

# [Introduction going on around him. the same](https://assignbuster.com/introduction-going-on-around-him-the-same/)

## Introduction

The mind can best be shaped to understand the world through ideas (forms) rather than material experiences and sensations. The highest type of reality is the one that is based on knowledge of forms as illustrated through the allegory of the cave.

## The nature of the mind and its relationship to other means of understanding the world

The allegory of the cave proves that man is able to perform his day to day functions without necessarily comprehending his true reality. Within the cave, there are prisoners who have been chained throughout their lives. The prisoners cannot turn their heads and the only thing they can see is a wall.

Although there are people who pass behind the prisoners through a roadway, it is never really possible to know that those are the real objects that reflect their shadows against the prisoner’s wall. Even the echo that permeates from the real people is translated as sound from the shadows. These individuals have therefore interpreted what they see or their material sensation for reality. They have not stopped to think that there could be a deeper meaning behind the shadows. In fact, even the things they identify or name are all related to what they perceive passing before them as shadows and not the actual objects. Language therefore reflects their perception of reality through the physical.

Plato argues that this never really denotes the real meaning. To get to understand what is actually going around us, one needs to go beyond the physical and grasp these things with the mind because that is the only pathway to conceptualizing reality (Brians, 52). The prisoner who was set free and shown the actual sources of the shadows actually realized that he had been mistaken all along. His reliance on his senses alone was not sufficient to grasp the world around him.

This prisoner had to be set free from his old perceptions in order to truly get to know what was going on around him. The same thing can be said about the process of acquisition of concepts. Physical objects often give mistaken views of what things really are. In order for one to truly grasp how the world works, it is essential for that individual to abandon the old concepts formed through materials and experiences with tangibles. Similarly, in order for the mind to truly conceptualize then it must challenge the status quo. The people in the cave are content with their circumstances. The dim fire light and their state of darkness is what they had come to know. They do not realize that there is something wrong with their existence.

Because they have never been exposed to another kind of existence, they are content with the little they possess. Here, the mind has not been engaged fully and this has resulted in a less fulfilling life (Plato & Jewett, 516). When one of the prisoners had the privilege of being exposed to the light and after he saw what the sun was all about, he soon found out that their previous life has been a misconception. This individual is therefore more enlightened than his counterparts who are still held in the cave. He now finds the way of life of the people in the cave to be pitiable and therefore decides that his duty is to get his people out of their state of not knowing.

However, most of them do not receive his ideas openly. Some actually despise him and believe that there is no truth other than the one tied to their existence. Plato was trying to illustrate that the mind has the capability of finding real knowledge but this will always come into conflict with knowledge obtained through material sensations as was the case with the people in the cave.

One must be ready to confront these old ideas in order to facilitate true intellectualism and enlightenment within one’s society. Indeed the process of enlightening others is always an uphill task because this entails dealing with a lot of resistance. Plato was well aware of Socrates life as a philosopher. He even discussed it with his counterpart during an analysis of the allegory. Socrates had engaged his mind to move beyond the senses in pursuit of truth. When he found this truth, he knew that it was now his duty to free other people from the chains of material perceptions. His society rejected the truth that he was providing them and eventually sentenced him to death.

It can be deduced from Socrates’ life that trying to inform others about the truth may rarely be successful. Every single individual must actively engage his mind and seek for it. It is only after one has fully experienced this transformation that one can really testify to knowing and believing the truth. Here, one can see that the nature of the mind is such that it must interact with different paradigms so as to establish which one represents reality and which one does not. Telling people about truth often entails the use of language. Plato often believed that language is comparable to the shadows that the prisoners saw on their wall. Individuals who are deeply committed to a certain view often get to that level by experiencing that view using their mind. Material perceptions are quite strong and in order to supersede them, it is essential to really experience reality.

The mind works not by hearing the truth but by interacting and gaining an experience with it (Brians, 94). In the allegory of the cave, the games that the prisoners were playing were used to symbolize the trivialities and cares of the world. Plato believed that the mind often undergoes a transformation once one encounters the light or enlightenment.

