

Have you ever asked yourself this question: "What am I here for? Why do I exist? If you haven't, you're probably the only one in the last millennia and millennia and millennia of history that haven't. It breaks down into two sub-parts: "Why am I alive?" and "does my life matter?" The first is a question of existence: "What is the point of existence?" The second is a question of significance. "What is the significance of my life? Is there a point to it? Do I just: eat, drink, take up space, breathe oxygen, use energy and die, leaving the world worse than when I came? Is there something higher than that?" And finally, "Is there intent? Is there a purpose for my life which I may not at present be aware of that I need to find and fulfill so I can live life on a much higher, more meaningful and satisfactory level than I am now?"

Let's not be like the fellow that said, "I hope life is not a joke because I don't get it"; or the fellow who wondered, "My life has a great cast; I just don't know what the plot is." We're going to save you from these quandaries today. We're going to save you from having to ask those questions. If you don't include God in the picture, you've got three options: first is the mystical approach. Like "The Matrix", you tap into the impersonal force within you and you become "God." You look within. This is the "Star Wars" theme. The only problem with that is that you didn't make you. You didn't create you. Something else created you. You had nothing to do with your creation, the place of your birth, the circumstances of your birth, your talents and your particular attributes; so how are you going to figure out by looking within what your purpose is? We agree that looking within has a certain value. If you look within to see the Super Soul, the Supreme Super Soul that also coexists within your heart and accompanies the soul, and we'll talk about that a little bit further on, but just by looking within and seeing yourself, you're not going to come up with any answers. It just doesn't work.

Imagine a picture of a cell phone. Now if you were living in a jungle setting and someone presented you a cell phone, would you be able to divine what the purpose of that cell phone is? Would

you be able to figure it out? You could listen to it, you could look at it all you wanted, you could bite it, you could taste it, and you could smell it. You could ask the village shaman, you could consult the spirits of your departed ancestors, you could look at the stars, you could look at your crystal ball; you could use every mystical approach that you wanted but you're still not going to know what the purpose of that cell phone is because you didn't make it. So we can't find out on our own what our purpose is because we didn't make ourselves. Even though the scientists are boasting, "We've created life," life is not created in a laboratory. You may have created the conditions under which life comes, but you did not create life. As far as sophisticated organisms, the scientists haven't even yet reproduced a grain of rice in their laboratories, what to speak of created life. So on our own, this just doesn't work. The mystical approach just doesn't work.

The second option is the self-help approach. There are all kinds of self-help books out there from Stephen Covey to Dale Carnegie. There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands of self-help books. They point you in the way to success. Some of the terminology in those books will be: consider your dreams, be disciplined, set some goals, figure out what you're good at, aim high, go for it, break your bad habits, believe that you can achieve, never give up - and they work. There's no question about it - self-help books work to bring you success. The only problem is there's a difference between being successful in life and having a purpose in life. There are lots and lots of successful people out there who have unimaginable wealth and fame and prestige and awards, and in their quiet moments they'll admit, "Why am I unsatisfied? Why do I want more?" They're living the good life, they've got the goods, but they're unsatisfied. They're craving more and more and more and more.

The third option is the philosophical approach. You take some philosophy courses and get your pipe and your cardigan out, sit by the fire and say, "I wonder what it's all about."

The first approach is to look within. The second approach is to create your own purpose and just make it up as you go along. The third one is to speculate upon it, to guess about it. There was a philosophy professor in Canada named Hugh Morehead who had, for twenty-five years, a habit of writing famous people and asking them one question. He asked them, "What is your purpose in life?", and he put all the answers in a book. Fortunately that book is out of print now - and I say fortunately because if you were to read that book it would be a real downer. You would feel like slitting your wrists, because successful people: architects, scientists, authors; they don't have a clue.

Carl Gustav Jung, the great psychologist, a world famous psychologist - I think he even won a Nobel Prize, he says, "I'm not sure whether life has a meaning or not but it appears to." Well that's really helpful, thank you Carl. Joseph Heller, another famous author says, "I have no answer to the meaning of life and I no longer want to search for any." In the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, the quandary of the intellectual search for the absolute truth, the problems of speculating on the meaning of life, are underlined:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent both
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd:
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

Into this Universe, the Why not knowing
Nor whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it's, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate;
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Master-knot , not of Human Fate.

