

Thursday, November 27, 2008

Thanksgiving is bloodied by turkey corpses.

Regardless of their party affiliation, presidents each year "pardon" a turkey, only to leave 48 millions more for "Thanksgiving" slaughter. Does the title of this blog entry sound harsh? Would it sound harsh or even overexaggerated to turkeys? Would I prefer such harsh words to the massacre (should we read that as "murder"?) inflicted worldwide on billions of innocent mammals, birds, and fish each year, to satisfy the cravings of human diners? Would you be eating meat today if you were shown and told in advance since infancy what you were really eating and how the animals are slaughtered, including the blood, guts, and untold suffering? Is it anything but advertising euphemism that meatsellers cloak animal corpses in such code words as hot dogs, hamburgers, pork, beef, bologna, sausage, bacon, ham, meatballs, and meatloaf? Soon after graduating college in 1985, I could no longer resolve all the toil I had spent advocating for human rights while chomping on burgers, chicken, and tuna fish. I responded modestly by cutting out all red meat, to distance myself further from my relatives in the so-called meat food chain. Three months later, I was at the Carnegie Deli, and ate a corned beef sandwich -- one of the most delicious meat items in the world for me of all time, and a scent that still made me swoon before retching on my last visit there this year -- figuring (rationalizing may be more like it) that I already came across as peculiar to many, so why add to the perception of peculiarity? I finished off the corpse in no time, with the most delicious rye bread, pickles, and fries on the side. Meat-eating continued nagging at me. However, that did not stop me from increasing my array of meat and fish eating the following spring while on a dream business trip in Hong Kong and Japan, where for the first time in over six years I let pork and shellfish pass my lips, and indulged in sukiyaki made of prized Kobe beef. A year later, I finally swore off red meat for good. Cravings kept me with red meat that long. A year after that, I learned how disgustingly gelatin is made. Completely grossed out, I then cut off all land animals from my plate. Two months later, I went to the Baltimore aquarium, followed by a visit to Little Italy for dinner. I felt ill at the thought of ordering marinara and shrimp, after having spent time with so many amazing and feeling fish at the aquarium a mile away. I later learned that it is not only lobster, crabs and shrimp that face the most gruesome of boiled/steamed-alive fish deaths, as I watched a fish being scaled alive at a Chinese supermarket, to be told by its buyer that chicken also is more delicious by plucking the feathers when the chicken is alive. That was twenty years ago. I have never eaten meat fish or fowl again. Seven years ago, I cut eggs and milk from my diet. Egg-producing chickens and milk-producing cows get slaughtered for meat after they stop producing; their relatives who are not raised to produce eggs and milk get slaughtered earlier. Too many food-raised land animals are treated horrifically during their terribly short lives, including the calves who are slaughtered as babies for prized veal, after struggling in tiny cages in the dark without their mothers, iron or milk, to obtain the tender pink flesh prized by chefs and restaurant food critics. How does that bad karma not get transferred to the meat that is eaten? Human executions are excruciatingly painful, despite litigation geared to reduce the pain. No similar efforts are made to minimize the physical and psychological suffering of animals, as they are led to slaughter first seeing and hearing their brother and sister animals slaughtered before their very eyes. Unlike humans executed in American death chambers, food animals are methodically beheaded, stabbed, and killed otherwise. See this gruesome video giving a brief meeting of your meat. More videos are here. Even if most people are unwilling to become vegetarian, world hunger and food prices will still dramatically fall if people drastically reduce their consumption of meat, fowl, milk products and eggs. There has never been an easier, more healthful, or more delicious time to live vegetarian; even supermarket aisles have infinitely more vegetarian choices than just five years ago. Restaurants have more vegetarian options than ever before, including Burger King and Subway with their veggie burgers (may not be vegan, though, but it is a start). See how you feel about your health, your annual physical exam, the environment, the animals around you, and world hunger after making such a change in your eating choices. You may never turn back. For many years I kept my vegetarianism mostly to myself, figuring that everyone should be able to do their own thing. They may, including my own thing to speak up for the animals who cannot speak up for themselves. Happy Thanksgiving? Happy for whom? Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Jon's news & views at 00:00