quest. ‘Shraddha’ is essential for the inner quest; shraddha is distinct from the ‘faith’ (loyalty to the only God) of the Semitic religions.
The inner quest will continue over many lives. The ‘law’ that governs life is known as the Karma. Karma and Rebirth are common to all spiritual traditions (Advaita, Dwaita, Vishishtadvaita, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shaakta, Boudha, and Jaina traditions) in India.

The Upanishads – Vedanta – contain the philosophy of the Vedas. There are more than 100 Upanishads, documented by different Rishis at different times. Among them 10 Upanishads are considered primary Upanishads, for which commentaries of various Acharyas (Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva) are extant. The exact period and chronology of these Upanishads are not clearly known.

The primary Upanishads are:

Ishāvasya, Katha, Kena, Prashna, Mundaka,
Māndukya, Aitareya, Taittariya, Chhāndogya, Brihadāranyaka

Some other Upanishads too have drawn the attention of scholars for their lucidity and eloquence (Shwetashvatara Upanishad is one of them).

All Upanishads assert and expound the same paradigm – the spiritual paradigm – in various forms. This finds repetition in the Brahma Sutras, written by Maharshi Veda Vyasa, who responsible for the classification of the Vedas into four – Rig, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva – groups. Vyasa was also the author of Mahabharata, Srimadbhagavatam and the scribe of Bhagavadgita.

The Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavadgita are considered to be the basic scriptures of the Vedic thought.

The very first statement of the Ishāvasya Upanishad expounds the spiritual paradigm – stating that the entire Creation is pervaded by the Divine spirit. Swami Chinmayananda observed that this statement forms the essence of Hindu spirituality:

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुन्जीथा मा गृह्दः कस्यस्विद्ध धनम् ॥

‘Ishāvasyamidam sarvam yatkincha jagatyām jagat
Tēna tyaktēna bhunjeetha mā gridhah kasyasviddhanam’

“God pervades this entire Creation – everything big and small is the manifestation of God.
Enjoy it through renunciation. Do not covet; for whose indeed is wealth ?”

---[Ishavaasya Upanishad, 1 ]

Indian philosophy lays considerable stress on renunciation – Tyāga – which means restraint of senses (indulgence) and greed – considered necessary for attaining spiritual growth (expansion of consciousness).
The reason for God creating the Universe is indicated in the Aitareya Upanishad, thus:

आत्मा वा इद्मेक एवाग्र आसीत् | नान्यतिक्लिन्यन मिषत् |
स ईक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति |

‘Atma va idamēka ēvagra āsit nānyat kinchana mishat
sa ikshat lōkanmu srija iti’

---[Aitareya Upanishad 1.1.1]

“In the beginning the Spirit (Atman) was One
and all this (universe) was the Spirit;
there was naught else that saw. The Spirit thought,
"Lo, I will make me worlds from out my being”.

----- [Sri Aurobindo’s translation]

In the Brahma Sutra, Maharshi Veda Vyasa asserts most emphatically:

एकं ब्रह्म द्वितीय नास्ति । न नास्ति किंचनः ।
‘Ekam Brahma dvitiya nāsti, neh na nāsti kinchana’

“There is only one Brahman (God), not the second, not at all, not at all, not the least bit.”

--- [Brahma Sutra]

The Bhagavadgita defines the relation between God and Creation: The Brahman (Purusha — unmanifested Spirit) encompasses (and surpasses) the Creation (Prakriti — manifested Spirit); the Creation is governed by its ‘Law’. God, the Creator remains above Law. He presides over the whole show — aloof and detached — allows the law to take its own course. It is the ‘Prakriti’ (manifested part of the Spirit) runs the show, as per the will of the Lord

उदासीनवदासीनं असक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ।
‘Udāseenavadāseenam asaktam teshu karmasu’

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृति: सूयते सचराचरं ।
‘Mayādhyakshena Prakriti sūyate sacharācharam’

“Reclining back, aloof and disinterested, I watch the tides of Creation.
Prakriti manages the Creation, as per my Will.”

