CHAPTER-IV

Philosophy of the Religion

Philosophy of Religion is generally understood philosophizing religion in the sense of the philosophical defence of religious conviction. Its programme is to demonstrate rationally the existence of God, thus preparing the way for the claims of revelations. But it seems better to call this endeavor natural theology and to term the wider philosophical defence of religious beliefs 'apologetics'. Then we may "reserve the name philosophy of religion for what is its proper meaning, namely, philosophical thinking about religion." (Hick p.1). So, behind every religion there is philosophy. The intimate relation between Philosophy and Religion can be seen in a particular branch of Philosophy, i.e. Philosophy of Religion. A true religion should be based on solid philosophical foundations. Religion and Philosophy are complementary to each other. "Indeed Philosophy should help us to put our fundamental religious beliefs on a solid intellectual foundation and so relieve us of much perplexity and doubt. Sometimes our religious beliefs are held timidly and with trembling doubt. We have a subconscious dread lest profane' science should come in and dissipate our beliefs. Philosophy takes us up into the mountain top and allows us to look over into this valley of uncertainties. In this, as in many cases knowledge banishes fear" (Patrick, p.38). The philosophy of Religion seeks to analyse concepts such as God, Dharma, Brahman, Creation, Salvation etc. In this chapter our study will confine only to Vaishnavism, the cult of worshipping Viṣṇu as the Supreme deity in any one of his several forms. Ākāradeva of Assam or Pañcasakhis of Odisha were not primarily speculative thinkers, they were pragmatics. Their ideal was to propagate a simple system of religion based on devotion, as the then society was more in need of reformation than a systematic philosophy. Caitanya also did not give a philosophical grounding to his faith but the Goswamis of Vrindaban framed this. Neither Ākāra deva in Assam nor Pañcasakhis of Odisha nor even their followers have ever tried to give any philosophical basis to their respective cults. Almost all the works of Ākāra deva and of his followers are translations or compilations, mostly from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. There are least original theological works written by them or commentaries given on any fundamental scripture, though in their translations they did not deviate from the invariant core. Nevertheless, an overall idea of their philosophical views can be had when we go through all their works. During the Pañcasakhī age various religious sects flourished in Odisha. So, the
philosophy of Pāṇacākhās was the assimilation of various religious trends prevalent during the time. Contradictory statements make the situation embarrassing and textual corruptions add to the difficulties. New interpretations were given to the borrowed ideas, or as to be acceptable by the community. While studying the philosophical thoughts of āa`karadeva and his followers and the Pāṇacākhās we will study their views on different branches of Philosophy like Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics etc. In this chapter we propose to deal with the philosophy of the medieval Vaiṣṇava saints of Assam and Odisha.

4.1 Metaphysics

Aristotle developed the study of Metaphysics, to be studied after Physics. While Physics studies the laws of the external form of existence Metaphysics thinks over the real essence of things. The subject matter of Metaphysics includes the world, the self and God. Metaphysical knowledge supplies a solid foundation to religious beliefs.

We come across three concepts having the same referential meanings in the Vedic literature as in Greek literature. They are (i) Brahman (ii) Paramātman and (iii) Bhagavān. In the Ṣaṁhitās the focus is on Brahman. The Yoga system deals with the Paramātman. The Bhagavadgītā and Purāṇas refer to Bhagavān as the ultimate reality. But these treatments are from three different angles or standpoints.

4.1(a) Brahman

The Vedānta Sutrā describes it as the Supreme Brahman, that is the origin of everything, jīvā…Idt asya gata.’ Dr. Radhakrishnan while articulating Brahman says, “It cannot be defined by logical categories or linguistic symbols. It is incomprehensilne nirguṇa (qualityless) Brahman, the pure absolute” (p.226). In the same line the Brahad-Īrṇyaka Ṣaṁhitā comprehends it as “ānātman nirupadhiśyaśaśa nirupakhyata nirvisesatvad ekat vacca neti neti…” (Radhakrishnan, ibidem, p.234). Taittirīyopaniṣad states that Brahman is Truth (Satya), Knowledge (jñāna), Infinite (ananta) and Bliss (ānanda). (GB.I.I.I Taitt.UP II.I.I) Satyam jñanamnantam Brahmac (ibid. III-6.1, anando brahmānīr bhaṭṭarvan). According to āa`karadeva’s Metaphysics, the Supreme Reality is Brahman. This Brahman has two
aspects: one, Personal or qualified and the other, Impersonal or non-qualified. Vaiṣṇava scriptures of Assam are derived from the Bhāgavadapuruṣa with commentaries of Ārādhara Swāmi which is entitled Bhāvatārtha-Dipikā. Ārādhara Swāmi was famous for his Advaitavāda. His “interpretation of the Purāṇas is advaitist since he was a follower of Ākara; and since the Bhāgavata itself tends to be monistic his Dipikā is usually regarded as most authoritative” (Furqanpuri p.297). However, these scriptures without denying the nirguṇa, i.e. indeterminate aspect of God, have laid more stress on the saguṇa aspects of God.

In Ākara’s thought three concepts of God or three modes of realizing the Absolute is accepted. (B.Chetia, p.13). God as the Absolute is beyond words. Here Ākara accepts the Ākara concept of the Abstract Brahman to whom nothing can be predicted or ascribed and which is qualityless or nirguṇa (Bhāgavadapurusha, by Ākara, X-1832). He opines that those who think of Īśvara as possessing some qualities do not know its actual nature (Ākara in Bhākatiratnakara-chap.1). Ākara says that Brahman is not even known by Brahma, nor even by the Vedas, and what is more, Brahma does not know itself” (Ākara in Kirtanaghosviniisastra-V-2).

While viewed from Mīyā, the Nirguṇa of Brahman appears as Saguna, a Brahman or Personal God, who is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He is the soul of the universe (Ākara in Vedasūtra IV 520-521) and possesses infinite number of qualities (Ākara in Bhākatiratnakara-V-2-note). Nirguṇa of Brahman assumes this form in order to please his devotees. (Bhākatiratnakara-V-3). At the time of dissolution or mahāpralaya everything gets merged in him (Ākara in Andipakra-p.176).

Personal God too is not easily accessible to the common people. So for the common people Ākara provides the idea of God to the image of man who shares the pleasures and pains of the masses. These three concepts are not distinct from one another, they are the three perspectives through which the one and the same Absolute is seen differently.

The concept of God as the Absolute is beyond the grasp of ordinary people. So, as a preacher of Vaiṣṇavism, Ākara prescribes the worship of personal god for general devotees. Because of its definite form, its worship becomes easy and consistent whereas the worship of the unqualified Brahma involves a long process, i.e. the study of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, thereafter to ponder over abstract topics.
to develop concentration, to sit in peculiar posture etc. for which it turns to be a Herculean task for a layman. That's why áa´karadeva believes in the worship of a personal God. He admits one Supreme Reality. The abstract qualities of the Lord are his adjectives such as His intelligence, consciousness and bliss. These attributes are His very self. The Lord must be supposed to have a form also just as music has a form perceptible only to the trained ears of a musician. áa´karadeva holds that the Absolute Reality is non-dual consciousness (having no distinction internal or external) pervading the world of multiplicity created by Māya. He regards the determinate God (Nirvāṇa) as real and essentially identical with Brahman. He is Sat (Existence), Cit (Knowledge or Consciousness) and Anand (Bliss).

In the cosmic pattern of áa´karadeva though jiva emanates from paramātman, both are not conceived as identical and co-extensive. They have their independent entities. áa´karadeva stated clearly in the very beginning of the Kṛtana Ghoṣ as follows: Prathame Pra,, int Brahmarupt Sanākama/ Sarba avatīrāra kira , a Nirīga , a (At the beginning I pray the Supreme Reality who in the guise of Brahman is the cause of all things and beings. He is also Nirīga , a). He is the material and the efficient cause of the universe. In Kṛtana Ghoṣ/áa´karadeva again states: tumi paramātma jagatara cesa eka/eko bastu nibhake tōmir byatireka/tumi kirya kira , a samastā caricara/Subar, a ka, dale yena nibhiko antara// tumi paśu pakhā sarisara taru êx, a /ajñata mudha jane doke bhūtā bhūtā ( O, Lord! You are the Supreme soul. You are the only God of the world. Nothing in the world remains outside you. You are the cause and effect of all things and beings of the universe. Just like gold and golden ornaments, which have no difference in reality, but due to ignorance, people look at their differences.)

Nimīna vasisthasaṃvāda is also full of the concepts of a unitary God. The ultimate Reality does not change, it is unborn and undying. It is indifferent (adistna), transcendental to all as their soul. Though it pervades the whole world, the worldly affairs do not touch it. Consciousness is its form, it resides in everything. It does not undergo any change, it is of the nature of bliss, knowing which all sins are washed away. It is the greatest friend of the devotee and is called Brahma, (VR.189-191). áa´karadeva’s Brahman, Nirvāṇa, Nirīga , a are all one and is the theistic Absolute, Personal God. He based this concept on Bhīgabata.

Though áa´karadeva believes in a personal God he denounces idolatry. He is against the mechanical ceremonials or showy rituals connected with the worship of idol. God is necessary for religion, for personal worship
alone, not for metaphysics. Metaphysics simply welcomes the concept of the Absolute. For ákaradeva religion is ultimate and God entertained by religion is also ultimate. He identifies transcendental God of the Bhágabata with Úpaniásic Brahma. The Impersonal Brahma, without any quality transcends common man’s devotional sentiments. He is one and the ultimate truth. He is ékaubhadrakáma Brahma. Madhavadeva also writes in his Nítáyábhisñadá that God who is formless, changeless is Ráma, Káś, a and Hari. He is the eternal and ultimate bliss.

According to metaphysics of Ótkalitga Vaiá, ãism the Supreme Reality is Brahma. He is all pervading, personal, imperishable, unmanifested and non-apprehensible to the senses. One of the five associates ájána, tha Das writes in his O-ya Bhágabata about Paráma, Saáśira and Íe. Paráma here refers to transcendental domain while Saáśira refers to the empirical domain, and Íe refers to a third category of consciousness of individuals who live, move and has its being in saáśira. In the process of evolution it is suggested to start with paráma then move into saáśira and then to Íe. When the question of dissolution of the universe comes it starts with matter, then it effects Íe and finally loses all its identity in Brahma. All these three states of creation, sustenance and dissolution are treated as “three attributes” of Brahma, the Paráma.

In the ábrámád Bhágavatpurá of Ótkalitga Vaiá, ãva guru ájána, tha Das Paráma enjoys special status in both the perspectives of Philosophy and Religion. In the Philosophical perspective it refers to the Supreme Absolute reality. It is monistic and transcendental to nature. Here Paráma is articulated in the gradational manner. It is used as a cluster concept. It is like a constellation of stars, each star like a concept has reference to its different layers of meaning. It is sumum-genus, the referring term to the Absolute. Beyond it there is nothing. It refers to the ultimate primordial being. A super imposed downward trust is imposed for explaining the creation as Íí or sport of the Paráma. Here a new concept-Hari-is developed. It means Bhágavín. Bhágavín is Hari when He desires for creation. But it is not absolutely unknowable for the spiritual being in us, in essence it is nothing but the Divine itself. Thus it is Being as well as Becoming as it is a case of self manifestation. Its being is Íí or wish, that is sportive desire. Thus when the absolute being empowers it with the wish to manifest itself it becomes sagu, a. He is identified as Hari, and when Hari is manifested with its mystic power of Mâyá, it is identified as Viá, a. Thus Viá, a
is the created power of the Absolute, the God-head of theistic speculations and the religious Supreme Being.

S.Bhattacharya in his *The Philosophy of Bhagabata* says, "The reality is conceived as having four aspects or *padas*. But this is not to be understood that the infinite being has four divisions, rather they are to be understood as gold, formed into many types of ornaments serving different purposes and they are meaningful in that sense. But the substance gold remains the same. So, the supreme reality is not broken by its manifestation. Thus the reality in its four aspects is the non-dual absolute. Absolute is what it is. It functions as the supratranscendental to remind that the other degrees of reality posited afterward are not cult deities of a purely personal nature but unlimited Absolute, itself manifested as apprehendable by human conceptions in a hierarchical order; the Absolute or the fourth grade Reality to indicate as *Sat-cit-ënanda*" (p.25). The third degree of Reality is *àr¢K¤À¸a*. *K¤À¸a* is Bhagav¡n Himself put by the *Bh¡gabata Pur¡¸a* without any reason. In the text *K¤À¸a* is displaced and relegated Mahav¡sa to the second grade of reality to accommodate *àr¢K¤À¸a* as the Supreme PuruÀa. *K¤À¸a* is named as *Édit-ViÀ¸u*. He is the primary embodiment of *Sat* and *Cit* with *ënanda* (bliss) only as a subordinate element. Next, there is the first grade reality known as *Brahma¸* who is only *sat* - the all comprehensive, undifferentiated and self-luminous being that provides the background for the world of becoming with all its heterogeneous and contradictory factors and also forms seminal conditions into which everything dissolves at the end of cycles.

Thus, the concept of *Brahma¸* with its logical meaning and implications got associated with theistic drive. With this, came up the concepts like *Ì¿vara*, *Hari*, *Bhagav¡n*, *ViÀ¸u* and *K¤À¸a*, the supreme Godheads. *Parama* and *Hari* are complicative concepts. *Parama* is the qualitiless Absolute, *Hari* is qualified Absolute. It turns out to be a theological concept and was later identified as *ViÀ¸u*, the *Ì¿vara-God* and the religious Supreme Being.

Thus, *Parama* is the Absolute concept, the non-dual eternal Being. *Hari* refers to the same concept with an attribution of desire for manifesting Himself into many. It is as a *µA* or desire oriented towards purposive consciousness, below the level of pure consciousness. This second layer of meaning with its creative power is identified as *ViÀ¸u*. *Sruti*-tråa *Sraµhita Icare mahin eka/ Måbahan prakise aneka// Satå asaµa para mahin/ge abasesa sese rahi// e¸u e Idya Madhya ante/ no taban anja ke jagatee// (Jagannåtha Das
I was alone before the creation. From me everything and being came into existence. I am beyond the sat and asat, existence and non-existence of this relational world of truth and falsity. When pralaya, the dissolution of the universe takes place and nothing remains, then only I exist'. Thus, I am the beginning, the middle and the end. Who else in the world other than me existed!)

Utkaliya Vaishavas accept Brahma as Nirguna, Nirvisesa and all pervading. In their opinion Brahma is ánya Brahma. As Puscasakhs believe, ánya Brahma lives in Mahánya. He has no name and form. Balarama Das writes in the Viśṇu Gita: Mahá Mahá sŚyare bhātirīni/ sethirā khipit acht nīmā/ Bhagabhire nīmā nīlnā/Arāpa Brahma mun atai (Ist chap.) (I take rest in Great Void where there is no nīma. My name is not used there. I am the formless Brahma). It is nothing, it is in the words of Stace made in another context: "as we have seen at the same time the Infinite, it is pure consciousness, pure ego, the one of Plotinus and the Vedanta, the Divine Unity of Eckhart and Ruysbroeck, and it is the Universal Self. It is both positive and negative, light and darkness, the "dazzling obscurity" of Suso" (p.162). This ánya Brahma is also called Nirvisesa. We notice here the influence of Acintyabhedabhedha or Suddhādaitya Vedanta of Vallabhacharya. Nirgu, a Brahmavida of Advaitavedanta is the focal point of Utkaliya Vaishavism.

