In our endeavour to construct a more satisfactory framework of interpretation for Indian Philosophy that overcomes at least some of the major difficulties of the traditional interpretation set forth in the preceding chapter, we shall begin by postulating the following hypotheses (which presuppose that the extraordinary, esoteric experience, usually called the "intuitive-experience" or "the yogic-experience" is a fact):

1. In the early phase of Indian thought the term "Śruti" referred to both the Upaniṣadic texts and the Yogic-experience and only the latter was deemed to be a pramāṇa (or source of knowledge). That is, in this phase "Śruti-Pramāṇa" denoted the yogic-experience only (Hyp. 1).

   We shall, in the course of our study, see how in the later phase (beginning with the advent of Jaimini and Bādarāyaṇa) the terms "Śruti" and "Śruti-pramāṇa" both came to refer to the vedic and upaniṣadic-Texts alone.

2. Notwithstanding differences in the intellectual convictions of people, one man's yogic-experience is identical with that of another's (Hyp. 2).

Contd....14....
The appropriateness of using the word "sruti" in referring (as Hyp.1 states) to the Upaniṣads as well as the yogic-experience seems to lie in this that (i) the Upaniṣads are nothing but a written record of a long oral tradition of education and (ii) in view of its exceptional rarity, the fact and nature of the yogic-experience is, to a vast majority of the people, a matter known only through the words of the "seers" who are blessed with that experience.

The contention that "sruti" also refers to something other than the Upaniṣadic "texts" or "words" seems to derive support from the Sānkhya Kārika, where having mentioned the three pramāṇas— Pratyakṣa, Anumāṇa, and Āpta vacana the author proceeds to give a definition of these:

"Perception is definite cognition of particular objects through the contact of the senses; Inference (Anumāṇa) has been declared to be of three kinds and it is led upto by the Middle term and the Major term; and valid assertion (āpta vacana) is āpta sruti" (SK 5).

Purporting to describe the modus operandi of the pramāṇas, the above Kārika could not be using "sruti" as synonymous with "vacana" or "words"; "sruti" needs to be deemed here as that which leads to "āpta vacana". And since obviously "sruti" does not here refer either to the sense organs or to inferential terms, it is reasonable to suppose that it refers to the yogic-experience.

Contd...15
§1. Now, by dismissing the Pramāṇa-status of the Upaniṣads, Hyp.1 paves the way for a frank admission of the self-contradictory nature of the texts and to seek an explanation of it. There seems to be no need to go in search of far-fetched explanations here, for we can trace in the Upaniṣads a very natural process of evolution of thought through generations of teachers which naturally accounts for the presence of differing, and even contradictory views. The evolution of thought is in evidence, for instance, in the chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad: The second section of chapter VI follows the logical process of critically examining an existing theory, viz. that an entity is non-existent prior to its production and then rejecting it proceeds to formulate an alternative theory viz. that an entity exists even prior to its production. Again, in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad we find that an observation of the transient nature of things has given rise to the speculation that Death is the ultimate reality: everything springs from and is absorbed back into death (Brh.up. I.1.). The realisation that entities cannot be produced from nothing perhaps led to the theory, in I.4, that a mortal human being is the source of all entities. A further realisation that the ultimate entities should be eternal seems to have given rise to the contention of I.3 that the eternal entities (like fire, air, sun, etc.,) are the ultimate realities. The lack of a logical order in the

Contd... 16...
presentation of these thoughts would not come as a surprise if one remembers the fact that the Upaniṣads are merely compulsory works.

Hyp.1, no doubt, maintains that the references of "Śruti" as pramāṇa and "Śruti" as text are different; it, however, does not preclude "Śruti-pramāṇa" from the "Śruti-text". or, in other words, the yogic-experience is not excluded from being one of the many topics discussed in the Upaniṣads and we do find numerous upaniṣadic passages referring to the yogic experience; for instance,

"This they consider as yoga-

The firm holding back of the senses.

