

המוסד למען קדושת חיי אדם



TORAH READING:

Vayeishev: Genesis 37:1 - 40:23

Kislev 23, 5776

December 5, 2015

This week's torah portion contains plenty of unorthodox interpersonal relating. Jacob now has twelve sons by 4 different women. These twelve were born to become the 12 tribes of Israel, from which the nation of Israel - the Jews - has evolved.

The mothers of Jacob's sons are:

- Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun
- Rachel: Joseph, Benjamin
- Bilhah (Rachel's maid): Dan, Naphtali
- Zilpah (Leah's maid): Gad, Asher

12 sons! Seems quite extraordinary and excessive by today's standards of family planning. Be fruitful and multiply, for sure! Let us be grateful that all of the unborn babies of Jacob made it out of the womb alive, so that we could live today.

Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, Er, dies young and childless, and his wife, Tamar, is given in marriage to the second son, Onan. Onan sins by spilling his seed (an act in defiance of G-d's 'Be fruitful and multiply' directive), and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Peretz (an ancestor of King David) and Zerach. Where would the Jews be without King David? Christians, too, consider him to be of utmost importance.

These interpersonal shenanigans gave birth to the most important people in history.

Who can say how an unborn Jewish child will change the world?

We know that many have perished because of abortion. A shanda, for sure.