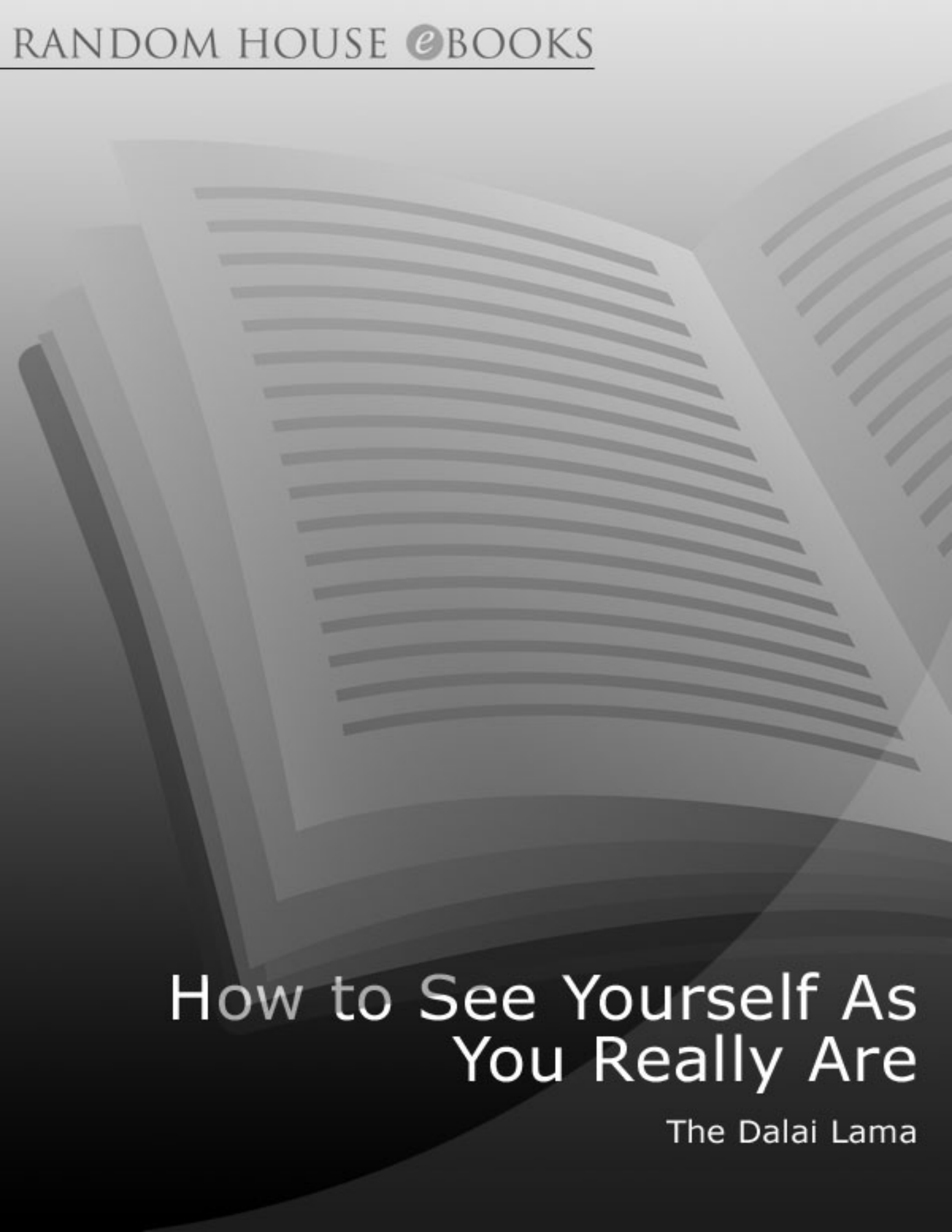


RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



How to See Yourself As You Really Are

The Dalai Lama

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About the Author

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the spiritual and political leader of Tibet. Today, he lives in exile in Northern India and works tirelessly on behalf of the Tibetan people, as well as travelling the world to give spiritual teachings to sell-out audiences. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