Then one becomes undistracted.

Yoga, truly, is the origin: and the end" (Kat. Up. 6.11)

"Those who followed after Dhyāna & Yoga

saw the ātma-sekti of God hidden in his own

Qualities ... ...."

(Svet. Up. 1.3).

In course of time the topic of Śruti - Pramāṇa seems to have assumed such importance that the compilers of the later Upaniṣads eschewed virtually all topics but those related to the yogic-experience. Thus we find the earlier

Contd... 17....
Upaniṣads like the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Chāndogya encompassing within their field variegated topics ranging from the yogic-experience to transmigration to gods to sacrificial rites, while the later ones like the Māndūkya are exclusively concerned with the yogic-experience, its implications and world-views based on them.

§2. Hyp.2 is intended to tackle the problem of the objectivity of the yogic-experience, and evidently it does ensure its objectivity. But if the yogic experience is treated as objective it can no longer also be simultaneously conceived as revealing the ultimate metaphysical position of any system. Therefore in addition to the task of confirming our hypothesis we have to contend with the problem of identifying what the yogic-experience reveals and how the common content of that experience is accommodated in radically different metaphysical systems. Presently we shall focus our attention on the first-half of the problem the latter half being a problem that gets resolved in the subsequent chapters.

Now, the yogic-experience that we are concerned with is the asamprajñāta or Nirbīja samādhi of the Yoga-sūtras described as:

Contd...18.....
"When this (subliminal impression) also is restricted, since all is restricted, (the yogin gains) seedless concentration (nirbīja Samādhi)". 

(Yoga Sūtra 1.51).

"But where everything has become just one's own self, then whereby and whom does one see? then whereby and whom does one taste? then whereby and whom would one smell?.........."

(Bṛh. up. 4.5.15)

and

"Not inwardly cognitive, not outwardly cognitive, not both-wise cognitive, not a cognition-mass, not cognitive, not non-cognitive, unseen, with which there can be no dealing, ungraspable, having no distinctive mark, non-thinkable, that cannot be designated, the essence of assurance of which is the state of being one with the self, the cessation of development, tranquil, benign, without a second - (such) they think is the Turiya". (Mā. Up. 7)

From the yoga-sūtras it is quite clear that what is 'experienced' or 'revealed' in the yogic-experience is a nirguṇa entity (an entity that is sans qualities), called the 'Puruṣa' by the Yogasūtras and called 'Brahman' by certain other texts:

"Then Naciketas, having received this knowledge Declared by death, and the entire rule of yoga, Attained Brahman, ............." 

(Kat. Up. 6.18)

Contd....19.....
The *Brhadāraṇyakopanisād* speaks of the nirgupa entity as:

"That, O gārgī, Brahmins call the Imperishable. It is not coarse, not fine, not short, not long, not glowing, not adhesive, without shadow and without darkness, without air and without space, without stickiness, odorless, tasteless, without eye, without ear, without voice, without wind, without energy, without breath, without mouth, without measure, without inside and without outside," *(Brh. up 3.8.8)*

Coming to the intuitive-experience believed in by the Jains and the Buddhists, and preferably called by them "Kai-valya" and "Nīrṇāṇa" respectively, we find the Jaina texts echoing the words of the Upaniṣads in describing the experience:

"Knowing whence we come and whither we go, he leaves the road to birth and death, rejoining in the glorious. All sounds recoil thence, where speculation has no room, nor does the wind penetrate there. The saint knows well that which is without support." *(Ākārāṅga Sūtra, Book 1, Lecture 5, Lesson 6)*

"............. he obtained the highest knowledge and intuition, called kevala, which is infinite, supreme, unobstructed, unimpeded, complete and perfect." *(Kalpa sūtras, first Lecture, 1)*
And as we may expect from this that the Jains too believed in a nirguna entity, we have the confirmatory passages:

"(The liberated) is not long nor small nor round nor triangular nor quadrangular nor circular; neither of good or bad smell; not bitter nor pungent nor astringent nor sweet; neither rough nor soft; neither heavy nor light; neither hot nor cold; .......... its essence is without form; there is no condition of the unconditioned; there is no sound; no colour, no taste, no touch—nothing of that kind". (Ākārāṅga Sūtra Book 1, Lecture 5, lesson 6).

