

THE MESSIAH

HIS-STORY (IN VERSES)

Vanavil K. Ravi



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Preface

A few days ago, I wrote some lines that occurred to me without any deliberation, as it normally happens while I write a poem. I was astonished that they were a set of verses leading to a long story, the Story that the world is familiar with, His-Story. Yes, the story of Jesus Christ.

I was tired, as I had just then completed writing an Epic in verses titled 'Prahlad' and corrected its final proof. Another one in succession?

Fortunately I was blessed with a short vacation, to celebrate Christmas. Can there be a better way of celebrating Christmas than writing His Story in verses?

I was surprised to find that no poet, at least to my knowledge, has written in English the full story of Jesus. Not even the great John Milton. I am humbled by the fact that Time has chosen me as the instrument for it. In the name of humility, I do not want to assume the lofty jurisdiction of siting in appeal over Time's Judgment in choosing me. That jurisdiction vests rather in the reader.

I did know, in bits and pieces, the incidents of the story. However, I spent some quality time to read through all the four Canonical Gospels and some other research articles, to organise the materials in my head. My head and heart have played equal roles in this creation.

I have followed Matthew mostly. I have not adverted to every incident or every saying in the Gospels. I left it to my intuition, as usual, in making the choice.

I am happy to note that the verses are interspersed with songs that I sang while I wrote. Music and Poetry have played a fitting but humble role in narrating the story. Of course, some places are dry and prosaic. The mood of the narrative may justify it..

To me this is History. I regard Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Rama, Ganesha, Siva, et al., as the same Supreme Being, the One in different forms and names.

Since I wanted to publish this at once, I requested my wife Shobana to give a foreword. She agreed and has given an inspiring Foreword. She is undeniably a good writer, proficient in English and deep in Spiritual Commitment. She not only gave a foreword but through her valuable suggestions made this Epic look more tidy, with the same concern of a mother who would comb the disheveled hair of her reckless little boy when he ventures to go out hurriedly. Shouldn't I thank her?

I dedicate this to my spiritual master Dr.A.Nithyanandam, who showed me and my friends what it is to be with Jesus even for a few moments.

Vanavil K.Ravi 27-12-2022

Foreword

Shobana Ravi

I have known the author, Vanavil K Ravi for the past 52 years out of which for 49 years I have been his life partner. I surely have held a vantage point of perception which I think qualifies me to write this foreword. It is undoubtedly my prerogative to vouch that he is a genuine philocalist since I have walked alongside in his journey through life.

Ravi is a philosopher-poet, like the vedic rishis. His poetics is founded in the deep recesses of his consciousness and his poetry flows out through the structured channels of scholarly discipline. At times even these channels cannot hold or direct it when his inspiration arises from a zone that has no name - the zone that is the substratum of all consciousnesses. Ravi's linguistic techniques are mostly unpremeditated and as he himself observes, his verses are moulded by both the English and Tamil prosody that he mastered at a very young age. 'The measure of my poetry is always musical,' he says. The structure may in places be new to native English speakers.

"More than what He said, how He said Made a greater impact He held the torch of Truth above Every single fact." (verse 59)

Ravi does not wait for words or choose them consciously. His superego steps aside and does not intervene while thoughts choose their vessels of expression. That is perhaps why a poem happens to him as a whole, in a second, like a lightning! 'The Messiah - His Story,' was written and completed in a short span of five days. Throughout the work, the tone of the poet is friendly and empathetic.

Love for wisdom has unshackled the poet from the dreary confines of orthodoxy. As wisdom is universal, so are the saviours! Parallel occurrences across the spectrum of cultures and religions reveal themselves to his discerning mind. One spiritual Avatar does not negate another and the pure Master is the singular almighty called by many names. "My father and I are one," said the Messiah. Ravi recalls the well-known anecdote of Adi Sankara's disciple Padmapada dashing across towards his master on the waters of a river when Sankara called out for him. The work being an epic, the speaker is the poet himself. The thesis of this epic, 'The Messiah - His Story,' is the eternal juxtaposition of the perfect against the imperfect.

"With a smile He foresaw that Peter might one day Walk upon the lotus flowers Spread across a lake." (verse 66)

If every pure Master is God, then every true disciple is His devotee.

The subtle rhythm in the verses acquire a lyrical lilt when the mood of the epic turns festive. The refrains are evocative of how the poet wishes to dwell on those moments a little longer, before having to deal with the colossal failure of humanity when no one 'watched or prayed,' and a trusted one even yielded to temptation.

"Hosanna, Hosanna,
The song of Hosanna - was
In the air
Everywhere - to
Welcome The Messiah!
Hosanna, Hosanna
Welcome him today
The King has come
All our sins
He would wash away:
Not with hand or magic wand

But with His own blood.

He will teach how to reach

The heart, not just the head.

Hosanna, Hosanna,

The song of Hosanna..." (verse 81)

Figurative language is not employed in this work of the poet, as the bare truth of the story is perhaps more compelling, and it is a given that the protagonist speaks through parables. The rhyme scheme is atypical. Random words rhyme with each other, sometimes the rhyme striking from somewhere in the middle of words. Alliteration becomes evident in the syllabic music of the words when read aloud.

"He had said several things that
Sounded blasphemous;
'The temple would be destroyed - and
In three days I shall rebuild".
None could understand the real meaning
Of this saying - that
He spoke of crucifixion and the
Third day Resurrection." (verse 89)

The context of the poem may be Biblical; but nonetheless it is history per se. The poet has approached the subject not religiously, but spiritually. He relates the story of his protagonist, Jesus Christ who is truly the son of God and man; to Ravi, the God not Christian, and the man not Galilean, but Universal. The poet extols the Messiah so that the world may see and feel Him as an Avatar not contained by the interpretations of the religion.

It is surprising that as for intertextual comparison, I am unable to find another epic in English, Relating the life and times of a spiritual Avatar. The Ramayana and Mahabharatha are two such epics in Sanskrit. But they too are different from 'The Messiah - His story' in the sense that their time frame is long, and canvas, vast. The embroidery to facts too could probably be much more as they are about the Avatars whose history has been otherwise lost in the course of time.