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see:
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There was--and then no more of Thee and Me.

The philosophical approach: if you want to know what the purpose of a machine is, you can take the approach that people have done for thousands and thousands of years. You ask the owner. You ask the person who created it or you read the manual. Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, “It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father¹.” Why do we exist? Because God created us! Why did God create us? To love us: that He may love us and that we may love Him.

1 [BG 14.4]

Those of you who have children – you love them, that's why you created them. That's why Alan created Brandon. He loves him. Sandya and Alanath - they have Tyler and they have a daughter. Why did they create them? They created them so they could love them. So God created us so that He could love us. That's why we exist; that's the main reason that we exist, so that we could be loved by God.

Now here's a book in our tradition called the "Nectar of Devotion." It has forty-five chapters, and I just wrote down some of the chapter headings. If you doubt me that the purpose of life is to be loved by God, let me just read you some of these chapter headings of the Nectar of Devotion. It's a manual. It's a Vaishnava, a Hare Krishna manual on what we're going to be doing in the spiritual world, and what devotees who are already in the spiritual world are doing. I just want you to know how many times the word love comes up here: Chapter 16: Varieties of Ecstatic Love for Krishna, Chapter 17: Ecstatic Love, Chapter 18: Characteristics of One in Ecstatic Love, Chapter 19: Devotional Service in Love of God, Chapter 26 - these are whole chapters, mind you. These are whole chapters: Stimulation for Ecstatic Love, Chapter 28: Symptoms for Ecstatic Love, Chapter 29: Expressions of Love for Krishna, Chapter 33: Conjugal Affection, Chapter 35: Neutral Love of God, Chapter 36: Transcendental Affection, Chapter 41: Fraternal Devotion, Chapter 42: Fraternal Loving Affairs, And Chapter 44: Conjugal Devotional Service in Conjugal Love.

Love is what it's all about. We were created to be loved by God. You can call Him God or Allah or whatever. Personally, I don't get much out of calling Him God because it's just an impersonal term. You know how if you don't know someone's name you kind of fake it? Remember the old Tallulah Bankhead movies? "Oh darling, nice to see you darling," you know? If you don't know what their name is you just call them darling, but after you've said darling about six or seven times, the person and everyone around you is getting the idea that you really don't know their name, do you? You're just faking it, right? So the problem that I have with people saying "God, God, God, God" is -

you don't really know who it is, do you? You don't really know His name. So we won't say God because we *do* know His name. He has many names: Allah, Govinda, and so on and so forth, and people in different cultures who want a personal relationship address Him by His name and not just the generic title of God.

Now there's two ways that you relate to God and they're not mutually exclusive. One is called *vrtya* and the other is called *parivar*. *Ekala isvara krsna ara sarva vrtya*². Notice that word *vrtya*. So there's *vrtya*, *ekala isvara Krishna* – “there's one Supreme controller and His name is Krishna”, *ara sarva vrtya* – “everybody else is His servant.”

People sometimes ask us, "Well, what about the female characteristics. Is God male or female?" In the sense that God, or Krishna, controls everything, He's male. He's the Supreme controller. In the sense that all of us: men, women, and demigods are controlled by God - we're all female. So there's the male aspect and the female aspect. He's the male controller and we're female. He's one and we are many. That's *vrtya*.

Now the other aspect is called *parivar* and that means family – its service - service and love, but in a family context. I have a picture here of Lord Shiva and his family. Lord Shiva is the central figure. On the right is Durga, or Parvati, and on her lap is Skanda, Kartikeya. Opposite is Ganeshji. Nandi the bull is lying at their feet and the peacock carrier of Skanda is there also; and probably the little mouse that carries Ganesh is somewhere around there too. So this is a really nice, cozy domestic scene. Now Lord Shiva is married to Parvati who is Durga, and who is Durga? Durga is the sister of Krishna. You remember when Kamsa came to kill the seventh child of Devaki? It was a girl and he went to bash her head on the floor. She flew up and said, "I am Durga and Krishna who will kill you has already been born somewhere else." So that's Durga, or Subhadra, Krishna's sister. Lord Shiva is

2 [Caitanya-caritamṛta]

married to Krishna's sister, so Lord Shiva is Krishna's brother-in-law. Kartikeya and Ganesh are the nephews. It really is family.