" .......... and thus the saviour said to the others: Herein is contained the vow (leading to) Brahman; this is the gain which a śramaṇa is desirous of. ........." (Sūtrakr-
tāṅga Sūtra, Book 2, Lect. 6, 20)

Turning to Buddhism, one cannot but wonder at the similarity of Buddha's description of the eight stages of deliverance with the description of the different stages of concentration in the yoga-Sūtra. The Mahāparinibbāna Sūtra records the Buddha thus:

1. A man possessed with the idea of form sees form—this is the first stage of deliverance.

Contd...21.
2. Without the subjective idea of form, he sees form, externally - this is the second stage of deliverance.

3. With the thought "it is well", he becomes intent (upon what he sees) - this is the third stage of deliverance.

4. By passing quite beyond all idea of form, by putting an end to all idea of resistance, by paying no attention to the idea of distinction, he, thinking "it is all infinite space" reaches and remains in that state of mind in which the idea of the infinity of space is the only idea that is present - this is the fourth stage of deliverance.

5. By passing quite beyond all idea of space being the infinite basis, he, thinking "it is all infinite reason" reaches and remains in that state of mind to which the infinity of reason alone is present - this is the fifth stage of delivery.

6. By passing quite beyond the mere consciousness of the infinity of reason, he, thinking "nothing at all exists" reaches and remains in the state of mind to which nothing at all is specially present - this is the sixth stage of deliverance.

7. By passing quite beyond all idea of nothingness he reaches and remains in the state of mind to which neither ideas nor the absence of ideas are specifically present - this is the
seventh stage of deliverance.

8. By passing quite beyond the state of "neither ideas nor the absence of ideas" he reaches and remains in the state of mind in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be." - this is the eighth stage of deliverance

(Mahāparinibbāna sutta, Chap.III, 34-41)

This last stage is nothing but the nirbīja samādhi of the Yoga-what we have simply termed the "intuitive" - or "Yogic - experience". Could we not then argue that the Buddha too believed in the nirguṇa entity (entities)? The Tevigga Sutta relates an episode that lends support to the argument: The Buddha is approached by two Brahmins seeking the path leading to "Union with Brahman". A non-believer in Brahman is wont to deny any such path; but the Buddha teaches them the path aspired saying"........ to the Tathāgata, when asked touching the path which leads to the world of Brahma, there can be neither doubt nor difficulty. For Brahma I know, Vasettha, and the world of Brahma, and the path which leadeth unto it ........" (Tevigga Sutta, Chap I., 43).

The foregoing discussion provides a confirmation for hyp.2 and also enables one to safely conclude that the nirguṇa entity is the content of the yogic-experience. This commonly accepted tenet of the ultimate reality of the nirguṇa entity (entities) plays a very important role in the metaphysical

Contd....23...
systems ranging from the unchanging-ātman theory of the
Sānkhyā to the Nairātmyavāda of Buddhism. But before moving
on to a study of the systems, let us have a look at the
concept of "Mokṣa" which, as we shall now see, owes its origin
to the yogic-experience.

§3.

Mokṣa:

The two received views of "mokṣa", against which
objections were raised in chap.1 imply that "mokṣa" is attained
by some knowledge: The view that "Mokṣa" is absolute
freedom from pain and misery implies that it is the result of
an extreme psychological detachment from or indifference to-
wards the body which in its turn results from the realisation
that the ātman is an independent, eternal entity or that it is
non-existent. The other view viz., that "Mokṣa" is acquiring
complete control over nature presupposes knowledge at least of
the natural and causal laws governing entities. It needs to be
emphasised here that according to both these views one cannot
be a "Mukta" in the absence of the respective Knowledges, or, in
other words, the particular knowledge of the ātman or of Nature
is a necessary condition of "Mokṣa".