"Why a Messiah should descend? Should suffer the most? What benefits accrued to Him - or To earth, the host? Can we find the Answer in the mind? Do we have access to the Cosmic Software? Aren't we prisoners in the Cage of Now and Here? In a solemn moment of silence, Away from the play of senses, The questions might dissolve. We will resurrect and live again With a new resolve. Amen! Om!"

Apart from being a prolific writer, Vanavil K Ravi is a lawyer, logician, and a philosopher . This should explain his prowess, in apt, unambiguous expression of thoughts and ideas. His Epic poem 'The Messiah – His story' defies the contention that epics are works that cannot be read in one go. I read it so! The effortless poetic cadence inbuilt in the stringing of words matches the grandeur of the plot. This and the lucid storytelling, are sure to place the work "The Messiah – His story," among the outstanding literary works in English.

— Shobana Ravi January, 2023 Chennai India.

Note

Shobana Ravi, a post graduate in English Literature was a Newscaster in Doordarshan, Chennai, India for more than 30 years.

She is a poet and a novelist. She has authored a narrative titled "The Catalyst", highlighting her experiences with her Spiritual Master Dr.A.Nithyanandam. Her first English novel, 'The Auspicious,' published in 2021 was well received. The second one, recounting a critical episode in the life of the great spiritual master Adi Shankara, is soon to be published by Garuda Prakashan, Gurugram. New Delhi.

I. Invocation

As a poet I am wont to see what
 Happened in the past;
 To see through the veil of Time
 And write it down fast.
 I pray to Him, the Lord Supreme
 Who plucked a tusk from His face¹
 To write an epic without a pause:
 "Bless me with that pace."
 Godspeed!

II. The Man!

- The grazing ground was steep
 Running down the hill;
 Here and there some flocks of sheep
 In a well-rehearsed drill!
 Passing clouds unloaded rain but
 Consolidated into smoke again,
 Climbing up the hilly slope,
 As if through a rope,
 To reach the sky with a sense of pride rocks
 Watching from every side.
- 3. The silence of the hill was broken
 By a rustic crowd!
 Of course, only whispers with
 A gentle mix of awe and wonder,
 All with eager expectation!
 "Someone has come", they said
 "For our emancipation; yes,
 "Messaiah!"
 The words were not clearly heard,

Yet bounced back from rocks around.

A silhouette emerged then,

"Ye!" — their lips let out an incomplete sound!

4. The man! Was he one?
Well, he called himself so,
Also "the son of God"!
He removed the gear
That covered his face,
It was bright, not by reflection,
But by itself emitting light;
Like the Sun? if said so,
Wouldn't it be trite?



III. The Immaculate Conception

5. Those were times of great expectations, People tired of tyranny, Homeless, wandering slaves, Suffering pain and senseless torture, Yet, steadfast in their faith! Faith in God, in prophecies That a Saviour would soon come. How to know Him? That's the conundrum!

6. False Messiahs, false Prophets,
Several had come and gone.
Still the hope was kept alive,
Waiting for a better dawn.
Would he be a warrior,
A saint or a preacher?
Would he perform miracles?
Would he cleanse the world
Like a flowing stream?
Well, everyone had a different dream!

Sand, rocks and mountains!

That was Judea,

Partly desert, between Seas – and

South of Samaria;

The land of shepherds and nomads, with

Towns of Jerusalem,

Hebron, Jericho, Bethany and the

Holy Bethlehem;

Soon to become home to the

True son of God.

At the time of this Epic

Its king was called 'Herod'.

7.

8. Gabriel, the Archangel is
One among the seven
Angels, Stars, Rishis², guarding
The Earth and the Heaven – with
Sky as robe and lily in hand,
A trumpet and a lantern too;
A branch, a scroll and a sceptre; –
Gabriel, he, she or it,
Appeared blue and well lit
In the dream of Mary,
Inside her closed eyelid.
She was engaged to Joseph,
A descendant of King David.

A virgin still and innocent,
Her dream was surely God-sent.

- 9. Announced Gabriel: "O young Mary! You will conceive before you marry. A son will be born, the Son of God! The Saviour that all anticipate – and Your conception would be immaculate, You are blessed to carry him In your womb before his birth – and In your arms upon his death!"
- The Holy Spirit descended to cause
 The purest of all conceptions!
 Virgin Mary cast away all
 Doubts and misconceptions she
 Accepted the verdict
 Handed down by Gabriel.
 The limited mind would never see
 Beyond its walls, what's Real!
- 11. Joseph was confused butAgain an angel intervened andTold him in his dreams, thatEverything was pre-ordained

The Prophecy was clear – Joseph Decided to adhere
To the vow of Engagement;
That's a touch of enlightenment!

Depends on one's perspective;
The three states of Consciousness,
Each of them is constructive.
The Waking State constructs life;
The Dream, its substratum;
The Deep Sleep is the matrix; the three
Constitute the realm
Of Consciousness but the fourth one
Is not unconscious.
Content-less, with no object,
It is simply conscious,
Watching as the Witness,
The pure Consciousness!

13. Angels and the Holy Spirit Communicate in the sub-conscious. They speak not in words – they Do not verbally address. A constant flow of intuition

Is their channel of communication – where

Forms are ethereal – though

The process would be sublimation.

14. The womb of the virgin – that's Yet to flower and open Became His cradle, Reminding Him of the Milky Ocean, Where He rested on a Snake, A huge and soft bed⁴. Joseph obeyed Angel's words – soon Mary did he wed.



IV. The Birth of Jesus

15. A cold winter evening,

Not cloudy but clear.

A prophecy had brought the three

Kings from far and near

To the land of Judea

Close to Jerusalem

All from somewhere East; a chill

Wind did welcome them.

They knelt down on the desert sand,

The sky was still blue!

With folded hands and closed eyes – they

Waited for the clue.

16. A star arose before the dusk – and

Moved away from them

Beckoning them to move forward

Towards Jerusalem.

That exactly was how they had

Seen in a dream.

They then started following the

Star and its beam.

