

An aerial photograph of a city, likely New York City, showing a dense urban landscape with various buildings and streets. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title and subtitle text. The background image shows a mix of older brick buildings and more modern structures, with a hazy horizon in the distance.

THE REBBE'S VIEW ON ERUV

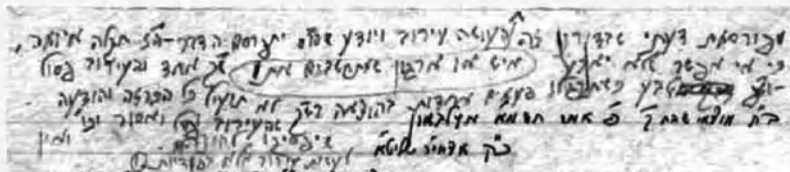
Building Eruvin in Cities and
the Presence of Reshus Horabim
In Our Times

הרבי: אפילו במקום שאין רשות הרבים דאורייתא אין לפרסם על עירוב

... לפעמים קרובות מתקלקל, ורואין במוחש שההכרזה על דבר זה (א) בימינו מגיע רק למיעוט ב) מעטים מהם שימנעו עצמם על ידי זה (לאחרי שהורגלו כמה וכמה שבתות). ולכן (במקום שאין רשות הרבים דאורייתא ומחאים לעירוב וכו') כדאי לעשות כמאמר חז"ל בזה – ובתנאי שלא לפרסם על דבר זה כלל.

"Oftentimes the eruv breaks, and we see clearly that an announcement about this (a) nowadays only reaches a minority of the community (b) few of those will abstain from carrying because of this (after having gotten used to carrying for many Shabbosos). Therefore (in a place where there is no reshut harabim and it is suitable for an eruv etc.) it is worthwhile to build one as Chazal say – on condition not to publicize this at all."

הרבי: מפורסמת דעתי, העושה עירוב ומפרסמו תקלה איומה



מפורסמת דעתי שבדורנו זה איש או ארגון שמתחשבים אתו העושה עירוב וידוע שסו"ם (שסוף סוף) יתפרסם הדבר – ה"ו (היה זה) תקלה איומה, כי אי אפשר שלא יארע ש"ק [=שבת קודש] אחד והעירוב פסול – וע"פ מנע כשיתרגלו פעמים אחדות בהוצאה בש"ק לא תועיל כל הכרזה והודעה שהעירוב נפסל ואסור וכו' שיפסקו להוציא. ואין לעשות עירוב אלא בסודיות.

My view is well known that in this generation if a person or organization that people consider (and respect) were to make an Eruv, and he knows that in the end it will become public knowledge – this is a terrible stumbling block.

(This is) because it is impossible that it will not occur even on a single Shabbos Kodesh that the Eruv will become invalid – and according to nature, once they will become accustomed a number of times to carry outdoors on Shabbos Kodesh, no kind of proclamation or announcement that the Eruv has been invalidated and it is forbidden to carry etc. will help to cause them to stop carrying (outdoors).

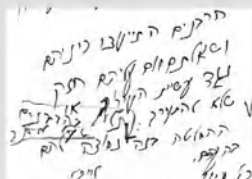
One should not make an Eruv except in secrecy.

האם להילחם נגד עשיית עירוב? הרבי: תלוי בהרבנים שעל אתר

After consulting amongst themselves, the rabbonim are asking if they should come out strongly against the Eruv, or should they not get involved?

[The decision regarding this] is dependent on the local rabbonim.

הרבנים התייעצו ביניהם ושאלתם אם עליהם חזק נגד עשיית עירוב העירוב או שלא להתערב? ההחלטה בזה: תלוי בהרבנים שעל אתר.



לבנות עירוב? הרבי: מה מכריחו להיכנס לזה?

לבנות עירוב – ידוע השקו"ט **ה מ ס ו ב כ ת** בזה, ומה מכריחו להכנס לזה?

[Regarding] building an eruv - The complicated halachic discussions regarding this are well known. What is forcing you to get involved?

