

Chapter 4

Musings

On the Sand-Dunes was published as “Musings on Life in Free Verse” and *A Day with Sambhu* as “Talks to a Boy.” Though both the works were published before Independence, readers can perceive a postcolonial strain in both the books. Venkataramani is committed to the uplift of human beings. Manjeri S. Isvaran sums up the postcolonial aspects of *On the Sand-Dunes*:

Mr. Venkataramani muses seated on the sand-dunes of his native place where the Kaveri joins the sea, sand-dunes on the beach as he himself says in a later work of his, *Murugan—the Tiller*, which are Nature’s softest bed for the philosophic thinker and seeker after truth. Now boisterously joyous, now morbidly melancholy, these reflections in rhymeless verse endeavour for the uplift of man, ‘from the modern civilization which has made every thing on this earth a complex and ugly knot—even the fairest flower a nest of bacilli.’ He heralds the superman of Nietzsche (the *Mahapurusha* of the Hindus), to make the pampered modern man a thing of shame. He calls man to return to his primeval existence, to where Nature lies in all her brilliant and beautiful repose, far, far from civilization with its soul-destroying industrialism,

sordidness, squalor and artificiality. (*Venkataramani: Writer and Thinker* 5)

Venkataramani wrote *A Day with Sambhu*, critics say, for children with a didactic element. But postcolonial readers find national identity, one of the major features of postcolonialism, to be the very breath of this simple book meant for children. The West had silenced the native voice and projected its culture as superior. Venkataramani resists the silencing by the West and celebrates the supremacy of the native/colonized culture.

The Next Rung and *Renascent India* were published as early as 1928. Venkataramani does not project the freedom struggle of the time. Instead he concentrates on Swaraj India. He is very confident that India will be free very soon. Therefore he concentrates on the main problems that India will face in the ensuing years. He discusses the problems posed by the West to Indians and suggests how they can be tackled. He takes up the issue of the World War and how it affects India. He suggests the type of Government that India requires, how the Indian village has to be administered and how it has to be rejuvenated. He points out the drawbacks of the West and how the native culture has to be reconstructed to realize real paradise. He also pays attention to the educational system of India and how it has to be restructured to suit the needs of Indians.

In the section “In the Throes of a Rebirth” of *Renascent India* Venkataramani says that there is total unrest throughout the world due to the World War. Because of this disturbance new creative ideas arise in India. “It is the restlessness and activity of a growing spirit which seeks to widen its consciousness and emerge into a higher and fuller mode of life. It is a renascent force. . . .” This force seeks a new philosophy which has permanent values (1).

As this century is marked by LPG-Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, the pervious century was greatly influenced by science. Science brought about many changes. Man detached himself from Nature and Mother Earth. Man concentrated only on material progress. Now man is aiming at a “higher unity achieved . . . of a philosophic enquiry into a oneness of all Life and the abiding verities of its love and sacredness in all its forms and relationship.” Therefore the search is based on impersonal grounds, for a code of “Sanatana Dharma” which is derived from permanent values, which assures peace in daily life (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 2).

The advancement of science has brought about a drastic change in society. It disturbs the social order, particularly in the economic aspects. Venkataramani supports this science on the ground that the disturbances caused by science are due to the “higher evolutionary urge in man.” The love of peace is present in every man

and even wars are waged against another country in order to achieve peace (*Renascent India 2*).

Venkataramani feels that India is at the first stage of renascent unrest. When it is in full splendour, he dreams that:

the effect of this Renaissance on creative achievement will be glorious. Its prophets will be different. Its voice will be new. Its literature will belong to another plane. Its songs will spring from new measures. Its rhythm, its ebb and flow will rise from the utmost depths. . . . Social action will be selected and based on permanent values, not related to mere acquisition and material comfort but to cosmic peace and joy contributing both to individual happiness and common good. (*Renascent India 3*)

He is very confident that the Indian Renaissance will play a vital role in the world movement of renewal and, at the end, the sovereign love of God will triumph over evil (Venkataramani, *Renascent India 4*).

In the section “Whirlwind or Rain” of *Renascent India*

Venkataramani says that there is a debate on whether the war will be a destroying whirlwind or a blessing rain. But, reading the clouds of the political sky, it is very clear that there will be a great whirlwind for the Eastern countries. Venkataramani says that the “Treaty of Versailles” is a first step to the next great conflict because it has not touched the important points which engendered the war. It has driven

the defeated very deep and he will only wait for a better chance. At this stage one cannot work for peace as “the seer sees already the thin ascent of rifle smoke.” Lloyd George and Clemenceau did not have the heart of a child, which craves for love and peace. They are “veteran politicians fed on their self-love and the dainty blood of the sheep” (5-7).

The war can be stopped only if there is a cultural and spiritual coalition between India and China and Great Britain and the U.S.A. Venkataramani is sure that the U.S.A. will listen to peace as it once listened to Swami Vivekananda (*Renascent India* 8).

The real problem is with Europe and its economic status. He analyses the European countries and states clearly: “Western and Central Europe, efficient and organized, with coal and steel as the glittering coins of exchange, is the real trouble. Its unemployed surplus population swell the conscript armies, and their courage in war is really the courage of the man who fights for his food” (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 8).

Venkataramani provides a solution to all modern wars. All people need to turn to agriculture and shed national boundaries. Man should have a “higher patriotism which feels that the human family is one, and one among many of God-created things” (*Renascent India* 9).

India’s duty is to bring peace to the world by preaching the “common humanity of the whole world.” *Renascent India* should raise

a new order of men who work passionless and selfless and follow the *dharma*, which alone will take men to a higher destiny (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 10).

In the section “The Renascent Urge” of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani says that while India is fighting for its freedom, it also has a higher vision. Even in the period of turmoil, Indians perceive the oneness of all life. He says, “India has a special message to give us, the most faithful and persevering of the caravan which has kept the bright star of the Oneness of Life steadfastly in view even in the midst of great upheavals.” He again insists that Swaraj India must turn to country life where people can work in fields (12).

