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PETA Calls for Rubashkin Slaughterhouse Probe

July 10, 2007



This morning, PETA filed a formal complaint with Sheridan County Attorney Jamian Simmons asking her to prosecute the AgriProcessors-owned Local Pride kosher slaughterhouse in Gordon for apparent violations of Nebraska's cruelty-to-animals statute. PETA's complaint follows a two-day undercover investigation during which an investigator documented the following abuses:

- * Cows remained conscious for up to two minutes after their throats were cut open
- * Workers ripped into conscious cows' throats with a metal hook
- * Workers mutilated conscious cows' ears to remove identification tags

PETA submitted its findings for scientific review by top experts in animal welfare, slaughter systems, and veterinary medicine including a former federal chief slaughterhouse inspector all of whom strongly condemned Local Pride's practices. Colorado State University Professor Dr. Bernard Rollin, a leading scholar in the field of animal consciousness wrote, "the evident insertion of the meat hook to increase bleeding is both inhumane and a violation of the principles of [kosher law]. The vocalization and struggling after the cut is made speak for themselves and should be abhorrent to and condemned by all observant Jews." PETA has also sent letters to both AgriProcessors and the Orthodox Union which certifies kosher meat asking assurances that these abuses will be stopped.

PETA has also filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service asking it to investigate possible violations of the federal Humane Slaughter Act documented at Local Pride.

This is the second time that PETA has revealed atrocities at an AgriProcessors slaughterhouse; a 2004 PETA undercover investigation of the company's Postville, Iowa slaughterhouse documented conscious cows having their trachea's ripped from their throats. The investigation prompted an investigation by the USDA, which concluded that AgriProcessors had violated federal law.

"AgriProcessors should not be allowed to continue violating state, federal, or kosher laws," says PETA Vice President Bruce Friedrich. "We're asking Ms. Simmons to prosecute AgriProcessors for its allegedly illegal and cruel practices, and we're reminding the public that the best way to stop cruelty to animals is to go vegetarian."

(PETA press release)

(Photo of Cattle restrained for stunning just prior to slaughter. Courtesy of Temple Grandin)

56 Comments >>

1. PETA is a terrorist organization. Whatever they do is irrelevant to normal society.

They would like no less than to ban the eating of all meat.

Comment by Joseph — July 10, 2007 @ 1:14 pm

2. lets not forget that the first step in nazi germany was banning shechita.

Comment by nuschus — July 10, 2007 @ 1:41 pm

3. "the evident insertion of the meat hook to increase bleeding is both inhumane and a violation of the principles of [kosher law]...."

I'm no expert (by far!), but I'm reasonably certain that this is untrue. I believe that once the animal is entirely geshochten you can no longer invalidate it even if you by mutilate it. It **might** be tzaar baalai chayim, but I doubt it. I believe that once geshiochten, it is considered dead for Jews.

Ironically, if I am right, at that point (mifarchesess) it would be tzaar baalai chayim for a **GOY**, but not for a Jew to stick a hook in it and so forth. But I could be wrong. does anyone hear know the Halachah?

Comment by Reb_Motcha — July 10, 2007 @ 2:10 pm



4. peta, peta pumpkin eata

Comment by bupkiss — July 10, 2007 @ 2:26 pm

5. They did the same stunt three years ago and the news reports falsely reported that the Chief Rabbi of the Jews, in Israel, condemned this slaughter house as non-kosher. PETA, Y.S., hate Jews. This is a way to make shechita forbidden. They should go after every slaughterhouse, not only kosher ones if they were really concerned with eating meat and killing animals. But they single out the kosher (read: Jewish) ones. That will just add to the all ready high cost of kosher meat due to the expense of hiring lawyers to defend the meat businesses. Anyway, KAJ does shechita in South America now, too, where PETA cannot do anything.

Comment by Proud KAJ-WH TIDE Guy — July 10, 2007 @ 2:34 pm

6. For years now, these guys are whackos!

Comment by Mike — July 10, 2007 @ 2:38 pm

7. bupkiss

Thanks for working it out for us.

