

*On Yom Kippur we come closer to God than we do the rest of the year. And, so at this time, there are a few things I d like to say to God.*

Dear God,

We are called to stand before you this day to bear our souls and to apologize for our wrongdoings throughout the year. I pray that we have done this to the best of our ability, and that you accept our prayers. But, while we're talking, I have a few questions for you.

Why is it that we must apologize for what we've done, and yet we don't hear anything from you? Isn't there a lot that you should be sorry for? I realize it may be blasphemous to assume that you should apologize, but I guess I'm feeling a bit weakened by this fast, and I'm bearing my soul.

God, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? Why do you let this happen? Do you do it on purpose? How can you take someone's life away before they've even experienced it? How can the world be filled with such evil? Where are you, God, when we need your help? Where are you when terrible things happen?

We respectfully await your reply.

Love,  
Your Children

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*This is the response that I believe God would send:*

My dear Children,

You ask me very reasonable and difficult questions to answer. I will attempt to give you some answers that you will understand, but first, I want to share a poem with you:

You asked for strength, and so I gave you difficulties to make you strong.  
You asked for wisdom, and so I gave you problems to solve.  
You asked for prosperity, and so I gave you brains and brawn to work.  
You asked for courage, and so I gave you dangers to overcome.  
You asked for love, and so I gave you the opportunity to help those in need.  
I have answered your prayers.

On this day of Atonement, I would like to say something to you. I want to apologize for the pain and suffering in the world. I do not wish you to feel pain and suffering, for it pains me too, but I recognize the growth that can come from such challenges. And while this is too difficult to understand when you are lost in a sea of grief and sadness, you must trust in me that, over time, the pain will subside. Your life will continue and you will continue to grow.

I'm sorry for the pain you face when someone you love dies. Whether you believe that I took them from you intentionally or that I allowed their deaths to occur, I cannot expect you to understand my reasons.

This world that I have created and given you is a very complex place. There is no way for me to explain, nor for you to understand, the course of events which take place and the full consequences of those events. And for this, I am truly sorry. I have created a system where death is a part of life. Without death, there could be no life. Without the ending of one generation and the beginning of another, there could be no growth.

I wish that when someone you love dies that I could personally comfort you and reassure you, although, if you are open, you **can** feel my presence giving you strength and courage. It is that sense of something larger than yourself, something connecting all living creatures. I also believe strongly in the support of your community, in which you can find comfort and the reassurance that I do love life.

The commandments that I have given you, my mitzvot, are one way I try to show you how much I love you and value life. They are a guide to living your life, and through them you can achieve happiness and meaning. Although, my commandments are not to be followed if they lead to death. For I am a god that values life.

On this day of atonement, I ask you to fast, not to punish you or torture you, but to give you clarity and to strip away the layers of defense that you have constructed, that prevent you from truly understanding yourself and me. However, if you are unable to fast because it would put your health at risk, I ask that you do not, for I am a god that loves life, not death.

However, on this day, I ask that you face your own death, and recognize the strength and inspiration that can come from such an act. Today your actions mimic those of the dead. You do not eat, for they do not eat. And the weakness that parallels your hunger, gives you a taste of the days when you will no longer have the strength to stand. I ask you to wear white, to imagine yourself cloaked in a burial shroud, while at the same time picturing yourself draped in the angelic robe that awaits you in the world to come.

And, it is the taste of death that you experience today, that can empower you to face life with renewed vigor and clarity, so that you can charge forward and begin this new year with a craving for life.

One of the greatest gifts in life I have given you which I hope you will come to appreciate is the gift of "free will." With it, you become who you are, you make your own choices in life, and you learn from them. Without it, you would simply carry on your lives with no greater purpose. I understand that the gift of free will comes with the risk that your fellow humans will use this gift for evil. I am sorry for this potentially harmful result, but I believe that you will ultimately be thankful for your freedom. I know that you wish I would come down and stop every act of free will that becomes an act of evil or pain. But if I were to do this, I would be taking away the very gift I have given you.

It may help you to know that life extends beyond this limited existence you see on Earth. You see, I have formed each of you in my Image. Your very essence is eternal in nature and continues to exist past the end of your physical body. There is no way for me to explain what becomes of you following your passing from this world, but perhaps a metaphor can help you to understand:

Imagine a large body of water so vast that no end can be seen. This is one way to understand me. When I create you and put you on this Earth, I take a drop of this water and place it within you. This is one way to understand your soul. When your earthly container has reached its end, that drop of eternal water returns to its source. It returns to me. Death as you understand it, is not an end. It is a transition. The hardest thing for me is that you cannot see this as long as you remain on earth.

I know that you may never forgive me for some of the things I have done or for what you believe to be my actions or inactions. I understand, and it is okay if you cannot forgive me. For I hope someday you may see that the frailty of life is what makes it beautiful. Knowing that some day you will no longer be on earth, can fill your days with meaning.

I love you with an unending love,  
Your Eternal Parent