CHAPTER V

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The philosophical analysis of Mahima dharma in the previous chapter clearly reveals the basic elements of this religion. But there is controversy among the scholars regarding its true character. Some scholars consider it as a modern form of crypto Buddhism while a few others interpret it as a reformation of Hinduism.

Mahima Dharma and Buddhism

Buddhism was very much popular in Orissa from the time of Asoka up to the sixteenth century. The influence of Buddhism on Mahima dharma is accepted by some scholars. N.N. Vasu was the first scholar who pointed out the veiled Buddhist of Utkala styled themselves as Mahima dharmin.¹

The origin of Mahima dharma can be traced to the middle of the nineteenth century. By that time Buddhism was not a living force in India and in Orissa it had been completely overshadowed by the prevalence of Brahmanical religion. There is no justification to level the followers of Mahima dharma as Buddhists.

As the Buddhists call their religion as Sadharma, the Mahimaites call their religion Mahima dharma. Because of this similarity Vasu establishes Mahima cult as a residual product of Buddhism. Literally Sadharma means true religion (Sat dharma). Buddhism was emerged as a security against the confusion of the common people, Buddha called it as Sadharma. This particular term was used occasionally and relatively. Actually Mahima cult is much above this sort of occasional and relative considerations. This cult is named after its founding father, Mahima Gosain.

Another argument of N.N.Vasu is that Mahima Swami is Lord Buddha. The point aduced by him is that Bhima Bhoi several times has addressed Mahima Swami as Prabuddha Swami or Buddha Swami. Bhima Bhoi writes, "Having seen your uncomfortable being as 'Buddha' for dayas and nights, your followers get depressed!" Also "That Supreme Being in the shape of human form incarnated as Buddha, preached the Alekha religion without any distinction".

Buddha literally means the "enlightened one". After attaining supreme knowledge any sanyasi may be regarded as

the Buddha. This has nothing to do with Buddhism as such. It was in this sense that the Mahimaites call Mahima Gosain as Prabuddha Swami or the incarnation of Buddha. So only for the use of the word Buddha it may not be justified to call Mahima dharma as the residue of Buddhism.

N.N. Vasu believed that Mahima dharma represents a form of Hinayan Buddhism. Like the Hinayan form of Buddhism, Mahima dharma is against idolatry. The weakness of his argument is borne out by the fact that several other religious sects like Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Bhakti movement also did not believe in idolatry. Therefore, on this ground it cannot be equated with Hinayan Buddhism. Vasu has further argued that the rules prescribed for the sanyasi Mahima dharma are similar to Mahayana Buddhism.

He asserts that the practices, such as begging from door to door, eating from one vessel, are inspired by Buddhism. But the one distinct fact about the Mahimaites is that they take annabhiksa from one person only. They never move from door to door. Thus Vasu is wrong in comparing it both the sections of Buddhism.

Vasu and Artaballav Mohanty associated Mahima dharma with Buddhism on the basis of the doctrine of Sunya which is common to both.
It is not correct to conclude Mahima dharma as Buddhism only on the basis of Sunya. The concept of Sunya can be traced back to Rig Veda. It is definite that this concept was known before the advent of Buddhism. Moreover the Mahimaites used the term to denote Sunya Brahman.

Bhima Bhoi says -

He whose banner is fluttered in the Sunya. 4

He who wanders in the Sunya. 5

He who is the inhabitant of Sunya. 6

That Alekha is Sunya purusha. 7

In the words of Bhima Bhoi his Ultimate Reality or the Sunya Brahman is Mahasunya 8 and also Purna Brahman 9 Except

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p.87.
7. Ibid., p.121.
8. Ibid., p.92.
for the similarity of the word, the term Sunya has different connotations in Buddhism and Mahima dharma.

Binayak Mishra believes that Mahima religion is a branch of Sahajiya religion. He has pointed out the influence of Sahajiya religion in the writings of Bhima Bhoi. Sahaja or Mahasukha is the ultimate goal of Mahima religion. Mahimaites have never identified themselves with the Sahajiya cult. Thus it cannot be said that Mahima dharma is an offshoot of Sahajiya cult.