Books by the Dalai Lama also available from Rider

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The Little Book of Buddhism

The Good Heart

The Dalai Lama's Book of Wisdom

The Dalai Lama's Book of Daily Meditations

The Little Book of Buddhism

The Little Book of Wisdom

His Holiness the
Dalai Lama

HOW TO
SEE
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Translated and Edited by
Jeffrey Hopkins



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Foreword

This book by His Holiness the Dalai Lama stems from a basic Buddhist notion that love and insight work cooperatively to bring about enlightenment, like the two wings of a bird. The overarching theme is that self-knowledge is the key to personal development and positive relationships. The Dalai Lama shows us how, in the absence of true self-knowledge, we hurt ourselves through misguided, exaggerated notions of self, others, external events, and physical things. Even our senses deceive us, drawing us into attachment and negative actions that can only come back to haunt us in the future. The book details how to overcome these mistakes in order to live from a realistic knowledge of our healthy interdependence.

The first part of this book shows how to draw back the deceptive aspect of our experience like a curtain; other approaches, such as suppressing lust and hatred, may be helpful, but they do not address this root problem. By directing our attention to the false veneer that so bedazzles our senses and our thoughts, His Holiness sets the stage for discovering the reality behind appearances. Our tacit acceptance of things as they seem is called ignorance, which is not just a lack of knowledge about how people and things actually exist but an active mistaking of their fundamental nature. True self-knowledge involves exposing and facing misconceptions about ourselves. The aim here is to find out how we get ourselves into trouble, then learn how to intervene on the ground floor of our counterproductive ideas.

Buddhist psychology is known for its detailed descriptions of the mind's workings, and His Holiness uses these insights in a practical way by helping readers catch hold of these processes through their own experience. His central theme is that our skewed perceptions of body and mind lead to disastrous mistakes, ranging from lust at the one extreme to raging hatred at the other, so that we are consistently being led into trouble as if pulled by a ring in our nose. By developing insight into this process, we can free ourselves, and those around us, from these endless scenarios of pain.

This part provides step-by-step exercises to develop our ability to recognize the disparity between how we appear to ourselves and how we actually are. Once we have recognized our warped assumptions for what they are, the second part of the book shows how to undermine them. The tools used to accomplish this transformation are renowned Buddhist reflections for questioning appearances, which the Dalai Lama illustrates with his own experiences. His Holiness guides readers through a variety of practical exercises to help us break down the illusions we have superimposed over and beyond what actually exists, and learn how to act in the world from a more realistic framework. This calls for valuing the interdependence of all things and appreciating the latticework of our relationships for the meaningful contribution it makes to our lives.

The book's third part describes how to harness the power of meditative concentration with insight to achieve immersion in our own ultimate nature, which undermines our problems at their very foundation. The fourth and fifth parts discuss how people and things actually do exist, since they do not exist in the way we assume. The Dalai Lama draws readers into noticing how everything depends on thought—how thought itself organizes what we perceive. His goal is to develop in us a clear sense of what it means to exist without misconception. Then the final part of the

book explains the way this profound state of being enhances love by revealing how unnecessary destructive emotions and suffering actually are. In this way self-knowledge is seen as the key to personal development and positive relationships. Once we know how to put insight in the service of love and love in the service of insight, we come to the book's appendix, an overview of the steps for achieving altruistic enlightenment.

This book itself is an illustration of Tibet's contribution to world culture, reminding us of the importance of maintaining a homeland for its preservation. The light shining through the Dalai Lama's teachings has its source in that culture, offering insights and practices that so many of us need in ours.

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Introduction: My Perspective

When we rise in the morning and listen to the news or read the newspaper, we are confronted with the same sad stories—violence, wars, and disasters. It is clear that even in modern times precious life is not safe: I cannot recall a single daily news program without a report of crime somewhere. There is so much bad news nowadays, such an awareness of fear and tension, that any sensitive and compassionate being must question the “progress” we have made in our modern world.