17. Herod, the King of Judea

Had heard this prophecy:

That the

King of Kings

Would be born - to

Rule the Promised Land.

Herod was nervous - his

Mind was in turmoil,

Swirling like the desert storm.

18. The spies of Herod brought the News of

The three kings' visit – Herod

Invited the Kings to his

Chamber for a feast.

In the course of conversation

He wanted them to find – the

Child that was born to rule and

Pay their respects soon.

19. "After that please come again and

Be my guest, Ye Kings!

Let me learn about the 'Messiah' - that

Every angel sings,

I would then visit the Great One and

Pay my respect too".

Saying so, king Herod bid

Farewell to the crew.

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20. The three followed the star.

It took them to Bethlehem – and Halted at a certain point,

Not a mansion nor a house

But a simple cowshed.

They entered the shed – where

Some straw was spread

Inside a manger – saw

The child on that bed

Knelt down and prayed – and

They then arrayed

The gifts they had brought for the New-born Child.

21. Gold, incense and oil

Three unique gifts they laid;

Once again they prayed and

Paid their respect earnestly.

They did not go back to

Herod and report;

They knew of his evil intentions – so

Avoided his court.



V. The Baptism

22. Herod became furious:

The Magi⁵ had deceived him.

He ordered killing of all children,
Born within two months
In or near Bethlehem.

Nothing new, the same ones,
The same fear, the same anger;
The same order Kamsa⁶ gave
Thousands of years ago.
The change is only in the name.
The story is the same.

23. What a bloody massacre followed that order!

The reckless soldiers hunted, killed

Infants more than one hundred.
The woe must become unbearable
Before some miracle happened.
So much blood, that too young,
Had to flow upon the earth
So that He would come and
Wash away the sins at last

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Who would understand His Law, His Path! – Even Angels stood aghast!

24. Once again as directed
By an Angel-voice
Moved away to Egypt
Joseph, Mary and the child
Escaping the massacre,
They lived there until Herod died – and
Returned to Nazareth
After a while.

25. When He was twelve – His
Parents took Him to the Temple,
The one at Jerusalem;
A long way from Nazareth.
In the Temple they lost the boy,
Found him after search,
Seated among the learned ones,
Assimilating what they taught;
Questioning what He agreed not!

26. The next eighteen years Nothing seen of Him Nothing heard of Him He was mostly engaged in the Company of heavenly Beings,

Not interested in earthly things.

A period of intense meditation?

A stoic preparation?

27. Several years had rolled by.

What happened none would know
As a man of thirty years – He
Sought to be baptised
In a place Called Al Maghtas⁷,
On the banks of Jordan River
That stood like a white lotus.

28. 'Isho', He was called in Aramaic8;

'Yeshua', His Hebrew name; 'Jesus', as He is now called.

All meaning the same:

The Saviour, the Redeemer, the

Deliverer, the Messiah!

God, The Son, The Holy Spirit,

All in one, Hallelujah!9

29. Jordan was celebrating another Messiah,

John, the Baptist who was the

Son of Zechariah.

His mother Elizabeth did not conceive for quite a long time.

As years advanced they lost the hope of

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Extending their family line. – Then,
Zechariah was blessed with a prophecy that
Gabriel himself appeared and spoke:
"Your wife will soon conceive a son,
John shall be his Name;
He could be the forerunner of the Lord to come."
The Angel's Voice kept echoing in his eardrum.

30. Zechariah was in doubt, a son at this old age?
Since he doubted the prophecy
He was cursed by Gabriel and
Lost the power of speech; he
Had to remain dumb
Till what the Angel prophesied
Happened in his life.
As foretold, soon conceived,
Elizabeth, his wife.

31. Elizabeth was happy when
Mary visited her.
Both were cousins and had
Equal love for each other
Mary said she was glad to
Know of Eli's conception
Then she told her how she too was
Carrying in her womb
The Lord Himself as foretold by

None but Gabriel

Elizabeth was filled with joy and

Wished Mary at once:

"You are the most blessed of all women and

Blessed is the child in your womb"

She said, "See, the child in my

Womb acknowledges

Your holy presence and leaps inside".

Mary stayed with Elizabeth

Till the latter gave birth.

To a son, as soon born

His father named him "John".

Zechariah regained his speech – all

Waited for the Saviour!

They knew that the time of Redemption

Was certainly near.

32. John became a Baptist,

Blessing the children of Jordan.

He commanded respect and veneration

All over Judea and its neighbourhood

People thronged to receive his blessings,

His divinity stood proved.

33. John the Baptist standing on the

Eastern bank of River Jordan

Welcomed Jesus, reverently - and

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Paid his obeisance
When He asked him "Please Baptise
Me in this River"
John was embarrassed and asked:
"Aren't You the Giver"
Jesus looked at John and asked him
"Go ahead ye, Baptist!" – John
Realised his role and played it well.
What a divine tryst!

34. On the Eastern bank of
'Nahar Hay Yarden'¹⁰ – the
River of Jordan,
Jesus was baptised by
John, the Holy One – yes
John, the Holy One.

On the forehead of Jesus – he
Sprinkled drops of water – he
Sprinkled drops of water
Every drop would rise above – to
Bring the Heaven closer – bring
Heaven and Earth closer

On the Eastern bank of Nahar Hay Yarden – the River of Jordan, Jesus was baptised by John, the Holy One – yes John, the Holy One.

Isho's head was immersed thrice
Into that river – well
Into that river – The
Sky did open up and clouds
Parted in wonder! – clouds
Parted in wonder!

On the Eastern bank of
Nahar Hay Yarden – the
River of Jordan,
Jesus was baptised by
John, the Holy One – yes
John, the Holy One.

The Holy Spirit descended
Upon the Blessed One.
A voice from Heaven resounded – "He
Is my beloved Son"!



VI. The Temptations

- 35. 'Now, the time to meditate',
 Thought that young man,
 'To burn up all emotions,
 Be it woe or joy;
 To shed down all that mind had
 Acquired hitherto;'
 He slipped into wilderness,
 Into solitude
- 36. In that desert all alone
 In deep meditation,
 Nothing external no
 Object-concentration,
 Only He, His inner light,
 Nothing else in His sight,
 Like a lonely star,
 A billion miles away
 From everything and every star.
 Nothing near, Nothing far!
 Sat He upon a hill,

That sent a scare, a chill - and All the forces of Universe,
The Good and the Evil
Came to a stand-still.

