

IN RESPONSE TO “THERE CAN BE NO DEBATE WITH PETA.”

Mr. Lubinsky has been given a difficult job: He is the public-relations representative for a company that has stated publicly, “What you see on the video is not out of the ordinary. ... Nothing wrong was, or is being done.” We can see why he might prefer not to even try to defend such statements.

It would be a tough job since, as noted previously, 100 percent of experts who watched the video (every single one, including Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb of the Orthodox Union, who called the trachea-ripping “especially inhumane”) agree that there are serious violations of the prohibition of *tza’ar ba’alei hayyim*. Only Mr. Rubashkin, his lawyer, and his PR man (Mr. Lubinsky) deny this.

If AgriProcessors had agreed to work to resolve complaints about its plant when we first approached the company two years ago, the current scandal could have been avoided. Instead, AgriProcessors continued to make a mockery of Torah law by ignoring us, continuing to abuse animals on its killing floor, and defending even the worst abuses.

Clearly it is AgriProcessors, not PETA, that has attacked the Torah’s commitment to kindness. AgriProcessors mutilated fully conscious animals and slaughtered them so crudely that some struggled to stand and flee after their windpipes had been ripped from their throats. And then AgriProcessors dragged Jewish principles through the mud by claiming, as Sholom Rubashkin did, that the scenes of terrified animals fighting against death on the killing floor represent “the Shechita process in its full glory.”

Those who are concerned about upholding Judaism’s proud tradition of kindness toward animals should be outraged by the actions of AgriProcessors and its two apologists, Mr. Lubinsky and Mr. Lewin. In direct contradiction to Mr. Lubinsky’s claims, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has already called the practices that we documented “egregious” violations of federal law, so it’s only a matter of time before AgriProcessors receives official censure.

When someone takes our video and gives it the title “Kosher Slaughter According to Orthodox Authorities,” it will be AgriProcessors, and not PETA, that is to blame. At PETA, we’ve found ourselves in a very odd position—defending kosher slaughter as more humane than conventional slaughter, even as AgriProcessors has been arguing the opposite.

Finally, as Mr. Lubinsky would know had he bothered to call Rabbi Cohen himself, PETA has never been duplicitous. In fact, our mission hinges on presenting the truth—however gruesome—and trusting people to make their own decisions. We have great faith in the human ability to make compassionate choices when we sit down to eat.

Whether Orthodox or reform, anyone who watches the tapes at GoVeg.com can see that the slaughter practices used by AgriProcessors were egregiously cruel and completely indefensible.