

## **LIFE AND LANGUAGE**

### **Sign of Authenticity in What People Speak**

**Francis Vineeth ♦**

O word Ineffable, you are the source of  
All wisdom and all beauty,  
All art and all articulation,  
All music and all melody  
All life and all language.

All what we know,  
All what we see,  
All what we relish,  
And all what we realize,  
Are only a ray of what you really are.

How dare I speak about you!  
You are Speech immortal,  
You are fire and fire is speech.  
As sparks fly from blazing fire,  
So does speech proceed from you,  
The 'burning bush,' the Word Ineffable.

As all rivers finally fall into the sea,  
As all clouds finally come back to us in rain  
Let my little words fall back into you  
And you fall on me, as rain from heaven,  
As I write these words in your name and fame.

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## 1. Introduction

The Word, imperishable is the firstborn of Truth, Mother of the Veda and hub of immortality. May she come to us in happiness in the sacrifice! May she, our protecting Goddess, be easy of entreaty.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Though written in different continents, in widely different periods of time, both these texts, taken from the sources of two different religions, are dimensions of the same Reality: Reality is truth and Truth is by its very nature Word, to be uttered or expressed.

The word-dimension of Reality is well acknowledged in both these traditions. The Word, when uttered, becomes the source of *sruti* (revelation), i.e., what is heard in perfect silence as a primordial awakening of our consciousness which, though unconsciously, is always searching for the source of its own existence gifted with self-awareness. Reality is Word and the Word is heard. What is heard is held in one's own heart and is meditated upon, until it sends forth sparks of fire, which resembles speech emanating from the Word accepted and assimilated into the human heart.

In this article we try to highlight the inner dimensions of human language and its authenticity as expression of life. But our human language and the dynamics of its expression are only the replica, as it is an imitation of what happened in the beginning, i.e., how in the beginning God, who is the Word, spoke to us, first by creation and then through numerous prophets and sages, and ultimately by the singular event of incarnation (Christianity) or periodic descent of God (Hinduism) to re-establish the original heavenly rhythm set by the Word, which has been distorted by the fallen human consciousness, which we call sin.

In either case, the Word, who is God and the source of all creation (John 1:2) and the mother of all Vedas and the hub of immortality (*Taittiriya Brahmana* 8.8.5.), has established the rhythm in this universe. Thus, God's original language of creation was the immaculate flow of divine rhythm, set by the Word, running through all creation, which was perhaps a reference to the paradise in which our first parents, according to the Bible, were placed. Paradise had a different rhythm of life and language, aglow with perfect truthfulness and transparency. Life and

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<sup>1</sup>*Taittiriya Brahmana*, 8.8.5.

language were not two different things there. This story, whether symbolic or real, has much to contribute to the authentic way of our life on earth. Perhaps our present earth is the same paradise after distortion, i.e., the humans slipped away from the pre-established rhythm and harmony of the Divine, and the earth began to produce ‘thorns and thistles’ (Genesis 3:18), an indication to the consequent suffering as ‘the awareness of disorder’ brought about by the disharmony in human action. The primordial utterance of the Word, the commandment given to the first parents, was thus thrown to wind. Life and language did not coincide in the distorted human beings. They hid themselves from the face of God. But God called them and punished them.

## **2. The Origin of Language**

Language is usually accepted as an oral or scriptural symbol system in which each symbol, whether sound or sign, word or picture, is given meaning. Though the meaning may slowly change, assuming new dimensions or even a different dimension of meaning in distant history of the word, the dynamics of fixing a word with certain meaning always works. This is necessary for the continuity of communication between human beings. Whether it is teaching, doing business or even playing, all these are based on a system of communication.