37. Forty days had gone by, Sans food, sans water, sans sleep! How could that young Man Survive such ordeal? Earth, Water, Fire, Air – and

Even the sky wondered – then,

Satan woke up from his slumber

38. Yeshua unruffled – in

Total equipoise – no

Wind can uproot grass - His

Will was of that class.

Satan was worried - "This

Must be stopped at once – else

The balance between the good, the evil

Would be lost - so

I should act fast."

The Satan unleashed temptations – to

Disrupt His Meditation.

Nothing would interfere

With His concentration.

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39. Four hundred years ago
 Satan did the same thing:
 To distract and disturb
 The Meditation of Siddartha¹¹.

Eons ago when Lord Shiva
Sat in deep meditation,
Floral arrows of Cupid were
Shot against Him¹².

Even the God must pass the Test – It is His Will, His Law, His own Text. Maybe some pretext!

40. Though the temptations were several – only Three are mentioned in the Gospel:
Rocks of bread to the fasting One;
Test of Faith by falling down;
Kingdoms offered of this Earth.
First:

Satan called upon the Man to Change the rocks to bread – by Just touching them.

He declined saying:

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but

By the words of God."

Next:

Satan asked Him to fall down from a high tower – chiding "Will you be protected by your Faith or God's Power?"

Jesus refused politely, "None shall test The Lord".

The last:

Satan then was explicit and offered Him a Crown
To rule all earthly kingdoms and be the King forever.

Rejected He and said:

"I shall only serve My Lord, God the Father".

Satan had to withdraw, all attempts having failed.

"Jesus is the Son of God" – all the Angels hailed.

41. The Angels sang:

"This Man is the Lord now.

He is full of Love.

The Rabbi, The Master – that

Everyone would bow.

He is the Messiah, the

Saviour too.

He is the Light of the

World, it is true.

The sick and the ailing – By

Touch he will cure.

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Lepers will become

Clean and pure.

The blind will see – the

Lame will walk;

Everywhere

That will be the talk.

This Man is the Lord now.

He is full of Love.

The Rabbi, The Master – that

Everyone would bow."

42. After

Forty days of fasting and

Intense meditation – He

Returned to Galilee like a

Walking waterfalls – His

Gait, glow and transparency

Were irresistible

Smile infectious, like a

Gem that's precious – all

passers-by were stunned

His flowing hair and swaying robe

Mesmerised the crowd

The length and breadth of Galilee

He walked, the town was proud.

Asilent glance from Him would do – to Stop even a blood hound

Doubting reason lost its ground – To Logic, no one's mind was bound.

Wherever He set His foot – a

New Path was found.



VII. The Ministries and Miracles

44. He walked beside the Sea

The Sea of Galilee; and

Saw two fishermen

Casting net, He called them out

As if He knew them then:

"Peter, Andrew come with me - to

Cast your net for more men."

Peter also known as Simon;

Andrew, his brother.

"Let us go and fetch more

People to my Father's door"

45. Without a word the two brothers

Followed Him at once.

Two others, also brothers

James and John they saw.

Both were with their father

In a boat with a net.

They left their boat and their father

When their eyes met

The Master who beckoned them

With a silent nod,
In the name of God.
More and more joined Him – and
Walked along with Him.

A6. Miracles He performed Not to earn money – nor Fame or name – but To announce His Father's words. The Blind were made to see, The Deaf heard, the dumb spoke, The lame walked, the sick cured. People were thrilled, "He is the Messiah" – they

Whole-heartedly acknowledged.

47. Jesus went to the synagogue, Spoke His heart out; "The Kingdom of Heaven has come!" – He Proclaimed without doubt. People thronged to listen to Him – and Gathered as a crowd – in Rapt silence that even their breath Sounded somewhat loud, More to hear His voice – that Had a distinct timbre!

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More to see His face – that Shone with resplendence! More to inhale purity Exuded by Him! – their Hearts to be filled with Peace to the brim.



VIII. The Sermon On the Mount

48. The crowd was in a constant swell.

By His words He cast a spell – that

Bound everyone - to

Follow Him and gather as if

It was a festival.

He moved away to a nearby mount,

As increased the people's count.

Climbed the Hill and He Stood still

A silence enveloped – then

He sat down and made a sermon – that's

Till this day remembered.

49. "Blessed are the poor, the humble, for

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven;

Those who mourn will get comfort and the meek

Shall inherit the earth; the one - who

Craves for Righteousness fulfilled;

Mercy reciprocated;

The Pure in heart will see God

The peacemakers are His Children

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The persecuted shall be duly

Rewarded in Heaven.

Blessed are thee" - thus

Delivered sermon, God's Son.

50. He spoke of all the prophets who

Had been persecuted.

He further said He had come

Not to break the Laws

But to fulfil them.

"Are you not the salt of Earth?

Don't lose your saltiness.

If you lose you would be trampled underfoot.

Aren't you the light, not to be inside a pot?

Burn bright upon a hill.

Add to the Commandment, 'thou shall not kill',

Another I would say:

Thou shall not be angry to your brothers and sisters.

Offer peace to your foes before you

Place your offerings to my Father".

51. When you cast a look upon a

Woman with lust in heart,

That itself is adultery, whether you

Touch her or not.

Eschew any part that might

Offend the whole being.

Swear not upon anything – by
Yourself you can do nothing. – if
Someone slaps you on your right cheek,
Show him your left.
Love thy friends and enemies too,
Try to be perfect.



IX. The Jealous Priests

52. The sermons continued.

Day by day the crowd increased.

"The Rabbi is the Messiah

He will give us the promised land"

All lips were praising Him;

All eyes were cast on Him;

All hands were folded in prayer – when

They stood before Him.

53. The priests in the Synagogue were

Jealous of Him.

How can a rustic lead

People to salvation?