Ironically, the most serious problems emanate from industrially advanced societies, where unprecedented literacy only seems to have fostered restlessness and discontent. There is no doubt about our collective progress in many areas—especially science and technology—but somehow our advances in knowledge are not sufficient. Basic human problems remain. We have not succeeded in bringing about peace, or in reducing overall suffering.

This situation brings me to the conclusion that there may be something seriously wrong with the way we conduct our affairs, which, if not checked in time, could have disastrous consequences for the future of humanity. Science and technology have contributed immensely to the overall development of humankind, to our material comfort and well-being as well as to our understanding of the world we live in. But if we put too much emphasis on these endeavors, we are in danger of losing those aspects of human knowledge that contribute to the development of an honest and altruistic personality.

Science and technology cannot replace the age-old spiritual values that have been largely responsible for the true progress of world civilization as we know it today. No one can deny the material benefits of modern life, but we are still faced with suffering, fear, and tension—perhaps more now than ever before. So it is only sensible to try to strike a balance between material development on the one side and development of spiritual values on the other. In order to bring about a great change, we need to revive and strengthen our inner values.

I hope that you share my concern about the present worldwide moral crisis, and that you will join me in calling on all humanitarians and religious practitioners who share this concern to contribute to making our societies more compassionate, just, and equitable. I say this not as a Buddhist or even as a Tibetan but simply as a human being. I also do not speak as an expert on international politics (though I unavoidably comment on these matters) but as a part of the Buddhist tradition, which like the traditions of other great world religions, is founded on the bedrock of concern for all beings. From this perspective, I share with you the following personal beliefs:

1. That universal concern is essential to solving global problems
2. That love and compassion are the pillars of world peace
3. That all world religions seek to advance world peace, as do all humanitarians of whatever ideology
4. That each individual has a responsibility to shape institutions to serve the needs of the world.

Let us consider these one by one.

1. UNIVERSAL CONCERN IS ESSENTIAL TO SOLVING GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Of the many problems we face today, some are natural calamities that must be accepted and faced with equanimity. Others, however, are of our own making, created by misunderstanding, and these can be corrected. One such problem arises from the conflict of ideologies, political or religious, when people fight one another over their beliefs, losing sight of the basic humanity binding us together as a single human family. We must remember that these different religions, ideologies, and political systems of the world arose to help human beings achieve happiness. We must not lose sight of this fundamental goal. At no time should we place means above ends: we must always maintain the supremacy of compassion over ideology.

By far the greatest single danger facing all living beings on our planet is the threat of nuclear destruction. I need not elaborate on this danger, but I would like to appeal to the leaders of the nuclear powers who literally hold the future of the world in their hands, to the scientists and technicians who continue to create these awesome weapons of destruction, and to all people at large to exercise sanity and to disarm. We know that in the event of a nuclear war there will be no victors because there will be no survivors! Is it not frightening just to contemplate such inhuman and heartless destruction? And is it not logical that we should remove the potential cause for our own destruction once we recognize it? Often we cannot overcome a problem because we do not know its cause or if we understand it, we do not have the means or the time to remove it. This is not the case with the nuclear threat.

Whether they belong to a more evolved species, such as humans, or to simpler ones, such as animals, all beings

seek peace, comfort, and security. Life is as dear to the mute animal as it is to any human being; even the simplest insect strives for protection from dangers that threaten its life. Just as each one of us wants to live and does not wish to die, so it is with all other creatures, though their power to effect this varies.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of happiness and suffering: mental and physical. Since I believe that mental suffering and happiness are more influential than their physical counterparts, I usually stress training the mind as a strategy to manage suffering and attain a more lasting state of happiness. Happiness is a combination of inner peace, economic viability, and above all, world peace. To achieve such goals, I feel it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all, irrespective of creed, color, sex, nationality, or ethnicity.

The premise behind universal responsibility is the simple fact that we all want the same thing. Every being wants happiness and does not want suffering. If we do not respect this fact, there will be more and more suffering on this planet. If we adopt a self-centered approach to life and constantly try to use others for our own self-interest, we may gain temporary benefits, but in the long run both personal happiness and world peace will be completely out of the question.