Seeing from this point, real language is not necessarily the ‘spoken word’, but the communication transmitted to the other, may be through signs, actions or even by sheer silence. In the soothing and serene atmosphere of a contemplative ashram, silence speaks volumes, fully in tune with the undisturbed serenity of the place. Our theme here is neither silence nor speech, but silence as a medium of unuttered words, entering into our hearts. Deeply seen, it is an invitation to us to ponder over the origin of language, not through the words uttered by the other or heard by me from outside, but an event that originates from the inner depth of my own being, which is awakened to accept what I really am in my innermost centre, namely, consciousness, awareness to be awakened by mere presence of the other. The other mentioned here need not be necessarily a human being, but anything or anyone, provided *it is* and invites me, or calls my attention to be bestowed upon it for a moment, when something miraculous, unthought-of, takes place: namely, under the hallow of a ‘blessed moment’ we become one; both the encountering and the encountered forget themselves and enter into each other, and relish their radical unity of *being*; i.e., ‘a being’, sharing ‘oneness’ with the other

being, in their own common patrimony of being in the all embracing boundless ocean of 'Being,' the origin and goal of all.

Thus seen, language is not from the periphery of any being, rational or irrational, which comes in contact and communication with us, but deep down a kind of recognition of each other, a 'sense' without or beyond any sense organs, that we all are one, in our innermost being, sharing the gift of being we received from that One, which alone is the non-dual and immortal, source and sustenance of all our communication system. That is why every human being breaks up into language, and language becomes an inalienable dimension of our being, because no one, in the real now or the future tomorrow, is destined to be all alone. Neither from the source nor from the goal, our being is without the other. All are rooted in the One: originating from the One, meeting the same One in everyone, and moving to that One in togetherness. Is it not the inner basis or foundation of mutual communication, the sameness we see in one another, in spite of our individual separatedness from the other, especially because of our body-dimension?

### **3. Body-Dimension and the Multiplicity of Languages**

Human beings are sometimes described as beings who can speak or use a language. Angels and animals do not use language as humans do. Angels, as spirits, do not need language, something that is largely body-bound; the inner content of this dynamism is invariably based on the gift of consciousness which humans, unlike animals, have received. We, the humans, are embodied souls or spirits. *Ayam atman Brahma* (this Atman is Brahman), says an upanishadic text. This is because there is consciousness in this person and "consciousness is Brahman" (*prajnam Brahman*) according to another text.<sup>2</sup> Consciousness is the special gift human beings have received from God which makes them capable of participating in Divine consciousness and by virtue of which they can rise up above all other beings whether embodied or not, except that One who is by nature consciousness and from whom the humans have received this great inestimable gift. But body brings to it all kinds of limitations, such as of

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<sup>2</sup>These are the two texts of the four *Mahavakyas* (great sayings) in which the great scholar Shankaracharya is said to have summarized all Upanishads. The texts are: 1. Brahman is consciousness (*Aitiriyā Up.* III.1.3). 2. This Self is Brahman (*Brahadaranyka Up.* II.5.19). 3. *I am Brahman* (*Brahadaranyka Up.* I.4.10). 4. That thou art (*Chandokya Up.* VI.8.7). These are foundational texts for the *Advaita Vedanta* of Sankara.

time and space, and all the consequent modalities and variations of culture, custom, and above all language. Language enters deeply into one’s being, because, though communication is technically and philosophically possible even in silence, as we have mentioned above, the humans depend on one or other language to make communication easy and successful.

The multiplicity of languages occurs, precisely because the human being is embodied. Body brings in the unavoidable human predicament of ‘placement,’ i.e., to be placed in time and space, to be situated, to be bound up by limitations of situatedness. Language is one of such limitation structures intimately involved in communication dynamism of the humans. Because it is an art of communication developed by a group of people situated in a minimum nearness which makes communication possible. Language develops ‘locus-bound’, that is, by people living in a particular place like a village, for example, so that mutual and continued communication evolves, and slowly gets structuralized, grammatized, refined and, thus, slowly moving from initial dialect to a refined language. The word *Sanskrtam*, (Sanskrit) literally means “well-made” (*Sam+krtam*) and is used in contrast to what people call ‘*pra-krtam*’ (i.e., pre-made), the dialect form of the same language. Pali is thus considered to be the pre-state of Sanskrit. But Pali is certainly a noble language and many of the original Buddhist writings are written in Pali and not in Sanskrit, though later they have been translated into Sanskrit. This dynamics of Pali versus Sanskrit, according to scholars, also reflects the Buddhist revolution against the then dominant brahminic culture whose language was Sanskrit. Buddha’s thinking was first spoken and written in Pali, i.e., the language of the then common folk. Any way language comes in as the medium of self-expression. Though silence is powerful, we need language for communication.

