

If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person.
If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house.
If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

Chinese Proverb

The Global Community

By his holiness the Dalai Lama

1. As the twentieth century draws to a close, we find that the world has grown smaller and the world's people have become almost one community. Political and military alliances have created large multinational groups, industry and international trade have produced a global economy, and worldwide-communications are eliminating ancient barriers of distance, language and race. We are also being drawn together by the grave problems we face: overpopulation, dwindling natural resources, and an environmental crisis that threatens our air, water, and trees, along with the vast number of beautiful life forms that are the very foundation of existence on this small planet we share.
2. I believe that to meet the challenge of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for his or her own self, family or nation, but for the benefit of all mankind. Universal responsibility is the real key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources, and through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment. For some time, I have been thinking about how to increase our sense of mutual responsibility and the altruistic motive from which it derives. Briefly, I would like to offer my thoughts.

One Human Family

3. Whether we like it or not, we have all been born on this earth as part of one great human family. Rich or poor, educated or uneducated, belonging to one nation or another, to one religion or another, adhering to this ideology or that, ultimately each of us is just a human being like everyone else: we all desire happiness and do not want suffering. Furthermore, each of us has an equal right to pursue these goals.
4. Today's world requires that we accept the oneness of humanity. In the past, isolated communities could afford to think of one another as

fundamentally separate and even existed in total isolation. Nowadays, however, events in one part of the world eventually affect the entire planet. Therefore we have to treat each major local problem as a global concern from the moment it begins. We can no longer invoke the national, racial or ideological barriers that separate us without destructive repercussion. **In the context of our new interdependence, considering the interests of others is clearly the best form of self-interest.**

5. I view this fact as a source of hope. The necessity for cooperation can only strengthen mankind, because it helps us recognize that the most secure foundation for the new world order is not simply broader political and economic alliances, but rather each individual's genuine practice of love and compassion. For a better, happier, more stable and civilized future, each of us must develop a sincere, warm-hearted feeling of brother- and sisterhood.

Universal Responsibility

6. First, I should mention that I do not believe in creating movements or espousing ideologies. Nor do I like the practice of establishing an organization to promote a particular idea, which implies that one group of people alone is responsible for the attainment of that goal, while everybody else is exempt. In our present circumstances, none of us can afford to assume that somebody else will solve our problems; each of us must take his or her own share of universal responsibility. In this way, as the number of concerned, responsible individuals grows, tens, hundreds, thousands or even hundreds of thousands of such people will greatly improve the general atmosphere. Positive change does not come quickly and demands ongoing effort. If we become discouraged we may not attain even the simplest goals. With constant, determined application, we can accomplish even the most difficult objectives.
7. Adopting an attitude of universal responsibility is essentially a personal matter. **The real test of compassion is not what we say in abstract discussions but how we conduct ourselves in daily life.** Still, certain fundamental views are basic to the practice of altruism. Though no system of government is perfect, democracy is that which is closest to humanity's essential nature. Hence those of us who enjoy it must continue to fight for all people's right to do so. Furthermore, democracy is the only stable foundation upon which a global political structure can

be built. To work as one, we must respect the right of all peoples and nations to maintain their own distinctive character and values.

8. In particular, a tremendous effort will be required to bring compassion into the realm of international business. Economic inequality, especially that between developed and developing nations, remains the greatest source of suffering on this planet.
9. Even though they will lose money in the short term, large multi national corporations must curtail their exploitation of poor nations. Tapping the few precious resources such countries possess simply to fuel consumerism in the developed world is disastrous; if it continues unchecked, eventually we shall all suffer. Strengthening weak, undiversified economies is a far wiser policy for promoting both political and economic stability. As idealistic as it may sound, altruism, not just competition and the desire for wealth, should be a driving force in business.
10. We also need to renew our commitment to human values in the field of modern science. Though the main purpose of science is to learn more about reality, another of its goals is to improve the quality of life. Without altruistic motivation, scientists cannot distinguish between beneficial technologies and the merely expedient. The environmental damage surrounding us is the most obvious example of the result of this confusion, but proper motivation may be even more relevant in governing how we handle the extraordinary new array of biological techniques with which we can now manipulate the subtle structures of life itself. **If we do not base our every action on an ethical foundation, we run the risk of inflicting terrible harm on the delicate matrix of life.**
11. Nor are the religions of the world exempt from this responsibility. **The purpose of religion is not to build beautiful churches or temples, but to cultivate positive human qualities such as tolerance, generosity and love.** Every world religion, no matter what its philosophical view, is founded first and foremost on the precept that we must reduce our selfishness and serve others. Unfortunately, sometimes religion itself causes more quarrels than it solves. Practitioners of different faiths should realize that each religious tradition has immense intrinsic value and the means for providing mental and spiritual health. One religion,

like a single type of food, cannot satisfy everybody. According to their varying mental dispositions, some people benefit from one kind of teaching, others from another. Each faith has the ability to produce fine, warmhearted people and despite their espousal of often contradictory philosophies, all religions have succeeded in doing so. Thus **there is no reason to engage in divisive religious bigotry and intolerance and every reason to cherish and respect all forms of spiritual practice.**