Mayadhar Mansingh argued that Mahima dharma is nothing but corrupted form of Mahayana Buddhism, as word Alekha of Mahima dharma is the remniscent of Mahayana Sunya. Not only Mahima Goswami was born, but he made his centre of missionary activity in the ex-princely states of Orissa where normally the Buddhists are now residing. Mahima Goswami is described by his followers as Buddha or Prabudha Goswami. This cult was called Sat dharma like the Buddhism, the satsanga gosthi of Mahima dharma resembles with Buddhist sangha, and the sarana is the same as refuge of Buddhists. The use of ochre-coloured garment and palm leaf fan of this sect have similarity with the Buddhist monk of Srlanka. The prohibition of meal after sunset and nonkilling of animal are also practised in Buddhism. All these led Mansingh to conclude that Mahima dharma is the echo of Buddhism.
The exact place of his birth is yet to be ascertained and the areas like Puri, Kapilas, Balasingha, Khuntuni, Dhenkanal, Joranda, Raikhol, where he appeared and propagated his dharma, do not reveal any Buddhistic influence.

Prohibition of food during night and nonkilling of animal is not the peculiar feature of Buddhism. So Mayadhar Mansingh has misled by inferring that these are the principles of Buddhism and subsequently practised by Mahimaites. A further argument of Mansingh is that Mahimaites - the carrying of palm leaf fan is even used by villagers of Orissa who are not Buddhists. The typical Varada of Mahima followers would have been an improvement upon that the practises of sarana of Mahima dharma has no resemblance with Buddhism.

Though there may be superficial similarity between the rules of conduct preached by Mahima Swami and the ten silas of Lord Buddha, its essential character is completely different from Buddhism.

**Comparison with Brahmanical Faith:**

The devotees of this religion do not admit the influence of Buddhism. This religion is more akin to Hinduism. On the otherhand there are a lot of similarities between this religion and Upanishads. Biswanath Baba, citing examples from the Vedas,

the Upanishads and the Gita, has tried to establish the fact that it is a branch of Hinduism. S.K. Mohanty holds the view that Mahima dharma is not a separate religion. It endeavors to reform the existing religious practices and beliefs of the Hindus. As Mahima Swami accepts the authority of the Vedas and Upanishads, it is undoubtedly a religious movement within the Hindu fold. K.B. Tripathy believes that Mahima Swami preached pure monitheism, identical with the doctrine of Vedanta or Upanishad. A.E. Esschman argues that Mahima religion is a reformation movement within the Hindu fold.

**Non-duality:**

The Brahman is second to none. The Swesta Upanishad states as follows:

In the beginning my dear,

this world was just being (Sat)

only without a second (6.2.1)

   S.K.Mohanty, "Mahima Dharma, Some observations".
   K.B.Tripathy, The Source of Mahima Dharma.
Before creation, this universe was but the self that is one (l.c.l)\textsuperscript{16}

Like the Upanishads, the Mahimaites claim their Absolute Reality - Alekha Param Brahman is one and without second. Bhima Bhoi says I will serve one religion, one name and one Brahman.\textsuperscript{17} He is free from all sorts of limitations. Here we find a close similarity between Mahima dharma and the Advaitavada of Shankara. Like Shankara the Mahima followers also claim all the multiplicity and duality of the empirical world which is due to neiscence or avidya finally fuse into it and forget all their distinctions as the rivers in the ocean. Thus we see the concept of non-dualism both in Shankara and Mahima dharma.

\textbf{Attributes of Brahman:}

The Alekha Param Brahman is described as attributeless (nirguna), formless (nirakara), indescribable (alekha) and absolute (niranjana). These qualities of the Brahman of Mahima dharma implies that it is largely influenced by the Brahman of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

\textsuperscript{16} Swami Gambhirananda, Brahma Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Sankaracharya, p.22.
\textsuperscript{17} Bhima Bhoi, Stuti Chintamani, p.63.
Svetasvatora Upanishad (6.11) cites -

The One God, hidden in all things
All pervading, the Inner soul of all things,
The overseer of deeds (Karman) in all things abiding,
The witness, the sole thinker, devoid of qualities
(nirguna)\(^{18}\)

Mundaka Upanishad (11.6) also says -

"That which is invisible, ungraspable,
Without family, without caste (avarna),
Without sight or hearing is It,
Without hand or foot
Eternal, all pervading, Omnipresent,

exceeding subtitle.

