Money and Human Consciousness

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Money, one of the great inventions of the 5th root race, only attained its present role in society after a long evolution in human consciousness. Now, it is hard to imagine a society without it. Money fuels world commerce, serves as an instrument of government policy, and facilitates scientific, educational, cultural, and humanitarian activities. It is a foundation of our civilization, as well as being a measure and product of that civilization.

Money is energy—one of the most important forms of energy in today's world—but its form has changed in response to human need. And as individual and group consciousness has expanded, important changes have occurred in the ways we create, manipulate, and use this energy. Through money we can express a range of impulses, from recklessness to selfish prudence to universal love. Money has highly esoteric significance, and understanding this significance will help us manage it more appropriately and make us more comfortable when called upon to give an accounting of our stewardship.

Much has been written about the "right use of money" and our responsibilities for the "redirection of money to Hierarchical purpose." Economic inequity, inner-city poverty, world hunger, the plight of refugees, sick children in developing countries, and a host of other concerns demand a reassignment of individual and group priorities. This essay echoes the same concerns, but it steps back to gain a broader perspective by examining the relationship between money and human consciousness. Perhaps, as a result, we can gain insights into what constitutes "right use" and how it can be accomplished.

Money and Society

As early as 800 BC the Lydians minted coins from electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver; Aristotle discussed the problem of money; and banking institutions were established in Florence and Venice in the 14th century.[1] But currency was in short supply in the ancient world and played a minor economic and societal role. Only privileged individuals and groups needed significant amounts of money, and most of what was available resided in their hands. Even among the privileged, wealth was more often reckoned in land, buildings, decorative metals, jewels, livestock, slaves, and in some instances wives. The words "capital" and "chattel" are both derived from the Latin word for cattle. Most economic transactions involved barter or theft. In feudal societies workers received food, goods, lodging, and security in exchange for their labor. As recently as the early 20th century, employees of some large industrial organizations were paid in tokens, or "scrip," exchangeable for merchandise in company stores.

One of the earliest uses of money, dating back more than 2,000 years, was the collection of taxes. Emperors, monarchs, and princes needed money to fight wars, pay tribute to more powerful enemies, support extravagant lifestyles, and outplace female offspring. In 1501 Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain paid a dowry of 200,000 crowns upon the marriage of their daughter, Catherine of Aragon, to Prince Arthur of England. When Arthur died, Catherine was quickly betrothed to the future Henry VIII, so that the dowry would not have to be repaid. Rulers' taxing authority was sometimes restricted, and for this and other reasons tax revenues often fell short of needs. Additional money was raised through sale of public land or grant of favors to wealthy subjects. When all else failed, rulers borrowed money, setting a precedent that republics and other modern forms of government eagerly followed.

Money was sometimes needed to buy territory. Charles IV purchased the electorate of Brandenburg in 1373, and 250 years later Dutch settler Peter Minuit reportedly paid 60 guilders to buy Manhattan Island from Native Americans. And, in the famous Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the United States acquired 828,000 square miles (2,144,520 square km) of land from France for $11,250,000. Whatever their fairness,[2] territorial purchases represented an advance in civilized behavior, contrasting with the more traditional method of expanding national boundaries by military conquest.

During much of the 20th century military spending dominated governments' use of money. However, as the century progressed, priorities shifted to social programs, including social security, healthcare, and education. Thus began a large-scale redirection of money to what we now understand as Hierarchical purpose. By that time, universal taxation and deficit spending had become established as instruments of public policy.

The demand for money by large numbers of people was stimulated by inter-city and international trade in the late Middle Ages, and further stimulated by the growth of large industrial organizations in the 19th and 20th centuries. Expanding trade and more complex transactions also required new forms of money, as coin-based currencies proved inadequate. From the 13th century onward, promissory notes and trade credit emerged, alleviating the inconvenience and risk of transporting coins or bullion over long distances. At the end of a trade fair, accounts would be settled at clearing houses which, over the course of time, developed into banks.[3]

Paper money emerged as a way to increase the money supply and facilitate the settlement of large debts. Initially, paper money was convertible into silver or gold coins, or occasionally into bullion. But convertibility provided an imperfect guarantee of value. First, the prices of gold and silver changed over time, both in absolute terms and relative to each other. Second, coins were frequently debased, either by issuing authorities who reduced the precious-metal content or by dishonest users who filed off or "clipped" part of the metal. Third, convertibility was sometimes restricted or denied altogether at times of national emergency, like the French Revolution and the American Civil War. Strict silver and gold standards ended before World War I, and by the 1970s most nations had abandoned any form of metal convertibility. The value of today's paper money depends on many factors, but scarcely at all on bullion prices. Even modern coins are just "token money" whose face value exceeds the cost of the metal from which they are made.

