

Cold knowledge by jacob bronwski

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Recognizing the immediate danger, he swept aside the pieces of plutonium with his hand. It was a split-second decision, but he chose to protect the lives of his colleagues over himself. He then called for medical help and asked the rest of them to mark exactly where they had stood during the exposure so as to be able to pinpoint the amount of radioactivity in those areas and hence the possible damage. He also told them that he would probably die but he thought they would recover. His words were all too accurate. Slotin died nine days later from radioactive sickness.

The idea of morality put forward by Bronowski is something I feel is very accurate. Morality is not about judging who is right and who is wrong. That idea is a pseudo morality. After all, morality, right and wrong is all relative. That is to say, that each of us makes our own decisions as to what "right" and "wrong" are. This is evident right there in the last paragraph of the text; Bronowski felt that the creation of atom and nuclear bombs was wrong while Slotin clearly felt that the development of the weapons was simply a scientific necessity. They both chose their own understanding of what was right there. Similarly, so do the rest of us. This ranges from opinions on whether abortion is a crime to whether divorce is right. So if morality is not about passing judgment, I agree with Bronowski's definition of morality. It is about your attitude to others, your responsibility towards others, your social consciousness and the realization that all of them are as important as yourself. When Slotin made his error in judgment and endangered himself and his colleagues, he had two choices: Save yourself, or save the others. He chose to save the others, which is true morality. He realized the fault was his and did what he could to rectify it, even at the cost of his own life. In his <https://assignbuster.com/cold-knowledge-by-jacob-bronwski/>

action lay not just the sense that others matter but an even greater aspect of morality; culpability. It would have been so easy for him to have saved himself. Instead, he took responsibility for his actions, stood firm by his own morality. The ability to stay true to his beliefs in what was right was I think the greatest sense of integrity. This is something very few people have the strength to do. It is common for us to take a stand on an issue. However, when it comes to taking that same stand on the issue when it applies to ourselves is something very few people have the courage to do. We try and take the easy way out. So, I believe courage is as much a part of morality as our ability to decide what is right and wrong. Slotin demonstrated the courage of this nature perfectly when he reached out with his bare hands to prevent the chain reaction. In this decision was the cold knowledge of his own death, so the courage was even more laudable.

Trying to dissect the several nuances of morality as expressed by this individual's actions in a way detracts from the nobility of the concept. It is difficult when we break apart the various facets of courage, strength, and judgment that morality is made up of, to fully appreciate the enormity of the concept of morality. Bronowski did sum up the key features of morality correctly, we cannot be moral unless we recognize the importance of our neighbors, and make decisions clear-headedly, but also to be strong and faithful to our beliefs. However in the spur of the moment reaction of the scientist, which was made with all consciousness of the consequences, lies a truly great idea: I was wrong, let me make amends for it. This I think is something that is also a part of morality and integrity.