12. Certainly, the most important field in which to sow the seeds of greater altruism is international relations. In the past few years the world has changed dramatically. I think we would all agree that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have ushered in a new historical era. As we move through the 1990s it would seem that human experience in the twentieth century has come full circle.
13. This has been the most painful period in human history, a time when, because of the vast increase in the destructive power of weapons, more people have suffered from and died by violence than ever before. Furthermore, we have also witnessed an almost terminal competition between the fundamental ideologies that have always torn the human community: force and raw power on the one hand, and freedom, pluralism, individual rights and democracy on the other. I believe that the results of this great competition are now clear. Though the good human spirit of peace, freedom and democracy still faces many forms of tyranny and evil, it is nevertheless an unmistakable fact that the vast majority of people everywhere want it to triumph. Thus the tragedies of our time have not been entirely without benefit, and have in many cases been the very means by which the human mind has been opened. The collapse of communism demonstrates this.
14. Although communism espoused many noble ideals, including altruism, the attempt by its governing elites to dictate their views has proved disastrous. These governments went to tremendous lengths to control the entire flow of information through their societies and to structure their education systems so that their citizens would work for the common good. Although rigid organization may have been necessary in the beginning to destroy previously oppressive regimes, once that goal was fulfilled, the organization had very little to contribute towards building a useful human community. Communalism failed utterly because it relied

on force to promote its beliefs. Ultimately, human nature was unable to sustain the suffering it produced.

15. Brute force, no matter how strongly applied, can never subdue the basic human desire for freedom. The hundreds of thousands of people who marched in the cities of Eastern Europe proved this. They simply expressed the human need for freedom and democracy. It was very moving. Their demands had nothing whatsoever to do with some new ideology; these people simply spoke from their hearts, sharing their desire for freedom, demonstrating that it stems from the core of human nature. Freedom, in fact, is the very source of creativity for both individuals and society. It is not enough, as communist systems have assumed, merely to provide people with food, shelter and clothing. If we have all these things but lack the precious air of liberty to sustain our deeper nature, we are only half human; we are like animals who are content just to satisfy their physical needs.
16. I feel that the peaceful revolutions in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have taught us many great lessons. One is the value of truth. People do not like to be bullied, cheated or lied to by either an individual or a system. Such acts are contrary to the essential human spirit. Therefore, even though those who practice deception and use force may achieve considerable short-term success, eventually they will be overthrown.
17. On the other hand, everyone appreciates truth, and respect for it is really in our blood. Truth is the best guarantor and the real foundation of freedom and democracy. It does not matter whether you are weak or strong or whether your cause has many or few adherents, truth will still prevail. The fact that the successful freedom movements of 1989 and after have been based on the true expression of people's most basic feelings is a valuable reminder that truth itself is still seriously lacking in much of our political life. Especially in the conduct of international relations we pay very little respect to truth. Inevitably, weaker nations are manipulated and oppressed by stronger ones, just as the weaker sections of most societies suffer at the hands of the more affluent and powerful. Though in the past, the simple expression of truth has usually been dismissed as unrealistic, these last few years have proved that it is an immense force in the human mind and, as a result, in the shaping of history.

18. A second great lesson from Eastern Europe has been that of peaceful change. In the past, enslaved peoples often resorted to violence in their struggle to be free. Now, following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., these peaceful revolutions offer future generations a wonderful example of successful, nonviolent change. When in the future major changes in society again become necessary, our descendants will be able to look back on the present time as a paradigm of peaceful struggle, a teal success story of unprecedented scale, involving more than a dozen nations and hundreds of millions of people. Moreover, recent events have shown that the desire for both peace and freedom lies at the -most fundamental level of human nature and that violence, is its complete antithesis.
19. Before considering what kind of global order would serve us best in the post-Cold War period, I think it is vital to address the question of violence, whose elimination at every level is the necessary foundation for world peace and the ultimate goal of any international order.