Now, imagine that plausible situation wherein a jīvan-
mukta is involved in an accident that severely damages the

Contd...24....
memory centre of his brain and his memory, thereby, is completely wiped out. All that has been learnt has been forgotten; reading, writing and the alphabets too are forgotten, he is unable to recognise his own kith and kin; nay, he does not remember even his own identity. Now what of the knowledge that liberated him? It seems impossible that while everything else has been forgotten he should remember this particular knowledge that won him liberation. But in that case, since this knowledge is a necessary condition for mukti, it would logically follow that the freed man becomes bound again. Such a consequence is inevitable.

At this stage it is only natural to raise the question as to whether the Indian Philosophers admitted the possibility of a mukta being bound again. Although there is no reference in the Indian Philosophical works to the specific situation considered above, the explicit denials of recurrence of bondage under any circumstance, provides sufficient ground for concluding that recurrence of bondage would be denied in the above case too. As non-recurrence of bondage is not guaranteed by the two prevalent views of mukti, these views cannot be regarded as fair interpretations of the concept of "mukti" held by the ancients; a fresh attempt at understanding the concept thus becomes necessary and in this attempt it appears fruitful to delve a little deeper into the origin of the concept.

Contd....2f
The most commonly held view about the origin of the concept of mokṣa is that it originated either from an extreme optimism or a mere wishful thinking on the part of the ancients regarding the possibility of an ever-blissful existence.

Though apparently convincing one fails to find satisfactory answers to some of the questions that the above view gives rise to: How could a concept springing from a mere wish or optimism sway the minds of philosophers for centuries together, and that too in spite of the vehement criticisms that the cārvākas (the materialists) must have levelled against it? Again, how did the concept usurp such a central place in the philosophy of the Buddha who sought to expunge from his system what did not conform to reason/experience?

Precisely this fact that the Buddha with his firm conviction in only two pramāṇas - experience and reason - still believes in "nirvāṇa", "rebirth" etc., suggests that these latter concepts are the product of reason/experience. We shall now attempt to reconstruct the pattern of thought that must have led the ancients to these concepts.

We would do well to first note the presuppositions on which all further arguments seem to be based; Contd....26....
I. let us call the immediate constituents of the world (the "objects" as we commonly refer to them) as the "empirical" entities. The ancient thinkers observed that

(a) All empirical entities are divisible or reducible into two or more entities, i.e., they are prone to destruction.

(b) When they are destroyed (or die), the empirical entities, are reduced into other empirical entities.

II. The nirguna entity revealed in the yogic-experience was (as we shall see in the next chapter) identified as the entity responsible for the fact of "consciousness"—as acquiring "consciousness" or "producing" it. Being nirguna in its unrelated state,

(a) The entity is "simple" or indivisible

(b) Acquisition or production of "Consciousness" would imply that the entity is related to certain other entities; that is, the entity requires auxiliary causes in acquiring or production consciousness.

A "conscious" being therefore, is not a simple entity.

Contd...27..
Generally, theory-building takes the following form:

(i) Some simple and primitive (unborn) entities are postulated (this avoids an infinite regress).

(ii) Laws are postulated to account for the behaviour of objects as well as to account for their nature in terms of the simple elements.

(iii) Some factor responsible for the creation of the world from the simple elements is also postulated.

