

# Rodef Shalom School Program

Transforming School Conflict Through Rabbinic Text

Unit 3:

## What is Conflict for the Sake of Heaven?



Teacher's Guide

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## Introduction

Welcome to the *Rodef Shalom School Program*: designed to teach middle school students conflict-resolution skills through engagement with rabbinic literature. This unit is the first of two units that explore the idea of *machloket l'shem Shamayim* (conflict for the sake of Heaven), what is now referred to as “constructive conflict.” In this unit, students encounter the famous *Mishnah* (oral Torah) that introduces the term *machloket l'shem Shamayim*, and they meet Hillel and Shammai, the Mishnah’s paradigm for people who engaged in *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. Students also meet Korach, the Mishnah’s prime example of a perpetrator of destructive conflict. Students explore the difference between these two types of conflict and learn principles for engaging in constructive conflict.

In this first unit, students will learn that both motivation and how one engages in conflict are important in assessing whether a *machloket* (conflict) is *l'shem Shamayim* (for the sake of Heaven). In the second unit, students learn a methodology for how to engage in *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. Students will have a chance to practice engaging in constructive conflict resolution using collaborative problem solving. While these two units integrate fully into the broader Rodef Shalom rabbinics curriculum project, they also can stand on their own as a core element in a school’s advisory or conflict resolution program.

As with all units in the Rodef Shalom program, this unit follows an inquiry based pedagogical model centering on the essential question: When is engaging in conflict considered to be *l'shem Shamayim*? The unit is constructed using the UbD (Understanding by Design) framework, and you will notice that the unit begins with a statement of the essential question and enduring understandings, and embeds formative and summative assessment throughout.

The first lesson of this unit introduces the essential question of the unit and examines this question by having students look at three case studies. As students wrestle with the question of what defines a conflict as *machloket l'shem Shamayim*, they return to the scenarios and look at them through the lens of the central Mishnah. We look forward to receiving your feedback on this unit. Please remember to complete the teacher feedback form as you go along, and as always, contact us with questions, comments and suggestions.

## Unit Goals

### What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim?

#### Essential Question

When is engaging in conflict *l'shem Shamayim* (for the sake of Heaven)?

#### Enduring Understandings

Not all conflict is destructive. In fact, conflict is fundamentally human and can be important both personally and for the greater good. Engaging in constructive conflict (*machloket l'shem Shamayim*) calls on individuals to:

- Examine their own complex reasons for engaging in conflict
- Consider the perspective of the other
- Find ways to engage in the conflict in a healthy and constructive way (ex. looking for solutions, preserving the relationship, being flexible, and valuing the opinion of the other)

#### Content Objectives

Participants will know that:

- The term "*machloket l'shem Shamayim*" refers to any conflict that is engaged in a constructive way.
- Korach's conflict was not *l'shem Shamayim* because, according to rabbinic interpretation, it was motivated largely by self-interest.
- Hillel and Shammai's conflict was *l'shem Shamayim* because, according to rabbinic interpretations, it was motivated by noble values that exceeded self-interest.
- Motivation is not a sufficient condition for *machloket l'shem Shamayim*.
- How one engages in conflict is also important.

#### Skill Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Examine a conflict from the perspective of its motivation, i.e. is the conflict motivated by a greater value?
- Examine a conflict from the perspective of its participants' engagement (e.g. if both sides showed respect for one another)
- Begin looking at text in an inquisitive way, asking questions about each word or phrase in the text.

## Overview of Unit 3 Lessons

Lesson Title	Texts Studied	Conflict Resolution Values and Skills
Lesson 1:  <i>What is Machloket l'Shem Shamayim?</i> – Student Theories	Mishnah Avot 5:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Havruta skills – how to learn productively with a partner.</li> <li>Different people have different ways of looking at the same conflict.</li> <li>Being curious about the perspective of the other side in a conflict.</li> </ul>
Lesson 2:  The Conflict of Hillel and Shammai	Talmud Bavli Ketubot 16b – 17a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine one's motivation for engaging in conflict and assess whether it is rooted in a positive value.</li> </ul>
Lesson 3:  The Conflict of Korach and Company	Meiri, Avot 5:17  Me'am Lo'ez on Bamidbar 16:7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both sides of a conflict might be motivated by different (and possibly conflicting) positive values.</li> </ul>
Lesson 4:  <i>Sofah L'hitkayem</i>	Meiri, Avot 5:17  Bertinoro Avot 5:17  Magen Avot 5:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How one engages in conflict is as important as why one engages in conflict.</li> <li>Four principles of constructive conflict resolution: look for a fair and equitable solution, preserve the relationship, be flexible in your opinion, value both opinions.</li> </ul>
Lesson 5:  In That Case...	Talmud Bavli Shabbat 17a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes a relationship that engages in constructive conflict turns destructive.</li> <li>Ability to rewrite a case study of destructive conflict as constructive.</li> </ul>

# Lesson 1: What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim?

## Lesson Goals

### Today's Question for the Board

What might conflict l'shem Shamayim (for the sake of Heaven) mean?

### Goals

Students will

- Create theories regarding what characterizes machloket l'shem Shamayim (constructive conflict)
- Be introduced to three situations of conflict and analyze whether these conflicts are l'shem Shamayim according to their initial theories
- Begin to realize that different people may have different perspectives around any given conflict situation
- Begin to develop curiosity about learning what others think

### Lesson Activities

- Introducing the Notion of Machloket L'shem Shamayim
- Testing the Theories
- Optional: Introduction to Havruta Learning
- Havruta
- Discussion
- Optional Homework: An Adult Perspective

## Lesson 1:

## Lesson plan

### Introducing the Concept of Machloket L'shem Shamayim

Introduce students to the phrase machloket l'shem Shamayim, which translates literally as conflict for the sake of Heaven. In the world of modern conflict resolution, it translates as constructive conflict. Tell students that when we study constructive conflict, we are interested in how people can engage in conflict in the most positive way. Thus, the essential question for the unit is: When is engaging in conflict l'shem Shamayim (for the sake of Heaven)?

