

Different Types of People

Various types of people live in the society viz. scholar, ignorant, religious, irreligious, cultured, illiterate, well mannered, ill-mannered, teacher, student, ruler, ruled, businessmen, farmers, labourers, relatives, friends, dear ones, etc. One does not behave in a similar manner with each of them. The way of treating everyone is different. A person who is beneficial for the society for e.g. a teacher, trainer, cultured and religious person, the behaviour with them cannot be similar to that with an ill-mannered, ignorant and illiterate person. The behavior with a scholar and an ignorant person, a religious and an irreligious person should not be the same. Rather, it should be as per his religious, societal and moral status. The infallible Imams (a.s.) have categorized people in the following ways:

1. One who knows and knows that he knows.

فَذَاكَ مُرْشِدٌ عَالِمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ

“He is a guide, a scholar. Then follow him.”

2. One who knows but is not attentive towards his knowledge.

فَذَاكَ غَافِلٌ فَأَيْقِظُوهُ

“He is ignorant. Then awaken him.”

3. One who does not know but he knows that he does not know.

فَذَاكَ جَاهِلٌ فَعَلِّمُوهُ

“He is illiterate. Then teach him.”

4. One who is a victim of absolute ignorance i.e. he does not know but thinks that he knows.

فَذَاكَ ضَالٌّ فَأَرْشِدُوهُ

“He is deviated. Then guide him.”¹

When people are different, then the behavior with each of them will also be different. One who is able to understand this will be able to successfully live a social and public life.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the laws of jurisprudence and morality are different for everyone e.g. father and son, husband and wife, mahram and non-mahram, friends and dear ones, ruler and subjects, teacher and student, leader and people, people and leader, scholar and ignorant, ignorant and scholar, disbeliever and a Muslim, believer and hypocrite, weak and healthy, insane and sane, etc. There is a different behaviour with each of them. The human instinct of justice demands that each of them be treated accordingly.

¹. Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 1, p. 195, H. 15 narrating from Ghawaali al-La'ali of Ibn Abi Jam'hoor al-Ahsaaee (r.a.)

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