

One of the projects of Global Coalition for Peace is the New Economic Paradigm. The first stage was redefining economics, the second stage-- still in progress-- is the implementation of this definition. This article summarizes the first stage and the initial chapters of the second stage

## **Aparigraha a New Economic Paradigm for a Culture of Peace**

*.....A world with hunger is a world without economic justice.... without economic justice there can be no peace .....*

“Aparigraha “ the fifth Yama in the system of Raja Yoga as compiled by Maharishi Patanjali in his classic Yoga Sutras is a Sanskrit word meaning --non-greed – or non-possessiveness.

We consider this the fundamental shift in consciousness to sustain the new definition of economics that we offer.

It is nothing new since it is part of the principles of world religions whose origins can be traced to the “Perennial Truth” or “Perennial Philosophy” as P.D. Ouspensky points in his Psychology of Man’s Possible Evolution classic. It is the spine of any ethical construct and yet its practice has been long abandoned. Our premise is that any endeavor without a spiritual component will not attain real success.

The new definition says:

**Economics is a normative social science that seeks means to provide for the satisfaction of universal, finite needs and specific, limited wants. This is in order to ensure the happiness of all human beings based on their spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and psychological make-up.**

**Economics as a spiritual and material science guides the allocation of the planet’s abundant, natural, material, manufactured and human resources to enable people to act as responsible members of society and stewards of the planet.**

The parameters used to implement this paradigm are:

1. No economic system intended for the benefit of the collectivity can or should be imposed. It needs to be embraced by the majority of the people based on the content of its message.
2. It needs to prove that its assertions are viable and demonstrate that it can deliver the envisioned results.
3. It needs to rest on historic background and be bold enough to sustain a vision that walks untreaded paths.

This paradigm establishes a priority for the satisfaction of finite needs, which mainly are a) Food b) Shelter c) Clothing d) Health e) Education.

The Aparigraha Paradigm rests on two pillars, (theoretical and practical): 1. a shift in the philosophical tenets of the theory and 2. the restitution of the commons.

In the first pillar we replace Scarcity (the essential concept on which the whole present economic system is based) with Abundance, Competition with Cooperation, Incentives with “Dharma” (duty or right motivation) and “free market” for “fair trade” and Swadeshi (local production and consumption.)

In other words the main thrust of economic activity should be geared as a first and immediate objective, to the satisfaction of the basic needs of humanity, food, clothing, shelter, health and education.

In the second pillar, the practical aspects, we propose the restitution of the commons, that is Air, water and soil as inalienable rights of humanity as a whole with its corresponding consequence of responsibility. In other words, none should be subject to ownership, that means no individual or organization can own them, and it is everybody’s responsibility to care for them in a way that they are maintained in as pristine condition as possible for successive generations.

If anybody were to claim ownership of the Sun and Air, we would think that person has lost his or her mind. Imagine a world where everybody would have to pay for the right to breathe the air. For hundreds of years now, however, the process of privatization has been underway. It started with land ownership. Now there are efforts to privatize water. Why, then, would we be surprised to learn it may happen with the air and the sun? Slowly but surely we are moving to that point of insanity and unless a policy of reversal is adopted the existence of the planet itself is at stake.

Starting from the premise that the most precious possession is LIFE, the first concern is for survival, it is evident that food becomes one of the fundamental means to ensure that survival, that is food that carries the forces of life inherent in a healthy soil and environment that are open to cosmic influences.

Longevity is a normal aspiration but if it is not accompanied by a good quality of life it loses its purpose, therefore the quality of the soil should be sufficient to render a quality of food that can sustain a good quality of life should be part of this inalienable right. It is the responsibility of all the members of society to guarantee that this holds true for every single human being. As long as land is being exploited, and rendered useless by the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides, we can not expect this right to be met. Unless our relationship with the land is based on LOVE we will be caught in a downward spiral.

Agricultural land therefore becomes of primary importance for the implementation of this paradigm. Since agriculture is totally dependent on the availability of land, society should make provisions to assure the maintenance and sustainability of agricultural lands and its ownership.

Cities are encroaching on agricultural land with the concomitant effect of raising the real estate prices, a system that is threatening the survival of small farms. With the present trend, the prospect is very bleak for the future of agriculture. Since our proposal’s main premise is to establish agriculture as society’s number one priority, it follows that the land issue, directly related to it, should rise to the same level of importance.

Water, with the present trend of privatization is next one in danger but the most critical area is land. Our proposal sustains that land should be owned by those occupying it, that means ownership is by municipal, county, state or federal, authority, depending on the civil organization, this ownership is not transferable in any case and is manifested by long term leasing to those who want to make use of the land for whatever purpose.

However agricultural land will have priority over any other kind of use.

How to implement this policy;? There is only one way to reverse the current process: go back to the very beginning and start with the restitution of the land to its true owners: “the people of the land.”

A step by step approach should be taken, first securing the federal and local, state or community owned land. This land would not be available for sale under any circumstances. It would only be available for lease. The land not presently being used should be put to use buying it from owners compensating owners at market value. Finally, land presently owned by individuals and being used will no longer be subject of inheritance, but would revert to the local authorities or government, the rest of the land in time and as circumstances allow will be bought at market value from their owners.

Although we do not expect to see the new economic paradigm manifest—with all its implications—in this generation, it is encouraging to see significant changes already underway, both in theory and practice of economics. Indeed this paradigm is one of many manifestations of a global shift of consciousness. The creation of local currencies in small communities across the globe, and the growing “land trust” movement in this country indicate that conservation and local self-reliance are—necessarily—the way of the future.