

[This is the conclusion to my autobiography]

After watching Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* and having finally discovered what it means to be an atheist, which I have been all my life without fully understanding, I too believe that life is all about having a sense of humour and not taking ourselves too seriously.

If we are looking for THE MEANING OF LIFE in the universe, we are looking for a finite answer to the mystery of our existence and we are in search of beginnings and endings. But if we are looking for the meaning of life as it applies to human existence on earth, that is easy to answer; it is what each individual makes of his/her life, it is activity. Some of us accept that life means conforming to principles laid down in social institutions— religious, economic, political and social – and we act accordingly. Others challenge these norms and values, repudiate them and find meaning in conflict. Yet others accept that living in society, which provides security and opportunity, requires a degree of adherence to convention and they find meaning in various forms of creative activity that take them beyond perfunctory rules and behaviours.

We give meaning to life through our actions. Everything we do from the smallest to the most colossal and famous of our activities are forms of creativity and they represent the meanings we give to our lives. We create through our interactions with one another and with our environment. We create ourselves and our conditions for living. Unfortunately, some of us tend to become dogmatic about our creations. So we have many structures – philosophical, political, religious, social, economic – in which we imprison ourselves and like prisoners, being in confinement, we abuse one another because of different customs and beliefs.

For me the meaning of life has everything to do with understanding that we create our realities and we do so in our response or reaction to society's demand for conformity. We either simply adopt norms and values or we question them. Those who question, come to understand the ways in which we are conditioned and how various forms of socialization inform our functioning. When we begin to understand the operating systems with which we have been programmed, we are able to evaluate them and make choices about their relevance in our lives. Then we can expand them to live our lives more freely. Those who are exceptional are able to step outside them to discover new and better ways of living for all.

**BEING**

the human creature,

incarcerated

in chaotic collusion

of light and dark

dichotomised

its strength called God,

Satan, its weakness,

interrogates

the accident of existence

and contrives

meaning for life

**07 August 2014:** Being in my 79th year, a pensioner, no longer considered a useful component of the system, I am often assaulted with the phrase, "Keeping busy, I see". Because I no longer am on an assembly line, society regards my existence as meaningless. As I live alone, an old spinster, I appear to be doubly useless. I have a few friends who may visit once or twice a year, but in general I am alone.

So what is the meaning of my life? It is truly an existential question. We think of a meaningful life as a life which serves others. According to Hinduism, as I am in the final stage of life, it is the time to devote myself to discovering, guess what? – the Meaning of Life. The religion recommends that I isolate myself from the world, cut off all human connection, and find a way to become reunited with the source of life – the creative energy of the universe. But I cannot do that; despite the fact that I have no intimate connection with anyone, I cannot simply go off and live as a hermit in a forest. I believe in ubuntu, that I am a person through other people, that my life has meaning here and now and not in the hereafter.

So being alone, what is the meaning of my life?

The way I see it, I may live on my own but I am not alone. I live in society and I enjoy the benefits of society. I have a pension, that allows me to survive without any frills, but it gives me the illusion of independence. So sitting alone in my house, how do I give meaning to my life. As I have already indicated, I am not alone. I enjoy the company of very evolved people every day of my life. Books, DVDs, the Internet connect me with great minds of this world and I spend my time learning from them. I was given a website by Francois Smit, the best present I have ever received in my life; it allows me to connect with all kinds of people everywhere. I share my ideas with them – some endorse what I write; others vilify me. Feedback, positive and negative, means connection and as I believe that it is through connection, ubuntu, that life has meaning, I know my life has meaning.

The meaning of life is not a one size fits all kind of thing; each of us has to find life's meaning in our own particular way. I write and in writing (and reading) I explore what life means to me.

And like everyone else, I do keep busy, i.e. I do amuse myself – I read, watch DVDs, knit, bake, exercise, do jigsaw and sudoku puzzles and listen to music.

Not being part of any system, I am free.