

## **The Principle of Peaceable Conduct as a Discrimination Tool in Social Life**

**Abstract:** By exercising their (imperfect) capacity to discriminate, people try to recognize and to understand some important differences between things that make them prefer some things to other. In this article I will use my ability to discriminate between people and societies according to a principle which plays the role of attractor, both at individual and societal levels, namely the principle of peaceable conduct. This principle allows us to discriminate at the civic level between the people who have a civilized conduct and those who manifest an aggressive conduct. The category of civilized people includes individuals who (a) respect the life and bodily integrity of their fellows, (b) practice self-control, not control over others and (c) do not claim, through coercive means, the goods that their fellows have obtained by making free and peaceful use of their own faculties and capabilities. The category of aggressive people reunites (a) murderers (those who endanger the lives of their fellow), (b) tyrants (those who beslave their fellows by taking control of some of their faculties) and (c) thieves (those who claim the goods of their fellows without their consent). The civilized conduct requires high standards of action of the people who embrace it and, implicitly, considerable physical and psychical costs. The primary impulses originating in our lower Self blatantly contradict the respect for life, liberty and property of our fellows, so that it seems impossible for them to be controlled only by personal effort. Therefore, it is vital that the energy allotted to peaceable conduct by our higher Self be superior to the energy which it spontaneously mobilizes in support of the primary impulses of our lower Self. This can be achieved by feeding the people with the social energy of certain social emotions in the process of internalizing the norms of peaceable conduct. Among these emotions, contempt and shame, respectively anger and guilt stand out through the predominance of the moral dimension and force of shaping human conduct. They underlie two different moral systems – “shame morality”, and “guilt morality” respectively – that support our peaceable conduct and, ipso facto, our civilized life.

**Keywords:** principle, peaceable conduct, discrimination, social norm, social emotion