1. Post the essential question in a prominent place where it can remain until the end of the unit.
2. Distribute long strips of paper and markers. Write the following sentence on the board: I think constructive conflict, machloket l'shem Shamayim, occurs when...
3. Have students create their own theories for what characterizes machloket l'shem Shamayim by finishing the sentence.
4. Have one student stand and read his or her theory. Invite anyone else in the class with essentially the same theory to join that student to form a group. Repeat until all theories have been presented.
5. Have each group select the one strip of paper that best captures their thoughts and have each student in the group write his or her name on it. Post student theories under the essential question.
6. Tell students that as the unit unfolds, the class will return to these initial theories for reflection. Keep students in these groups (or divide groups of more than five students into smaller groups) for the next activity.

### Testing the Theories

In this activity, students will have a chance to test their theories on case studies from the world of a middle school student. Five possible case studies of machloket are included at the end of this lesson. The cases have been designed to be complex and relevant – complex in that there are no clear “good guys” or “bad guys,” and relevant in that they probe issues that are from the students’ world. Since every school has a unique student body, feel free to create your own case studies instead of the ones listed here.

1. It is recommended that you select three cases to be used throughout the unit. The first should be about conflict between friends (such as cases 1 and 4). The second should be about conflict with an authority figure like a parent or teacher (such as case 2). The third should be about conflict beyond the typical sphere of the child (such as cases 3 and 5).
2. Create individual handouts for each of the cases that you will be studying so that the focus can be on one case at a time. The five cases can also be found as eTexts.
3. Tell students that they will be utilizing their theories to determine if a number of cases of machloket meet their criteria of machloket l'shem Shamayim. Begin each case by doing a shared reading of the case. Clarify any details that are confusing to students.

4. Ask students to identify:
  - The parties involved in the conflict
    - a. Case 1: Sharon vs. Michal
    - b. Case 2: Joanne vs. the teacher, Mr. Markin
    - c. Case 3: Benjy vs. the principal
    - d. Case 4: Ava vs. Zoe
    - e. Case 5: Ethan vs. school community
  - What the conflict might be about
    - a. Case 1: Michal feels that she should have the right to invite whomever she wishes to her party, but Sharon wanted Michal not to invite Anna.
    - b. Case 2: Joanne feels that her teacher, Mr. Markin, is unfair to her and the other girls in the class.
    - c. Case 3: Benjy feels that the school's new dress code violates the first amendment rights of the students.
    - d. Case 4: Ava feels disrespected by Zoe who did not eat cake at her party, but Zoe feels Ava is not respecting her right to choose what she eats.
    - e. Case 5: The community is disappointed with Ethan for writing that Malik should not be kicked off the newspaper staff, but Ethan feels that this is an issue of freedom of the press.
5. Have each group decide if the case, according to their own theory, is an example of constructive conflict, *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. Have a representative from each group relate their group's decision and its reasoning. You might also want to record the groups' decisions on their theory strips for when the cases are revisited later in the unit.
6. After going through all three cases, have students hold on to them for use later in the unit.

 **eOption**

The above activity can also be done using an online blog. Have students visit the following blogging website: <http://kidblog.org/RodefShalom>. Users Student1 through Student30 have been registered. Give each group in the class a username. The password for all users is *RS!!*. The log-in button is located in the top right corner of the page. On the blog, students can view all five cases. After reading each case, each group of students should respond by posting on the blog. They should write the name of their school, the first names of the students in the group, their group's decision and its reasoning. After all the groups have posted, students should read each other's' posts, as well as comments from students at other schools. Do a rough survey of all the responses to see if the majority of students sided one way or the other.

**Optional: Introduction to Havruta Learning**

*Note: This section is included for schools using this unit as a starting point. For schools that have done other units, please skip this section.*

*Havruta* (partner study) is the method in which Jews traditionally study. It takes place in pairs and involves practical social skills, such as active listening and learning to constructively offer an alternate point of view. Havruta study is a primary methodology employed in this course, both as a method for actively engaging with texts and as a model for practicing conflict resolution skills. In traditional, adult settings, students learn to ask and pursue their own questions regarding a text. Because of the level of sophistication and experience of students in middle school, this course primarily uses guided havruta, in which students engage with the text using guided questions that can be found on student sheets (the traditional method) or as question marks on PDF versions of the texts (eOption).

If this is the first time students are engaging in havruta learning, it is important to introduce them to the concept. This can be done by the teacher and a strong student modeling havruta while the other students actively observe using the first text of the unit or another text. Teachers should keep in mind throughout this unit and all others in this program that havruta learning is not a simple activity. It requires ongoing monitoring and development of social skills.

**Havruta**

Explain to students that in the text they are about to read, the rabbis of old will define machloket l'shem Shamayim. The text (to be found below and in the student workbook) is a mishnah from *Mishnah Avot*, which is often called *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of our Fathers). It was written around the third century CE in the Land of Israel along with all of the Mishnah. (Students who studied the Unit 1, *Aharon, Rodef Shalom* will have encountered Pirkei Avot sources before.) Tell students that their main task in havruta is to figure out what the text is saying and to brainstorm questions that they are curious about with regard to the text.

**Text 1:1****פרקי אבות פרק ה' משנה י"ז**

כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, סופה להתקיים.

ושאינה לשם שמים, אין סופה להתקיים.

איזו היא מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים? זו מחלוקת הלל ושמאי.

ושאינה לשם שמים? זו מחלוקת קרח וכל עדתו.

**Mishnah Avot 5:17**

Every מחלוקת (conflict) which is לשם שמים (for the sake of Heaven) is destined to endure.

And that which is not לשם שמים, is destined not to endure.

What kind of מחלוקת is לשם שמים?

This is the מחלוקת of Hillel and Shammai.

And that which is not לשם שמים?

This is the מחלוקת of Korach and his company.

## Study Methods

**Traditional:** Students should work through the first text (What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 1, Text 1) in pairs and write their questions on the student sheet (What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 1 Student Sheet).

**eText:** Students should find "What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 1, Text 1 from the online Student Text file. Questions to help guide the havruta learning can be found in the [eTexts](#). Students should enter their answers directly into their devices.

## Discussion

1. Make a list of the questions that students asked about the mishnah they just read. Tell them that they will get a chance to explore some of their questions, but they will be focusing on the essential question for the unit.
2. Discuss: does our first reading of this mishnah help us better answer the question of whether each of the conflicts in the case study was *l'shem Shamayim*? Does anybody want to change their theory after reading the mishnah?