India is rich in culture and tradition. There is unity in diversity. The problems and troubles in India are common to the world. One can find solutions to the world’s problems in India, because “Her one great quest has been the ways and means to higher forms of peaceful life, ever eager to reduce the lower elements that resurge powerfully at every stroke of action that physical life needs for its subsistence” (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 14).

India has a great mind, which accepts all castes, religions and even the sectional interpretation of life. Even among the conflicting elements she has achieved unity. She has adopted a “Sanatana Dharma, a code basing action on impersonal motives and selfless principles” (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 15).

India has attained this stage "because of the excellence of her ancient political machinery." The citizens do not waste their time on clerical work but in the open, where they spend time in "prayerful moods of philosophy and meditation" (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 15).

Indian politics is based on peace and it does not encourage war as a weapon of improving trade. It serves well as a hedge, which protects culture and religion. India has preserved its culture and religion amidst the industrial revolution and a highly centralized government for a period of more than one hundred years, because of its "full life in the villages" (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 16).

The world today is too materialistic. Europe and America have no time for leisure and cultural or spiritual activity. Whereas, "*Renascent India's* message is a philosophy of productive rest and creative leisure." But India's will be audible to the world only if it is set free. Venkataramani asks, "A captive bird in the cage, will it ever sing its sweetest songs in its gloomy cell, when the leafy branches wave their welcome before its very eyes and the sun rides in splendour across the blue vault of the sky?" [*Renascent India* 17).

In the section "Creative Unrest" of *Renascent India* Venkataramani says that, due to the British rule in India, there is unrest in almost all fields. The cherished ideals of the Indian political, social, cultural and spiritual milieu are disturbed and thrown into the

“melting-pot”. “All values are being inverted and tradition ignored” (18). This is a very important aspect of postcolonial literature. Because of the disturbed ideals, the people have changed their attitude. Venkataramani complains, “A rampant materialism nourished by a logical and scientific rationalism is sapping the strength of our cultural and spiritual ideals.” This twist of ideals has given birth to a renaissance, which is not too far. The Indian Renaissance will prove a great boon to India as well as to the world. But it needs careful guidance to reach its destination (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 18).

Venkataramani is happy that the younger generation is hopeful and ready to work for the change: “the younger generation has shown proofs of an earnest desire to turn the ideals into racy and indigenous deeds” [*Renascent India* 20]. But these ideals, which will lead to a full Indian life, will materialize only if this energy and strength are directed to the great quest true to India’s instincts. Otherwise all this work and energy may prove a waste (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 21).

If an option is offered to Indians between politics and culture, Indians will always opt for culture. They will give the least importance to politics or government, but, at the present moment, adventure in politics also seems to be important (Venkataramani, *Renascent India*

What Venkataramani has expressed in his novels is given in a nutshell in these lines: “One man is never meant to rule another. It is an inversion. Like all inversions, it is exciting, seemingly good and joyous for the moment but never healthy, but terrible in reaction when the time comes for proper reckoning and assessment of the final values of a deed.” (Venkataramani *Renascent India* 22).

Venkataramani’s idea of Swaraj is totally different from others’. He gives minimum importance to government and looks at higher ideals. His principle of Swaraj will relieve people from sleeplessness and “aching with over-work, hunger, blind repetition, pain and waste” and will yield “Peace, Love, Rest and Harmony to the whole world” [*Renascent India* 24).

In the section “The Twin Causes” of *Renascent India* Venkataramani says that two causes which drive Indians towards a Renascent India are the intellectual hunger of the educated people to find a respectable place for India in the world and widespread poverty. Saying that many people are not aware of the poverty prevailing in India, Venkataramani gives statistical data on the poverty in the villages:

I see with my own eyes everyday hundreds of poor, ill-clad., famished and over-worked men. Ten per cent are totally unemployed. Fifty per cent live on one meal a day,

no better than pigs in the sty, and twenty per cent, on bare two meals without any standard of comfort. (26)

This poverty is due to the fact that their produce is not used by the villagers but for the exigencies of modern life and government. They have also not learnt the method of increasing agricultural production. Even the government is blind to this problem. The government never does anything to improve the life of the Indian villagers. The government concentrates more on the Army and other services. He pleads that the government should pay attention to “Agriculture, Land Tenure and Mass education. Its axis is tilted in favour of sunlight to the urban areas, and darkness and death, and cold and hunger to the hundreds of villages” (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 26).

A great injustice is being done to more than half of the population of India. Hunger is driving the entire rural mass to dissatisfaction with the government. The people work all day in the fields just for one meal a day. They do not have any prospects. There is no peace of mind among the people. Therefore the great responsibility of the government is to bring peace and happiness to the villagers. Immediate attention is required to allay the physical hunger and “passionate longing for freedom.” Venkataramani warns that if a solution is not found to these two problems, the

country/government will have to face a severe situation (*Renascant India* 27-28).

In the section "Federal or Unitary" of *Renascant India*, Venkataramani debates whether renascent India should have a federal or unitary government. He analyses various factors and concludes that a decentralized government is the best suited to India.

The unitary type of government concentrates power in one person or place, which is not suited to the Indian temperament. The unitary type is the best for countries where "moderate area and population is threatened by war on all its four sides by powerful and aggressive neighbours, on account of its geographical position," or when it is considered "a profitable game of adventure" (Venkataramani, *Renascant India* 29).

The unitary type is designed to manage the country at times of peril. If it continues, even the finest mind gets perverted. Venkataramani says, "Democracy with its complex conditions and high ideals will never tolerate the unitary type in its primitive rigour even in countries where the circumstances are otherwise favourable" (*Renascant India* 31).

Renascant India will not accept the centralized/unitary form of government. India needs decentralization and freedom to sustain and to progress in both cultural and spiritual work. Citing from Indian history, Venkataramani says that the two great kings of India, Asoka

and Akbar, failed in the end because the unitary type of government is opposed to the genius of India (*Renascent India* 32).

The communal troubles in India during the struggle for Independence are due to political misdirection. These are just the passing cloud and convey “a message of peace, reached through federation, decentralization and surrender.” If the government keeps alive the village council, people can live with peace and security. Venkataramani says, “The heart-centres of our national life should be spread out in the unity and perfection of our many villages and never be gathered into an ugly knot like London or New York.” He also cautions against imitating the West (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 36).

