

By the Grace of G-d
29th of Tammuz, 5717
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Abraham Feiglin
c/o Mount Scopus War Memorial College
245 Burwood Road
Burwood, Victoria
Australia

Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of July 12th, in which you write about the problem of a Jewish Sporting organization which conducts matches and games on Shabbos, requesting permission to use the athletic grounds of the College for sport activities on Sunday, which you refused. You ask my opinion whether you acted in accordance with the Jewish law, etc.

Needless to say that you were completely in the right, because of all the reasons you mentioned. The essential reason, however, is that a school which is an institution educating and bringing up Jewish children, and instilling into them a certain outlook and way of life, must always be consistent in its program and method, in conformity with the teachings of our Torah, the Law of Life.

Although our Sages have told us not to weigh the respective importance and stringency of the various laws of our Torah, all of which have to be fulfilled with equal devotion, nevertheless there are certain commandments which are the most stringent, and among them especially that of Sabbath observance. To keep the Sabbath holy is one of the Ten Commandments, and our Sages said that it balances in importance all the other commandments put together.

From the above it is clear that a Jewish organization which officially and publicly desecrates the Sabbath, particularly a youth organization, and, more so, when such desecration is motivated only by pleasure, not having even the mistaken justification based on the problem of a livelihood, and is nothing but a wanton desecration of the Torah and the Ten Commandments -- such an organization has no claim whatsoever on the cooperation and support of a Jewish educational institution. Moreover, were the College to accede to the request of the said organization, it would amount to giving the stamp of approval by you of the policy of the said organization. In such a case, the students of your school would certainly be influenced by, and drawn closer to the said sport organization, and the harm to them would be far reaching and irreparable.

By the same token, your refusal to go along with the request of the said organization, represents a justified and impressive protest against this public Sabbath desecration, which protest has an invaluable educational effect, not only on the students of your school, but also to the entire community of Melbourne, Australia, and far beyond.

From the above it is also clear that there is no basis for the argument that it would be better for the children to be connected with this organization during the Sabbath, rather than be spread all over the City without supervision and without guaranty that they do not engage in undesirable activities, perhaps in non-Jewish ~~groups~~ ^{clubs} etc. Apart from the cardinal difference between public desecration of the Sabbath, which is officially sanctioned by the school and Board of Education, etc., on the one hand, and the individual conduct of children, on the other, there is also this difference that in the case of the children who are not under the school's supervision, it is to be hoped that only a minority of them do not conduct themselves as desired, and that even these may some day be organized so as to spend the Sabbath in a desirable way; whereas, if official sanction be given to the children's participation in the said sport group, contrary to the Shulchan Aruch, it would be a wrong which cannot be righted - which will also undermine the prestige of the school, etc.

One more point, experience has shown that in our days the young people cannot understand any policy of compromise and concession. They ask the simple question: If you can make compromises and concessions in one section of the Torah, by what right do you expect us to follow and conform to the other parts of the Torah? This is a logical question. For, either or: Either the Torah is Divine and G-d given; in which case man has no jurisdiction, with his limited yard-stick, to choose as to what parts to accept and what to reject; or, if man is the ultimate judge as to what to accept and what to reject in our religion, then it means that the religion is man-made, hence, by what right can one human being impose his ideas and will on another human being, since every human being is subject to error and fallacy. That is why concessions and compromises are so dangerous nowadays, even more than in bygone days. Especially concessions and compromises which go to the very root and foundation of our religion; namely, the Holy Sabbath, and directly affect Jewish children and youth in the process of education in their formative years, and which can only lead to progressive deterioration, conservatism, reform, and, eventually, to complete assimilation.

I send you my prayerful wishes that the Almighty grant you success to bring up many, many students to be a pride to our people, because the will, with pride, carry the banner of our faith and tradition, which has come down to us from G-d at Mt. Sinai.

With blessing to you and all your family,