## Optional Homework: An Adult Perspective

1. Tell students that listening to other people's perspectives sometimes helps us think about things differently. This will be a central idea when reading about Hillel and Shammai.
2. Have students find an adult (e.g. parent, caregiver, coach, another teacher) who is willing to share his or her perspective on machloket l'shem Shamayim. Students should ask the adult the following question and record the results: (insert question). (The question for this activity can be found on the student sheet for this lesson and online in the eTexts.)
3. Question: In class, we are learning about how to engage in conflict in a constructive way. The Rabbis of old called this machloket l'shem Shamayim. Can you share a few tips that you have learned in your life about how to engage in conflict in the most positive way?

## Is It Machloket L'shem Shamayim?

**Case 1:** Sharon and Anna have been in class together since third grade but have never really gotten along. Sharon's best friend in the class, Michal, decided to have a birthday party for which she invited all of the girls in the class to a movie and then to sleep over. Sharon told Michal that she could not sleep over if Anna was going to be at the party, and she asked Michal to consider not inviting Anna. Michal said that she did not feel good about inviting everyone in the class except for one, but Sharon insisted that she would not come if Anna was there. This made Michal feel angry with Sharon. "I can't believe you're so inflexible! It's my birthday party and I can invite whomever I want." That night, Michal sent out invitations to everyone in the class including Anna. When Sharon saw Michal in the hall the next day, she said, "I guess you're not really my best friend after all," and then walked on.

**Case 2:** Joanne felt that her teacher, Mr. Markin, was favoring the boys over the girls in math class. She observed, for example, that Mr. Markin seemed to choose boys more often than girls when he asked a question. And once, she thought she heard Mr. Markin telling another teacher that boys were better than girls at math. Joanne felt he was especially tough on her, especially when she answered incorrectly.

Overall, Joanne was a strong student who had never been in trouble, but she was upset by the way she felt Mr. Markin related to her. The next time Joanne felt that Mr. Markin was picking on her, she stood up and said, “Mr. Markin, you have no right to talk to me like that. You are so unfair. I am out of here.” She picked up her bag and walked out of the class. She was tracked down later in the day by the vice-principal who suspended her for two days.

**Case 3:** At “Shammai Community Academy” (SCA), the school’s Parents’ Association altered the school’s dress code policy to prohibit students from wearing shirts with pictures. This angered Benjy, an eighth grade student at SCA. Although Benjy did not have shirts with pictures that he was particularly attached to, the policy just did not seem right to him. He started a petition asking the Parents’ Association to reconsider its policy. The petition said, “We, the undersigned, believe that SCA’s new dress code policy is a violation of our first amendment rights. We ask that the school immediately change this policy.” Over 90% of the students in the middle school at SCA signed Benjy’s petition, along with a number of parents. When Benjy met with the principal to present the petition, the principal was not very happy with Benjy. He said that Benjy had managed to make everyone angry and that his actions had hurt the school community. He also said that Benjy should learn that he cannot always get what he wants.

**Case 4:** Ava and Zoe have been friends since third grade but it has always been a rocky relationship. Each year they have had huge fights and go for weeks “hating” each other until they finally sorted things out. This year, Ava noticed that whenever they went out, Zoe would hardly eat anything. In fact, Zoe often skipped lunch to hang out in the halls with friends, and overall she was looking thinner and thinner. Ava invited Zoe to a birthday celebration, and Zoe refused to eat a slice of birthday cake. That made Ava really angry. “What? You’re too good to eat with us at lunch or when we go out and now you won’t even eat a slice of my birthday cake? What’s wrong with you?” Zoe did not respond – she just got up and left the party. The next day, Ava complained to all of her friends about how Zoe had ruined her party. Zoe told her friends, some of them the same people to whom Ava had complained, that it was her right to eat what she wanted and that Ava was no longer her friend.

**Case 5:** Malik is an 11th grade student in a neighborhood public high school and also writes a weekly “Youth Voice” column for the local community newspaper. In one column, Malik wrote an article that was highly critical of Israel and its treatment of Palestinians. This made many in the Jewish community angry and a “Letter to the Editor” writing campaign was launched calling for Malik to be replaced immediately. Ethan, a Jewish day school student, had been on Malik’s baseball team the previous summer. While sitting on the bench, the two of them had had many conversations about Israel. Although Ethan disagreed with what Malik had written, he knew that Malik had written his letter not to get attention but because it was something in which he really believed. Ethan decided to write a letter of his own to the editor. In it, Ethan wrote, “While I am sympathetic to how members of my community feel about Malik’s column, I feel that kicking him out of the newspaper would be decidedly un-American and definitely wrong.” Ethan’s letter was published along with two letters calling for Malik’s dismissal. When Ethan showed up at school the next day, people sneered at him and avoided talking to him.

## Lesson 2: The Conflict of Hillel and Shammai

### Lesson Goals

#### Today's Question for the Board

What made the conflict of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai constructive conflict, machloket l'shem Shamayim?

#### Goals

Students will

- Understand that, while Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai often disagreed, in part their machloket was l'shem Shamayim because they were motivated by values
- Recognize that one element of machloket l'shem Shamayim is examining one's motivation (e.g. is there a positive value behind the conflict?)
- Continue to recognize that different people may have different perspectives regarding any given conflict situation.

#### Lesson Activities

- Homework Review: An Adult Perspective
- Havruta
- Discussion
- Machloket in the News

## Lesson 2:

**Lesson plan****Homework Review: An Adult Perspective**

If students interviewed adults about their tips for engaging in constructive conflict for their homework assignment, then it is worth sharing this wisdom. The following is one option:

1. Post a piece of mural paper on the board and have the class gather around with their homework answers.
2. Give markers to five students. Each should choose one tip from their list and write it on the mural paper.
3. The student then hands the marker to another student. If one of the points on the mural paper matches something on the student's page, he or she puts a check next to the point. Then, the student adds a tip that has not already been posted.
4. Continue for a certain amount of time or until all tips are posted. This activity works best when students are not allowed to talk throughout.
5. At the end of the activity, point out the top tips that the adults suggested. Post the tip page somewhere in the room. Refer back to it as students learn more about the Rabbis' ideas of machloket l'shem Shamayim.

**Havruta**

1. Explain that Hillel and Shammai were two rabbis of the 1st century CE who founded schools that generally opposed one another. In fact, there are 316 *machlokot* (disputes or conflicts) in the Talmud between the schools of Hillel and Shammai dealing with a wide range of issues. One of the texts we will look at records one of their disputes dealing with telling white lies.
2. Remind students of the mishnah read in the previous lesson and then examine Text 2:1 together. In it, the Meiri, a 13th century Catalan rabbi, explains that the machloket of Hillel and Shammai were a quest for "truth" rather than just a fight for the sake of it. If both sides are engaged in a quest for truth, they are debating some kind of underlying value. In Text 2.2, students will have a chance to witness one machloket of Hillel and Shammai and to think about the underlying value that is motivating each.