In the section “Indian States and British India” of *Renascent India* Venkataramani asserts that only a federal government is suited to India. He urges the necessity of a stable Swaraj India. If India has to prosper in all fields, the full resources of India have to be tapped and the government should work for a peaceful internal administration (37).

India has many small states with scanty resources and population. Only twelve states can be taken into account. Some of these states were under the control of the Moguls and the Maharattas. But once the British became the paramount power, they became mere “nominal figure heads gracing a powerless *gadf*” (Venkataramani,

Renascent India 38). When the national movement is working for the greater cause these small kings will surrender their power and states for the common cause. Venkataramani is very optimistic:

When the occasion comes, both the Muslim and the Hindu Princes will surely make a voluntary surrender of their treaty rights and privileges in exchange for a common Indian citizenship so that they may better bring to the great task of national reconstruction of Swaraj India, the fine personal qualities they certainly now possess. (*Renascent India* 39)

For the movement to be successful, India has to be united. In the present state such an ideal cannot be achieved. Venkataramani says that, if Indian states are formed based on linguistic provinces and guided with a humanitarian and international outlook, it will lead to a decentralised and free life (*Renascent India* 39).

Venkataramani is a visionary who predicts the problems that India will face after Independence. He says, “This desire for homogenous provinces on the linguistic and cultural basis can be satisfied only on a thorough redistribution of area, be it British India or Indian states.” To achieve this, the only means is for the chiefs to surrender their rights for a noble cause (*Renascent India* 40).

The chiefs should shatter the “glutting sense of riches and possessions,” which poisons all life. Instead they should yield “to a

sense of duty, right conduct, public welfare, and common good and justice from the humblest to the highest.” Only then the Indian Renaissance will attain its great height. “The prophecy of the twentieth century is the triumph of village life, simple, loving and peaceful (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 40-41).

In the section “The Indian Village” of *Renascent India* Venkataramani says that after uniting India and jointly working for the common cause, the people should go “back to the village” and lead a simple life. The rural people are undisturbed by invasion or war. They stand united and in “assured cultural unity, continuity and permanence” (*Renascent India* 43).

Venkataramani contrasts the life in the village with that in the city. Only village life “prepares man for a higher plane of action, a simpler and more fruitful existence” (*Renascent India* 44). Under the rule of the East India Company, the Indian village was totally neglected and even ruined. But now one can perceive a ray of hope. People in high positions have begun to think positively about the village and its reconstruction.

Venkataramani calls the village a “self-supporting unit.” They have everything on their own. They have their own corn and oil. There are several groups of people, each carrying out its traditional avocation so that the entire village leads a decent and self-sufficient life. There are weavers, carpenters, smiths, barbers, washermen and

potters. They all live in harmony. The rich people give them land as *maniyam* (grant), which supports the poor people. The Indian village temple “promotes and keeps alive the unity and cooperation of the different classes.” Everyone in the village lives in intimacy, which reduces conflicts among the people (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 45-46).

“Every artisan and labourer is paid primarily by an allotment of land in the village adequate to keep a family in comfort as tropical needs are, though not in luxury.” So there is no pauper and no one starves. Everyone has land to support him and his family. Therefore any work in the village like desilting of rivers, co-operative irrigation, and drainage of the fields is done with devotion. Therefore there is no slave or master. Everyone performs their duty and lives in harmony (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 45-46).

The internal arrangement for doing agricultural work is organized neatly. The labourers get their share of grains or wages. They are also provided with a set of clothes on festive days like Deepavali or Pongal. The petty officers like *Talayari* and *Niranikan* do their respective work in the Indian village for the smooth execution of the agricultural work (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 48).

They also have a Panchayat (village government) system, which governs the village. The President matters much. “He is often a hereditary holder coming from a family reputed for its learning, piety

and character and owning a decent share of lands in the village.” He has great powers. He is checked by the other panchayatdars (Village Council members). Venkataramani sadly says that the British extended their centralizing arms from Delhi and controlled and spoiled everything. Idyllic peace is possible on certain conditions. Once internal prosperity is ensured there should be no disturbance from outside. On no account should the agricultural products be exported. But many may feel that such a policy is not practicable. In the traditional Indian village whenever there is excess grains or vegetables they gladly distribute it to their fellowmen. “So no one is actually unemployed or destitute in a true Indian village.” It is possible because of the village people’s devotion to the plough and their trade seclusion. Venkataramani says that these sketches may look ideal to some people but it is actually a reality in many Indian villages where the essential conditions prevail (*Renascent India* 49-50).

The British government, with its flair for industries, has eroded the Indian villages. They have imposed heavy taxes on villagers, which they cannot bear. Even the small landlords, whether they had a good yield or not, had to pay a fixed tax for a decade or two (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 51).

A central government is a blessing to only a few people but definitely not to villagers. The village pays nearly 25% to 33% as tax to

the government. This percentage increases if the yield is less, due to some natural disaster, as the land tax is fixed. “It really means that a village exports three months’ food to pay for peace and protection and to keep alive the towns and high officials, and correspondingly it starves.” The government exchanges agricultural products for luxury goods. As a result, ultimately the store of grains is not sufficient to feed the people. So the labouring sections of the people suffer acutely. In these circumstances agriculture has become a non-profitable vocation. So many have deserted the villages and moved to towns to become clerks or *vakils* with the dream of becoming a judge. “Ambition, unreal and ruinous, is driving us away from real and nourishing work” (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 54).

Remedying these mistakes is not going to be easy. It will be a difficult task. The people have to change their mindset and heart to revitalize the village. The government too should do a great deal for its part to bring back the happiness of the Indian villages (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 54).

Venkataramani states that the government has to pay much attention to the improvement of the Indian villages, because, the Indian villages alone can provide solutions to the economic ills inherent in every progressive society (*Renascent India* 55).

The villagers never draw a sumptuous salary. But they take pride in limiting their comforts and needs and leading a simple life. In

the village everyone is paid equally, whatever may be the work they do, as the need of the stomach is the same for all people.

