

Shabbat activity – 1 hr.

Court is in session!

Question: should Cinema City be open on Shabbat?

- I. Introduction: scatter pictures on the table, each participant chooses a picture that symbolizes Shabbat for him/her. They present their picture to the group and explain why they chose it.
- II. Activity: divide into two groups. Each group receives the question (should Cinema City be open on Shabbat?) and a letter written to the municipality by one of the two characters (below). Each group has 15 minutes to prepare an ‘opening argument’, and decide on two ‘witnesses’ they would call to argue their case in court.
 - a. Each group presents their case, their witnesses, and the other group has a chance to cross examine and question.(5 minutes)
 - b. Each group has 10 minutes to prepare a summing-up statement.
 - c. The judges (the groups three ‘madrichim’) make the final decision.
- III. Conclusion: group discussion about whether or not their original opinion has changed as a result of the activity.

To: The Jerusalem Municipality

From: Inbal Berkowitz

To whom it may concern,

My name is Inbal Berkowitz and I am a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I moved to Jerusalem three years ago for my studies, and am now in my last year at university. Today, I face the question of whether to continue to build my future in Jerusalem after my studies, or to return to Tel Aviv where I was born. As a young person, one of the main factors in my decision is my social life. At this stage of life, all of us are already working hard and very busy, so our weekends are a time to meet friends, enjoy ourselves and take part in whatever entertainment opportunities the city offers. But how can we enjoy ourselves if there aren't any places of entertainment open on Shabbat? There simply aren't places in Jerusalem where young people can get together to enjoy themselves on the weekend. Perhaps this sounds trivial to you, but for young people it is a major factor in choosing a place to live. If you want this city to grow and to attract a young population, young families and a wide variety of populations (not just the ultra-orthodox), you must take into consideration different life styles. In addition, Israel sees itself as an open, Western society—therefore, every citizen must be allowed to choose his own life style. If Cinema City is open on Shabbat, then young people and young families can come to enjoy themselves there without disturbing anyone else—and those who choose not to do so can just stay away.

If you want to see Jerusalem become a city painted in black—populated by an ultra-orthodox majority, then you should continue to ignore the other populations, which will gradually leave the city. But it is time for a change. In the hope that you consider my request seriously,

Sincerely,

Inbal Berkowitz

To: the Jerusalem Municipality

Re: Opening Cinema City on Shabbat

To whom it may concern,

My name is Aaron Malinkov and I own a chain of dairy restaurants. Recently, I opened one branch of my restaurant in the Cinema City in Jerusalem. I am aware of the recent demonstrations in favor of opening the Cinema City on Shabbat, and wish to express my strong opposition to this step. I am a religious Jew, have lived in Jerusalem for over fifty years, and feel strongly connected to the city. In my eyes, one of the beautiful things about this city is that all kinds of people can live here: ultra-orthodox, religious, secular, Arabs, new immigrants, etc. The city must remain tolerant to the beliefs of all and respect the entire population. Opening Cinema City on Shabbat would mean that my business would be one of the few which would be closed on the weekend. We all know how fiercely competitive the business world is. How can I compete with businesses that are open an additional two days during the week—days which are considered to be the busiest of the week (Friday night and Saturday)? This would be a death sentence for my business—my business would simply collapse. Do you want to open an entertainment center in Jerusalem which suits only one type of population, and doesn't allow others to be part of it? It is important to note that a large percentage of the city's population are observant Jews.

Another issue is the problem of workers in Cinema City. Those businesses which are open on Shabbat will not be able to hire religious workers. Isn't this discrimination? No good businessman will want to hire a worker who won't be able to work on the busiest days of the week. And, of course, this also means that those businesses which are open on Shabbat will not be certified as Kosher—thus, only the secular population will be able to eat there. This effectively closes the Cinema City to the large religious population of Jerusalem.

I hope that you will take my arguments into consideration,

Sincerely,

Aaron Malinkov