The Rebbe's View on Eruv: Building Eruvin in Cities and the Presence of Reshus Horabim In Our Times

Rabbi Shmuel Zajac

Maggid Shiur – Tomchei Temimim Morristown, NJ

Summary of the Full Hebrew Essay

A recently discovered letter has shed further light on the Rebbe's stance on Shabbos *eruv* in cities.

In this letter, the Rebbe expresses his view that:

- I. Even when there is no *reshus horabim*, an *eruv* should not be constructed due to the obstacles that will inevitably result.¹

¹ The exception being those *eruv* constructed — discretely and without publicizing — as a last-resort failsafe against transgressing the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos.

- II. There are existing contemporary locations that bear the status of an absolute *reshus horabim*, where a traditional *eruv*, by means of poles and strings (*tzuras hapesach*), would be invalid.

As a result of this letter, the advocates for carrying with an *eruv* were at loss, as the Rebbe's disapproval of *eruv* is clear. To this end, a certain *eruv* proponent published an essay dismissing any contradiction to his pro-*eruv* view and claiming that, on the contrary, it is a "great *mitzva*" to construct city *eruv*.

Lest there be any doubt, let us address the most outrageous of the claims:

Firstly, this *eruv* proponent repeatedly quotes from Shulchan Aruch that "it is a *mitzva* to pursue [the construction of] *eruv*".² To set the record clear, this quote from Shulchan Aruch is quoted out of context. The source is discussing a different sort of *eruv*; namely, courtyard and shared *eruv chatzeiros*. This source does not at all relate to putting up walls or polls — **that is an entirely different topic.**

Furthermore, the entire basis for the *mitzva* of *eruv* is not, as he claims, for the purpose of *oneg Shabbos*, but to prevent the transgression of carrying. Therefore, if there is *any concern* that the *eruv* could **cause Shabbos transgression**, there would not be any *mitzva*, and moreover, **it should be avoided.**

This is why, throughout the decades, **the Rebbe neither pursued, nor encouraged of his own accord, the construction of *eruv*** (despite their claim that constructing *eruv* is a 'great *mitzva*'). In fact, across the Rebbe's letters and responsa, there were no instances of the Rebbe pursuing the construction of an

² Shulchan Aruch Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim, 366:13, 366:18, 395:1.

eruv. Despite countless opportunities to do so, there were never any directives from the Rebbe, or instances where the Rebbe instructed any of the numerous Chabad Chassidim, Shluchim, or Rabbonim to construct an *eruv* in their cities.

All the above doesn't even mention the most salient aspect:

Throughout all those decades of leadership, an *eruv* was never constructed in the Rebbe's *own* Shchuna — Crown Heights itself. Of course, if the Rebbe wished an *eruv* in Crown Heights, it would certainly have been built. Above all else, **there are countless testimonies from numerous Chassidim, Rabbonim, and Shluchim that the Rebbe instructed them explicitly not to build an *eruv* in their cities!**

Another claim put forth by *eruv* proponents is that due to the resilience of modern materials used in contemporary *eruv* construction, the *eruv* never becomes invalid. This is, however, factually incorrect. Experts, who check *eruv* in US cities, have attested to me personally that **even modern-day *eruv*in are often damaged and invalid**. This fact is quite evident by the large budgets accrued for *eruv* inspection and maintenance.

The next claim is that even if the *eruv* is damaged, nonetheless, a weekly inspection and quick repair can fix it before Shabbos. But, what assurances are there that *eruv* damages will only occur 'conveniently' in the middle of the week, so that it can be caught and remedied in time? Realistically, an *eruv* can sustain damage shortly before Shabbos, such that any attempted repair would be impossible to complete. **Indeed, any assertion that damage can "always be repaired in time," only adds concern on the standard of repair.**

Moreover, in the scenario that the *eruv* breaks **on Shabbos itself** (which is not at all unlikely), how will every single

community member — all of whom are relying on the *eruv* to save them from a severe Shabbos transgression — be immediately notified? As the Rebbe indicated in a letter to the Jewish community of Melbourne, **“It is impossible that there won't be a Shabbos when the *eruv* won't be invalid.”**

This dual nature of *eruv*in — that it can both prevent and, *ch"v*, cause severe transgression — explains the Rebbe's directive that **“those Rabbonim who are familiar with local conditions should decide which factor should supersede.”**

At the same time, in a place with an established *eruv*, the responsibility exists to ensure, as best one can, that the *eruv* remains kosher, to save those using it from *chilul Shabbos*. Nevertheless, a Chossid ought not to rely on the *eruv* due to the risk of transgression.

