

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.

HYacinth 3-9250

File

התאחדות חסידים
לונדון

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
First Day of Chol Hamoed
Pesach, 5724
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rabbi Eliyohu Jung
210 West 90th Street
New York City

Sholom uBrocho:

My brother-in-law, Rabbi S. Gourary, informed me yesterday of your desire to know my opinion about the question of an Eiruv for Manhattan. Though, because of the sanctity of Chol Hamoed my correspondence is generally suspended during these intermediate days, I hasten to convey to you my views, this matter being, as I was told, דבר האמורא.

As you will surely recall, the matter was raised a few years ago, when I expressed my position, which has not changed. However, since I do not know if you are fully informed of it, I will here reiterate the main points of my viewpoint relative to this matter:

Firstly, as a matter of principle, where according to the Din an Eiruv can be instituted, it should be so instituted (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim ch. 395).

Secondly, special consideration has to be given to the state of affairs and attitudes in respect of the observance of the Mitzvoh in the present day and age, which has a particular bearing on the problem under discussion. I have in mind the precaution which such an Eiruv calls for under the best of circumstances, and certainly here and now, against the possibility of the Eiruv becoming Posul. In olden days, when there was a close contact between the Jewish community ("the man in the street") and the Beth Din or Rav, the invalidation of the Eiruv, and the consequent resumption of the pre-eiruv state of the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos, could be fairly easily communicated to everyone and no harm was done. Nowadays, unfortunately the position is different. While the institution of the Eiruv would quickly become common knowledge, not only through various media of communication but also by word of mouth, the rescinding of it in case of its invalidation, would only reach those who are in contact with the Rabbinical authorities, or who attend the synagogue regularly, whereas many would remain in ignorance of the changed situation. Moreover, many of those who might get into the habit of carrying on Shabbos on the strength of an Eiruv, might "not so readily" discontinue to do so even if they became aware of the breakdown in the Eiruv; and this contingency is particularly to be considered in relation to the Jewish youth in this country.

In view of the above, it is an absolute necessity, in my opinion, that the Eiruv, if one is feasible at all according to Din, should be carried out in the utmost secrecy. This means that the purpose of the Eiruv would be not to enable a Jew to carry his Talith to Shul on Shabbos, but only to relieve those who already transgress the Shabbos by carrying things - from doing so b'Issur.

Thirdly, and this too is an essential point in my position: The opinion expressed in the first conditional paragraph, namely that where an Eiruv is permissible according to the Din it should be instituted, is based, of course, on the general principle indicated above. However, it expresses no opinion regarding any particular place, such as Manhattan in this case, as to whether or not it indeed ~~qualifies~~ qualifies for an Eiruv according to the Din. This is a matter to be decided by the Rabbinical authorities who have thoroughly investigated the pertinent details in full accord with the Hilchoth Eiruvim.

I take this opportunity to extend to you and yours my prayerful wishes for a continued kosher and happy Pesach.

With blessing

/By reason of Chol Hamoed,
this letter is left unsigned/.