

# Rap 000 – Intentional Community

## Intentioneering

As human beings our nature includes both spiritual and physical aspects. Our spiritual lives arise from an awareness of grace and inspiration, and a sense of right and wrong, while in contrast our material lives are governed by the agreements we choose to keep for the economic and political processes in which we engage. Balancing the spiritual and the material in our lives is the ideal of **material spirituality\***.

Whether the source of our spirituality is an external revelation (transcendence), an intuitive nature (immanence), or a balance of these, our awareness and expression of spiritual truth informs and balances our economic and political lives, or how we manage our time and provide for our health and happiness in the physical world. As we create the society in which we choose to live, we deliberately set an ethic of happiness according to the balance we strike between material and spiritual values.

Human society is an expression of the balance of both spiritual and material aspects. When we respect both privately and commonly owned and controlled property neither eclipses the other. The former represents material values and the latter represents spiritual values, and both are justified via **natural law**.

In order for our culture to express a balance of material and of spiritual values, we engage in processes of seeking justice through the discernment of common law. The seat of authority over individual choice is always the individual's conscious, inner light, or awareness of truth and justice. However it is inspired, the individual expression of this awareness may be considered to be one's understanding of **natural law**. A culture, then, trusts each person to manage their participation in society according to a set of common values such as of love, peace, equality, tolerance and justice. As these evolve into social norms, a **normative law** arises from the collective acceptance of individual expressions of **natural law**. When affirmed and codified by a community the common law becomes **positive law**.

Creating our own happiness ethic through processes of setting norms and social contracts is essentially the process of collective behavioral engineering resulting in forms of intentional community, defined as people practicing common agreement and collective action. This **intentioneering\*** of aspects of culture into various intentional communities with different values from the larger, outside world in aggregate creates a **parallel culture\***.

## Parallel Culture

As a global civilization, human beings have created a world order comprised of economic systems and laws that, although may have originally been inspired by **natural law**, through the processes of writing human-made laws or **positive law** are tending to respect spiritual ideals less than wealth, and the power flowing from it.

As capitalist globalization becomes increasingly exploitative of the Earth's resources, and economically and politically oppressive (materialism eclipsing spirituality), the need grows for supporting economic processes and establishing social groups in which people may express values more in balance than those of the **dominant culture\***. Such efforts represent the creation of a **parallel culture\*** in which people work to collectively manage their local community life and their involvement in larger political and economic systems, thus determining for themselves how to balance spirituality and materialism in their lives.

The **parallel culture\*** is a **chaordic** or chaotically-ordered, evolving network of local intentional communities, affirming the balance of individual needs with social and environmental responsibility, while the **dominant culture\*** is comprised of "circumstantial communities" affirming individuality over collectivity in an increasingly hierarchical, authoritarian government by the wealthy which may be called **plutocratic fascism**. In contrast the decentralized, participatory, economically diverse culture balancing common and private ownership creates a **parallel culture\*** which may be called the **egalitarian commonwealth\***.

Within the **egalitarian commonwealth\*** the various affinity groups creating intentional community each find their own balance of spiritual and material values, through different expressions of the concept of **rational altruism\***.

## Rational Altruism

The focus in the **dominant culture\*** upon the monetary economy, represented by the concept of the **scarcity paradigm\*** in which economic demand is created by the emphasis upon possessiveness and property rights, preventing sharing and resulting in the exchange economy, is often explained via the theory of **rational self-interest**. In contrast, the **parallel culture\*** of the **plenty paradigm\*** focusing upon the sharing economy of common property ownership, is explained via the theory of **rational altruism\***. The **scarcity paradigm\*** asserts the negative perspective that the pursuit of happiness requires a struggle for private wealth and power, while the **plenty paradigm\*** asserts the positive perspective that happiness is best provided when we affirm that there is plenty for all when we share.

**Rational altruism\*** affirms one's intention to work for mutual benefit, social justice and ecological responsibility. A lifestyle of caring, nurturance, sharing and cooperation involves community-oriented processes such as consensus decision-making, the building of intentional community, worker and community-owned businesses, consumer cooperatives, socially responsible investing, site-value taxation, shared real estate equity such as through land trusts, equity accounts replacing rent, and forms of time-based economies.

## Time-Based Economics

In time-based economies the world's natural resources are shared, and individual labor contributes to a common wealth by maximizing public goods and services, providing for individual happiness through systems of **rational altruism\***. With a sharing of wealth, fear of economic loss or exposure (fear of scarcity) is reduced and greed is not rewarded. Happiness, then, is found as much in working for the good of all as in work for personal benefit.

Communal economics involves forms of time-based, plenty-paradigm economies while barter and monetary systems are forms of exchange economies. Barter systems and local currencies have been used to increase local self-reliance, as well as to help monetary economies out of depression through supplementing official scarcity-paradigm currencies. **Time dollars** and **service credits** are also exchanged hour-for-hour as forms of **labor exchange**, while in communal economies no exchange is involved as labor does not earn personal property but access to all of the common wealth.

In the **plenty paradigm\***, participation in the time economy is the root of public good, and all community-supporting work is valued equally. **Anti-quota or gifting labor systems\*** such as in cohousing communities and Rainbow Gatherings involve no minimum labor requirement for a person to maintain their standing in the group. In **egalitarian** communities one hour is worth one credit regardless of who is working or what is done, and involve either a **fair-share labor system\*** requiring a labor contribution without labor accounting, or **labor credit** systems requiring a **labor quota** and the accounting of a minimum labor contribution for a person to maintain membership in the group.

## Material Spirituality

Each person must find for themselves their own balance of material and of spiritual values, and from the understanding of that authenticity then find or create a community expressing that balance. As a Gathering of Tribes the Rainbow Family develops a particular expression of diversity through affirming certain common spiritual and material values, while each constituent tribe or community develops and expresses its own unique balance.

The Rainbow Family of Living Light serves to support individuals and communities in finding their own balance by respecting both private and common property ownership through economic diversity, and both immanence and transcendence in spiritual expression through religious pluralism. These expressions of balance represent the variety of hues and shades of color in the rainbow of **material spirituality\***, affirmed and honored in the Rainbow Pageant at Gatherings of the Tribes.

\* For definitions of terms visit the Culture Magic website at <http://CultureMagic.org>