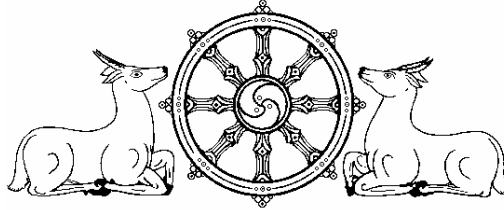


Interdependence



The majority of the world's population of six billion people has little interest ... when it comes to religion. That group has a greater influence on society - than those who are religious do.

I get the impression that when people are not much interested in religion they also neglect values like compassion, a sense of sharing, a sense of caring - all the things that people consider to be a religious message and reject. That's a mistake. These are secular ethics, not a religious message, and they are for everyone.

Everyone can understand that being human, you want a happy life, a happy family, to be a happy individual. But material things will not provide you with genuine inner peace or inner happiness. Human values are essential... present them not as religious matters but as secular ethics that are essential whether you are religious or not.

When I look at birds and animals, their survival is without rules, without conditions, without organization. But mothers take good care of their offspring. That's nature. In human beings also, parents—particularly mothers—and children have a special bond. Mother's milk is a sign of this affection. We are created that way.

The child's survival is entirely dependent on someone else's affection. So, basically, each individual's survival or future depends on society. We need these human values. I call these secular ethics, secular beliefs. There's no relationship with any particular religion. Even without religion, even as non-believers, we have the capacity to promote these things.

His Holiness, The Dalai Lama of Tibet