**Text 2:1**

**בית הבחירה למאירי, אבות פרק ה'**  
 ואמר איזו היא מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים?  
 [זו] של הלל ושמאי! שהיה אחד מורה הוראה והשני חולק עליו להודעת האמת,  
 ולא לקנטר ולא לנצוח.

**Meiri Avot Chapter 5**

And which is the machloket that is for the sake of Heaven? That of Hillel and Shammai, for one would rule on a matter and the other would disagree with him in order to understand the truth and not just for sake of provocation or a desire to win.

3. Now write the first three words from *Shemot 23:7* on the board:

### מדבר־שקר תרחק...

*Keep far from a false matter...*

From here, we learn that the Torah does not want us to tell lies. Ask students if, despite this general rule, there are times when it might even be proper to tell a lie. Collaboratively craft criteria for instances in which lying might be ethical.

4. Tell students that next they will have a chance to meet Hillel and Shammai. (Students who studied Unit 1, *Aharon, Rodef Shalom*, will have encountered these rabbis before.) If students have not encountered Talmud study before, explain to them that the Talmud is a commentary on and expansion of the Mishnah. It was finished around the year 500 CE and records the conversations of the Rabbis of Babylon and Israel during the previous five centuries. The Talmud is written in Aramaic, the spoken language of the Jewish people at that time.
5. Frame the upcoming havruta learning by telling students that the text will deal with the question about what to do at a wedding when one encounters a bride that one thinks is not a good "catch." Should one still dance before the bride and groom and tell him what a lucky guy he is?
6. Tell students that they should read today's text on two levels. First, they should consider the issue in the debate. Do they agree with Hillel or Shammai? Second, students should consider the machloket itself. Why would the Talmud tell us the story of the machloket? And, why does our mishnah from Avot choose Hillel and Shammai to be models of machloket l'shem Shamayim? For students who are encountering havruta learning for the first time in the unit, review how this approach to learning works.

#### Text 2:2

#### תלמוד בבלי מסכת כתובות דף ט"ז עמוד ב' – דף י"ז עמוד א'

תנו רבנן: כיצד מרקדין לפני הכלה?  
 בית שמאי אומרים, "כלה כמות שהיא".  
 ובית הלל אומרים, "כלה נאה וחסודה".  
 אמרו להן בית שמאי לבית הלל, "הרי שהיתה חיגרת או סומא אומרין לה - 'כלה נאה  
 וחסודה'?! והתורה אמרה 'מדבר שקר תרחק!'"  
 אמרו להם בית הלל לבית שמאי, "לדבריכם, מי שלקח מקח רע מן השוק ישבחנו בעיניו או  
 יגננו בעיניו? הוי אומר ישבחנו בעיניו!"  
 מכאן אמרו חכמים, 'לעולם תהא דעתו של אדם מעורבת עם הבריות'.

**Babylonian Talmud Tractate Ketubot 16b-17a**

Our Rabbis taught: How does one dance before the bride?

Beth Shammai say: [Praise] the bride as she is.

And Beth Hillel say: [Praise] the bride [by saying she is] beautiful and graceful.

Beth Shammai said to Beth Hillel: If she was lame or blind, does one say of her, “a beautiful and graceful bride” when the Torah says, “keep yourself far from a false matter?!”

Said Beth Hillel to Beth Shammai: According to your opinion, if one has made a bad purchase in the market, should one praise it in his [the purchaser’s] eyes or make fun of it? Surely, one should praise it in his eyes!

Therefore, the Sages said: Always should the disposition of man be pleasant with people.

**Study Methods**

**Traditional:** Students should work through the text (What is Machloket L’Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 2, Text 2) in pairs and write their answers to questions on the student sheet (What is Machloket L’Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 2 Student Sheet).

**eText:** Students should find “What is Machloket L’Shem Shamayim? Unit 3: Lesson 2 Text 2” from the online Student Text file. Questions to help guide the havruta learning can be found in the [qs](#). Students should enter their answers directly into their devices.

**Discussion**

1. Choose one person to represent Bet Hillel and one to represent Bet Shammai. Have them do a quick, impromptu debate to defend their side’s perspective on the issue of: should one lie to the groom and tell him the bride is “pleasing and charming?”
2. Discuss *some* of the following havruta questions:
  - Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai are arguing over what one should say to a groom if one observes that the bride is not a “good catch.”
    - a. What is Shammai’s opinion? Tell the groom exactly what you think.
    - b. In what value is Shammai’s opinion rooted? Shammai is motivated by the value of always telling the truth.
    - c. What is Hillel’s opinion? Tell the groom that she is beautiful and graceful.
    - d. In what value is Hillel’s opinion rooted? There is actually discussion amongst the rabbis regarding which value Hillel is basing his opinion. Some say it was “for the sake of peace” (ex. Ritva) and some say it was to “endear her to her husband” (ex. Ran). Students might

come up with a different idea, such as making the groom and bride happy – *l'samayach chatan v'kallah*.

- e. Do you agree with Hillel or with Shammai? Students should reflect on the value that they hold most significant.
3. Both Hillel and Shammai's positions are rooted in values and not in personal gain. This is a key ingredient in defining a conflict as *l'shem Shamayim*. In constructive conflict, both sides are motivated (at least in part) by values and not by personal gain.
4. Why does our mishnah from Avot choose Hillel and Shammai to be models of *machloket l'shem Shamayim*? They were chosen as a model because they were able to engage in *machloket* rooted in positive values in which they believed and not because they wanted to obtain glory.
5. Tell students that *Halakha* (Jewish law) is according to Hillel; therefore, one is required to tell the groom that the bride is pleasing and charming.
6. Ask students: Why does the Talmud, in this and hundreds of other cases, list both opinions? What is the Talmud trying to teach us? The Talmud is teaching us that constructive conflict is itself a value in Judaism, and that there is value in learning about another perspective; it opens the mind and helps one consider whether one's opinion is the best. (This idea will be explored in more depth in the next unit.)
7. Shammai's approach will likely create conflict. Hillel's approach avoids conflict. Imagine that your good friend is dating/hanging out with someone that you think is not a good person. You could approach your friend next time you see him or her and say exactly how bad you feel this person is (create conflict). Or, you could totally avoid talking to your friend about this (avoid conflict). Or, you could do something else. How might you speak to your friend about your concerns without hurting his or her feelings? Perhaps the friend could be spoken with privately. The conversation could begin by asking the friend why he likes this person so much, and then could turn to concerns you have. The conversation could be framed with, "I am talking with you because you are my friend, and I really care about you."