Balarama Das writes in the Viśṇu Gita that Nīma Brahma is the cause of all creations. Puscasakhs call this nīma as Ekaksara, Pra, ava, Ajapi Gītā and they hold it as the indispensable means for realizing Nirgu, a Brahma. Hence they do not wholly deny personal God but consider the worship of personal God, i.e. Ṣagāmīth as only a means to have Brahmatāna. They cannot see any difference between BhurBhur Ṣagāmīth and the Vott. Ṣagāmīth as described in the Upanishads represents Puruṣa who is regarded as the creator, can move about without feet, can see without eyes and hear without ears. This description of Puruṣa bears affinity with that of Puruṣottama Ṣagām, tha as his shape defies analysis. In Ṣagāmīth the puruṣa is transformed into absolute Puruṣa. He is at once one and also trinity which is nothing but the three aspects of his form. This brings into Ṣagāmīth the concept of Advaitism.

Puscasakhs describe God as all pervasive. He pervades everywhere and in everyone’s body. He is present in every atom of this universe. He is the soul of all souls, life of every Āyā. He pervades everywhere as ghee is in the milk or as nectar in the flower. He is known as the Paramātmā (Supreme Spirit). In the
Virāha Gēthi Arjuna asks āryākṣā, "O, Vanamill, Purulottam, if you are famous as the friend of the devotees, as the ocean of mercy, then where is the implication of your absolutism, formlessness and void?

In reply, āryākṣā, "I am āyātrupī, Anīma and Ananta; but people call me in different names for the benefit of their worship" (Balarama Das, p.8). Achyutananda describes this Advaya (non-dual) Brahman as ā, Ikara and Nirākīra (formless). Again, to describe formlessness he has taken resort to some names like ānya, Javaanāhā, Kākā, Mābramahā etc. Paucaskahśis also symbolically describe Brahman as Āleka, Nirākīra, ānya, Nirgu, ā etc. which symbolizes the Brahman who is above Nirgu, a or Sagu, a. Hence they meditate upon the paramātman who is above nīma and anīma, Ikara and nīkara, Alekha etc. To attain this Paraātman, some worship Javaanāhā, some Kākā-Kākā, a and some others āvī - āākītī. But these are all for doing Sādhana or for bringing concentration to achieve the Absolute Brahman. Paucaskahśis are mainly to support of Nirgu, a Brahman. Like the expression "Neti Neti" of Upaniṣad, Paucaskahśis point at Absolute Brahman in negative terms and express the opinion that He is indescribable. Javaanā, tha Das while describing the nature of Brahman as Sat, Cittē and Īnanda stings. Brahman Sacchidananda ā, a/ Nirākīra ā se nirgu, a/ nitya se punt Sarbigata/ Ākīaya abhya sahtita// niskriya nisphal ā/ nitya/ nirabatnā niranjanata// (Brahma is Sacchidananda. He is nirvikāra and nirgu, a. He is eternal and immanent. He is indestructible and indeterminate. He is immovable, fruitless and quiet. He is eternal and indescribable.)

(Jagannātha Dasa Charitamātap.182).

Both the Assam and Utkaliya Vaisnavas hold that the Supreme Reality is one, without a second. Both of them admit that the Supreme Reality is sat (existence), cit (Consciousness-force) and ānanda (Bliss). For Utkaliya Vaisnavas, the Absolute is beyond all descriptions. It can only be indicated but not described. In the same manner Assamese Vaisnavas hold that the Absolute is not limitable or definable by any determination.

Moreover, in Assamese Vātā, avas hold that the Supreme Reality is one, without a second. Both of them admit that the Supreme Reality is sat (existence), cit (Consciousness-force) and ānanda (Bliss). For Utkaliya Vaisnavas, the Absolute is beyond all descriptions. It can only be indicated but not described. In the same manner Assamese Vaisnavas hold that the Absolute is not limitable or definable by any determination.

Moreover, in Assamese Vaisnavism we find three concepts of God. They hold the view that Brahman manifests as (i) God as the Absolute, (ii) Nirgu, a Brahman, as Sagu, a Brahman, or Personal God and (iii) the determinate God (Īvāra) as Sat, Cittē and Īnanda. Utkaliya Vaisnavas, a va preachers too speak of Parama in gradational manner. They describe first Parama, the referring term to Absolute, then when the Absolute Being is empowered with īśwī, wish He is identified as Hari or Bhagavī. Thirdly, when Hari is
manifested with his mystic power of Mâyá he is identified as Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu).

For both the Assamese and the Utkalya Vaiṣṇavas everything in the universe is an expression of the Absolute, and for them these expressions do not affect in any way the monistic character of the Absolute. According to both the views, the Supreme Reality is apprehended in a two-fold way, as personal and impersonal. The personal aspect is known as the Absolute. The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view. Regarding the creative power, the Absolute Brahmā is called God (Viṣṇu). This world or Jagat is a creation of God.

4.1(b) Jīvātmā, Paramātmā, and Sāda (Matter)

Medieval German philosopher Eckhart states, "To gauge the soul is to gauge it with God, for the ground of God and the ground of soul are one and the same (qtd. in Huxley’s *Perennial Philosophy*)." In the opinion of Pañcasakhis God is one, all pervasive and the inner controller of everything and dwells in human heart. Brahman transcends the phenomenal existence having no relation with it. But the inner core of a jīva is identical with Brahman (Brahmatva jīvah). God has created the universe. And hence nothing is outside God and also God exists in his creation and it is the real existence. The essence of paramātmā exists in the essence of jīvas and creation because paramātmā is present in every element. He is all pervading and exists in all beings, even in an ant to the same degree as in a human being. When one’s mind goes beyond normal wisdom it can be able to realize the non-dual existence of jīvātmā and paramātmā but still he forgets self realization and gives special importance to the body comprising panchabhutas as everything. From this point of view each jīva is Purna Brahma. Due to ignorance one cannot realize the non-dual existence. Hence Pañcasakhis propagate intuition which is very much essential for the salvation of the body. They feel everywhere the equal existence of their own Self.

We find the influence of Vallabha’s Dvaitadvaitavidit, Rādhā Vallava sect and Achintya Vedānta School on the Pañcasakhis. But in the eclectic rituals of the Utkalya Vaiṣṇavas they established a complete harmony of all the views. Because of this they were able to realize the completeness of the Supreme Being. So within the ambit of their knowledge these ideas have been combined in various ways and illuminated the existence of this fullness whose focal point exists as Nirguña Brahmadvīda of Advaita Vedānta.
The Nirgu, a Brahman and Sagu, a Brahman are the two aspects of the same reality. Basically, áa´karadeva believes in the nirgu, a Brahman. But while dwelling upon the acts of Lord Kṣaṇā, a, he appears as a devotee of the Sagu, a Brahman. áa´karadeva realised the significance of the Sagu, a Brahman as the means of worship. So also Ōkāliacondition. avas believe basically in Nirgu, a Brahman as Nirñekha, áunya etc. but they followed Sagu, a Brahman as a means of worship. This they did for the easy concentration of the laity on a worshipping power.

4.1 (c) Nature of Jēva (Self)

áa´karadeva mentions that God manifests Himself as many by His will or spirit. As everything is there in the heart of God so the selves must also be there in His heart. His manifestations as soul or matter are neither unreal nor illusion. In áa´karadeva there is a tendency of engineering a union between the individual self and God. But this union does not mean identity. This concept is possible only when the soul feels that he is a part (āmsa) of God. áa´karadeva expressed it in one of his spiritual songs (Borgèt):

yata jēva ja´gama kēta pata´gama ¡ga n¡ga jaga teri  k¡y¡ (O, God! All the creatures including the insects, the movables and the immovables are parts of your body). For áa´karadeva the relation between God and man, Ì¿vara and Jēva is often spoken of in terms of the relation between fire and its sparks, a whole and its parts. Just as sparks emanate from fire, similarly the jēvas emanate from the paramātmā. He assures that God exists in us as the soul or spirit. Through the concept of rāsal¢l¡ he tries to emphasize the view that God, i.e. Kṣaṇā, a exists in each heart of the gopis, who stand for devotees. In the Kērtanaghos, when áa´karadeva writes, tom¡re se amsa ¡mi yata jēva j¡ka/tom¡ra m¡y¡ye prabhu b¡ndhil¡ ¡m¡ka. (Oh Lord! All of us are your parts and you have bound us with your sport or m¡y¡), he expresses the same concept regarding the nature of soul. In the opinion of áa´karadeva souls are real but they are dependent upon God for their existence.

However, the Ōkālia VaiAvas are not prepared to admit that the jēva is only an appearance. For Jagann, the Das, the individuality and finitude of the soul is very much real and although finite, it is intimately related to Brahman. This relation is identity with as well as different from Brahman and which does not involve any contradiction (Roy Gouri, p.26). Further in the same context it is said, ”The Jēva is a fraction of God, who is total and complete. The jēva is like a spark of a flame. It is a divine manifestation.
The jīva is not a part of Ārka as such. Had it been so, the jīva would have been Omniscient like Ārka. Although the jīvasakti is not essential to God, it is potentially present in Him. It is an adjective of God but appertains to Him occasionally. God is like the sun and the jīvas are like rays. The individual self is a reflection or a part of the ultimate Ītman, the sporting self in the created world order enjoying every facility and scope of returning to the Infinite self. Ārka may say it is Avidyā while Ramanuja will hesitate to accept it as an illusion. But according to Jagannātha, the Das the jīva is as good a reality in the world of realities. He says: sakala dehe Nirīga, a/ Basanti anīdi Kīra, a/ Se Nirīga, a deha gata/ Basantī bhava anukato// (From the time eternity the body is the citadel of God, the Nirīga, a Brahman. He takes up its being as per the nature of the body).

The body is a product of Miyl, it is out of matter, subtle elements, mind and consciousness. This body is the world of the jīva which appears as real. Jagannātha, the Das describes, “The Ītman is nirgu, a and formless but when associated with body it takes up its qualities as fire takes up the form according to the form of the wood that burns. The sūkha and the saukha sartra (subtle body) and mind (mana) is created by God out of His power of Miyl but this world of Appearance appears as real to the jīvas” (R.K.Das (ed.) Ārkaṇāda Bhāgabata, vol. XI. P. 13). Soul is the silent spectator of all the actions of jīvas. Thus the life game is played by the individual jīvas, ultimately to realize their own self. The Bhāgabata of Jagannātha, the Das does not believe in the complete identity between the individual self and the supreme self but believes in the relocation that the individual self is not different from the supreme self, it is but its own intrinsic nature.

Hence for the Šekalīya Vaśas the jīva and Brahma are abhinna (non-different) in as much as they are conscious, and they are bhītum (different) in as much as their attributes are quite different. When Brahma is all knowing jīva is very little knowing and when Brahma is all powerful jīva has very little power. Brahma is the master of Miyl but jīva is susceptible to, and is under the bondage of Miyl. Brahma is the creator while jīva under the bondage of Miyl has its body created by Brahma.

The views of the Assamese and Šekalīya Vaśas about the apparent difference of the jīvas and the real identity between jīva and Brahma would seem to be inconsistent if we speak of them at one level of existence. So, to remove this inconsistency they must be viewed from empirical or nyāyaŚrīka dōstī (pragmatic viewpoint) and transcendental or ParamŚrīka dōstī. At the empirical level different jīvas are
conceived of as being related to God. But at the transcendental level there is only one Supreme Reality. And, nothing exists apart from the Supreme Reality.

The changeable matter is also not out of the range of the Supreme Being. For example, the elaborate dialogue between the demon king Hiriya Kaçtipu and Prahlada which we find in 0-tha Bhagabata however does not occur in the original Sanskrit version. Here the rising anger of Hiriya Kaçtipu is brought to a boiling point as Prahlada finally looks at the pillar fearfully and submits that the Lord is also in it. And, there the Lord resplendent in His divine glory with lotus, conch shell, mace and wheel in His hands appears. Hence Panchasakhis believe that God is present in every being and non-being (matter).

Both of them while admitting non-difference between Ívara and Íjñas also speak of the relation as one of difference. Subject to limitation due to Mâyà, there is the difference between the two.

Here both the Assamese and the Úkáiléya Vaisnavas believe that Íjña is a part of Brahman. Íjña and Brahman are abhinna in as much as they are conscious and bhitna in as much as their attributes are quite different. Brahman is infinite but Íjña is finite. Both of them are of the opinion that God exists in us as the soul or spirit.

4.1 (d) Concept of the World

In the Advaita Vedánta of áa´karācarya there is a clear cut notion that if Brahman is the only reality then God and the world must be unreal, it seems real only empirically. Although áa´karadeva seems denying the ultimate reality of the world, his tendency towards the reality of the world is that God is all in all, He is the Supreme Being. For him although the world is asthira, i.e. restless it is not wholly illusory as the snake in the rope, it is the partial manifestation of the Brahman, hence real in the bosom of Kààla. Áa´karadeva denies the absoluteness of the world’s relativity. Although he raises the position of God to that of Brahman he does not do so in the case of the world. The world is false (asat), being connected with avidyā or nescience. The world only appears as real which has only empirical existence. The distinction is only apparent. As the philosophy of Assamese Vaíla, avism admits only one reality, i.e. monothelism it is bound to deny the world as it happens.

According to Úkáiléya Vaíla, avism world is the outcome of the sweet will of the Universal Being. But the world is not capable of exhausting the Universal Being fully, as it is the limit of the potentiality of
the universe. The unchanging eternal self is the essence of the changing world. This essence also constitutes the essential character of the Universal Being. According to the Bhagabata, the saškara is neither real nor illusory. It is both. It is the platform where both Parama and the jiva play in their own way. World is the self manifestation of the Lord, His sweet will. Here both the sects admit that the world is not fully illusory like the snake in the rope as neither real nor illusory, it is the both.

4.1 (e) Mîyâ

The Sanskrit word ‘mî’ means to measure, to create and man means to think, it is mind’s creative imagination. So mîyâ means all embodied image of creation-God’s creative power. The word mîyâ has been used in various ways. For example, in the Bhagabata it is used as ignorance and delusion (10/13/25), as the manifestation of God’s energy (10/3/46), as the power which exposes untruth (10/14/22), as Yogamîyâ deft in bringing about unexpected turn of events (10/12/42) and also as iner nature (5/18/38). In the Rg Ved mîyâ is found to have been used in the sense of intuition (prajnâ). In the same tune Sankrîdîrya viewed that the unqualified Brahman is the only spiritual truth, all else including the world and the being are illusory. For him Brahman is the only being who is liberated from Mîyâ.

āa´karadeva has accepted Brahman as the ultimate cause of this world. As we know that there is no real difference between gold and the jewelry made of it, similarly, the individual beings and the world, according to āa´karadeva, are not different from Paramâtmâ. The world which appears as real to the ignorant is actually an illusion, an appearance of the ultimate reality.

Regarding the relationship between the cause and the effect, Sankrâdêva supports the notion of vivartavâda. According to this, the cause does not really change into the effect. For example, when we perceive a snake or a rope due to lack of light, the rope just appears to be a snake but not really changes into it. Similarly, this world appears to be real but actually it is not real. The ignorant sees the world in place of the Brahman who is the Ultimate Reality. In the similar way, Brahman does not really change into this world but we see the world of multiplicity in place of one single Brahman. Hence regarding the origin of this world āa´karadeva accepts the theory of vivartavâda. āa´karadeva holds the view that due to the presence of mîyâ we perceive the world of multiplicity in place of Brahman. Mîyâ is the magical power of Brahman through which the world is projected. Due to the influence of mîyâ jiva forgets his real nature that
It is a part of God and hence suffers a lot in this world (Jagat). Mâyā being the magical power of creation is indistinguishable from God. For áa´karadeva, Mâyā is only the will of God to create the appearance. But it does not affect God. For ignorant people who see many objects here instead of one Brahman, Mâyā is an illusion producing ignorance. On the other hand, Mâyā conceals the real nature of Brahman and makes Him appear as the world. According to áa´karadeva Brahman is the ultimate truth, Jagat is unreal, and under the spell of Mâyā jiva believes in the illusion of the multiplicity of this world and takes it to be real. God is said to be the greatest magician and has created this world through his magical power, i.e. Mâyā. Though the world appears real to the ignorant but the persons who have true knowledge about it do not accept anything as real except God.

