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MacDonald's Spirituality

There appears to be a growing trend toward instant everything, neatly packaged and easy to assimilate. Thinking is being bound within minimization, which does have an upside side, as it is easily digested and recalled or thoughtlessly regurgitated. This minimization may be neat packaging, but the substance, depth and breadth of what is packaged is missing or obscured by the quick presentation and assimilation. But it is substance that gives lasting spirit nutrition, creating experiential growth. Being spiritually undernourished normally arises from the constant consumption of intellectually prepared fast foods that have no lasting substance. Spirit hunger will never be satisfied with neatly packaged quotations or memorable pronouncements, no matter how good they are. They can be seen as dessert, but the main course is missing, and so constantly craving more of the same, wondering why you continually remain famished. Minimization can be a superficial intake of plastic food, posing as real. It is easy and quick to obtain, but also an artful deceit that is becoming the norm, as plastic has replaced the reality of experientially knowing the substance of what is neatly packaged. That does not mean plastic food is indigestible and ineffectual, just plastic. When you are starving to death plastic food may artificially suppress the appetite. But it never satisfies.

Neat packaging is undeniably supportive, but the substance is missing. The substance is discoverable only when you tear the package apart and probe the filling, and that takes effort and risk. Effort, as you actually have to work at it; and risk, as you can easily get burnt. Substance is founded upon depth of understanding that is personally useable and directional in your daily life. Neat packaging is attractive and can be inspiring, but knowing the depth and breadth of the package requires you to investigate what is inside. Neat packaging, for all its benefit, can instill investigative lethargy leading to empty intellectual parroting. The value of the package is easily missed, like eating dessert with no main meal. Dessert is great, but endless consumption will make you sick while left craving something of substance.

The amount of information that is now available, on any subject, is staggering. Minimization may appear as a necessary distillation to present a core understanding. But it is easy to forget, or skip over, the enormous amount of investigative work of those who created that core understanding, and simply take the core as what the understanding is. But the core is just a distillation of the total, and although it may stand on its own, it is not the total: the total still requires individual effort to discover the core for oneself. The presentation of the core is only a pointer; it is not the substance. The core is the dessert whilst the experiential understanding is the substantial main course. As pleasant as dessert is, it is still just dessert.

The neat package, core, or dessert is someone's experiential condensed wisdom. That neat package is not yours; unless you can make it yours by going through the same or similar processes the other person has, and arrive at the same end. Once there, then it is yours as well, but not until then. Until you arrive at that end, the repetition of that neat package is superficial wisdom, having no experiential depth and no personal substance. Superficial wisdom is parroting digestible bits of condensed wisdom, presenting a facade of experiential wisdom.

Prepackaged information can be the deceit of learning by exploiting chunks of condensed wisdom at the expense of experiential knowledge, creating a society of secondhand one-liners. The superficiality of this form of learning can best be described as MacDonald's spirituality: there are many outlets producing the same form of food, their product is quick to get, easily digested and best of all it requires no effort on your part.

Are we developing into a MacDonald's society where only the superficial is necessary? Are 'things', neatly packaged becoming more important than understanding the 'how' and 'why' of what is packaged. Is the majority of our time spent upon some form of work, relationship, or prosperity issue that are all security based? Is how you look, dress, or live more important than how you think and act? Does that intellectual lassitude create armchair witnesses to suffering, encapsulated in three to five minute bursts on the television, followed by another and then another, ending with a story to leave feeling better about the world? But, of course, we can forget today's disasters, for tomorrow's news will bring more of the same, just somewhere else.

Are we losing our ability to feel compassion simply because we are learning to block it due to the packaged and endless onslaught of media induced visible pain? Witnessing children dying of hunger, mutilated bodies from war, ravished economies that create greater pain to follow, natural disasters, local shootings, terrorism, vandalism, road rage and local family crises demand a response, and yet before one can grasp the extent of one disaster another is in-your-face. Are we being immunized against compassion by the constant drain upon it by the endless series of tragedies, with one disaster following another? Are appeals for disaster funds beginning to fall upon deaf ears, as the string of successive tragedies requires you to choose the disaster that affects you the most? Are we becoming desensitized to the pain of others, simply by the overwhelming amount of instant world information that we are afflicted with daily? Is our compassion being neutralized simply to survive in our modern industrial and technological society?

A hundred years ago known disasters were local and anything further than your locality took communication months before you heard of it. In days past living was simpler, possibly harder but simpler. Is the news of endless tragedies and suffering desensitized human beings that can no longer access that compassion unless it affects them directly or personally? As a society are we standing upon the threshold of an uncompassionate abyss that could consume our feeling, thoughts, and actions, eliminating a personal capacity that could potentially define our existence? Media manipulation of endless five-minute coverage is ceaseless, providing little to no space to assimilate one before another is in-your-face. Is the daily news, for all its importance, a nightmare of hidden deceit using an artful deception to exploit individual compassion, indirectly desensitizing the viewers? As such, is human potential being manipulatively entrapped and suppressed by the endless mental plastic food we consume? If so, are those unrealized compassionate responses pacified by the consumption of assimilated neat packages? Have we gone into overload and shut the lot down to preserve our sanity? Whatever happened to simplicity and sincerity, or is that just a fading memory from 'olden' times?

Plastic foods, whether you appreciate it or not, will ultimately make you sick, no matter how neatly it is packaged as it is superficial nourishment. It is dessert in many forms. Dessert does not get to the core of 'why' and 'how', and there is a 'why' and 'how'. It just takes courage to look and tenacity to continue looking. If you choose a path of investigating-your-existence you will discover it goes from simple to complex, and wonderfully enough returns to simplicity, bathed in a substance encased within

sincerity, with an enormous amount of trying times in-between. But then you can eat your dessert, as you know where the main meal is.

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