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powerful words

His Holiness the Dalai Lama recently visited Manchester and shared his wise words with thousands. [Kim Taggart](#) was in the crowd.

The 14th Dalai Lama was at Manchester's MEN arena for a weekend of talks and workshops to promote non-violence and of course, the core Buddhist message of compassion. He aimed his message particularly at the UK's younger audiences in the wake of the 2011 riots.

In our search to find meaning behind the riots, some believed that part of the cause was a damaging mix of materialist ideals and social depravity. Whatever the cause, most of us would have concluded that changes needed to be made. In light of this, the title for this event, 'Real Change Happens in the Heart' spoke volumes. In the foyer there was all manner and persuasions of people; a gang of teenage lads with satirised cartoon t-shirts, mothers and daughters and young men pouring over an extensive Dalai Lama book fair in the corner.

warming up the room

Inside, his words bounced warmly around the arena. A crowd of tens of thousands were attentive, leaning forward. Despite the enormity of the room he saw no sense in projecting his voice and at first spoke in whispers: "We have some special unique ability, we must utilise that." He was speaking of humanity's mental capacities, encouraging us all to develop and strengthen our minds. The sight of his distant figure on the stage, surrounded by such huge numbers seemed completely normal. Before arriving I had wondered how he would connect with people in such a big venue. Although 2 huge 50ft screens helped with a visual, he had such a strong presence and would have been fine without them. Perhaps this is why in Tibet he is known as Kundun meaning 'Presence'.

Gradually, the room seemed to heat up with the warmth of his words. He was offering hope around the current issues of economic and ecological strife: "These crises are our own creations; so logically, we have the ability to overcome these man-made problems." Although his words were universal and common-sense, they also held a timely poignancy.

undoing crisis of consciousness

He also spoke of the age in which we live. Via the internet there's lots of new and sometimes terrifying information coming through into our consciousness. The scale of global unrest and ecological damage can be overwhelming and can serve to create more polarities in our minds.

As this was something I had been personally grappling with, his words struck a chord, "Think," he stressed. "Pay attention to humanity." He was explaining how our mentality had a lot to do with our health, stating succinctly "The ultimate source of good health is peace of mind." It was clear that the composure and mental capacities of this 'simple Buddhist monk' as he refers to himself, were quite healthy. His speech continued for another two hours with a question and answer session at the end. Although he lived up to his title 'Ocean of Wisdom', a common translation of his name, he had no problems saying "I don't know." One of the questions addressed to him was "What is the most important thing for a mother to teach her child?" To which he instantly replied: "I think you know best," which met with a ripple of laughter.

permeable words

Even though he repeated his usual core philosophies of compassion, truth and altruism, it was more effective to hear him speak them out loud, permeable even. His words were simple and universal, leaving religion out of the equation in favour of spirituality and science. He encouraged respect for all beliefs and emphasised: "most importantly, respect the non-believer."

As I left the stadium I noticed that my heart was light and unburdened like a child's. Ultimately all of his messages left an echo of positivity in me. In bed that night my mind was reeling with his words and intentions: "love more; love is altruism not attachment; compassion is the only way; the importance of mother's nurturing for self-esteem... think... think!" I had a feeling that his words were alive in me, somehow imprinted.

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"The ultimate source of good health is peace of mind"