Venkataramani praises the Indian village as a bright crystal which reflects a great civic ideal" (*Renascent India* 56).

In the section "Some Problems of Swaraj India" of *Renascent India* Venkataramani foresees the problems that Swaraj India will face in the future. Here again he gives prominence to the agricultural problem. He takes in hand five important problems.

The first is agricultural indebtedness. The agricultural products are enough only to feed the growing population of India. But the agricultural products are exported and exchanged for industrial products. Therefore poor Indian folk are suffering and starving. Venkataramani is against exporting grains and pulses. He calls it "blood exchanged for rose water." The industrial worker gets a substantial salary whereas the hardworking peasant "has to pay for it and goes under." People should turn to a simple life, shaking off the desire for a luxurious life. The banks, which lend money to farmers, should give it at 4% interest and even the law should be amended so as to suit the farmers. Only then farmers will flourish and the industrialist will turn to agriculture (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 60).

The second problem is mass education. Though India is a cultured country, the literacy rate of Indians needs to be increased to

suit the modern world. Venkataramani complains that the present system of education is a mere waste of time and youth. The schools are like prisons and teachers are like dutiful jail-wardens. He wants to shift the location of schools from uninteresting buildings to the deep shade of a banyan tree, by the side of some water body. "In such a fine-little Ashrama, a rearing of the young on the most beautiful and natural lines, is a creative work of joy for its own sake." If India goes Nature's way everything will be the best in Renascent India (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 63).

The next is military expenditure. It is Venkataramani's firm conviction that spending money in the military is a total waste. One need not invest so much money in the military if one follows the traditional Sanatana Dharma and sheds the desire for gold, trade, commerce and riches. If everyone is allowed to enjoy their own life there will not be any enmity or war among peoples. The military will then be unnecessary.

The next problem is the cost of administration. The people in the administration are paid more than anybody else. Others have to work to pay the civil service people. Therefore their salary has to be cut down and an atmosphere has to be created wherein such work is honorary and is done for the sake of love and not for money (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 63-64).

The burden of taxation is unevenly distributed all over India. The system of taxation and land tenure crushes the poor and favours the rich. The first duty of Swaraj India is to amend the law and effect a humane revision (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 65).

Some of the other problems can be solved by creating a small holding in perpetuity. Venkataramani insists that the land should be distributed equally to the people. "Law and public opinion should enable the creation of three-acre holdings in perpetuity and embalm them for ever by rendering them impartible, inalienable and tax-free" (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 66). If the above-mentioned problems are solved Renascent India will be really happy.

In the section "The Higher Problem" of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani says that the Indian people have inherited all the good qualities. But the "personal qualities have their corresponding civic deficiencies." For example patience and forbearance may be misconstrued as cowardice and lack of self-respect in daily life. Because of such misunderstanding the image of India suffers. Though Indians have individual refinement, it should be shared with others so as to boost the image of Renascent India (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 68-69).

The average Indian never shows his virtue to the public. His "public" ends with his family. So only his family is aware of his virtues and not the public. According to Venkataramani, the average Indian is

not intoxicated by power and wealth. He is not ambitious. So he behaves like a slave to his masters and *salams* everyone. But once he tastes power and wealth he becomes more ambitious and craves more of it. He never thinks of using his power and wealth for common purposes/good (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 70-71).

The average Indian is personally very compassionate and self-sacrificing. He keeps himself and his family clean. He has good sanitary habits and cooperates with his family even in very adverse conditions. But one cannot expect such qualities from him when it comes to public matters or even to his neighbours. He does not care for the suffering of neighbours: purposely stores garbage in the neighbour's boundary and never cooperates with them.

Venkataramani insists that this attitude of the Indian must change. This type of behaviour may be attributed to the "long political subjection of India for over one thousand years." The average Indian has yet to cultivate the civic sense (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 73).

A kind of inferiority complex prevails among Indians, which blocks the soul and blinds the vision. "We are unable to discover our own great man till some cultured alien does it for us. Then we crowd round and clap hands as poor relations do round a man who has suddenly got rich." But even the triumphant man is possessed by an inferiority complex as he was ignored in his heyday. His view of life

has turned, cynical. Therefore he too fails to do good to others. The elders fail to guide the youngsters and they do not recognize and appreciate the talent of the youngsters because they were ignored in their youth. So this habit is passed on from generation to generation. But it seeks compensation in admiring foreigners. “Our mania for aliens is at the root of our national degeneration.” Indians must shed this complex and develop confidence in themselves. They must give expression to their inner virtues in public (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 75).

In the section “The Real Paradise” of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani says that India is at the initial stage of its Renaissance. If the problems mentioned earlier are solved, the Indian village will turn into a real paradise. A healthy marriage of science and tradition will improve the agricultural products. Then the new Indian village “will have a beauty of form of a rebirth, the new features of an emergence.” It will also spread the message of peace and love to the world. All the good virtues will find expression in both private and public life (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 79).

Venkataramani spells out his philosophy of life thus: “Life which needs nothing, which shuns nothing, which goes in quest of nothing is the rarest and the choicest, and the fullest in Nature.” To achieve all these India should have the utmost freedom of expression and freedom from slavery (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 80).

The leaders, whatever religion they follow, are united together for liberating India from the clutches of foreigners. The envisioned paradise is at a great distance and the speed poor because of the slower members. India's political and economic thinkers have to change their mind. Venkataramani declares, "Never will true Swaraj be yours till you learn neither to buy nor to sell for copper or gold" (*Renascent India* 82).

In the section "Swaraj Constitution for India" of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani repeatedly stresses that there has to be a change in the way India is administered. He envisions a Swaraj Constitution for India incorporating several changes.

The first change is the introduction of the Village Council or Panchayat. He describes in detail how a Panchayat has to function. The Village Council may consist of five members who may be elected once a year and select a Chairman from among themselves. They will take care of village development and sanitation. The Council may be assisted by a Village Munisif and an Accountant and a *talayari*, who does the work of a policeman. The Council itself can levy taxes and part of it can be spent for village development and a part can be sent to the provincial government and ten percent to the national government, if necessary (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 84).

in the matter of judicial affairs, it is necessary that they are heard by a Village Court presided over by a Judge. If people are not

satisfied with the verdict of the Village Court, they can appeal to a higher body. Even for this higher appeal Venkataramani suggests certain rules and regulations (*Renasant India* 85).

