

3rd December 1993

D.E. Inspector
Eruv Planning Inquiry
Barnet Town Hall
The Burroughs
London NW4

5th floor
Annen Grace Hospital -

Dear Sir

ERUV APPEALS

I should like you to ask the Secretary of State to imagine a bright sunny Saturday some time next summer. A young Orthodox Jewish family is walking along a pleasant attractive residential street in Barnet. They have one young child in a push chair and another walking with them carrying a gift-wrapped parcel.

The couple are obviously happy and as they walk along they are greeted by a man leaning on his front garden gate. "Hello", says the man, "you seem to be enjoying yourselves".

"Yes", says the young mother, "isn't it wonderful? This is the first Sabbath since our Rabbis confirmed the existence of our Eruv so that we can carry outside the house. This means we can push the little boy's buggy and our daughter can carry a present. We are taking them to visit their grandmother".

"What makes the Eruv"? asks the man.

"Well, it's an area defined by the Rabbis", says the young father. "In a few places we have a few poles joined together with invisible wire, usually over roads and junctions but for over 90% of the perimeter we refer to existing physical features. For example in your street as long as we keep to this side of your garden fence and this side of the line of your neighbours' fences and walls on this side of the street, we can carry.

"Very good", says the man, "I hope I shall see you again. Good-bye".

With that, the couple continue on their way, their enjoyment increased by the man's kind words.

The man, being devout (but of unknown religion) and being moved by what he had heard goes indoors and offers a short prayer of thanksgiving:-

"My blessings have been increased. I gain pleasure from my garden, its fences and my gate. Now, at no cost to myself, my humble fence is helping that nice young couple. I can claim no credit but the sum total of human happiness has been increased. That gives me pleasure. Thank you".

ERIC'S LETTER

During this time the young couple go further down the street and meet a second man at his gate, who demands, "What are you Jews doing out on Saturday?"

"Oh", says the young mother, "Isn't it wonderful? This is the first Sabbath since our Rabbis confirmed the existence of our Eruv so that we can carry outside the house. This means we can push the little boy's buggy and our daughter can carry a present. We are taking them to visit their grandmother".

"I've heard about that", says the second man. "You're trying to take over the area as a Jewish enclave". "No, no, that's not the case", says the young father. "The Eruv area is defined by our Rabbis solely for the purposes of allowing us to carry. It has no other significance. In a few places we have a few poles joined together with invisible wire, usually over roads and junctions, but for over 90% of the perimeter we refer to existing physical features. For example, in your street as long as we keep to this side of your garden fence and this side of the line of your neighbours' fences and walls on this side of the street, we can carry".

"How dare you!" shouted the second man. "You're using my fence for your Jewish religion without even asking. You taint my property with Jewishness and give my street a special Jewish meaning. I find that deeply offensive". And he rushes indoors.

The young couple continue on their way, their joy temporarily crushed by the vehemence of the second man's attack. But they soon regain their composure, remembering the kindness of the first man and the original reason for their happiness and by the time they arrive at the children's grandmother's house, they are ready to enjoy the day to the full, and do so.

Back at the second man's house, he rushes in to where his wife is enjoying making cakes for her weekday club. "It's intolerable", he shouts, "the Jews are using our street and our fence for religious purposes. We're polluted. There'll be hundreds of them walking up and down in a few weeks". And he goes on shouting and complaining for so long that his wife is also persuaded to be angry so that she loses all pleasure in what she is doing, and the second man seethes so much that he cannot concentrate on his favourite Saturday programme.

Sir, this may be a folksy story, but I ask you, and in his turn the Secretary of State, to consider wherein lies the evil, and where is that evil's relevance to the planning decision to be made.

Yours faithfully