When we're talking about God's family, we don't have to be vague or sentimental or wish-washy. These are actually family members of the Lord, and we're all related in a family connection. So serving family members in love and devotion is the most natural thing in the world.

A question of significance: "Does my life matter? Was I just brought up in this world to just take up space and die?" We need meaning in our life because meaning is what keeps us going. Meaning is what gets us out of bed in the morning. Without meaning, life is not worth living. There was a Hungarian camp in World War II that the Nazi's, in order to demean the Jewish prisoners during the Holocaust, had them manually process sewage from the camp. They had a building and it was more or less manually processed. One day the allies came along and they bombed the building, so there weren't even the rudiments of a sewage plant. What the Nazi's did was, they had them transfer brick by brick the rubble of the sewage plant from one corner of the concentration camp to the other. It took them all day to do that, just move the rubble. Then the next morning, move it back. After a month, prisoners were just going nuts. They were trying to get themselves killed. Their life had no meaning, and therefore it wasn't worth living. They would talk back to the guards. They would infuriate the guards, hoping that the guards would blow them away. If that didn't work, they would take a rush at the wires and start crawling over the wires hoping to get shot, because death was preferable to a life without meaning.

You may wonder: if there's *one* God, and He's created me for enjoyment, and I'm a part and parcel of the Lord, and I'm going to spend all eternity being loved and loving God, is there going to be meaning in that, because there's only one God and there's so many of us. Some religious traditions try

to bolster up our significance. They try to reinforce our perceived sense of meaning by trying to make us seem more unique than we actually are. For instance, I've heard it said by one Christian preacher:

The reason you matter is because God created the whole universe, He created the whole galaxy just so he could create this planet. He created this planet just so He could create the human race. He created the human race just so He could create you; just so that He could love you. Also, of all the various species that are on this planet, you're different. You're the only one that has a soul. Animals don't have a soul. So you're special. This is the only planet in the universe that has life. God created the whole universe just so this one planet could have life as we know it, and He created all the species just so we could prey upon and misuse all the others, because they don't have a soul.

This is an artificial attempt to make you feel significance by artificially making you seem unique. But at the same time, it minimizes the greatness of God. You're trying to bolster up your ego, but you're actually offending God. Because the fact is: every single planet and every one of countless universes is teeming with life. Some of the life is even more advanced than ours, some less advanced. We're not the only human species in the universe, and we're not the only species with a soul. Every living being is animated by spirit. If you say animals have no soul, you've just contradicted yourself. The word animal from Latin means "soul." If it moves, if it breathes, if it has sensation, there is inside of that, a spirit soul, and that spirit soul is as significant to God as we are. He does not give us permission to misuse other living beings on the weak and false platform that we have a spirit and they don't. So all of a sudden we're not quite so unique.

There are millions and billions and billions of uncountable living beings on billions and billions of planets and not only humans have souls but ALL species of life have souls. So does that make you less significant? No, Not at all! Do you know why? God can have a personal relationship with each and every one of you. That's God. He doesn't create a finite limited number of only human beings because He's afraid of extending Himself too far. That's not God, I'm sorry. You might wonder, "Well if I go to the spiritual world, maybe I'll have to wait in line. There's one God and there must be millions of people, so there must be a really long line. How many millions of years will I have to wait in line before I get up to God and shake His hand and He says "Next!, You know, I've got a lot of people to shake hands with today."

Another way of limiting God is called imaginative iconography such as what Michelangelo used on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He thought, "Well, God is older than everyone else," So Michelangelo imagined that he's got to have gray hair and have a beard, and He can't even stand up; he's pictured as lying down. Now that presents another problem. That's kind of a deterrent also, if you believe that - if you swallow that about God. Why would anyone want to go to the spiritual world where God is an old man? "Shhh, don't make any noise; God is taking His afternoon nap. Be quiet....Oh no, you can't cook samosas, you can't deep fry samosas and pakoras in ghee! You can't make those gulab jamuns - God can't eat those because it would raise His blood pressure!"

