A Personal Remark

Though we firmly assert that R. is not considered an avatāra in the original Vālmīkian Epic and though we are not ready to believe that R., in the way he is portrayed by V., is a historical figure, we are not saying anything against the possibility that the ideal of R. (beyond the message conveyed by V.) is a timeless revelation of the Absolute, having gradually evolved in the consciousness of the Indian man. However, such a vision transcends all critical investigation (this is the reason why we do not consider it part of our thesis) and can be obtained only by a mystical intuition into the heart of those great men who found themselves motivated, however this motivation may have originated, (namely after the model of Kṛṣṇa), by their religious experience to consider R. an avatāra of Viṣṇu. But since every mystical experience is ineffable, beyond concepts and words, and every conception of it is already an interpretation on a discursive level, pointing to but no longer able to describe this experience, the important thing is not the way how these mystics have conceived of and introduced in words the ideal of R. as a manifestation of the Absolute, but the very mystical experience of theirs. Every interpretation of an ineffable experience is criticizable if it is to be taken literally and discursively, for it is able to recapture the original experience only inadequately and partially, often erroneously, it evokes it, but never describes or reproduces it. On the other hand, the experience in itself, if genuine, is beyond criticism. Therefore, the conception of a historical R. as an avatāra of Viṣṇu is, if taken literally, unreal because historically unfounded, meaningless because
contradictory. But if it is understood in a transcendental vision and enlightened by the understanding that it has been advocated time and again by great mystics of India, that from the time of V. the ideal of R. (as also of S.) has, as one of the greatest and loftiest ideal man can conceive of and aspire to, inspired the lives of millions and millions of people in India, and that the V. Rm. itself is the fruit of a deep existential experience of a saint-like poet, this conception points to a great religious mystery: that, beyond the message conveyed by V., the ideal of R. as well as of S., which he gave birth to, is a timeless ideal, a divine revelation of the Absolute given to the Indian people, but with a universal message, a message for every man.