Comment by YZCCJR — July 10, 2007 @ 3:32 pm

8. Granting that PETA has sinister ulterior motives, could we set that aside for a moment and consider their point objectively? The post-shechita ripping, etc. is intended to speed up the process so they can move on to the next cow and produce more meat faster. I do not claim to know all the halachic parameters, but if you have seen the tapes, there is certainly the appearance of tzar balei chaim. Even if we are going to posit that the writhing is entirely reflex, must we harden ourselves to such a display for the sake of money? Wouldn't it be reasonable to wait for just a minute for the animal to lose consciousness subsequent to the shechita-cut, which I would assume is how Jews have always prepared their meat. Does the mesora of shechita need these enhancements?

Comment by borninthebronx — July 10, 2007 @ 3:48 pm

9. Proud - I am no fan of PETA, but they DO go after many, many non-kosher slaughterhouses, just check out their website. This is not out-and-out anti-semitism.

In terms of South American Schechita, it wouldn't shock me if PETA is trying to get video from there too. That meat is sold here in the US and the PR would be just same, no matter where it is processed. If they are breaking some US laws, they could be baned from shipping that meat to the US.

Comment by Chaim Yankel — July 10, 2007 @ 4:18 pm

10. In this article it says "This is the second time that PETA has revealed atrocities at an AgriProcessors slaughterhouse" that sounds like a hasty presumption of guilt to me.

Comment by thinkingclearly — July 10, 2007 @ 5:20 pm

11. Thank you 'borninthebronx' for your comments. It's such a breath of fresh air to finally see a sane poster on this site.

Whenever an article of this type appears on YeshivaWorld, you can be sure that most people's first reflex is to mindlessly defend the tribe. Usually all one sees here are the predictable robotic sheepheaded comments. I wish more people could think a little for themselves sometimes.

Comment by NobodySpecial — July 10, 2007 @ 5:52 pm

12. AGRI should shape up their act, this is not a Kashrus issue; this is an AGRI Issue. Then Agri uses us Jews and Jewish organizations to fight back, Kashrus is not issue, Kashrus is not on the line, it's just a Chilule Hashem. Agri new that PETA was after them they should have taken care of it. 1. Why do they have "Shchitah menachus"? 2. They could make the neck area of the box bigger so the "shchitah" should go deeper, they don't want to remake the boxes because of money and that's a "chilul hashem"

Comment by bp — July 10, 2007 @ 6:52 pm

13. I have not posted in months, but BORNINTHEBRONX and NOBODYSPECIAL have restored (some of) my faith.

While it is easy to brush off PETA's remarks as irrelevant and throw in a Nazi association for good measure, it is wrong to throw the baby (cow) out with the bathwater. The fact is that sometimes people (even Frum ones) do things wrong and it is incumbent on the community to investigate with an open mind and, if necessary, to correct matters.

Anything less is a disservice to both the cows and ourselves.

Comment by Charedim Kol Yisroel — July 10, 2007 @ 6:54 pm

14. My husband has been shechting in AGRI for several years and when he saw the PETA video he was absolutely shocked. Nothing even close to what they concocted on that video was true.

Comment by Fafdichune — July 10, 2007 @ 8:04 pm

15. If I recall correctly, last time (2 years ago) that PETA revealed all these "supposed" abuses the government decided that the violations that they could find were not substantial enough to warrant prosecution (I believe the issues the gov't uncovered had to do with proper handling of and segregation of poultry to prevent contamination, regarding the issues with the actual treatment of animals the gov't found that they were not substantiated). PETA is on a campaign to ban slaughter in general (whether they have a special agenda against schita or not I can not surmise, but it would not surprise me if we are being singled out, you only need to look at our history for the last few thousand years or so to see that this assumption is not so far out) they will use whatever means to attain their goal whether it involves being honest or not.

Just to cover myself, I do not recall the exact gov't findings the last time around so it is possible that I might have misstated somethings, but 100% I know that the gov't decided that there was nothing that warranted any prosecution. PETA can say what it wants but ultimately I think they are just trying to blow smoke and there is nothing there to find.

Comment by mattisyahu — July 10, 2007 @ 8:27 pm

16. Chareidim Kol Yisroel,

Paying any attention to these whacko Leftist kooks is totally wrong and harmful.

They have evil motives and should not be given credence in any way.