That is the Imperishable which the
wise perceive as the source of being".\(^{19}\)

Upanishad believes that the Atman or Self is unborn and eternal. Katha Upanishad describes the indestructibility of soul in the following manner:

19. Ibid., p.367.
"The wise one (i.e., the soul, the Atman, the self) is not born, nor dies, This one has not come from anywhere, has not become anyone. Unborn, constant, eternal, primeval, this one. It not slain when the body is slain". 20

The Mahima followers believes this theory strongly. Bhima Bhoi throughout his writings has mentioned, "He is not born from any womb, He has no shape, That Mahima Swami is the only Brahman And he propagates the Avaduta Religion". 21

The Hindus are of the opinion that God incarnates Himself to lighten the heavy burden of sin and vice. The Bhagavad Gita says - 

"Though unborn and immortal and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamaya (devine potency) keeping my nature (prakriti) under control" (4/6)

Gita also mentions: (4/7/8)

"Aryun! whenever there is decline of righteousness and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body myself forth.

For the protection of virtuous, for the protection of evil-doers and for establishing Dharma on a firm footing I am born from age to age."

Similarly the Mahimaite also believe that Alekna Param Brahman himself descends to the earth for the restoration of true religion and to rescue the pious and devotees at the same time to show mercy to the sinners. Bhima Bhoi says - "When the people become psychologically morbid, the Lord himself appears to save the afflicted devotees". Also thanks to the Lord who take birth in the void, come to the earth in the human form to rescue the human being.

Like advaitavada it asserts that Ultimate Reality which is otherwise called Mahima is Brahman and a confirms that the empirical world is the product of neiscence. The man being engulfed with neiscence, cannot take notice of the Absolute and is subjected to suffering. As soon as there is the realization of Mahima, the world nature with all its quality and multiplicity dissolves into remote oblivion.

23. Ibid., p.12.
24. Ibid., p.68.
25. Ibid.
Like the Advaitins the Mahimaites, also describe their Mahima as Nirguna. 26

**Cosmology:**

The cosmology of Mahima is a synthesis of two opposite trends - the dualism of Samkhya and monism of Vedanta. For the Advaitins, the world is an apparent modification of Brahman concealed by a consumic veil of illusion called maya. Mahimaites admit that Mahima Swami is responsible for the creation. Bhima Bhoi in the *Brahma Nirupana Gita* 27 vividly describes how everything emanates from the Brahman Mahima. Mahima is not the sakti of Param Brahman. Mahima and Param Brahman are one and the same. 28 On the other hand, for the Samkhya thinkers the cosmos is an evolutionary outcome of two opposite forces purusha and prakriti - the material cause which undergoes a real modification and is a composite of three qualities - Satta, Raja and Tama. Reference may be made here to Bhima Bhoi's *Stuti Chintamani* which favours the same hypothesis. 29

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27. Ibid., pp.55-60.
29. Ibid., p.156.
Mahima dharma, like all other traditional religions, prescribes a series of moral values and religious conduct which has resemblance with the traditional Hindu religion. The followers are advised to lead a pious life. Ahimsa is the best sacrifice. God is not worshipped in the anthromorphic form. Like the yajna of the Vedic form dhuni is an important aspect of Mahima dharma. They disinfect their body with cowdung. Their sarana, darshana before sunrise and sunset suggest that they are the worshipper of the sungod. But they do not worship Him. Mahima dharma lays emphasis on the law of Karma and its corresponding hypothesis of rebirth. According to this theory the actions of a person determine his next birth. Bhima Bhoi writes that one suffers for his past misdeeds and enjoys the benefits of the past virtuous deeds. Bhakti and divine grace, as

the path of liberation are common to both the Brahmanical religion and Mahima dharma.

Because of these significant similarities, Mahima dharma is regarded as a modification of the Advaita philosophy. But the designation of the dharma as nirveda by Bhima Bhoi is likely to create confusion. Bhima Bhoi's idea of nirveda, however, does not necessarily indicate the complete condemnation of Vedic scriptures, but only its ritualistic portion. Mahima dharma is a sect of Hinduism, which originated, as its disciples believe, to destroy all irrelevant accretion gathered round the Hindu religion without destroying the core. Mahima dharma, as regards its philosophy, represents a modification upon the contemporary religious ideas.