But the Indian Philosophical systems do not conform to this mode of theory-construction; step (iii) is rejected by all these systems, and this is because they reject the creation of the world from simples. The Indian thinkers seem to argue that the factor which is responsible for the creation of the world should be such that the question "what caused this factor?" would be impertinent, or else, an infinite regress into another factor responsible for the factor that creates the world would be inevitable. They seem to have settled in favour of a mental factor - avidya or ignorance on the ground that ignorance of anything is natural to beings and of such ignorance it is not reasonable to ask "What caused it?" In fact, it is knowledge and not ignorance, that presupposes a causal factor. Having thus

Contd...28....
argued in favour of avidya, they contend that this implies a "conscious" being; for, ignorance can be meaningfully asserted only of an entity which can acquire knowledge and knowledge presupposes a "conscious" being. Now, according to II (b) above a "conscious" being is not a simple entity; and hence the view that all the factors leading to creation are simple factors comes to be rejected.

Further they argue, Avidya may be said to be the cause of the world in this sense that it engenders in the "conscious" being a sense of wonder at and a desire to know about the things comprising the world. And in its efforts to know and understand the world it is bound to tamper with the entities, thus upsetting the balance of Nature, disturbing the state of equipoise that Nature maintained till then. All this implies the existence of other empirical objects in addition to the non-simple conscious-being, as the latter cannot be envisaged to operate on the simple elements which are too subtle even to be perceived. Thus the ancients came to the theory that the world process, the process of production, change, and destruction, begins not from the simple elements, but rather from empirical objects. This is expressed by them in terms of "anāditva" or "beginninglessness" of the world. "Anāditva" denies the view that simples initially exist uncombined or in isolation, which under the influence of some causes, come into

Contd...29...
combination. "Birth" or "Production" of empirical entities is from other empirical entities; there is simply no factor that produces entities from simples. This ensures that if an entity is resolved into its simple constituent factors, then these simples cannot be brought into combination again under any circumstance whatsoever. (III).

To see how the philosophers arrived at the concepts of "rebirth", "Karma", and "Mokṣa", We may begin by considering the fact of the death of a "conscious" being, say, a human being. It is observed that at death while the physical body continues to exist, the activities which presuppose consciousness—thinking, feeling etc.—come to an end. From the cessation of "consciousness" while the body still exists, it was inferred that at death, the nirguṇa entity is dissociated from the body. By II (a) the nirguṇa entity is simple and therefore "death" would mean the disintegration of the human being into its simple constituent elements. This obviously contradicts I (b) according to which any empirical entity when destroyed is reduced to other empirical entities. In harmonising these two contentions it was supposed that the nirguṇa entity that dissociated from one body associates itself with another to give birth to another "conscious" being, so that in the final analysis death results not in a reduction into

Contd...30...
simple elements, but rather in giving rise to a new "conscious" being in addition to the reduction of the physical body into other empirical entities. That is, death of one "conscious" being results in the production or birth of another conscious-being with the nirguṇa entity being the common factor between the two. This is the concept of re-birth. Further the nirguṇa entity cannot be conceived to be unrelated to any other entity even during the time that lapses (however small the duration) between the dissociation of the nirguṇa entity from one body and its association with another. Else, that is, if the nirguṇa entity was not associated with some entity in that duration of time, it would mean that death has resulted in a resolution into simples, thus violating I (b); so that its subsequent association with another body would mean that a simple entity comes into combination with other entities, thus violating (III) above. In order to overcome this the concept of a "Sukṣma Sarīra" or "Subtle body" - a body which remains associated with the nirguṇa entity until and unless the latter is freed from all associations seems to have been adduced.

At this stage one may ask: What determines the specific nature of the new conscious-being? The nature of any new product the thinkers seem to have argued, is determined both by the material cause(s) and the other factors influencing the process Contd...31..
of production. In the case under question, the physical body of the being that dies can alone serve as the material cause of the new being. But this physical body reduces, as observed, into other entities or, in other words, it just decays; it cannot therefore be regarded as the material cause of the new being. In order to account for the nature of the new being they resorted to the law of "Karma" - it is one's previous acts or "Karma" that determines the nature of the new being.