Without the support of convertibility, currencies are at the mercy of public confidence, and depreciation in value manifests as inflation in the prices of goods and services. There have been numerous instances of currency collapse, accompanied by hyperinflation—one of the most notorious occurring in Germany in 1923. Some currencies are weaker than others, and, if allowed to do so, people exchange money as a hedge against further depreciation. For example, many Russian people immediately exchange ruble earnings into U.S. dollars for safekeeping. However, for the most part, the stability of governmental and financial institutions has allowed paper currency, bank deposits, and most recently electronic money to gain broad acceptance.

Money enables business enterprises to buy and sell products and to pay wages, salaries, dividends, and taxes. They also require financing to support ongoing operations and future growth. Financing comes from accumulated earnings, borrowing, new stock offerings, or in some cases government grants. Money facilitates the transfer of resources to distant locations—a characteristic that has reached a high degree of efficiency in the electronic age. Multinational commerce and investment, on the present scale, would be impossible without highly liquid forms of money.

Money not only fuels business activity, it helps measure it. An organization's plans are embodied to a large extent in the budget, its financial blueprint for the future. The budget expresses the corporate will in financial terms, providing a set of targets to which managers and others commit themselves. Subsequently, money serves to benchmark actual performance, either internally or in the eyes of investors, labor unions, and government regulatory bodies. Money cannot describe everything that an organization does, and the value created by organizations is not just economic value. But ease of data collection and interpretation has made financial information the principal barometer of business success.

The widespread availability of money gave individuals and groups new choices, responsibilities, and flexibility to order their lives. It increased the variety of possible transactions and created the ability to store economic value. People could choose to forego immediate consumption in order to build future security through savings and investments. Money has changed the lives of ordinary people as much as it changed governments and corporations. People who do not have bank accounts are marginalized by society, and credit ratings have replaced family names as determinants of respectability.

Some people distrust banks and stuff money in mattresses or hoard precious metals. Others distrust business in general and anyone associated with it. But the success of an economy requires trust in financial institutions and mutual trust among parties to transactions. In a recent speech, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan observed that:

> Trust is at the root of any economic system based on mutually beneficial exchange. In virtually all transactions, we rely on the word of those with whom we do business... If a significant number of businesspeople violated the trust upon which our interactions are based, our court system and our economy would be swamped into immobility.[4]

As they learn to manage money, people also learn to manage risk. We cannot protect ourselves completely from loss, but we may be able to reduce losses to a tolerable level. However, risk tolerance varies from one individual to another, like hair color or personality ray, and people approach risk in different ways. Most of us prefer to deposit money in a bank rather than a mattress, and we buy various kinds of insurance. Many of us waste money at least to some degree. Some people are drawn to gaming, speculation, and other high-risk ventures—legal or illegal, and with their own or others' money—in the hope of large, quick returns. Others fall victim to scams.

Multiple skills are needed to manage money and risk successfully. These skills include discrimination, detachment, self-discipline, patience, common sense, and the ability to balance conflicting objectives. Not everyone succeeds, and burgeoning consumer debt and bankruptcy filings are familiar symbols of failure. But the overwhelming majority of people, in both rich and poor nations, do succeed and in the process become stronger, wiser, and more responsible.

Esoteric Aspects of Money

Money, in an age of paper currency, bank deposits, and electronic commerce, is an ephemeral commodity, lying beyond the physical senses. Philosopher John Stuart Mill called money an "insignificant thing" whose only advantage is that it can do "quickly and commodiously, what would be done, though less quickly and commodiously, without it."[5] Be that as it may, money is the lifeforce, the *prana*, the *chi*, of economic systems. Money energy resides on the etheric level, probably the 3rd or 4th etheric subplane, close to its neighbors: data, electricity and magnetism. Interestingly, modern technology has brought about an increasing, and significant, convergence of monetary, informational, and electromagnetic energies. Both money and data also have strong mental associations, and the increasing use of money by governments, business enterprises, and ordinary people ran parallel to the shift toward a mental focus.