Venkataramani says that school teachers must guide and assist the rural people in the right direction. He also prescribes that they should be paid only Rs.30 per month, according to the prevailing value of money. He feels that giving a sumptuous salary to teachers' leads to evil in society. He adds that the members of the Village Council should be fairly educated (*Renasant India* 86).

His second suggestion relates to the district administration. One Chief Executive Officer has to administer a district. He may have control over the heads of the various departments. He should be selected only based on a national level competitive examination and must be paid more than three thousand rupees (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 87).

The Provinces should be formed based on culture and language. The Council members have to be elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and every one lakh people should have one representative on the Provincial Councils (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 87).

Ten Ministers shall administer the Province with the Governor as the head. The Council shall elect a Chief Minister and the Chief Minister will appoint the other Ministers, who will control their

respective departments. The Governor shall be appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of India. He specifies how much the Governor and the Ministers have to be paid if they refuse to serve on an honorary basis. He also recommends that the Province may have a High Court (*Renascent India* 88).

Venkataramani specifies how the Indian Government has to function. There must be one representative for half a million population in the case of the Federal Assembly of India. Six hundred and forty members will be the strength of the first Assembly. He also states that the Village Councils may constitute the electoral body. The life span of the Assembly will be five years. The King of England shall appoint a Viceroy for seven years. The members of the Assembly may elect the Prime Minister, who, in turn, will appoint Ministers. The Ministers shall not be more than twelve in number (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 89-90). There will be a Supreme Court, which shall decide disputes referred from the districts, Provinces and States (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 90).

Venkataramani also suggests that India need not have a second chamber because, the huge population, with its diversity, will itself check any hasty legislation. Pointing out negative aspects of the second body, he adds that the problems of India are manifold. If one

concentrates on them and tries to find solutions, India will become a role model to the world (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 90-91).

In the section “A New Order” of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani talks about the importance of the *sanyasin* spirit to India. The Swaraj government can be carried on well only if India produces on a larger scale *sanyasis* or people who renounce the world and work for the common cause (92).

He says that only those *sanyasis* whose prime motive is to help others should become members of all deliberative bodies from the Council to the Assembly. Another important rule which will lead Swaraj India to its full glory is that any member of the government or government servant, from the Council Member to the Prime Minister, should buy no property during or after their period of service. If they buy, they should seek permission from their Village Council or the Public Service Commission which recruited them. The excess profits from all exploiting trades and professions have to be taxed heavily, so that all people will be benefited evenly. If this rule is once established the mark dividing the personal and the public interest will vanish. Venkataramani admits that these rules may seem much opposed to the present custom. But if one realizes that life on earth is only a “rest-place” and not permanent, one can understand the importance of the above rules (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 93-94).

in the section "A Programme of Rural Reconstruction" of *Renasant India*, Venkataramani stresses eight important areas which will help in rural reconstruction. They are: 1. Panchayat or Village Council, 2. Introduction and promotion of scientific agricultural methods in villages, 3. Need of a cooperative stores in every village. Exports and imports may be guided by the Village Council. 4. The Village Council may employ a doctor to take care of medical aid and sanitation in the village. A mid-wife may assist him. 5. A Panchayat school with a teacher, a good library and a reading room for the public. The Village Council can help the villagers by providing electricity facility for domestic and agricultural work. 6. The tanks and the channels shall be maintained properly. Every field shall have a source of irrigation and also proper drainage outlet. 7. Fouling of streets and water resources shall be penalized. The people have to maintain proper good habits to ensure proper sanitation in the village. 8. The Panchayat shall beautify the village by planting trees on both sides of the streets and in river-beds (Venkataramani, *Renasant India* 95-97).

If these are followed with strenuous work for five years, the villages will become a paradise. But this can be achieved only if everyone turns towards ploughing and leads a simple life. The Council shall also be allowed to retain a certain percentage of the revenue with itself for the development of the village. Then real peace and

happiness can be achieved. Venkataramani expects a political leader with such a vision to improve the village and its people (*Renascent India* 97-98).

In the section “Bank the Waters” of *Renascent India*, Venkataramani gives examples from world history of renaissances and people responsible for them, for example, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and, in India, Sankara, Asoka and Akbar. Though India had many renascent movements, they failed to achieve the promised results due to Indians’ sluggishness in action. Indians should actively engage in action, which should be a noble and selfless work. He counsels the people to take advantage of the renaissance of the 1920s and work for human uplift. God will help India to utilize this period and help by providing peace and love to India (Venkataramani, *Renascent India* 99-105).

In the section “Our First Triumphs” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that man has learnt the arts of cooking and clothing, which distinguish him from other species. Venkataramani considers these to be man’s first triumphs. Though man has progressed in the art of life, “Our civilization is but the bottom rung of another ladder running up to a loftier range, more peaceful, more panoramic and more sublime” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 2). After the first triumphs, man has developed with patience and labour three important institutions, namely, government, property and

marriage. These three institutions are interlinked in several ways. If these three institutions are evaluated with a passionless mind, it will lead to “grand Truths of life” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 5).

In the section “On Government” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that government, though the youngest in this family of three, is the “most intrepid.” It controls property and marriage at critical moments. For the smooth running of the government many have to work hard. In due course, the government malfunctions and leads to “chronic fissures in our social life.” The government was originally “intended to ameliorate, by Justice and mercy, the evils wrought by a high sense of possession which has marked man as a refined eating animal, and forced him to develop the institution of property.” Man craves for ease and comfort in the future. Therefore he fights with friends and foes alike and saves property for his sons and grandsons (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 7-8).

The government’s first requisite is police power to watch over the weak and the poor and protect them from injustice. But it functions in the other direction. It guards the rich and the strong. There is no equal distribution of the basic requirements of man to live happily. Food is stored by the rich while the poor are starving in the field. The government fails to enforce economic equality for its people (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 8-9).