Mâyā has functions of Ėvara, a, and VikÀepa, a. Ėvara, a, covers jiva with darkness and vikÀepa, a makes the real appear as unreal and unreal as real. The jiva being under the influence of Mâyā remains attached to the world and suffers a lot and also remains away from God. áa´karadeva in the K¢rtanaghos¡ says: tumi param¡tm¡ jagatara ¢sa eka, eko bastu n¡ hike tom¡ra vyatireka. (There is only one God in this world and nothing in this world is different from God). He again says in the Bh¡gabata: K¤À¸ara bhakatidhara/ Mich¡ mora k¡y¡// Ito svapnasama sabu m¡y¡. (10/1479) (Devote yourself to Lord K¤À¸a. In vain you say Mine, mine'. But actually all these are Illusion like dream). In Nimi Navastiddha Samb¡da he says: Yata lat¡ taru t¤¸a/ k¡h¡ko nadekhai bhinna/ Harira áarira buli mane// (67). (All things such as tree, creeper and grass are not looked upon as separate things, but as the body of lord Hari).

But the question arises if this visible world is nothing but Mâyā, how then can the inert world be the body of God? If everything is unreal or creation of magic, then how can we respect all as Lord ViÀ¸u? Again, if God is the cause of all things, if everything is the form of God, then how can the world be the tricks of Mâyā? The answer to all these lie in áa´karadeva’s Bh¡gabata. áa´karadeva says that one should keep faith in God and one’s repose of faith in Him indicates the absence of others. That means where God exists there exists nothing, not even Mâyā. But faith cannot exist by its ownself; it needs God’s support for Mâyā. For example, water reflects the Sun, but if there is no Sun there can be no any reflection of it. Thus the image of the Sun and perception of it, both are dependent on the Sun. Same is in case of Mâyā. The existence of Mâyā is dependent on God, the Absolute. The essence is that Mâyā has no independent existence.
Mâyâ is dependent on God and also wherever there is God’s presence the delusion of Mâyâ cannot be there. In this context, in the Bhagabata it is said that Mâyâ vanishes at God’s sight. In Bhakti Räñikarava’dán karadèva writes: “Wherever there is God there is no Mâyâ. So Vatuka, tha is also free from Mâyâ. Madhavadèva also writes in Bhakti-Rañikar that in Vatuka, tha there is no Mâyâ as there is pure existence of Brahman (G4).

Hence, according to bà’dán karadèva Mâyâ evolves out of Viśu. It is not without beginningless. It is the active power of God. As for him, God is the Lord of Mâyâ. So he has expressed his dependence on God’s grace to cross over the tide of Mâyâ. According to him, worldly Mâyâ can be overcome with the help of the grace of Kåma (tare saśāsira mâyâ Kåma kripave) (Bhakti Räñikar of bà’dán karadèva and History of the Concept of Bhakti ed. Maheswar Neog, 1051). This view is also found there in the Gâ and Bhagabata. Thus bà’dán karadèva uses the word Mâyâ as the power of God and calls God as the Lord of Mâyâ (Mâyâdhása). By putting him at the centre of all he prays for His grace in order to get rid of the illusion or tricks of Mâyâ.

Otkailsya Vâtâ, avas also hold the opinion that Brahman is the ultimate cause of the universe. But in the normal vision of a man bonded with Mâyâ world (jagat) is seen in place of Brahman. Hence, when seen specially world is real and unreal both. As name and form are placed on the basic essence it assumes to be true. Until and unless the veil of ignorance is removed the world becomes evident in front of us. Empirically the bonded jiva takes the world as real to explain this empirical reality. Pâpasakhás believe that metaphysically the world is not real. Ignorance is the cause that stands in the way to distinguish between the real and the unreal. Brahman is the ground on which the world appears through Mâyâ. In Jagannâtha Das’s Ótu Bhagabata we find the mention of Mâyâ. The initial prayer which Saunaka muni and other sages sing before Suta reads like this: “Have mercy on us and tell us all those preferred knowledge knowing which Viśu’s Mâyâ will be lifted and the jiva will attain salvation”. As discussed earlier Avidyâ has two functions, i.e. Ṛvara and Vikåepa. Avidyâ through āvarana conceals the unity and Vikåepa projects names and forms as the world.

The world may be illusory, but this illusion is a cosmic illusion in which we ourselves are included. All that are manifested are not right knowledge. Due to ignorance or faulty knowledge these seem like what they appear to be. The unmanifest and attributeless to be manifested and adorned with attributes has to bear the concealment of Mâyâ. Mâyâ is a necessity till the sense organs hold, but when one goes beyond mâyâ
and achieves true knowledge (Pramāṇa) this concealment is unveiled. Pāṇḍarakaḥśis admit that the world is only an appearance. It is not ultimately real. So long as a rope is mistaken as a snake, it is sufficient to frighten the person who mistakes it. But it is only when the rope is known as the rope that person may laugh at his folly. Similarly, so long as we are engrossed in ignorance the world seems quite real to us. It is only when true knowledge dawns on us that the world looks unreal. The manifold world of existence is effect; the highest Brahman is the cause. The effect has no independent existence apart from the cause.

Vidyā and Avidyā which are the causes of salvation and bondage of beings respectively are but the creations of God—“Bandhamokākāri Īdye mīyāya me bhinmita” (Gītā ii/11/3) which is in Jagannātha Das’s language “E Id tete gu, a karna, Rijana eka mane suna, Mīyā manaṣya avatāra, ke kaha mahimī tinkara/E Rinkarpana ye āvantī/Mīyā gahane na padantī/Obhayā sandāṣātā ēant/ VīÅu, a sevaka gete pri, 1// Ebhāt bhakāti ye têkēva/kahā bitra Jagannātha _tha//” (Bhāgabata, II/25/32) (O King! Listen to me attentively. All the qualities and actions, illusions and forms of human beings are graces of Him. Those who listen to the sports of Rāma every evening and do not fall into the trap of Mīyā are devotees of VīÅu, a. This is the quintessence of devotion, says Jagannātha). Therefore, only God can undo being’s bondage caused by Mīyā-bhaktītygena mānātistha mādhūrivya propagātē. Pāṇḍarakaḥśis always want to go beyond sense organs and also Mīyā after which the concealment of Mīyā is sustained and Itma gets true knowledge and is liberated. According to them, Mīyā sustains unreality covering reality. It is avidyā as it conceals true knowledge of Brahman. It is the power of God which creates, sustains and persists over the universe through Mīyā. Pāṇḍarakaḥśis’ persistent effort is to unravel the concealment power of mīyā.

A absolute Brahman is called God (Vīra) with regard to its creative power. This world or jagat is a creation of God. The Absolute is the precosmic nature of God. Both the Assamese and the Otkalīya Vaīṣṇava avas admit that saĀśra is neither real nor illusory. It is both. It is the platform where both paraṁa and the jīva play in their own way. It is false because it is connected with avidyā. However, from empirical standpoint it is real because it appears so.

Assamese and the Otkalīya Vaīṣṇava avas admit the ascending order in respect of cosmic evolution. Both of them conceive it as a movement of entire creation towards the ultimate goals of absorption in the Absolute. According to both objects of the world are achievements of such a state of perfection in which not
only all individual sources are merged in God but also God is merged in the Absolute.

According to Vaishnavism, philosophers of both the sects the main business of religion is to dispel ignorance and help us escape from this world of divided consciousness with its discords and dualities to the life eternal.

4.1 Liberation

Orthodox Indian systems of thought are of the belief that human life is the most capable among all living creatures of attaining the total perfection by pursuing the \( \text{caturvarga} \), i.e. four Puruṣārthas or noble objects of life which are dharma (religious merits), artha (wealth), kāma (bodily enjoyment) and mokṣa (salvation). Among these four, mokṣa is recognized as the supreme one. In Indian schools of thought, a discourse on the concept of the soul is not complete without a deliberation on the kind of its bondage and the way how to attain liberation. Liberation as the spiritual fulfillment of man must come at the top of all other values. It is the goal which everybody pines for in this life.

The term liberation consists of diverse meanings. Firstly, the word liberation originates from the word liberty’. Liberate’ means freedom or release from slavery, imprisonment, captivity or any other form of arbitrary control. It is the highest human value of life and considered in isolation from other values of life like the economic (artha), hedonistic (kāma) and moral (dharma) values. Here the distinction is made on the basis of difference between empirical and transcendental values.

ānavamīśa meaning following the \( \text{Upāniṣadic} \) view maintains that mokṣa is the ultimate goal of mankind and it is such a state where the illusory distinction between the Ātman and Brahman disappears totally owing to emergence of knowledge of identity between the two. According to Ramanuja, the bondage of the soul is due to karma, i.e. past deeds. To destroy the effects of the past deeds in order to get rid of the bondage the individual has to study the Vedas and perform specific duties. The knowledge of Vedanta being attained, the individual comes to realize that the soul is not the physical body but a part of God. Then through mercy of God liberation is attained.

The ultimate freedom which the soul attains is liberation or mokṣa. It is the cessation of transmigratory life and eternal search for the bliss of the Absolute. The condition where in the experience of spiritual freedom arises in the consciousness even before the shuffling of the physical body, in certain
cases called _jivanmukti_ or liberation, while living and the attainment of this freedom after the leaving of
the body is called _videhamukti_ or disembodied salvation.

`a`kara`deva describes salvation as a state of being or a state of consciousness in which the
removal of the worldly entanglements takes place. Since bondage is due to attachment of worldly objects,
liberation is possible through the aversion of these enjoyments that in turn helps in the realisation of God.
This aversion is produced by the experience of sorrows of worldly existence, renunciation of all desires of
enjoyment or pleasures in this world, self control and self discipline, respectful attachment to God, love for
creatures, complete surrender to God.

`a`kara`deva though derives his principles and the concepts of bondage and liberation from
Vedanta yet in practice he glorifies the contention of the Bhagabatapurana, and the Gita. The reason for that
is that Bhagabatapurana is the fundamental text for Vaisnavite devotees (Phanihussana Das, p.324). S.N.
Sarma says, "Assamese Vaishnavas have recognized and enumerated five kinds of videhamukti. (1) Silokya
(being in the same plane with God) (2) Simipya (nearness to God), (3) Siruppya (likeness to God) (4) Sarstti
(equaling God to glory), (5) Suyuja (absorption in God). a`kara`deva deals with all these types of muktis except
the last one, i.e. Sayujayamukti or Noa" (p.41). This type of mukti is really expected by jnanamrgins only.
He says, Nolige Noa mukutika tathi/ Nihin Haripida pankaja gathi/ (I do not want mukti. I wish a
place at Hari's feet.) (Kirtanaghosha).`a`kara`deva and the Assamese Vaishnavas do not take this kind of
mukti where "the complete absorption in God deprives jivas of the sweetness and bliss associated with
bhakti, deprives the devotees of the devotional pleasure and vision of the beatific form of the Lord. It proves
that Vaishnavas preferred Bhakti to Mukti." (S.N.Sarma, p.41).

`a`kara`deva accepts both _jivanmukti_ and _videhamukti_. Like Buddha he believes that liberation
can be attained even in this life. For him a _jivanmukta_ is a realized self whose actions are guided in
accordance with the universal will. He maintained that true knowledge destroys all merits and demerits of
action and so in the _jivanmukta_ state man holds his body only by the will of God. But the effects of
obligatory duties are not destroyed, so far as it produces meritorious results and helps the rise of true
knowledge. Here salvation for Assamese Vaishnavas is not a mere hypothesis of a future life but it is
conceived from within and the attempts are directed to locate the experience of salvation within human
situation. áa´karadeva says tht he is the jévanamukta who feels the lord in all. (Bhakti Ratnakara,p.223-233).

Though the passion for the beyond’ creates an indifference to worldly pleasures and attractions a liberated soul has not to forget his responsibility to rescue others. Thus man’s quest for salvation is not only individual, it is also for the upliftment of the sinners around him. Here we find that though áa´karadeva prescribes bhakti or devotion as a life course but at a later stage of man’s self-transcendence it culminates in knowledge or wisdom (áa´karadeva in áriknadvígarat, 12th Chap. p. 1465) (dekhe brahma nílgíje jito jévané mukti).

áa´karadeva reiterates that the complete surrender to Lord Kåśi, a alone can lead one to liberation. For example, in the Bhágabata’s 13th chapter it is mentioned that Debahuti after losing her son thought Hari as her son and worshipped Him performing yogic paths. Ultimately she attained Brahman through bhakti, detachment and knowledge. She even forgot her body as being jévanamukta. Again after death she attained Brahman. The place where she left her body is known as stiddhapat.

In áa´karadeva’s religious philosophy of three ways of attainment, i.e. karma, jñāna and bhakti devotion to Kåśi, a is the best means of liberation. áa´karadeva and Mādhavadeva both are of the opinion that bhakti alone leads one to mukti.

According to áa´karadeva without aversion towards the material or worldly objects devotion cannot be possible. Thus he says , Birakti bhi mahigáti nálabhaya/ Yiñyána bósaye húi birakati//Karaga Kåśi, a atá mírca ekíríbhakti/Tika kthi katho sēta patha mahigáti// (Bhakti Ratnakara p.225) (Without aversion salvation is not attained. One who remains averse towards worldly objects, practices wholehearted devotion he attains paramagáti).

áa´karadeva speaks of four stages of aversion. At the first state there is the will to abandon worldly objects. At the second stage aversion towards the tasteful things arises. At the third stage the person conquers the mind. At this stage the mind does not enjoy the worldly objects though the sense organs may enjoy them. In the last stage total aversion towards worldly objects takes place (Bhakti Ratnakara,p.227). áa´karadeva appeals people to maintain an attitude of detachment towards the mundane world.
áa´karadeva seems to emphasize on the annihilation of sins. That’s why he opines that one should follow such paths which will help him get rid of sins as according to him liberation is nothing but releasing oneself from all kinds of sorrows and sufferings. He is of the opinion that one can overcome his sins simply by chanting the name of Nírðya , a as is stated in the Ajími Ráikhyána. We find four stages of worship (sidhaú) here. Ajími though became wayward yet he never deviated from his guru’s words, that one should remember in all circumstances the name of Hari and His attributes and the culture of God. So when he visualized messengers of god of Death he recalled his personal god Nírðya , a, a name after which he had named his son. With a simple call to His namesake God was overwhelmed and He sent four of His messengers who took hold of Ajími’s soul and thus the latter got Srúpya muktí. The devotion towards KáÁ¸ a liberated him irrespective of all his evil deeds. Like Nimbarka and Ballava áa´karadeva also maintained that the grace of God is ever ready to lift up the helpless and make them see the truth of things. So devotion, not liberation is the ultimate goal of life for a devotee. áa´karadeva contends that a devotee of God should not direct his efforts to emancipation alone. If he serves God and serves people in true sense making him free from all desires then liberation comes to him automatically. áa´karadeva’s attention is to discover the real means to attain the liberation. Hence he considers Saprema bhaktí (lovelorn devotion) and D¡syá bhaktí (slave-like devotion) as the real ways.

