



Mira: A Faithful Soul Immersed in Divine Consciousness of Krishna

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Abstract: My aim is to bring out the value and importance of spiritual commitment and devotion of a devotee who on some or many occasions may be called upon to sacrifice or suffer everything. Mira is a paragon of such devotion and dedication to her Lord Krishna. Mira is well known as a person who led an intense spiritual life. Her devotion to Krishna is unparalleled and may baffle some philosophers. The element of faith which Mira had in Lord Krishna is perhaps either under-appreciated or has been absent in recent discussions by scholars. I intend to propound the faith factor which was predominant in Mira's entire life.

Key words: Commitment, devotion, choice

Faith and Freedom

There are several questions which may arise at this level. Was Mira a mystic? Was she an incarnation of Radha or a Gopi? Was she a thinker? Was she a superwoman that is an incarnation of Para-shakti etc.? Would I be right if I hold that the response to all these questions could be potentially given in the affirmative? Though there could be a difference of opinion but one thing is certain that her faith in Krishna was unique. It was her faith which gave her the courage to face all trials and tribulations of life; it was her faith in Krishna that gave her the strength to bear all the sufferings of life without any carps. Dr. SheelaBhargava, an expert on Mira says, "It is generally believed that challenges arising from the family made her a devotee but the truth is devotion to Krishna was an internal compulsion" (Bhargava 2000, 21). DrSheelaBhargava is right if by internal compulsion she means an internal choice. The devotion of Mira to Krishna was indeed a choice made by her. Mira chose to lead a dedicated life devoted entirely to her Lord.

Scholars believe that Mira's loving devotion towards Krishna could have begun right from the age of seven. As Mira grew up, she gave up all the glory and splendor, all the power and pelf, all the comforts and luxuries of royal life of her own free choice. The only thing which she never gave up was her faith and love for her Lord. Of her own choice and freedom, she sacrificed everything for the sake of her Lord. Indeed, it was her faith in Krishna which made her steadfast in her love and devotion as a devotee. Attempts from the royalty to dissuade her from her spiritual quest proved futile. Mira sings, " मीरांलागौरंगहरी, औरनरंगअटकपरी।" (Bhargava 2000, 22). Mira says that her soul is permeated by the texture of her Lord and nothing can discolour her devotion or distract her.

Furthermore, according to Mira, one who has seen the lasting glory of spirituality, that person would not opt for the flimsy splendor of the world. "गजसेउत्तर के खरनहिं चढस्यां, ये तोबात न होई" (Bhargava 2000, 22).

For Mira, she had two options. She could either choose the comforts and enticements of the world or she could choose the love of God. Perhaps, the love of God is at times highly demanding and may demand everything from the devotee, especially those things which a devotee may cherish. Mira chose the love of God as her first and only priority. The Lord came first in her life and the rest did not matter. Her unconditional commitment to Krishna reflects her unwavering devotion to him which



was based on the foundation of faith. Her faith in God made her reject the temporal world and she remained firm on her path to devotion because of her faith in Krishna. Her destination was her Lord and her entire life was a journey towards this destination. In one of her verses she recites पियाम्हारानैणांआगेरहज्योजी।नैणांआगेरहज्योम्हाने, भूलनाजाज्योजी। “मीरारेप्रभुगिरधरनागर, जनमजनमरीसांची”।

(Saraswati and Samdani 2004, 47). While in Chittorgarh, Mira was subjected to immense suffering. The royalty failed to comprehend her existential condition which was an outcome of her faith in Krishna. As there was no one of a high spiritual caliber to understand the predicament of Mira, Mira left Chittorgarh for Dwarka says Prof. SatyanarayanSamdani; a renowned scholar of Mira. What he says of Mira’s departure is important and correct.

‘LEAP OF FAITH’ OF MIRA

A staunch devotee of Mira, namely Swami AnandSwarup says that Mira’s faith was her personal and individual commitment to the Lord. There was no mediator or a preceptor to lead the devotee towards God. Her only teacher was Lord Krishna. She was neither a member of any religious sect, cult, or organization, nor she formed any of her own. She did not advocate or propound any philosophical doctrine or formed any philosophical school. Her only aim was to foster a life-long desire in her heart for Krishna based on faith and devotion. When she sings “पायोजीम्हें, तोरामरत्न धनपायो।”(Saraswati and Samdani 2018, 1:56); or “रामनामरसपीजैमनुआ” (2018); or “भेरामनरामहिरामरहै” (2018) reveals her immense faith and devotion.

Surely, the Lord came first in the life of Mira. Her faith was tremendous. At times, God tests the love of a devotee by putting the devotee in discomfort. Sufferings and miseries of life could not shake her faith because Krishna was everything for her and everything was for Krishna. Therefore, at the farewell ceremony post wedding, Mira requests her mother to accept her solitary wish and that was to take the idol of the Lord Krishna with her. She says that the Lord permeates my entire being. I cannot live without the Lord and without the Lord my life is in darkness so please allow me to take my Lord with me. Seldom one can find such a devotee of faith who led a life of spirituality by choice and freedom; rather than compelled by circumstances. 1. She renounced the world of her own choice. This could happen because of her faith. In fact, faith is the first step for *moksha* (liberation). In faith and spirituality it is the Lord who matters. Mira recites, “म्हारांरीगिरधरगोपालदूसरा णांक्यां।”(Bhargava 2000, 49).