Government service is no more honorary but a profitable adventure. The government allots large sums of money for civil and military work and only a mere ten percent is allotted for agriculture and other real needs. The tiller of the soil, the real producer of wealth, receives very little. The attitude of politicians and the public must change in order to achieve a better future. Venkataramani says: “The sense of gain and possession which now motives all labour should yield place to a sense of public duty and right conduct based on permanent values to evolving life” [*The Next Rung* 12-13].

In the section “On Property” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that, as a mark of civilization, everyone has the right to own property. If it is so, “Then, why, in the name of God, should not every man possess in his own right an acre of land, a minimum to appease that hunger [?]” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 15). But ninety out of one hundred do not have land, for the remaining ten per cent possess the lands of the ninety. Therefore Venkataramani insists that there should be equal distribution of agricultural lands to everyone. He says that the modern government has failed to ensure economic equality to everyone. No one should be allowed to take more than he needs in kind for a day. Only if everyone accepts this idea redemption is near and all standards of living will become one. Everyone needs to accept the simple way of life as the best. The two great institutions “government and property should function properly and adequately

for the benefit of the race and its uplift” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 19).

In the section “The Arch of Religion” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that the institutions of government and property can function properly and the ideals can be achieved only when the institution of marriage functions properly. Religion guides and tames the impulse of rebellion in any man for the proper functioning of marriage. Venkataramani says that religion not only tames but also promises “peace, love, contentment, leisure, meditation, and inward search, as against work, waste and hurry, slavery and loss of self-respect incidental to all organized life” [*The Next Rung* 22).

Religion, whatever its name may be, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity or Islam, guides all the three institutions and its ethical dictates are made the laws of the people. But all these four religions, born for a common cause, fight for supremacy. Instead of bringing about peace and love among mankind it has nourished hatred and “devastating and cruel wars” are fought in its name. He prays God to give eternal peace to the world (*The Next Rung* 23-25).

In the section “On Cooking and Clothing” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that man learnt the art of cooking and clothing when he has progressed from the jungle. He advises the readers to be vegetarians and eat natural items like fruits, nuts, flowers and leaves. Flesh foods increase the bestial instinct in man. Man enslaves

another man for the sake of cooked food. He is against the system of slavery. If man eats natural food, “He will get the courage to starve and die rather than to eat slaved food got as wages from another on bended knees.” He asks man to take food according to the nature of the work he does. He is always for simple and light food, which improves “the quality of the mind-power and work” (*The Next Rung* 42-44).

Venkataramani makes a passing reference to clothing, giving a symbolic reference to clothing. “By clothing, I mean not merely the mere art of drapery and dress, but all those great acts which externalize life, and feed the sense of pomp and parade that profoundly move and mismove life at every step in its speeding career” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 44).

In the section “Agriculture and Emigration” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that many people leave the village and go out to work in industries. Only the dull and simple-minded people are tilling the soil. The West made the blacks and the browns till the soil and in return they supplied factory made goods. Venkataramani cannot tolerate this and says, “This desertion of the plough and disloyalty to Mother Earth are at the root of all our misery.” He wants everyone to return to the village and enjoy cultivation. He suggests that this is the only way to have worldwide peace. He wants even the military to promote agriculture and engage in agriculture related activities during

peacetime, instead of wasting time on "futile drills and marches" (*The Next Rung* 45-47).

He gives another suggestion to remove poverty from this land. He wants money to be used only "as a token of exchange in a limited scale." Lending money at interest is a sinful act (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 49).

The industrial revolution brought about a change in men's thinking. People no longer consider ploughing an honourable work. "Instead of foodstuffs, pleasure stuffs are now produced in plenty to soothe the cravings of a few." He regards this attitude as the fundamental cause of the misery of hundreds (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 50).

He spells out the solution to the problems of the poor: "a. reversion to the old ideals of plain living, village life and agriculture, with the speed and the firm accent which modernity has given us" (*The Next Rung* 51).

In the section "On Education" of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani speaks about the education system for postcolonial India. "The true school is the home and the best teachers are one's own parents, and life and Nature around." As the parents are engaged in other work, they pass their primary duty onto someone who works for fixed wages. The school turns out to be a "juvenile prison-house" and keeps the young ones from doing mischief. As all schools are crowded, they

insist on minimum freedom and maximum discipline. The government does nothing to improve the quality of education but passively funds the school and leaves the management to autonomous bodies (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 55).

The first twenty-five years of life are wasted and man learns the real lesson of life only when he is forty-five or fifty. The youth need to develop the qualities of “daring and enterprise, the courage to tread new paths and a constructive mind quality” (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 56).

A drastic change has to take place in the methods of teaching the young. Freedom must be given to the young to roam about and learn lessons from “Self-made mistakes and self-invited failures.” The curricula in the schools and colleges have to be changed. The science of agriculture should be given more importance than any other “soul-blasting” sciences. The student should learn more from life than from books. The teachers also should keep their mind young. Venkataramani is very sure that if one takes all these steps one can move from the bottom rung of the ladder to few steps ahead (*The Next Rung* 59).

In the section “The Hurdles Ahead” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that the main hurdle blocking India’s progress is the population explosion. The sex-impulse has to be sublimated and man must divert it to universal understanding. Man needs to avoid

tinned food and take fresh and green fruits and vegetables. The system of education has to be changed and learning should start from one's mother's womb. If all these happen, man can move to the next rung in the ladder (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 60-68).

In the section "The Next Rung" of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says that, if all the changes suggested by him are effected, there will be a new rule on the earth: a combination of "Science and Religion; Poetry, Philosophy, Meditation and Music." The *Rishis* of ancient India understood the secrets of the world. Hence they sublimated the sex-impulse and achieved great things in this world and in another world too (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 69).

The descendants of the *Rishis*, the Brahmins, who have to carry out their mission are now working as mere government employees and have "ignored the priceless inheritance" (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 70).

