**11th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest**

**Title of speech**: Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

**Writer**: His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet

**Excerpt:**

No matter what part of the world we come from, we are all basically the same human beings. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. We have the same basic human needs and concerns. All of us human beings want freedom and the right to determine our own destiny as individuals and as peoples. That is human nature…

As a Buddhist monk, my concern extends to all members of the human family and, indeed, to all sentient beings who suffer. I believe all suffering is caused by ignorance. People inflict pain on others in the selfish pursuit of their happiness or satisfaction. Yet true happiness comes from a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share. Although I have found my own Buddhist religion helpful in generating love and compassion, even for those we consider our enemies, I am convinced that everyone can develop a good heart and a sense of universal responsibility with or without religion.

With the ever-growing impact of science on our lives, religion and spirituality have a greater role to play reminding us of our humanity. There is no contradiction between the two. Each gives us valuable insights into the other. Both science and the teachings of the Buddha tell us of the fundamental unity of all things. This understanding is crucial if we are to take positive and decisive action on the pressing global concern with the environment.

I believe all religions pursue the same goals, that of cultivating human goodness and bringing happiness to all human beings. Though the means might appear different the ends are the same.

**About the Speaker:**

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk. He is the spiritual leader of Tibet, and a Buddhist. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a man of peace. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems.

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**About the speech**

In 989 the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He took the opportunity to talk about how human beings are more alike than unalike. Although he is a devout Buddhist, he makes it clear that he thinks our attitude towards each other and other living things on earth is key: we must take responsibility for everyone and every living (sentient) thing. The Dalai Lama is perhaps unusual compared to other spiritual leaders because he is interested in science and the environment, as well as human spirituality.

**Discussion Guide:**

Do you agree with the Dalai Lama that we all have responsibility to care for people and creatures—insects, animals, plants---that are suffering? Why or why not?

Do you agree with the Dalai Lama that we should show love and compassion even to our enemies? Why or why not?

If you had a chance to speak to the world about the environment, what would you say?