

GOD SQUAD



Rabbi Marc Gellman &
Msgr. Thomas Hartman

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For Agnostic Son, a Deity Dialogue

Q. My 15-year-old son, Sean, is super bright and has just told me he's been wrestling with the existence of God. He said he is only an "agnostic" — not an "atheist" — because he isn't convinced there is no God.

I am very upset because he's always been close to God, and, in fact, it was his deep faith through the years that inspired me to get closer to God. What should I say to him?

— Beth, Atlanta

A. First of all, be glad that Sean is only an agnostic and not yet an atheist. Saying he is an agnostic and is not sure about God seems to us to be an important but veiled request for spiritual guidance.

Open up a dialogue about God with Sean. Support and value his doubts and share with him moments in your life when you may have questioned God's existence. Then ask if he would be willing to discuss this matter with your clergyman or clergywoman, perhaps with you present.

Here are our best proofs for God. Use them as conversation starters, but understand that your son's God talk is really just a cover for other questions about the meaning of life and his place in the world.

We think God is real, because if there was no God there would be nothing to start the world.

If there is no God, there would be no reason to do good. If there is no God, there would be no difference between people and animals. If there is no God, there would be no souls and no chance that souls could live on after death.

Mostly, if there is no God, there is no reason to get out of bed in the morning and no reason to believe that life has an edge over death, hope an edge over despair and love an edge over hate.