As every religion aims at liberation or mokÀa the ultimate goal of Utkaliya VaiÀ¸avism is also liberation or deliverance from the bondage of life. Of the five kinds of liberation in VaiÀ¸avism, i.e. sarupya, samipya, sáloka, sarstí and sújya Utkaliya VaiÀ¸avas deal with sújya muktí. To enjoy the proximity of Paramánda one should get himself liberated from worldly pleasures from the cycles of birth and death, so that one can get complete liberation as the type of liberation is taken as void by the páncaúakhs. One tastes the pleasure of this void when he attains liberation. This kind of realization of void is the other name of Bauddha Nirvá, a. To have this kind of realization or to attain bliss one need not pray God with tearful eyes. In this kind of practice man is illumined with glory of humanism.

This liberation can be attained by Jñána. Páncaúakhs particularly Achyutananda does not mean Jñána as derived from study or experience but as enlightenment of Brahmaggña or spirituality which lies in every jñáva which they call Jyoti in yogic language. To know this Jyoti is the only Jñána.
Odisha has a strong hold of Yoga-\textit{Jñā}-Bhakti tradition. According to Paucaśakhīs the aim of yoga system is to control the body by transferring the material body into a subtler one to release the Akha-Nirūṭāma. Body is the abode of mind and unless body is controlled how mind can be controlled? Meditation of yogic practices helps one to control sensual feelings. By performing yoga one should make clarification of soul (citta suddhi). And divine grace can be attained through austerity and religious and bodily practices. So long as feeling of bhakti for Brahman or Ṭvara does not arise in one's mind, one is to concentrate upon Ṛgāmāthī after doing necessary daily rites and rituals through yoga etc. Paucaśakhīs take Ṛgāmāthī as ānya and Nīrikiś. He is the ānya purula of Achyutananda.

\textit{Jñā} is the other path of liberation by which human beings can reach salvation to attain Brahman. Otkaliya Vaśā, ava poets assimilated knowledge (\textit{Jñāna}) with the bhakti and regarded it as the most efficacious means of reaching the supreme deal. According to them a bhakta needs to follow some paths of knowledge before he reaches the realm of bhakti. Here knowledge means "brahma \textit{Jñāna}". It is evident that as sīte yoga was a must for reaching the stage of \textit{Jñāna} so knowledge is the way by which a person can reach the next higher stage bhakti. Whenever Bhakti is achieved the utility of \textit{Jñāna} becomes no longer necessary. Lastly, through Bhakti God can be obtained. When the \textit{Jñāna} completely merges in Paramātmane, when it feels that everything is Mīgi except God, the Lord of the Mīgi, it attains mukti. Achyutananda in his ānya Saśiṭit saśiṭit says, Kie kihirā mithyā e Saśiṭit, epe tarile bhavasindhu pāra, Ṛpakā ipe cīnhile re bību, Kie kile ḍrīṁbhara hoESA (\textit{\textcopyright 1942-1943}). (In this illusory world everybody is selfish, no one is a substitute to the other/ so self absolution from this ocean of illusion is important/0 son, by recognizing yourself/ you can be immortal for ever). In \textit{Ma\textbullet\textbd{a}dura Upaniṣad} it is also mentioned that "Just as the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, similarly a man of wisdom goes to that divine person losing his name and form etc. (\textit{111.2-8}). Dāganda Ṭha has writes in the \textit{Bṛgubāt} about Kā\textbullet\textbd{a} man, a's saying to Arjuna:Dekha e yete nada nadit, prabhite milanē jadadhi.Labana jale se mēsantī, swarnīna gane pisorantī. Gopa kini nīchmate, mana jihana det mate.Deha Saśiṭit pisoritē, janna marana nīstārile(Vol. XI, chap.XII). (Behold! All these rivers, rivulets which flow on merge into the ocean. Mixing with saline water they forget their name and identity. Likewise the cowherd maidens have merged their life and mind in me.
They forget the body, the saśāsra and are delivered from the cycle of birth and death.

Following the Bhāgabata the Utkalīya Vaśī, avas take jiva as a rivulet and Paramātmā as an ocean. Hence the Pāucasakhs aim at sīgāra makti. Here one has to taste the joy of void by detaching himself from the transitive and sorrowful earth. Here ānanda is equal to zero. Acyutamanda writes in his "Chaurshti Yatra": Muktāt hele bhakāt pīta, bhakāt hele manaku bhetāt xxx Bhakāt pīle muktāt bīta, muktāt pīle sabā pa, dtāa.(Averston leads to devotion and devotion leads to the inner recess of mind. Devotion leads to liberation and liberation makes all wise.) Utkalīya Vaśī, avas never seek any thing, they do not expect rewards. Vaśī, ava poet Chaitanya Das in his Viśarpa Purāṇa, a too says, Nirguṇa, a bole mukta hele holi prasanna/ gīthi tāthi moṭe baramgīt ghenā// Debabrata holi mora bare kīrya nīhib/ muktī/ nobhika mora kalpani achat// Prasanna hoile yebe muktī moti kara/ muktī siddhi bāchā moti dtu/ Gakradhara//(VIIth ch.) (God said He was pleased with Debabrata and asked him to beg any reward. But Debabrata asked him nothing except muktī.)

Pāucasakhs were iconoclasts. They paved the way for the search of the divine in one's own self. The ānugrabrahma exists in every human being. One who recognizes it never fears birth and death and attains liberation.

4.1 Monotheism

Monotheism is the positive and firm belief in the oneness of God. Generally in all academic works bhakti is defined as monotheism based on devotion to a personal God who is also moral and who seeks a total and unqualified response from human creatures. Some medieval Vaśī, ava Advaita-Kimṣapāda, Nimbhrkā, Mādva and Vallabhā- upheld the concept of a personal God. Bhakti comprises three factors, namely, the belief in a personal God, a non-montistic view of reality and the negation of the efficacy of jñāna. Although saṅga, a bhaktas like Caitanya, TulsiDās and others uniformly conform to one factor at least, namely the belief in a personal God, the approach of most of them is flexible. However, Nanak and Kabir are nirguṇa, a bhaktas who uphold the impersonal concept of God, the montistic view of the ultimate reality and the importance of jñāna. The difference between and juxtaposition of the Nirguṇa, a and Saṅga, a schools of Bhakti, upholding devotion to an impersonal and personal God respectively, are far too clear in the medieval devotional movements. Nirguṇa, a School of bhakti was characterised by montistic thought and the idea of an
impersonal God.

Monotheism generally indicates "the abandonment of all other beliefs, fears and customs relating to many gods whose place or dignity "the one god tends henceforth to take and to retain" (Jostah in The Encyclopaedia") & is defined as belief in one personal God. The philosophical explanation of the oneness of God in impersonal terms is either pantheism or monism. This differentiation is based on the principal belief in a personal God which is a necessary concomitant of theism, and that all impersonal explanations of God constitute part of philosophy and not of religion. Therefore, the scholars who elaborate upon the bhakti theme associate religion with the worship of personal deities. They project Vaśavism as a monotheistic religion since it shows both the presence of a personal concept of God and a concentration on the worship of one personal deity, be it Viṣṇu or its incarnations like Kṛṣṇa, Śaṅkarāchārya, Nārāyaṇa, etc.

In medieval Assamese Vaśavism all the devotional works have clearly recognized the personal aspects of God, without considering the fact that such an assertion would go against their own statements expressed in some other places of their composition. Assam Vaśa texts without denying the nirguṇa, a aspect have laid more stress on the saṁkar, a aspect of God. Āhārakadeva in his celebrated work Vīrāṇaghoṣa describes the two fold aspects of God. Here he says that as indeterminate God is not comprehensible, devotees including the gods worship and adore His beatific form in the person of Nārāyaṇa (Verse 84-85). The adorable God being saṁkar, a and saṁkīra, the familiar epithets of the impersonal Brahma like nītrikīra, nītrajñana (unattached, pure), nīrguṇa, a (attributeless) etc. have been generally interpreted in conformity to the devotional cult. Thus, according to the Nīmaghoṣa the term nītrikīra applied to the personal God means one who is devoid of ordinary or special form and not absolutely attributeless or impersonal one. Similarly, nīrguṇa, a as an epithet of Nārāyaṇa, a means that He is above the influence of the three guṇas as (Nīmaghoṣa verses 162-163). Therefore, it may be said that without denying the transcendental and indeterminate aspects of God the Vaśavism of medieval Assam have recognized a personal God for the purpose of devotion to whom negative epithets of the indeterminate Brahma with modified interpretation have also been applied.

Āhārakadeva propounds a philosophy of oneness which demands in its religious aspect of supreme surrender by the devotees to one Supreme Being. This being is personal and seeks total and unqualified...
response from the subjects. áa `karadeva maintained very often that the Supreme is one and that there is no other. He expressed the idea in following words: Thou art the Supreme Self, the only lord of the universe. There is no other except Thee (K¢rtanaghos¡). So, áa `karadeva’s approach towards this aspect is much more than R¡manuja. But we cannot wholly identify him with R¡manuja as the former is stricter in the belief of one God than the latter. The latter sometimes allows the worship of other gods also. To quote Girtsh Baruah in this context will not be inappropriate. He says, ”áa `karadeva presents before us as a personal God with all auspicious qualities. K¢À¸a for him is the ideal God who can fulfil all the human desires. The Impersonal Brahman without any quality transcends common man’s devotional sentiments“ (áa `karicirya and áa `karadeva. A Comparison p.181). Gītá like the Bhigabata emphasizes the concept of personal God though it often tries to convince us that God, i.e. K¢À¸a, is nothing but Brahman, the view which áa `karadeva also subscribes. S. Joshi says, ”Though the Gīt¡ accepts both personal and Impersonal forms of God it gives more importance to personal form of God because it is readily accessible” (The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol.XXIX, No.4). However, as a true mystic, áa `karadeva regards the personal spiritual experience alone. The formal philosophical controversies over the questions of the Nirgu¸a, a and Sagu¸a, a nature of the Brahman are totally irrelevant for him.

Gékaliya VaÌ¸as of the medieval times followed the path of devotion mixed with knowledge. They are the worshippers of par¡bhakti. We find Sagu¸a, a, a upísaní in apar¡ bhakti where as nirgu¸a, a upísaní is followed by par¡bhaktas. Like Nanak and Kabir Paµcasakh¡s follow nirgu¸a, a bhakti. Jagann¸tha, tha, the symbol of nirgu¸a, a Brahman is the centre of worship or the spiritual pursuit of devotion mixed with knowledge. As Paµcasakh¡s are the followers of nirgu¸a, a bhakti they, even after describing many attributes of their God, fail to locate Him like the ”neti” ”neti” of the UpaniÀadas. Jagann¸tha, tha Das is quoted describing the nature of Brahman as ”ananta apiroti sehi/sams¡re p¡ra se atai/ (Jagann¸tha Charitmrita p.182). Though Paµcasakh¡s follow the path of both sagu¸a, a and nirgu¸a, a but for them one has to go beyond sagu¸a, a and nirgu¸a, a, para and apara to attain the fullness of God. Pradhan maintains that ”He who is paratpara is alekha, nirikira, ñaµga and nirgu¸a, a etc. in Paµcasakh¡s works. But all these are symbolical. Paµcasakh¡s meditate this par¡tpara who is beyond níma and anima symbol, syllable, ikara and nirikira everything” (Kon¿k-p.71). To attain this par¡tpara one sees Jagannith, Rudbaksna or áivasakti on the way
of self meditation. But in the path of practice this type of deities are just different steps of worship. But in real sense they have no relevance with the Brahma in fullness. Balarama Das in his *Pritha Giti* says, "Jyoti rupare mora dehit / Ena anamia nina bahit// Jagata boliti aantar/ sartra jagata saAhira//(There arkrna says to Arjuna: I am luminous, nameless, infinitie, eternal, World is my body. While worshipping, devotees call me in different names due to convenience) (2nd chap.). In order to attain Purna Brahma the devotees follow these paths which point out towards the Sagu, attiva of God but actually he aims at nirgua, a Brahma. Pradhan further writes, "Like áa karudeva Paucaskahis and his followers follow Sankhya theory by keeping the united form of Purula and Prakriti as the vyabharika and manifested form of Brahma and put unmanifested Purna Brahma beyond it" (Konarka p.70). Hence regarding Brahma Paucaskahs seem to lean towards the theory of áa karudeva's Advaita Vedanta. They also accept Brahman as Sanga jyoti etc., but finally they keep Brahma or Parama the highest grade of God beyond all these. Though they worship Jagannth they take him not as a personal God but as impersonal one. To quote Pradhan again, "Panchasakhas put Nirgu a Jagano,tha and amkara KÅÀ ,a or áanya KÅÀ ,a in place of Sanga Somasi Brahma Jago,tha and follow Pt, da Brahmanda and yoga sadhana...They are the worshippers of Nirgu a Brahma and meditate the Impersonal, undual Parambrahma in the guise of Bauddha-Jagann,tha and follow Pt da Brahma and yoga sadhana...They are the worshippers of Nirgu a Brahma and meditate the Impersonal, undual Parambrahma in the guise of Bauddha-Jagann,tha-KÅÀ ,a or HarI-Hara" (p.77). Hence though Gkaliya VaiA avas believe in both Sagu a and Nirgu a get they give more importance to Nirgu a or Impersonal Brahma". But speaking strictly from philosophical viewpoint it cannot be monism because it takes Jagann,tha as the personal God and worships his idol for the beginners of devotion. Paucaskahs also worship Pusadevatis. Hence like Assamese VaiA, avism theirs may also be called Monotheism.

4.1 (b) Theory of Creation

Creation is a theological doctrine, not a scientific hypothesis. It is the God-centric theory. In both Assamese and Gkaliya VaiA, avism God is conceived as the creator and the efficient cause of this world. The concept of God as creator has far reaching implication. First, it raises and addresses the question that what is the relation between Brahma and Jagat and secondly it supposes to throw light on the question of the nature of the empirical world.

áa karudeva, even though he is not a philosopher in the strictest term yet he offers the doctrine
of creation to give answer to the question of creation. According to áa´karadeva, Kṣa is the creator. He is the prime mover of this world. In his Nint-pa-siddhi-samvita he says, “Oh Lord Kṣa, the primal Being, Thou art the cause of this creation, created Māyā along with the elements; Thou have created the manifold world of different kinds of bodies with the five elements. (With the help of Māyā Thou have created numerous creatures and entered into them as their inner self.” In his Anit-pitana, áa´karadeva states that before the creation, the eternal Brahman or Brahmārupi Niraµjana alone existed in whom was merged fourteen worlds. Brahman, because of His feeling of loneliness, thought of creating the world through Prakṛti in a sportive spirit. He produced Prakṛti, the unconscious element, out of Himself, at His will and attached Māyā to it. He too manifested Himself as the conscious spirit (purusa), produced vibration and impregnated prakṛti. This resulted in producing first intellect (Mahaµ or buddhi) and from intellect three ahlākiras (egos) evolved. These three egos, i.e. Sattvika, Rjasika and tāmasika in turn produced various organs and elements. From the rjasika abhānkara five motor organs and five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, mouth, skin, tongue, hand, feet, anus, genitators), from the tāmasika abhānkara five subtle elements (tanmātras) and five gross elements (mahabhutras) and from the sattvika abhānkara ten presiding deities of indriyas (Vīyu, Vahni, ViLa, a, Indra, Dēśa, Praśpātī, Aśvini Kumara, Mitra, Īditya, Varu,a) and also mind originated. Since Prakṛti and her products are unconscious, God became active in the form of conscious spirit and pervaded them at various stages of evolution in order to combine those elements and quicken their vibration. Finally, the world was created and God placed Himself within it as the pervading Reality” (3rd skandha, Anit-pitana, verses 40-60).

