



THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

I am pleased to know that this conference, Empowering Real Change: Leadership for a Better World, is being hosted to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. I consider myself a follower of Gandhi-ji. On my first visit to India in 1956 I visited Rajghat and was deeply moved as I prayed on the banks of the Yamuna. I wondered what wise counsel Gandhi-ji might have given me. And then, one winter upon my return to Tibet, I had a dream in which I was meeting the Mahatma.

Ever since, Gandhi-ji's engagement in ancient Indian wisdom has been a great inspiration to me. One of my life commitments is to do whatever possible to spread the message of Ahimsa and Karuna. Regrettably, I feel that we are facing a moral crisis caused by our society's over-emphasis on wealth and material development, at the expense of our basic human need for kindness, compassion and concern for others. In order for our younger generations to possess these vital positive values it is essential that our education system teach these qualities to help them become happy people with happy families living together in a happy society.

We must appreciate the oneness of humanity and the responsibility that each of us has in promoting it. An educational framework that encourages people to develop inner values is essential and must be done in a secular way so that followers of all faith traditions are included, as well as the growing number of those who do not hold to a particular religious belief; all want happiness and all want to be free of suffering, whether they follow a religion or not.

I am committed to reviving interest in ancient Indian thought, as I believe this can be of immense value in transforming our destructive emotions and promoting basic inner qualities. As necessary as physical hygiene is to maintaining our physical fitness, cultivating emotional hygiene and learning to tackle our destructive emotions is essential to mental fitness. In this connection, elements of ancient Indian wisdom can be immensely helpful. India is unique in possessing the potential to combine its ancient knowledge with modern education in order to develop peace of mind. I'm encouraged by the growing interest that I find among young Indians who will hopefully contribute to the holistic development of applying ancient Indian techniques to bring about a positive state of mind, in this country and eventually throughout the world.

I hope that these ideas can be discussed during your conference and that they might be incorporated into your activities. This would, I believe, be a meaningful way of paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi.

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