

CONTACT: Donald Lehr – The Nolan/Lehr Group / +1.212.967.8200  
[dlehr@templetonprize.org](mailto:dlehr@templetonprize.org) / [www.templetonprize.org](http://www.templetonprize.org)

**Statement by Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr.**

**40 Years of Spiritual Progress & the 2012 Templeton Prize Laureate**

Good Day, everyone! This day is a particularly important day to share these reflective words: “How little we know; how eager to learn.”

Those words are the motivating vision of the Templeton Prize, created 40 years ago by my Father, Sir John Templeton, the late global investor and philanthropist. These words have long been a major part of the vision for the Templeton Prize. This vision fosters an eager pursuit of discovery, most especially the seeking of new insights into the limitless potentials in the realm of the spiritual.

This is what Sir John summarized as “Spiritual Progress.”

Following Sir John’s spiritual and philosophical world views, the Templeton Prize affirms that there are indeed “spiritual realities.” Humans have a fundamental spiritual dimension – in addition to their physical or material one.

This timeless belief is shared by the overwhelming majority of people – both past and present. But what do spiritual realities encompass?

Concepts associated with the spirit would clearly include prayer, thanksgiving, love, and a pursuit of the Divine. But so, too – creativity, purpose and infinity are also essential Spiritual Realities.

Sir John envisioned that the Prize would identify “entrepreneurs of the spirit” – that is, those who devote their talents to expanding our vision of human purpose and ultimate reality. Thus, in raising concepts like creativity and purpose in its pursuit of Spiritual Progress, the Prize often honors those who use the tools of science and philosophy to undertake spiritually relevant research.

But the optimal context for such a vision is to encourage an open-minded spirit of humility in these approaches. Sir John stressed that humility causes an open mind, which in turn makes it possible for us to learn from each other. Furthermore, an open mind is a major contributor to progress. The Prize seeks to recognize that spirit of humility so that people of all nations can learn about the rich variety of ways that others love and understand a supreme spirit.

Sir John even foresaw the day when new information on Spiritual Realities from science research might reduce conflict between religions. He felt that, from such research, people will come to acknowledge the spiritual information which is universal to all people. In this way, it is hoped that all religions will embrace Sir John’s vision: “How little we know, how eager to learn.”

And so, in that spirit of spiritual progress, the nine Templeton Prize judges – representing a wide range of disciplines, cultures and religious traditions – individually, and separately of each other, carefully evaluate all of the Prize candidates each year.

From this process, the Templeton Prize Judges have chosen the 2012 Templeton Prize Laureate: His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader who has engaged both with science and also with those far beyond his own religious traditions.

His Holiness has become an incomparable global voice for universal ethics, nonviolence, and harmony among world religions.

He has vigorously focused on the connections between the investigative traditions of science and Buddhism as a way to better understand and advance the best that both disciplines might offer the world.

He has encouraged serious scientific investigative review of the power of compassion and its potential to address fundamental problems of the world. This search is at the core of his teachings.

And within that search, the “Big Questions” he raises include: “Can compassion be trained or taught?” This very same question reflects a long-standing, deep interest of Sir John Templeton.

His Holiness has fostered the inclusion of careful scientific methods to the study of spiritual perspectives, which in turn fosters the spiritual progress that the Prize has recognized for the past 40 years.

With an increasing reliance on technological advances to solve the world’s problems, humanity seeks the reassurance that only a spiritual quest can answer. His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers a universal voice of compassion underpinned by a love and respect for a spiritually relevant scientific research that centers on every single human being.

Countless millions of people around the world have been drawn by his appeal to compassion and understanding for all, regardless of their religion.

In several videos which you can view on the Templeton Prize website, the Dalai Lama says, in a global embrace of all:

“You can develop genuine sense of concern of well-being for others, including your enemy.... that kind of compassion, unbiased, unlimited, needs training, awareness.”

And he also says:

“The basis of genuine friendship is trust. Trust depends on openness. So, through these things, we can change. That’s my belief, but .... my friends have a lot more research work to do!”

Thus we hear: The power of compassion, when it is viewed as being unlimited; and also, the quest to use science research to discover more about Spiritual Realities. These concepts, central to the teachings of His Holiness, are fundamental to the purpose of the Templeton Prize, namely, to encourage progress in the spiritual realm by calling attention to new research and new insights arising from investigating life’s spiritual dimensions.

Today, as we celebrate the Templeton Prize and 40 Years of Spiritual Progress, we pay homage to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for his insights into the spiritual dimensions of human experience and most especially for his advancement of spiritual progress.

Thank you then for joining us today in this most joyous announcement.

# # #