

Festival of Libra, London, October 2019

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Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the festival of Libra; a warm welcome also to the many friends and co-workers who are listening in on the internet via our website.

We read that Libra is a major conditioning factor where law, sex and money are concerned. In relation to money we also read that humanity 'is brought up on false values' and money's 'wrong use' and that 'until these things are being righted, the return of the Christ is not possible.'

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So now, under the influence of Libran energies, it might be pertinent to ask the question as to whether humanity is in the process of righting false values and using money rightly? It would seem at first sight that this is not the case, that humanity is very much in the thrall of money, of the power it bestows and the personal luxuries it can buy. And when we look at the great inequalities in wealth that exist across the world, which seem to be increasing rather than reducing, we may come to the conclusion that we are far from righting our relationship with money and that this is holding up the Reappearance.

And yet, we are in a period when the ideologies relating as to how we organise our markets, the distribution of resources and the role of money, are being called into question. Capitalism, the system that dominates national economies around the world, is being probed as to its fitness for purpose. The devastating effects that continual economic growth is having on the environment, to the extent that humanity's future is in jeopardy, are now being recognised. As President Macron recently said, 'our house is burning'.

While the governments of the world are slow in dealing with the difficult problems that humanity are facing, and particularly those that relate to the relationship between money and power, there is much hope in the fact that there are many individuals and groups who are actively looking to find new approaches, or to adapt the current system to reduce its negative effects. New ways to organise and allocate resources that will meet the needs of an ever-growing world population at the same time as protecting the environment, are being considered. Ideas such as the strangely named Doughnut Economics of Kate Raworth of the Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute. Her approach is global in nature and explains that the aim of economic activity should be meeting the needs of all, within the means of the planet. In her book *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*, she redraws the economy embedding it within the Earth's systems and its environmental limits, a doughnut that shows the interdependence of all the players. She provides an economics where the wealth from the natural world is widely shared and inequalities in wealth and income are reduced. Money, markets, taxation and public investment would be designed to conserve and regenerate resources rather than squander them. State-owned banks would invest in projects that transform our relationship with the living world, such as zero-carbon public transport and community energy schemes. New metrics would measure genuine prosperity, rather than the focus on growth which as we know degrades our long-term prospects. ²

Governments are going to be slow in the uptake of such radical thinking because it requires nations to work together and as we know, nations are looking increasingly inward at the moment due to the negative effects caused by rapid globalisation. But such ideas will come to the forefront at some point, because of the group nature of the energies of Aquarius that are now pouring into humanity. Ideas related to organisation and the distribution of the world's resources and, the groups who are working with them are also being powerfully aided by the incoming energies of the seventh ray. Uranus, through which the seventh ray works and the esoteric ruler of Libra, is peculiarly active at this time.

We read that there are many disciples on the seventh ray now in incarnation, disciples who are part of the Seventh Ray Ashram that is now active and in the process of externalisation. Their influence is bringing a definite concentration on that powerful physical concretisation of energy called 'money'. Changes in relation to money is a hard thing to bring about, as we all know, for there is much vested interest in keeping things as they are, and of course money, power and politics are deeply entwined. But the ideas for change are available, they are just waiting for the right conditions to manifest. We read most encouragingly that the plan for the divine use of money is well in hand and is engaging the attention of disciples upon all the rays. These disciples are also being aided by a 'group of adepts who are authorities upon modern financial matters and Who are competently preparing to institute those newer techniques and modes of financial interplay which will supersede the present disastrous methods.' ³

Let us take a few moments to ponder this and then say together the Mantram of Unification

**The souls of all are one and I am one with them.
I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.**

**Let pain bring due reward of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer form, and life and all events
And bring to light the love that underlies the happenings of the time.**

**Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail. Let all people love.**

Inequality is seemingly a major issue of our times. The latest World Inequality Report states that inequality is everywhere in the world and rising all the time. The report suggests that 'If rising inequality is not properly monitored and addressed', 'it can lead to various sorts of political, economic, and social catastrophes.' ⁴ Thomas Piketty in his book *Capitalism in the Twenty-First Century* argues that inequality is not an accident but rather a feature of capitalism which he says can only be reversed through state intervention. A solution to this inequality he writes, 'is a worldwide progressive taxation on wealth' and he goes on to say that the 'absence of such a law may well imperil the free market itself.' ⁵

