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WHY DON'T WE SLEEP IN THE SUKKAH?

From the Talks of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

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General Editor:
Rabbi Meir Avtzon



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1.

Meticulous to Eat, Yet Not to Sleep

In the way my father-in-law the Rebbe conducted himself regarding the *sukkah*, we see a striking contradiction:

When it came to eating and drinking in the *sukkah*, he was scrupulous to the very last degree. He insisted that not even a drink of water be taken outside the *sukkah*¹ — and he held to this even on *Shmini Atzeres*.²

Yet when it came to sleeping in the *sukkah*, it was just the opposite: he was seen not to sleep in the *sukkah* at all, but in the house.³

This is puzzling, because if anything it should be the other way around. Sleeping in the *sukkah* is the stricter of the two: a casual meal is permitted outside the *sukkah* — all the more so a drink of water — while even a brief nap is not.⁴

{Now, one might try to explain that} sleeping in the *sukkah* can involve real hardship — depending on the conditions of the place or time and so on — and in such circumstances **the law exempts** a person from it, as the **ruling** states:⁵ “In cold regions, where sleeping in the *sukkah* causes distress on account of the cold... one need not sleep in the *sukkah*... for whoever is distressed by dwelling in the *sukkah* is exempt from dwelling in it.”

But that explanation does not suffice: Physical hardship of this kind never stopped the Frierdiker Rebbe — not even when nothing more than a *hiddur*, an enhancement of the *mitzvah*, was at stake. We saw this in the way he conducted himself with the *sukkah* itself when it came to eating and drinking: he took no account of the difficulty and was **stringent** regardless — even on *Shmini Atzeres*, and even when it rained. The law permits eating in the house once rain falls,⁶ yet he still would not eat outside the *sukkah*.⁷

1) See *Mishnah, Sukkah* 26b; Rambam, *Hilchos Sukkah* 6:6; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 639:2; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 639:12.

2) See *Minhagei Chag HaSukkos* (Sefer *HaMinhagim—Minhagei Chabad*, p. 67; *Hosafos to Shulchan Aruch HaRav* [Kehot ed.], p. 725, col. 2).

3) See *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 35; and likewise the *sichah* of the first night of *Sukkos* 5699 (*Sefer HaSichos* 5696–Winter 5700 [Kehot, Brooklyn, 5749], p. 295) — regarding the Rebbe Rashab.

4) *Sukkah* 25a (in the *Mishnah*); *ibid.* 26a; Rambam and *Tur/Shulchan Aruch* there; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 639:7.

5) *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 639:8 (and sources cited there).

6) See *Mishnah, Sukkah* 28b; Rambam, *Hilchos Sukkah* 6:10; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 639:5ff.; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 639:17; 639:21ff.

7) See the halachic discussion in *Responsa Minchas Elazar*, vol. 4, end of §31 (where it is noted that the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, generation after generation, were accustomed to dwell in the *sukkah* for all seven days of the festival even when rain fell).

Clearly, then, his not being particular to sleep in the *sukkah* had nothing to do with physical hardship or discomfort.

2.

A Light Too Bright for Sleep

There is a well-known saying of the Mitteler Rebbe regarding sleeping in the *Sukkah*: “How can one sleep amid the *makifim* {encompassing lights} of *Binah*?”

What he meant is this: A tremendously great G-dly light shines in the *Sukkah* — a light too lofty to be drawn down and internalized within a person (within his inner faculties). Instead, the light envelops him as an encompassing light (*or makif*), the way a physical *Sukkah* literally “surrounds” a person.⁸ And it surrounds not only the person himself — at least his head and the greater part of his body⁹ — but “his table” as well, such that all his affairs are meant to be conducted within the encompassing space of the *Sukkah*, for “you shall reside {in the *Sukkah*} as you dwell {in your home the rest of the year}” (*teishvu k'ein taduru*).¹⁰¹¹ Since such a lofty G-dly light shines there, how could one possibly sleep in such a place?¹² It is along the lines of {the Patriarch Yaakov's expression in} the verse,¹³ “Indeed, the L-rd is in this place, and I did not know it [for had I known, **I would not have slept in such a holy place** — Rashi].”¹⁴

Indeed, it is **obvious**, {that this reason for not sleeping in the *Sukkah*} follows even the **simple** understanding of the *Halachah*. If a person lies down to sleep in the *Sukkah* and simply cannot fall asleep by any means, then by the **straightforward** ruling of the *Shulchan*

8) See the *sichah* of the first night of *Sukkos* 5699 (cited above, note 3) — where it is presented somewhat differently.