### The Perspectives Game

1. Return to the essential question: When is engaging in conflict *l'shem Shamayim* (for the sake of Heaven?) Post a response: For a conflict to be *l'shem Shamayim*, the motivation for engaging in it should reflect a positive value.
2. Close with the "Perspectives Game," in which students have to guess a value upon which a particular perspective is based.
  - a. To do so, make a list of one-line issues.
  - b. Divide the class into two teams, and for each turn, randomly choose one representative from each side.
  - c. Flip a coin to decide which side will be pro and which side will be against.
  - d. Each representative, starting with pro, has twenty seconds to think up and state the value that they stand for.
  - e. If successful, the team scores a point. Students learn to distinguish between stating the value and arguing for their side.

**Examples of Perspectives Game Issues**

1. Principal says: kids will wear uniforms from now on
  - Possible Pro values: safety, equity, environment for *limud* Torah
  - Possible Against values: freedom of expression, affordability
2. Governor says: we will ban hand guns in our state
  - Possible Pro values: safety, reduce crime
  - Possible Against value: right to bear arms
3. Teacher decides that only Elisha will have a chance to redo the test
  - Possible Pro value: equity (ex. Elisha wasn't feeling well)
  - Possible Against value: equity (ex. others might have also had a problem, not fair to the other students)
4. Parent decides that Noam is not allowed to go to a friend's party
  - Possible Pro value: safety (ex. not supervised)
  - Possible Against value: friendship, parent should be able to trust child
5. President and Congress declare war against a country
  - Possible Pro value: safety of citizens of that country
  - Possible Against value: non-violence – belief that violence does not solve problems.
6. Mark decides to vote for his best friend to become president of student council, even though he is not the best candidate
  - Possible Pro value: loyalty to friend
  - Possible Against value: democracy depends upon voting for the best person
7. Congress passes a law banning the sale of candy to minors
  - Possible Pro value: health protection, fiscal responsibility (ex. obesity is expensive to the health-care system)
  - Possible Against value: equity (ex. why only minors), freedom from over-regulation by the Government – people should look after their own health.

## Lesson 3: The Conflict of Korach and Company

### Lesson Goals

#### Today's Question for the Board

What made the conflict of Korach the primary example of machloket that is destructive, that is, not l'shem Shamayim?

#### Goals

Students will:

- Learn that the rabbis viewed the machloket of Korach as not l'shem Shamayim because Korach was motivated by self-interest and envy.
- Realize that part of examining whether a machloket is l'shem Shamayim involves exploring the motivations behind it.
- Begin to explore the idea that both sides of a conflict might be motivated by values rather than self-interest.

#### Lesson Activities

- The Story of Korach and Company
- Havruta
- Discussion
- Case Study Carousel Brainstorm

## Lesson plan

### The Story of Korach and Company

This lesson depends on knowledge of the story of Korach (Bamidbar 16-18), which students may have learned in their Tanakh class or in parashat hashavuah. If students have no familiarity with the story, it might be worth learning it from the original text at this time. For students who are familiar with the story, or if time does not permit studying from the original, the following video created by Godcast and narrated by R. Joseph Telushkin is a good telling of the key elements of the story.

“Parshat Korach: Moses vs. Korach – A Showdown of Biblical Proportions”

<http://www.g-dcast.com/korach/>.

Tell students to watch the video with their notebooks open in front of them. Their task is to decide if, in their opinion, the conflict of Korach and company is a machloket l'shem Shamayim. As they watch, students should jot down notes that either support or reject this categorization.

Review the first ingredient of machloket l'shem Shamayim discussed in the previous lesson. A conflict is l'shem Shamayim if the motivation for engaging in it reflects a positive value such as the pursuit of truth. What positive value might Korach's actions have reflected (e.g., democracy, freedom of political speech)? What else might have been behind Korach's actions? This is considered in the havruta text study that follows.

### Havruta

In this text study, students explore the motivation behind Korach's actions. The first text is the continuation of Meiri text (2.1) from the previous lesson. The second text is from the Me'am Lo'ez commentary on the Torah. The Me'am Lo'ez is an 18th century commentary on the Chumash. It was begun by Rabbi Yaakov Culi, whose notes were used by Rabbi Yitzchak Magriso to write the Bamidbar volume from which our text is taken. The script was originally written in Ladino, the Sephardic equivalent of Yiddish, and so there is no Hebrew text provided for this source.

#### Text 3:1

#### בית הבחירה למאירי, אבות פרק ה'

ואיזו היא מחלוקת שלא לשם שמים? זו של קרח ועדתו - שבאו לקנטר על משה רבינו עליו השלום ועל הנהגתו מדרך קנאה וקנטור ונצוח.

#### Meiri Avot Chapter 5

And which is the machloket that is not in the name of Heaven?

That of Korach and his congregation, for they came to complain about Moshe Rabbenu, may he rest in peace, about his leadership, (solely) out of jealousy and provocation, and (a desire) to win.

**Text 3:2****Me'am Lo'ez on Bamidbar 16:7**

In order to understand this episode of Korach's rebellion, we must consider the question of his motivation. Korach, after all, was not one of the lowly elements of the population, but the grandson of Kehath, and one of those charged with carrying the Holy Ark. Not only was Korach of the Kehathite family, the most prestigious family of the tribe of Levi, but he was the head of the clan, in addition to being a very great scholar and sage. Why then did he embark upon this quarrel? Why was he so unreasonable in his demands? What drove him to this suicidal action? What prompted him to go so far as to suspect Moses of lying about the things that he taught the Israelites? The answer is envy, the worst of all character flaws. Korach was destroyed by an immense craving for power – a clear instance of when our sages said that “Envy, passion and the pursuit of honor drive a man out of this world.”

**Study Methods**

**Traditional:** Students work in pairs through the text (What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 3, Texts 1-2) and write their answers to the questions on the student sheet (What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 3 Student Sheet).