Comment by tzoorba — July 10, 2007 @ 8:31 pm

17. PETA are a bunch of chayos. A number of years ago they were comparing animals being shechted to the victims of the nazi's. Could someone tell me at what point does an animal die? I always assumed that after shchita K'halacha the animal is dead. Could it be just nerves movig around afterwards? If the animal can still feel, then how could the Torah permit shchita if tzar balei chaim is a dioraisa?

Comment by brumfin — July 10, 2007 @ 8:37 pm

18. gotta love it... according to some posters here you are a breath of fresh air, you can renew faith and only you are sane if you immediately jump on the band wagon of don't judge the Yid favorably too quickly! such nonsense!

Comment by mdlevine — July 10, 2007 @ 10:41 pm

19. P eople
E at
T ons of
A nimals.

Comment by bigplaut — July 10, 2007 @ 11:19 pm

20. although your first instict would be to say "let's just look into it". Remember that PETA is considered a bad organization that openly values the lives of animals more than the lives of humans. As in the case of the donkey bomber story. In the case of PETA there is no chezkas kashrus. We must NEVER side with them. Let others find fault, if there is fault to be found.

Comment by yid613 — July 11, 2007 @ 12:26 am

21. Lets face it, not only are they interested in stopping sh'chita they want to stop meat in general. They are a bunch of r'shoyim and need to be stopped. I say we all join a group called PETA which stands for People for Eating Tasty Animals.

Comment by mark levin — July 11, 2007 @ 1:19 am

22. PETA is one of the biggest hypocritical org ever. Just 2 years ago after the first grotchke they made then. They found 3 PETA employees that used to collect cats and kill them. Even worse PETA put their full force in protecting these criminals.

All these leftist orgs in general are 1 big hypocritical existence. Green, animals, peace, abortion etc!!!!!! Don't kill your dog and peace but let people have the liberty of killing an unborn baby???????????????????? Not taking in account how all these orgs are always against Israel and condone terrorists etc.

Comment by JOLI — July 11, 2007 @ 5:53 am

23. If you are considering this to be something wrong done by them then you were mekabel lh. just because you were oliver, don't complain that others didn't do it with you.

Comment by baki — July 11, 2007 @ 7:36 am

24. P eople for
E ating
T asty
A nimals

As the advertisement says: "we love vegetarians; more beef for us!"

Comment by efsHERPUNKTfarkert — July 11, 2007 @ 7:50 am

25. This is given: PETA is against the killing of animals ENTIRELY. In other words, they want ALL killing of animals to stop, and all eating of animals to stop. So what do you think they want? Humane slaughtering of animals, or NO slaughtering of animals? So yes, they are out to stop shechitah entirely, and then we Jews won't be able to eat animals at all. Then PETA will have scored a victory.

Comment by Reb_Motcha — July 11, 2007 @ 9:11 am

26. I love animals, they taste delicious.

Comment by shazam — July 11, 2007 @ 9:36 am

27. To Mr. TIDE. Everyone agrees as to the true motives of PETA. Unfortunately we sometimes give them material to accuse us of wrongdoing. I saw the Peta movies of a few years ago and I was shocked. We are dealing here with a highly automated process where speed is of the essence and invariably Kashrus, Tzar Balei Chaim and much more suffers. I doubt if Mr. TIDE has ever seen the operation in the Mid West or Uruguay. I have seen shechitah performed many times. My father O"H was shochet. Never did I see an animal walk after Shechitah nor make a moo sound. If the Koneh is severed it is highly unlikely that the animal can make a sound. Last but not least never would my father O"H let anyone touch the beheimoh until it stopped moving completely. This takes about three minutes.

Comment by Also Yoshor — July 11, 2007 @ 10:05 am

28. I think PETA is the biggest joke around, but let's not fool ourselves into thinking that Rubashkin, or any company for that matter, is above scrutiny or can't be cutting corners

Comment by crockhocker — July 11, 2007 @ 10:44 am

29. I happen to agree with most of the comments about PETA. The "donkey bomber" story is but one example of their over-the-top tactics that may hurt their cause more than it helps.

Notwithstanding that, sometimes it is precisely the crazy, over-the-top nutjobs who uncover genuine abuses, and, while it would be ridiculous to accept PETA's word with a grain of salt (and some good BBQ sauce), it would be irresponsible to use their wackiness as an excuse to summarily disregard everything they have to say.

