**Why We Fight**

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**#1**

**Today's Learning Material**

The rivalry between the Jewish nation and antisemites began even before the forefather of all the antisemites (Esav/Esau) and the forefather of the Jews (Yaakov/Jacob) were born.

Isaac and Rebecca’s twin sons, Esau and Jacob, were physically and temperamentally different. Esau was interested in physical pleasures; Jacob in matters of the spirit.

**Torah Bereishis 25:21-23**

*And Isaac prayed to the Lord opposite his wife because she was barren, and the Lord accepted his prayer, and Rebecca his wife conceived.*

*And the children struggled within her, and she said, "If [it be] so, why am I [like] this?" And she went to inquire of the Lord.*

*And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kingdoms will separate from your innards, and one kingdom will become mightier than the other kingdom, and the elder will serve the younger."*

**#2**

**Question: On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself as regards frequency of becoming involved in quarrels?**

**#3**

The following Mishna instructs judges:

**Pirkei Avos 1:8**

*...when the litigants are standing before you, they should both be viewed as guilty; and when they depart from before you (after the verdict has been rendered) they should both be viewed as virtuous, when they have accepted the judgment.*

**Questions:**

* **This Mishnah seems to contradict America’s legal principle of "innocent until proven guilty". Why do you think that is?**
* **How can both parties be guilty? What if one of them is 100% right? Why does the Torah call both of them guilty?**

**#4**

**Hooray for Fighting! by Liba Pearson**

Crazy as it sounds, arguing is an opportunity.

**Question: What opportunity can there be in arguing?**

**Talmud Eruvin 65a**

*The true nature of a person is recognized through three things:*

1. *his cup* ("kos" in Hebrew) (how he acts after drinking),
2. *his wallet* ("kis" in Hebrew) (his business integrity and how he spends his money),
3. *and his anger* ("kas" in Hebrew) (people usually get angry about things that matter to them).

**Questions:**

* **What are the main topics you tend to argue about?**
* **What do you think these things reveal about you?**

**#5**

**Pirkei Avos 5:20**

*Any dispute that is for the sake of Heaven will have a constructive outcome; but one that is not for the sake of Heaven will not have a constructive outcome...*

**Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

The sages are here drawing a fundamental distinction between two kinds of conflict: argument for the sake of truth and argument for the sake of victory.

Many times people won’t let an argument die, claiming, “It’s the principle of the thing!”

**Questions:**

* **What is an argument “for the sake of heaven”?**
* **What quarrels have you (or someone you know) been involved in "for the sake of heaven"?**
* **When have you (or someone you know) claimed that your quarrel was for "the sake of heaven" but you had personal motives?**
* **How do you know the difference between the two?**
* **When you are involved in a quarrel, is your objective total victory or agreement?**

**#6**

**After Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and sends them to bring their families and his father Jacob to Egypt, he instructs them:**

**Torah Bereishis 45:24**

*And he sent off his brothers, and they went, and he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."*

**Questions:**

* **What makes a disagreement turn into a fight?**
* **How could you reduce arguments and manage disagreements BEFORE they spiral into fights?**
* **What methods/ behaviors could you use to stop a quarrel ONCE it has begun?**
* **What methods/ behaviors could you use to PREVENT quarrels?**
* **How does changing one’s perception help to prevent quarrels?**

**#7**

**Question: What plans of action can you make to resolve any quarrels you are presently involved in?**

**#8**

**Question: What's your takeaway from today's discussion?**