#### **4. The Authenticity of Language and its Relatedness to Life**

Whether the language spoken is Pali or Sanskrit, Latin or Italian (Italian being a popularized variation (derivate) of Latin), what is important is how much the spoken words reflect the actual life of the person. An ancient dictum runs as follows: “People may doubt the veracity of one’s words, but they usually accept the veracity of what one does.” This is supported by another Latin saying: “*agere sequitur esse*,” i.e., action follows being. In other words, “what you are is seen by what you do; not necessarily by what you talk about.” This takes us to the question where does action spring from? Action can originate from any level of our consciousness.

When a little baby cries, mother gives a chocolate in order to stop the crying. But another day the same baby asked for chocolate; mother did not give him chocolate; instead she took him quickly to hospital, because the baby was sick. The action is from the life-layer (*prana*) of consciousness. Suppose this baby is Karl Marx, and when this baby grew up he found that there are structures of injustice in this world and decided to study and analyze this problem in depth. The result was the famous work, *The Capital*, the text that has enshrined the foundational values of communism. Here the action is springing up from the mind level of consciousness. Demands made by human reason, logical and social analysis play bigger roles in this level of consciousness. Human consciousness can still go forward into another level, where the logic of the mind is not abandoned, but transcended in the light of another enlightened consciousness which people call faith. Faith level is almost always deeply associated with religion. Faith is a strong and unalterable commitment to a lifestyle which is totally guided by faith values.

I do not mean here that all those who follow one or other religion, do have such deep commitment to abandon everything and follow the religious ideal to the maximum level possible. This difference between faith values and rational values can easily be understood when we compare the teachings of Karl Marx and Jesus Christ. They both have several common points as the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden, establishment of justice in the world, etc. But the inner consciousness during these movements is not the same. In short, communist values, in spite of its call for justice, are not the same as Gospel values. The Sermon on the Mount and the proclamation of the Gospel Beatitudes are not at all understandable from purely rational and analytical approach. This is the way faith differs from pure reason. In short, faith values are founded in God and divine revelation to humankind contained in religious scriptures and traditions. On the contrary, secular values are based on human reason and its logical, calculative dynamics of thinking. When St. Francis of Assisi left his family and possessions and opted poverty, he did it not after enormous studies on social analysis; but because, after his awakening, he wanted to be like Jesus Christ, who was poor and whom he opted as his Master and ideal. Hence, it is not study, though it is very noble and good, that matters in saints, but a different kind of awakening. However, when we speak, we should speak reasonably well, because faith is not the same in everyone. But, as seen above, our language differs according to the state of our consciousness.

## 5. Awakening and Attitudinal Transformation: The Dawn of a New Language and a New Lifestyle

Quite often it happens that our mind is already pre-settled with regard to many factors in our life. This may be due to our own family and a wider cultural tradition. This is quite normal and, to a certain extent, the accepted natural way of being groomed into a set of family and cultural values. But all these values are not always so sacrosanct, though they may have the sanction of centuries. Hence, in course of time, they are questioned. Who questions them? There are people who are not satisfied with the present system, may be because it lacks openness and transparency, justice and equality, freedom of expression or enterprises, etc. These people have a different way of looking at the customs and traditions, values and ways of life transmitted by these traditions. They are the awakened ones, at least with regard to the situation and value system they are sharing. Awakening is a dawn of a new consciousness. It is the manifestation of the inner power of consciousness to rise above structures and systems, which are far away from the pure nature of the Spirit. Awakened persons are sometimes considered to be prophets, revolutionaries or also saints. All these can be true or false, depending on the nature of awakening: rational (more reason bound, yet a new way of thinking) or spiritual (where the source of enlightenment is the Spirit, which instils divine values). Invariably they all speak a new language, framing words, sentences and imageries to fit into this newly awakened consciousness. The conservatives are normally afraid of these people, because the awakened people demand change and speak about it, pointing to the way how the society should change. This change demands a new way of seeing things, articulating their vision in a new language, demanding attitudinal changes from the people and finally living accordingly. New wine should be put in new wineskins (Matthew 9:17), i.e., new consciousness should be followed up with new lifestyle.

