

ONE’S SAVIOUR IS ONE’S OWN SELF: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF “BEING” IN THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF THE CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD AND THE “ACTIVE PRINCIPLE” IN STOICISM

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It is significant to focus on how human beings from ancient times to the modern day have resorted to different methods to get rid of suffering. Although, people believe that the world has advanced with the birth of technology, the human mind in its endless thoughts, aspirations, fears etc., remains in essence, the same. There is also an intrinsic need in most people to resort to the supernatural and superstitions to alleviate human suffering as did mankind through time immemorial. Depending on an external entity or force is at the heart of most of these beliefs. In such a context, this study attempts to reveal how suffering could be eradicated by oneself independently, which has been emphasized in both Indian and Hellenistic philosophies. The main focus of this research is to find similarities and differences between the concepts of “Being” in the sixth chapter of the *Chandogya* Upanishad and the “Active Principle” as expounded in Stoicism, and to observe how these philosophical thoughts could help alleviate human suffering in the modern world, and contribute to the well-being of society. The study, a library research, focuses on the primary sources, the *Chandogya* Upanishad with special reference to chapter six and the fragments of Stoic philosophers. Modern scholarship is also used as secondary sources for the purpose of comparison. A profound study of the chapter six of the *Chandogya* Upanishad and the metaphysical theory of Stoics unveils that both these philosophical systems are monistic. All things are a part of “Being” in the *Upanishadic* teachings, and they constitute a part of the “Active Principle” in Stoicism. Being produces the four elements and thereby is present in everything - Similarly the Active Principle mixes with the passive principle (matter) and is found to be in everything. Thus, one’s own self is a part of “Being” or “Active Principle” according to the respective philosophical systems of thought. Moreover, self-realization leads to the respective goals of the two systems of philosophical thoughts. One’s self-realization that is, realization of the being within oneself, leads to Ultimate Reality according to the *Chandogya* Upanishad. Similarly, one’s rational selection of things according to nature leads one towards Ultimate Happiness according to the Stoics. Therefore, one’s savior is one’s own self and no external force can bring ultimate happiness to one’s life. Thus, it is fruitless for people in the 21st century to seek solace from external forces as it can be found only within oneself according to these two prominent systems of philosophical thoughts.

Keywords: Being, Active Principle, Stoicism