Comment by Charedim Kol Yisroel — July 11, 2007 @ 11:19 am

30. Also Yoshor: My father uluv hasholom was also a shochet, though before I was born. From the stories he told, I can tell you that those times were before the overwhelming mass-production of shechitah.

My father a"h quit shechitah because they told every shochet that he must DOUBLE the amount of chickens they shecht per hour. My father a"h said "That is not ehrlich," and gave up that line of work.

This was some 45 or 50 years ago. It was a different world, a different time, a different mindset. Today, everyone thinks that the slower shochtim are "farshluffen," when it just might mean that they are more ehrlich.

Comment by Reb_Motcha — July 11, 2007 @ 12:00 pm

31. I once heard a member of PETA use the word "THE". So from now on, all of us 'frumeh yidden' should refrain from using that word.

Comment by NobodySpecial — July 11, 2007 @ 12:34 pm

32. I once met a member of PETA.

I asked him what his shoes were made of?

He said leather.

I asked him if he knew how the leather was removed from the cow, if the cow was killed humanely?

He said he didn't know.

I asked him so how can you wear leather shoes?

He said "I don't know."

I asked him what his belt was made of?

He said leather...(play chorus)

I asked him if he played baseball?

He said yes.

I asked him what his baseball glove was made of?

He said leather...(play chorus)

Some people are just so empty they have to search for a cause and something to complain about and fill their time.

Hashem made Kosnos Ohr for Adam and Chava, allows Basar Taivoh, and commands us to eat meat from Korbonos, and Basar V'Dagim V'chol Matamim.

Vegetarianism has no place in Yiddishkeit, except for health reasons.

Finally, has anyone seen a source that states that the reason we do Shchitah is because it is humane? Isn't Schita considered a Chok? We do Schitah because Hashem said that we have to Shecht. Even if science could prove that there is a "more humane" way to kill cows, we would still Schecht.

Comment by eliezer — July 11, 2007 @ 12:39 pm

33. Post 15. is correct. The last time, the government investigated and found no violations, and nothing to prosecute. Of course as usual, by that time the news media had moved on to something else.

PETA is lying. There were no violations then, and I expect the same is true now.

Reb Motcha, with all due respect, kashrus especially shechitah has come a long long way over the last 50 years.

Comment by esg78 — July 11, 2007 @ 1:08 pm

34. shazam

With a side sauce?

Comment by YZCCJR — July 11, 2007 @ 2:34 pm

35. Charedim,

Welcome back , I missed your posts. I especially liked the line about 'throwing in the Nazi association for good measure'.

I couldn't agree more with you and the previous two posters. We Yidden have a tendency to turn into 'jumping jacks' whenever we hear something remotely Anti without thinking it through. Ofcourse none of us will drive around with a PETA bumper sticker but why in fact cant one wait for the animal to lose complete consciouness before shechita cut? I mean I am no animal lover but its just common decency to prevent suffering. AFTERALL, we are a nation of RACHMONIM!

Comment by nameless — July 11, 2007 @ 2:36 pm

36. I once met a man named Eliezer
I asked him what was the relvance of his last post?
He said he didn't know...
And neither does anyone else...

Comment by NobodySpecial — July 11, 2007 @ 3:22 pm

37. Eliezer why do you bring up a straw man?

Whoever said that we have to be vegetarians? I didn't see anybody here say that. And who said that we do shechitah because it's humane?

HOWEVER WE ARE FORBIDDEN TO DO TZAR BA'ALEI CHAIM.

Just because the PETA people are againt Tsar Ba'alei Chaim [among other things], doesn't mean that we have to be FOR Tzar Ba'alei Chaim.

This discussion has nothing to do with PETA.

If you ask a member of Peta why he eats meat, he would most likely answer "I don't eat meat" [not "I don't know"].

I suspect also that if you ask a member of Peta why he wears a leather belt he would also most likely answer "I don't wear a leather belt".

[I don't know why I even bother writing this.]

Comment by NobodySpecial — July 11, 2007 @ 3:44 pm

38. Eliezer says;

'Finally, has anyone seen a source that states that the reason we do Shchitah is because it is humane? Isn't Schita considered a Chok? We do Schitah because Hashem said that we have to Shecht. Even if science could prove that there is a "more humane" way to kill cows, we would still Schecht'

FYI there was a very learned Rav in Spain a few hundred years ago who wrote a perush on Tnach, he also happened to be a doctor. He is known as the RAMBAM. He beleived that we have a right to ask and are entitled to explanations EVEN if Hashem commanded us to do something.