Money has great psychological significance. A nation's currency, with its distinctive symbols and images, can be unifying or divisive. It serves as a comforting reminder of a common heritage and group identity, a tribal totem that unites its members and sets them apart from outsiders. When a currency is imposed on a conquered nation or separatist group, it becomes a symbol of oppression. Particular ranges of earnings or wealth also establish group self-awareness, and both the “haves” and the “have-nots” are constantly reminded of their relative status.

In free-market economies, currency values and the corresponding prices of goods and services are determined in the markeplace. The success of free markets rests on the assumption that buyers and sellers bargain, without external interference, to establish fair prices. Both parties are driven by the profit motive, which might suggest that greed and self-interest would result in widespread abuse and exploitation. However, as Adam Smith observed more than 200 years ago, the outcome can be socially beneficial:

> Every individual endeavors to employ his capital so that its produce may be of greatest value. He generally neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. He intends only his own security, only his own gain. And he is in this led by an Invisible Hand… By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society.[6]

Governments, from time to time, have attempted to improve on the effectiveness of markets, and Communist central planners tried to do away with them altogether. But in virtually every case these attempts failed and have been abandoned. Government regulation, in most countries, is now restricted to breaking up monopolies, providing a “level playing field,” and ensuring the availability of reliable information. Markets are not perfect, as occasional violent price swings demonstrate, but they are the best means of allocating resources that we have yet devised. How the profit motive translates, in the aggregate, into an effective, reliable social instrument—what underlies the Invisible Hand—largely remains a mystery, attesting to the wonder of human consciousness or perhaps, as Adam Smith seemed to suggest, a higher power.

The Tibetan compared the discipline of capitalists and financiers with that of esoteric students, noting in particular their one-pointedness and powers of concentration. He went on to comment that “their evolution parallels that of the mystic and the occultist.”[7] Indeed, financiers’ manipulation of money resembles the manipulation of elementals in a magic ritual. Finance academics scornfully compare technical analysts, who try to predict future stock prices on the basis of historical data, to astrologers. And stock-market day-traders and commodity traders, anxiously watching their computer screens for movements in prices, remind us of medieval alchemists watching their crucibles. The hope is that the speculators will realize—as the adepts always did—that what happens in the crucible is at most a symbol of the transmutation that takes place, or should take place, within the self.

The 7th ray is the ray of manipulation of energy, imposing new forms to constrain or organize energy, or transforming it from one form to another. Human activities are correlated with the rays. Just as politics is assigned to Ray 1 and education to Ray 2, economics and finance are assigned to Ray 7. The increasing role played by money in our society parallels the influx of the 7th ray into planetary manifestation.

The Tibetan referred to money as “concretized energy.” But over the 50 years since he concluded his work with Alice Bailey, it has become much less concretized. The world’s money supply is now highly liquid. It constantly changes form and flows from one location to another. Economists speak of the “transaction velocity of money,” the rate at which a given stock of money can fuel a sequence of activities; the faster money can be received, used, and passed on, the more economic activity it can sustain. The velocity of money has increased dramatically in recent years, and it is likely to increase still more as electronic funds-transfer becomes more common. Today, money may stay in one place for less than a second, before it is moved elsewhere or transformed into some other asset. The daily trading volume of the world’s securities exchanges exceeds US$100 billion, and that of the currency markets exceeds $1.5 trillion. Such is the scale and fluidity of global finance and the business activity it supports.

The Tibetan also mentioned a "divine aspect of money" and identified the world of business and finance as "a new field for spiritual endeavour."[8] He looked forward to a time when money will serve an important role in the implementation of the Plan. Among the New Group of World Servers are disciples "animated by a spirit of selfless service—and there are many such," inspired by the 3rd Aspect of deity, and working under the direction of the Mahachohan, whose responsibilities include the fields of economics and finance. The Tibetan comments on these disciples' work:

> They will regard money as the means whereby divine purpose can be carried forward. They will handle money as the agency through which the building forces of the universe can carry forward the work needed; and… those building forces will be increasingly occupied with the building of the subjective Temple of the Lord rather than with the materialising of that which meets mans desire.[9]

Interestingly, in the Tibetan's teachings, the term "building forces" usually refers to the Devic Kingdom. The implication seems to be that, with the fast-progressing "deconcretization" of money, new fields of collaboration may be opening up with certain classes of devas. Bearing in mind what has been taught elsewhere concerning contact with the Devic Kingdom, purity of motive and freedom from astral influences would seem to be particularly important in any such collaborative effort.

