



Toward A Spiritual Economics

Part I

By Amit Goswami

"The implications of research on consciousness ...suggest interconnection at a level that has yet to be fully recognized by Western science, and throw into doubt the pervasive conception of a world dominated by competition."

*If **Willis Harman's** nine-year-old prediction is proving correct, what are we to do when capitalism, the centuries-old, but lone-surviving major model of economic organization on Earth, collides with the advent of consciousness?*

"One of the most important aspects of these forces for change is the apparent emergence of a new worldview... On the other hand, there are many indications of the possible emergence of a trans-modern picture of reality differing both from the scientific worldview and the traditional religious worldview.

"This emerging trans-modern worldview involves a shift in the locus of authority from external to 'inner knowing.' It has basically turned away from the older scientific view that ultimate reality is 'fundamental particles,' and trusts perceptions of the wholeness and spiritual aspect of organisms, ecosystems, Gaia and Cosmos. This implies a spiritual reality and ultimate trust in the authority of the whole."

*Can capitalism accommodate consciousness? Or, is a New World Order in order? Academy Fellow **Amit Goswami** picks up Willis's torch and examines these topics in a three-part Transformation series. A quantum physicist, Amit also guides legions of people who seek his knowledge of the mysterious border where science and consciousness meet.*



Many people think that capitalism and market economics grew out of the materialist philosophy that classical physics has given us. But this is myopic thinking by people who have missed the evolution of consciousness in the affairs of the manifest world.

First, notice that during the period that capitalism developed in the hands of such luminaries as Adam Smith, it was Cartesian dualism under the modernist umbrella that was the influential metaphysic, not materialism. Modernism values mind *and* meaning.

Second, notice that capitalism replaced feudalism and the mercantile economy (Adam Smith's term for the economy prevalent in England in his time) in which the pursuit of meaning is highly limited and vast numbers of people are denied it. Compared to feudalism in which wealth or capital remains in the hands of a fortunate few, capitalism and the market economy have certainly brought capital to the hands of many more. This has given a large number of people the economic freedom and flexibility needed to pursue meaning in their lives.

Third, notice that the only serious challenge to capitalism after the demise of feudalism/mercantile economy is Marxist economics. And it was a failure! Instead of Adam's Smith's "invisible hand" to drive the market and distribute capital, Marx envisioned that such a distribution can be done more effectively under a dictatorship of the proletariat in which labor directly takes over the distribution and equalizes wealth. But Marxist economics so far has been installed only under the politics of communism (in which the dictatorship of the proletariat become more like a dictatorship of a bureaucracy), and it failed miserably. And the failure is primarily due to the fact that most people just cannot work hard when their labor does not inure to the benefit of their own private property and private wealth.

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Unfortunately, it does not take a genius to see that capitalist economics as is practiced today is also at a crisis point. First, present day capitalism is based on continuous growth and expansion that require unlimited resources; this cannot be sustained on a finite planet. The finitude of resources may already have caught up with us. The finitude of the environment is an additional constraint on unlimited growth.

Second, the free market does not seem to be quite so free anymore. (Consider unequal access to information, tariff barriers, rising industrial concentration, etc.) Why? And what is the remedy?

Third, capitalism and its continuing economic expansion produce higher and higher standards of living. Wages do not keep pace without producing inflation. To meet the demands of higher standards and their higher cost, people are forced to give up their higher needs, such as the need of children to have a non-working mother or leisure time to pursue meaning. Thus, invariably some of the basic promises of capitalism are shortchanged by the nature of the beast itself.

Fourth, and most importantly, no thanks to the development of multinational corporations, the process of equilibrating the management-labor relationship

that feeds the equalization of the movement of meaning between the classes is stalled. What is the remedy for this?

Actually, capitalism is superior to Marxism because it recognizes one basic human need: the survival and security of the physical body. This basic ego-need requires private property; any economic system that ignores this basic requirement is bound to fail.

But as the psychologist Abraham Maslow pointed out, besides this fundamental need we have an entire hierarchy of needs. Capitalist economics ignores people's higher needs. This is one of its major defects. Following Maslow, but modifying his theory according to the insights of my general approach to spirituality -- science within consciousness -- we can easily see what these higher needs are.

Our Redefined Higher Needs and the Rudiments of a Spiritual Economics

The basic elements of the developing science within the primacy of consciousness are as follows:

- Consciousness is the ground of all being.
- The possibilities of consciousness are four-fold: material (which we sense); vital energy (which we feel, primarily through the chakras and secondarily through the brain); mental meaning (which we think); and supramental discriminating contexts such as physical laws, contexts of meaning and feeling such as ethics and love and aesthetics (which we intuit). The material is called gross, and the others make up the subtle domain of our experience.
- When consciousness chooses from the possibilities the actual event of its experience (with physical, vital, mental, and supramental components), the physical has the opportunity of making representations of the subtle. The physical is like computer hardware; the subtle is represented as software.
- Our capacity for making physical representation of the subtle evolves. First, the capacity for making representations of the vital developed through the evolution of life via more and more sophisticated organs to represent the living functions, such as maintenance and reproduction. Next, the capability of making more and more sophisticated representations of the mental evolved. We are at this stage of evolution right now.
- Our capacity to represent the supramental has not yet evolved. However, there is evolutionary pressure on us in this direction. This provides the primary reason some of us are attracted to spirituality.

