

Money - The root of all evil?

The common belief today, especially in the Western world, or societies strongly influenced by the Western world, is that money is the engine that creates Wealth, which ultimately will lead to Wellbeing. In this relationship, money is seen as the tool that generally increases happiness by reducing stress and enabling one to control their life. The accumulation of money, in kind or invested in assets, generally signifies Wealth, which is believed boosts emotional well-being, particularly because it provides security and other emotional needs, such as confidence, self-worth, etc. The enhanced emotional state is said to lead to overall "Wellbeing", made possible by the things that money can buy. For example, access to better health care, stronger relationships, and the ability to engage in activities that can help give meaning and purpose to one's life. From this perspective, it is very easy to see and understand why this thinking is conquering the world, and also the reason for the now heightened global drive for money.

Now let us contrast this modern world view with the pre-modern world view.

Previously, the concepts of Wealth, Wellbeing and Money, were seen as independent, even where they existed in a society. The very primitive societies did not even have money, as an independent concept. Also, Wealth and Wellbeing had much broader meanings than they have today.

For example, Wealth in these societies was measured by the richness of one's social standing, which was determined by one's Prowess **and** Reputation. *Prowess* had to do with the individual's exceptional skills, expertise, or superior ability in a specific field, while *Reputation* focused on the person's character, behavior, and interaction with others. Neither of these had anything to do with money. Also, Wellbeing had a much broader meaning. First and foremost, emphasis was given to the community's health, for whose maintenance every member of the society had a joint responsibility, since one person's action could result in the gods visiting some punishment or blessing on the entire community. Personal health or Wellbeing was considered secondary.

The Result

Although one could debate which of the two world views is preferred, i.e. the modern, oriented to the personal, or the pre-modern, oriented to the community/greater good, the emerging evidence of the results of the modern world views are becoming evident. The modern era has existed for close to a century and a half, which has given enough time to see the promises put forth to support the arguments of the promoters of the new world view.

With this emerging evidence, we can now compare the outputs of these two world views to judge for ourselves their pros and cons for humanity.

No doubt, the modern era philosophies have created the unprecedented economic, commercial and scientific achievements, compared to what we read from past historical accounts.

But if we go by the definitions above, this success would apply, without any dispute, only to the Money component of the above-mentioned concepts. While modern society may still speak of prowess, money now trumps skills, expertise, or superior ability. Skills and expertise are now commodities, subordinate to money. This is quite clear in the types of people that we celebrate today, most of whom are ranked by their bank accounts, or income potential.

It can also arguably be said that Reputation, as it was once understood is a forgotten concept in our modern world. Reputation today is tied to celebrity status, which is invariably tied to money. or in the few exceptions, crass notoriety.

And since neither Wealth, nor Wellbeing can be spoken off today independently of money, the modern understanding of these concepts has become euphemisms for possession of money.

Therefore, today, Money has grown from a simple and well-defined concept when it was first introduced to facilitate commerce, to the point where it has become commerce itself, and overshadows the substantive activity that it was initially intended to facilitate. To buttress this point, the value of the financial markets (i.e., their stock markets and other financial instruments) far exceeds the value of the companies or ventures whose stocks they are supposed to represent. In effect, the financial instruments have become a much bigger trading or commercial activity of their own.

The unseen Spiritual undercurrents at work.

For many, the foregoing results could be interpreted simply as, *"It is what it is"*.

But anyone familiar with the Spiritual laws will see these results as due to the inexorable laws that determine outcomes, based strictly on the driving motivations behind our thoughts/philosophies, or actions.

Often, we pay very little attention to our motivation, or mask them under what appears noble to others. Yet, the resulting outcome is always determined by the true unspoken motive, which we are trying to hide or mask.

Now let us apply this spiritual perspective to the evolution of the philosophies that gave us the results that we are experiencing in the modern era.

As science began to uncover ways to exploit the forces of nature, it sparked what became known as the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution sparked the need for easier access to money to fund the significantly higher investments required to build the necessary manufacturing systems.

Then stepped in the Capitalist Economic philosophy, aimed primarily at raising, using and controlling money. Something that was critical for the industrial revolution to take off. But, unlike previous financial philosophies, the budding Capitalist philosophy was only concerned about the supply and resources required to achieve the desired goal. Little or no consideration was given to the traditions of Wealth (prowess and reputation) or Wellbeing (community) in their theories and arguments.

Understandably, focus became shifted entirely to money. To the ability to raise and control it. And those who succeeded in both became the giants of the industrial revolution. With the growth of the financial services into an industry on its own rights, money, and future speculations about its value became something to be traded, and to earn money from. Thus, those who had the money could now make money itself, without need to create or produce anything substantive. This helped to propel the influence and importance of money even further. With its growing influence, power gradually shifted to the monied class. This happened even in societies where the aristocratic, ruling class, among whom the notions of chivalry and nobility, once ruled supreme.