--- [Bhagavad Gita, IX- 9,10]
Elsewhere in the Bhagavadgita, Sri Krishna clarifies that all beings are the manifestation of the Divine. God resides in the heart of all creatures. But this awareness is usually clouded by the divine ‘Maya’ – the cosmic delusion created by God for the purpose of His own original ‘game plan’ known as the ‘Leela’.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे ॥
श्रायमयनसर्वभूतानि यन्त्राश्चाति मायया ॥

'Eshvarah sarvabhūtanām hriddeshērjuna tishthati
Bhrāmayan sarvabūtani yantrarūdhāni māyayā'

“O Arjuna, . . .Know that God resides in the heart of all beings.
It is He who creates the delusion by gyrating them on the giant wheel of ‘Maya’ ”.

----[Bhagavadgita, XVIII-61]

1.4 Core of all Beings

Evidently, the human kind is the most sophisticated stage of development in Nature. As we see the human consciousness can revel in various levels of his being. The God residing in the being – ‘Atman’ – is covered by several layers – ‘koshas’ (sheaths) – of increasing subtlety as we approach the core Spirit of being. ‘Prajna’ – the awareness of being – the ‘I am’ consciousness, can revel, stabilize or make transitions among the various sheaths (sharīra, prana, Manas, Buddhi) of the being.

Spiritual development essentially implies of proximity achieved by the Prajna with core spirit – . When Prajna identifies with a particular sheath, its reach and capacity is limited by the sheath. Grosser sheaths have limited range, but as ‘Prajna’ moves to higher (subtler) planes, its reach is wider.

The experience of the Prajna upon the subtler planes (sheaths) can not be described using grosser tools. Language (words), being a creation of the intellect, is inadequate for ‘explaining’ the subtler experience at the level of the Atman. In that sense, the Atman is ‘achintyoyam’, ‘anirvachaneyam’ (beyond words and language).

When ‘Prajna’ rises to the level of the soul, its range and reach is the whole Creation. It realizes that it is unified with the Brahman, which is the ultimate Realization, for the individual.

आत्मैवाध्यतमात्मोपरिष्ठात्मा पश्चात्मा
पुरस्तात्मा दक्षिणत आत्मोत्तरत आत्मेवद
‘Ātmaiva adhastāt ātmōparishtāt ātmā paschādātmā
purastādātmā dakshināt ātmōttaratah ātmaivedā’

“What is below is Atman; what is above is Atman; what behind is Atman; what is ahead is Atman; what is to the right and left – know that that also is the same Atman”

----[Chhaandogya Upanishad,7-25-2]

The final goal of life is the glory of realization – that the individual being realizes its unity with the Cosmic Spirit. The ‘Prajna’ merges with the ‘Brahman’. When this happens the basic illusion – the ego, the ‘vasanas’ – residue of past karmic experiences – automatically fall off. Hence, the individual is released from the compulsion of taking rebirth. This is termed ‘Moksha’, the final liberation.

And when this happens it is an occasion for the final celebration. As the Shwetashvatara Upanishad pours out on the occasion of final celebration:

श्रुण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थु ।
"Shrunvantu vshwe amrutasya putrā āye dhāmāni divyāni tathuḥ"

“Hear, O children of immortality, . . . Even ye that reside in higher spheres! . .

वेदान्तमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम् आदित्यवर्णं तमस: परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति नान्य पन्था विद्यते अयनाय॥

"Vedāhametam purusham mahāntam ādityavarnam tamasah parastāt
Tameva viditvā atimrutyumeti nānyah panthā vidyatē ayanāya"

“I have found the Great Being who shines like the effulgent Sun beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone one passes beyond death, escaping the cycle of birth and death.”

----[Shwetashvatara Upanishad 2-5, 3-8]:

1.5 ‘Anubhuti’ is Personal

Thus, according to the Indian philosophy, the overarching goal of life is the realization of the Self. Every being in the Universe is entitled to this reward; every being is in the process of evolution towards this final goal. Swami Vivekananda identifies this feature as the common base of Hindu
philosophy. In this sense Hinduism is not a “credal system”, where the follower subscribe – ‘believes and obeys the words of a prophet ‘ – but emphasizes in the ‘Anubhuti’ - realization of God, and nothing short of that:

“. . . these few points are common among all the various religious sects in India,. . . Above all, . . . religion, in India, means realization and nothing short of that. "Believe in the doctrine, and you are safe", can never be taught to us,. . . Mere believing in certain theories and doctrines will not help you much. The mighty word that came out from the sky of spirituality in India was Anubhuti, realization, and ours are the only books which declare again and again: “The Lord is to be seen”. Bold, brave words indeed, but true to their very core; every sound, every vibration is true. Religion is to be realized, not only heard; it is not in learning some doctrine like a parrot."