In socio-political level, this call for change is known as revolution and often causes a lot of damage and bloodshed because of the resistance from the groups exercising power. But there are also spiritual revolutions in history. For example, from very ancient days in India, we had the movement of wandering monks and later forest-dwellers. We had the Desert Fathers, whose magnificent way of living and praying can be seen in the volumes of *Philokhalia*.<sup>3</sup> In the middle ages, the Christian Europe produced two brilliant examples of everlasting inspiration for many, Saints

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<sup>3</sup>For the new Indian edition, see Cherian Eapen, *Philokhalia*, vols. I-V, Kottayam: DC Books, 2000-2009.

Francis and Clare from Assisi. They spoke a different language, new to the people of their time and followed a lifestyle which proved the sincerity of their words. All these were awakened people, who expressed their newly awakened consciousness in action which gave birth to a new way of life. The veracity of an awakened consciousness should be seen in action. Jesus said: “Seeing your good works, let people say you are my disciples” (John 13:35).

“I send you as sheep among wolves” (Matthew 10:16). The disciples of Jesus accepted this command of their beloved master and lived up to his standard. Jesus knew very well that they could not do it, unless their consciousness is transformed, enlightened and empowered. Therefore, he said to them: “I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him” (John 14:16-17); “The Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you” (John 14:26). Thus, it is clear to Jesus that his disciples should have a new consciousness well awakened by the Spirit of God before they start their mission. They should be endowed with divine consciousness, speak a new language and naturally live accordingly. Real preaching is also real life. This takes us to the next and last section of this article: Autobiography as the inspirational source of political or spiritual awakening and achievements.

## **6. Autobiography as Authentic Source of Inspiration for New Forms of Life and Language**

I am fond of biographies. The sincere and well dedicated secular as well as spiritual leaders inspire me very much. This is because a lot of theoretical knowledge need not help us to realize the ideal, whereas living examples help us more. To live what you know, to dedicate one’s life for an inspiring ideal is really very great, whether it be secular or spiritual. Because whatever little we know, when we try to put or integrate it into our life, life becomes noble and the language we speak becomes easily understandable to the people, looking at the lifestyle of the person who speaks. This is because life reflects language.

Jesus washed the feet of his own disciples and dried them with the towel round his waist (John 13:5). Then he told them:

You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought



to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you (John 13:13-15).

Jesus did not mean that every year we do a ritual of washing the feet of our own servants. But he did mean that everyone should be ready to lower oneself for the other, serve the other with love, not just for the sake of duty and salary. The kingdom he wants to inaugurate presents a completely new set of values, and, thus, a totally new language, naturally to be followed up by a new lifestyle. Thus, life and language should go together. Proud and powerful people also may speak and do as they like, demanding prestigious positions and high salary from others. Their speech and lifestyle may agree. But this is nothing great from the point of view of the Gospel ideology, and even of the enlightened people from any community. Language and life should agree in higher and spiritual ideologies. Many secular ideologists have achieved this in their own way. From the secular point of view I see Karl Marx as an ideologist and I think, with all sincerity according to his conscience, he went about, facing a lot of adversities, resigning his prestigious job, organizing trade union, being expelled from his own country and so on. There was a high ideology, a different way of looking at the then realities of life, a totally different language, which of course reflected well in his lifestyle.

There are two model autobiographies which I found very inspiring. They are: one from the secular world, the *Autobiography of Gandhi*, titled *My Experiments with Truth* and the other from the spiritual world *The Autobiography of Therese of Lisieux*, titled *The Story of a Soul*.

