

Words of wisdom from Rotterdam

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It isn't rituals or ceremonies that make up the core of Buddhism but investigation of the mind. These words were spoken by the [Dalai Lama](#) during his [visit](#) to Rotterdam on 11 May 2014. The spiritual leader of Tibetans added the following during his [talks](#): investigation of the mind leads to a transformation of our emotions. Destructive emotions destroy our peace of mind. Too much stress destroys our system. Inner peace is needed for a healthy body-mind of the individual, with effects for his or her family, for society and for the world at large. Inner peace is a condition for outer peace.

Sixteen thousand people from across Europe listened to the Dalai Lama's [message](#) of common humaneness. Every human being suffers. The Buddhist truth of suffering concerns the *condition humaine* which inevitably entails suffering (birth, sickness, death) and the unsatisfactoriness of life: life never seems to live up to our expectations. The cause of human suffering is our ignorance of reality as it is: we humans follow our selfish desires to escape life as we experience it. The reality is 'empty', meaning impermanent and transcient. Suffering is humans' own creation.

Men and women can end their suffering by realising how their perspective on life makes them suffer. Thus, investigation of the mind may lead to happiness and peace. Apart from this message for the audience's personal life, the Dalai Lama emphasised the unity of mankind as a whole. All human beings are basically the same mentally, emotionally and physically. Everyone wants a happy life. We can communicate heart-to-heart. Seven billion people are one in this. Now readers may ask: how can this be said? Anyone can observe that the globe is filled with problems, strife, unhappiness. According to the Dalai Lama, this is because we focus on secondary-level differences. These secondary aspects get all our attention: difference in nationality, religion, economic system, education level and level of wealth. Our focus on secondary differences makes for the strife in the world. The Dalai Lama stressed the importance of instructors teaching human kindness, from kindergarten to university. The 'simple Tibetan monk' with a wide following recognized the unity and deep connection among all religions but, in view of religious differences, he called for a [secular moral ethics](#).

At this time of European elections and discussions about what binds us and divides us, it may benefit politicians and voters to take to heart these words of wisdom.

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