Despite the similarities, the differences between the two systems are well noticed. The Mahima followers according to the Mahimaites, God, who is not different from the Absolute, can come down to the world and can be in the form of living being to restore the true religion, to rescue the pious, the devotee and at the same time to show mercy to the sinner.41

41. Biswanath Baba, Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa, n.l.
This God will fulfill the desire of the devotees. We will discuss how far *Param Brahman* be the God of this kind. *Brahman* is *Nirguna, Sunya, Avaya* and *Ananta*. It is above limitation. To say positive about *Brahman* or to worship Him is to limit him. *Isvara* is the subject of worship. *Brahman* cannot be worshipped. *Brahman* is realized by identifying oneself with *Brahman* (*Ahm Brahmasmi*). If *Brahman* is worshipped, then there is duality of devotee and deity. This is totally contradictory. *Brahman* is non-dual.

Thus the Mahima followers, describe their Absolute as *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. Perhaps Mahima dharma has identified the Absolute with God to satisfy the mind of the people. At the time when Mahima dharma emerged, the people have no clear idea about *Nirguna Brahman*. Idolatry was the common practice. In order to make the religion more simple and to attract the common people, the Mahimaites have identified God with *Alekha Param Brahman*.

Though *Brahma Jnana Bhakti Yoga* is the way for liberation, they give prime importance to *bhakti*. *Advaita Vedanta* emphasizes *Brahman Jnana* as the means for *moksha*. *Bhakti marga* is advocated by the followers of *Saguna Brahman*. As the Mahima followers have identified the *Alekha Param Brahman* with *Isvara*, they accent both *bhakti* and *jnana* as the means of liberation. Really they give less importance to *jnana*.
The Mahimaites believe that the Sunya Mahima, as the Absolute, is the only Reality. This Absolute, out of its own accord, creates the world of Jiva. The Jiva remains distinct from the (Sunya Mahima) till dissolution (pralaya) of the world when Jiva merges with the Absolute as the rivers merge into the sea. Jivatma is united with Paramatma. Thus the difference between Jivatma and Paramatma is removed.

The Mahimaites, unlike the Advaitin, confer a separate created status though ultimately for temporary nature, to the Jivas. Of course, like Ramanuja, they do not maintain a clear-cut difference between Jiva and Brahman, but a mere relative difference. Ramanuja believes in the realization of Brahman, not in being Brahman. The Mahimaites follow the middle path. They have similarity with Advaitin so long they maintain that the Sunya as the Ultimate Reality. The individual loses itself in the Ultimate Reality, and thereby makes itself identified with the Sunya. They have also collaboration with Ramanujaitees when they agree that as long as Jiva has not realized the Ultimate Reality, it is really distinct from Brahman.  

They also disagree with Shankara in the theory of creation. Biswanath Baba asserts that the Satya Mahima Dharma.

43. Biswanath Baba, Alekha Param Brahman Darshana. Purbandha, p.35.
preached by Mahima Swami is based on a kind of philosophy which he terms as Visuddha Advaitavada. Shankara, according to Biswanath Baba, has misrepresented Advaitism by introducing the mayavada. By accepting maya or avidya, as the cause of world creation, Shankara is forced to admit two principles, viz., Brahman and Avidya. Biswanath Baba thinks Shankara Advaitism as inconsistent because of its acceptance of two principles. The fundamental tenant of advaitism becomes misconceived by declaring both Atman as Nirguna and world to be due to avidya.

Biswanath Baba, is of the opinion that the inconsistency is Shankara's advaitism can be eliminated if advaitism is interpreted in the line of the Mahimaites. Visuddra advaitavada claims that Brahman is the cause of world creation. The world is evolved out of Brahman's wonderful greatness or Mahima. So it is unnecessary to accept avidya as the cause of world creation.

The creation of the world due to maya is not real, so any explanation regarding the world creation is unnecessary. Therefore the non-duality of Brahman is least affected. As Brahman is Nirguna, anything other than Brahman can never be accepted. The advaitavada of Shankara is of this category. Shankara always avoids to answer what about and whereabouts of
avidya as its very nature does not require any such explanation. It is evident that the Nirgunatva of Brahman is least affected by the admission of avidya. The interpretation of Visuddhadvaitavada in this connection should be well discussed. Brahman is the cause of world creation. It is because of Brahman's wonderful greatness or Mahima world is evolved. Now it is to be analysed whether by rejecting avidya and accepting Mahima as the cause of world creation, the advaitavada is logically inconsistent. If avidya is agreed to be another principle other than Brahman, then why, in the same parlance, Mahima cannot be another principle? Biswanath Baba states that Mahima eternally belongs to Brahman, whereas avidya cannot belong to Brahman because the very inclusion of avidya would disfigure the very being of Brahman. Here a question arises, i.e., Mahima being a positive description can it not affect the non-duality of Brahman? If Brahman is unqualified and indescribable how it will possess Mahima. By accepting Mahima maximum injustice is done to the philosophical position of advaitism.44

Thus the creation of world due to Mahima will affect the sanctity of advaitism.