Look at this picture here. When Krishna was on the planet 5000 years ago, just to counteract this tendency to over-exaggerate our position and under-exaggerate God's position, Krishna took 16,000 wives. There was nothing carnal, nothing mundane about it. A King named Vanasura had captured 16,000 girls and in Vedic times, even if it was against your will, if a man held you - even captive in his house - your chastity was in question and no other man would marry you even though it wasn't your fault. That was okay with them because they wanted Krishna as their husband anyway.

They had heard about Krishna's glories and His pastimes and they all wanted Krishna as their husband anyway so they went and they said, "We have no social position My Lord, and they bowed down and said, "Will you accept us as your surrendered souls?" So Krishna said, "Well how can I do that? I'm just one. You're 16,000." He's just joking. "We know you're joking. You're unlimited. You can expand -you're in each one of our hearts already. Why you can't come out and stand before us?" Krishna says, "Alright, you got me, you got me," and He appeared as the husband of each one of those 16,000 queens. Now yogis in India, some yogis, they can expand themselves up to seven times. There are seven sacred rivers in India: Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri. So if you take bath in one of those rivers, it purifies you of your sins. So yogis can expand themselves seven times so that every morning they can take bath in all seven of the sacred rivers in India, thousands of miles apart. But each expansion is doing the same thing as every other expansion. They're like television images. But Krishna expanded Himself 16,000 times and He lived with each queen and in each household, in each expansion, He was doing something different. In one household He was talking with His queen. In another house He was worshiping Himself at the altar, and in another household He was showering....and each queen thought, "Krishna is with me only." Some even got a little taken with themselves; some of them were thinking, "Krishna is my hen pecked husband", and not one of them had an inkling that Krishna was also with the other 16,000.

So don't worry about there being a "no vacancy" sign or a "busy" sign at the spiritual world, because God is of such a nature that He can expand Himself and have a personal relationship with each and every one of unlimited living beings. We already experience that. You don't need me to write you a certificate. Practically speaking, Bhagavad-gita, 13th chapter Krishna says "I am also accompanying the living being. I am also in the hearts of all the living beings - ksetra-jnam capi mam viddhi³. He's

3 [BG 13.3]

already described the nature of the soul. He's already described *our* nature: that we're spiritual, we're each one of us eternal, and we're full of knowledge and full of bliss. We are created from God and like sparks from a fire; we have the same qualities as the fire. The fire has light and heat; the sparks from the fire have light and heat. God is eternal, we're also eternal. God is blissful, we're also blissful. God is full of knowledge; we're also full of knowledge. Each one of us shares the qualities of God in that we're eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. This is called sat-chit-ananda. However, we're not God. God is a spirit, we're a spirit, but we're not God, because our consciousness is limited to this body. Each one of you as an individual spirit soul knows the pains and pleasures in each one of your bodies, but you do not know the pains and pleasures in others bodies, nor do they know the pains and pleasures in your body. So although we're eternal, our consciousness is limited. Krishna says, "ksetra-jnam capi mam viddhi". In this body there is another consciousness which is Supreme and which knows the pains and pleasures in each and every body. That is God. You could call Him the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit or Paramatma, as we say in Vedic culture - the Supreme soul, but He knows your business. He knows the llama's business, He knows the parrot's business, and He knows the ant's business because He is already expanded in the hearts of every single living being. So does your life have significance? Yes, yes it has significance, because God - His nature is such that if you render pure devotional service to Him, if you learn to love God, His capacity to love you is so much greater. In fact, He already loves you. He loves you as much today as He did yesterday, as He will tomorrow. There's nothing you can do that will ever disappoint Him. He's right there accompanying you in your heart of hearts. He knows what you're going to do before you do it.

You can't get home and say, "God I gotta tell ya. I did something really stupid today," and God say, "You've got to be kidding me. I don't know how I missed that one." No! He already knew that you were going to do something stupid and he still loves you. His love for you is as great today as it

ever was and it will be as great in the future as it ever will. So does your life have meaning?