How can He preach

What is not in the books?

Why were the masses so mad after Him?

No answer occurred to them. – they

Saw Him as an adversary.

54. The sea of Galilee was just a lake

Yet is called a Sea

Can this Rabbi be a fake?

Or the Messiah to be?

Doubts lingered only in the

Minds of the priests

Whose income depended entirely

Upon rituals and feasts

Condemned by this Rabbi,

The Revolutionary!

Is He really the Son of God – or

Just a visionary?

55. With headful of questions the

Priests were worried – they

Couldn't do anything

Against the people's will.

Murmurs and whispers floated around,

To drive the nail, still, no evidence was found.



X. Our Father

56. He continued to preach.

The hearts of the people were within His reach.

The rustic and the poor, the oppressed ones,

Looked up to Him for guidance.

He spoke their language, ate their food.

He walked with them in their neighbourhood.

He was the leader of the multitude.

The jealous could sense the people's mood.

57. "Alms and Prayers are private affairs,

Not for others to know.

They shall not be done as

Matters of show.

What the right hand gives

Let the left be blind to it.

Pray in secret, within your house

My Father would see in secret – and

He will reward you."

With these words He Prayed;

His voice was not loud – yet

Every word was heard – by

Everyone in the crowd.

58. "Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done; on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses, as we
Forgive those who trespass against us.
And let us not fall into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.."

59. "Your Father knows your needs
Don't be worried of them
Food, clothing or shelter,
He will provide all.
None can serve two masters; choose
God or Mammon¹³.
Judge not others, so that
You shall not be judged."
More than what he said, how he said
Made a greater impact.
He held the torch of Truth above
Every single fact.

60. A disciple wanted to leave – to Bury his dead father. The Master quipped:" Follow me Let the dead bury their dead."

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He followed without protest – and
Thus he passed the critical test.
To the first four,
He added eight disciples more
Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew,
James, Lebbaeus, Simon, Judas.
He bade them go and find the lost sheep,
The sinners who had transgressed.



XI. Five Loaves and Two Fish

61. He performed more miracles;

All who watched were spell-bound!

Even the dead came to life

At His behest - many

More became His followers – even

Some who doubted first.

62. John the Baptist was beheaded!

The News reached Galilee.

He had been in prison

For a while then.

After the death of the king Herod

His Sons Antipas and Philip,

Step-brothers, in fact,

Were assigned to rule two distinct zones.

Antipas divorced his wife and

Married Herodias, his step-brother's wife.

Since John the Baptist condemned this

He was imprisoned.

Herodias, by some clever plot, persuaded

Antipas to have John beheaded.

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63. The News was disclosed to Jesus

By His disciples.

Jesus went into seclusion, sat upon a distant rock.

Knowing it, thousands came to see Him.

Sun had set and sky was getting dark.

The disciples pleaded:

"Master, send them away so that

All may go home early,

Have dinner and sleep

In their homes comfortably."

Jesus said "Feed them now and here.

"Master, we have bread five loaves - and

Fish just two in all - while

People more than five thousand are

Waiting for the call."

Jesus smiled and said:

"Bring to me the bread and fish

Let me make to God a wish."

Holding the basket He looked up – and

Then prayed in silence.

He gave the basket to one and said:

"Serve them one by one".

Loaves and loaves and fish in thousands

Came from that basket.

After dinner He bade them leave – then

All of them left.

64. Long ago in Bharat

When some men attempted – to
Disrobe a woman in the court,
She prayed to Him for mercy.
At once her saree got extended – into
Miles and miles of cloth
She was saved from disgrace,
Of course by God's grace¹⁴.
Five plus two had now become
More than five thousand – to
Serve the poor and save the humble – His
Arms would ever extend.



XII. More Miracles

65. Jesus asked His disciples to
Take a boat and cross the Sea
Then He climbed up the Hill and
Chose alone to be
Prayed for a while – and
Just before dawn – walked
Straight on the waves of the sea.
Seeing Him walking
On the waves of the Sea
The disciples were afraid;
"It's a ghost", they cried.

66. "Why fear? I am here" – He
Announced to them:

"Strengthen your faith, erase the doubt – no
Miracle is impossible."

When Peter too wanted to

Walk upon the sea – his

Fear was the obstacle

Jesus held him protectively – and

Led him back to the boat

Walking on the waves like a float.
With a smile He foresaw that
Peter might one day
Walk upon the lotus flowers¹⁵
Spread across a lake.

67. They reached Genneserat

Reckoned as the garden of God.

A small plain on the west

Surrounded by some hills.

Fertile and beautiful,

Because of streams

Flowing down the hills - with

Trees of olives, grapes and figs;

Also walnuts in abundance

The people there recognised Him – and

As the word spread,

Waves of people came to Him - and

All of them were fed – were

Allowed to touch the

Edge of His cloak

And by that – the

Sick were cured and healed

And before the Son of God

All of them kneeled.

68. Two groups of Jews were there,
Those who believed in resurrection,
Angels and Spirits; — but
Adhered strictly to tradition.
They were Pharisees.
Then there were those who did not believe
In Angels, Spirits, Resurrection — and
Cast away all tradition;
They were Sadducees.

69. Pharisees asked Jesus:

"Why your disciples do not adhere to What in tradition said?
Why didn't they wash their hands
Before they ate their bread?"
Replied He, with a smile – "What
Goes into mouth does not defile
The man or his purity – what
Comes out from mouth does it – if
Tainted by impurity."

70. When the Pharisees decreed that
 A woman, a prostitute
 Had sinned, she must be
 Punished and stoned to death,
 Jesus wrote on sand "Let
 The one who has never sinned

Throw the first stone"; – the Crowd dispersed silently
As there was none.

71. When Pharisees and Sadducees

Demanded to be shown – some

Sign from Heaven He refused.

He then asked His disciples:

"Who am I? Are you confused?"

Some said John, meaning the Baptist;

Some said 'Elijah'; some, 'Jeremiah';

Only Peter said:

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God".

Jesus replied:

"Thou art Peter, the rock upon which

I will build my Church."

Then He said:

"I wait to be killed in Jerusalem".