In the cosmology of áa´karadeva God is the Absolute Reality. He is the material and also the efficient cause of the universe. For him the world is the phenomenal appearance of God. It is the immediate and direct expression of God’s creative will. As Prakṛti is unconscious, God pervaded her and her products in order to combine those elements and thereby quicken their vibration. The world without God is like a lamp without its light.

Thus áa´karadeva’s theory of Creation has leaning towards Sānkhya doctrine of creation though he is found to have given it a theistic interpretation. Hence it does not totally support Sānkhya doctrine as a whole.
In the section “Veda átuti” of the Kirtanghoshákaradeva expresses that God is the creator of all individual bodies and He is present in every jiva. “Ekapati caicara deha gada samastia atavya…bhakabo sarvabhive” (Thou created all that body and prosperity…chant his name from your heart).

In Hindu philosophy we find three theories about creation-Vedic, Sánkhya and Tintrik. Vedic, Baudhá and Tintrik - all these three imaginations are reflected in the Paµcasakh¡ theory of creation. There are descriptions about the theory of creation in the works Brahikinda Bhugola, Anarakoha Gíti, Viríta Gíti, Tall vi, I áunya Såhhti etc. Paµcasakh¡s do not think like Sánkhyas that the world is created from the Matter (Pradhana), they think that it is created from the void.

Balarama Das describes in the Brahikinda Bhugola that áunya Brahma ár¡k¡À¸a told Arjuna that in the beginning when there was no sun, moon, day, night, earth, air, Brahma, ViÀ¸a, Maheàwara and Veda, there was only Brahma in the form of void. When elements like mercy and bliss dawned on his mind he desired to create out of void. As a result, vindu overflowed and dropped from his body. That vindu is divided into three vija rasas. From these vija rasas are born three murtis, i.e. Brahma, ViÀ¸a and Maheàwara. Jagat or the world etc. is being created from this Trimurti.

In the Premabhakti Brahma Gíti Yasobanta Das describes the process of creation as follows. Bhagavina is Ank¡ and Ídt. He only exists when the Jagat was áunya Mahiã. Mahiã originates from the Bhgavat áyat in which there was consciousness which is the abode of Cinmaya Ítm¡ R¡m. Though he is Nirgu¸a the moment he desired to create the universe, he produced Prak¡ti attached with “Urma, Dhurma, áyat, Ívila and Vindu”. Yogam¡ originated from the water where paµcakalas fall. Yogam¡ then created Om from her body which is familiarly known as jyotirlinga. The creation is originated from the association of jyotirlinga and Mahiã.

When Alekha Ank¡ra assumes the form He is known as the formless ViÀ¸a, i.e. Nirikira who is the creative aspect of Ankira. Alekha created millions of universe from the womb of Nirikira. After one hundred and eight lives of Brahma Nirikira gives up his existence. He is created again by Ankira and the cycle continues. Nirikira is also known as Viríta PuruÀa or Ídt Brahma. Vindu or material potency dropped from the void implies both the void and the gu¸a. When áukt¡ longs to create she turns passive (ghanibhuta) and
appears as Vindu. This Adśakti or Jögamijñi is Prakṛti caused from the personified great void, Nirajñana. She (Prakṛti) is the goddess, and the personified great void is God and there the first mother and Nirajñana are associated. Hence, here we find the basic concept of void from which the creation begins.

In the words of Achyutananda the theory of creation is that “Adyare swayam eka Brahma thil/ Tahinru Prakṛti jña hotil/ Prakṛtiura sabu hotil jña/ Ekoṣa pura hotil Khjiṭa” (In the beginning there was only the Brahma from where emanated Prakṛti and from Prakṛti all others emanated that is known as twenty-one worlds). (Obhayalish Patala, Caturtha Patala- 46/4 patała).

Creation theory of the Paµcasakh¡s has two characteristics. One is Vindu and the other is Prakṛti. Vindu is the transformation of Nirakñra Brahma. When Brahma longs to create Prakṛti originates.

Jagannath Das follows the model of Sāmkhya doctrine of Evolution. He describes in his Bhagabata that Nirñya, the lord of Mâyá, being desirous of manifesting as the many by the power of that Mâyá, took up Kila (time), Karma (efficaces of work) and Svabhava (nature) that approached Him, without any effort on His part. Associated with the supreme Being, Time becomes capable of disturbing the equilibrium of guña as and svabhava in evolving into categories and karma and of effecting the emergence of Mahátatva. Caused by the preponderant urge of rajas and tamas, ahãkàra (egoity) was produced from the Mahátatva, which is dominated by tamas and which carries with tē the sense of substantiality, sentience and movement. In this way evolution started from Prakṛti.

Though the Sāmkhya doctrine of evolution is largely followed by Jagannath Das yet his concept of Prakṛti is slightly modified form as developed by Ramanuja is accepted. For Ramanuja, Prakṛti is absolutely God dependent. In Jagannath Das’s opinion tē is not independent as in Sāmkhya philosophy, tē is absolutely God dependent as Ramanuja views. It is called lilāvibhuti because creation is his sport. Paµcasakh¡ had followed Sāmkhya symbols, i.e. three, five, twenty-five etc. in their literature. Regarding Creation theory two mythical concepts have drawn the attention of Jagannath Das, one, Hira-yā Garbha and the other Vritta Purúṣa, the concepts that are found in the Airāvatítthiyabhatá. These concepts dominate the philosophical thinking of Jagannath Das regarding the theory of Creation. Thus religion with its domination of faith and acceptability against logicality comes to the forefront of philosophy. In this context God saved the creation. Mu qta/ svatantra mo bhiva/ (Who else in the world other than me existed)
Though there are differences between Puscasakhis about the theory of Creation yet there is unison in their basic thinking. All the members in the Puscasakhil group agree in the theistic interpretation about the theory of Creation.

4.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is that branch of Philosophy which is concerned with the discussion of the problems concerning knowledge. Lack of systematic theory of knowledge is found in both the sects, i.e., Assamese and Otkaliya. As the religious preachers of both the states are not academicians or philosophers hence this discrepancy is bound to occur. But here an attempt is made to discuss their views on Knowledge in a systematic manner.

4.2 (a) Path of Knowledge (Jñina)

Among the three ways of God realization, i.e., the way of knowledge, action and devotion Assamese Vañña, avas declare that the way of devotion is the ultimate way of realizing God. Jñina karma bhakti kahilo kari bhed/bhakti parama pantha dito partiched. (ārākaññ acaryākāra bhāya iṣta p.324) (ārāmakāma bhāya xi skandha V 141).

Jñina stands for all kinds of knowledge. In ārāma bhāya one such verse is found that states four Pramāṇas of knowledge which ās karadeva cites in Ṭhākārī Rājanātra. The verse is “Srutih pratyakṣa maitihyamanuman arcatustayam/ bramanasyanavasthanat Vikalpat sa Virājyate.” Pratyakṣa (Perception), anumāna or inference and sabda or sruti (authority or testimony) are regarded as the three sources of empirical knowledge. (Aitihyam is not found as a separate source of knowledge). Apart from intuition ās karadeva holds that perception, inference and testimony are three sources of practical knowledge. In ās karadeva’s Vañña, avas we find authoritative knowledge which has its source in the scriptures because the religion preached by him is based on the Bhāgadāta Purāṇa, Gīta and other Purāṇas. He accepts the authority of the Vedas. Parama gahana aitik to vedabana, Yīka sant mohā darahwe mahajñani. Vede gīka vīhyache ākā karma. Vede gīka ntsedhle setto akarna. (Ṭhākārī Rājanātra) (There is no possibility of error and illusion in the Vedas. Those which are ascribed by the Veda are Karma and those which are prohibited by the Veda are said to be akarma. A knowledgeable person may be detached from illusion or
desire by listening to the words of Veda. The words of the Vedas are completely reliable. Hence Vedas are regarded as the voice of God.)

The teachings of Guru are called testimony. For religious thought an initial belief in God is necessary which one gets from the teachings of Guru and the scriptures. But these only provide progressive knowledge. ákaradeva expresses the limitations of intellect in the process of realizing the Supreme. The scholars only study but a devotee grasps the essence. ákara deva writes: vedi yama yajña yajñā, parusa kare andha, kōtī kōtī janama mokṣaṁ labhe ētā prabandha.

(Speculative doctrines of the Veda and Yoga system make people blind. He who relies on it is unable to know Me even by taking crores of births in the world) (Jutika Das p.49). From the above mentioned quotations we find that for ákara deva God cannot be realized by intellectual knowledge because it is mediate, indirect, partial and can give only empirical knowledge. ákara deva in Pīsa, da Mardana says that intellectual knowledge cannot give proper knowledge because it is critical and creates confusion. In the same tune Madhavadeva also writes to Nimbahoshi, āśrātra guru upadesa krāma rima, vijayasī, nītra pilana/ kebala stīyār suddha buddhi nītra, jūlini bowe kīra, a. (Sloka no. 254) (The intuitive knowledge of the devotee is the only source of valid knowledge. The rest such as scriptures, advice of guru are merely certain formalities to be observed for practical purposes).

ákara deva advised that instead of looking outwardly one should look within to achieve the Supreme Being. Intuition gives us an idea of the whole. Intuitive knowledge is transempirical and can make us able to realize the Brahman. This type of knowledge arises in the mind of a devotee through his devotion to God. It is spontaneous, direct, immediate and self evident knowledge. It is self proven, valid knowledge.

Intuitive knowledge is itself transcendental knowledge as empirical knowledge must be transceeded in order to have the intuitive realization of God. Intuitive devotional knowledge in the form of realization of the presence of the lord everywhere and in every being arises out of selfless devotion (niskṣaṇa bhakti) to the Lord.

Gōkaliya Vañā, ava guru ṽaganno, tha Das says, Nitya Nirguṇa śv Bhagabāno /Se nahe tāta abāsina/ x x x kāṭa pata, gu ṽāraṇī, e/ basai ērtra pramaṇa, e/ Same basai Sarba dehe /sthula néyane bheda nāhe// (Bhagabata-II Skandha, 4th chapter). Realization of attributeless Brahman is quite impossible through
empirical eyes. One cannot see Him through Syeet, Jvala, Om or Dhama. Neither Avatars like Brahman, ViKa, Utsava nor Vedas like Rig, Sim, Yajuh, Atharva can know Him. All the five gross elements, sun, moon, creatures and satrs become paralysed being incapable of having a visit with Brahman. Knowledge of Brahman which leads to eternal bliss does not depend on the performance of any rituals or actions. Achyutananda advised people to look within to achieve Supreme Reality instead of looking outwardly (AdiSambid, p.1).

The logical mind unable to acquiesce in the partial tries to grasp the totality of things and finds no rest until it is anchored in the truth. It is buoyed up by the undying faith in its destiming to acquire Supreme truth. Huxley decides to acquire self realization through the inner light (Perennial Philosophy, 31). The Gita recognizes two kinds of knowledge that which seeks to understand the phenomenon of existence externally through intellect and that which by the force of intuition grasps the ultimate principle behind the apparent series. All knowledge for them is knowledge of God.

Intuition which is self evident through sound is innate. For the development of the intuitive power one requires a tuning of the mind by totally purifying it. A conversion of the soul is necessary here. One can see the ultimate truth through divine sight or spiritual vision. The devotee sees everything within him, even God. For attaining this spiritual vision the individual should learn to look within by purifying his mind and fix it on the highest Reality. To remove spiritual blindness the fire of passion and the tumult of desire must be suppressed. To suppress the mind with egoism, yoga and jnana are the two means. Yoga is the suppression of mental activity and jnana is its true comprehension. Spiritual intuition is a union of knowledge with austerity and passion, the most complete experience that we can possibly have where we shall have no more confusion of mind.

Pancasakhis are nirgua, a worshippers of Brahman. But they are not explicit about the role of intellect or reason in their religious thought. Indeed, they are of the opinion that out of relative knowledge one acquires knowledge of external objects. This also helps one in intuitive knowledge. So, Achyutananda uses this external knowledge as hetu' (logic) or consciousness repeatedly, in order to establish God realization wholly. He tells, Akhanda Brahme pratikara/Netu ka gheoina bhiira (Though love the complete Brahman and roam taking logic in mind) (Brahma Shankoli, Daalama Kalpa).
This "Hetu" or logic is important in Utkaliya Vaishnavism. This hetu consciousness is used in the sense of remembering the things of the past life. Achyutananada describes in "Anikrita Samhita"- "Perva hetu thile juna pripta net" and yogis get the real knowledge with the help of sadgurus if they have prior knowledge.

Philosophical theories or logic only cannot help in the realization of Brahman because of its base of rationalism which is unnecessary in this area. It is imperative to mention that without this feeling philosophical discourse is full of arguments and contradictions. In scripture it is mentioned that Paramatman is present in all beings and He is also present in us, which is believed and also accepted to some extent. But if we fail to bring this fact into feelings by repeated realization this will lose its verbal value. Pucascakhlis all in unison have declared that only by rising above gross wit and being overcome with emotion by one's own feelings one can enter into the realm of that divine feeling and will find it easier to have a sight of Nirguna, a Parambrahma. They call this feeling as Sahajnubhava. The observer or the wise may fail to express this feeling in words. Therefore, their feelings and knowledge are full of privacies. So, it is very difficult to call philosophical systems or definite "isms" from their writings. Those who fail to believe in this mysticism are in the words of Bhartrhari "Nolukopyabalokate yadi diba suryasya kim desanan" (Vatragya Satakam-Konarka p.73). Aldous Huxley also agrees that apart from intellect and consciousness there is a third power which is not renowned as a transformed form of one's heart or mind or intellect and consciousness(qtd. in Kingsland, p.131-132).

Human mind is always in flux. But saint poets who control their mind and bring it to an equilibrium state do it by loveful steady decision and meditation. Intuition is possible by deep meditation which is the subject of every circle or level of mind. It is true that help of yoga is taken for the discipline of mind. Of course, along with it deep meditation and close reflections are necessary. Only by intuition direct knowledge is possible. When we focus on an inner layer through an outer layer, the inner layer seems to be outer regarding a different view. And the focus goes on till we focus on the innermost point to feel the existence of Supreme Reality. And only then we feel the presence of Nirguna, a Brahma through Intuition. So long as the Supreme Reality is not realized through the innermost point or direct knowledge the process goes on. The mention of seven layers or flight of Nitya Sthalayogapatha as we find in Pucascakha literature is nothing but the innermost point of the mind. The yogi when after crossing the seven stages enter at the
realm of eternal Rasa circle becomes overwhelmed at the sight of nondual divine Being. It is the great union between the jiva and Parama. To enter into this stage Achyutananda prescribes a series of yantra, mantra, tantra, chayli, jyoti, abida, sahajita, samadhi and rasa in Gurubhakti Gitã, Ankira Samhitã and Chaylis Patala. We also find various descriptions of Intuition in the writings of Balaram Das, Yasobanta Das, Ananta Dwaraka Das. All of them agree that realization of true knowledge alone can lead a devotee to the eternal state of liberation. It arises in the mind of a devotee through his earnest devotion to God.

This “Antard¤sti” or inner sight of the Paurasakhs is the brahmad¤sti of devotional poet Dudu, the Intuition of Bergson, Third thing of Huxley and also the supernatural knowledge by which one can get a visit of the Innerman of Eckhart.

4.2 (b) Path of Action (Karma)

Action is known as Karma, which etymologically means action, work, deed etc. It also requires rihe, moral or moral duty, certain consequence of the act done in a former life. Karma determines one’s life after death and conditions his next life. Because of Karma, men are eternally bound to the wheel of existence or birth-death-rebirth. Karma denotes both actions in general and the fruit-producing subtle impression. The desire, the will, the intention to develop relations with the external world is the spring of all actions.