Mahatma Gandhi was a very spiritual man and in that way also religious. The specialty of his spirituality is that he applied it into the socio-political world of his time, confronting the unjust socio-political power structures, including the political freedom movement in India. His autobiography is a narration of events after events, meeting different kinds of people, of different mindsets, power-politics and expectations. The candid and simple way of putting them just as they are, makes it very powerful and strongly appealing.<sup>4</sup> Actually Gandhi was not writing an autobiography as many people would think about the story of his family traditions, glories and achievements, etc. On the contrary, as Gandhi himself names it, it is “the story of my experiments with truth.” That is, it

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<sup>4</sup>The autobiography was well appreciated by all. The printing history shows that. The price of the book is very much subsidized now (Rs. 30 for 464 pages). Navajivan Publishing House gives in August 2008 the number of copies printed so far as 14,59,000.

is 'the story of truth' as reflected in one man's life: the lifelong struggle to be on the side of truth always. An astounding specialty in Gandhi's way of truth is that he uncompromisingly united truth with non-violence. Hence, the watchwords *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. The autobiography is, therefore, the story of truth and nonviolence. The perfect transparency of these two high ideals can be seen everywhere. Truth according to Gandhi is God. Doubtlessly he is right. The Indian word for truth is *satya*. I understand it as the claim of being (*sat*) over us; that is *satya* (truth). There is no other truth. If God is Absolute Being, He is also Absolute Truth. This autobiography is of course the story of truth as Gandhi conceived, confronted and lived; a vivid, simple and open description of event after event, as they unfolded in his life. The reader gets a feel that he is there with Gandhi. On the relation between the Absolute and relative truth Gandhi writes in the introduction to this book:

But as long as I have not realized the Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler. Though this path is straight and narrow and sharp as the razor's edge, for me it has been the quickest and easiest.<sup>5</sup>

Our human life on earth, at its best, can only be the agony of realizing truth in the given situations of our life. These situations are quite often given to us, rather than made by us. But one's commitment to truth should remain unaltered in all our situations. Nobody can claim the realization of the Absolute truth; but we do realize truth with all our human limitations, and thus participate in the successive manifestations of the Absolute truth here below on earth, in time and space.

The second autobiography, I have chosen, is of a very different type, namely the story of a young girl who wanted to dedicate her whole life to Jesus, to love him, to participate in his suffering and to offer her as a living sacrifice for him and for the whole world. Here the central theme around which the autobiography evolves is simply love. While for Gandhi Truth was not an idea but a reality to be confronted and lived in day to day life, for this young girl, love was the force which guided her life from the very early age till her death. Truth and love are intimately and inseparably related. This is because truth as the claim of being over us, is to be accepted, no matter how small that being is, because it is a reality, a fact, existing in its own way. We can very well develop an attitude towards it,

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<sup>5</sup>Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Trust, 1927, reprint 2008, xiii-xiv.

as our consciousness and consequently our conscience, decides or dictates; but we can by no means deny the existence of that reality, however meagre or insignificant it is. This recognition of the other, a person or a thing, and our obligation towards that is the basis of justice. Justice given to the other beings, human or non-human, is the minimum form of love. Of course, love can be much more generous, even loving the other by giving up one's own life for the other person, which Jesus himself proposed and testified by his own life, as the highest form of love (John 15:13).

Author of this second autobiography is St. Therese of Lisieux, widely known as 'Little Flower'. *Story of a Soul*, as it is titled, could be summarized as a young girl's experiments with love. Unlike Gandhi's autobiography, there is no encounter with the then reigning worldly powers, no protest movements, nothing that would draw the attention of people of her time and even of her own country. All events took place largely in the ordinary atmosphere of a simple, believing family and in a cloistered convent of perfect silence, prayer and spiritual discipline. Yet this simple story attracted millions of people all over the world.<sup>6</sup>