9) *Sukkah* 3a.

10) See *Sukkah* 28a (in the Mishnah); Rambam, *Hilchos Sukkah* 6:8; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 634:4. See *Tzafnas Panei'ach* cited below, note 25.

11) *Sukkah* 28b. And sources cited there.

12) The Rebbe notes that this conduct is absent in earlier generations — even among masters of Kabbalah who sensed the *Sukkah*'s light — because for them sleep itself was a lofty rung of divine service, not merely bodily (cf. *Bereishis Rabbah* 14:9; *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* ch. 12). Only Chabad teaching

draws the *Sukkah*'s encompassing light down to be felt in the physical body, which is why the Mitteler Rebbe — whose role was to convey Chassidim through comprehension — demanded this of Chassidim. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, pp. 33, 60; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 131; vol. 2, p. 650; *Reb Levi Yitzchak, Igros Kodesh*, p. 334ff.; the *sichah* cited in note 8.

13) *Vayeitzei* 28:16 and Rashi there.

14) Note the comparable instance we find on the festival of *Sukkos* — that on account of the great joy of the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah*, “we did not taste the taste of sleep” (*Sukkah* 53a [from the *Tosefta* there, 4:3]; *Yerushalmi* there 5:2).

Aruch he can go to sleep in his house. Moreover, if he is certain¹⁵ that he will not be able to fall asleep in the *Sukkah*, he need not even attempt it to begin with.

This, quite simply, is the reason the Frierdiker Rebbe did not sleep in the *Sukkah*: when he sat in the *Sukkah*, the encompassing light of the *Sukkah* shone for him in a **revealed** way, and that would **not let** him fall asleep¹⁶ in the *Sukkah*.

We can add a further point here, one that makes it even more halachically fitting — regarding the distinction between eating and drinking in the *Sukkah* and sleeping in it:

Concerning the very definition of “you shall reside as you dwell” (*teishvu k'ein taduru*), the Alter Rebbe explains¹⁷ that “any excessive exertion that a person would not trouble himself with, and would forgo, in order to remain settled in his home, he is likewise not obligated to undertake in order to remain settled in his *Sukkah*.” The same applies to sleep: if the situation is such “that had he faced exertion like this in order to sleep in his home he would not have slept in his home, he need not sleep in the *Sukkah*, for whoever is distressed by dwelling in the *Sukkah* is exempt from dwelling in it.”¹⁸ [As the Alter Rebbe explains,¹⁹ the exemption of one who is distressed derives from the very principle of “you shall reside as you dwell” — for “throughout the year, too, a person does not live in a place where he is distressed.” Accordingly, with regard to **anything** not included in how one “dwells” at home, the obligation of “you shall reside” (in the *Sukkah*) does not take hold.]

The same is true in our case: In the situation the Mittlerer Rebbe was speaking of — or the situation reflected in the conduct of the Frierdiker Rebbe — where the intensity of the revelation in the *Sukkah* is itself an obstacle preventing sleep, one is for that very reason exempt from sleeping in the *Sukkah*,²⁰ since in such a state one could not have slept at **home** either.²¹

15) With certainty according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, understandably (based on having made the effort in the past, or in the present as well; or a comparable assessment consistent with the *Shulchan Aruch*).

16) This is not so with eating and drinking (see the *sichah* cited in note 8 — the distinction between sleep and study, etc.). Note also that sacrificial meat is eaten in the *azarah*, yet there is no sitting (and certainly no sleeping) in the *azarah* (*Yoma* 25a; and sources cited there).

17) *Shulchan Aruch* [*HaRav*], *Orach Chaim* 639, end of §4.

18) *Ibid.* §8.

19) *Ibid.* 640:5 (from *Tosafos*, s.v. *Holchei derachim* — *Sukkah* 26a).

20) The principle “his view is nullified before that of all others” does not apply here (see *Rama* and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 640:4 [§11]) — for beyond the fact that if it is known that a person is among the exceptionally sensitive he is exempt (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* there), here too “it is the way of people to be distressed by such a thing” (wording of the Alter Rebbe there); it is only that they do not sense the *makifim* — but were they to sense them, they certainly would not be able to sleep.

21) See below (sec. 8) regarding the law as it applies to other people.

3.

