

The Compass of Knowledge: Justice and Compassion

Knowledge is the brightest torch bestowed upon humanity; without it, the roots of civilisation would remain fragile, like a sapling that has not yet touched the soil. Yet, the light emitted by this torch can sometimes burn our hands instead of illuminating our path. Knowledge is just like this; it is neither inherently good nor evil, it is simply a power. What elevates or corrupts it is the direction of the conscience that bears it.

Knowledge devoid of justice and compassion serves selfishness and cunning rather than benefit. Filtering through the fertile lands of Ancient Mesopotamia, Syriac wisdom teaches us that knowledge is not merely a mental accumulation, but that it also carries a spiritual responsibility. For knowledge to truly generate benefit and elevate society, it depends on being built upon two ancient pillars: Justice and Compassion.

The Shadow of Light: Justice

Justice is the primary philosophical boundary that determines where knowledge shall stand and what it shall serve. Knowledge devoid of justice is like rain that fails to fall upon the earth; it nourishes only its owner, leaving the rest parched.

When a physician's knowledge begins to view the patient as a source of revenue, when an engineer's knowledge is used solely for personal wealth, or when a philosopher's knowledge turns into a pedantic shield; when a clergyman, administrator, or politician serving the public sphere thinks only of their own self-interest, that knowledge ceases to be a part of truth. For this knowledge has now begun to view the other not as an end, but as a mere means.

Justice demands altruism. Using knowledge solely to expand our own comfort zone defiles the soul of knowledge. Thus, knowledge becomes corrupted; it turns its back on the common values of society and inevitably becomes the servant of cunning. And what is cunning, if not using knowledge to conceal the truth, secure an advantage, and establish an unfair dominance? True knowledge, however, demands transparency and honesty.

The Energy of the Heart: Compassion

If justice is the vertical axis of knowledge, compassion is its horizontal and all-enveloping energy. Compassion is the spiritual breath that infuses human warmth into the sea of dry reasoning. In Syriac thought, knowledge and love are not rivals, but two forces that complement

one another. The heart is the executive force that translates the laws produced by the mind into action; when the heart grows cold, the mind turns into a tyrant.

Compassion rescues knowledge from the narrow and suffocating cage of selfishness. Even if a person attains the highest rank of knowledge, they remain in humility thanks to compassion. They do not look down on others; they do not turn their knowledge into an instrument of domination. On the contrary, they use the comprehension they possess to alleviate the pain around them and to ease difficulties.

Knowledge without compassion, however, becomes egocentric. It imposes itself on its surroundings with the rhetoric of "I know best". When the power given by knowledge drives an individual into arrogance, that knowledge no longer serves the desire to be "good", but merely to be "great". And knowledge that is great but spiritually impoverished fortifies the walls of selfishness instead of offering benefit to society.

The Test of Knowledge

Knowledge can create both light and darkness. Its benefit depends on the moral will of the person carrying it. When we balance knowledge with the scales of justice and blend it with the warmth of compassion, knowledge generates benefit in the truest sense. Otherwise, our quest for wisdom is destined to turn into an ostentation condemned to remain in the shadow of personal interest and cunning.

A true sage is recognised not by how much they know, but by the virtue with which they knead what they know. What elevates them is not the volume of their knowledge, but the intention and purpose with which they use the light within that knowledge. For knowledge opens the door of benefit both to oneself and to the world only when it is balanced by justice and brought to life by the warmth of compassion.

For knowledge is both the light and the test of existence. Knowledge that does not pass through the scales of justice and is not softened by the touch of compassion merely expands the mind; it leaves the soul barren. Wisdom, however, transcends the cunning of the mind, flourishing as the fruit of a profound peace between the intellect and the heart.

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