His latest book has been recently published in English, (it was first published in France in 2001) it is called *Top Incomes in France in the Twentieth Century: Inequality and Redistribution, 1901-1998*. It is about taxation and in it Piketty charts the historical ups and downs of France's income and inheritance taxes. His conclusion is rather modest: Taxation can tame inequality if we want it to.⁶

It could be said that taxation spans two of the conditioning energies of Libra, money and law, for in progressive taxation we gain greater fairness in the distribution of money and resources, therefore less inequality and greater justice. It is however, a controversial subject that provokes considerable disagreement and heated debate. Since the 1980s, Free Market Economics has dominated economic policy particularly in the US, UK and Europe. Progressive taxation as an intervention in the market has been seen as inefficient and unjust and this has been partly due to the significance given at the time to Friedrich Hayek's thinking. In 1975 Mrs. Thatcher reportedly slammed down a fat book during a Conservative Party debate and declared, "This is what we believe!" The book was Hayek's, *The Constitution of Liberty*. Hayek believed that social engineering, like redistributive income taxation, exalted the wisdom of central planners over the diffused wisdom of the market. He writes, 'No human mind can comprehend all the knowledge

which guides the actions of society'. Therefore, legislators must bow to 'an impersonal mechanism, not dependent on individual human judgments, which will co-ordinate the individual efforts.' The 'impersonal mechanism' was the market, through which wealth would grow. He saw social solidarity and selflessness as only apparent in small tribes, that it was self-interest that propelled society towards prosperity. Attempts to redistribute income, therefore, were seen as regressive, and contrary to the advance of civilization. ⁷

In the light of Piketty's new book, Hayek's arguments now look unconvincing. The data he has gathered and analysed shows that high taxes on income and inheritances can keep inequality in check, or even make it fall. That the inequality that is a natural outcome of the market mechanism can be reversed. He says, that 'in a world without taxes, [the] process of accumulation can be extremely rapid.' 'Inequality is not incomprehensible or uncontrollable. It is the result of political decisions.' Despite Hayek's contention that the free market produces strong and stable societies, in Piketty's estimation, 'the experience of the 20th century suggests that societies that are too obviously unequal are inherently unstable.'⁸

The issue of taxation has been very much in the news in recent months. The Conservative party, as do the Republican party in the US, put reducing taxes as central to their policies. The current Prime Minister has committed to reducing taxes and recently in the US the rate of tax was trimmed from 39.6 to 37 % and the threshold for the estate tax was raised from \$5.6 to \$11.2 million. Inequality is already a serious problem in the US and can only be worsened by this tax reduction as fortunes will accumulate faster than ever before. It was this that was most likely the impetus in June for 18 prominent millionaires and billionaires to sign an open letter to US 2020 presidential candidates calling for the new government to tax extreme wealth. The letter called for a 'wealth tax' on the 'richest 1/10 of 1%' in order to fund climate change initiatives. Additionally, the Democratic hopeful Elizabeth Warren has proposed an annual tax on the largest fortunes in America, with the tax revenue generated being funnelled into the IRS to catch those who move or hide their money to escape tax. And in Europe, the EU is due to bring into effect in January 2020, the Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD), which seeks to tackle 'the thriving culture of corporate tax avoidance.'

The issue of higher taxes on the rich was also raised by Rutger Bregman while speaking about his book *Utopia for Realists* at Davos. He said that industry had to stop talking about philanthropy and start focusing on taxes. In relation to philanthropy he said, 'I'm not against philanthropy, I mean, by all means come up with all those wonderful plans. But pay your taxes first.' He went on to say that there are billionaires with totally corrupt business models, who are not paying their workers a living wage, who are avoiding their taxes and polluting the environment. And to distract from all that they say 'Oh, I've got a nice plan for some education for girls in Uganda'. ⁹ Asked about the counterview, which is that higher taxes curtail the free market and therefore limit economic growth, Bregman said that if we look at history the 'golden age of capitalism', with high rates of growth and technological innovation, which occurred 'between the '50s and the beginning of the '70s, when in the developed world there were much higher taxes. ¹⁰ This is extensively corroborated in Piketty's new book.