Comment by nameless — July 11, 2007 @ 3:51 pm

39. correction, Peirush on Halacha rather..

Comment by nameless — July 11, 2007 @ 3:53 pm

40. P- PLEASE
E- EAT
T- THE
A- ANIMALS!!!

Comment by Wordjew — July 11, 2007 @ 4:06 pm

41. Eliezer, the RAMBAM also had a beard.
You seem to have an abundance of straw in your house.

Comment by NobodySpecial — July 11, 2007 @ 4:57 pm

42. P - PLEASE
E - END
T - THE
A - AUTOMATIC REFLEX TO OPPOSE PETA WITHOUT EVEN STOPPING TO THINK IF PERHAPS THEY HAVE A POINT
- P - PERHAPS
E - EVEN
T - THE
A - ANIMAL RIGHTS NUTS ARE OCCASIONALLY ON TO SOMETHING

Comment by Charedim Kol Yisroel — July 11, 2007 @ 5:08 pm

43. P - Perhaps CKY is right and
E - the animal rights people have a point
T - Though, I would rather give the benefit of doubt to:
A - a Yid

Comment by mdlevine — July 11, 2007 @ 8:03 pm

44. I'm completely not sure where "straw" and "beard" came in here, and just by your name, "nobodyspecial," you don't deserve a response.
- However, Nameless, I will ask - does the Rambam give a reason for Shchita? I didn't say there is no reason, I'm just not sure I've seen one. If there is one, anywhere, please cite the source.
- Thanks.

Comment by eliezer — July 11, 2007 @ 8:10 pm

45. The concept of Tzaar Baalei Chaim was in the Torah long before the bleeding heart liberals joined the movement. That same Torah defined how shechita is to be done. It is not done because it is humane. That is only an ancillary benefit.
- Ha'omer "al kan tzapor yagi'u rachamecha" m'shaskin oso. Sheose midas HKBH rachamim v'einan ela gezeiros. Shechita is NOT defined by Tzaar Baalei chaim, even though TzBaCh is a torah'dik concept.
- Until Walt Disney put a cute little coat on the filthiest rodent in you home (Mickey Mouse) and made a film about a poor little baby deer (Bambi), no one in the world ever imagined the concept of animals having feelings and rights. PETA's entire outlook comes from a false perspective, therefore, Chareidim KY, they are NOT onto anything.

Comment by midwesterner — July 11, 2007 @ 8:27 pm

46. PETA SAID THAT SINCE THE CHICKEN JUMPS AROUND AFTER SHECITA, IT IS PROVEN THAT IT SUFFERS. I ONCE HEARD A GOOD RETORT. HOW CAN IT HAVE PAIN IF IT DONT GOT NO HEAD?!?!?! PETA DONT KNOW--THEY DONT GOT NO HEAD EITHER!

Comment by ploini — July 11, 2007 @ 8:35 pm

47. Reb Motcha
your earlier post that it has nothing to do with Kashrus happens to be wrong, true once rov (most of)the simanim are cut it is called shochut, nevertheless, even miut basra is to be cut beshchitah, and if the shochet only cut rov which is kosher and then for the rest to be removed with a hook does not pasel but is not ideal, it is better to be makeh al rosho like rashi says in chullin daf lamed beis to be mekarev misoso rather than attack the siman. there also is a problem of havloas dam by speeding the death thru ripping out the simanim, and this is of course besides the tzaar baleh chaim aspect, this is why Israel's initial reaction 2 years ago was its a kashrus problem, at the end they found a heter but it is no way close to ideal mehadrin.
NO i am not vegetarian.

Comment by grump — July 11, 2007 @ 11:14 pm

48. Eliezer,
Donno if he gives an explanation. If its indeed a chok like Shatnez and Parah adumah, probalby there is a reason which we just dont know. My point is though, that unlike many, the Rambam 's philosophy was that its ok to have questions and one is not an Apikores if he doesnt have the 'put up and shut up' principle,

I dont understand the 'straw and beard' either. However the fact that his cover name is 'nobody special' is certainly not a reason to deny him a response! Since when is humility a faux pas??
After being introduced to people like 'Baki and Gemoro Kop', etc, I think its quite refreshing!