Prosperity in the Modern World

The 1990s brought economic stability and prosperity to much of the developed world. Unemployment, inflation, and interest rates were generally low, and consumption increased. On the other hand, concern for the future has also increased, as safety nets have been dismantled. Government welfare programs have been scaled back, and the credibility of both government and corporate pension plans has declined. In response, more and more people have had to take responsibility for their own financial security. Saving for the future has become a matter of necessity.

Moreover, "saving" has progressed from a jar on the mantle shelf to a passbook savings account and government savings bonds to bank certificates of deposit and, most recently, to mutual funds and stocks. Stock ownership is no longer the prerogative of the wealthy, but is emerging as the preferred mode of investment for ordinary people. More than one-half of the people in the United States directly or indirectly own stocks. Many rely on professionals to manage their investments, but more and more people prefer to do it themselves. Discount and online brokerages have made buying and selling stocks easy and relatively inexpensive, and information on which to base investment decisions is readily available from books, business periodicals, and the Internet. This level of active involvement in portfolio management, by a sizable fraction of the population, is a major step in human development and mass empowerment.

Financial markets, where trade stocks and other financial instruments are traded, have existed for centuries. But their visibility has increased dramatically as more people have become active investors, and they comprise an important medium of human expression. The financial markets form part of the infrastructure supporting world economics. We may buy a company's stock as an investment, but that stock finances the company's operations, providing the goods or services that modern life demands and giving employees and vendors a livelihood. Our investments may also fund local, national, or international government operations. The financial markets attract a variety of responses; some people view them as roads to heaven, while others view them as slippery slopes to hell—the epitome of greed and evil. The truth, of course, lies somewhere in between. Interestingly, opinions about the markets always seem to focus on the role of investors and speculators, and not on organizations' need for financing. Even then, critics forget that pension funds, insurance companies, endowment funds, religious institutions, and other nonprofit organizations contribute a sizable portion of total investments.

Making money has often been associated with ambition, unbridled competition, and ruthless exploitation, but history shows that sustainable prosperity rarely comes from antisocial behavior. More often it results from cooperation. At the level of the modern firm, one of the most frequently cited determinants of success is cooperation: between employees and managers, among corporate partners, and among companies in different countries. Similarly, national prosperity requires cooperation among large numbers of people who share common values, as well as cooperation with other nations. Prosperity requires some of the same qualities that produce a civilization; it is seen as the result—perhaps even as a by-product—of a civilized, well-ordered society and world. Again to quote Alan Greenspan:

> National well-being, including material prosperity, rests to a substantial extent on the personal qualities of the people who inhabit a nation. Civilization, our civilization, rests on the presumption of… mutual exchange to mutual advantage among free people.[10]

Cooperation among nations has greatly increased since World War II. Economic unions linking groups of nations have emerged in various parts of the world. Most successful has been the European Union, a subset of whose members have now embraced monetary union and a single currency. The euro, soon to be the sole legal tender in an economy as large as the United States, is expected have major economic significance. But it also makes an unmistakable—and unique—statement of multinational identity. The participating nations have demonstrated their willingness to replace nationalistic monetary symbols by a single symbol of shared vision and cooperation. The United Kingdom's reluctance to join the monetary union turned out to be advantageous because of subsequent depreciation of the euro, but it was motivated, in large measure, by fear of lost sovereignty and national self-concept.

The global economy is too tightly knit to allow one nation to ignore its neighbors, particularly if a neighbor is experiencing economic difficulties or a currency crisis. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have done much to alleviate disasters like the Asian financial crisis of 1998. Cooperation is needed, not just among nations, but among the different institutions within a given nation. A World Bank report comments that in 3rd World nations:

> Effective development requires partnerships among different levels of government, the private sector, donor groups, and civil society. A comprehensive strategy is simply too demanding for any one level or area of government or for a single donor.[11]

In a variety of ways, group consciousness is making inroads into modern economics. Group consciousness is not necessarily less materialistic or "separative" than individual consciousness; groups as well as individuals can be materialistic and self-serving. However, the greater distribution of wealth helps reduce inequity, even when a primary motive for doing so may be selfish. As in so many areas of human endeavor, even imperfect motives can sometimes lead to desirable outcomes.

