

Good Yom Tov, Good Shabbos Everyone. Sukkos is a time of great simcha - happiness. The main source of this happiness is our faith in Hahsem. As we sit in the fragile Sukkos, we are reminded that our true security in life comes from the Master of the Universe who runs the world.

An epidemic raged through The Town of Nadvorna as Sukkos was approaching, and the physicians warned the townsfolk to take all possible hygienic precautions for fear of contagion. The local judge, an unusually evil man, was told that Rabbi Mordechai of Nadvorna had just built a sukkah. He at once dispatched a messenger with a court order to demolish it forthwith, because it supposedly contravened the municipal health regulations. The Nadvorner Rebbe ignored the message.

Within minutes a squad of police arrived at his doorstep to warn him of the consequences of his defiance. He replied: "I built my sukkah in order that it should stand, not in order that it should be demolished." This time the judge sent the tzaddik a summons.

When this too was ignored, the judge decided to descend on his victim himself. He ordered the tzaddik in harsh terms to dismantle the sukkah immediately, and warned him of the severe punishment which any further disobedience would earn him. These threats and warnings did not shake the tzaddik's equanimity in the slightest. He simply answered coolly in the same words that he had told the policemen - that he had built his sukkah in order that it should stand, not in order that it should be demolished.

The judge was incensed and was about to pout more vituperation upon the tzaddik, whereupon the latter remarked, "I would like you to know that Rebbe Meir'l of Premishlan was my great-uncle."

The judge flew into a rage: "Who cares who your great-uncle was? Just demolish that thing, and that's all!" The Nadvorner now repeated what he had just told the judge, then asked him calmly to wait a moment; he wanted to tell him an interesting story.

The judge, taken by surprise, signified his assent with a brief nod, and R. Mordechai began:

"Once there lived a priest who had ten sons, all of them as robust and strong as cedars. He owned a beautiful big park, full of trees that delighted G-d and man alike. One day he decided that he would add grace to this grove by planting a little flower garden next to it. So he uprooted some of his trees, and in their place he planted fragrant flowers. But no sooner had he finished this work than his sons fell ill, one after the other. First the oldest weakened and died, then the second, and so on, until the very youngest fell ill. The priest was at his wit's end. He summoned the most expert doctors, and even consulted sorcerers, but to no avail.

At this point several people advised him to make the journey to visit Rebbe Meir of Premishlan. Who knows? Perhaps salvation might come through him, for he was reputed to be a holy man. By now there was no alternative open to him, and he was desperately eager to save the life of his last surviving son.

So with a heavy heart he traveled to Premishlan. "Arriving there he told the holy man of all the trials that had befallen him - and now even his last son was mortally ill, and no physician could cure him. Heaven alone could help him now.

"'You had a beautiful garden full of goodly trees,' Reb Meir told him, 'but because you wanted a flower garden as well, you chopped down the trees of G-d. And that is why He has now chopped down your trees, 'for man is a tree of the field.'" But since you have already come here, and your time has not yet run out completely, I promise you now that your youngest son will be helped from Above, and will soon be cured.'

The holy man then prayed that the Almighty heal the priest's son, in order that His Name be sanctified wherever people would hear of his story. This prayer was accepted, and the son grew to manhood...

"I want you to know," Rebbe Mordecha'le concluded his story to the judge, "that you are the son of that very same priest... So, tell me, now, is this the way you repay the kindness that my great-uncle showed you by saving your life?"

The judge fell at his feet, and wept. "True, true, I know it all!" he sobbed. "Forgive me, Rabbi, for what I've done to you. You can build even ten of those things - but only promise that you will forgive me!" The promise was given, the chastened judge went his way, and the Rebbe of Nadvorna enjoyed his sukkah in peace. Note: Years Later, Rebbe Mordechai Of Nadvorna died on The First Day Of Sukkos. **Good Yom Tov, Good Shabbos Everyone.**