

The Bottom Line

To properly understand “the bottom line” it is necessary to give an introduction to the way Halacha guides and determines our lifestyle. We would all like things to be “black or white”. “Just tell me; is it forbidden or permitted?” However, life is not so simple. There are many different situations in Halacha and each situation has its own definite rules and guidelines. We will present a number of situations and their guidelines:

- 1- If there is a dispute among the Poskim regarding a certain issue and the consensus of the Poskim is to decide the manner according one opinion, we are **mandated** to follow that opinion.
- 2- If there is a dispute among the Poskim and there is no consensus, if the question is regarding a Torah prohibition, we are **mandated** to follow the stringent opinion. If the issue is regarding a Rabbinical prohibition, we are *permitted* to follow the lenient opinion.
- 3- The Shulchan Aruch will sometimes declare that a certain food is forbidden unless there is a great loss of money, in which case one may follow the lenient opinion. This is seemingly difficult to understand. Even if one were to lose all of his assets he is not permitted to transgress a prohibition. How then may he be lenient in case of great financial loss. The Ramoh explains, that whenever we allow leniency in cases of loss, it means that in truth we have decided the issue according to the lenient opinion. However, since there are many opinions that rule stringently, we are **only permitted** to follow the lenient opinion in case of financial loss. Now, if one were to say that since the true Halacha follows the lenient opinion, I would like to follow the lenient opinion even when there is no loss of money, he would be transgressing the Halacha. If the Shulchan Aruch decides that one can only be lenient in cases of great financial loss, then we are **mandated** to follow the stringent opinion in all other cases
- 4- At times there is a Halachic situation when most Poskim decide according to the lenient opinion but, nevertheless, there are reputable Poskim that decide the issue stringently. The later Poskim may decide that in this case, though the Halacha follows the lenient opinion, nevertheless, since there are reputable Poskim who decide the matter stringently, they recommend that one act stringently, since there has not been a clear consensus to be lenient. In this case, one is **not mandated** according to Halacha to follow the stringent opinion but one is recommended to do so.
- 5- There may be a dispute among the Poskim and the consensus is to be lenient, or, the Jewish nation generally accepted the lenient opinion, but there are nevertheless, dissenting Poskim. In such a case, the general populace is not suggested to act stringently, but those seeking a higher level of observance are recommended to act stringently.

Historically, the type of Eruvin constructed in the small towns fell into the fifth category; the general public practiced leniency while the “Baal Nefesh” (those seeking a higher level of observance) were recommended to be Machmir.

Los Angeles, a city with a population of a few million, with streets that are relatively straight and extend for miles and service 600,000 people is unique. On the one hand, as stated clearly in the Responsa of R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski ZT”L, Los Angeles is definitely considered a Reshus HaRabim of 600,000 making our city more stringent than the small towns in Europe. On the other hand, the construction of an Eruv utilizing “walls” is better than the European Eruv which consisted solely of a Tzuras HaPesach.

How does one weigh the efficacy of an Eruv built with three walls with its breaches closed with a Tzuras HaPesach in a city with 600,000 people, and under which of the abovementioned categories does it fit? How would our contemporary Poskim classify the proposed Eruv in Paris?

This question was submitted to leading Poskim of our generation: Their response ranged from: “The Eruv should be relied upon only in case of true necessity” [רק יסמוך על העירוב בשעת הדחק ואף בשעת הדחק המחמיר תבא עליו ברכה] to “The decision to act stringently is one’s own private decision.” [הרוצה להחמיר יחמיר לעצמו]

The RCC accepted to supervise the construction and maintenance of the Eruv and to certify it as Kosher, within the abovementioned parameters.

RCC Kashrus Approval of Eruv

The Rabbinical Council of California and the RCC Eruv Vaad Halacha certifies the validity and maintenance of the Los Angeles Community Eruv [LACE]. This Eruv incorporates the highest standards possible in a large metropolitan Eruv. Eruvin in large metropolitan areas are not certified according to all halachic opinions. For a comprehensive discussion of the differing views of the classic and contemporary Poskim pertaining to our Eruv, it is imperative that one read the Eruv guidebook and / or review it with their Rov.