In this way, there must not only exist the urge to satisfy physical needs but also needs in all the other dimensions of our experience. In addition to the satisfaction of physical needs, a spiritual economics must address:

- Gratification of emotional needs; positive emotions such as love, compassion, and satisfaction itself, both conditioned and unconditioned;
- Pursuit of meaning, including the pursuit of new mental meaning that requires creativity;
- Pursuit of spiritual and supramental (soul) needs such as altruism, love, and happiness.

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And in truth, this ladder of needs is not entirely hierarchical. If one satisfies higher needs, the urge to satisfy lower needs actually decreases. The opposite is also true. If a lower need is satisfied, the demand for satisfying a higher need increases. In this way, the strategy for an economic system more suitable than capitalism is to address all the needs simultaneously.

Whereas capitalism is an economics of physical well-being based on the satisfaction of our conditioned physical ego-needs, idealist or spiritual economics must be an economics of holistic well-being based on the satisfaction of both our (physical) ego-needs and higher needs (pertaining to the exploration of the vital, mental, soul and spirit).

Micro Economics of the Subtle

We may have to develop new spiritual organizations.

Economics is about production-consumption, demand-supply, prices and all that. How does that kind of stuff work for our subtle needs? Let's talk about these micro details.

Production of positive vital energy can be accomplished in many ways: forestation -- plants and trees have abundant vital energy; cultivating positive health (for a definition, see my book [The Quantum Doctor](#)) in society: people of positive health radiate vital energy; and so forth. But the best way to ensure production of vital energy is to encourage the workplaces for ordinary people to offer facilities so that their employees can achieve positive health, for example, by practicing yoga, Tai chi, and meditation, to name a few.

As for production of mental meaning, in the contexts of the arts and entertainment industry we already have some of the means in place. Both of these industries have the capacity to produce positive vital energy (positive emotions) as well. However, much of the arts and entertainment industry has bogged down into the negativity of a materialist culture. But we can shift the emphasis from negativity to meaningfulness and positivity.

The production of supramental and spiritual energy requires more effort right now. In the olden days, spiritual organizations like churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and the like cultivated and produced supramental and spiritual intelligence in their leaders and practitioners. Nowadays, many of these organizations are more interested in influencing mundane politics than investing in the supramental. But make no mistake about it: it can be done, although we may have to develop new spiritual organizations to do it. In the olden days, perhaps the most effective means of production (and dissemination) of supramental energy were travelling monks (called *sadhus* in India; in the West, troubadours are an example). This we can revive; to some extent the many New Age conferences on spirituality are already serving this purpose. Also effective are group meditations through which, as some of parapsychologist [Dean Radin's experiments](#) show, people can experience non-local consciousness and hence can take creative leaps to the supramental domain. This can be done even in workplaces.

Now to the question of consumption. Because the vital and mental are mappable in us, they can be consumed both by local and non-local means. For example, if we see good theater, it cultivates the processing of meaning in us, even

new meaning. When we partake in good meaningful entertainment, we also feel positive emotions; we are consuming them. As we consume, we ourselves have the potential to become producers.

Supramental energy consumption is non-local, but it requires local triggers. There are scientists who subscribe to the so-called Maharishi effect, according to which the spiritual and supramental energy generated by a group meditation is consumed automatically in the local vicinity. Data is cited with claims of crime reduction in big cities where TM groups perform such meditation. However, this is controversial and I am not advocating it. A purely quantum mechanical consumption of your spiritual energy requires that I be correlated with you by some means or other. For example, [experiments by Mexican neurophysiologist Jacobo Grinberg](#) suggest that if two people intend together, they become so correlated, but it should be simpler than that. There are many anecdotes of how people feel peace in the presence of a sage. (I myself have experienced this.) So just being locally present may trigger consumption.

The best part of the story of subtle energy products is that it is mostly free. The subtle dimensions have no limits; we can consume a sage's love all we wish, the supply is not going to diminish. There is no zero-sum game in the subtle. There may be a bit of material cost of production. So one may put a material price tag on subtle products to offset this; that may not be such a bad idea because it enables people to be more serious about their intentions when they consume subtle products. Here is also an opportunity for the government to subsidize the subtle industry.

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In the next article of this series, I will take up the subject of how spiritual economics saves capitalism.

About the Author: Academy Fellow **Amit Goswami** was recently a research fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and now has returned as a professor of physics at the University of Oregon's Institute of Theoretical Science. He has taught physics for 36 years in this country. His education was in India with a Ph.D. degree in physics from Calcutta.

Amit is the author of six books including the successful textbook, [Quantum Mechanics](#). Amit is a pioneer of science within consciousness — science based on the primacy of consciousness — which is developed in his books [The Self-Aware Universe: How Consciousness Creates the Material World](#) and [Science and Spirituality](#). He has also authored [Quantum Creativity](#) and [The Visionary Window: A Quantum Physicist's Guide to Enlightenment](#), and [Physics of the Soul](#), and the upcoming *Integral Medicine*. Amit gives workshops in the United States, Brazil, Sweden, and India on the subjects of quantum creativity, quantum healing, physics of the soul, and science and spirituality. He recently appeared in the film [What The Bleep Do We Know?](#)

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