In their quest for happiness, humans have used different methods, and all too often, these means have been aggressive and harsh. Behaving in ways utterly unbecoming to humanity, people commit terrible cruelties, inflicting suffering upon other living beings for the sake of selfish gains. In the end, such shortsighted actions bring nothing but suffering—to ourselves and to others. Being born a human being is a rare event in itself, and it is wise to use this opportunity as beneficially as possible. We must keep in mind that we all want the same thing, so that one

person or group does not seek happiness or glory at the expense of others.

All this calls for a compassionate approach to global problems. Globalization means that the world is rapidly becoming smaller and more interdependent, because of technology and international trade. As a result, we need one another more than ever before. In ancient times problems were mostly family-size, so they could be addressed at the family level, but that situation has changed. Today one nation's problems can no longer be satisfactorily resolved by itself alone; too much depends on the interests, attitudes, and cooperation of other nations. A universal approach to world problems is the only sound basis for world peace. We are so closely interconnected that without a sense of universal responsibility, an understanding that we really are part of one big human family, we cannot hope to overcome the dangers to our very existence, let alone bring about peace and happiness.

What does this entail? Once we recognize that all beings cherish happiness and do not want suffering, it becomes both morally wrong and pragmatically unwise to pursue our own happiness oblivious to the feelings and aspirations of all other members of our own human family. Considering others when pursuing our own happiness leads us to what I call "wise self-interest," which hopefully will transform itself into "compromised self-interest," or better still, "mutual interest." Some people think that cultivating compassion is good for others but not necessarily for themselves, but this is wrong. You are the one who benefits most directly since compassion immediately instills in you a sense of calm (nowadays medical researchers have shown in scientific studies that a calm mind is essential for good health), inner strength, and a deep confidence and satisfaction, whereas it is not certain that the object of your feeling of compassion will benefit. Love and compassion open our own inner life, reducing stress, distrust, and

loneliness. I quite agree with a Western doctor who recently told me that those people who often use the words *I*, *my*, and *me* are at greater risk of having a heart attack. When, because of self-centeredness, your view is narrowed to yourself, even a small problem will seem unbearable.

Although increasing interdependence among nations might be expected to generate more cooperation, it is difficult to achieve a spirit of genuine cooperation as long as people remain indifferent to the feelings and happiness of others. When people are motivated mostly by greed and jealousy, it is not possible for them to live in harmony. A spiritual approach may not provide an overnight solution to all the political problems caused by our present self-centered approach, but in the long run it will address the very basis of the problems that we face today, removing them at the root.

The world is becoming smaller now, to the degree that all parts of the world are obviously part of yourself. Thus, destruction of your enemy is destruction of yourself. The very concept of war is outdated. If the twentieth century was the century of bloodshed, the twenty-first has to be the century of dialogue.

If humankind continues to approach its problems from the perspective of temporary expediency, future generations will face tremendous difficulties. Global population is increasing, and our resources are being rapidly depleted. Consider the ruinous effects of massive deforestation on the climate, the soil, and global ecology as a whole. We are facing calamity because, guided by expediency and selfish interests, and not thinking of the entire family of living beings, we are not taking into account the earth and the long-term needs of life itself. If we do not think about these issues now, future generations may not be able to cope with them.

2. LOVE AND COMPASSION AS THE PILLARS OF WORLD PEACE

According to Buddhist psychology, most of our troubles stem from attachment to things that we mistakenly see as permanent. Operating from that misconception, we see aggression and competitiveness as helpful in the pursuit of what we imagine and desire. But this only foments belligerence. Such misguided thinking has always been going on in the human mind, but our ability to act on it has become greater, now that we have machines and techniques of enormous power to gather and consume resources. In this way, greed and aggression, spurred on by our ignorance of things as they really are, release more of their poison into the world. If problems are resolved in a humane way, they simply end, whereas if one tries inhumane ways, further problems are added to the previous ones.