The West thinks of common redemption for all. But this not possible. The East thinks the other way. Venkataramani believes that man may exist for ever in this world (*The Next Rung* 73). He believes strongly that no other superhuman species can occupy this universe:

The next rung in my ladder is reserved only for my own species, a peaceful, benevolent, duty-doing, possession-less, passion-less, self-respecting, self-working, all-knowing, purposeful creature who looks almost like man

except for a quiet glint in his eyes, and a strange and celestial glow of Light in his face. (*The Next Rung* 74)

To achieve this everyone has to work collectively. If we do so “another millennium of peace and love among all and to all” is assured (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 75).

In the section “India’s Place and Work” of *The Next Rung*, Venkataramani says, “The whole world is longing now not for political unity as a final step but for the realization of the cultural and the spiritual Oneness of all life.” Renascent India will help in satisfying this desire of the race (Venkataramani, *The Next Rung* 89).

India has one-fifth of the world’s population and a “microcosm of the hopes and troubles of the whole world itself.” India is “a store house of traditions.” It also has many movements, which enable it to answer the “philosophic enquiry into the Science of Government.” The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics and the *Puranas* are intended to solve the riddles of life and guide man in the proper direction. India has faced many conflicts, both political and cultural. It has overcome all these conflicts and developed a cultural unity. It advocates “a Sanatana Dharma, a code basing action on impersonal motives and cultural principles.” It is capable of providing solutions to all problems. But, Venkataramani asks, “Will the West, with its ‘superiority complex,’ with its strident racial pride, care to listen to the song of Peace, which India has ever been fluting, since the dawn of

civilization?” He expects that India will be free very soon and its sweet songs will be heard by everyone (*The Next Rung* 90-94).

Venkataramani’s *The Next Rung* has several other sections which are found in *Renascent India* too: “Creative Unrest,” “Federal or Unitary,” “Indian States and British India,” “The Indian Village,” “Some Problems of Swaraj India,” “The Real Paradise,” “Swaraj Constitution for India.”

In *On the Sand-Dunes* Venkataramani introduces himself as a prose-poet to the literary world. He is a great lover of the river Cauvery and its sand dunes. He loves to muse sitting on the sand dunes. “And I am alone on the sandy dunes pining for things which will never be mine” (*On the Sand-Dunes* 1).

Observing the world around him, Venkataramani is depressed. He is weary of the cycle of Nature. Nature has given everything in plenty, but they constitute a “barren fertility.” He finds no use in all these prospects. He finds only pathos in all created life. He is in a dejected mood and views only the melancholy side of things. He says, “Man the tyrant and God the Saviour, to neither would I bend my knees or mutter prayers. But patiently I live on without faith in God and without hope in man” [*On the Sand-Dunes* 7).

He has no faith in life. He compares life to things like bubble, foam, rainbow, cloud in the moon/vapour in the sun, waves, flower that has a few minutes /hours of life. He is sad that modern

civilization has made everything complex. Man has become greedy and lustful. Venkataramani wants to move away from the madding crowd and live in isolation. He finds happiness only in communion with Nature. But fate forces him to live with “callous crowd of men” for ten months. He feels that everyone, whether a beggar or a rich man, is living in agony for some reason or the other. However, he understands that intense misery has a lot to teach him about the intricacies of life (*On the Sand-Dunes* 10-14).

Modern man has lost his soul and insensibly moves fast in the machine-world. He is like a cultured rose with the petals painted, without natural fragrance. Venkataramani points out the drawbacks of town life where people concentrate only on “I” rather than on the common/public good. He prefers the “field fed clew and the salt-laden breeze” to the noisy city life. Only silence teaches him all the tastes of life. This he can experience only in the countryside (*On the Sand-Dunes* 21).

Man is the best in everything. But he dilutes himself by cultivating an interest in modern industrial life. Venkataramani believes that the West’s educational system only cages the free soul in the name of school. He is also against the so-called industrial development, which only pollutes the entire world. He says that the British “Laid for us a thousand miles of railways and thousands more

of Marconi's sky-sweeping, God-annoying poles to flash message of our woe to our Father in Heaven" (*On the Sand-Dunes* 35).

He blames the mentality of modern man. The imbalance in the society is due to the behaviour of men. He gives his own interpretation of when man fell from Eden: "You really fell from Eden only when you learnt to mint your soul into silver and sold your brains for coins that you may transmit them to your sons." He says that one man's labour or brain is the asset of all. It should not be used only for his own benefit. With money, man has bought a share of Mother Nature and made others starve. Everyone should have only his share of food. It is a mere waste to preserve Nature's plenty in cold storage and pass it on to sons and grandsons (Venkataramani, *On the Sand-Dunes* 36-39). '

All things created by God are free, but man does not allow others to be free. Venkataramani gives the reason for man governing another man: "Why? That he may rob the bread of his living brother and preserve it for his children that may never be born?" His deep desire to free the country from the West is expressed thus: "Alas for Democracy and Civilization! what a fine name to cover a crowd of sins which neither poets nor saints can wash off with their tears!" (*On the Sand-Dunes* 43)

Venkataramani calls upon the West to shun their soul-killing industrialism and city life and turn happily to village life, where they can find time for everything. He dreams of a society where everyone will be free and none are governed by others. They will get whatever they want and they will quench their thirst and hunger from the gifts of Nature. He ends the song on a note of detachment and dejection: “I am tired of this reverie-song and this world” (*On the Sand-Dunes* 57)

Venkataramani released the second edition of *On the Sand-Dunes* in the year 1933. In the Preface to second edition, he says “SAND DUNES are never the same even for an hour. And ten years have wrought a magic change over every familiar form and shape on these ancient shores” (n. pag.).

In the first edition Venkataramani begins his song with “The Sun has set behind a floating cloud” and in the second edition he begins with “The Sun has set in the bosom of a cloud like a sleeping child in the cradle” (*On the Sand-Dunes* 1). He retains the refrain “But I am done and unfriended on these sand dunes pining for things that will never be mine” and adds two more lines “The river has the sea. The flower has the bee.” He also adds five more stanzas to the second edition (*On the Sand-Dunes* 4).

The Madras Mail comments on the little book *A Day with Sambhu* thus;

A picture of an ideal day in the life of a school boy in tones that will make a general appeal. There is so much wisdom contained in brief phrase. This is one of the very best and is the most simple, the most direct and the most pleasant we have read for many a day. (Venkataramani, *A Day with Sambhu*, title page)

In this book Venkataramani talks with the schoolboy Sambhu and shows how a boy has to live everyday from the moment he wakes up in the morning till he goes to his sleep in the night.