Nonviolence and International Order

20. Every day the media reports incidents of terrorism, crime and aggression. I have never been to a country where tragic stories of death and bloodshed did not fill the newspapers and airwaves. Such reporting has become almost an addiction for journalists and their audiences alike. But the overwhelming majority of the human race does not behave destructively; very few of the five billion people on this planet actually commit acts of violence. Most of us prefer to be as peaceful as possible.
21. Basically, we all cherish tranquility, even those of us given to violence. For instance, when spring comes, the days grow longer, there is more sunshine, the grass and trees come alive and everything is very fresh. People feel happy. In autumn, one leaf falls, then another, then all the beautiful flowers die until we are surrounded by bare, naked plants. We do not feel so joyful. Why is this? Because deep down, we desire constructive, fruitful growth and dislike things collapsing, dying or being destroyed. Every destructive action goes against our basic nature; building, being constructive, is the human way. I am sure everybody agrees that we need to overcome violence, but if we are to eliminate it completely, we should first analyze whether or not it has any value. If we address this question from a strictly practical perspective, we find that on

certain occasions violence indeed appears useful. One can solve a problem quickly with force. At the same time; however, such success is often at the expense of the rights and welfare of others. As a result, even though one problem has been solved, the seed of another has been planted.

22. On the other hand, if one's cause is supported by sound reasoning, there is no point in using violence. It is those who have no motive other than selfish desire and who cannot achieve their goal through logical reasoning who rely on force. Even when family and friends disagree, those with valid reasons can cite them one after the other and argue their case point by point, whereas those with little rational support soon fall prey to anger. Thus **anger is not a sign of strength but one of weakness**. Ultimately, it is important to examine one's own motivation and that of one's opponent. There are many kinds of violence and nonviolence, but one cannot distinguish them from external factors alone. If one's motivation is negative, the action it produces is, in the deepest sense, violent, even though it may appear to be smooth and gentle. Conversely, if one's motivation is sincere and positive but the circumstances require harsh behavior, essentially one is practicing nonviolence. No matter what the case may be, I feel that a compassionate concern for the benefit of others-not simply for oneself-is the sole justification for the use of force.
23. **"The genuine practice of nonviolence is still somewhat experimental on our planet, but its pursuit, based on love and understanding, is sacred. If this experiment succeeds, it can open the way to a far more peaceful world in the next century.**
24. I have heard the occasional Westerner maintain that long-term Gandhian struggles employing nonviolent passive resistance do not suit everybody and that such courses of action are more natural in the East. Because Westerners are active, they tend to seek immediate results in all situations, even at the cost of their lives. This approach, I believe, is not always beneficial. But surely the practice of nonviolence suits us all. It simply calls for determination. Even though the freedom movements of Eastern Europe reached their goals quickly, nonviolent protest by its very nature usually requires patience.

25. In this regard, I pray that despite the brutality of their suppression and the difficulty of the struggle they face, those involved in China's democracy movement will always remain peaceful. I am confident they will. Although the majority of the young Chinese students involved were born and raised under an especially harsh form of communism, during the spring of 1989 they spontaneously practiced Mahatma Gandhi's strategy of passive resistance. This is remarkable and dearly shows that ultimately all human beings want to pursue the path of peace, no matter how much they have been indoctrinated.

Zones of Peace

26. I see Tibet's role in such an Asian Community as what I have previously called a "Zone of Peace": a neutral, demilitarized sanctuary where weapons are forbidden and the people live in harmony with nature. This is not merely a dream-it is precisely the way Tibetans tried to live for over a thousand years before our country was invaded. As everybody knows, in Tibet all forms of wildlife were strictly protected in accordance with Buddhist principles. Also, for at least the last three hundred years, we had no proper army. Tibet gave up the waging of war as an instrument of national policy in the sixth and seventh centuries, after the reign of our three great religious kings.
27. Returning to the relationship between developing regional communities and the task of disarmament, I would like to suggest that the "heart" of each community could be one or more nations that have decided to become zones of peace, areas from which military forces are prohibited. This, again, is not just a dream. Four decades ago, in December 1948, Costa Rica disbanded its army. Recently, 37 per cent of the Swiss population voted to disband their military. The new government of Czechoslovakia has decided to stop the manufacture and export of all weapons. If its people so choose, a nation can take radical steps to change its very nature.
28. Zones of peace within regional communities would serve as oases of stability. While paying their fair share of the costs of any collective force created by the community as a whole, these zones of peace would be the forerunners and beacons of an entirely peaceful world and would be exempt from engaging in any conflict. If regional communities do develop in Asia, South America and Africa and disarmament progresses

so that an international force from all regions is created, these zones of peace will be able to expand, spreading tranquility as they grow.