The humane antidote to these problems is love and compassion, which are the essential ingredients of world peace. We are social animals; the main factors keeping us together are love and compassion. When you have love and compassion for a very poor person, your feelings are based on altruism. By contrast, love toward your husband, wife, children, or a close friend is often mixed with attachment, and when your attachment changes, your kindness may disappear. Complete love is based not on attachment but on altruism, which is the most effective response to suffering.

Love and compassion are what we must strive to cultivate in ourselves, extending their present boundaries all the way to limitlessness. Undiscriminating, spontaneous, unlimited love and compassion are possible even toward someone who has done harm to you—your enemy. And their power is astonishing.

Buddhism teaches us to view all sentient beings as our dear mothers and to show our gratitude to our mothers by loving all sentient beings. One of the first actions we took in life was to suck milk from our mother's nipple, mother's milk being the very symbol of love and compassion. Scientists have documented through research on monkeys that offspring who are separated from their mothers for a prolonged period are more tense and harsh, lacking the capacity to express friendliness to others, whereas those brought up with their mothers are more playful, which implies happiness. According to the Buddhist outlook, we are born and reborn countless numbers of times, which means it is conceivable that each sentient being has been our parent at one time or another. In this way all beings share family ties. From the moment of our birth, we are under the care and kindness of our parents; later in life, when we face the suffering of disease and old age, we are again dependent on the kindness of others. If at the beginning and end of our lives we depend upon the kindness of others, why in the middle of our lives should we not act kindly toward them? It is the pragmatic choice.

Developing a kind heart, a feeling of closeness for all beings, does not require following a conventional religious practice. It is not only for those who believe in religion. It is for everyone, regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation. It is for all who consider themselves to be, above all, members of the human family, who can embrace this larger and longer perspective. The basic values of love and compassion are present in us from the time of our birth, whereas racial, ethnic, political, and theological perspectives come later. Violence does not accord with our basic human nature, which may lead you to wonder why all sorts of violence become news but compassionate acts seldom do. The reason is that violence is shocking and not in conformity with our basic human nature, whereas we

take compassionate acts for granted because they are closer to our nature.

Since we all wish to gain happiness and avoid suffering, and since a single person is relatively unimportant in relation to countless others, we can see that it is worthwhile to share our possessions with others. Happiness that is a by-product of loving and serving others is far superior to what we gain from serving only ourselves.

Our lives are in constant flux, which generates many predicaments. But when these are faced with a calm and clear mind supported by spiritual practice, they can all be successfully resolved. When our minds are clouded by hatred, selfishness, jealousy, and anger, we lose not only control but also our judgment. At those wild moments, anything can happen, including war. Although the practice of compassion and wisdom is useful to us all, it is especially valuable for those responsible for running national affairs, in whose hands lie the power and opportunity to create a framework for world peace.

3. ALL WORLD RELIGIONS SEEK TO ADVANCE WORLD PEACE

The principles I have mentioned are in accordance with the ethical teachings of all world religions. I maintain that Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism all hold up love as an ideal, seek to benefit humanity through spiritual practice, and strive to make their followers better people. All religions teach moral precepts for the advancement of mind, body, speech, and action: do not lie or steal or take others' lives, and so on. Unselfishness is the common foundation laid down by all great spiritual teachers. This is the basis for leading their followers away from harmful deeds caused by ignorance and toward the path of goodness.

All religions agree on the necessity to manage the undisciplined mind, which harbors selfishness and other sources of trouble, and to point the way to a spiritual state that is peaceful, disciplined, ethical, and wise. In this sense I believe all religions have essentially the same message. Of course, there is no end of argument when religious differences arise from dogma and cultural diversity. However, it is much better to implement in daily life the goodness taught by all religions than to argue about minor differences in approach.

There are many religions seeking to bring comfort and happiness to humanity, just as there are many treatments for a particular disease. All religions endeavor to help living beings avoid misery and find happiness. Although we may prefer one religious perspective to another, there is a much stronger case for unity, stemming from common desires of the human heart. Each religion works to lessen suffering and contribute to the world; conversion is not the point. I