Many people want to know what is happening in the cloistered monasteries or convents, where a community of monks or nuns live, bidding farewell, once for all, to their entire dear and near ones. Here is a story of such a girl, the story of her unconditional love for Jesus whom she chose as her Beloved Spouse, who would at an early age transplant her into His vineyard where she would bloom and bear fruit. This vineyard was the great Carmel, not very far from her own home. But the transplantation really meant cutting off all physical nearness, visits, constant contacts, transactions and other expressions of relationship. But all these were willingly opted and in the case of Therese at the age of 15. Though this was her great desire, rule was against it, and she, breaking all the rules regarding visitors in Vatican, requested permission for it from the

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<sup>6</sup>The publishers from Washington writes: “So limited were the funds that the first ICS publications edition of *Story of a Soul* in 1975 had to typeset by volunteers, and lacked even the benefit of the French accents. Rapid sales, however, allowed for a new edition the following year, complete with accents, indices, and a new cover. This second edition quickly became our best-seller, and has remained so for the past 20 years, far outstripping all other releases, and now used throughout the English speaking world.” Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul* (Autobiography), Washington: ICS Publications, 1975, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2005, ix.

Holy Father Leo XIII, at the time of a general audience, when people in the long queue were allowed only to meet, greet and pass on.<sup>7</sup>

Why was this great desire to join the Carmel? She knew well that, though physically limited in movements and contacts in the world, the souls living within the walls of a silent enclosure have the vast expanse of consciousness in the area of pure love for the Lord whose mystical body encompasses all. Hence, her call was also a call to love all. This is true. They are called to love all, pray for all, including great sinners and criminals, offer sacrifices for all. In Vatican, Therese was begging permission to begin her dedicated life of prayer and love in the Carmel even before the permitted age-bar. She had already experienced the power of her prayer for the conversion of a notorious criminal (Pranzini) while she was still at home, about which she writes in the autobiography:

I felt *charity* enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and please others; since then I have been happy ... To awaken my zeal Lord showed me my desires were pleasing to Him. I heard talk of a great criminal just condemned to death for some horrible crimes; everything pointed to the fact that he would die impenitent. I wanted at all causes to prevent him from falling into hell, and to attain my purpose I employed every means imaginable ... My prayer was answered to the letter! In spite of Papa's prohibition that we read no papers, I didn't think I was disobeying when reading the passages pertaining to Pranzini. The day after his execution I found the new paper *La Croix*. I opened it quickly and what did I see? Ah! My tears betrayed my emotion and I was obliged to hide. Pranzini had not gone to confession. He had mounted the scaffold and was preparing to place his head in the formidable opening, when suddenly, seized by an inspiration, he turned, took hold of the *crucifix* the priest was holding out to him and *kissed* the *Sacred wounds three times!* Then his soul went to receive the merciful sentence of him who declares that in heaven there will be more joy over one sinner who does penance than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance.<sup>8</sup>

Like Gandhi has incidents and events one after another to illustrate his experiments with truth and non-violence, this girl narrates a lot of little incidents and simple events where she is inspired or even challenged to express her love for her Beloved, by opting suffering for members of her spiritual world. This is not at all limited to her own family or community

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<sup>7</sup>Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, 134.

<sup>8</sup>Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, 99-100.

members. She had missionary priests as friends, for whom she prayed and offered sacrifices. As we have just seen, even great criminals were included among her friends, for whom she prayed intensely. She makes a reference to St. Paul who said, “Yet strive after *the better gifts*, and I point out to you a yet more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:1), and continues saying:

And the apostle explains how all the most *perfect* gifts are nothing without *love*. That charity is the excellent way that leads most surely to God... I understood that *love comprised all vocations, that was everything, that it embraced all times and places... a word, that it was eternal!* ... Then, in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my love ... my vocation, at last I have found it... *my vocation is love.*<sup>9</sup>

Before her death (September 30, 1897), on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1895, burning with love for Jesus and souls, she offered herself “as a victim of Holocaust to God’s merciful love,” and prayed,