Despite the ensuing struggle among the classes, it soon became clear that all classes were basically interested in the same, i.e. access to control of money. Even the Marxist ideology that was considered the antithesis of the Capitalist model, argues for control of the productive resources by the masses, with no mention of the traditional (spiritual) values that have guided societies for millennia. Neither have subsequent economic models that attempt to blend the two opposing models under the name of Social-welfare.

One thing they have in common is their emphasis on the satisfaction of needs, which were also redefined as basic necessities of life. For example, housing, food, health, security. And the desire for money was seen as driven by these needs.

However, with further evolution in science, technology, social philosophies soon redefined things that were once considered luxuries, to be necessities of life. In the US for example, a two-car family is now considered a necessity by many. And as new gadgets were developed or business models were created, these too were rapidly added to the accoutrements that are now considered necessities for modern living. Thus, as one need is satisfied, another luxury becomes classified as a need, fueling the need for more money.

Meanwhile social aspects that were once cherished, e.g. the broader meaning of Wealth (as in Commonwealth) or Wellbeing (as in the well-being of the community) soon lost ground. This easily happened because the prevailing economic and social philosophies were based on a bed rock of winner-take-all, or zero-sum game¹.

¹ In both scenarios, one participant's gain is directly matched by the loss of others, meaning the total net benefit is zero. If one player wins the entire pot or reward, all other participants lose, leaving no combined gain.

Conclusion

Through The Grail Message, we now know that there is tremendous power associated with our words, open or secret thoughts and desires. The laws of creation energize these powers, to bring them into fruition, based on the true essence of their nature, even if we have not given much consideration to them. Thus, as we call it into the world, so they play or echo back to us.

But we are also told that the reciprocal echoing can affect us, dulling our sensibilities, if the unleashed powers are selfish in nature, or expanding our perceptions if they are of an altruistic and ennobling kind.

Therefore, we need to appreciate that the money mania today, which has overthrown many of the desires that once promoted a more holistic way of life, is simply the result of the strength of each individual's desires. The narrowing of our perceptive ability, due to the activity of these same laws, makes it very difficult, if not impossible for many to appreciate the selfishness inherent in many of today's driving philosophies, and therefore their own desires.

According to the activities of the laws of Creation, even cultivating other virtues will not by itself remove or curb the selfish desires that are fueling the drive for money. This driving desire has to be uprooted within, otherwise it will interfere with the cultivation or manifestation of noble desires. For example, being a generous donor to charitable activities does not mean that a person's greed or selfishness will be curbed or overcome. Each act stands by itself, exercising its own effect on the spirit.

No doubt, this knowledge poses a great challenge that many face today, as they try to escape from what they obviously see is an untenable situation or life style. For example, how does one go back to living as a single income earning family, when they have built their life style around a two-income family, which is now the norm in many societies.

So, the real problem may not be money after all, but the tough decision, shock and severe handicap that one will face if they were to take the big step. Yet, according to the spiritual laws of creation, the more we feed the desire, the more it drives us towards its intrinsic end, which can narrow our spiritual perceptions further.

Also, the much talked about alienation that is felt in modern societies, is, unknown to many, the consequence of the *zero-sum mentality* that rules most of our thinking today. It is simply a manifestation of the laws of creation at work, showing how we have eroded the important concept of commonwealth and common wellbeing, which are vital to our emotional and mental balance.

So, again, one could ask, how does one swim against this overwhelming social current?

There is no easy answer, or formula to be handed out for this. One has to make their own decision, after familiarizing themselves with how the laws of creation work, and their consequences for us. We have pointed to how the quality of our desire can constrain or expand our spiritual horizon or perception, and even the emotional problems that can arise therefrom. In the end, the decision remains personal, in accordance with our ability to exercise our free will. And only the individual can weigh the cost and benefit to themselves.

Post script

This article does not argue against earning or “*making money*”, as the saying goes. Nor does it argue against being rich. It simply points out that richness defined only in terms of accumulating money is detrimental to the Spirit. It is unnatural because the true purpose of Wealth, as already explained, is to contribute to the overall Commonwealth and Wellbeing.

Furthermore, regardless of whether we use currency or barter, we humans will exchange goods and services to satisfy the needs that we cannot produce or already have. Even this can be seen as nature (The Universe) nudging us to learn to cooperate with each other through such mutually benefiting exchanges. What is decidedly wrong is that over millennia, the mechanism and systems that we have instituted to facilitate these exchanges have, in ignoring the law of beneficial balance, introduced and created distortions to which we have assigned terms like greed, avarice, obsession, hoarding, etc. These distortions infect our psyche. Infection that we again describe as alienation, depression, anxiety, etc.

But because of our focus on the symptoms of the distortions, and the resulting narrowing of our Spiritual perception, we fail to see the true driving force behind these evident problems.

It is this insight that this article has attempted to bring to the fore.

Therefore, it is hoped that, with this little insight into the consequences of our actions and desires, any choice that we may be forced, or voluntarily make, will be weighed more heavily on the spiritual, rather than the material side, because the negative impact on the Spirit continues long after any physical *material benefits* would have ended.