Absolutely! Not because of what we are, but because of God's capacity to love each and every one of us. If you have five dollars and I have a million dollars, and I ask you to surrender that five dollars in exchange for the million dollars how much will you hesitate? Not much, because within the million dollars so many five dollar bills are contained. So God is asking you, "Learn to love me and in return, the floodgates of my love for you are open. They're already evidenced by scripture, by the fact that He accompanies us in our hearts no matter where we go or how fallen we become, God is always there as our friend.

So there are three levels that we can live our life on: survival, success or significance. The survival level is where ninety percent of the people in the world are. I've traveled all over the world and I guarantee you there isn't anyone in America that isn't worried about survival. If you're living on the survival level, you don't know where your next meal is going to come from, the clothes you own are on your back and you probably won't have a roof over your head the next time it rains. Most people in the world are on the survival level, but nobody in America is struggling with these questions of survival, not even the poorest person. Emotional starvation, emotional survival: you work at a job that dissatisfies you and you can't wait to get out and party on the weekend; you're always dreaming of being somewhere else and doing something else; there are people that are emotionally starving but not physically starving. If you've got some change in your pocket or if you've got some change in a dish somewhere in a dresser in your bedroom, you're already in the top ten percent of wealthy people in the world.

Everybody in America lives on the success level compared to ninety percent of the people in different parts of the world. Success level means you may not have a lot of money but you can pick and choose: "Should I go eat here? Should I go eat here? Should I go there? Which movie do I want

to see? Do I want to see this movie or do I want to see that movie?" Success level means you actually have options, but success and significance are not the same. As I said before, there are plenty of successful people just who say, "Why do I feel like a fake? Why do I want more? Why am I not satisfied?" The answer to that question is, because you are eternal. God is eternal, you are eternal, and you're not going to be satisfied with any temporary relationship in this material world; you're not going to be satisfied with material success. You need to turn your success into significance.

We were made for significance. We don't need more money, we need more meaning. We don't need more possessions, we need more purpose. We don't need more success and status, we need more significance. How do we do that, how does significance come? It comes by knowing Krishna who made you, knowing the purposes that you were put here for, and living out the five purposes and will be discussed in this writing. How do we do that? We need somehow or other to get into small groups and live it, talk about it, study it, discuss it and take it to a more mature level. This is part of what we were talking about, living a purposeful life. Living a purposeful life is not going to be achieved just by sitting and learning a little here, a little there; forgetting ninety-five percent of what you heard by Tuesday morning. Living a purposeful life will mean actually stepping up; getting some training as a lay person, as a lay leader; starting or joining a small group. It is the basis on which people's lives will be transformed and Krishna's knowledge will become available to people all over.

As I mentioned, God is aware of every detail of every living being's life because He is in the heart of all living beings. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a blade of grass moves but that God is not right there witnessing and permitting as the overseer and permitter. That attests to our significance; that our life matters. He also made an ideal plan for us. He made an ideal plan for us to live our life to the fullest, to get the greatest amount of satisfaction, bliss, and holiness out of it. Now I venture to say, not many of us are in harmony with God's plan for us. Therefore, He's more or less inactive in our

lives. He's waiting for us to inquire. He's waiting for us to search out. He's waiting for us to get removed enough from our own agenda and our own purposes to find out what the real purpose is. At such time, He'll become very, very active. In the meantime, He's just witnessing as the overseer and permitter.

An example is given of two birds in a tree. One bird is the soul and the other bird is the Super Soul; God. So the soul is sort of enjoying the fruits of the tree. Some of them are bitter and some of them are sweet. In this way we go through life, getting the karmic reactions from our deeds in our past lives and accruing new karmic reactions for our next life. The other bird is just observing, giving free reign to our misused free will, but at such time as the enjoying bird wakes up and tries to search for their purpose in life, then the other bird, the Paramatma, becomes very active, because He's more anxious for us to fulfill our purpose; He's more anxious for us to do what we need to do here and come back to Him than we are ourselves. All we need to do is indicate some willingness to do that.