B.Kar, "Biswanath Baba on Mahima and Advaita."
Though devotion is the most important path for liberation, they assert intuition to be the last means for liberation. This intuition is achieved through meditative devotion. The meditative devotion is nothing but thinking of god always. Knowledge of the Mahimaites does not indicate the empirical knowledge of worldly things but the advice of the teacher (Guru aina).*

Relation with the Panchasakha Tradition:

Mahima dharma has its roots in the medieval Vaishnavism as developed by the Panchasakhas. This religion identifies the Alekha Brahman with Sunya Brahman. The Mahimaites use the concepts of Alekha, Nirguna, Mahima etc., all of which appear in the medieval Oriya Vaishnava literature.

Mahima dharma does not follow the concept of Sunya directly from Buddhism, but from different Hindu tradition. The medieval Vaishnavas of Orissa had interpreted these ideas (before the rise of Mahima Swami). Panchasakhas thought that the salvation can be achieved through meditation and through bhakti. Yoga is a rigorous practice. The common man is confused by this. On the other hand the Mahimaites introduce the doctrine of Brahman Jnana Bhakti Yoga for the reunion of soul with the Sunya Brahman. There is no need of Yoga or any

* Here Guru usually refers to Mahima Goswami.
aesthetic knowledge about the Alekha Brahman. By thinking the Alekha Brahman always anybody can adopt the path of Brahman Jnana Bhakti Yoga. By this he can identify himself with the Alekha Param Brahman. There is no difference between Alekha Brahman and the individual. This is called Pinda Brahmanda theory. The Panchasakhas popularised this theory.

Param Brahman can be found in every individual of this world. He presents himself even in the Chandala. As a consequence, the common feast between the members of different castes is followed inside the Jagannath temple compound. These features are also noticed in the Mahima dharma. In the words of Bhima Bhoi there is only two castes male and female, as everyone is the child of Alekha Brahman. As a symbol of this, the Mahima followers and Mahima sadhus eat together on the day following Guru Purnima.

The Panchasakhas made the prophecy in the so called malika. They forecasted the Kalki avatar of Lord Jagannath and the appearance of Mahima Swami, with the practice of Brahman Jnana. Like the medieval Oriya malika, Bhima Bhoi predicted the future which is popular in the villages even today.

Mahima dharma asserts bhakti as the means of the liberation. In this respect it is similar to the Vaishnavism.
In Mahima dharma the liberated soul completely loses its identity in the Alekha Param Brahman, whereas in the Vaishnavism the liberation is possible by self surrender. Like the Vaishnavites, they are against the supremacy of the Brahmins. The theories of Void, pinda Brahmanda and Guruvada are common to both Mahima dharma and the Vaishnavism.

Though they use the words astanga yoga, sat chakra, trikuta, olata ujani, nirvikalpa samadhi, phunkavandha, vankuhala like the Vaishnavites, they do not practise rigorous kaya sadgana and the yogic practices. They assert that astanga namaskara (sarana) with body and mind is the main way for the realization of Brahman. Moreover, their strong belief in intuition or realization of Brahman drew them closer to Vedanta. Besides, their sarana-darshana, code of conduct, religious practice, detract them from the Vaishnavites. The followers are not permitted to have a tulsi plant at home, a plant that is dedicated to Vishnu. They are strictly forbidden to touch even nirmalya. Their denial of the supremacy of Jagannath establishes a new tradition.

It is said in Mahima religion that Lord Jagannath from Nilachala Himself had met Mahima Gosain in Kapilas and took
the precepts of Brahman Jnana Bhakti Yoga. He came to be
known as the disciple Govind Baba. If he is the Lord of
the Universe, why he is confined to one place? Coming in
the Kali Yuga I (Mahima Swami) assumed the post of Jagannath
(Lord of the Universe).\textsuperscript{45} They do not give importance to
Lord Jagannath. Moreover, Jagannath has lost the original
religious sanctity.