29. We do not need to think that we are planning for the far distant future when we consider this or any other proposal for a new, more politically, economically and militarily cooperative world. For instance, the newly invigorated forty-eight member Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has already laid the foundation for an alliance between not only the nations of Eastern and Western Europe-but also between the nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the United States. These remarkable events have virtually eliminated the danger of a major war between these two superpowers.
30. I have not included the United Nations in this discussion of the present era because both its critical role in helping create a better world and its great potential for doing so are so well known. By definition, the United Nations must be in the very middle of whatever major changes occur. However, it may need to amend its structure for the future. I have always had the greatest hopes for the United Nations, and with no criticism intended, I would like simply to point out that the post-World War II climate under which its charter was conceived has changed. With that change has come the opportunity to further democratize the UN, especially the somewhat exclusive Security Council with its five permanent members, which should be made more representative.

In conclusion

31. I would like to conclude by stating that, in general, I feel optimistic about the future. Some recent trends portend our great potential for a better world. As late as the fifties and sixties, people believed that war was an inevitable condition of mankind. The Cold War, in particular, reinforced the notion that opposing political systems could only clash, not compete or even collaborate. Few now hold this view. Today, people all over the planet are genuinely concerned about world peace. They are far less interested in propounding ideology and far more committed to coexistence. These are very positive developments.
32. Also, for thousands of years people believed that only an authoritarian organization employing rigid disciplinary methods could govern human society. However, people have an innate desire for freedom and democracy, and these two forces have been in conflict. Today, it is clear

which has won. The emergence of nonviolent "people's power" movements have shown indisputably that the human race can neither tolerate nor function properly under the rule of tyranny. This recognition represents remarkable progress.

33. Another hopeful development is the growing compatibility between science and religion. Throughout the nineteenth century and for much of our own, people have been profoundly confused by the conflict between these apparently contradictory world views. Today, physics, biology and psychology have reached such sophisticated levels that many researchers are starting to ask the most profound questions about the ultimate nature of the universe and life, the same questions that are of prime interest to religions. Thus there is real potential for a more unified view. In particular, it seems that a new concept of mind and matter is emerging. The East has been more concerned with understanding the mind, the West with understanding matter. Now that the two have met, these spiritual and material views of life may become more harmonized.
34. The rapid changes in our attitude towards the earth are also a source of hope. As recently as ten or fifteen years ago, we thoughtlessly consumed its resources, as if there was no end to them. Now, not only individuals but governments as well are seeking a new ecological order. I often joke that the moon and stars look beautiful, but if any of us tried to live on them, we would be miserable. This blue planet of ours is the most delightful habitat we know. Its life is our life; its future, our future. And though I do not believe that the Earth itself is a sentient being, it does indeed act as our mother, and, like children, we are dependent upon her. Now Mother Nature is telling us to cooperate. In the face of such global problems as the greenhouse effect and the deterioration of the ozone layer, individual organizations and single nations are helpless. Unless we all work together, no solution will be found. Our mother is teaching us a lesson in universal responsibility.
35. I think we can say that, because of the lessons we have begun to learn, the next century will be friendlier, more harmonious, and less harmful. **Compassion, the seed of peace, will be able to flourish.** I am very hopeful. At the same time, I believe that every individual has a responsibility to help guide our global family in the right direction. **Good wishes alone are not enough; we have to assume responsibility.** Large human movements spring from individual human initiatives. If you feel

that you cannot have much of an effect, the next person may also become discouraged and a great opportunity will have been lost. On the other hand, each of us can inspire others simply by working to develop our own altruistic motivation.

36. I am sure that many honest, sincere people all over the world already hold the views that I have mentioned here. Unfortunately, nobody listens to them. Although my voice may go unheeded as well, I thought that I should try to speak on their behalf. Of course, some people may feel that it is very presumptuous for the Dalai Lama to write in this way. But, since I received the Nobel Peace Prize, I feel I have a responsibility to do so. If I just took the Nobel money and spent it however I liked, it would look as if the only reason I had spoken all those nice words in the past was to get this prize! However, now that I have received it, I must repay the honor by continuing to advocate the views that I have always expressed.
37. I, for one, truly believe that individuals can make a difference in society. Since periods of great change such as the present one come so rarely in human history, **it is up to each of us to make the best use of our time to help create a happier world.**

Text taken from

www.dalailama.com

Q1: What ideas in the text do you agree or disagree with?

Q2: Many people use anger as a tool to get what they want. Is this the right thing to do? Would it be better if they use love and compassion as their motivation?

Q3: Is it possible to create zones of peace? Peace zones would be countries or groups of countries that do not have their own military forces?

Q4: Is the UN (United Nations) the key to a peaceful world in the future? What would happen if all the nations on Earth joined the UN, and there was only one army: the UN Peacekeeping force?

Q5: Do you have a sense of universal responsibility?

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