

## **What about Money?**

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On a plane again, this time to Albuquerque. So I'd better be fast in writing this one, since it is such a short trip! No first class on this plane (you might have guessed the airline), but yet some people still make a clear attempt to let their status be known.

Their comments and gestures both make a point- "I have money, perhaps more than you." On the other hand, others are very simple and you cannot really read what their financial status might be. And not that it really matters, I say this just to develop a point for discussion (the things that come to mind when you travel). Maybe my curiosity has been stimulated by these two ladies next to me, they seem to go out of their way to give me a perception of what their bank account might be (like if I cared!).

Money is many things to many peoples, some see it as a way to obtain power and control- that can be dangerous. Others look at it as a status and class. I would like to subscribe with the ones that see it as a source to obtain freedom. And not just buying power, but in a broader sense freedom to help you express who you are; it allows you to go places, meet your needs, have fun and share your wealth with those who you love, or help those you see in need.

I clearly remember my days (years and decades I must say) of financial deprivation. I hated living in such a tight budget- you had to measure every single move, need and count every single penny! What a drag! On the other hand, we always managed to have some fun and do things (inexpensive things, that is!). It's interesting that despite all the limitations, you would always find a way to express yourself, your joy of life and sense of freedom. There were also lots of dreams and magical thinking, which helped a lot.

But then, there are people who get so caught up with money that it enslaves them. They obsess about money, the more they have, the more they want to have. Investments, bank accounts, loans, credit, etc. with the subsequent need to work more and more to keep up with these external demands. What a vicious cycle! A lot of these people are miserable, despite all the wealth they accumulate. It becomes their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd priority in life- how sad. In a sense they lose their freedom. That is sad!

I see it as sad, because it drives these people away from more important objectives in life. Especially if they neglect their growth as a person, the sensitivity to care for others and to appreciate life at its fullest. Most importantly they might neglect their need for spiritual development. If you ask me, this latter concern should be a top priority for all of us. You cannot lose track of that. It needs to be done at your own pace, and with your tools- but it needs to be done. We cannot afford to lose track of that.

Now, granted that with the consumer mentality we have is hard to deviate from the materialism of our society. Also, with all the negative things going on (crime, violence, tragedies, etc.) is more difficult to practice kindness, understanding and caring. But, you know what?- I see it as a part of the process to grow spiritually. I believe this world was not meant to be perfect, on the contrary, -it was design as a contaminated scenario to allow us to work on and perhaps overcome a lot of our imperfections. Like I have alluded to before, the key is not reaching perfection, is achieving a balance. An equilibrium that would help us become better, and betters us (what a task!).

I'm a firm believer in a personal relationship with God (or High Power) as the basis for a good spiritual balance and growth. The collective participation is important (religion)-but the basis and commitment needs that personal approach.

People search differently for this spiritual development. I'm no exception. I was raised as a Catholic, but started my own search early on. It led me to search and search, looking for answers and try to acquire that balance and I am sure that as many others I might have looked in the wrong places and talked to the wrong people. But at the same time it allowed me to get to the right people and the right place ("search and you shall find").

Is there risk involved in this? Yes, of course, but such is life (full of risks)- It is not until things start making sense to you, that you start understanding what this search means and where it is leading you.

This is called introspection, at this point you make these concepts your own not because your read it in a book or listened to it from an expert's lips. It needs to hit in the "right spot" and this spot is very much yours, your subjective interpretation. From there the need to keep yourself in check and at the same time trust yourself enough to go on with the process. Remember, there are no warranties, is part of the risk. But believe me, when you hit that spot, you will know.

I have learned after a long and difficult search that life is really simple, but we tend to complicate it. I have also learned that God (High Power) is within you and everywhere. The trick is that you usually start the search everywhere else and from there find it inside. But it does not end there; then you find the responsibility of recognizing and accepting God (High Power) inside everyone else (the good and the bad, the loved and not as loved, etc.) This realization changed the way I looked at myself, others and life in general. You need to accept that, and by doing so it makes you more aware of your place in life; you start seeing and understanding the "big picture".

When you get there, the search is not over by any means-it has barely begun.

Understand as well that this is something money cannot buy, in fact, often it gets in the way of the search. By the same token, if you develop the right approach; it may facilitate the process. It all depends on you own perspective or your priorities and the resources you mobilize to get you there. So, what about money?-What about it?-It might not even really matter.