

Speech by the Dalai Lama

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to be in your company this evening. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. It shows me that you are willing to hear what I have to say, which in turn conveys to me that you possess compassion and empathy. There are many issues that I feel compelled to talk to you about, but of most concern to me today is the violation of human rights, the treatment of others and how to overcome this. As long as fundamental human rights continue to be violated, we as a whole cannot move forward in peace.

Every human being deserves to live in a stable, democratic society where there is freedom and respect for all. People the world over are still being oppressed for their beliefs, the colour of their skin, their sexual preference to name a few. To be persecuted for such reasons is despicable and I find it hard to accept that this still happens in our world today. After all, it is a fact that every one of us has an innate need to feel happy, free and equal. Shouldn't we then strive to achieve this? Yes, but how you ask!?

The cultivation of a society where there is tolerance and respect needs to and must be encouraged. Intolerance stems from ignorance, therefore, I believe the way to overcome this is through educating the minds of younger generations and fostering a culture of understanding between regions. Having an open dialogue (and an open mind) with each other as individuals and between nations, will allow for constructive conversations to take place. I very well know that this is much easier said than done! People must forget about greed and domination and realise that stereotypes are just that, they are generalisations that breeds hatred. This will pave the way to a just and harmonious existence.

Thank you from the depths of my heart for listening to me speak. It has been an honour to share my thoughts with you. I look forward to and live in hope that one day we will be united and the citizens of this world can live together in peace.