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### **The Culture of Denial and the Inheritance of Cruelty**

The more forcefully we ignore something, the more power it has over us and the more strongly it influences us. Taking a clear look at the foods produced by modern methods and what we have been conditioned to accept, we find misery, cruelty and exploitation. Therefore, we avoid looking deeply at our food, if of animal origin, and continue to float in that big river in Egypt (da Nile).

This practice of avoidance and denial, applied to eating, carries over automatically into our entire private and public life. We know, deep down, that we cannot look deeply anywhere. If we do, we will have to look deeply into the enormous suffering our food choices directly cause.

So, we learn to stay shallow and to be willingly blind to the connections we see. Otherwise, our remorse and guilt would be too painful to bear. We, therefore choose to ignore and remain ignorant and inattentive to the pain and suffering our eating causes.

Being unwilling and unable to see, confront, and take responsibility for the hidden ocean of horror we condone to those who are sentient and vulnerable as we are, we remain hardened and blind by choice. We choose to be blind when we shop for, prepare, and eat the flesh of other creatures. Becoming insensitive to the pain that we cause daily to defenseless animals, we also become insensitive to the beauty of the creation that we oppress and disconnect ourselves from at every meal.

The desensitizing of millions of children and adults, on the massive scale that consuming millions of tortured animals daily requires, sows countless seeds of human violence, war, poverty and despair. These outcomes are unavoidable, for we can never reap peace, joy and freedom for ourselves while sowing seeds of harming and enslaving others.

We may speak of love, kindness, freedom and a more gentle world, yet it is our actions, especially those that are habitually practiced, that determine what future outcomes we and others will experience. The cycles of violence that have terrorized people, both historically and today, are rooted in the violence of our daily meals. Though animals cannot retaliate like other people can, our violence toward them retaliates against us in the form of heart disease, cancer, arthritis, constipation and more.

By confining and killing animals for food, we have brought violence into our bodies and minds. Our meals require us to eat like predators and thus see ourselves as such. We cultivate and justify predatory behaviors and institutions that are the antithesis of the inclusiveness and kindness that accompany true spiritual growth.

Because cruelty is inescapable in confining, mutilating, and slaughtering animals for food, we have been forced from childhood to be distracted and inattentive perpetrators of cruelty. As infants, we have no

idea what “veal”, “turkey”, “egg”, “fish” or “beef” actually are, or where they come from. We don't know what horror is visited upon helpless creatures in order to create the easily available concoctions being spooned into our little teething mouths and developing consciousnesses.

In time, we accept this indoctrination of denial and cruelty as normal and our meals become rituals of distraction and repressed sensitivity and guilt. The price we pay for this is the dulling of our innate intelligence and compassion.

Aloha!