What is the Meaning of Life?
Program 24
Empirical and Intuitive Evidence for God's Existence
by Ernest O'Neill

What is the meaning of life? Most of us have great difficulty seeing any meaning in it these days. And yet we have been sharing over these past weeks that if you stand back and look at the world itself, there is a lot of meaning and order and purpose built into it.

You've only to look at the world of nature to see how there is an extraordinary balance in the insect world. There is an amazing order in the effect that the moon has on the tides. There is a great balance in the very circulation of water that comes down in rain and evaporates from the ocean. There are all kinds of phenomena in our world that point to order and purpose and design in its origin.

It's just that we have been used to taking the theory of evolution as an explanation of the origin of the world and thinking that that, of course, abolished any need to explain creation. We can see as we've quoted often from "The Origin of Species", Darwin's own words that indicate that evolution, of course, is only a suggestion of the way things might have developed after the original seed was created by some Power or some Creature.

What we have been sharing is that when you look at the order and design of the world and when you look at the personableness of you and me, and then when you look at the fact that we all have this inner gyro compass of conscience that makes us want to act higher than is natural for us to act, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that it is very reasonable as Einstein says, to believe that there is an intelligent personal mind behind the universe.

This is partly the explanation of the fact that belief that there is a god of some kind, who is the Creator of the universe and the Creator of you and me, is an intuitive sense and has been an intuitive sense in mankind from the earliest centuries. In other words, it doesn't matter which tribe you go to, it doesn't matter how primitive the people might be, it doesn't matter whether it's the Iron Age or the Stone Age or what age. It doesn't matter how many thousands of years you go back or how many millions of years you think you may be going back, wherever you go you find that man has had always some sense that there is a Supreme Being somewhere behind the universe.

Always he has had that explanation in his mind. That the only way to justify the order and design that he sees in the sky above him is that some Being greater than himself put those stars in that sky. So whatever civilization you examine you will find that there is in it a belief in a Supreme Being. There will often be symbols of the Supreme Being that those people will worship.

Behind all the idols and behind all the images they have this sense that there must be a God somewhere. Indeed, wherever you go, in your study of anthropology, you'll find that there is also a sense that they ought to be better than they are. They ought in some way to please that God and so they'll always have some kind of sacrificial system that deals somehow with the guilt they feel because they are not living as they know from their inner conscience that they should live.

So this circumstantial evidence is just some of the explicit reason why all of us sense intuitively that there must be a God somewhere. Our forefathers have always had that sense and conviction right from the earliest years. Here is the statement of a young man in 4000 B.C.: "A man must truly proclaim the greatness of his God. A young man must wholeheartedly obey

the command of his God." That's nothing to do with Christianity, nothing to do with religion as we know it, it's simply a very early example of our human race proclaiming his inner conviction that there is a God and a man must recognize that. In other words, there has never been a time when men and women have not felt intuitively that there is a God.

There is a strong tendency in us today to declare that that comes simply from our psychological sense of need of a Father figure; our psychological sense of dependence. But rather than using the explanation or rather than using the description as a reason for not believing in a God, it is just as reasonable to use that psychological explanation as a clear indication that we were made by a God and that we have a sense of psychological dependence because in reality we are psychologically dependent.

We have a sense and a need for some father figure because in fact there is some father figure. That's why we feel it. In other words, there is something perverse in our modern tendency to believe the opposite of what is common sensical, or to begin to suspect something simply because it does fit the case exactly. It is no proof that there is not a God, that we happen to sense that there must be a God somewhere. Indeed we do not use that kind of logic in our ordinary everyday life.

We actually pay great attention to our intuition and to our intuitive sense. Whether we are salesmen or whether we are investors in the stock market or whether we are teachers or whether we are bosses or whether we are parents, we pay great attention to our intuitive sense. We trust it greatly. We often talk about a woman's intuition as something that we men wish we had to the same degree.

Many of us who involve ourselves in gambling depend utterly on our intuitive sense. So, it's very reasonable to take note of that intuitive conviction that men have had down through the centuries, that there must be a God. There is no civilization, however primitive, however uneducated, that does not have a sense that there must be a God. It's just logical.

Of course, you must admit it yourself. When you look at this world and you look at the sky above and the sun and the wind and you find out more and more about the vastness of space, and you discover that the stars that we apparently see are often only the light that is still on its way towards us from stars that have died, hundreds and thousands and maybe millions of years ago. Such explanations, such realities, convince us all the more that there must be some Power that is much greater than ourselves, much more intelligent than ourselves, and much more competent than ourselves that is responsible for all that we see around us.

In other words, it just makes good sense as we look at the world around us to say, "there just has to be a God, there must be a God." We find ourselves in the same place as people like Mao and other Communists who have in their explanations to other leaders of state, used very easily and naturally the term 'god'. It is a term that occurs to mankind almost automatically as the explanation of this incredible complex universe that we see around us.