All the above is discussing a city with a population of less than 600,000, and it is not a *reshus horabim*, and it is therefore possible to construct an *eruv* there. In a city that does have 600,000, it is a de facto ***reshus horabim mid'oraisa***, within which an *eruv* constructed with poles and strings (*tzuras hapesach*) is of **no value at all**. For carrying to be permitted, such a locale would have to be completely walled off with a gate that is closed nightly!

Those who do wish to rely on an *eruv* in densely populated areas argue that a *reshus horabim* requires a single street with 600,000 or more daily passers-by.

Such a definition, however, is instantly refuted by the Alter Rebbe's rulings on *eruv*in: “a large **city** which **contains** 600,000 inhabitants,”³ “to a **city ... within which** 600,000 individuals

³ Ibid, 357:7.

pass.”⁴ Furthermore, the Alter Rebbe qualifies that the Jews’ desert encampments were considered an absolute *reshus horabim* — i.e. they fulfilled all conditions to be considered as such according to Torah law — despite the fact that **no single path in the encampment had 600,000 daily passers-by.**⁵

Similarly, from the Rebbe’s phrasing (in the recently discovered letter) that an *eruv* can be constructed “**in a locale absent of a *reshus horabim mid'oraisha*,**” it is clear such a *reshus horabim* is **a common, present-day reality.** To suggest that the Rebbe was referring to Tokyo, Japan (as one *eruv* proponent suggested), far removed from where most Jewish communities reside, is absurd.

Furthermore, in a letter to Rabbi Eisenshtat regarding an *eruv* in Manhattan, the Rebbe clearly stipulates that if not for the barriers at the island’s tollbooths, Manhattan would have been considered a true *reshus horabim* — **despite the lack of individual streets with 600,000 daily passers-by.**

Of particular note, the Rebbe once addressed those claiming there is no present-day concern of *reshus horabim* and quote the Shulchan Aruch that “we do not have true *reshus horabim* in our time.” The Rebbe then dismissed this, pointing out the reality that times have changed and there are numerous areas nowadays with populations far exceeding 600,000 inhabitants, easily qualifying as true *reshus horabim*.⁶

Finally, to address the suggestion from some *eruv* proponents who quote the Tashbatz – that “one who’s heart is faint [regarding *eruv*in] ... has been influenced by heresy” – as a

⁴ Ibid, 392:1.

⁵ Ibid, 404:2.

⁶ 12 Tammuz 5745, sicha 4 (from the audio recording).

means of casting aspersions on those sincere, G-d fearing Jews who have genuine concerns about the issues with city *eruv*, **is a blatant and appalling misrepresentation!** The Tashbatz was referring to those who take issue with the enactment of an *eruv* as a halachic ruling, not about someone who holds that a particular *eruv* is halachically invalid.

In summary:

From the Rebbe's acknowledgment of contemporary *reshus horabim*, it is obvious that they are a common, present-day reality — and that it depends on the city's total population count exceeding 600,000, rather than a specific street's daily passersby count. Declaring that "according to the Alter Rebbe there is no *reshus horabim*" is a perversion of the truth.

It's shocking that individuals who aren't expert Poskim, and therefore unfit to rule on such weighty matters, permit themselves to be lax about severe Shabbos transgressions, especially after numerous proofs are presented to the contrary. It is appalling that even after their mistake was pointed out, they stubbornly cling to their claims, ignoring all evidence to the contrary, and making as if the issues with the *eruv* are contrived!