As the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad asserts that goal of life is direct perception of the One and the only God – the substratum of all Creation – in the cave one’s own heart.

\[\text{Yat sākṣāt, aparokṣāt brahma yā ātmā sarvāntarah} \]

"The goal of life is realization – immediate and direct perception of Brahman (Atman) – who pervades the whole of Creation – at the innermost sanctum sanctorum of one’s own heart.”

---[Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, III, 4-1]

1.6 Multiple Paths to the Single Goal

Since Anubhuti is personal, it is natural and necessary that the individual chooses one’s own path according to one’s own temperament and stage of spiritual development. Thus, freedom of choosing one’s own path (and pace of development) is very natural to Hinduism. This has led to a plethora of paths cleared by numerous saints contributing to the rich tapestry of Hindu spirituality.

Says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, that the goal is independent of the path. Krishna assures that He would respond and light the path (of the individual seeker), chosen as per one’s own taste, ability and temperament:

\[\text{Yo yo yā tuṇu bhaktāḥ śraddhāyamṛcchitāṃ mīchchati} \]

"Tatsyābhāsād bhāvāvād viddhāmānāh"
“Yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktah śhraddhayārchitimicchati
tasya tasyāchalām śhraddhām tāmeva vidadhāmyaham”

“In whatever form a devotee conceives the Godhead,
and offers worship, I stabilize his faith in that very form”.
---[Bhagavadgita, VII, 21]

In modern times, Swami Vivekananda declared that the goal of Vedanta is – to prompt, guide and urge every individual to use every opportunity, every yoga, to make quick progress to reach the ultimate goal of final liberation.

Swami Vivekananda concisely states the Goal of Vedanta :

“Each soul is potentially divine; the goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature external and internal. Do this either by work (karma) or worship (bhakti), or psychic control (raja), or philosophy (jnana) – by one or more or all these – and be FREE. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details”.

1.7 Religious Tolerance

Religious tolerance is fundamental to the Spiritual Paradigm; it is more than a mere ‘moral value’. it is the manifestation of its philosophy. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan puts it:

“Toleration is the homage which the finite mind pays to the inexhaustibility of the infinite”

---- [S. Radhakrishnan, “Eastern religions and Western Thought”, p. 317]

Even when followers of exclusivist religions came to India seeking refuge, India was generous and hospitable.

“The oldest of the Indian Jewish communities. . . . (were) traders from Judea arrived in the city of Cochin, Kerala, in 562 BCE, and that more Jews came as exiles from Israel in the year 70 CE, after the destruction of the Second Temple. The distinct Jewish community was called Anjuvannam. The still-functioning synagogue in Mattancherry belongs to the Paradesi Jews, the descendants of Sephardim that were expelled from Spain in 1492. . . . [The land space granted by the Hindu kings to the Jews was] . . . codified on a set of copper plates granting the community special privileges. . . .
Jews of Cochin, . . . in Anjuvannam, . . . rights to seventy-two “free houses”. The Hindu king gave permission in perpetuity (or, in the more poetic expression of those days, “as long as the world and moon exist”) for Jews to live freely, build synagogues, and own property “without conditions attached”.

--- [Wikipedia, “History of Jews in India”]

And when the Zorastrians, defeated and persecuted in ancient Persia . . . found refuge in Gujrath under Jadhav Rana, the Hindu ruler . . .

“Hindu India was kind to the refugees from Pars. They suffered no persecution, no fear. They were allowed to prosper and grow. They built the first fire temple in AD 721 (at Sanjan, Gujrath), installed with due ceremony the holy fire which they called the Iranshah, the King of Iran . . . .”

---- [Sooni Taraporevala, “Parsis- the Zoroastrians of India”]

Abdul Razak Berni, Persian ambassador at the court of Hindu ruler of Kozikode, Kerala, 15th century:

“The people (of Calicut) are infidels; consequently, I consider myself in an enemy’s country, as the Mohammadans consider everyone who has not received the Koran. Yet I admit that I meet with perfect toleration, and even favour; we have two mosques and are allowed to pray in public.”