One Torah: Body and Soul

But this calls for explanation:

As has been said many times, our holy Torah is a **single**, unified Torah: the inner dimension of Torah (*Pnimiyus HaTorah*) and its customs, and the halachic dimension of Torah, are “entirely one” — as the *Zohar* states,²² that the revealed dimension of Torah and its hidden dimension are like a body and a soul. That is, all the parts of Torah accord with one another and rise together as one. It follows, then, that the customs of the great ones of Israel (and of those who walk in their footsteps) — customs whose very content is rooted from the **outset** in *Pnimiyus HaTorah* — must be consistent with their standing in *Halachah*.²³

In our case, however, this is not understood. Since, in *Halachah*, the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* obligates a person to sleep in it²⁴ — how can it be that the **inner** content of the *Sukkah* (the “*or makif*” that shines within it) should stand in **contradiction** to that, and **not** allow sleep in the *Sukkah*!?

And beyond this: the explanation given above (sec. 2) is, at most, an **exemption** not to sleep in the *Sukkah* — since “you shall reside as you dwell,” as explained. But in the end, it would seem, something is still missing in the **fulfillment of the mitzvah** of *Sukkah*. And how could one say that the inner content of the *Sukkah* should be the cause of a **deficiency**, G-d forbid, in the **fulfillment** of the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* (in its plain, halachic sense) as it ought to be fulfilled, in its entirety? If anything, the reverse should be true: one should reach the inner content of a *mitzvah* (here, the revelation of the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*) precisely after, and **by means of**, fulfilling the *mitzvah* in its **plain, physical form** {— sleeping in the *Sukkah*}!

4.

Sleep: No Fulfillment, Only a Prohibition

Seemingly, this could be resolved based on what is explained in *Tzafnas Panei'ach*²⁵ — that there is a fundamental distinction between eating and drinking in the *Sukkah* and

22) *Zohar*, vol. 3, 152a.

23) See also *Derech Mitzvosecha* (5a; 22b): the revealed is in accordance with the hidden, as a body to a soul. — See also *Shelah*, *Beis Chochmah* (16a); and elsewhere.

24) To the point that the *Sukkah* must be in a place fit for sleeping; and if one made it in a place where

sleeping in it would cause him distress, it is an invalid *Sukkah*, and he does not fulfill his obligation with it even for eating (*Rama* there; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* there, §6).

25) On the Rambam, *Hilchos Sukkah* 6:2.

sleeping in it: eating and drinking are a fulfillment of the **mitzvah** of *Sukkah*,²⁶ whereas sleeping in the *Sukkah* “is not a fulfillment of a *mitzvah*; it is only that one is forbidden to sleep outside the *Sukkah*.” On this basis he explains why, in the *Gemara*²⁷ and in the Rambam²⁸ (in describing the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*²⁹), the detail of sleeping is not mentioned — only eating and drinking: “one eats, drinks, and strolls in the *Sukkah*”³⁰ (and not sleeping).

[With this, he also resolves, quite simply, the question³¹ — why does one not recite a blessing over sleeping in the *Sukkah*? — because sleeping in the *Sukkah* does not accomplish the **fulfillment of the mitzvah** of *Sukkah*, but is merely a matter of avoiding the prohibition against sleeping outside the *Sukkah*.]

From this it is understood that even when a person sleeps outside the *Sukkah* in a **permitted** manner, since he nonetheless eats and drinks in the *Sukkah*, nothing at all is lacking in his fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*.

Accordingly, it is understood that there is no contradiction here — that according to its **inner** content the *Sukkah* “disrupts” the matter of sleep, while at the same time, halachically, one is in fact **obligated** to sleep in a *Sukkah* — because sleeping in the *Sukkah* is not part of the essential **mitzvah** of (dwelling in the) *Sukkah*; the obligation to sleep in the *Sukkah* is only a (consequence of the) prohibition against sleeping outside the *Sukkah*, as stated. And in our case, since this causes distress and so forth, the prohibition does not apply to begin with.

[Seemingly one could ask that practically this answer is not fully smooth, for how is it possible that, halachically, the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* should give rise to a **prohibition** against sleeping outside the *Sukkah*,³² while from the standpoint of the inner content of the *mitzvah* the reverse is true — sleeping outside the *Sukkah* is a **permitted** matter (and even a fitting one)?