Comment by nameless — July 12, 2007 @ 12:37 am

49. Just one more comment, Peta is not only anti killing animals ([unless of course they're the ones doing the killing.](#)) They are also [pro killing people](#), if it will stop the killing of animals. As it says in medresh Koheles Rabah
צאת בת קול ואמרה אל תהי צדיק הרבה רשב"ל אומר כל מי שנעשה רחמן במקום אכורי סוף שנעשה אכורי

במקום

That is PETA.

Comment by matzahlocaol101 — July 12, 2007 @ 7:49 am

50. Grump,

After you learn Simla Chadasha 100 times than maybe you can comment on hilchos shechitah. If you learn Bais Dovid 100 times, you may know how to shecht, but nobody will eat your shechitah. It seems you think you're a rishon and you can posken from the gemora, but other rishonim thought differently. After the shochet cuts rov simanim the animal is halachicly dead. However if a Jew goes back while the animal is still mifarchesses and cuts miut basra, it is considered sheya between the first and second cut and the shechitah is posul because of sheya. That is why they DAVKA had a goy remove the trachea so the animal would bleed out faster and there would not be a shayla on the shechitah. However for PR reasons, I believe they stopped that practice. The Rav hamachshir is not answering his phone right now, but bli neder I'll call him later and verify that.

Comment by matzahlocaol101 — July 12, 2007 @ 8:05 am

51. grump: Thanks for the clarification.

Comment by Reb_Motcha — July 12, 2007 @ 9:20 am

52. In response to comments 15 and 33, the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed that AgriProcessors "had engaged in acts of inhumane slaughter" and that "FSIS employees observed the acts of inhumane slaughter and did nothing to stop the practice." A PDF report of the USDA's report can be found here:

<http://www.goveg.com/pdfs/AgriprocessorsReport.pdf>

This time around, cows were having their ears mutilated and their throats ripped into with a hook — all while they were still conscious. I suspect those practices constitute "acts of humane slaughter" from a government perspective. But more to the point, from a halachic perspective, they cause animals unnecessary suffering (tza'ar ba'alei chayim).

Comment by mcroland — July 12, 2007 @ 11:02 am

53. Nameless,

Thanks for the response.
And the rebuke is accepted.

Comment by eliezer — July 12, 2007 @ 1:40 pm

54. matzahlocaol

you seem to have an attitude problem i wrote that it is shochut after rov and also wrote it does not passel the fact that miut basra might be hooked, by a goy indeed, all i said it is not ideal mehadrin, for an einah bar zevicha to cut or remove the miut basra, and do we know if every guy portraying as a goy is really a goy, did they do a yichus check mitzad thier mother before hiring the guys with the hooks, come on get a life, and learn how to read a post.

btw the simla and the bais dovid dont ding on a gemorah

Comment by grump — July 12, 2007 @ 7:39 pm

55. I left another long well researched post with links and a first hand story about shechitah and it vanished. I understand my post might not be posted in the order I wrote them because The editor sees the last one first. But why was it canded? You didn't like the chicken video? I think it proves the point. For our purposes Shulchan Orech determines what's humane and not PETA and not the USDA. The USDA may not like it, but neither did the Humane Germans in 1937 that were worried about animal suffering.

Comment by matzahlocaol101 — July 13, 2007 @ 7:46 am

56. It seems that many of the comments contributed to this Peta news report miss as to what the real problem is. Why must the Orthodox community be accused again and again of improprieties in the productions of Kosher meat? It seems that at best we are dealing here with 'Bedi Eveds' in many areas of the meat processing areas attributed to these slaughter houses. It makes you wonder why must these slaughter houses operate at such a speed to warrant such reprehensible behavior. The answer to that is greed. It makes you wonder as to why reputable kashrus organization give hechsherim to these outfits. I would like Mr TIDE to answer why his Kehila gives a hechser to such an outfit? I think the frum people would not mind paying a little more for their meat if they would be guaranteed that the meat they eat was produced Kosher and Yoshor Lchatehiloh.

Comment by Also Yoshor — July 13, 2007 @ 4:39 pm

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