**eText:** Students should find “What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 3, Text 1” and “Text 2” from the Student Text file. Questions to help guide the havruta learning can be found in the [Q&As](#). Students should enter their answers directly into their devices.

**Discussion**

1. Choose *some* of the following havruta questions for discussion
  - According to the Meiri, why did Korach engage in conflict with Moshe? Korach was jealous and he enjoyed fighting to win.
  - Why is it important for the Me'am Lo'ez to indicate that Korach was from an important family? Perhaps it would be more understandable for someone without power and prestige to lust for these things, but why would Korach, who was a Kehathite and head of a clan, launch this rebellion against Moses?
  - What is envy? How does it explain Korach's actions? Envy is resentment over something someone else has. Korach was envious of Moshe's position of leadership. His rebellion was not motivated by a lack of something in his life, but by envy for what someone else had.
2. Ask students: “Are all rebellions motivated by glory and power?” While one might argue that glory and power may be a side motivation for virtually all leaders of rebellions, often rebels feel that they are acting for a greater purpose. With the American Revolution, the cause was self-government. In the Civil War, the cause was states' rights. What was Korach's motivation? Theoretically, had Korach been motivated by some greater purpose, such as a belief in democracy or even a belief that

Moshe's leadership was harmful to Israel, then perhaps his machloket could have been *l'shem Shamayim*. (While most rabbis felt that Korach was motivated by selfishness, some students, in reading the text, might want to challenge that reading.) That said, an examination of motivation is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for defining the nature of a conflict. The way one behaves when in conflict is also an essential element.

### Case Study Carousel Brainstorm

1. Before class, prepare six pieces of chart paper – two for each conflict (see the five case studies from Lesson 1 on pages 6 and 8 of this unit).
  - Glue a copy of each case to the top of two pieces of chart paper. On the first, write the name of one of the parties in the conflict and on the second, write the other. Post the charts around the class, preferably so that both pages of the same case are far away from each other.
  - Have students work in havrutot, and give each pair of students a red and a blue marker.
2. Tell students that the goal of the activity is to uncover the motivation of each of the characters in the cases.
  - The class will be spread around the room, near the various hanging pieces of chart paper. At their station, the students' task is to reread the case to remind themselves of the details, and then, as a pair, to add one thing to the chart that might explain the motivation of the listed character in the conflict.
  - If the motivation reflects a value such as justice, honor, or truth, they should write their motivation in blue. If the motivation is self-centered, such as a personal desire for status or position, they should write in red.
3. After one or two minutes, signal to the groups that it is time to rotate.
  - Each time students arrive at a station, they should remind themselves of the case, read what others have written, and attempt to add a possible motivation that is not already written. This, of course, makes the task harder with each rotation, and as such, some time, perhaps 15 seconds, should be added to each rotation.
  - Repeat so that each havruta visits at least three stations (one side of each conflict).
4. Collect the pages. The next class begins with a reflection on this activity.

## Lesson 4: Sofah L'hitkayem

### Lesson Goals

#### Today's Question for the Board

Other than motivation, what other ingredients are necessary for a machloket to be constructive, that is, l'shem Shamayim?

#### Goals

Students will:

- Learn that examining motivation is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for determining whether a machloket is l'shem Shamayim.
- Examine machloket from the perspective of how one engages in conflict and learn four ingredients for creating constructive conflict resolution.
- Understand that the Rabbis saw *sofah l'hitkayem* (will endure forever) as an opportunity to speak about how to engage in machloket l'shem Shamayim.

#### Lesson Activities

- Necessary but Not Sufficient
- Havruta
- Discussion
- Back to the Opening

## Lesson plan

### Necessary but not Sufficient

In the previous two lessons, students examined machloket from the perspective of motivation. An examination of the motivation behind the conflict to assess whether it is rooted in a value is necessary, but not sufficient, to determine whether a machloket is constructive, that is, *l'shem Shamayim*.

To illustrate this idea, begin with an extreme example of someone who believed in a value, but despite this, there is general agreement that the person's actions were abhorrent. For example, Yigal Amir sincerely believed that Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin's plans regarding Palestinians made him a threat to Jews living in Israel, and that Jewish law required him to be killed (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodef> for more on the halakhic argument). This resulted in this religious Jew assassinating the elected prime minister of Israel. Cases such as this illustrate that being motivated by a value is not a sufficient condition for conflict to *be l'shem Shamayim*.

The fact that both sides of a conflict can be motivated by principle illustrates the following important points:

- Just looking at one's own perspective is not sufficient, because often both sides of a conflict feel that they are motivated by a just cause.
- It is important to examine one's own motivation and decide if it is essentially motivated by values (although personal gain may be an additional motivation).
- One should be careful to be curious, but nonjudgmental, about the motivations of the other side in a conflict.

The previous lesson concluded with the "Case Study Carousel Brainstorming" activity, in which students were required to indicate a motivation for each member of a conflict and then assess whether the motivation reflected a value. If it did, the motivation was written in blue, however if it was self-centered, it was written in red.

1. Go through the pages of chart paper from the previous lesson and observe any cases where there was a blue motivation for both sides of the conflict. If there was not, work as a class to think of a blue motivation.
2. The following are possible values for each side of the five case studies from the "Case Study Carousel Brainstorming" activity:

Case 1:

- Michal – not excluding someone
- Sharon – loyalty to a friend

## Case 2:

- Joanne – opposing discrimination against women
- Mr. Markin – commitment to teaching all students (Perhaps Joanne misinterprets Mr. Markin's actions as discriminatory when in fact, he sees himself as encouraging certain girls to learn more because he believes they could do better.)

## Case 3:

- Benjy – freedom of expression
- Principal – educating students to be respectful

## Case 4:

- Ava – loyalty to a friend
- Zoe – right to be different

## Case 5:

- Ethan – freedom of expression
- Community – loyalty to Israel

**Havruta**

1. The rabbis asked the question: what is *"sofah l'hitkayem"* (will endure forever) in our mishnah? What, in fact, continues to exist? Ask students this question and do a quick brainstorm of ideas. Tell students that they will encounter four rabbinic ideas of what continues to exist, two from the 16th century Italian commentator, R. Ovadiah Bertinoro, and two from the 15th century commentary by R. Shimon ben Zemach Doran from Algeria, the Magen Avot. Each concept of what continues to exist reflects an additional necessary component for a conflict to be *l'shem Shamayim*.
2. In this activity, students will encounter four texts. While the texts themselves are not overly challenging, understanding the implication can be. To help, there is a "What Continues to Exist" worksheet that havrutot can work on together on page 17 of the Student Workbook. Tell students that they should connect the source to one of the boxes stating what continues to exist, and then connect that to an explanation of what one learns from this text about *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. Tell students not to fill in the rectangles at the bottom; these will be filled in during discussion.

