

Kol Nidre Message

Once upon a time there was an angel who disobeyed G-d. When the angel was summoned to appear before the throne of Judgment to answer for his misdeeds, he pleaded for mercy and begged G-d to forgive him. G-d looked down upon the angel kindly and said, "I shall not punish you, but you must atone for your wrongdoing. I will give you a task to perform. Go down to earth and bring me the most precious thing in the world".

The angel sped down to earth, happy to have a chance to win G-d's forgiveness. Over many countries he roamed and for many years looking for the most precious thing in the world. One day he came upon a great battle field. He saw a young man who had fought bravely in the defense of his country and was now dying. The angel caught up the last drop of blood from the soldier's wound and hastened back to heaven with it.

"This is indeed a precious thing that you have brought back said G-d. A soldier who gives his life for his country is very dear to me. But, return and search once more".

So the angle returned to earth and continued his quest. For many more years he roamed through cities, woods and plains. Then one day, he saw a nurse in a great hospital. She was dying of a dread disease. She had nursed others through this disease, working so hard that she had worn down her own strength and so caught the illness herself. She lay pale and gasping upon her cot. As she was dying, the angel caught up her last breath and hastened to heaven.

"Surely G-d', said the angel, "the last breath of this unselfish nurse is the most precious thing in the world. "It is a very precious thing that you have brought to me," G-d replied. "One who gives up life for others is indeed worthy in my sight. But, return and search again".

Then the angel returned to earth. Far and wide he roamed, and for many years. One night, he saw a villainous looking man on horseback, riding through a dark forest. The man was armed with a sword and a spear. The angel guessed on what the wicked errand this man was bound. He was going to avenge himself on the keeper of the forest, who would not permit him to poach on the king's game. The man came to the small hut where the forester and his family lived. Light streamed from the window. Getting down from his horse, the villain peered through the window. He saw the wife of the forester putting her little son to bed. He heard her teaching him how to say his evening prayers. Something within his hard heart seemed to melt. Did the scene bring back memories of his own faraway childhood and his own mother, who had also taught him to pray? Tears filled the man's eyes and he turned away from his evil deed and repented of his ways. The angel caught up one of his tears and flew back to heaven with it.

"This said G-d, "is the most precious thing in the world, for it is the tear of a repentant sinner. And repentance opens the gates of heaven.

L'Shanah Tova