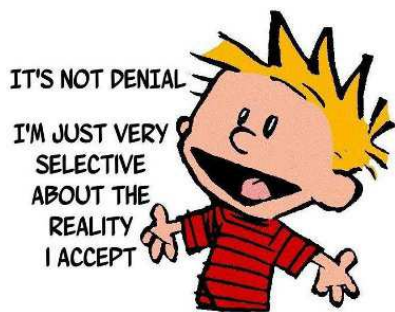


DENIAL

Firmly convinced of the benevolence of their business, Ben & Jerry's corporate leaders seem firmly in denial concerning the company's operations in Israel/Palestine. Persons or groups in denial, can be fully cognizant of a truth "out there", but fail to personally acknowledge its meaning.

Classic examples of denial (classic because so clear and strong) include scientists working on weapons of mass destruction who take no responsibility for their use, or Polish peasants living near concentration camps who saw nothing, heard nothing, smelled nothing odd going on on the other side of the walls and fences. Reality was adjusted defensively away.



Less extreme examples, but far more common: groups of customers, coworkers, or fans often ignore the darker sides of organizations they endorse or enjoy. Many people for instance appreciate Walmart's prices, and put out of mind the store's many deleterious effects on communities, workers, and small business.

So it is that Ben & Jerry's leaders, while mostly aware of the house demolitions, killings of children, expropriations of land, administrative detention, torture, violations of international law, daily crimes of theft and vandalism, attacks by settlers against Palestinians which are rife in Israel and the illegally occupied Palestinian territories, put them out of mind, and remain indifferent to doing business in and with such a state. Or if not personally indifferent, they passively accept "the way things are over there" even refusing to uphold the company's obligations to its own mission statement.

Their consciousness seems numbed by their own warm and fuzzy language of Peace, Love and Ice Cream, and the hipness, cleverness and "awareness" demonstrated by their titled flavors. Their denial is an overriding pact of ignorance they make with themselves, a knowing, but not-knowing, a being-there, yet not-there, outside it all, morally innocent in a guilty world.

In Vaclav Havel's words, they have become accustomed to "living in the lie." It is up to us, their customers, to deny their denial and demand they acknowledge what is going on around them, with them, through them, and then act responsibly toward that reality.