72. On hearing Master's words – the

Disciples became sad and asked:

"Why say such dreadful things?

Aren't You powerful to

Overcome death?"

The Master laughed and asked:

"Do you know the meaning of death?"



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XIII. The Transfiguration

73. Some days later, along with three

He went atop a hill;

Peter and the two brothers,

James and John, with Him.

On reaching the top, Jesus stood

Transfigured in a white robe,

Bright like the sun.

Then appeared Moses and Elijah

Talking to Jesus.

A Voice from the cloud announced:

"Here is my Son, hear Him."

On hearing the Voice, amidst a thunderous noise,

Peter and the two fell on their face.

The Holy Two had disappeared.

Jesus touched His three disciples

He said: " Arise, fear not.

Tell none, what you saw today".

He went on to reveal – that

Elijah had come first

As the Baptist to prepare His path – and

Again He spoke of the aftermath,

How He would be betrayed into the Hands of men
By one of them for gain;
He would be killed - but
Rise again.

74. On reaching Capernaum,

They were asked to pay some tax.

Jesus bade Peter:

"Go to the sea and cast a hook; Catch the first fish, open its mouth; There you would find the Coin for tax." Peter did what the Master said - and Thus the tax was paid.

75. Jesus and the disciples set out

On their journey to Jerusalem,

Halted in Jericho, the Palm City,

Rich in palm trees and it was - the

Gateway to Jerusalem.

Once again Parables; mystic tales;

Profound, yet meaning not easily found;

Golden words of eternal truth,

Like:

"A camel may go through the

Eye of a needle; but

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The kingdom of heaven, the rich would never".

And:

"Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

76. The mother of James and John kneeled before Him and prayed:

Let my two sons sit by

Either side of Your throne in

Your Father's kingdom..

Jesus said:

They will drink from the same cup

That I will drink from - but

Where they would sit - my

Father would decide.

With these words, He

Erased her pride.

77. Near Bethany the News arrived,

Lazarus was dead.

The brother of Mary and Martha! Yes,

Lazarus was dead.

Jesus went to his village and

Waited near the border.

Martha came running to Him – and

Told Him of the death

The death had happened four days ago,

Lazarus had been buried.

Jesus consoled her and said
"Nothing to be worried".

78. Jesus went to the tomb

"Open the stone", He commanded.

After some hesitation, the

People there opened the grave.

"Come out Lazarus, come out"

All heard Jesus shout.

Then came Lazarus

Walking out from grave;

This assured, the prophecy that

He'd come this world to save.

79. They

Reached the village

Called Bethpage – on the

Outskirts of Jerusalem.

Jesus called His disciples and

Addressed two of them:

"When you enter this village,

An ass, a colt you'll find.

Bring those animals here to me,

None would question, none would mind.



IX. Enter, Jerusalem

80. The Olive Hill overlooked the magnificent city.

That morning the path to it bustled with festivity; - with

Olive branch

In their hands

People waited everywhere

For their king to come.

Breeze and flowers, morning showers,

Also did welcome

The King of Kings,

The Saviour,

The matchless Messiah!

Foretold by the prophets

Elijah and Jeremiah.

81. Hosanna, Hosanna,

The song of Hosanna¹⁶ – was

In the air

Everywhere – to

Welcome The Messiah!

Hosanna, Hosanna,

Welcome Him today,

The King has come
All our sins
He would wash away;
Not with hand or magic wand
But with His own blood,
He will teach how to reach
The heart, not just the head.

Hosanna, Hosanna,
The song of Hosanna – was
In the air
Everywhere – to
Welcome The Messiah! – let's
Welcome The Messiah!

82. No one knew who taught this song,
The people sang on their own!
It was not in Books – but
Was on people's lips.
The song was on their lips like
The clouds that floated high – to
Burst and pour down upon earth
It was like a child's birth.
The people simply sang.
Who taught the wind to move?
Ocean waves to rise and fall?
Buds to bloom and welcome bees;

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From the seeds to raise trees? The people simply sang.

83. Those who thought they knew Him
Proclaimed 'He was Jesus,
The Prophet of Nazareth,
The Prophet of Galilee.'
The people of Jerusalem
Thought they understood;
What even the twelve had not.
Maybe the ass that carried him – and
The colt that followed did.

- 84. He entered the gates of the great city
 Not on horseback but upon an ass.
 Not with pomp but like a servant.
 Sharp eyes, dark hair,
 Steadfast in Truth.
 Anyone would say He was
 Truly the Heaven's fruit.
- 85. He went to His Father's House,
 The Temple of God in Jerusalem,
 Distressed to see the activities that
 Marred its sanctity.
 No prayer was said or heard even but
 The voice of the vendors who sold

Not only goods, silver and gold – but Even their hearts and souls. The noise made by money-changers, and The yelling and shouting priests! Jesus was distressed and furious - how People can be so spurious!

86. The hand that healed the sick then took
A whip and lashed those wrong-doers.
With fiery eyes and fuming face – He
Drove them out and pushed their tables,
Threw their seats in air and said:
"My Father's House is meant for prayer
Not to hold a fair.
Have your trade and gossiping
Outside the Temple Door."
All the vendors and money-changers – like
Dust before a whirlwind,
Fled the Temple, the faithful few
Remained and watched the scene.

87. The chief priests were stunned;
Before they could react
The sick and blind came to Him – He
Healed and cured them fast.
The children started singing
"Hosanna to the son of David".

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The chief priests were perturbed.

They queried Jesus and He replied:

"Haven't you read the prophecy:

'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings'?

Is it not now happening?"

88. By parables He spoke

Of the prophecies – and

Uncovered the layers of

All controversies.

The more He spoke the priests became

More jealous of Him.

His miracles shook their doubting minds – and

Planted fear in them.

'Somehow He must be silenced;

Let us do something! - but

Thousands had belief in Him – yet,

How dare He said He was the king!

89. He had said several things that

Sounded blasphemous:

'The Temple would be destroyed – and

In three days I shall rebuild'.

None could understand the real meaning

Of this saying – that

He spoke of crucifixion and the

Third day Resurrection.

