

During our Daf Yomi class we were recently studying how the various sacrifices were to be carried out including how the lottery was to be conducted to determine which animal is to be sacrificed and which will have another fate. If the lottery is flawed, one of the animals is “left to die”. The wording seemed very strange when we are instructed to be caretakers for our animals.

I texted the Rabbi because I wasn't sure what “left to die” means. He explained that the animal is locked in a small room and left to die on its own.

After an additional query, the Rabbi said “Indeed. It's a very difficult law.”

I still found myself searching for a way to resolve the discomfort I was feeling about this procedure. I could not be a caretaker for our animals with this law. After a lot of research, the only thing I could come up with to resolve a very troubling law is as follows:

Once an animal is taken to the Temple with the intent of being sacrificed; that animal is no longer our animal but Hashem's animal – regardless of the outcome. Once I accepted this proposition, I was able to rationalize that man could not affect the way the animal is treated – we are in a hands-off situation.

Placing the animal in a small, locked room seems to be the minimum we could do short of simply turning our backs on the situation and ignoring the doomed animal completely.

I am still wrestling with this more than the thread count on each white garments worn during the Yom Kipper service.