The answer is that “the Torah speaks with regard to the majority.”³³ The details of the *mitzvos* are structured according to the content of the matter as it applies to **most** people, and since most people do **not** sense the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*, an

26) And moreover — the eating “makes the *Sukkah* into a *Sukkah*” (*Tzafnas Panei'ach* there; see there at length). See below, note 56.

27) *Sukkah* 28b.

28) *Ibid*.

29) Only in the following halachah does the Rambam mention that one sleeps in the *Sukkah* — see below, note 37.

30) So it is in the *Gemara*. The Rambam omitted “and strolls” and in its place has “and dwells.” See the wording of the *Rama* (and the Alter Rebbe) cited below, sec. 5. This is not the place to elaborate.

31) *Tosafos*, s.v. *Shekvar* — *Berachos* 11b. See also *Rosh* there (ch. 1, §13) and *Sukkah* ch. 4, §3.

33) *Moreh Nevuchim*, vol. 3, ch. 34.

obligation to sleep in the *Sukkah* arises (for there must be “you shall reside as you dwell”). And therefore there is no contradiction from the fact that, for a minority — the exceptional individuals³⁴ who *do* sense the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*³⁵ — the inner content of the *Sukkah* causes them to become exempt (**halachically**, as explained above in sec. 2) from sleeping in the *Sukkah*.^{36]}

5.

But Sleep Is Part of the Mitzvah

In truth, however, one cannot resolve the practice of our Rebbeim in this way. For according to the **Alter Rebbe's** halachic ruling in his *Shulchan Aruch*, sleep too is part of the **mitzvah of dwelling** in the *Sukkah*. As he states explicitly:³⁷

“How is the mitzvah of dwelling in the *Sukkah* fulfilled? One should eat, drink, **sleep**, stroll, and dwell in the *Sukkah*.”

[His source is the *Rama*.³⁸ On the wording of the *Mechaber* (which is the wording of the Rambam), “How is the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* fulfilled? One should eat, drink, and dwell in the *Sukkah*,” the *Rama* adds the words “(one should eat, drink,) **sleep**, and stroll.” That is, the *Rama* holds that the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* includes sleeping (and strolling) in the *Sukkah* as well.³⁹

And seemingly this is also the view of the *Tur*, who adds⁴⁰ (to the wording of the *Gemara* cited above) “one eats, drinks, and **sleeps**.” This accords with the view of Rashi⁴¹ (brought in *Tzafnas Panei'ach* there⁴²), that “the essence of dwelling in the *Sukkah* is eating, drinking, and sleeping.”]

34) See above, note 13, that in earlier generations exceptional individuals were able to sleep even amid the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*. See there.

35) And similarly with regard to other people, in the situation explained below, sec. 8.

36) A parallel: *oneg Shabbos* is fulfilled with food, meat, and wine, since “most people take pleasure in eating meat” (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 242:2) — yet one for whom eating is harmful “need not eat at all... so that he not be distressed on *Shabbos*” (ibid. 288:2). See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 84ff., on our Rebbeim's custom not to eat bread at the third meal.

37) 639:4.

38) 639:1.

39) The Rebbe notes that the *Rama's* addition is understood on this basis — though the *Mechaber* himself continues (§2; and the Rambam 6:6) “they eat, drink, and sleep in the *Sukkah* all seven days” — because the *Beis Yosef* holds (like the Rambam) that sleep is not part of the *mitzvah* but only the negation of a prohibition, whereas the *Rama* and the Alter Rebbe hold it is part of the *mitzvah*. See *Biurei HaGra* there.

40) In Section 639.

41) *Sukkah* 20b [so it should read in *Tzafnas Panei'ach* there], s.v. *Lo yatza*. And similarly there, 7a, s.v. *Mai lav*; Rashi cited in the following note.

42) And he references *Eruvin* (44a), “so that he may eat, drink, and sleep.” See Rashi there: the essence of

And along these same lines we find that the Alter Rebbe rules⁴³ that the blessing over the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* applies to **sleeping** in the *Sukkah* as well (only that there is no separate blessing over sleeping, because one discharges this with the blessing recited over eating in the *Sukkah*⁴⁴).

And so the difficulty remains: Since, according to the Alter Rebbe's approach, "the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*" includes sleeping in the *Sukkah* as well — how can one say that the inner content of the *mitzvah* **contradicts** the idea of sleep?

6.

