



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

Many of the world's problems and conflicts arise because we have lost sight of the basic humanity that binds us all together as a human family. We tend to forget that despite the diversity of race, religion, ideology, and so forth, people are equal in their basic wish for peace and happiness. However, this will be achieved neither by merely talking or thinking about it, nor by waiting for someone else to do something about it. We each have to take responsibility as best we can within our own sphere of activity. As free human beings we can use our unique intelligence to try to understand our world and ourselves.

In the world at present, there is not much concern for humane values: there is too much dependence on money and power. If human society loses the value of justice, the value of compassion, the value of honesty, we will face greater difficulties in the future. Some people may think that these sorts of ethical attitudes are not much needed in the areas of business or politics. I strongly disagree. The quality of all our actions depends on our motivation.

A real sense of appreciation of humanity, compassion and love, are the key issues. If we develop a good heart, whether the field is science, agriculture or politics, since the motivation is so very important, the result will be more beneficial. With proper motivation these activities can help humanity; without it they go the other way. This is why the compassionate thought is so very important for humankind. Although it is difficult to bring about the inner change that gives rise to it, it is absolutely worthwhile to try.

It is natural that we should strive to improve our standard of living, but not at any cost. The more we pursue profit and material improvement, ignoring the deeper values, such as compassion,

tolerance and contentment that comes of a corresponding inner growth, the quicker ethical values will disappear from our communities. Then we will all experience unhappiness in the long run, for when there is no place for justice and honesty in people's hearts, the weak are the first to suffer. The resentments resulting from such inequity ultimately affect everyone adversely. What we must do is to balance external material progress with the sense of responsibility that comes of education and inner development.

It is also natural that we will face obstacles in pursuit of our goals. But if we remain passive, making no effort to solve the problems we meet, conflicts will arise and hindrances will grow. Transforming these obstacles into opportunities for positive growth is a challenge to our human ingenuity. To achieve this requires patience, compassion and the use of our intelligence. But to ignore such opportunities is to waste our human potential. It is extremely important to realize that the graver the crisis we encounter, the greater is our need for patience. Above all, we must not lose our determination.

The last century was marred by conflict and war. Let us take steps now to ensure that this new century will be characterized instead by non-violence and dialogue, the preconditions of peaceful co-existence. It is natural that in any human society there will be differences and conflicts, but we have to develop confidence that dialogue and other peaceful methods are a valid alternative to violence in all our relations. If we take the differences between us as grounds for fighting and argument, there will be no end to it. All of us will be weakened and diminished.

I welcome occasions like the World Day of Planetary Consciousness because they represent an effort to involve many people positively in different parts of the world at the same time. The Day will provide an opportunity to develop and encourage planetary consciousness. This is very important because we too easily approve well-meaning suggestions to protect the environment, to work for peace and to help those unable to help themselves without recognizing that we are all involved. We expect someone else actually to do something about it. Improving our world is not just a matter of relying on governments and leaders. We all have to participate. Therefore, I pray that everyone celebrating the sunrise on the first World Day of Planetary Consciousness will be inspired to do something practical to increase respect for the Earth, to foster genuine peace among its people, and to nurture greater compassion in all our lives.

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