----- [“Murray’s discoveries and Travels in Asia”, vol.- II, p.20]

Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-1680), personified all that is noble in Indian tradition, emerged as a brilliant response to all the alien invasions of centuries. He established the Hindavi Swaraj, based on the traditional Indian Spiritual paradigm. His religious policy was strikingly different from those of Mughals and the Bijapur Sultanate:

“In India religious intolerance has been very rare and Shivaji’s conception of a Hindu empire was in no way identified with religious persecution. He enlisted in his army seven hundred (Muslim) Pathan deserters from Bijapu.; at least three of his naval commanders were Muslims by faith, and he venerated the Muhammadan saint Sheikh Muhammad as he venerated the Hindu saints Tukaram and Ramdas. He granted inam lands for the ‘illumination of and food offerings to, the shrines of Muhammadan saints and Muslim mosques were maintained by state allowance’.”

----- [S.N. Sen, “The Military system of the Marathas”, p.18]
“... Khafi Khan, who delights in showering the most opprobrious epithets ... on him (Shivaji) is yet constrained to admit that “he (Shivaji) made it a rule that whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the book of God, or the women of anyone. Whenever a copy of the sacred Koran came to his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Mussalman followers. When the women of any Hindu or Muhamadan were taken prisoners by his men, and they had no friend to protect them, he watched over them until their relations came with a suitable ransom to buy their liberty.”

--- [Elliot and Dawson, “History of India”, Vol-II, pp.254,256,262, 269]

In his response to Welcome at the World’s Parliament of Religions, Chicago, on 11th September, 1893, Swami Vivekananda said:

“I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood:

“As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.’ [Shiva Mahima Stotra ]”

----[http://cwsv.belurmath.org/volume_1/vol_1_frame.htm]

1.8 Indian Paradigm

To sum up, the Vedic Philosophical outlook, rests on the Spiritual paradigm, which can be compiled into a few points:

- Creation is the manifestation of the Divine. The whole of Creation is involved in the Cosmic Game (‘Leela’) of evolution – all beings continuously evolve towards the final Goal of life – which is to realize the Divine within.
- Evolution is governed by the Law of Nature, under the watchful eyes of the Divine. The Divine may intervene in the Creation as ‘Avatar’, or in response to prayer.
Belief in God is not an essential requirement for evolution. Belief in a personal God is one’s own choice. The Indian paradigm admits multiple paths to the same Goal.

The individual is called upon to make decisions in life on a continuous basis – the decisions which constitute Dharma – and is held responsible for one’s own decisions and actions – under the Law of Karma. As the Bhagavadgita enjoins

उद्धरेदाकिनाकिानं आकिानिवसाधयेत्

‘Uddharēdātmānātmānam ātmānamavasādhayēt’ [BhagavadGīta, VI – 5]

Each is responsible for one’s own actions – and one’s own progress or decline.

1.9 References

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3. Swami Somanathananda, “Geeta Bhava Dhare” (Kannada), Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1982
4. Swami Somanathananda, “Upanishad Bhava Dhare” (Kannada), Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1982
9. Elliot and Dawson, “History of India”, Volume –II, 1865
10. S.N. Sen, “The Military system of the Marathas”
APPENDIX

- Mundaka Upanishad makes a plain statement:

ब्रह्मेवंद विश्वम्

“Brahmaivedam Vishwam”
Know that the whole of Creation is Brahman
--- [Mundaka Upanishad,2-2-12]

- Chhandogya Upanishad asserts the underlying unity of all Creation

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तत्जलानिति शान्तं उपासीत।

Sarvam khalvidam Brahma tajjalāniti śānta upaseeta

“All this is Brahman; The beginning and the ending of the world is Brahman;
it is Brahman in which the world continues to breathe.
One ought to meditate upon Brahman with a calm mind . . .”
---[Chhandogya Upanishad, 3-14-1]

- Brahman cannot be modeled, nor defined using words. It is beyond the grasp of 'intellect', declare the Upanishads:

न तस्य प्रतिमा अस्ति यस्य नाम महतं यशः।

There is none equal to Him ; His name is Great Glory
--- Shwetashwatara Upanishad [4-19]

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वागगच्छति नो मनः।

There the eyes can not reach, nor the speech, nor the mind
--- Kena Upanishad [ 1-3 ]

यतो वचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सः।

From whence words, unable to grasp, return, along with the mind
--- Tattvārtha Upanishad [2-9]
○ Taittariya Upanishad defines the characteristics of Brahman:

आनन्दं ब्रह्म
"Anandam . . . Brahma"
Brahma is . . . Bliss

---[Taittiriya Upanishad 3-6.1]

सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म
"Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam . . . Brahma"
Brahma is . . . Truth, Knowledge and Infinitude.