In order to live in one single act of perfect Love, *I offer myself as a victim of holocaust to Your merciful love*, asking You to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of *infinite tenderness* shut up within You to overflow into my soul, and that thus I may become a *martyr* of your *Love*, o My God! ... I want, O my *Beloved*, at each beat of my heart to renew this offering to You an infinite number of times, until the shadows having disappeared I may be able to tell You of my *Love* in an *Eternal Face to Face!*<sup>10</sup>

Therese is a great saint, a missionary of universal love, and a theologian of the Church, teaching her ‘little way’ which could be followed by anyone, provided they are ready to be ‘little ones’. She writes:

Because I was little and weak He lowered Himself to me, and He instructed me secretly in the *things* of His *love*. Ah! Had the learned who spent their life in study come to me, undoubtedly they would have been astonished to see a child of fourteen understand perfection’s secrets, secrets that all their knowledge cannot reveal because to possess them one has to be poor in spirit.<sup>11</sup>

These daring words are balanced with her deep humility and filial trust in the Lord’s merciful love. Be like little children, loving and trusting,

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<sup>9</sup>Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, 194.

<sup>10</sup>Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, 277.

<sup>11</sup>Therese of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, 105.

without fear, without pride. God will take care of the rest. This is her *Little Way*.

In the world of spirituality, Therese spoke a new language, became a patroness of mission, without stepping out beyond the enclosed campus of her convent. What she wrote is exactly what she lived. Her life and language coincide. This new language of the Little Way was very appealing to many even in the modern world. Perhaps many people in the Church did not expect that this young lady of 24, whose only major writing is her own Autobiography, which does not sound like a theological or doctrinal treatise at all would be declared 'Doctor of the Church.' But this work is full of novel insights, capable of inspiring readers, because everything written is tested in the crucible of actual life in the context of a family and convent. Love is the major theme running through the whole of autobiography. The appeal to the book shows that innocent love experienced and expressed in the context of real, everyday life, is very powerful and may work as an antidote against the hue and cry for Globalization, where world's comforts and amenities are made available even in small cities or villages for those who can afford it. In globalization what actually happens is that our heart and soul become wedded to modern consumerist items of the society. Amenities become globalized, converting the globe into a place of bitter market movements. Of course all are available. But human consciousness shrinks; this is especially the case as the so-called global availability is available only to the rich. Whereas in this story, what we see is a young girls' consciousness expanding to global dimensions, or even to universal dimensions, embracing all in a sacrificial act of love for all, while actual living will be devoid of global or wealthy and consumeristic items. Living or moving space is small and even unknown to the world. But the embodied consciousness is wide and open to universal boundlessness, which we understand as unselfish and self-surrendering love for all. This is little Therese and this is perfectly understandable against the background of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is all-encompassing, cosmic and fully global.

## **7. Conclusion**

Originating from the Word Ineffable, consciousness flows down to mankind in the form of awakening, idea and utterance. By the time it becomes utterance, it loses its vast expanse of freedom in self-expression. The uttered sound, in spite of its tendency to transcend limitation, is always pressed down into the so-called linguistic specifications of human

words. These words are earthly, much more bodily, subject to the modulation of mouth and tongue and the audibility of sound waves. This is the unavoidable predicament human beings find themselves in. But this is also a blessing, because now we have a community speaking the same language. This dynamics runs through all the members of the human family: Life-Language-Communication. Hence, be happy that we have a language at our disposal which makes communication possible. Remember that our life, reflected in our language, is the sign of authenticity of what we speak.

Life and language are two facets of the same reality. Reality is Truth. Authenticity of our life entirely depends on our commitment to Reality (*Sat*), Truth (*Satya*), Justice (*niti*) and Love (*Prema*). Truth is ‘expressed’ in words and deeds. Words build up language and deeds confirm what we say in whatever language. People say: Life is the open book. There is a higher and more easily understood language, that is the silent utterance of life, a language not heard but seen, a language not so much asserted by words, but witnessed by deeds. Life is the language par excellence. That is why Gandhi said: “My message is my life” and St. Therese said: “At last, I have found it, my vocation is love.” Love is a language of life which everybody understands.