MEERA’S COMPONENTS OF FAITH: UPASANA, SADHANA, AND ARADHNA

Spiritual illumination is not possible without divine devotion. Determination, patience, and devotion is needed for spiritual awakening. Faith and complete surrender to the Lord was the foundation of Mira’s spiritual strength. She had the outlook of a risi. She remained detached from the world. “Spiritual path (sreya) and material path (preya) are diametrically opposite to each other and only one of them can be followed. If the world was pleased with someone his inmost self will not be happy with him. If the inner soul is satisfied, the displeasure of the worldly people will have to be



suffered. This has generally happened in the lives of all true seekers of truth. It is very very rare that the pursuit of higher ideals has been approved by relatives.” (Acharaya 1996, 27).

For Mira, more than relatives, relationship with God mattered, because Mira was an ascetic (tapasvi); she was a mystic, she was an enlightened saint. Mira became a paragon of true upasana which is a surrender to the will of God. She was an epitome of sadhana which is self-restraint and purity of mind. She exemplified aradhana which is austerity. She was perpetually occupied with spiritual pursuits, because her faith (shraddha/astha) in the Lord was unflinching. Faith in Krishna made her bold and fearless. Her actions were inspired by peace and non-violence. Her abiding love and reverence for Krishna made her a true devotee. Dr. Madhurinath in wonderful essay ‘Nature of Love, its Effect and Dimension: With Reference to Mira’, observes that in love there is an element of sacrifice and self-denial and Mira sacrificed all the worldly comforts and pleasures for the sake of her Lord” (Madhurinath 2018, 17). At times faith and love go together. The love of Mira for Krishna was beyond space and time. Her devotion seems to resemble the Alvars, the Vaishnava poet-saints of South India.

Paradox of Faith

Mira never doubted the existence of Krishna even for a moment. Kierkegaard says “he who loves God without faith reflects on himself, while the person who loves God reflects on God” (Kierkegaard 1985, 66). The faith of Mira was not an empty belief. In fact, it was a faith that “the projects on which one sets one’s heart are possible even when they prove humanly impossible to carry through” (Kierkegaard 1985, 25).

No matter how difficult a situation is, Mira had the faith that she would not be deprived of God’s love, that is God will not forsake her. This component of faith may seem unintelligible to a lay person. Mira stood in an absolute relation with the Lord. The ethical was suspended. The single individual is higher than the universal; this is the paradox of faith as Kierkegaard would say. The individual acts on the strength of the absurd. Mira’s faith in God reveals an absolute duty towards God. As a single individual, Mira related herself absolutely to the Absolute. Her devotion and love for God and her faith became absolute and the universal or ethical was reduced to relative. It was this paradox of faith that she was quite unable to make intelligible to a lay person. In one of her verses, Mira says “पग बांध घुंघरियांनाचीरी ।लोगकहेमीराभयीबावरी, सासूकहेकुलनासीरी ।तनमनवारुंहरिचरणामें, दरसनअमरितपास्यांरी ।मीरारेप्रभुगिरधरनागर, थारीसरणांआस्यांरी ।” (Saraswati and Samdani 2004, 46). The world stood in a paradoxical opposition to her love of God. The paradox of faith may evoke distress and anguish. Her faith may appear an enigma but she always rejoiced in it. Her infinite resignation and surrender to God was implicit in her faith. Her commitment to Krishna was an higher expression of faith. Faith was the highest passion for Mira. This divine contemplation enabled her to attain mystic intuitive knowledge of God which she revealed by singing the mystic glory of God through her hymns just like Periy-alvar and his adopted daughter Goda or Andal sang.

Conclusion

I have established that the faith which Mira nurtured was an outcome of her own personal encounter with Krishna. I regret there is no space to discuss the fine essays of Dr. BhagwandasTiwari, Prof. Kalyan Singh Sekhawat, ShriBrajendra Kumar Singal, and Dr. C. L. Prabhat as well as the



observations of Prof. SatyanarayanSamdani. In my view their works could provide inspiration to work further on the enigmatic literature and philosophy of Mira. Let me round off by saying that Mira's choice was a spiritual life-view to which she remained committed throughout her life. Her life was a fantastic tour through the spiritual landscape of faith, love, sacrifice, subjectivity, prayer, devotion and unconditional commitment.

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Footnotes

1. See. Saraswati, Om Anand and SamdaniSatyanarayan. 2004. *Mira Padmala* for hymns of Mira with a glossary.
2. For a classic philosophical discussion on Mira's literature, see Prabhat, C.L. 1999. *Mira JeevanAurKavya*. Jodhpur: Rajasthan Granthagar.