We hope and pray that those who are misguided in this matter should not be embarrassed to concede to the Rebbe's view that full *reshus horabim* domains **are** a common reality, in which case the use of a string and pole *eruv* is invalid.

In the merit of strengthening our Shabbos observance, may we merit the true and complete Geulah.

"It Is Certainly a Reshus Harabim D'oraisa!"

12 Tammuz 5745 – from the audio recording

"There was a complaint and an uproar about why how we can speak about teaching the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach. Though the Rambam ruled clearly that a Jew must endeavor that a non-Jew should fulfill the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach, how is it that was this not done previously?

"This an example of a Halachic Law that is relevant currently. There is a ruling in the Shulchan Aruch, and the Alter Rebbe cites it, that nowadays there is no city with a Biblical *reshus harabim*, since there are not 600,000 that pass through it.

"The question therefore arose about a city where there clearly *are* 600,000 that pass through it. People wanted to suggest that since Shulchan Aruch says that in those times there were no such places, this would indicate that there never *could* be such a city, even though **he's in a city and counts (or the authorities count) 600,000 people and more!**

"How is that relevant to the law in the Shulchan Aruch? Shulchan Aruch *itself* cautions, that there isn't a "*chok*," an unchanging law, it's simply that because there aren't 600,000, it cannot be a Biblical *reshus harabim*. **If, however, there is a city which has 600,000 people, then there cannot be any debate – it is certainly a *reshus harabim d'oraisa*!**

"One must only ascertain, or have reason for concern, that there are 600,000 people there.

"Similarly, regarding these matters..."

Reb Yoel Kahan:

The Rebbe is Clearly Opposed to an Eruv

Bein Hametzarim 5776

Greetings and blessings,

It was with great wonder that I read the two questions regarding the Eruv. The matter is simple and there is no room for question.

Regarding the first question – there are many letters (printed in *Igros Kodesh*) where it is **clear** that the Rebbe is opposed to building and using an Eruv in a large city.

Regarding the second question – there is absolutely no rationality to say that the situation has changed.

Furthermore, if you say that "the situation has changed" – this is a breach *Rachmana Litzlan* regarding all of the Rebbe's directives (and so too regarding all directives in our holy Torah) that on everything people can say that "the situation has changed." One should not even consider such a thought. This should suffice for the wise.



Rabbi Leibel Groner:

The Rebbe Strongly Opposed Making An Eiruv In Our Community

I was asked about the Rebbe's stance regarding constructing an Eiruv in our community of Crown Heights.

Reply:

The Rebbe strongly opposed making an Eiruv in our community, and he reiterated on several occasions that no one has permission to make an Eiruv here.

It should be explained to all those who, *Rachmana Litzlan*, are considering making an Eiruv here that anyone who does so, *Rachmana Litzlan*, is starting up with the Rebbe, and he should recognize the effect it may have, G-d forbid, on himself and his family etc.

When the rabbonim in Melbourne wanted to construct an Eiruv, my brother A"H and R. Chaim Gutnick A"H asked the Rebbe how they should respond, and the Rebbe's reply was that they should oppose it fiercely.

All Anash and Temimim should discard this idea.

To conclude on a positive note,

Yehuda Leib Groner

המזכיר הר"ר יהודה ליב גראנער ע"ה:

הרבי התנגד בכל התוקף נגד עשיית עירוב בשכונתינו

נשאלתי אודות דעת כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו בענין בניית עירוב
בשכונתינו, שכונת קראון הייטס.

מענה: הרבי התנגד בכל התוקף נגד עשיית עירוב בשכונתינו.

כמה פעמים אמר שאין רשות למי שהוא לעשות עירוב כאן.

צריכים למסור לכל אלו שר"ל חושבים לעשות עירוב כאן, שעליהם
לדעת שכל מי שר"ל יעשה זה – ער שפילט זיך מיטן רבי'ן, ויקח
בחשבון התוצאות שיגרום ח"ו לעצמו ולבני ביתו וכו'.