Right Use of Money

We pay taxes, whether or not we agree with particular government policies or programs. In the famous dictum, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,"[12] the Christ formally withheld his support from suggestions of tax evasion. In modern society, besides spending or saving, we redirect substantial sums of money to government purpose, hoping that God and Caesar are not too far apart in their intentions. In addition, each of us must address our responsibilities for charitable giving. We must decide how much to give and which causes to support. The allocation of money calls for careful consideration, and we shall be held accountable for the priorities we set and for our motives for doing so. In countries where contributions are tax-deductible, governments share decision-making authority in the public support of charitable causes.

Frequent appeals for money come from the arts. Symphony orchestras, ballet companies, art museums, and the like are becoming increasingly expensive to operate, but they are patronized by a relatively small fraction of the population. Government support is being cut back, partly as a reaction against "elitism," and the burden of funding is shifting to the private sector. Many people feel an obligation to support the arts because they raise the level of consciousness and preserve the civilization that we have inherited. Similar motives may underlie support for religious and educational institutions, as well as organizations committed to protecting the environmental and wildlife. Interestingly, the arts and religious and educational institutions tend to flourish as the direct result of economic *inequity*. Our cultural heritage of great musical compositions, art treasures, cathedrals, and universities reflects the indulgence of a wealthy elite. However, today we are more sensitive to the problems of inequity and are less willing to dismiss the needs of the less fortunate on the grounds that "the poor always ye have with you."[13]

Despite increasing prosperity, many people have not participated, even in the developed nations. The homeless sit on sidewalks within sight of new high-rise buildings. Wages often are inadequate to support families—even to secure lodging—and large numbers of people are being forced off welfare roles by government spending cuts. Worldwide, the number of people living on the streets exceeds the population of Japan. Approximately one-third of homeless people are children, and another large group suffer from psychiatric conditions. Even in countries with the greatest social conscience, needs continually outstrip governments' ability to meet them. Charitable organizations try to do what governments cannot or will not do, and they also carry much of the burden of response to natural and man-made disasters. For example, when Hurricane Floyd hit the Eastern United States in September 1999, Salvation Army disaster relief teams assisted 18,412 displaced persons and emergency workers in the first 12 hours.[14] Media coverage intentionally or unintentionally plays an important role in determining which disasters receive the most attention from relief organizations and donors.

People in the developing nations have faired much worse. Per-capita gross national product, among the 210 economies tracked by the World Bank, varies from a high of US$40,080 in Switzerland to a low of $100 in Ethiopia.[15] And in at least six countries, four of them in sub-Saharan Africa, more than 60 percent of the population live below the poverty level.[16] Not only are the developing nations poor by any standard, but they are getting relatively poorer. Income in the world's 10 poorest nations is only 1.5 percent of what it is in the 10 richest nations, down from 11 percent in 1900.[17] Third World countries also are impacted more harshly by fluctuations in commodity prices and exchange rates. During the 1998 financial crisis in Asia and South America, several African nations recorded negative growth rates.[18] Exchange rate movements can result in a particularly crushing burden when foreign debt is denominated in more stable currencies.

Developing nations need massive amounts of financial aid, but sometimes even small amounts, intelligently applied, can have far-reaching effects. Programs to stimulate local enterprise have been outstandingly successful. The famous Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, established in 1976, provides small loans to help entrepreneurs set up businesses. Recipients, typically the poorest people in a region—and the least likely to meet conventional standards of creditworthiness—have demonstrated the ability to manage money responsibly. More than 96 percent of loans are repaid.[19] Similar microcredit programs have been set up in many other countries, and 22 million people throughout the 3rd World now have access to small loans.[20] Another program, the Heifer

Project International, uses donated money to buy cows, goats, lamas, and other livestock for poor families in developing countries.