What is the intent, what is the reason that we're put here? What is our purpose in life? The answer is that we're eternal. We're eternal, and this life, this present life is a blip. It's a blip. If you stretch a tape from here to Istanbul - if you stretch a tape halfway around the world thirteen and a half thousand miles, this life would be a little blip - a little blip compared to eternity. That's what this life is all about. And so what is the purpose of this life? What is the significance of this life? It is rehearsal, it is practice, and it is the warm-up before the competition begins. It is the first lap around the track before the race actually starts.

Whatever we do in this life, however we conform, or whatever percentage we conform to God's purpose in this life, we're qualifying for eternal life after this life. Here's a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson called Crossing the Bar:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell;
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

One time Narada Muni was traveling - He's a transcendental liberated space man and while traveling, he met several people. Sainly people, they always try to benedict conditioned souls. So he met a butcher and he didn't know what to say. He didn't know what to benedict him because for every day that he killed a cow, he was going to take birth as a cow himself to find out what it was like on the other end of the fork. But, as soon as he would die, then he was going to reap all that karma. So Narada Muni didn't know whether to wish him live or die. He didn't know which was better for him.

Then he came to a king. Kings are hedonistic; wine, women and so on and so forth. People say, "Long live the king!" So that's what Narada Muni benedicted the king with. He said, "May you live long with your wine and women, because after you die, then you're going to become a dog in your next life." So long live the king. He came to someone who was practicing bhakti yoga; who was serving the Lord in His deity form in the temple: cleaning the temple, cooking for the Lord, discussing, sharing the knowledge of the Bhagavad-gita, singing the glories of the Lord. Narada Muni wanted to benedict that person but he said, "I can't. I can't. You're already so blessed. Right now you're serving the Lord, and after death you're going to continue serving the Lord, so there's nothing I can do for you. You're already totally blessed. Live or die it doesn't matter, you're blessed. Here you're serving the Lord, and when you cross the bar you'll also be serving the Lord." That's what the purpose of our life is for.

Here's a little bit of geography. On the cover of the Srimad Bhagavatam, you'd see the spiritual world on your right hand side, a big orb surrounded by the petals of a lotus flower. That is called Goloka Vrindavan, and that is the transcendental abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Krishna. It sits at the topmost part of the spiritual world. The spiritual world is self-effulgent. There's no need of sunlight or moonlight or electricity because its Spirit is self-effulgent. There are also blue regal Narayan planets where the Lord exists as His four armed Vishnu form. Now in the bottom right hand corner is a little dark cloud in the corner of the spiritual sky. Maha Vishnu is laying down and from his navel the lotus flower and Lord Brahma, the Creator of the universe comes. Where we are is called the Maha-tattva. You could see the conglomerate elements of earth, air, fire and water, enclosed and floating on a spiritual ocean called the Garbhodaka Ocean. So how, after this short life in the dark world, where the illumination is artificially provided by the sun and the moon - how we comport ourselves for the next twenty or thirty years will determine whether after this life we go to the eternal kingdom of God. Is it worth it? Is it worth it study lectures, and to study the Bhagavad-gita, and to

think about getting in a small group? Is it worth it to spend twenty or twenty-five hours to know how we're going to spend the rest of all of eternity? Is it worth it? Anyone have an MBA can tell us whether this is a good business opportunity? You can't stay in this world. Whatever utopian efforts that you exert yourself to in this world, they're going to be doomed because this world decays. The spiritual world stays as it is. This is the material world, and matter goes through six phases. Even the universe itself goes through six phases: creation, growth, duration, reproduction, dwindling and vanishing. Everything in the world goes through those six phases, but the spiritual world is eternal; it always stays as it is. Time is absent in its three phases of past, present and future. This material body - so many years ago I had a different body, so many years from now I'll have a different body. My cells are always changing so I'm always gauging things in terms of past, present and future.

We just had a memorial service for Ishwara, a little boy that died. He died at nine years old of a brain tumor. It took about three months for the disease to work its course, and he died. If you're in material consciousness you're thinking - "Oh, two months ago Ishwara was alive but sick. Five months ago Ishwara seemed to be a healthy, nine year old boy." And now, if you're in the material consciousness, you think, "He's gone." But that's only in respect to the body. Ishwara, the soul within that body was always here.