Yet another question that could be raised is whether the series of "rebirths" is an endless one - the death of a "conscious" being inevitably resulting in the birth of another "conscious" being. The ancient thinkers didn't think so and their belief in the possibility of putting an end to the series has its basis, once again, in the yogic experience. The yogic experience is the experience of the nirguna entity. And a nirguna entity is experienceable only when it is isolated from other entities all of which possess some quality or the other. For, the experience of an entity in which the nirguna is associated with these other qualified or saguna entities is bound to be the experience of the qualities. Therefore, from the fact of yogic experience one may infer the possibility of the isolation of the nirguna entity. Again, since by II (a) the nirguna entity is a simple element, once isolated it does not enter into combination with other elements (by III). That means the series of re-births comes to an end. It is this end

Contd.... 31
of the series of re-births that is called "mokṣa".

Mokṣa, then, is due to the isolation of the nirguṇa entity and not due to knowledge. A votary of the "Mokṣa is due to knowledge"-view may still argue that since the isolation of the nirguṇa entity is caused by the yogic-experience and since this experience is the source of our knowledge of the nirguṇa entity, this knowledge itself may be said to be the cause of the isolation of the nirguṇa entity and hence of mokṣa. It must be noted, however, that it is the knowledge of the nirguṇa entity that follows the yogic-experience, and not vice-versa, so that this knowledge (of the nirguṇa entity) cannot be the cause of the yogic-experience or of mokṣa. If mokṣa, then, is not the result of any knowledge, loss of any knowledge (even of all knowledge) cannot bind a muktā, cannot re-kindle the series of re-births.

Further, "mukti" in the above sense does not deny the possibility of a muktā undergoing experiences of pleasure, pain, etc., and is not, thereby, incompatible with the notion of the jīvan-muktā working out the prārabdha-karma. This is, again, not incompatible with the possibility of the muktā developing a certain psychological detachment towards the body that enables him to have a threshold of pain higher than that of a common man thus giving rise to the impression that he is beyond pain and misery.

Contd...33.
Though constituting a slight digression, it is nevertheless worthwhile and interesting to note that apart from being at the root of concepts like "re-birth" and "mokṣa", the yogic-experience and the nirguṇa entity seem to be responsible for the atheistic character of the Indian philosophical systems.

The yogic-experience and the nirguṇa entity were undeniable facts for the ancient thinkers, and after identifying the nirguṇa entity as the one responsible for "consciousness", they concluded that a "conscious" being is not a simple entity. Now whatever else one may either attribute to or deny of God, "Consciousness" and "indestructibility" cannot be denied.

But to be a "conscious" being is, according to the Indian philosophers, to be non-simple and therefore prone to division or destruction. To postulate a God whose "consciousness" is not the result of the nirguṇa entity is nothing but an attempt at accommodating a preconceived entity in the system where none is required.

If the yogic-experience is the reason for the atheism of the majority of the Indian Philosophical systems, one would expect the theistic systems to reject this experience. And, we do in fact find the theistic systems of Rāmānuja and Madhva virtually rejecting this yogic-experience. Constrained by the
fact that the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta Sūtras, which they were interpreting, frequently spoke of the yogic-experience these thinkers could not afford to ignore it and so resorted to giving a different interpretation to what was said of that experience. While the earlier thinkers understood the experience as one where no qualities were apprehended, the theists interpreted it as one where no inauspicious qualities were apprehended; and again, while the entity experienced was earlier taken to be an entity devoid of all qualities, the theists interpreted it as being devoid of all inauspicious qualities. This almost amounts to a confirmation of the importance of the yogic experience in determining the atheistic nature of Indian Philosophical systems. Not only the atheistic trend, but the whole course of Indian Philosophy is, as we shall see in the following chapter, well within the ambit of this experience with one early deviation by the cārvāka and a very much later one by the theists.

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