90. That was enough for the High Priest,

Caiaphas by name.

Judas, a disciple

Helped him without shame.

Just for the sake of thirty Silver

Coins, Judas fell

What a ghastly betrayal; his soul he

Pledged to sell.

Jesus knew and He knew this well – and

Openly did He tell

All His twelve disciples

Of the betrayal

Which would be on the last

Day of the festival.



XV. The Last Supper

91. Came that day when Jesus sat

For His Last Supper

All the twelve were with Him

He spoke of betrayal

Everyone wanted to know whether

He was the black sheep

"Can I ever betray thou?"

Peter asked his Master.

"You will deny me, that too

Thrice before the cock would crow."

After sayting so He asked them:

"Be bold, ye shall not weep.

When I am taken away and

Killed in the cross.

It would be in fulfilment of

The Prophecies and not a loss."

92. He sought some private time to pray – and

Asked them to keep watch

While He prayed they fell asleep – Judas

Then opened the latch – He

Kissed the Master in betrayal – the

Armed men entered soon – and

Took away Jesus Christ - when
All the disciples took flight.
Peter did deny Him thrice
Before the cock crew
The morning light was not so bright
A dark curtain, the clouds drew.

93. The trial was a farce:

Once before the Sanhedrin
The assembly of priests;
Next before Pilate,
The Governor of Jerusalem.
He spoke of destruction of Temple,
He called Himself the Messiah,
This was blasphemy.
He claimed to be the son of David
and also the king.
This was high treason.
Enough reason - to
Find Him guilty
And pronounce

94. Pilate was disturbed, not

Death Penalty.

Convinced of His guilt

He knew it was not

Proved to the hilt.

His wife too had cautioned

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By a written note:

"Don't misjudge that Man,

He is innocent

I suffered in a dream today

Due to Him."

Yet, Pontius Pilate had no option.

The people had turned

Against Isho.

Whom they had praised – a

Few days ago.

95. Pilate with a heavy heart

Overtly decreed

"This Man before me is guilty

Of that you call blasphemy."

At every passover the

Governor had a choice to set a prisoner free.

Troubled by his inner voice

Pilate gave the choice

To the people who were then making a lot of noise.

The thief Barabbas - or

The humble one, Jesus?

Alas!

The people chose Barabbas.

Oh, Everyone turned a Judas!



XVI. The crucifixion

96. Jesus was taken, disrobed and shamed

He was asked to carry a cross

The Cross was heavy not by its weight – but

He carried the sins of all

He had to climb the Calvary Hill

Whenever He stumbled

He was whipped

By the merciless soldiers in guard

To quench His thirst He begged for water – they

Gave Him vinegar mixed with gal matter,

He rejected and threw it away.

97. Where did go the lips that sang

Hosanna to Him?

Where were

The blind that saw and lame that walked

All because of Him?

Where were the twelve who followed Him?

The people are people – with

No justice in their sense.

Their faith is just a matter of

Selfish convenience.

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98. On reaching the summit, they fixed upright

The cross and nailed Him to it,

Nailed on His palms, Nailed on His feet

Pressed a

Crown of thorn upon His head

Everywhere, it was blood.

A thief on either side,

Similarly crucified.

Marys were there:

One, His Mother – and

Magdalene, the other.

John, the youngest disciple,

He was present too.

Pathetic to see, gory indeed

Vultures descended and flew.

Jesus moaned and even cried.

Suffered, the Son of God.

Only by suffering He could absorb

The sins of His people at fault.

He had to pay others' debts – and

Bear others' cross.

He had to play the part assumed

In this dramatic Epic. – No

Words can now describe His pain

Even by poets, prolific!

99. "Eli Eli lama sabachthani,

My god, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Cried Lord Jesus upon the Cross.

People thought He was calling Elias.

His breath stopped, He was dead.

The Earth did quake,

The Temple Veil was torn in two,

The rocks started rolling down.

Graves opened up,

Ghosts released.

The signs of a cosmic anger

Filled the sky and earth – on

Seeing His pathetic death.

100. A rich man of Arimathea wanted the body

Pilate conceded to it.

He took the body of Jesus Christ,

Wrapped it in clean linen - and

Put some spices, myrrh and aloes and

Also ointment,

That were brought by Women from Galilee.

The Mother kept the body

For a while in her arms.

Did she weep?

The bleat of a sheep

Suppressed all other sounds.

The sky was pouring, dark too.

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Her tears were not seen.

The Arimathean laid the body inside

The new tomb he owned.

A stone was rolled as the door

Of the sepulchre.

He left thereafter with nothing more to do.

The two women, Marys, sat outside

Spent the night forlorn.

To one, He was born;

To the other,

He was her life's first dawn.



XVII. The Resurrection

101. The day next came

The chief priests there – to

Ensure there was no breach.

They set up guards

To have a watch,

So that there was no overreach.

He died on the cross - on a

Friday evening

The third day was Sabbath.

There was a storm – a

Hurricane wind

The door of the tomb had rolleth.

102. He had risen from the dead!

Worth every drop of blood

That He had to Shed

Is it so?

Who would know? - But

Mary Magdelene

Was the first eye witness.

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She was struck with awe and fear

Seeing her dead Master near

Did He wipe His blood-stained face – and

Give to her the shroud?

Truth is seldom seen in crowd.

It stands aloof.

Truth shines in every heart

Irrespective of proof.

103. Then He appeared to the Eleven disciples, as

Judas had ended his life.

Thomas had his doubt - and

Touched Him to be convinced.

Faith is not a cosy bed.

But on it

Burning embers always spread.

104. Why a Messiah should descend?

Should suffer the most?

What benefits accrued to Him - or

To earth, the host?

Can we find - the

Answer in the mind?

Do we have access to the

Cosmic Software?

Aren't we prisoners in the

Cage of Now and Here?

In a solemn moment of silence, Away from the play of senses, The questions might dissolve. We will resurrect and live again With a new resolve. Amen! OM!

