# of neighbours & strangers

It's to do with the level of trust within a society, what Rabbi Sacks calls "Social Capital" – the knowledge that you are surrounded by people who have your welfare at heart, who will return your lost property, who will raise the alarm if someone is breaking into your house or car, who will keep an eye on the safety of your children, and who generally contribute to a "good neighbourhood", and are willing to help even a stranger in distress.

TALKING POINTS

around our theme

taken from

Ki Teitse

Deuteronomy 21:10–25:19

THE SMALL COMMUNITIES ONE SHABBAT

Jewish Small Communities Network

The annual Shabbat celebrating the small Jewish communities of the UK

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (mitzvot) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitse.
These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, returning a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of kilayim (forbidden plant and animal hybrids). ... and many more, so basically a lot !

On the face of it, this is a parasha full of commands. But then it introduces a completely different angle...

"Do not see your kinsman's donkey or his ox fallen on the road and ignore it. Help him lift it up"
(Deut. 22:4)

לֹא־תִרְאֶה אֶת־חֲמוֹר אָחִיךָ אוֹ שׁוֹרוֹ נֹפְלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהִתְעַלַּמְתָּ מֵהֶם הָקֵם תָּקִים עִמּוֹ׃

Why break off from detailing rules to start talking about lifting up a fallen donkey?

Could there be a pointer to why this is introduced when we see that the word "Chamor" חֲמוֹר (donkey) is related to the word "chomer" (material, physical).

Questions:

• Are commandments alone enough to enable us to have a well-managed society?

• Is there a relationship between how much support we offer one another and the rules we all choose as part of our lives?

• Can this symbiosis have a role in helping to sustain your everyday life or your community

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