The Water-Drawing That Knew No Sleep

We will understand this in light of what the Sages relate⁴⁵ regarding the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah*:

"When we rejoiced with the joy of the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah*... we did not taste the taste of sleep — for we would doze **on one another's shoulders**."

From this it is understood that during the days of the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah* the *Tanna'im* did not sleep in the *Sukkah*⁴⁶ — for the meaning of "they would doze on one another's shoulders" is that the dozing took place not in the *Sukkah*,⁴⁷ but in the place where they all celebrated the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah* together (the *azarah*).

On this, one can seemingly question: Even though dozing outside the *Sukkah* was certainly permitted by the Torah⁴⁸ — it is nonetheless clear that the *Tanna'im* strove to fulfill the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* all seven days⁴⁹ ("you shall dwell in huts for

the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* is in these three things. And similarly in Rashi there, beginning of 44b.

43) 639:12 (from *Tosafos* and *Rosh* cited in note 30).

44) And "if he does not wish to eat in this *Sukkah*" — he must recite a blessing over sleeping and strolling as well (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* there 639:15).

45) *Sukkah* 53a (and in the *Tosefta* and *Yerushalmi* cited in note 15, "on one another's shoulders" is not brought).

46) The Rebbe notes that even if the decree against musical instruments on *Shabbos/Yom Tov* dates to the Second Temple (see *Likkutei Torah*, *Rosh Hashanah* 57c), so that beforehand the *Simchas Beis HaSho'eivah* was held all seven days — it emerges that in the First Temple they did not sleep in the

Sukkah at all. See *Sukkah* 50a in the Mishnah and onward, and the commentators.

47) And so it is stated explicitly in *Responsa Tashbetz*, vol. 1, §100 (end of s.v. *Tzarich lehakdim*).

48) The Rebbe notes that dozing outside the *Sukkah* was permitted either because casual sleep is only rabbinically forbidden, or, more simply, because one engaged in a *mitzvah* is exempt from the *Sukkah* (*Sukkah* 25a; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 640:18).

49) The Rebbe notes that although eating in the *Sukkah* is obligatory only the first night ("from then onward it is optional" — *Sukkah* 27a), one still fulfills a *mitzvah* and blesses when eating in it on the other days, and must make "his *Sukkah* his fixed dwelling" (see *Chiddushei Chasam Sofer* to *Orach Chaim* end of 639). Obviously the *Tanna'im* strove to fulfill the *mitzvah* all seven days — unlike *Sukkah*

seven days”⁵⁰) with the **utmost** *hiddur* (enhancement), and, in the words of the Mishnah,⁵¹ “**all seven** days a person makes his **Sukkah his fixed dwelling**.”

And since “the essence of dwelling in the *Sukkah* is eating, drinking, and **sleeping**” (as above) — how does it come about that they would, from the outset, set the order of the celebration of the festival of *Sukkos* in such a way (that they would doze off outside the *Sukkah*,⁵² and consequently) that the completeness of “his *Sukkah* as a fixed dwelling” is lacking (since they did not have “the essence of dwelling in the *Sukkah* (which includes) (eating, drinking, and) sleeping”)?

From this itself it is compelling to conclude: even when one sleeps (by permission of the Torah) outside the *Sukkah*, there can be accomplished — according to **all opinions** [including the ruling of the Alter Rebbe cited above, that the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* includes sleeping in the *Sukkah*] — the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* to sit in a *Sukkah* in its **completeness** (i.e., even satisfying the *hiddur* with which the **Tanna'im** fulfilled a *mitzvah*).

7.

Eating Anchors the Dwelling

The explanation for this is:

The fact that the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* includes sleep does not mean that the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* imposes a **separate** obligation to sleep in the *Sukkah* — for were that so, it would emerge that whenever a person does not sleep in the *Sukkah* (for whatever reason, even because the **Torah exempts** him from sleeping in it), he would in practice⁵³ be lacking in the proper fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*.

Rather, it is merely one detail of the **general** obligation of “you shall reside as you dwell.” The Torah's obligation is “you shall **dwell** in huts for seven days” — there must be residence (and remaining⁵⁴) in the *Sukkah*, “his *Sukkah* as a **fixed** dwelling.” But since the fixedness of a person's residence is bound up with the place where he conducts his primary

47a, where the reason was “their animals graze there.”

50) *Emor* 23:42.

51) *Sukkah* 28b.

