

# The portrayal of wisdom in platos allegory of the cave

[Philosophy](#)



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I believe that knowledge is the simple process of acquiring and assimilating information, either through education or by reading the literature on specific topics. To me, wisdom is a different concept, distinct from the mere process of merely acquiring knowledge. Thus, I see wisdom as understanding one's self and the value of freedom as well as the ability to apply theories into practice through one's virtues.

Plato's wisdom becomes highlighted throughout the story but there are occasions where it gets accentuated by the way he presents his philosophy. One of the most significant indicators in this context is Aristotle's reference to the significance of the soul over the body. He perceives the journey upwards from the cave as the " ascent of the soul into the intellectual world" and not as a physical escape from bondage (P. 3 S/1). Thus, Plato intends to connote the idea that the soul is the essence that can liberate humans and, on the other hand, the body focuses on superficial matters such as trivial comforts. The postulation of such a profound idea in the story is an example of Plato's wisdom.

Aristotle's contention is that the prisoners acquiesce themselves to confinement in the cave on the presumption that it is a safe and comfortable place because they lack virtues, due to which they do not value their freedom. Thus, if a person attempts to escape from the cave and is blinded by sunlight they will ridicule him and say that it is " better not to think of ascending" and, thus, due to their lack of wisdom, the prisoner community will put to death the one who attempts to differ (Plato p 517). By this allusion, Plato attempts to emphasize that generally, people lack the faculty of wisdom and thus fail to recognize their honor and virtues. For them, the

minor comforts in life, in this case, a sense of security that the prisoners feel inside the cave, are more important than the dignity of their souls. Such a line of thinking demonstrates the wisdom of the philosopher.

Moreover, Plato also refers to Aristotle's contention that the human soul possesses virtues that are similar to physical capabilities and, therefore, if the soul lacks in certain traits, these can be inculcated by "habit and exercise" (Plato p 518). Besides, he also argues that the "virtue of wisdom more than anything contains a divine element" and, thus, a conversion of the soul becomes possible (Plato p 518). In other words, it appears that Plato seems to emphasize that the human soul can be cleansed through the right efforts if someone educates people and make them see the truth, for which the teacher needs to inspire wisdom in them. The incorporation of this philosophy in the work by Plato makes it an excellent example of a wise story.

In the story, The Allegory of the Cave, Plato identifies certain features of wisdom, which are primarily the understanding of one's true self and freedom, which the prisoners lack. Thus, they discount the value of freedom and remain shackled in the cave, content in the notion that it is safe and comfortable. On the other hand, Aristotle, a wise man knows that a good teacher can inspire a human soul and instill in it any virtues it lacks through mentoring. He has set an example of this by teaching and mentoring philosophers like Plato and it can be argued that Aristotle is considered as a philosopher of great wisdom because he has been able to practically apply his knowledge by exercising his virtues. More significantly, he has not flinched even at the prospect of death and defied it by the sheer grit of his

virtues. Thus, I believe that Plato's story, The Allegory of the Cave, envisages most of the components of the definition of wisdom I have offered.