There is a necessary relation between karma and moral life of a man as karma is the result of desires. Desires may be egoistic or altruistic. Under desire there are certain springs of karmas such as kama or kimani, i.e. inclination towards an object. Desire is basically subjective condition of the mind which is not determined by external factors. Therefore, man is morally responsible for his good and bad karmas. In the causal explanation of actions, desire is neither logically necessary nor is the sufficient condition of action. It is between actions and moral responsibilities, between karma and free will. If we deny volition or free will the concept of moral responsibility of karma is automatically eliminated. Good motives and intentions have also impact on actions.

Man is the solitary moral being because like the vegetable and animal kingdom he is not controlled completely by the external circumstances. Conditions do not make man, man also shapes the circumstances. In the words of Rashdall, “Etymologically the word responsibility signifies the ability to call upon to answer for an act, with the implication, that if the agent cannot make a satisfactory defence of it, he may
If man is only a slave of circumstances then moral concepts like good and evil, virtue and vice, merit and demerit, responsibility etc. do not mean anything. Man has the right to do good or bad, or just what comes to his mind. He is not hindered by external factors. If while doing the action someone depends upon somebody else then the responsibility is not his own. In the words of Welton, "We are responsible for our acts in exact proportion as they express our personalities. In so far as they do not express what we are, we are not responsible for them." (p.44).

We find the origin of the term karma as Rta of Rg Veda which means universal law. The Vedic seers tried to explain the law of Karma as the moral foundation of the universe, according to which the righteous persons are rewarded and wicked are punished in this life or hereafter, not by the whim of destiny but by their own actions. Buddhist theory of Karma lies in the belief that by Karma one attains glory and also by it one comes into bondage and sufferings. According to the Bhigavad Giti, the technique of profound actions without producing reactionary effect is called "Karmayoga." Here it is mentioned that one must not run away from Karma but rather perform karma without any attachment to the idea of consequences.

In the teachings of áa`karadeva the concept of Action, has an important role in human life. The tenets of áa`karadeva’s faith are firmly based on the Bhigabata and the Giti. áa`karadeva writes about action in his writings: Vede y¡ka bihi ¡ce t¡ke buli karma, Vede y¡ka nisedhile sehito akarma, Vihita nakari nacari he bikarma p¡teka (That which is prescribed by the Vedas is called "Karma", which is not prescribed is known as "akarma" and not following prescribed karma generates sin or bikrama) (ár¢ áa`kara V¡ky¡m¤ta verse 207).

The concept of Karma of medieval Assam Vaishnavas is based on the traditional "doctrinal of Karma". According to them we are all within the sphere of karmas, áa`karadeva is of the opinion that all creatures take their birth, and so are subject to pleasure or pain, affections and fears due to their karma. Life cannot be one of inaction, it may be either of good or bad action. People enjoy or suffer as inevitable consequences of their deeds. (ár¢ áa`kara Viky¡m¤ta verse 1006-1007).

In Indian Philosophy we find that suffering is recognized as the consequences of previous sins and when a good man dies he goes to the next world carrying his merits with him. Buddhists believe that one is rewarded or punished according to his own actions. áa`karadeva also does not believe in fatalism. He claims...
that a performer of good actions attains glory or virtue and its reverse experiences are suffering and evil. 

ā`karadeva maintains that the law of Karma is the application of the law of cause and effect to the moral world. He states that human beings lead their lives bounded by their illusive (karma bandha) actions and are doomed to suffer under the spell of illusions. The following verses from the Kṛṣṇaṇaḍāt show the merits and demerits accrued to human life depending upon the actions of the previous life.

Koti koti janaṁa/ antare jīvira/ acha mahāpārivar/ bhīt bhāg guṇasya bhavaj/ bhīrāt bhumīta acī (Aśīmīla Upākhyā) (Those only who earned heaps of virtue during their crores of lives scarcely take birth in Bharat).

He again says: Sīte pīksava daive bhātī hāta/ cinte Īpaṁra mara īpaṁ marīna/ yītāṁ bhauṭā nītāke tāra nīśāla. (These sinners have been ruined by destiny and they encompass their own death and can never be free from the sufferings consequent on their entering the cycle of birth and death again and again). ā`karadeva stresses on the freedom of will and the consequent possibility of effort by the person for the attainment of the highest good.

Vaiṣṇava reformers of medieval Assam are not against karma in general but against a particular type of karma. Of the three types of ceremonial work - nitya, naimittika and kīmya- they are deadly against the last type of work because it involves selfish motive to gain worldly pleasure or the attainment of heaven. (Bhakti Ratanī, verse 961). In the initial stage a devotee should not give up daily and occasional works prescribed by the Smritis but those should be performed as steps to the higher end of the Viṣṇu (Namghos, verse 597). Bhattadeva in his Bhakti Bibeka says that a person cannot escape from performing nitya and naimittika duties but he should not indulge in the kīmya-karma (III/163).

For ā`karadeva Saklima Karma (actions passionately associated with fruits) creates attachment or bondage. It is the result of ignorance. But his concept of Nisklima Karma is not giving up of action but of interest, desire etc. He stresses on the performance of action in a detached manner as detachment from worldly pleasure is necessary to concentrate the mind on devotion to God and such detachment can come only when one realizes the true meaning of the goal of life. But for a lay man this is not an easy task. Those who are not capable of performing desireless action based on pure bhakti, they may start with saklima or kīmya karma (Nimi-Navastheṣṭi-Saśkara, verses 211-217). But when Bhakti is attained and attachment to the
detached actions increases and leads one to perfection all these duties become redundant. áa´karadeva emphasises on detached work as the key to the individual good. He teaches, Yekeka sukrtamina K¤À¸, ata arpiba (Adityaahad, verse 3/6) (dedicate all your good deed to K¤À¸.).

Papcasakhis too believe that for the sake of purification of mind different kinds of acts should be performed. The acts which are performed to achieve a particular end are the cause of ignorance and bondage. Those actions are hindrances to the ultimate end of human life. Therefore, they should be avoided. The scriptures ordain to perform all the rites prescribed for the realisation of the Supreme Reality. Actions accompanying knowledge are considered better than the knowledge unaccompanied actions, because the former expiates the knower of Brahman of his defects. Also, a devotee who performs actions unattached to its fruit attains the highest good. One can neither attain actionless nor perfect life by abstaining from action or by mere renunciation. Papcasakhis have deep veneration towards the house holders. Hence they call for action. In Jagano tha Das’s words, SaÄs¡re yete dina thiba/ Udyoga karma na chidtha// (Bhagabata, II Canto)
(So long as you are in this world, don’t desist from enterprising acts) As the Papcasakhis are desireless persons they have no attraction towards the impact of karma. So Balaram Das writes. Kina karma chid! lika sangist bolant! Tyâgîmîne saba karmaphalahîn chidant!// (Those who renunciate all works and actions they are called sanyasis but who do not desire any fruit from action they are called renunciars). Different kinds of actions spoken of by the scriptures are the different means of attaining the Divine knowledge. It destroys all the sinful acts of the knower. He does not cling to the consequences of his evil acts after Divine wisdom dawns upon him. Unlike áa´karácarya, Papcasakhis believe that with the dawning of Divine knowledge fruits of all acts, the accrued and those which have already started accruing, are destroyed.

Utkaliya VañÂ, avas believe that the self reaps the fruit of what it sows. He acquires either merit or demerit by dint of his good deeds or misdeeds. He gets rebirth on account of his conduct in particular and acts in general. The acts which an individual performs leave behind an unseen impact. In other words, he is rewarded or punished according to his own acts. Jagannath Das sings in his Bhagabata. Karma kasane deha saxe/ Aranje Ajagara priye (One should have to tolerate the fruits of karma like that of the python in the forest) (Bhagabata, I canta, 17th chap.). Again in the same chapter, Jagano tha Das says, Arjî mân thîllî jîh
purbe/ PhalitI more isti ebe// x x Tume te arjI achIma tibI / ebe hen bhunIthait tibI// (I get the reward of my act now what I had acquired earlier. You also have to suffer the result of your actions, now what you have acquired earlier). Jagannath tha Das to his Bhagabata Pari, 17th chapter, 11th canto describes elaborately through a dialogue between Krsna and the wife of Kausa about the theory of Action and perishableness of the world. Puscasakhis believe that realization of Brahm completely annihilates only the accumulated and unfructifying actions of the past and prevents any future accumulation of the result of actions, but it does not destroy those actions which are fructifying through the present body of the realiser, and thus are to be taken as a life force. Puscasakhis stress on the realization of the Supreme Self, which is acquired by a person of steady intellect on the accomplishment of desireless actions. The world is transitory and perishable. So to destroy the bindings of action one has to enquire about the imperishable and constant. Hence as the world is an illusion one has to get true knowledge of how to destroy the bindings of karm by being liberated. Everybody comes to this world to do some actions, feeling oneself as father/mother, husband/wife, brother/sister etc. After completing one's own role he has to proceed according to his action. In Upanishad it is said- "Carei beti carei beti"-walk walk. As the binding of the body, world or action is an illusion Jagannath Das advised to surrender oneself at the feet of God without expecting any fruits of action-

"Ist na kari karmaphale/ ëara , a mo pída kamale// (Bhagabata, 11/20)
Karmara phala ëyiga kari/ nItthaIura bhaba ëtte dhari///" (Bhagabata 11/21)
(Without desiring anything, take shelter at my feet. Concentrate on the Eternal without expecting any result.)

Hence the panceasakhis are the believers of nItkIIma karma. According to them, by following and adopting the path of NityantI one can be freed from attachment and be detached from the chain of saIIsra bandhana or illusion and one would be well abreast of the nature of Karma. In the árImad Bhagabata it is told. "Karma Karina klIaIa jIstI akarme Visodeva prItI//" (Bhagabata tungi 0 SamiIa p.29) (People who perform desired actions are destroyed but desireless karmas (akarma) lead one to the love of God). In Achyutamanda's language. "Enu kari karma atai ge bhrama purate rIka nagIbu/ Akarme nIshchale Visodeva prItI anabarate mayIbu". Puscasakhis use the word akarma in their writings. Generally akarma means
the works or actions which one should not perform. But the Pauçasakhs and their followers mean it as the action which cannot be seen or known, the desireless action. As there is no difference between doing and non doing for desireless persons they surrender every action to God and get liberated. This is the inward action where one loves God desirelessly.

4.2 (c) Path of Devotion (Bhakti)

When jñāna or spiritual knowledge is a marga that is said to lead to liberation, the other marga is bhakti. Of the three paths namely jñāna (knowledge), Karma (action) and Bhakti (devotion), prescribed for the attainment of Lord, the highest importance has been given to bhakti in the Bhāgavata purāṇa, though all the three paths are mutually interlinked. (Bhāgavata Mahātmya-Aparadha purāṇa vv.11-71). In Kaliyug only bhakti can free people from worldly attachments by ridding them of all doubts. (Bhakti Ratnakal, V.282, Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, a 1.5.12). It begets god’s grace and involves not any higher intellect or cumbersome process but simply prayer and worship of one’s personal god.

To ākaradeva, knowledge without devotion is futile. He who follows the path of knowledge without devotion struggles for nothing. Such knowledge cannot produce any result. ākaradeva maintains that devotion is the bearer of great fruits.

According to ākaradeva, it is only through the performance of devotion that knowledge arises automatically. Man suffers in vain by thinking of Yoga. Bhakti kare- vi jñāna, ipani upaje jñāna, Yoga chinti mire mān kīke (ākaradeva Vedavyāsa, p.199). ākaradeva observes that devotion will result into omniscience. Here the word devotion’ is used in comprehensive sense. It includes the absence of fear, greed, desire, shame, attachment, anger etc. and aversion to worldly objects, respect for all, love, faith, self surrender, selfless service, purification of mind etc.

For the Assamese Vaishnavas devotion is an integral and intuitive spiritual experience in which all the three elements of religious consciousness are blended together so as to make it an effective element in the culmination of cognitive and conative elements. Arati Deka Barua rightly says, “ākaradeva attributes higher place to bhakti that muktī even though he accepts muktī as the highest end of life” ( p.197). According to ākaradeva one can easily attain God through devotion. In his words, Purama ahīsa dharma sangise/ nipwe ji moka jñāna abhyase. //Bhaktīse kare imika batsya/ kabilo
uddhava tēo rābasya. (If you find it difficult to attain God through observation of dharma or sanyāsa or jñāna, then try bhakti because tē is the bhakti which can even impress God) (Kirtanaghośa) Midhavadeva in the first line of Nimaghośa says.

Maktito nispraha gīto sehi bhakatak nama Rasamaya magaha bhakātī. (I salute that devotee who is averse to salvation. Oh, God, the fountain of all bliss. I beseech to make Thy devotee only). Sibarath Sarow remarks, “Bhakti is in short, the devotees willing self surrender to the deity born out of intense knowledge of and/or love for the deity” (“āā´karadeva and Spinoza”, ed.Girish Baruah p.237-238). āā´karadeva opened the door of bhakti for all irrespective of caste, creed and status. He set all on the same footing when he declared that one need not be a great scholar or of high birth to become a bhakta. Again, in the matter of devotion one need not be a Deba or a Dvija or a mendicant, nor one should possess knowledge of the vast scriptures. Hence for Assamese Vaishavas, detached love or Niskāma Bhakti is considered superior to mokṣa.

Ūktaliya Vaishavas too give equal importance to bhakti. Pañcasakhis’ view about jñāna does not exclude bhakti. In fact they speak of bhakti in conjunction with jñāna. Pañcasakhis rate bhakti as the highest in very clear terms. The highest form of bhakti for them is jñānamātrā bhakti in which devotion is given much importance than knowledge. Again, by jñāna they all mean the knowledge gained through the inner spiritual experience, and not the knowledge acquired by intellectual endeavour. Therefore, bhakti in its generic sense and jñāna in the intuitive are common to Īktaliya Vaishavas of medieval times. They are advocates of the bhakti for the Nirguña Brahma.

Pañcasakhis place bhakti in line of Īradālī and yoga and describe all three as the means of salvation. According to them, tē is bhakti which sustains the aspirant in his search after the self and culminates in that state of self realization or ṇāma which is the only way to salvation or mokṣa. The medieval Īktaliya Vaishavas of their spiritual pursuit take Īradālī as the faith with which the quest begins. They take yoga as the active will and bhakti as the emotional involvement which arouses the passion and the longing for the quest.

Pañcasakhis are worshippers of pari bhakti. We find that sajā, a āpisami is followed by the Paribhakti followers. Pañcasakhis follow nirguña bhakti like Rāmānanda, the guru of Kabir and Kabir himself. Jagannāth, the symbol of nirguña, a Brahma is the centre of worship of the spiritual pursuit of
devotion mixed with knowledge. Thus bhakti which acts as a means to the initial stage of spiritual
endeavour finally becomes an end in itself when it culminates in the experience of the self for it exists both
in search of the self as in the state of abiding in the. Pauca sakshis maintain Bhaktibhiva specially in relation
to their para or Nirgua, a Brahman and asks that their verses on self contemplation should be sung in
bhaktibhiva. The devotees should take the name of God with sraddha and bhakti since this is not possible to
grasp the nature of the Nirgua, a Brahman without it.

The highest knowledge according to Pauca sakshis is the experience of Brahman (Brahmubhiva)
which transcends all empirical knowledge. This knowledge has no reference to human intellect and is rooted
in the self through personal experience only after taking the teachings of spiritual gurus. In this spiritual
pursuit knowledge comes and then the devotion. The path of yoga is also the refined path for the realization
of God. Pauca sakshis give more importance to this path. By achieving such type of knowledge devotion comes
naturally.