52) The Rebbe notes that even if there were *Sukkos* adjacent to the Temple Mount the Sages' wording “from there... to the study hall... to eating and drinking” (note 15) implies their eating was near the Temple Mount (see *Shirei Korban* to *Yerushalmi*

Sukkah 5:2) — and they certainly ate in the *Sukkah* (sec. 7). It makes no sense that the order was set so that all the great ones of Israel failed to fulfill the *mitzvah* all seven days.

53) Along the lines of the Sages' teaching (*Yerushalmi Kiddushin* 3:2) that one prevented by circumstance is not treated as though he acted.

54) See *Rosh*, *Sukkah* ch. 4, §3; *Tosafos Yom Tov*, *Sukkah* ch. 2, mishnah 4, end.

activities — eating, drinking, and sleeping — the obligation of “you shall dwell in huts” therefore includes (primarily) these three.

And since the **primary** fixedness of a person's residence is determined not by his “place of sleeping” but specifically by his place of **eating** (as the *Tzafnas Panei'ach* proves from the laws of *Eiruv*),⁵⁵ it follows that among these three (eating, drinking, and sleeping), the **essential** aspect of dwelling in the *Sukkah* is connected specifically with eating.⁵⁶ As the Alter Rebbe states explicitly,⁵⁷ “**eating** is the essence of the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*” (even though the *mitzvah* includes sleeping in the *Sukkah* as well, as above). For this reason one recites the blessing specifically over eating in the *Sukkah*, and the blessing over eating exempts drinking, sleeping, and strolling, because they are “drawn after and **subordinate** to eating.”⁵⁸

And therefore it was not necessary for the *Tanna'im* to go and “doze” in a *Sukkah* in order to have “his *Sukkah* as a **fixed** dwelling” — because they accomplished that **completely** through their **eating** in the *Sukkah* (as the *Gemara* relates their daily order, “...from there to eating and drinking...,”⁵⁹ and their “eating and drinking” was certainly in the *Sukkah*⁶⁰), since eating accomplishes the (essential) “residence” — the remaining and **fixedness** — in the *Sukkah*. Thus they **lacked nothing** at all in the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of “you shall dwell in huts.”

On this basis our case, too, is understood: although the inner content of the festival of *Sukkos* prevents the matter of sleep in the *Sukkah* — **nothing at all** is thereby lacking in the **halachic** fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah*.

[And the fact that, halachically, sleeping in the *Sukkah* is a detail of the *mitzvah* of dwelling in the *Sukkah* — that is because “the Torah speaks with regard to the majority,” and most people do not sense the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*, as above, end of sec. 4.]

55) The *Tzafnas Panei'ach* rules like the view in *Eiruv* that a person's essential dwelling is his place of bread, not his place of sleeping.

56) *Rosh, Sukkah* there (in the name of Rabbeinu Tam): the fixedness a person makes in the *Sukkah* is eating — hence one blesses over eating. Note that the first night's obligation is eating, not sleeping (*Ritva* to *Sukkah* 27a).

57) 639:12 (source: *Rosh, Sukkah* there).

58) The *Tzafnas Panei'ach*'s point that eating “makes the *Sukkah* into a *Sukkah*” fits the Alter Rebbe's view too — except that the Alter Rebbe holds sleep to be part of the *mitzvah*. This is not the place to elaborate.

59) The places cited in note 15.

60) They were certainly stringent not to eat or drink anything outside the *Sukkah* (see sources in note 1).

8.

Why Even We Do Not Sleep in the Sukkah

This explanation, however, accounts only for the Mittlerer Rebbe's expression and the conduct of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the exceptional individuals who sense the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*.

Yet we see in the conduct of very many people that even those **not** yet at the level of (being able to) sense the “*or makif*” of the *Sukkah* are not accustomed to make a point of sleeping in the *Sukkah* (even though, when it comes to eating and drinking, they are stringent even where there is no obligation).

The explanation for this is straightforward:

Chassidim, being **bound** to our Rebbeim, study their Torah (in order to carry it out) and walk in their ways — so “the custom of their teachers is in their hands.”

(This is along the lines of the *Gemara*'s account⁶¹ that “Rav Acha... would **seek** out a *hadas* of two and one” — taking a myrtle branch that had only “two leaves on one stem and one leaf below, so that it rises and rides upon the two”⁶² — in accordance with the view of Rav Kahana; for even though Rav Kahana himself says only “**even** two and one” — meaning that “three in one cluster is **all the more** valid”⁶³ — nonetheless, “since it issued from the mouth of Rav Kahana,” it was, for his disciple, a matter of **hiddur** to do specifically as he did.)