There was never a time you did not exist nor in the future will you ever cease to be⁴. He is eternal. And that little boy was so Krishna Conscious. He was hearing the tapes of Krishna, the chanting, the kirtan – constantly; a nine year old boy. When his parents planned him - we talk about planned parenthood - when his parents wanted to have their third son, they were living in the northeast and they had become devotees. They wanted to attract a special soul. The way they did that, they chanted,

4 [BG 2.12]

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna...

- Fifty rosaries on the day of conception. Most ladies know the day she's most likely to conceive; so on that day they chanted fifty rounds. They invested about four hours in intensely absorbing themselves in the sound of Krishna's holy name,

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

, and Ishwara was the result. He was the soul that was attracted to that consciousness in that womb, and he insisted on hearing the names of Krishna. Two weeks ago, he told his parents "I want to go to the temple." I was aghast. I was shocked. He was absolutely almost just skin and bones. You could tell he only had a week or so to live, but he wanted to come to the temple and it was a huge effort - the wheelchair, the I.V's and all this stuff....and they spent about three hours here and he went up and saw the Deities, he took charnamrita and so on and so forth.

So the body, everything material, will go the way of matter, but the soul is eternal. That's what we're here for. That's our purpose; to awaken our love of God and to act according to that purpose. Now, the biggest atheist in the 20th century Bertrand Russell said, "Unless you assume the existence of a God, nothing else has any meaning," and I agree with him. It's true. Unless there is a God, nothing else has any meaning because our existence is just random, it's just chemicals.

You know how they talk about business men stabbing each other in the back? Well why not? Why should it be a crime to literally stab a rival? Why should it be a crime? It's just chemicals. There's no crime happening here - the guy's sticking a sword through the chest of his business rival. Chemicals are sticking a chemical through some other chemicals and chemicals are being rearranged. You know the chemical value, the chemical elements of this body, if you put them on the market on a

pharmaceutical auction; they're worth about \$19. So at worst, at worst it should just be a misdemeanor. Murder should just be a misdemeanor. You stole twenty bucks. If you shoplift twenty bucks at K-Mart they won't even prosecute you. It has to be over \$100. It probably wouldn't even be a misdemeanor. If there is no God, what is the meaning and where is the crime? What should the consequence be? God creates everything with a purpose. He doesn't create anything without a purpose. Even the ants, the woodpeckers, the llama, the deer, even the bacteria have a purpose. I read a story one time of some people that were bothered by a woodpecker outside their door. It was a wonderful, magnificent oak tree and the woodpecker was, "Peck peck peck peck peck" creating holes in the oak tree. They were worried that the woodpecker was weakening the oak tree because of the holes it was putting in the oak tree. They made some arrangement to get rid of the woodpecker - they used chili pepper or something and sure enough, the woodpecker disappeared. Three years later during a windstorm, that oak tree cracked in half and died and they realized that far from weakening the oak tree, the woodpecker was going in and taking out the termites. Everything has a purpose. What to speak of human beings with intelligence - with the ability to ask, "Who am I? Where have I come from? Why do I exist? What is the significance and what is the intent of my life?" If you don't know the purpose of your life, you will abuse it. If you don't know what money is for, you'll abuse it. If you think a hundred dollar bill is to light your cigar, you'll misuse it. If you think life is simply to make money, you'll misuse it. If you think life is for fame, you'll misuse it or you'll allow other people to abuse and misuse you. This is what it comes to if there's no God.

Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita, "Whoever knows Me as the Supreme personality of Godhead without doubting is to be understood as a knower of everything and he therefore engages himself in full devotional service⁵." God is that person whom knowing, everything becomes known

⁵ [BG 15.19]

and nothing is unknown. I'll repeat that: God is that person; Krishna is that person whom knowing, everything becomes known and nothing is unknown. If I know God, does that mean I can guess the number of fingers you have behind your back? Is that what it means? No. It means, what you need to get out of this material world and live and be loved and love God in eternity, He will give that to you. And especially if you want to preach that, if you want to share that in a small group or as a book distributor, you will get all facility.