Bregman advocates, 'lower taxes for the lower classes and the middle classes, the people who actually do the real, valuable work, and higher taxes on the rich.' He is now working on a new book in which he intends to challenge the view that humans are inherently selfish, as writers such as Hayek contend. It is not true, he said, that people revert to their true, nasty selves when the thin veneer of civilisation is stripped away. "If we assume the best in people, we can radically redesign our democracy and welfare states". ¹¹

It was the world wars of the twentieth century that started the process of undermining the foundations of Capitalism. The war we read, acted like a purge, it opened the eyes of men to the underlying cause of the war—economic distress that was caused by the exploitation of the planet's

resources by an international group of selfish and ambitious men. ¹² Since the war much progress has been made in alleviating the dire poverty and suffering that the unequal distribution of the earth's resources created. There has been, according to the World Bank, marked progress on reducing poverty over the past few decades, for example in the 1960's 45% of the world's population were in extreme poverty, in 1990 it was 36% and today it is less than 10%. ¹³

While the number of those who are existing below 1.90 dollars a day is falling, inequality is rising and for similar reasons that caused the war, for power is focused within a small group of international Capitalists who control and direct governments to their own ends. It is again a war against selfish and separatist forces, although this time, at the moment, it is contained on the mental plane as a battle of ideology, as the many heated opinions on the role of progressive taxation stand as an example. As we know, all progress is cyclical and one progresses from step to step in a spiral fashion which ever involves a retracing of one's steps. Humanity is therefore tested time and time again on a higher turn of the spiral. It is also the case that in the turning of the cyclical wheel, in the evolution of the spiral, similar conditions eventuate and the same needs arise until they are eventually eradicated fully and for good.

The words of the New Testament that 'the love of money is the root of all evil' is beginning to be truly recognised, as can be seen from the many important voices warning of the dangers that lie ahead. As the Tibetan points out, 'The reason for all this outcry, discussion, and noisy criticism is that, as men awoken to the facts and begin to think and plan, they are aware of guilt within themselves; their consciences trouble them; they are conscious of the inequality of opportunity, of the grave abuses, of the entrenched distinctions between man and man, and the factor of racial and national discriminations; they question their own individual goals as well as national planning. The masses of men in every land are beginning to realize that they are largely responsible for what is wrong, and that their inertness and lack of right action and thinking has led to the present unhappy state of world affairs.' ¹⁴ And this is where the world disciple, humanity finds himself, facing himself once more on a higher turn of the spiral. But this time he is better prepared, he understands better the true nature of things. The organising potency of Uranus and the seventh ray, and the energies of Libra are preparing the way towards that much needed point of balance that will tip the scales that will lead us determinedly towards Aquarian values.

So, in answer to our question, as to whether humanity is in the process of righting false values and using money for the good of all rather than for selfish reasons. We can say most definitely that the process is in hand, that through the work of the many thinkers and activists labouring to bring to our attention the inequalities and problems of our current systems and striving to find better ways, the balance is slowly swinging away from separativeness and materialism to a future based on sharing and brotherhood. We read that 'Certain great hopes are taking form and will become the pattern of man's living. Certain great speculations will become experimental theories and later prove demonstrated facts.' And that a 'process of reorientation is going on which will eventually enable the mass of men to present a united front upon views hitherto regarded as the vague visions of intelligent and optimistic dreamers.' ¹⁵ What is clear is that the issues at stake are at the forefront of human thinking and the indications are that humanity will eventually decide correctly, will attain a point of balance or equilibrium by choosing the way which leads between the two great lines of force, and finally throw the weight of public opinion on the side of cooperation, sharing and brotherhood.

References:

1 *Externalisation of the Hierarchy* pg. 627

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3 *Externalisation of the Hierarchy* pg. 570

4 World Inequality Report

5 Quoted in *Utopia For Realists* – Bregman, pg. 92

6 <https://psmag.com/economics/what-can-we-do-about-inequality>

7 *ibid.*

8 *ibid.*

9 <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/01/rutger-bregman-world-economic-forum-davos-speech-tax-billionaires-capitalism>

10 *ibid.*

11 *ibid.*

12 *Problems of Humanity* pg. 73

13 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty>

14 *Problems of Humanity* pg. 170

15 *The Rays and the Initiations* pg. 78