But the sky did - the Clouds shed profuse tears, Thunder Rolled around - and Raised a mourning sound. Did the Father "who art in Heaven" Watch this pathetic scene? Once did He not say, "My Father and I are one?" Why this suffering, sacrifice? Who were taught and what lesson? It remains a grave mystery, Literally, it is His story.



XVIII. HIS-STORY NEVER ENDS

106. History is His Story,
The story of the world.
History is His Story,
The story that He told.
History is His Story,
The story of His Life.
History is His Story,
The story of sacrifice.



NOTES

- (Verse No.1) Lord Ganesa, a manifestation of God Supreme, is 1. visualised in India with the face of an Elephant. When Veda Vyasa, the celebrated author of the Epic 'Mahabharat' set out to write that epic, he was on the lookout for a scribe who would write down with the speed that would match his dictation. Finding none among humans so proficient, he approached Lord Ganesa with his request. Lord agreed on condition that Vyasa shall dictate without pause lest he would resign. Vyasa agreed and said that Lord Ganesa too should write without a pause as he dictated. They started the work. Half-way through, the instrument of writing, say, the quill, broke in the hands of Lord Ganesa. He, at once, without second thoughts, plucked out one of the tusks on his elephant face and continued to write. The Epic was thus completed. Hence the grace of Lord Ganesa was invoked by this author to write down this epic fast. He did it in about six days.
- 2. (Verse No.8) Rishis, in Indian tradition, are evolved human beings who, by strenuous penance and practice, had developed faculties that are not available to ordinary human beings. Angels, in Abrahamic Religions, are the Ministers or ambassadors of God. Archangels are the chief angels. They are seven; Great Rishis or sages are also seven, corresponding to the seven stars of the constellation called the 'Big Dipper' or 'Ursa Major'.
- 3. (Verse No.12) In Indian Literature, the Fourth State or Pure Consciousness, is referred to as The Witness Consciousness or Turiya. In the Existentialism of the French Philospher, Jean Paul Sartre, the term 'Pour Soi'is used to refer to the subjective aspect of Consciousness.

- 4. (Verse No.14) The Supreme Being, in His form as Maha Vishnu, is visualised as reclining on a huge snake, Adi Sesha.
- 5. (Verse No. 22) The three kings are mentioned as three wise men or the Magi in the Gospels.
- 6. (Verse No. 22) When God incarnated as Krishna, His uncle Kamsa was the ruler of that kingdom. There was a prophesy that a child born of his sister would kill Kamsa. So, he imprisoned his sister and her husband and one by one, killed the children born of his sister. However destiny had it that Lord Krishna took birth as the eighth child of Devaki, switched places, secretly grew up and killed Kamsa.
- 7. (Verse No. 27) Al Maghtas, pronounced as Al MATUS is the baptismal place of Lord Jesus.
- 8. (Verse No. 28) Aramaic was the spoken language of Jesus.
- 9. (Verse No.28) 'Hallelujah' means Praise to God.
- 10. (Verse No.34) 'Nahar Hay Yarden' is the Arabic name of River Jordan.
- 11. (Verse No.39) Siddartha was the name of the Prince, who left his family and palace and wandered as a mendicant and after years of severe penance attained wisdom as Gautama the Buddha. During His penance, Satan, known as 'Mara' in the Buddhist Tradition, tried to distract Him with temptations. However Siddartha was unyielding and thus attained wisdom.
- 12. (Verse No.39) When Lord Shiva was in deep meditation, the God of Lust shot his floral arrows on Him and tried to wake Him up. Angered by this, Lord Shiva burnt the God of Lust to ashes.
- 13. (Verse No.59) Mammon implies earthly wealth.
- 14. (Verse No.64) This is the story of Draupathi in the Epic, Mahabharat.
- 15. (Verse No.66) Sanandana was a disciple of the great Indian Philosopher-sage, Adi Shankara. Once the Master called his disciples from the opposite bank of river Ganga (Ganges). No boat was available. But Sanandana, on account of his faith in

the Master, stepped on the water and began to walk. Impressed with his devotion, the divine Ganga showed her admiration by placing lotuses on the water to support his feet at every step. To the astonishment of all, he unconcernedly crossed over to the other bank where he was duly rewarded by the embrace of the Master. In memory of this incident, he was named Padmapada by the Master. This incident happened nearly eight to nine hundred years after the period of the present Epic.

16. (Verse No.81) 'Hosanna', literally means "Save". Also used as a term of praise.



Vanavil K.Ravi is a bilingual poet, writing profusely in English and in his native tongue, Tamil. He has authored 20 books so far as listed below. Till date, 101 Seminars, some National and some International, have been conducted by several Universities and Colleges on his published works.

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List of the published works of Vanavil K.Ravi

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- 2. **Law, Logic and Liberty** (Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai, 1998)
- 3. **Verses of Wisdom** (Anand Jothi, Chennai, 2002)
- Namakku Tozhil Kavithai, (நமக்குத் தொழில் கவிதை ... Poetry is My Calling) (Vanavil Cultural Centre, Chennai 1996)
- 5. Unnodu Naan, (உன்னோடு நான் With You, I am) (Trisakthi Publications, Chennai, 2009)
- 6. **Minnar Chuvai,** (மின்னற்சுவை **The Taste of Lightning)** (LKM Publication, Chennai, 2007)
- 7. **Sorkalukkul Erikol (**சொற்களுக்குள் ஏறிக்கொள் **Come Aboard My Words**) (Trisakthi Publications, Chennai, 2009)
- 8. Valluvarin Vayilil (வள்ளவரின் வாயிலில் At the Threshold of Thiruvalluvar) Girikuja Publications, Chennai, 2011
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- 16. **The Sound of Silence** (A collection of Poems in English) Nivethitha Pathippagam Chennai, 2021
- 17. **Seamithu Vaitha Nizhalgal** (சேமித்து வைத்த நிழல்கள்) Nivethitha Pathippagam, Chennai, 2021
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- 19. **Prahlad,** the Epic.. and sixty short poems, Nivethitha Pathippagam, Chennai, 2023.
- 20. **The Messiah** His-Story* (The life of Jesus in verses), Nivethitha Pathippagam, Chennai, 2023.

