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Frabjous Day! [1]

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Earlier in the year a prominent leftie journalist told me that something like this would happen. I'm afraid I rather choked on my pint and jeered at him at the time, for I didn't believe that something quite so simple and obvious would ever gain traction in Governmental circles [3].

> *Elderly people are to be given money to pay for their own care in a move being hailed as one of the most radical welfare reforms in a generation. They will have the right to decide how and where they spend the cash, instead of social workers dictating what help they need to live in their own homes. Personal budgets will also be set up for younger disabled people frustrated by their lack of choice.*

We move, at a stroke, from the bad end of Milton Friedman's four ways [4] of spending money to the good side: from spending other people's money on other people, to spending other people's money on yourself (with restricted budgets we get close to the very good end [5], spending your money on yourself).

Now I know, there are those who think there shouldn't be any form of Welfare State at all but let's look at political reality here shall we? Clearly, people shopping for the help that they need (yes! we've introduced markets to the monolith!) are going to get more of what they want than if they are the passive recipients of whatever the bureaucracy would like to offer them.

> *'When I was able to control their budget, I shopped around for their care, and interviewed different carers until I found the right person. Her carer now comes at 9am on the dot, but is also happy to take her to the GP, take them shopping and do other jobs that the previous person wasn't allowed to do.'*

Hurrah! Trebles all round don't you think? We're finally getting people to see the basic problem with the construction of public sector services in this country. We don't actually have to provide the services from the public sector at all. In fact, we'll get much better services if we don't, if we simply finance them and leave provision to people buying what they desire on open markets.

Now that we've got our foot in that door, when do we start seeing the same happening with the NHS, with education...

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