There is no contradiction between bhakti and jnana in Pauca sakshi religious analysts for they do
do not recommend the path of jnana to the sense of scholastic learning. Bhakti and jnana work together to
acquire a particular result, i.e. realization of God. Thus, this form of bhakti cannot be taken as at variance
with Pauca sakshi’s definition of knowledge.

However, medieval Otkaliya Vaishavs have not shunned Riddhi-Kosala. Under the pressure of
circumstances they had to compromise with Rgina sect of Caitanya. Yasobanta Das describes devotional
love as nearest to God. It is the best mode of devotion to acquire God. They enquire Jiviti and paramiti in
Riddhi and Kosala, a instead of human form. They take Ridhi and Kosala, a as one entity. Balarama Das in
Yedhinia Sira Gopiya 6thwrites that Jagannath is the unified form of Riddhi and Kosala, a.

According to the Pauca sakshis it is bhakti which sustains the aspirant in his search after the self
and culminates in the state of self realization. In their language-
Etmi re hina dekha”(Oh Soul! See the Soul within the Soul). And this is the only way to salvation.

Whenever Pauca sakshis use the term jnana in an absolute sense, they mean the spiritual knowledge
of the self gained through inner personal experiences and not the knowledge gained through the intellect.
Hence Pauca sakshis’ bhakti (devotion) is called as “jnamiµri bhakti” as bhakti and jnana stand in close
conjunction here.

According to Tarachand, the Bhagabata purana marks the transition from the ancient religion of works (karma) to the medieval religion of bhakti (P.134). In the 20th chapter of the 11th Canto of the Bhagabata Puran, it is mentioned in the beginning that karma is recommended for the attached only. Later on when karma, jñāna and bhakti are replaced by that of bhakti, jñāna and vairgya the importance of karma seems faded away. The latter three are interlinked since here bhakti is described as the means through which one acquires jñāna and vairgya. But all the three paths, i.e. bhakti, jñāna and karma are important for beholding paramātman.

4.3 Ethics

Ethics is the study which induces human beings to consciously think about the highest Good, right and wrong judgements. There must have some principles for orderly social life. It evaluates human habits, character and voluntary determinations. Human beings come across the problems in day to day life when one has to decide between right and wrong. This decision requires criterion of right and wrong or good and ultimate good. To present such a criterion is the job of moral philosophy.

Vaiṣṇavism of medieval period, the founder of new value system

The experience in which a religious believer finds God is the value experience. The judgement on the supremacy of God is a value judgement. Thus a typical religious attitude is an attitude towards value experience as a whole. This attitude reveals that all value experience is somehow related to God who is the source of values and the supreme value (Mac Gregor, p. 239).

Theoretically, values are of two types-intrinsic and extrinsic. When something is preferred it becomes valuable. The element of preference involved is regarded as ultimate or final, a value which is said to be intrinsic. Again a value whose basal preference is subordinate to some other preference is said to be an extrinsic value. Hence an intrinsic value is an end in itself while an extrinsic value is a means to an end which is valued. The relativity of both the values is due to the fact that sometimes what is intrinsic from one level of our life becomes extrinsic when that level is transcended. But it may be pointed out that from the highest level of our spiritual development the intrinsic values become identical with absolute values (Bhattacharya, H.M. p.399).
Vaisnavite ethical decisions are grounded in both religious beliefs and cultural values. The traditional teachings of Assam Vaishnavism includes the ideas of Karma and rebirth, collective versus individual identity, bondage versus liberation, good versus evil etc. and values form the basis of the entire cultural pattern. A study of the entire value system in áa´karadeva and Pācāsakhī’s thoughts brings out their uniqueness and outlooks on the world and the society.

áa´karadeva exhibits a humanistic concern in making the problem of universal suffering as the most important pre-occupation. This frame of mind makes the concept of value the guiding principle of his religion. Thus axiological concern constitutes an important motivation of Assamese Vaishnavism religious philosophy.

In áa´karadeva’s thought a devotee knows about the dependence of all values on their source, i.e. God. Here the religious faith finds expression through the development of moral character. áa´karadeva shows God as the source of aesthetic, moral and spiritual values. As the source of moral values He is the cause of the saśsāra, the protector of the devotees and the destroyer of sin. He is the bestower of the salvation, the ruler of destiny and the most compassionate one to the poor. He is pleased by devotion and causes disappearance of the sorrows. He is the lotus eyed, the destroyer of fear. As the source of aesthetic values, God is eternally beautiful (áa´karadeva’s Bhakti Ratnakara). God is also the source of spiritual value. He is the spiritual guide of the bhaktas who wander aimlessly in this world for sensual gratification in this birth and also in the next. What a devotee is to do is only to wipe out egoism from his mind and surrender himself totally before God.

Utkaliya Vaishnavas like their counterparts in Assam believe that practice of certain values is necessary for spiritual realization. The ethical and devotional teachings of the Pācāsakhīs are interrelated. They believe that a religious man as devotional should bear moral qualities. They give much importance to “Cittaśuddhi” or purification of mind. As they were spiritual gurus they gave importance in nīnakārīana which can lead one to spiritual and moral upliftment.

In connection with the relation between intrinsic and extrinsic values in Assamese and Utkaliya Vaishnavism we would proceed to discuss the significance of devotion. For a devotee the supreme object of interest is God. Hence, He is the supreme value. áa´karadeva in his religious thought attaches a special
importance to the value of devotion whereas in Ï£kāliya Viśāva Philosophy much importance has been
given to the value of aversion (mukti). But the latter also gives importance to the value of devotion in
Kaliyug which can lead one to aversion, here both the branches are unanimous in holding that in Kaliyug
bhakti is the best mode of worship to as much as God can be easily pleased by bhakti alone.

In Jagannātha Das’s Oṭa Bhagabata we find that a character named Prahlād left his father
because his father was not a devotee of Viśu. Prahlād was such a type of devotee who did not wish for
liberation but wanted only the endless service to God. Dasa holds the opinion that God can be realized
through love or devotion, dedication, worship, prayer, selfless service, meekness and humility. Thus he tried
to induce people to indulge in moral actions which are beneficial for the society.

Assamese Viśāvas also give supreme place to bhakti. They believe that God is one and He loves His
devotees. He does not want anything from devotees. Even a single leaf of basil plant and water are
sufficient for God. Hence in Bhakti Pradēpāṅkaradeva advised his followers to be liberal and considerate
to all and to love all creatures. Both the sects believe that a great sinner can also be emancipated through
his devotion to God.

Both the sects emphasized the practice of non-violence, self control, endurance, humility,
compassion to creatures, detachment, good conduct etc. to become a true devotee of God. They maintained
that every human being should perform his duty for the welfare of the human society.

4.3 (a) Non-Violence (Ahiśā)

Non-Violence is the supreme duty of a human being. Besides, its negative aspects it possesses a
positive aspect too. Non-violence has elements of love, sympathy, pity and fearlessness. Buddha who is the
very incarnation of the ethic of compassion states- Let a man overcome anger by non-anger, let the evil be
overcome with good, let the avaricious man be overcome with gifts, let liar be overcome with truth;
through non-enmity-enmity comes to rest. (qtd. in Machenji, A Manual of Ethics, p.12)

The doctrine of non-violence is the pivotal point in the teachings of ākāra deva. According to him,
all living beings are part of God and hence are sacred and are like the children of God. So they are not to be
hurt or killed in the name of religion.

ākāra deva does not contradict the Jain theory of Ahiśā. But his doctrine of Ahiśā differs from
Jaina view in some of the practices of the latter. Theoretically, the principle of Ahimsa involves the purity in thought, word and deed in the practice of universal love. (Gandhiji, M.K., Young India, Aug. 11 (1920)). In áa´karadeva's religion much stress is given on non-violence, love, kindness, mercy etc. (Borbora, p.127).

In áa´karadeva’s Prahlada Carita Prahlada says to his father: Jina phri eri sara kiña/ apuni man kari apasama/ abatru nitra sava karti sama/ ehtse K监察À¸ara bhakti uttama. (Prahlada Carita). (Hence O father, give up evil nature and control your own mind. Behave equally with both friend and foe, this is the best form of devotion to K监察À¸a.)

In Kirtanghosáa´karadeva says: Yaita thike mora bhakta udar caritra/ Kät-patra `gako tathí kirya pavitra/ nakare pra „ika hi Ísí nibhi ek spriha/ imita arpana kare ipusíra dehi. (Prahild Carita) (wherever my devotees of liberal character happen to be, thereby they sanctify even worms and insects. They do not harm any creature and are above all desires, they even dedicate their own persons to Me).

In Odakya VaiÀ¸avism non-violence plays an important role too. Pachoasakhis were against animal sacrifice on the plea of appeasing God. After taking initiation VatÀ¸ avas of Odisha become vegetarians immediately. According to Jagannona thha Dass,“Sakala dehe Nirgita, a Basanét anïdî kira „a”. (In every beinging Nirgita, a resides as the cause without beginning) (Jaganno thha Dass, O-ta Bhagavata). Hence they advise people to love all creatures created by God and not to harm any living animal. They advise people to forgive. In his words, “Da „thi saketi giru thi se pur „i kàami Ísàra”. (He who has the power to punish should also have the power to forgive) (O-ta Bhagavata). When man’s mind indulges in material greed, keeping far away from social ideals, then he follows violence with a view to achieving properties, power etc. Jaganno thha Dass writes too “ye pri „i pare hinsì ka re/ Devañi pajt se na Ísre”. (He who indulges in violence etc.
to others will never escape even if he worships God). Hence a wise man who realizes the higher self keeps his own self away from violence. Following the path of non-violence he comes closer to the Absolute God as He is the embodiment of all love and non-violence and He loves all His creatures.

4.3 (b) Self-Control

The Bhagabata emphasizes physical purity and a spirit of meditation as a pre-condition either for reading the scripture or for listening to it. Appropriately rectified it creates a mood of religious quietude and calm.

According to Assamese Vaishnavism self-control implies both control of the mind and the body. Concentration of mind is necessary to ensure control of mind. Concentration is possible through continuous recitation of the name of the Lord. In *Kirtumgahos* áákaradeva tells, Do not turn to idolize others. árava, a-Kértana will alone free you from the snares of passions. The passions like anger, pride, greed, lust are the enemies of the human life and they should be controlled by following the laws of God. Of four forms of mind, áákaradeva considers "Citta" as the subtlest and the most sensitive physical entity. And the "Citta" cannot perform properly unless the evils of intelligence, ego and the senses are removed. These evils can be removed by directing the senses towards the path of God. According to áákaradeva a person who cannot control his senses by his mind is an extrovert person. He is a crazy worldly man who does not know God (áákaradeva, Bhakti Ratnákara, p.59) In "Ajimila Upakhyna" it is said that purification of mind is possible through the kértana of Hari. Cittara sodhana Harira kértana Prápara abhajai (Hari kértana purifies the whole heart and thereby the sins are completely approved).

Foundation of the Paccasakali philosophy is based upon the worship of Nirikira (Zanga) Brahma. This manner of worship involves control of all senses. Achyutananda has said, "With a mind that has not been calmed and made ready for further attainments, all yogic practices and austere repetitions are sure to go in vain. Mind is thus the guru, it is the root and the real player. Mind is the Bhagabata and the Giti, and when that is not ready and confident then even nectar is sure to taste bitter". If a man’s inner soul does not submit to the path of bhakti and "sádhaná", he cannot become a real bhakta. He must have powerful and refined sensibility to receive genuine knowledge from his guru. So, Achyutananda has ridiculed the pseudo disciples in many of his works. He has hated the false Vaishnav occupationist Mahantas and the egoistic
sadhus” (Ratnakara Chaiti, Achyutananda Das, p.12)

Thus Paµcasakh¡s advised people to be humble, learned, faithful, selfless, active, benevolent and affectionate. And to gain all these qualities one has to control his own self. They give a high premium on right living, right action and simplicity of lifestyle and on devotion or bhakti.

According to the Paµcasakh¡s, as one cannot altogether be passive, therefore, the scriptures and gurus direct him to act primarily for the purification of mind and secondarily for maintaining law and order in the society. In jagannath das’s language, “Manati sukha dukha d¡t¡ se p¡pa panyara karati” (The mind is the giver of pleasure and pain, the author of sin and guilt) (Bhagabata).

Paµcasakh¡s put restrictions on food habits, body, speech, mind etc. They recommend moderate eating and call for fasting as the means of self-purification, which is an adjunct to self control. They also lay stress on the inoculation of good conduct because religious deeds performed by a man of good conduct become fruitful. Hence jagannath das writes to his Bhagabata:-Eha tu samane bcticra/cauchala citta sibhra kart// sarba indriya mana rundhi/ugaya karne det buddhi// Etmi&a# dekha saha maye/ bibeka suggiba adage// Samidhi basi yogadhyine/titika dekhi hina gijine// x x x Nitrate gijine mana det/Mana dosala rakha taath// Su#ira dekha mo swartpe/janna nothiba bhaba kup// (Contemplate in your pure mind by making your moving mind still. Withhold all your desires and mind your daily rituals. Look at the soul everywhere. Arouse your conscience and inner knowledge. Meditate in trance and behold the soul in the light of the soul. Concentrate ever on wisdom, keep your mind still and behold the universe in my form. Only then you will not born again on this earth (11Skandha, 9th ch. P.60 Bhagabata).

4.3 (c) Compassion

Compassion is taken as a must in almost all religious philosophy. A true devotee treats all creatures as his own self. He recognizes the existence of the absolute soul even in animals’ life.

In Assamese Vaia all creatures are treated equally. The following verse in the Kirtanaghos proves this fact. “Kukura candila gardhvaro Hemi-rim jantiya saviko piri karibi pranin (Even the souls of dogs, untouchables and asses are verily God. Keeping this in mind, salute all those). Again, in the section “Prahilida Gartiia” we find “karadeva stonging. Kaa ara carana ci etveka hraidyata/ Isanta Nvara Hart samosta bhatata/ henujint pri, tka kartva sakikra/ tebese Kaa ata rati bheteka tanira (One should
concentrate upon the feet of Kṣṇa within his heart. Lord Hāri is omnipresent in all creatures, hence have due regards to all of them. Then only you will have an interest to Kṣṇa.

For āśvārkadeva though the passion for the beyond’ creates an indifference to worldly pleasures, a liberated soul should not forget his responsibilities to rescue others. Thus the feeling of compassion arouses a sense of social commitment which makes it incumbent upon him to uplift the miserable, who are steeped in the misery of worldliness. āśvārkadeva says, “The wiseman conquers the six internal enemies, sorrows of life and attachment totally. Being the most tolerant and enlightened and discarding greed for worldly objects he becomes the most compassionate and leads the life of benevolence. āśvārkadeva: ārṇadvīgabata, X skandha, p.1467).

In the same tune, Pañcasakhis feel compassion for animals, insects and human beings. They are against animal sacrifice. They advise people to see all animals equally. The following verse of Achyutananda proves the fact. O, wisemen! Live in Truth and Peace. Tell, what is in the words of Guru, Read Scriptures after performing ablutions. If you kill animals you will be called a hunter. xxx He who considers even an insect Brahma he is known as the knower of Conscience.

Pañcasakhis in accordance with the tradition of ārkāetra view the society beyond the narrow looks of casteism. For this, they had to face open opposition from the powerful priestly class. According to them, a bhakta has no caste. He is the member of the family of Lord Viṣṇu. So, Viṣṇu addresses the community of His disciples as Vaiṣṇavajana. Through their writings the Pañcasakhis always try to work for the upliftment of the downtrodden people of the society and try to give them equal space in the society as enjoyed by the higher castes. They treat all men equal. Achyutananda says a hödra only can be a servant of God and writes. I do not desire to be a Brahmin. I have no faith in Kṣatriya or Vaiṣṇava. One’s mind becomes humble when he thinks himself low. So, I would like to be a hödra.