Prabhupada had translated Bhagavad-gita and he came to America trying to get it published. It was the job of Brahmananda, one of his early disciples to get the Gita published because they had no money and no resources. They sent the man to so many publishing companies that all came back refused, including Collier Macmillan. It all came back refused. Brahmananda was beginning to think, "This Gita isn't really publishable because it's all Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna - it's for devotees. It doesn't have any commercial value." He was thinking "We'll never get it published," and he had pretty much given up on it. Every publisher in New York had refused. The devotees made a record, Meditations, and one day, they got a check from Macmillan for one copy of the Meditations album with Prabhupada's singing on it. Brahmananda went in and said, "Prabhupada! Macmillan ordered a Meditations album!", and they'd already sent a check in advance. So Prabhupada was there and he said, "Take the record and tell them we have Gita and ask them to publish it. Say, 'We have a Gita and we'd like you to publish it.'" Brahmananda said, "Yeah, but, we already asked them and they said No." Prabhupada said, "Tell them we have the Gita translated and we want them to publish them." Brahmananda said, "Well do you want me to bring them the manuscript and show it to them and everything?" "Tell them we have the Gita and we'd like them to publish it." So Brahmananda says, "Oy vey!" (He was Jewish) "Oy vey, what am I going to do." So he went down there and he went into the accounting office and he delivered the record. It's just an accounting office, you know, number

crunchers, nobody significant or anything, and he delivered the record, and he was just about to tell this guy when the door opened and the assistant manager of publishing walked in, Richard Wade.

Brahmananda turned to him and said, "We have the Gita, we'd like you to publish it." He said, "Great." He said, "Great, we're doing a world religion series right now. I've got the Qur'an, I've got the Bible, I've got the Torah - I need a Gita. Bring it to me, we'll publish it." Brahmananda danced through the streets, you know, touchdown - celebration all the way home, "Prabhupada! Macmillan said they will publish the Gita!" Prabhupada said, "Hmm...good." He already knew. All Brahmananda needed to do was just to believe that if you know Krishna, everything becomes known and nothing remains unknown, especially doors opening when you want to spread it, when you want to share it with others.

One person said - and you may think, "Well, I've already lived so much of my life, I've already got so many entanglements and so on and so forth; it's too late." No, it's never too late. Prabhupada didn't even come to America until he was seventy years old. He had to raise his family; he had to make sure they were well situated. He didn't want to in the name of spirituality abandon his family, but he did everything in its own proper time. So if you're wrestling with the question of your existence, if you're searching for meaning in your life, and significance, and if you're not sure what your purpose is, then you haven't found it yet. But your time can come. Your time can come. You simply need to ask the Lord. Our method of asking, of opening up and inviting the Lord to reveal His purposes to us, is saying His holy names:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Do you want to know why you're having difficulty in your relationships? Get to know Krishna. Do you want to know why you're spending more than you're making and you're getting in debt? Get to

know Krishna. Do you want to know the purpose for your life? Get to know Krishna. Do you want to know why you're stressed out all the time? Get to know Krishna. Do you want to know the answers to your questions that you can't find the answers to yourself? Get to know Krishna. Whether you're a seeker, coming here for the first time; whether you're a stumbler - one of those people that's sort of in and out, off and on with churches, and so on and so forth (we have a lot of them in Utah county - we call them the stumblers); or whether you're serious, it doesn't make any difference how old you are, or how young you are, or what your background is, you're here. This is something that will transform lives. It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from, the opportunities are available.

So we'll conclude with this prayer: Lord, because you made me, you must have a purpose for my life. I admit that I focus on *my* plans and purposes and not yours. But starting today, I want to know and I want to fulfill your purposes for me and why you put me on this planet. I commit myself to learning about it. Thank you that you made me to love me. Thank You that you've cared for me even when I didn't know it. Thank you that you made me eternal. I want to live a life filled with meaning and I want to start getting to know you better. As best as I can understand it, I ask you, Lord Krishna, to make yourself real to me. Come into my life and help me to understand your purposes.

Om Tat Sat⁶

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

⁶ A mantra in Sanskrit which translates literally "All that is the Truth", essentially meaning the Supreme and Absolute Truth.