PREFACE

Systems of philosophy mediate between the knowledge/experience of reality and the ways of human approach to this knowledge/experience. When reality is conceived as evolving and the epistemic appropriation of it as evolutionary, there arises the question of method. Method in philosophy is not a definite set of rules to be followed mechanically and blindly. Indeed, a method has certain elements that may be imitated, but its defining aspects cannot be copied thanks to the fact of evolution.

The methodological analysis undertaken in this thesis is not meant to offer a model for doing philosophy. It aims to awaken human consciousness to the evolutionary structure of its cognitive procedures. It realizes its aim by exposing the operations that Sri Aurobindo performs and the transformations that he undergoes while he conceives and expounds an integral non-dual picture of reality.

As regards the methodology of this exposition a few points are noteworthy: Firstly, the primary source of the work is Sri Aurobindo’s own writings, published in 30-volumes as Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, and the 37-volume The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, which is being published since 1997. Although 14 volumes of the complete works are yet to be published, the volumes that include the formerly unpublished materials are all available by this time. Wherever verbatim citations were essential, passages have been quoted from the sets of original works mentioned above. In introducing varied themes in different chapters, reliable and reputed secondary sources have also been consulted, quoted and duly acknowledged. Secondly, for making an orderly presentation of the loosely spread out materials, and for facilitating a smooth and systematic progression of the inquiry many a heuristic tools have been borrowed. For instance, in the first chapter, Kantian notions of transcendental synthesis, intellectual synthesis and figurative synthesis are used to introduce Sri Aurobindo’s literary genre; and, in the final chapter, Ken Wilber’s chain of being is brought as the backdrop to present the inquirer’s own analysis of human cognitive life.

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