

Chapter -III

Obstacles

“What are the obstacles to reaching the goal? What causes ignorance of our reality (a-jnana)? I shall tell you. It is the identification with the body, the delusion that you are the body”. ---*Sai Baba*¹

The greatest obstacle in life is ignorance of the goal. We are not even aware, until we receive a few knocks and start learning that human birth has an exciting purpose. Our goal is to achieve permanent bliss by experiencing reality. The reason for ignorance is the vice. It is like the grip of the masters who rule lives. These masters' area is selfishness (I-ness). It is made up of a mother and her five children. The mother is desire. When we intensely desire something and don't get it, anger and jealousy are born. But if we get what we crave, attachment arrives. As attachment grows stronger, greed is born for more of the same. As greed is satiated conceit takes birth. These six masters rule our lives, and we become selfish individuals.

A great mystery of existence is the presence of evil. All spiritual, generally all human endeavour, has to face and answer this Sphinx. As he answers, so will be his fate. He cannot rise up

even if he wishes. He cannot progress even when there is occasion, because of the setting obstacle. It has many names and many forms. It is sin or Satan in Christianity. Buddhism calls it *mara*. In India it is generally known as *maya*. Grief and sorrow, weakness and want, disease and death are its external and ubiquitous forms. It is the force of gravitation named by a modern christian mystic. It pulls man down, fixes him upon earth with its iron law of mortality, and never allows him to soar in the spiritual heavens. It has also been called the wheel of *karma* or the cycle of ignorance.

The aim of spiritual seekers has to rise out of it by force of *tapasya*, energy of concentrated will or divine grace to escape into the beyond. This is the path of ascent. In this view it is taken for granted that this creation is transient and empty of happiness.

Sri Aurobindo's view is different. He says evil can be and has to be conquered here itself, here upon this earth and in this body. Matter or physical body is not by itself the centre of gravity of the human consciousness. It does not pin the self to the life of pain and misery and incapacity and death. Matter is not the evil nor made up of evil. It harbours evil under the present circumstances.

Rumi, the Persian mystic, says in his famous imagery it is like a piece of iron, dull and dismal to look at. When it is put into fire slowly it acquires the quality of fire. It turns into a glowing and

radiant beauty. It maintains its original form, individuality and material reality. The crust that has to be eliminated in matter is called by Sri Aurobindo "inconscience". Matter is inconscient. Therefore it is unconscious and ignorant. "Make it conscious, it will be radiant and full of knowledge. This is the great transformation needed, the only way to true and total reformation. The divine descends into matter precisely to work out that transformation."²

In a sonnet *Man the Mediator* by Aurobindo, the lines of the poem lead us to the fact, that without change in human consciousness, life is not free and subtle. It is in a state of perplexity. When the grossness is eliminated it becomes subtle and free and comes to know to choose the way towards supernal lights.

" A dumb Inconscient drew life's stumbling maze,
A night of all things, packed and infinite:
It made our consciousness a torch that plays
Between the Abyss and a supernal Light."

Self-realization is impossible without becoming a perfect man according to Bailey.

"Let each man think himself an act of God,
His mind a thought, his life a breath of God."⁴

Hall says:

"An evil man is clay to God wax to the devil;

A good man is a God's wax and Satan's clay."⁵

According to Swami Vivekananda "man is man so long as he is struggling to rise above nature, and the nature is both internal and external. It is good and very grand to conquer external nature, but grander still it is to conquer internal nature. It is good and grand to know the laws that govern stars and planets, but it is infinitely grander better to know the laws that govern the passions, the feelings and the will of mankind."⁶

Notes

1. Sai Anoo SaiBaba's *Teachings on the Direct Flight to Divinity*, (oct-2001).p.57.
2. Nolini Kanta Gupta *The Coming Race and Other Essays*, vol-1, chap- God's Labour, (pub-1970),p.280
3. Sri Aurobindo *Collected Poems*, (pub-1972)p.137.
4. Sarnad *Truth Eternal*, The Original Writings of Samarth Guru Shri Rama Chandraji of Fatehgarh, U.P, translated from Urdu, (pub-1973),p.18.
5. Sarnad *Ibid*, p.18.
6. Sarnad *Ibid* ,p. 20.