Mahima dharma does not completely oppose Jagannath cult.
It is a reformation movement that turned against the Jagannath
worship. It is believed that Bhima Bhoi and some other Mahima
followers tried to burn the idol of Jagannath in 1881. The
thorough analysis of the writings of Bhima Bhoi and the usual
rites of the Mahima followers will give a clear idea about
the relation of Mahima dharma with the Jagannath cult. In this
regard the statement of Eschmann can be cited. She says,
"this movement derives its criticism of the Hindu tradition
directly from the tradition itself, thus standing in an almost
paradoxical two fold relation to the tradition which it accepts
on the one hand and rejects on the other".

Bhima Bhoi has interpreted Alekha Prabhu as Jagatataratata\textsuperscript{46}
(father of the Universe), Jagannath (Lord of the Universe),

\textsuperscript{45} Bhima Bhoi, \textit{Nirveda Sadhana}, pp.1-5.
\textsuperscript{46} Bhima Bhoi, \textit{Stuti Chintamani}, p.4.
Chakadola (round eyed), Kalia (Black coloured), Madanamohana, Pitavasa (yellow-clad coloured), Venudhara (holding flute). Sometimes he also describes Alekha Prabhu as Vishnu. He is Narayana, the Kshirasindhuvasi (who lives in the milk ocean). The writings of Bhima Bhoi were in no way against the Jagannath cult, rather these rare opposed to the superstitions in Jagannath cult.

Jagannath is known as Buddha, i.e., the ninth avatara of Vishnu. He will appear as Kalki avatara to deliver the mankind. Similarly Bhima Bhoi writes, "Mahima Swami appeared in the age of Kali. You all surrender yourself to the Lord now. Submitting yourself, enjoy salvation and see in your own eyes the form of Buddha".  

From the above discussions it is clear that Mahima dharma is not opposed to Jagannath cult. The report of the Dhenkanal Magistrate which a contemporary one mentions, "Mahima Swami believed in the existence of Hindu gods and goddesses, but, to them, they are under His commands and that they are bound to obey whatever He wished them to do".

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47. Bhima Bhoi, Stuti Chintamani, pp.15-16.
49. JIC Part-VI, Lt No.40, 8.10.81, p.1336.
Like the Nirguna bhakti followers, they are against idolatry, pilgrimage, offering worship to the ancestors. They also oppose the wearing of beads and use of sandal marks.

They are also forbidden to beg alms in the leaves of banyan and peepal trees which have some relationship with the Brahmanical religion. Rituals and sacrifices are not observed. There is nothing wrong in praying and meditating until and unless jiva has not achieved ultimate realization. This gives an idea that Mahima religion arose out of the contemporary religions of the country. We can also accept this religion as a reformation movement within the Hindu fold. Mahima Swami made efforts to bring reforms by dismissing the idol worship. He said that the Hindus can well appreciate the formless God and devotion to that Arupa Brahman can replace the worship of idols. In spite of the formative trend, the Mahimaites keep themselves in close contact with certain old Vedic ideas as stated earlier. They allow diversity amidst the inner unity.

From the above discussions it seems that Mahima philosophy assimilated many ideas from several sources. But this need

not suggest that Mahima as a religion does not possess any philosophical background of its own. The Absolute Reality in Mahima dharma is regarded as Sunya and again is identified with Nirguna Brahman of Advaita metaphysics. Mahima Swami is the product of His age. Considering the need of the time, he has suggested certain revolutionary changes in the existing religious values by emphasizing purity, good conduct, faith in a formless god, totally free from complicated rituals and supremacy of Brahmanical priests. In this sense his faith may appear to be distinct from Hinduism, but a deeper analysis reveals its Vedic foundation. To a large extent Mahima dharma represents a reform of Hinduism inspired by indigenous tradition and without any contact with western value system. When we analyse the religion in a historical prospective of the nineteenth century and place it side by side with the Brahmo Faith or the Arya Samaj movement, we may agree with Eschmann, "Mahima dharma is an autoconthous Hindu reform movement,"51 though perhaps it has its unique feature.

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