On Sambhu's twelfth birthday, Venkataramani, taking on the role of a Sadhu, talks with him and he is happy to see that the boy follows the tradition of India. He rises early in the morning, the ripe time to be with God and think about Nature. He asks him to begin the day with a brisk walk and salute the sun at the time of dawn. "For the sun is the giver of light and life to our earth." He also lists the benefits of doing the *Suryanamaskara* every day (*Sambhu* 5).

Both Sambhu and the Sadhu enjoy a rainy day and sport in the open air. They move from the seashore to the fresh river. The Sadhu tells the boy, "The river is a sacred thing in our lives, Sambhu. We worship it morning and evening. Running water is a cleanser. It has the healing touch." He then traces the origin of the river. It is born in some far off hills and, crossing various places, reaches the plains. While the river journeys from the hills to the plains, it proves useful in

many ways to many lives. It quenches the thirst of everyone, the rich and the poor, and fertilizes the land whether it belongs to the sinner or the saint and ends its life by sinking itself in the sea.

Venkataramani compares this retreat of river to the sea as a married daughter returning to her maternal home for “rest, peace and maternal love” (*Sambhu* 10-12).

The Sadhu asks Sambhu to lead the life of a “true river, which does good to everyone. One should learn lessons from the river. The river respects the banks on both the sides and flows within them. Similarly a man too should enjoy freedom, adopting discipline and self-control as the two banks of life. The river is a sacred thing and taking bath in it is a holy act. He cautions Sambhu that he should not pollute the river or allow others to pollute it. If anyone wants to clean his mouth or teeth, he has to do it elsewhere and not in the river (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 13-15).

He teaches Sambhu how he should bathe in the river: “Take a quick, full plunge into the river, head to foot. Enjoy your bath like a fish. Abandon yourself completely for half an hour to the gentle flow of the river.” Sambhu swims and dives like a fish and spends his time sporting in the water. The Sadhu also instructs him not to wash his clothes in the river. After the bath he asks Sambhu to get ready for his morning prayer (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 16).

He instructs him to do meditation in the morning after a bath: “It will fit you well for the day’s work. It will give you tireless energy and peace of mind. It will keep you young even in ripe, old age. It will take you safely through life’s long and varied struggle.” He asks Sambhu not to nurture any evil thoughts while doing meditation (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 21-23).

The Sadhu directs Sambhu to leave for his house after the morning prayer near the river. If his mother offers coffee, he should bluntly refuse it, because it is not a drink for young ones. Instead he should drink milk and drink it slowly. He also suggests a better food than milk. It is cold rice mixed with curd. He says it is the angels’ food on earth. He asks him to eat slowly and chew every morsel of food. Food has to be prepared from things which are raised in one’s own garden. He advises him “not to depend on another” for his daily needs (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 29).

He instructs Sambhu to get ready for school as it is nine o’ clock in the morning. He teaches him how to behave with his schoolmates. No one is dull or wicked: “only by your thinking so, you make someone dull or wicked, and you yourself become dull and wicked in the long run.” In the school, he has to listen to the teacher carefully. He should not indulge in any mischief or in any violent action. Forgiving and forgetting any wicked things done against him

will lead to a peaceful life, because that person will never repeat the wicked action against him (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 30-33).

He needs to “cultivate a curious and probing mind,” which will improve his thinking. The Sadhu considers three hours in the morning to be ideal for learning in school. After that he has to return home for mid-day meals. If he has school in the afternoon, he can go to school. Otherwise he can spend his time working and playing (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 35-36).

After his study is over, he has to work in the garden, because work alone makes man healthy and vigorous. He must water the plants with his own hands. If he has more lands, he can plot for himself a slice of land, where he can grow anything. Venkataramani says, “Nothing like giving a name to things and making them your own by the high right of your hard toil. Grow therein the vegetables you like best” (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 35-36). He advises him to fertilize the land using natural manure, and to sow the seeds during the month of *Ani*. Care must be taken till the crop yields fruits and vegetables. The food cooked from the garden vegetables will be sweeter than any other: “Nothing is so good or sweet in this world, Sambhu, as those you have yourself made or raised, by your own patient toil” (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 37-40).

He suggests to Sambhu the types of trees to grow in his garden. The evening can be spent walking in the paddy fields. He can also

take the cow with him to graze. The cow is a sacred animal. It has to be kept clean and healthy (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 42).

The staple food for Indians is rice, which grows in plenty far and wide in the fields. The paddy is grown in wet lands and dhal, gram, cotton and oil seeds are produced in dry lands. If proper care is taken the crop will yield double the produce (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 45-46).

The sun sets in the evening. The twilight deepens into darkness. They return home after chanting evening prayers at the temple.

The Sadhu advises Sambhu to take a light supper, chatting with the members of the family. If he is tired he can go to sleep. He asks him not to sleep in costly beds or on sheets of cotton, wool or silk but only on a mat woven of grass. He also asks him not to sleep in a room, which is a prison-house for the body, mind and soul. Instead he should always sleep in the open air where there is a free play of wind: "The fresh air you breathe goes to make half your health and fortune in life." He should not sleep too long and must get up early in the morning (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 52-53).

He concludes the day by telling Sambhu the story of evolution. Life on the land "slowly but surely ascended up the ladder, rung by rung, from the amoeba to the fish, from the fish to the reptiles, from the reptiles crawling on earth to the splendid beasts roaming in the

forests, and then to our own human kind now trying to make a heaven of earth” (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 56).

So all life is one and therefore one should not inflict cruelty on any creature or on other human beings. One must practice *ahimsa*. To carry out this simple principle one needs courage. One must be firm in following *ahimsa* and make it one’s lifestyle. The Sadhu also advises Sambhu to be a vegetarian, which will make him “good and great, gentle and kind under all stress and strife.” The food that is gained in a natural way is good for all. He leaves Sambhu after blessing him and goes his way to Rameshwar (Venkataramani, *Sambhu* 57-63).