---[Taittiriya Upanishad, 2-1.3]

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○ Chhandogya Upanishad tells us how the Brahman was alone, and thought of becoming many:

सदेव सोम्येदिग्र आसीदेििेवाद्ववतीयम् । . . .
तदैक्षत बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति तत्तेज ऐश्कत बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति तदपो सृजत् ।

"Sadeva somyedamagra āsīt, ekamevādvitī yam . . .
Tadaikshata bahusyāṃ prjāyeyeti, tatteja aikshat bahusyām . . ."

“In the beginning, ‘sat’ alone existed, the One without a second.
It reflected: “May I become many? May I manifest as many?”

--- [Chhandogya Upanishad, 6.2.1-3]

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○ Mundaka Upanishad that Brahman pervades all Creation:

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।
अधश्चोधवृम् प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥

"Brahmaivedamamrutam purastād Brahma paschād Brahma dakshinātaschottarena
adhaschōrdhvam prasrutam Brahmaivedam vishvamidam varistham"
“Know that the whole of Creation is the immortal Brahman. What is front of you, is the Brahman; what is behind is also Brahman; what is to your right and to your left, and above, and below is only the supreme Brahman”

--- [Mundaka Upanishad, 2-2.11]

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○ Shvetashvatara Upanishad asserts that the ultimate God is One:

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वच्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरतमा ।
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षीचेत्: केवलो निर्गुणश्च।

"Ekō devah sarvabhūteshu gūdhah Sarvavyāpi sarvabhūtantaratmā
Karmādhyakshah sarvabhūtadhivāsah Sākshicētā kevalō nirgunascha"

“Listen, O children of immortal bliss, . . .
God is One, hidden in all beings, all pervading, the inner self of all beings, He presides over all actions. All beings reside in Him, He is the Witness, pure Consciousness, Single, free from the three qualities (‘Satva’, ‘Rajas’ and ‘Tamas’) of Nature.”

-----[Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 6-11]

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○ In the Bhagavadgita, Sri Krishna declares that He is the beginning and end of all Creation:

गतिर्भर्तो प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्।

“Gatirbhartā prabhussākshi nivāsah sharanam suhrt
Prabhava pralaya sthānam nidhānam bijamavyayam”

“I am the Destination, the Husband, the Master, the Witness, the Abode, the Protector and the Friend (well-wisher) to all. I am the Beginning, and the End (of the world); Know that I am the seed from which the Creation has sprouted.”

-----[Bhagavadgita IX – 18 ]

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The Spirit pervades the entire Creation:

मया तत्तमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्त भूतिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्वस्थितः ॥
न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्यमेव योगमेववरम् ।

“Mayā tatam idam sarvam jagadavyakta mūrtina
Matsthāni sarva bhūtani na chāham teshwavasthitah
Na cha matsthāni bhūtani pashya me yogamaishwaram”

“Invisible, I pervade the whole Universe. All beings are in Me (sustained by Me).
I am not in them (not conditioned and limited by them). See my ‘Yoga’ and my ‘Aishwarya’.”

‘Yoga’ – ONE at the base of all Creation
‘Aishwarya’ – ONE flowering as infinite variety and diversity

---[Bhagavadgita, IX – 4, 5]

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Acharya Shankara, the great exponent of Advaita Philosophy, established the four Temples and Guru Peethas in different parts of India. The vision statements of the each of them – known as ‘Mahavākya’ – is a statement picked from the Upanishads:

अहं ब्रह्मस्वमि
“Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman)

-----[Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,1-4.10]

प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म
“Prajnānam Brahma” (Consciousness is Brahman)

-----[Aitareya Upanishad, 3.1 ]

अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म
“Ayam Atmā Brahma” (Atman is Brahman)

-----[Maandukya Upanishad, 2; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4-4.5]

तत्वं असि
“Tatwamasi” (Thou are That)

-----[Chhandogya Upanishad, 6-8.7 ]

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