The impact of such programs has been spectacular, transforming lives and creating jobs and self-esteem where few opportunities previously existed. In the developed world we pride ourselves on our fiscal sophistication, but microcredit programs testify that even people in the world's least developed nations can manage money carefully and responsibly. However, it is interesting to note that 94 percent of the Grameen Bank's 2.4 million loan recipients are women. In the bank's experience, women outperform men as money managers and are more likely to use the money to benefit their families.[21]

The redirection of money has a high priority, but money by itself cannot cure the ills of global inequity. As a recent World Bank report points out:

> Raising per capita incomes is only one among many development objectives. Improving quality of life involves more specific goals: better health services and educational opportunities, greater participation in public life, a clean environment, intergenerational equity, and more.[22]

Efforts by poor nations to improve the lot of their people typically are hampered by low literacy rates and by a "brain drain" of the educated elite. Governments must try to address these issues and also must establish infrastructure for the efficient distribution and utilization of foreign aid. They must also be vigilant in eradicating corruption that siphons off scarce funds and undermines foreign confidence. It is a sad commentary on human behavior that powerful individuals line their own pockets at the expense of fellow citizens living in abject poverty.

The need for contributions to these and a wide variety of other causes is clear and pressing, and this need translates into important service responsibilities. However, welfare agencies, charities, and similar nonprofit institutions should be more understanding of—and sensitive to—the individuals, corporations, and government agencies to whom their fundraising efforts are targeted. "Other uses" of money, with which the fund-raisers compete, may also have a high priority.

It is ironical to observe the attitudes to money in the sprawling community of religious, cultural, humanitarian, and environmental activism. In general, money tends to be viewed in a negative light, as the medium of materialism, greed, and exploitation—the stuff of military spending, political campaign contributions, and organized crime. However, where fund-raising is concerned, money becomes theirs by right, and individuals, corporations, and governments have an obligation to support their worthy causes. How and why donors obtained the money is of little concern to them. There is a faucet to be turned on, and the pipe just comes out of the wall. Inconsistent attitudes toward money and overly aggressive fundraising lead to alienation and separateness, and they undermine donors' readiness to give. "Giving fatigue" is very real, and fund-raisers who call during the family dinner hour are no better than telemarketers. We need a mutually-supportive, working partnership between organizations that create wealth and those that meet human needs and seek to reduce inequity.

Fundraising institutions must also be scrupulous in their use of donated money. Some well-known charities spend the greater part of their funds—as much as 90 percent—on administration, including lucrative salaries for their own executives. These institutions should study their profit-seeking counterparts for ways to improve operating efficiency. Other "charities" are outright scams, using pictures of hungry children to raise money that never goes near an orphanage or soup kitchen. Many Irish-Americans were appalled to learn that money they had donated for ostensibly humanitarian purposes went to buy weapons for the Irish Republican Army.

Nevertheless, we must accept imperfections in welfare organizations and among recipients of donated funds as generously as we ask others—and the Lords of Karma—to overlook our own shortcomings. Many people participate in a special Sunday meditation which affirms the flow of monetary resources to the New Group of World Servers. When he asked his disciples to engage in this service activity, the Tibetan encouraged us to "Ponder on the redemption of humanity through the right use of money." [23] He admonishes us in the accompanying instructions to conclude the meditation "with a careful consideration of (our) own responsibility to the Plan, and each week plan (our) financial cooperation with the Hierarchy." He continues: "Be practical and realistic and know that if you do not give, you may not ask, for you have no right to evoke that which you do not share."[24]

Conclusion

The widespread use of money required a level of mental development that we attained comparatively recently in human history. Money is both the creation of human consciousness and a measure of its values. Money sustains life as we know it and symbolizes many things, including power, security, and group identity. For those who have it, money can buy the "extras" that make life more fulfilling. As the Bible tell us: "A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things."[25] However, the negative qualities of money are also well known, and scripture notes its strong relationship with desire: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."[26]

Money has brought out the best and the worst in people. On the one hand, unscrupulous monarchs, mints, and money changes exploited—and in the process weakened—currencies for their own ends; and money has featured directly or indirectly in almost every conceivable evil. On the other hand, honest business people, financiers, and many others see money's potential for benefiting the masses. Like most forms of energy, money is ethically neutral; whether it is good or evil depends on how it is used.