כשרבני מלבורן רצו לעשות שם עירוב, אחי ע"ה והרב חיים גוטניק
ע"ה שאלו את הרבי איך עליהם להתייחס לזה והתשובה היתה
שינגדו לזה בכל התוקף כו'.

אנ"ש והתמימים כולם, צריכים לבטל מחשבה זו.

ומסיימים בטוב,

יהודה ליב גראנער

הר"ר יואל כהן ע"ה:

מפורש שדעת רבינו נגד עשיית עירוב

ב"ה בין המצרים תשע"ו

לכבוד הרה"ח ר'

שלום וברכה

בתמי' גדולה קראתי את שתי השאלות בנוגע העירוב, והרי פשוט, שאין שום מקום לשאלה.

בנוגע שאלה הא' - הרי ישנם כו"כ מכתבים (נדפסו באגרות קודש) בהם מפורש שדעת רבינו זי"ע היא נגד עשיית והשתמשות בעירוב בעיירות גדולות.

ובנוגע שאלה הב' - אין שום סברא שנשתנה המצב.

ובאם נאמר ש"נשתנה המצב" - הרי זה פריצת גדר רח"ל בנוגע כל ההוראות של כ"ק רבינו זי"ע (וכמו"כ בנוגע כל ההוראות בתורתינו הקדושה) שעל כל דבר יאמרו נשתנה המצב ואל תפתח פה כו' וד"ל.

י"א
ב"מ

"א זיכערע זאך אז ס'איז א רה"ר דאורייתא!"

התוועדות י"ב תמוז תשמ"ה (שיחה ד')

מתוך סרט הקלטה – <https://ashreinu.page.link/jwyD>

"מ'האט געהאט א טענה א טומל, היתכן מ'האט אנגעהויבן רעדן וועגן שבע מצוות בני נח, אז דער רמב"ם האט אפגע'פסק'נט א הלכה ברורה, אז א איד דארף זיך משתדל זיין אז א ניט איד זאל מקיים זיין שבע מצוות בני נח דידהו, היתכן, מ'האט דאס פריער ניט געטאן?

"איז דאס בדוגמא ווי א הלכה וואס איז געווען נוגע איצטער. עס איז דא א דין אין שו"ע, און דער אלטער רבי בריינגט דאס אויך אראפ, אז קיי"ל אז בזמנ"ז איז ניטא קיין שטאט וואס ס'איז דא א רשות הרבים עפ"י תורה, דערפאר [וואס] ס'איז ניטא קיין ששים רבוא בוקעין בו.

"במילא אז ס'איז געקומען דער שאלה אין א שטאט וואס ס'איז דא בפירוש ששים רבוא בוקעים בו, האט מען געוואלט אפלערנען וויבאלד [אז] עס שטייט אין שו"ע, אז אין זמן פון שו"ע איז ניטא געווען אזא מין שטאט, איז [דאס] א סימן אז [ס'וועט] קיינמאל ניט זיין אזא מין שטאט, אע"פ וואס ער געפינט זיך בעיר פלונית, און ער ציילט איבער (אדער [די] פאליציי ציילט פאר עס), און מ'האט איבערגעציילט אז ששים רבוא בוקעים בו, און נאך מערער ווי ששים רבוא.

"וואס האט א שייכות צו דין אין שו"ע? שו"ע באווארנט אליין, ס'איז ניט א דין א 'חוקה חקקתי', אזוי ווי ס'איז ניטא קיין ששים רבוא בוקעים בו, אשר לכן איז ניטא דער דין פון רשות הרבים (דאורייתא) מן התורה. בשעת אבער מאיזה סיבה שתהי' איז געווארן א שטאט, און מ'האט דארט איבערגעציילט אז סאיז דא ששים רבוא אדער מערער, איז ניטא אינדערויף קיין שייכות צי חילוקי דעות, (ס'איז) א זיכערע זאך אז (ס'איז) א רה"ר דאורייתא. מ'דארף נאר זיין זיכער, אדער וויסן עכ"פ מספק, אז דארטן איז דא ששים רבוא.

"עד"ז בנוגע לעניינים אלו..."