4.3 (d) Good and Evil
Evil means something wicked which is very often equated with sin, that is disobedience to the will of God. It is also willful negligence of one’s duty or willful violation of morality, religion as well as of the laws of the society. It consists in deliberate performance of what is wrong and not performing what is right. Hence, sin is an evil act. It signifies deliberate choice of wrong things and rejection of right things. The problem of evil is apparently incompatible with the actuality of an omnipotent and all loving God. If God be not infinitely good He will not be worthy of worship. “The Christian approach to suffering makes Satan on the one hand and man himself on the other hand to directly responsible for evil but God has allowed it without interference with a moral purpose of the ultimate good of man” (Kedar Nath Tiwari, p.141). Tiwari further says, “The Koran seems to decipher at places God’s purpose behind allowing the existence of evil in the following two ways, (i) suffering is a punishment for sin, and (ii) suffering is a trial or test for faithfulness in God” (p.162). The Guru Granth Sahib depicts that ignorance is the cause of evil and suffering. However according to Hindu Philosophy “ Good acts are those which aim at the wellbeing of one self and others and evil one are those which interfere with the wellbeing of oneself and others.” (Swami Krishnananda qtd. by Radhakrishnan in A Short History of Religious and Philosophic Thought of India p.181). Hindu solution to the problem of Evil consists in holding that man himself and not God is responsible for his suffering and he can annihilate it by his own effort. God has given man free will. Therefore, He does not interfere in his action.

Assamese Vaishnavas profess that the inherent goodness in man finds its expression in his behavior. In the Kantian manner áa´karadeva long before Kant, treats the principle of humanity as an end and never as a means. The moral laws cannot be imposed on oneself from outside but he himself imposes all these upon his own. áa´karadeva does not deny the existence of evil nor does he make God responsible for all these. He is not much worried about the causes of evil, rather he tries his best to finding out the means and ways for controlling evils in man’s life. He has shown the practical way about how to conquer evils.

Utkaliya Vaishnavas are instrumental in performing the crucial and much awaited yuga-karma where they destroy the sinners and save the saints. Papwasakhis believe that men are full of egotism, pride, naughtiness, anger, cruelty and greed. The class of men who give up their caste duties, kill their father, cows, outrage the modesty of women, steal etc. are the doer of evil deeds. They perform sacrifices in name
with hypocrisy without any regard for the sacrificial ordinances. They want in purity and good conduct as taught by great teachers. They are not true in their dealings. According to Utkaliya Vaiṣṇavas, avars such actions are evil actions.

Both the sects of Vaiṣṇavism are of the opinion that ignorance is the root cause of evil. Due to ignorance worldly people are guided by sensual pleasure, anger, greed etc. Stealing, taking alcohol, animal slaughtering, adultery betraying somebody, showing disrespect to God or someone etc. are social evils.

The ignorant people alone prefer the earthly things to the devotion of God. The free will’s defence solution is accepted by both the mystic thinkers- Ākāra Deva and Jagannātha Das. Madhava Deval also in his Nāmaghosā describes “Ipan Ipan bindha Ipan Ipan ēkāru Ipan Ipan rakhe māre.” (Each man is his own friend, and also his own enemy, he himself protects or destroys himself) (V.26). The pure Atman has become impure by the attachment of five evil passions - Kīma (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (covetousness), Maṅha (Attachment to worldly objects) and Ahamkāra (pride). These are the evils because of which man becomes degenerated and loses his true nature. Both the sects in their works show the terrible consequences of the evil deeds. Achyutananda writes in his आयुर शास्त्रः Anubruti kile gebe krut nāla hige. Eta ni athite jūna dhūna kāaya hage. (2/205) (As crops are destroyed by drought, so knowledge and meditation are destroyed by ignorance of the soul). Achyutananda in his MADHI has expressed his hope that a golden future would come for the mankind when evil deeds of the people would be shattered and social peace and harmony would be established. He warned the people to be aware of the hard times ahead and exhorted them to stick to the righteous path, otherwise God Himself in His Kalki avatar would destroy them in the Kaliyug. He wished for the extinction of wicked people who pose threat to the society, and he believes that only then peace and prosperity would prevail upon the society. He forecast that God in His Kalki incarnation would destroy evil forces. Thus he sounded an apocalyptic warning.

Achyutananda was not a nihilist, he was not a pessimist. He had positive views on the life and the world. He believed in essential goodness of human beings. He wrote that man possesses the freedom of will and has the power to control his evil desires and wicked mind. However, what a man needs is his austerity, his sense of restraint and his determination to resist evil. He also encouraged people to follow the path of devotion or cultivate virtues like truth, kindness, charity, non-violence, forgiveness giving respect to others.
desist from nurturing the passion of jealousy or envy and to cultivate the quality of keeping patience and sense of respect and restraint.

Like Achyutana, áa´karadeva too was an optimist. For him, a great sinner has possibility to redeem himself; he has the power to overcome his sufferings by his total devotion to God. In the section “P¡sa¸da Mardana” he prescribes that only chanting of Harinam can absolve one of the sins accrued. The outcasts who eat dogs, the murderer who commits the crime of killing Br¡hmans and preceptors, the persons who commit acts like patricide or matricide are absolved of sins by simple act of remembering Hari.

According to K.D.Goswami, áa´karadeva says, “the individual soul and the world outside appear as real to the impure mind which is clouded by m¡y¡ or illusion.” (p.84). Again, “Ya´ta sadadhana jina sabe ViÀ¸ ,um¡qi / lisa r prak¡de meghara gene ch¡qa” . (Gajendra Up¡khy¡na) (All riches, son and other members of the family are but illusions of ViÀ¸ , they appear like shadow of cloud in the sky). The ignorant soul prefers the earthly things to the devotion of God. In the section “P¡sa¸da Mardana” of the K¢rtanaghos¡, áa´karadeva rules that one intoxicated with naughtiness for thinking himself being possessed of knowledge ridicules both ViÀ¸ , a and VaiÀ¸avas and Harin¡ma seems to trouble his ears.

áa´karadeva asserts that evil can be destroyed neither by thinking nor by feeling but only through devotion. He believes that Hari is realized not through Karma and Jµ¡na but through bhakti. Even the consequence of deeds can be averted by means of devotion to God.

In the Namaghos¡ Milhavadeva also advises the individuals to confess their sins before Hari, who is absolutely benevolent and kind and forgives even the worst of sinners if they sincerely repent for their sins. Milhavadeva says, Kao koÊt gharal aparidha atri/ karo int daÊcaya/ He Hari mora dola bena manti/ kÌoÊtgyoka K¡p¡maÊa (Namaghos¡317) (Oh! God, I am a sinner who commits crores of sins every day. Oh Merciful! Please pardon me considering me Your slave). Repentance will move the benevolent God to forgive mercy seekers their sins and thereby they will be able to attain salvation.

Self-control, self discipline, respectful attachment to God, love for other creatures, complete surrender to God, renunciation of all the desires, averton towards enjoyment of sensual pleasures lead one to salvation, the highest good of life. He who sees ViÀ¸ , a in the entire world gets the joy of the highest good forthwith even while alive.
Paµcasakh¡s give stress on the realization of the supreme soul. It can be acquired by a person of steady intellect on the accomplishment of desireless action. Hence, as the world is an illusion one has to get true knowledge about the reality. And intuitive devotional knowledge that in the form of realisation of the presence of the lord everywhere and in every being arises out of selfless devotion to the lord.

Achyutananda makes Ribisas a powerful medium for socio-cultural renovation of the contemporary Odishan public life. They prescribe that purity in body and mind, humility, non-adultery, equanimity and non-violence lead one to a pleasurable life. He advises people to see many in one that unify all the diversities of the world. He also prescribes "Pt. da-Brahmanda Tatvva" as the way of understanding worldly essences.

Paµcasakh¡s have showed both the paths of devotion and wisdom for the attainment of the formless Jagannath of Nityagolaka. They have established the path of discipline on hathayoga and r¡jayoga. The success of physical and spiritual discipline taught by gurus is important for them. They also put importance on yogic s¡dhana. They think that through true knowledge of Brahman and recitation of the name of R¡ma and K¤À¸a, a one can achieve in kaliyug the ultimate good, i.e. salvation.

4.3 Humanism

The word Humanism is derived from the “Human” with the suffix ism’. The word Human is derived from the Greek word ismos (Oxford Dictionary). The meaning of the word Humanism formed by Human and ism "is a system of thought that regards humans as capable of using their intelligence to live their lives, rather than relying on religious beliefs". In short, Humanism is of or about Man.

Different theories of Humanism arose in the world as movements against the established order of human existence. Humanism in Assamese VaiÀ¸ ævism appeared as a protest against disrespect to certain human beings on the basis of caste, creed and race. In áa’karadeva’s time people were being exploited for their position in the society and on their taking place as high or low in the order of the society determined by the ruling and priestly class. But áa’karadeva was a liberal. He preached the message of equality and fraternity. He tried to remove malpractices appearing in rituals in the name of religion. He knew well that a lay man could understand anything only when it is tinged with religion. Hence he had to have resort to religion to preach humanism in the garb of religion. He was fully convinced that religion could motivate and accelerate the pace of social change by repudiating the prevalent superstitions and value structures and
offering socially convincing values.

Love has been defined by áa´karadeva as a cementing force. In *NiminavasidhasaÄvada* áa´karadeva observes that love has the power to attract others and is always accompanied by devotion. Love for humanity does not express passion, it displays self-sacrifice. It generates the feeling of self surrender, joy and happiness. His sense of oneness embraces the whole of humanity. áa´karadeva has firmly declared that the selfless path paved with the Mahima `tra of K×À¸a’s name will make one to see God in all creatures. áa´karadeva in his writings has termed all creatures in the universe as having the soul of the supreme. In his philosophy there is no distinction between Br¡hmin and cand¡l (untouchables) and between high caste and low caste. In the eyes of áa´karadeva the lover of God is the man of high rank, no matter to which caste he belongs. He approached humanbeings to cross the barrier of casteism deep rooted in the society. áa´karadeva and his followers advocated that the lowborn would be sublimated in companion with the good and honest people. For them, the kritisas, kac¡ris, the kh¡sis, the g¡ros, the Ahoms etc and all the sinful people would get purified in the company of the good people or the devotees of K×À¸a.

Humanism of áa´karadeva is not confined to human beings only, but it goes a bit broader. His humanism is in a sense love for all creatures in the universe. He opposed the ritualistic activities like sacrifice of animal on the altar of gods and goddesses in the name of religion. He preached that virtuous people should try to see God in every creature and should never sacrifice them as all are same and equal in God’s creation.

Though both áa´karadeva and Midhavadeva saw divinity in all creatures yet they put more emphasis on human life. In their opinion man is the supreme of all creatures as only men can lead a spiritual life. Animals, birds and insects cannot aspire for a spiritual life or they cannot attain it. In the *Kirtanghosá* áa´karadeva writes: deve ra dariva/ gi hena jannaka/b×thi kari koa kime, gohata thikti/harika sma/li/ mokla sidhi hari nima (Your earthly life is more precious than Deva’s life in Heaven. Waste not it in trifles. Lead a domestic life and remember God. Attain liberation through Harin¡ma)”. In this context Nilima Sharma says, “He (áa´karadeva) never encourages his follower either to observe the ideals of asceticism or sand¡sa or to find appeasement to the excesses of sensualism. He makes it clear that living this very life in this spatio-temporal world one can delevate oneself through self-realization and can establish social
About áa´karadeva’s love for creatures, both human beings and non-human beings, Nilima Sharma again says, “áa´karadeva’s philosophy of love is positive and dynamic. He makes an appeal to every human person to follow the path of love” (p.338).áa´karadeva’s secularism leads to “Sarvadharma Sambhava”. As he says,Pararā dharmakā/nibhāstibhi kādācitt (Bhakti Pradēp p.141) (Hurt not other people’s religious sentiments).

Commenting on áa´karadeva’s humanistic approach towards the society, Sharma further says, “To have a better interaction with the common masses, he lays emphasis more on faith and less on logic, more on love and less on intellect. He insists on the supremacy of faith over logic in the attainment of the highest end of life. Likewise, Soren Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism comments that individual human person can bridge the gap between himself and supernature by leap of faith” (338).

In Odisha the Vaishnava preachers of medieval times introduced the concept of a clear and glorious liberal Humanism. They cleared for the low class and the low caste the wags and means about how to raise themselves spiritually. They opposed the mean concept of casteism and put the downtrodden people on a high pedestal of social scale. In a society full of evil rites and inhuman activities, Paµcasakh¡s praised humanism to propagate their religion. They taught man to gather force within, to love man as man and to see his own image in every creature establishing universal brotherhood. They firmly declared that the selfless path paved with the Ma´trar¡j or Mah¡ma´tr a of R¡ma and Koµ, a will help one see God in all creatures.

In "Prahl¡da Carita" of the 0:ta Bh¡gabata, Jagann¸tha Das holds that for the propagation of love, one need not escape from this world. Living a house-holder’s life a person can embrace the whole world by gradually expanding the cult of divine love to others. Jagann¸tha Das tried to establish equal status for men and women, high and low, downtrodden and uplifted. He also fought against the prevailing discriminations perpetrated upon the socially weak and the backward. He writes, “Sakala ghate eka Hari / Sak˜ma swar£pe acht part// E bhiva jit e Ḹagane / Ande pr1 , 1 nisfrtle// Asura yakÀa r¡kÀasagana / Stri ¿udra candla pram¡¸ / Mrigu pata´ga p¡pi j¢ve / Sarve taribe ViÀ¸u bh¡be// (O·ia Bh¡gabata: 7th Canto, 7th chapter, p.46) (The same Hari is present in each body. He pervades in a subtle manner. Knowing this many
creatures like demons, women, ādras and outcasts got liberated and they are the proofs of this. Insects and sinners and all will get deliverance for their love to Viśnu.

In Utkaliya Vaiśnavism neither a king nor a Brahmin is great but great is the devotee who takes the name of lord Jagannāth or Kṛṣṇa. Pāṇcasakhīs practically followed the humanitarian philosophy in their day to day life. They followed the ideology of humanitarian philosophy under the banner of which they fought against castesm.

Śiṣyaṁśati bhakti dharma of the Pāṇcasakhīs aimed at showing the path of liberation to the masses that were seen as fallen lots by the so called higher castes. The Pāṇcasakhīs did not discriminate between high and low, rich and poor, privileged and unprivileged. They asserted that everyone in the society has his right to have the knowledge of Brahma. Therefore, Balaram Das wrote the Brahma Gitā in Odia to facilitate the lowest of the low to read the Gitā and know its secrets. He too wrote Laxmi Purāṇa where he has raised the status of Candālas, thus giving them due recognition in the society. Jagannātha Das wrote the Bhigabata in Odia to make it accessible to all, irrespective of caste, creed etc.

Thus we see there is not much difference between the Assamese Vaiśnavism and Utkaliya Vaiśnavism in their attitude to human beings. All of them have reacted against artificial stratification, exploitation in the name of caste and class and oppression perpetrated upon the lower caste and class by the upper class and the privileged. But when āaśkaradeva and Mādhavadeva were mild, gentle and soft in their attack on higher castes, Pāṇcasakhīs were caustic, aggressive in their attack. In comparison to Assamese Vaiśnavas Utkaliya Vaiśnavas have composed large number of works where they have vociferously denounced caste system.

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