Managing money can provide important lessons in manipulating more general types of energy. Effective money management—in the family, the business, the nonprofit institution, or the government agency—requires discipline, a realistic approach to risk, the ability and willingness to set priorities, and trust in the economic system. The Puritan ethic applauds thrift, and saving and investment provide for the future and also supply capital to fuel economic growth. The willingness to invest represents a further advance in human consciousness; investment is a form of sacrifice, in which the higher good is preferred over the lower. But thrift, as well as expenditure, may be selfish or selfless, and both have karmic implications.

Money can be used to make the world better or a worse place, and we shall be held accountable for what we do with the money we have. Many of us enjoy the benefits of prosperity, while others endure grinding poverty. Large-scale inequities in wealth pose a major problem in social justice—and it is *our* problem. In the words of Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank: "(P)overty is not created by the poor but by the institutions and policies that we, the better off, have established."[27] Progressive tax rates and government welfare and aid programs go some way to alleviating inequity, but much of the burden falls on individual and corporate donors.

Institutions that depend on donations or government grants have a responsibility to become as efficient as the best profit-seeking organizations, and they must be scrupulously honest in their use of contributed money. On the other hand, we cannot dodge our own giving responsibilities because money sometimes is wasted or even misappropriated, any more than we can justify tax evasion on the grounds of government inefficiency. Mechanisms for soliciting, receiving, and distributing funds may be imperfect, but they are the best that we have been able to create.

Meanwhile, greater integration of the different sectors of human activity—ordinary people, business, government, and nonprofit organizations—is necessary to sustain the creation of wealth, achieve social justice, and enhance our civilization.

How much we give must be determined in relation to our means, as well as in relation to other resources we contribute, such as time, effort and skills. However, even when we have determined our proper level of giving, there is still no clear way to prioritize competing causes. Should we, for instance, support the arts when children go to bed hungry? How do we balance causes with great emotional appeal against other causes which, in the overall scheme of things, might contribute more to human progress? Such questions demand continued, thoughtful reflection.

The Hierarchy works through the many individuals and groups that identify with its goals and devote their lives to selfless collaboration. It is a telling commentary on the role of money in human affairs, and human consciousness, that Hierarchical work depends on it so heavily. The Tibetan looks forward to the eventual "spiritualising of money." He also notes that "its massing in quantities for the work of the Great Ones, the Disciples of the Christ, is part of a much needed world service and can now make a satisfactory beginning; (and) it must be carried forward with spiritual insight, right technique and true understanding."[28] Money is woven into the societal fabric of the 5th root race, and under 7th ray influence its role and form are likely to develop further. Money will continue to express human values and ideals, which will change as humanity changes. At times, money may have deserved the title "root of all evil," although other human creations were strong competitors. We have an opportunity to demonstrate that money can also be an effective instrument for expressing the Will-to-Good.

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[1] John F. Chown. *A History of Money*. Routledge, 1994, p.107.
[2] The price of the Louisiana Purchase amounted to less than 3 cents per acre.
[3] John F. Chown, *op. cit*, pp. 123-132.
[4] Alan Greenspan. Millennium Lecture: "Maintaining Economic Vitality." September 8, 1999.
[5] W.J. Ashley [ed.]. *Principles of Political Economy*. 1909, p. 488
[6] Adam Smith. *The Wealth of Nations*. 1776
[7] Alice Bailey. *Letters on Occult Meditation*. Lucis, 1922, p. 251
[8] Alice Bailey. *Esoteric Psychology* II. Lucis, 1942, p. 731
[9] *Esoteric Psychology* II, p. 193
[10] Alan Greenspan, *op. cit.*
[11] "World Development Report 1999/2000." World Bank, 1999.
[12] *Mark* 12:17 (KJV)
[13] *John* 12:8 (KJV)
[14] "On the Frontiers of Disaster." Salvation Army, September 1999.
[15] Source: World Bank, 1998 data.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Source: Carter Institute, 1999.
[18] "World Economic Outlook." International Monetary Fund, 1999.
[19] Source: Grameen Bank Foundation, 1999.
[20] Muhammed Yunus. "The Grameen Bank." *Scientific American*, November 1999, pp. 114-119.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] "World Development Report." World Bank, 1999.
[23] Alice Bailey. *Discipleship in the New Age* II. Lucis, 1955, pp. 228-231
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] *Ecclesiastes* 10: 19 (KJV).
[26] 1 *Timothy* 6:10 (KJV).
[27] Muhammed Yunus, *op. cit*..
[28] Alice Bailey. *Externalization of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 61.