

January 10, 1967

Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon
c/o Mr. Victor Tarry
Congregation Shearith Israel
8 West 70th Street
New York, N. Y. 10023

Dear Dr. Gaon:

I am writing to you to clarify the matter of the Eruv, about which there has apparently developed some misunderstanding. Permit me to clarify the subject to the best of my ability.

The intent of the last communication sent to you, from which the confusion arose, was not to limit the effectiveness of the Eruv. We believe and declare and support the full validity of the Eruv for Manhattan. Had we had any question about its legality, we would never have undertaken our venture.

We did, however, decide to proceed with caution in order to avoid any public controversy which would have, in the long run, proven more damaging than an Eruv would be constructive. We therefore preferred not to publicize the Eruv in print, so as not to arouse any violent and ill-tempered opposition. We also counselled our people that it would be wise policy not to do any unnecessary carrying in public in a manner that would prove offensive to those who do not recognize the validity of our Eruv. Furthermore, we emphasized the fact that no Eruv, anywhere, can permit the handling of any objects which Jewish law considers mukzah. However, I repeat that this in no way vitiates the Eruv of Manhattan.

There is one primary condition, however, which accompanied the announcement of this Eruv: the constant and uninterrupted supervision of the Eruv by a Board of Supervisors (Mashgichim) who would be compensated according to a pre-arranged schedule. The leading synagogues of the area undertook to subvent this Board by committing themselves, contractually, to pay \$500.00 per year; the smaller synagogues who participate will be paying somewhat lower rates.

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Your Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue is one of the most distinguished and important in the entire country, and certainly in Manhattan. It is therefore absolutely crucial for the continued existence of the Eruv, and our unqualified approval of its validity, that the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, together with The Jewish Center, Congregation Kehilath Jeshurin, The Fifth Avenue Synagogue, and the others, formally agree to the financial support I indicated above.

I do hope that the misunderstanding has now been cleared up, and that we may look forward to the affirmative response of the leaders of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue so that we may proceed with the full assurance that we have your support.

Sincerely yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

RNL/fz

BC: Dr. Gaon in London (air mail)
R. Jung
R. Silverstein