**Text 4:1****רבי עובדיה מברטנורא, אבות היז**

כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקיים.  
 כלומר שאנשי המחלוקת היא מתקיימים ואינם אובדין, כמחלוקת הלל ושמאי שלא אבדו לא תלמידי בית שמאי ולא תלמידי בית הלל.

**Bertinoro, Avot 5:17**

Every controversy that is in the name of Heaven, the end thereof will continue to exist.  
 This is to say that the people of controversy are destined to exist and not be “destroyed,” as with the dispute between Hillel and Shammai, for neither the students of Bet Shammai nor the students of Bet Hillel were destroyed.

**Text 4:2****רבי עובדיה מברטנורא, אבות היז**

כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקיים.  
 המחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, התכלית והסוף המבוקש מאותה מחלוקת להשיג האמת, וזה מתקיים, כמו שאמרו מתוך הויכוח יתברר האמת, וכמו שנתברר במחלוקת הלל ושמאי...

**Bertinoro, Avot 5:17**

Every controversy that is in the name of Heaven, the end thereof will continue to exist.  
 Controversy which is in the name of Heaven, the purpose and its desirable end is to obtain the truth, and this continues to exist, as they said that from a disagreement the truth will be revealed, as was revealed in the disputes between Hillel and Shammai...

**Text 4:3****רשב"ץ, מגן אבות היז**

כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקיים.  
 ואפשר לפרש שדברי שניהם יתקיימו, האוסר והמתיר, לפי ש"אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים הם"...  
 [ו]היה ביניהם אהבה ושלו.

**Rashbaz, Magen Avot, 5:17**

Every controversy that is in the name of Heaven, the end thereof will continue to exist.  
 And it is possible to explain that the opinion of both will continue to exist, the one who forbids and the one who permits, because “these and those are the words of the living God...” [and despite their differences] there was love and peace between them [Hillel and Shammai].

**Text 4:4****רשב"ץ, מגן אבות ה"ז**

ומה שאמר שאם היא לשם שמים שסופה להתקיים... ואפשר לפרש 'סופה להתקיים' שיוודו זה לזה, שאינן מתכוונות לנצח זה את זה, אלא להעמיד הדבר על בריו; וכשיתקיימו ראייות האחד יתבטלו דברי האחר. וכמו ששנינו, חזרו בית הלל להורות כבית שמאי.

**Rashbaz, Magen Avot, 5:17**

And when it says that if it [a controversy] is in the name of Heaven, it will continue to exist... One can interpret "continue to exist" that they [both sides in the conflict] will concede to each other, for each has no intention to defeat the other, rather only to clearly establish the matter – and when the proofs of one side are proven, those arguments of the other will be canceled. And this is as we learned: once, the school of Hillel went back to instructing in accordance with the school of Shammai.

**Study Methods**

**Traditional:** Students work in pairs through the four texts (*What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 4, Texts 1 – 4*) and complete the worksheet (*What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 4 Student Sheet*).

**eText:** Students should find "*What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 4, Text 1*" through "*Text 4*" from the Student Text file. Although the worksheet is included in the Student Text file, it is recommended to print out this worksheet so that students can look at it while they are viewing the texts.

**Discussion**

1. Review the worksheet to ensure students have connected the various boxes correctly and understand the connections. (Please see the end of the lesson for a completed chart "What Continues to Exist.")
2. For each text, ask: "What advice does each text offer about constructive conflict resolution?" Have students fill in the answers in the empty boxes (possible answers are indicated in the diagram below). Ask: "What new big idea did we learn about what constitutes a machloket l'shem Shamayim?" Students should realize that while having a motivation based on values is a necessary ingredient, the approach one takes in dealing with the conflict is equally important. In the next unit, students will have a chance to actually learn a strategy for engaging in constructive conflict resolution.

