A Warkari In Pandharpur

Ramu Ramanathan

Poet, Director, Playwright

rramu.rramu@gmail.com

Night falls down from the sky

The Warkari gathers a bit of a cloud on his thigh

The darkness embraces him as he sighs

He invokes Namdeo & Eknath & Janabai

Did they also have an Aadhaar?

Or Nir-Aadhaar did they die?

Like our hungry homeless Warkari?

The pavement is his pillow

Holy stones in it, full of woe

He pokes ancient thoughts with his toe

When will this Brahminism finally go?

Inter-connected to the ancient past

The Pandharpuri model was built to last

But as the Warkari does his Tuesday fast

He wonders, will Aadhaar annihilate my caste

The government agent who shot his photo

Said the Warkari's life will be transformed in toto

He will be free to recite Tukaram's kirtans

The Warkari's atma will ascend to the sun

Will his IPR disintegrate in heaven, by then?

Will the bugs and infections make him zen?

Nahin, nahin, said the government agent -

Our proprietary system is mightier than the pen

Now smile please, say cheese, while I count to ten

The Warkari tries to sleep, in his dream, he hears Sant Dnyaneshwar

He asks, Do the Pandavs-Kauravs have an Aadhaar, O Krishna Sir?

Instead of an answer, all we hear are the abhangs

Every phrase is encoded-decoded by *the* Sangh

Scientific knowledge, among bhakths, causes *rasa bhang*

Beware of wissenschaft, says the Panchajanya's Diwali Ank

It's when the Warkari reads the fine print with a magnifying glass

He realises, all the rules have been dictated by the upper class

Data is the new oil and it is up for sale

Even if like the Warkari you're tenth standard fail!

Will the 12 digits be uttered along with the morning ablutions?

Will the 12 digits, help the poor genuinely get their daily rations?

Will the 12 digits be the new Gondhal and Bharood?

Will you need to pray with 12 digits for a change of mood?

Will the first language our babies learn be these 12 digits?

Will 12 digits replace I Love You as a popular mantra on this planet?

Will the 12 digits, be audited, and sold off at an auction?

Or will the 12 digits be nuked by a Kudankulam bomb?

Will computer science professionals cause more atrocities than World War I?

Will God and Satan spar over these 12 digits, just for fun?

I know not

Perhaps Vithoba, he knows

Unless even he knows not

Cause even Vithoba will be privatised, soon

The rumours say by the next monsoon

Pandharpur has its first digital-yug mess

Vithoba, he suffers from sleeplessness

A new religion sponsored by the MNCs, it appears

Mistaken identities start to spread an epidemic of fear

The Warkari realises how he is a mis-fit

Someone, you see, has stolen his digit

He sings his tragic lament with an *ek-taara* and a *dholak*

Not realising this is red tapism, not a case of bad luck

Thus is born the 21st century Pandharpur

A Trojan Horse built as high as the Duke's hilltop

Inside it there are a million and one laptops

The Ghats, replaced by binary bits instead of agricultural crops

Registrars, service providers, data thefts have left the Warkari numb

Vithobha is missing, and Pandharpur town survives on bajri crumbs

The Warkari wants to book a ticket to paradise

But Yam-Dhoot says Nichte-Nein, you are a lice

Even as his name is being deleted, the bhajans pour out

The absence of Aadhaar, has converted him into a lout

He sings a final song

And kisses the sky

From Jejuri to Wai

They ask, why, o why!

Will this be the saga of the last Warkari from Pandharpur?

Will this be the saga of the last Warkari from Pandharpur?