

I took the next couple of months to do some thinking. What did it mean that I loved my dog but ate other beings? How did we decide which to pet and which to slaughter? Was my momentary pleasure worth a lifetime of suffering? If I changed my diet, would I no longer experience pleasure from my food? Would my family and friends think I was crazy?

One night in August, I put down my dinner fork and declared I would no longer eat flesh. The mulling had been important, but action was more so. Wanting justice and working for justice are two different things, and I could no longer claim the former without doing the latter. As I learned more and more about the ethical, environmental, health, human rights, and workers' rights issues associated with wealthy nations' addiction to meat, I became firmer in my ideals and actions. And that decision gives me deeper and deeper satisfaction as I see others make the same connections and as I continue to discover the joys and ease of veg cooking and baking.

In eschewing animal products, I experience one of the most joyful means to pursue justice I can imagine. I'm so lucky: three times a day I can use my delicious food choices to fight injustice and show compassion.

As Tolstoy, who knew something about war and peace, wrote, "As long as there are slaughterhouses, there will be battlefields."

Gretchen Primack
Hurley, New York



For me, as the mother of two adventurous 20-something daughters who are actively examining the world with the indignant eyes of youth, the issue of justice looms large and personal. As a physician, writer, and activist, I focus especially on the struggle for human rights in Israel and Palestine, and the consequences for the occupier and the occupied as well as for those of us who bear witness.

Several months ago, in a Boston suburb, I passed out leaflets for a play, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*. This is the moving story of an iconoclastic wild child who goes in search of meaning and the possibility of righting wrongs in a small, disastrous spot in the world and is herself crushed to death by the driver of a giant bulldozer who is willfully blind to her presence and her power. Her writings touch on the idealism of youth, the bearing of witness in the face of tremendous tragedy, and the horrific realization of the human trauma that is the everyday life of people living in Gaza. The diary entries and e-mails also draw us into the century-old conflict between Jews and Palestinians and the ugly reality of occupation. In this sense, *Rachel Corrie* takes us on an intimate, youthful journey into the questions of justice and injustice, and as I listened, I found myself weeping with the aching heart of a grieving mother.

Several years ago, I stood in the rubble of the same demolished neighborhood in southern Gaza where Rachel was killed. In every direction, there was a swath of destruction, with concrete tumbled at odd angles, wires jutting into the blue sky, multi-story fragments of apartments with pictures still standing vigil on the walls, fragments of doorways and streets. In this wretched havoc were hundreds of lost shoes, bits of underwear, a child's doll, bright yellow Lego pieces, a computer game, fractured plates, a testament to the chaos and the rapid flight of the families as the Israeli bulldozers came crashing through. I tried to imagine a residential area: homes tightly clustered, schools, stores, children playing in the street. For the first time during my visit to the region, I completely lost my composure and started sobbing, filled with a deep sense of shame. I was ashamed to be Jewish, ashamed of the behavior of the Israeli government, and ashamed to be the citizen of the country that made this possible.

I couldn't imagine a better method to humiliate and enrage an entire generation of Palestinians. This seemed such an obvious recipe for disaster, for despair, for provoking growing militancy.

I couldn't fathom how such a military operation made life safer for Israelis or what combination of fear and blindness made it possible for young Israeli soldiers to commit these acts of massive civilian destruction.

As I look to the future, for the children of Rachel's generation in Gaza and beyond, it seems to me that creating justice involves acknowledging the dream of Jewish statehood and the horrific consequences of the Nazi Holocaust — and at the same time recognizing that the creation of the State of Israel was predicated on the destruction of Palestinian villages and dispossession and expulsion of more than 700,000 indigenous human beings. Creating justice begins with honestly looking at the devastating consequences of the Israeli occupation both for Israeli society and for Palestinians, and admitting that current U.S. and Israeli policies are disastrous and provocative of the most extremist elements in both societies.

This we must do for the sake of all of our children.

Alice Rothchild
Boston, Massachusetts



Three haiku about justice, justice:

a besere velt
"justice, justice shall you pursue"
the means and the ends

"It's not about food —
we must hunger for justice!"
Isaiah shouts out

"Justice," they call it?
Where is my utopia
with bread and roses?

peace, love, happiness
v'tzedek tzedek tirdof
add people and mix

Dan Brook
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