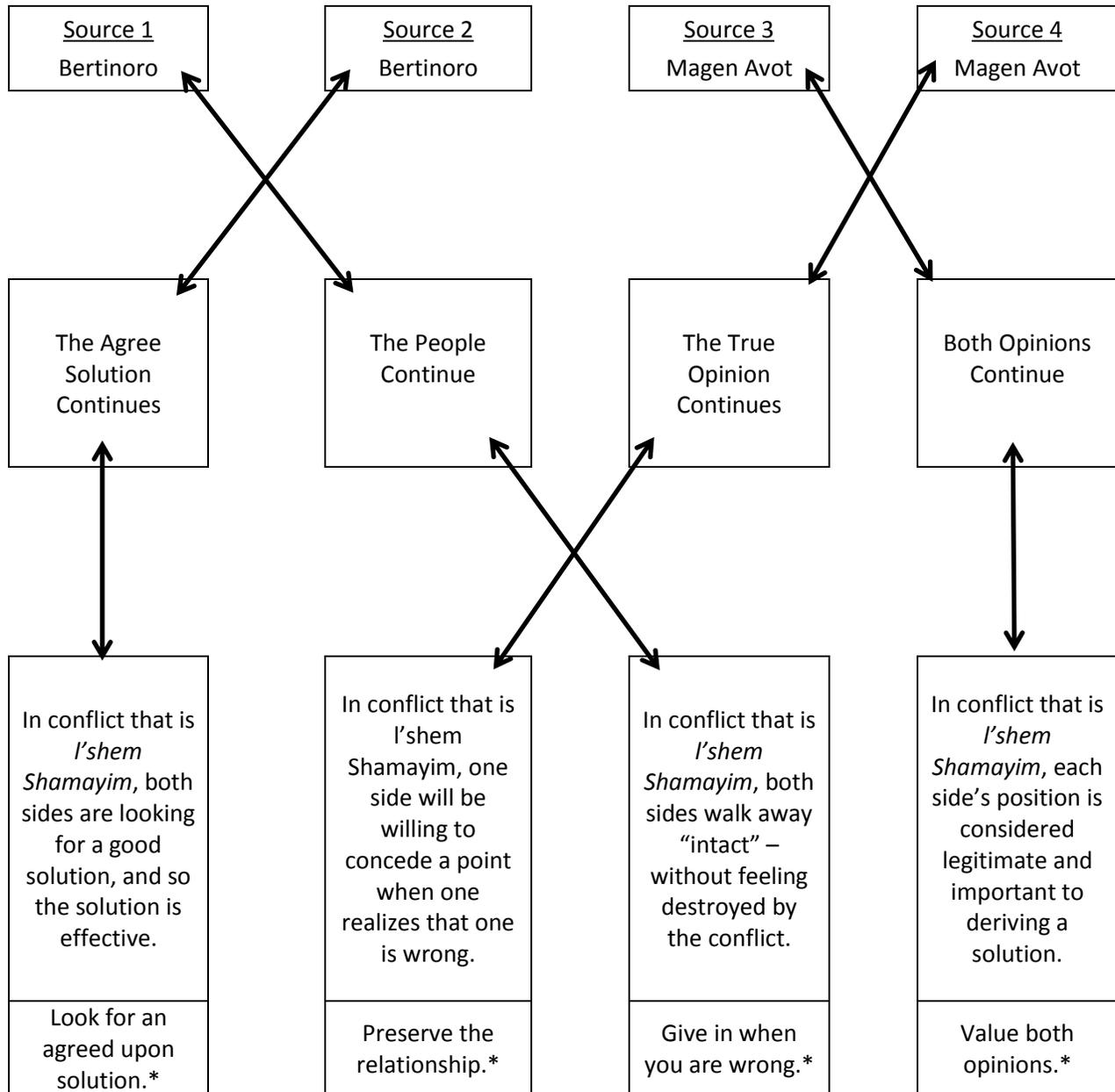
### Back to the Opening

Tell students to return to whichever character they chose for the opening activity. In the opening, students saw that while the character was driven by a motivation rooted in values, the way he or she dealt with the conflict rendered it not l'shem Shamayim. Consider now how the character violated the four principles\* of sofo l'hitkayem learned in this lesson. For example, while Yigal Amir's conflict with Yitzchak Rabin z"l was motivated by a value, he did not engage in machloket l'shem Shamayim because:

- He did not look for a solution that would consider his needs (security) and those of the other side (desire for peace).
- In the most extreme way, he did not preserve the relationship. Violence is always a sign that it is **not** machloket l'shem Shamayim (the justified use of violence is an important, but different, discussion).
- He was not open to considering whether he was wrong.
- He did not value the perspective of the other side.

\*You will find the four principles of sofo li'hitkayem listed on the bottom of the next page and on page 17 of the Student Workbook

What Continues to Exist?



\* The four principles of sofo li'hitkayem

## Lesson 5: In That Case...

### Lesson Goals

#### Today's Question for the Board

How can the case studies be rewritten as conflicts that are l'shem Shamayim?

#### Goals

Students will:

- Learn about a time when Hillel and Shammai engaged in destructive conflict and about the 9<sup>th</sup> of Adar.
- Rewrite the case studies so that they become cases of machloket l'shem Shamayim according to the principles studied in this unit.

#### Lesson Activities

- The Destructive Conflict of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai
- In That Case...

## Lesson plan

### The Destructive Conflict of Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai

While Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai generally engaged in *machloket l'shem Shamayim*, the Talmud records the story of one day when Bet Shammai engaged in destructive conflict. On that day, the students of Bet Shammai came to the *bet midrash* (study house) with a sword and used it to force their opinion on the students of Bet Hillel.

Although Bet Shammai's motivation may have been rooted in a strongly held value, the fact that they did not engage in constructive conflict meant that their *machloket* was not *l'shem Shamayim*, and this day was considered as tragic as the day the Golden Calf was created. (Other sources struggle over whether violence was actually carried out. For more sources see <http://tinyurl.com/9thAdar>.)

- Do a shared reading of "What is Machloket L'Shem Shamayim? Unit 3, Lesson 5 Text 1" from Talmud Shabbat 17A. Ask: "How does having a sword in the bet midrash change things?" Discuss how the threat of violence would make the students of Bet Hillel too fearful to state their side.

### 9 Adar, the international Jewish Day of Constructive Conflict

The 9th of Adar, the day when this story is said to have taken place, was declared by the rabbis to be a fast day (although it was never observed as such!), and more recently, it has been declared the international "Jewish Day of Constructive Conflict" by the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. The idea of this day is to teach the values and practices of constructive conflict and to look for ways of transforming destructive conflict into constructive conflict. For more information on how your school can participate in "9 Adar, Jewish Day of Constructive Conflict," please see the Rodef Shalom website (<http://9.org/schools>).

### In That Case...

1. Have students imagine that the people in the case studies from this unit had just commemorated the 9th of Adar and had committed themselves to engaging in *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. Recall that this includes both an examination of one's motivations for engaging in the conflict and engaging in the conflict in a constructive way. In this culminating task, students will work in pairs to rewrite a case to transform it into a constructive conflict – *machloket l'shem Shamayim*.
  - Assign the cases so that one third of the class will be working on each of the three cases.
  - None of the case studies are clear instances of *machloket l'shem Shamayim*. For each case, students should begin by examining why this is so.
  - Students should decide what the value that is motivating each side of the conflict might be.

- Students should then rewrite each case so that it tells the story of a machloket l'shem Shamayim. The motivation of each side, from their own perspective, should be clear, and the principles from sofo l'hitkayem should be observed. Students should be careful not to change the basic facts of each case. Students should feel free to begin with the original text from the case studies and then alter them, rather than telling the whole story from scratch, although they may do so if they wish.
  - Divide students into groups of three, with each group having one person from each case. Within the group, students will swap their stories twice for feedback. The first reader will examine the story from the perspective of motivation – is the motivation of each side clear and rooted in a value? The second will check that the principles of sofo l'hitkayem were observed. Each reader should also help the authors revise and proofread their stories, to ensure they are of “publishable” quality.
2. Collect the “proofread copies” and decide on a few to be shared. Use the collected stories for summative assessment purposes.
  3. Review with students what they learned in this unit about what comprises a machloket l'shem Shamayim. It begins with an examination of motivation, but also requires engaging in conflict in a positive way. In the next unit, students will learn a specific strategy for engaging in machloket l'shem Shamayim: a three-step process that they can use to deal with conflicts in their lives in a constructive manner.