Indeed there is a further point in our case: If one were not to conduct oneself **in practice** like the conduct of one's teachers, wherever possible, it would cause such a person **distress** (and one who is distressed is exempt from the *Sukkah*) {thus, he is actually exempt to begin with}.⁶⁴

And even more so in our case: since the Mittlerer Rebbe **demand**ed this matter of Chassidim (as the Frierdiker Rebbe relates in the *sichah*),⁶⁵ one who is connected to our Rebbeim cannot sleep peacefully in the *Sukkah*. For although the “**light**” of the *Sukkah* does not disturb his sleep {for he cannot perceive it} — he is nonetheless distressed by the very fact that he has not reached the rung at which the light of the *Sukkah* shines for him so revealed that he cannot sleep in the *Sukkah*.

61) *Sukkah* 32b.

62) Rashi there, s.v. *Trei*.

63) Rashi there, s.v. *Mehader*.

64) See above, note *20.

65) Cited above, note 8.

And even one whom it does not trouble that he does not sense the light of the *Sukkah* — he is nonetheless distressed that **this expression of the Mittlerer Rebbe** does not take hold of him.

Because of this, **sleeping** in the *Sukkah*⁶⁶ causes him distress — how can it be that he is able to sleep in the *Sukkah* without distress? — and {he can then rely on the exemption that} one who is distressed is exempt from the *Sukkah*.

[And although **this** distress does not come from the *Sukkah* itself but from an incidental matter (from **his** lowly state, that a word of the Mittlerer Rebbe does not trouble him) — the law that one who is distressed is exempt from the *Sukkah* applies not only when the distress comes from the *Sukkah* itself, but also⁶⁷ when the cause of the distress (in dwelling in the *Sukkah*) is something external,⁶⁸ such as cold, rain, and the like. So too in our case: since in practice his sleeping in the *Sukkah* is bound up with distress (on account of the “cold,” {i.e. insensitivity,} of not being in accord with the will of the Mittlerer Rebbe), he is {therefore} exempt from the *Sukkah*.]

* * *

May it be His will that we merit, very soon indeed, the *Sukkah* made of the skin of the *Livyasan*,⁶⁹ and, in a general sense, {may we merit the time when G-d will} “spread over us the *Sukkah* of Your peace” — the revelation of the Time to Come (a foretaste of which shines in the encompassing light of the *Sukkah*)⁷⁰ — with the true and complete Redemption through our righteous *Moshiach*, speedily in our days.

*From Sichos delivered on the second day of Chol HaMo'ed Sukkos,
Simchas Torah, and Shabbos Bereishis 5730 (1969).*

66) That is, beyond his general distress at his lowly state [that he does not sense the *Sukkah*'s encompassing light, or that the Mittlerer Rebbe's saying does not affect him] — a distress that entering the house would not relieve (see *Rama, Orach Chaim* 640:4; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* there §5) — the very act of sleeping in the *Sukkah* causes him a further distress: how could he sleep in the *Sukkah* untroubled?

67) The Rebbe notes a distinction in the *Tzafnas Panei'ach* (*Mahadura Tinyana* 25c): when the distress comes from the *s'chach* and walls, it is no *Sukkah* at all; when from another cause, one is merely exempt. See there.

68) Rashi *Sukkah* 26a, s.v. *Mitzta'er*, “that the *Sukkah* distresses him,” refers to dwelling in the *Sukkah* — the distress need not stem from the

Sukkah's substance itself (see *Tzafnas Panei'ach* there); as he writes earlier (25b, s.v. *Tza'ara d'meimeila*), “the *Sukkah* distresses him, such as heat, cold, or a foul odor in the covering” — heat and cold are not from the *Sukkah* itself but only cause the dwelling to be with distress.

69) *Bava Basra* 75a; *Yalkut Shimoni, Emor* remez 653).

70) The Rebbe notes that the *Sukkah* parallels Noach's Ark, in which there was a foretaste of the peace of the Time to Come. See *Torah Or/Sefer HaMaamarim Es'haleich-Liozna*, p. 57 (with glosses, *Or HaTorah, Noach* 669bff.; 638bff.; *Hemshech VeKacha* 5637, chs. 95–96); d.h. *BaSukkos Teishvu* 5736, ch. 4 (*Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, vol. 1, pp. 177–178).