Consequently, one finds it almost impossible to be put back in the earth and to gauge issues using the same standards that other men who have not seen the light utilize. In other words, once the mind undergoes a transformation through knowledge of forms, it cannot again go back to the old method of using sensations in order to make sense of the world. These standards often become unacceptable and even pathetic to the person who has been transformed by knowledge. These people are still in mental bondage and their way of life it too far from reality (Warmington, 78). Plato firmly believed in Socrates ideas yet those very ideas are eventually what led to so many people being angry at him. Socrates often held that the invisible world is where the truth lies and that those who choose to see with their eyes are blind to the truth. He believed that using the eyes – or the senses for that matter – contributed to the obscurity of the world because it was impossible to really know the world through the use of one’s eyes.

On the other hand, Socrates argued that the intelligible is really found in the invisible world. In fact, this philosopher was so bold as to say that the sun lit world of the senses could not be taken as real and good. Those people who believed it to be so were actually putting themselves in a den of ignorance and evil. It is only the few who possess the courage to really get out of this den that get enlightened. When using the allegory of the cave, Plato was deriving his teachings from these affirmations made by Socrates and this eventually adds gravity to the assertion that the mind can truly gain an understanding of its surrounding only if it surpasses the visible and reaches for the invisible. Indeed this allegory brings to the fore the issue of spirit consciousness.

In order to really know oneself, one must think of the cave as the daily responsibilities and daily life and the life outside the cave as a life referring to the never ending spirit. In this regard, for one to really understand knowledge, one must get to the spirit. However, this is not possible unless one can become a real master of one’s mind. One must think of the world and the light in it as an illusion and one must find comfort or rely on the transcendental consciousness. The latter refers to an eternal realm that is synonymous to real good.

This allows the mind to be at ease and hence allows it to get to the real meaning of life (Plato & Jowett, 520). The allegory also provides an in-depth explanation of what life is about through one’s influences and exposure. In fact, many stereotypes or religions can sometimes be interpreted as the cave in the allegory.

A person who has grown up knowing about a certain religion to the point of becoming a fundamentalist will often close his mind to other alternatives. This is someone who believes that the only truth that exists out there is the truth that he or she was taught in his or her religion. To this end, the religion becomes like a cave which blocks him from really engaging with the truth. Even though other people might approach such a person and try to convince him about the truth, it is likely that such a person will not accept that truth because he has closed his or her mind to it. In order for one to be exposed to reality, it is necessary for one to be open to the possibility of there being another realm.

Fundamentalist religions often act as caves that close follower’s minds to knowledge and reality. It is often essential for such individuals to open their minds so that they can undergo a paradigm shift. The allegory of the cave also illustrates how each and every member of society has a certain kind of cave in their mind. This often emanates from impulsive thought processes that get formulated into the mind by one’s sensations. However, once the mind, which is synonymous to the cave, starts allowing reality to permeate it then the cave will start being dismantled. It is here where the mind will start to build up real knowledge and therefore look beyond certain reality so that it can be fully understood.

The point at which one can get to real self actualization will occur when one breaks down this barrier of the cave (Warmington, 201). Certain underlying truths can only be accessed once the mind tears down these structures and replaces it with truth structures. The cave is usually created by those experiences that people go through and it often closes people off certain possibilities. The truth is very expansive and cannot be contained within the cave mentality. Plato’s allegory on the mind and its relation to material sensations also provides a way of understanding what real leadership is. When an individual had the privilege of seeing the light, then that person goes back to his former life, that person would genuinely want to bring the other people in his society to par with his reasoning. This kind of leader would take up the responsibility of teaching not because of a quest for power, fame, glory or any other superficial reason; such a person would want to govern so that he or she could make his society a better place.

The true leader is therefore one who does it out of an obligation rather than selfish needs. In other words, this person will be able to forsake all other material based desires in order to meet the needs of his society. In essence this reflects maturity of the mind. One cannot be in a position where one can change one’s society without forsaking the things that are related to the external.

It is also essential to take note that real change in one’s life only takes place when one has taken charge of one’s reality. Humankind often allows the external to design and create it’s life; this is what makes up what people become. Such individuals will often go through life without thinking through it.

They will take each day as it comes and not even bother taking a conscious decision to take charge of their existence. Through the mind, mankind has the option to take over his existence and this must be a conscious step taken by all who dare (Watt, 152). One would wonder why philosophers even bother with the other members of society since it has been clearly proven that they will meet resistance stemming from sense related inhibitions.

Plato believes that it is a true leader’s responsibility to take on this task because that is the only way that society will get better or it is the only way that the truth can really get to other people. As an enlightened person, one must be a representation of goodness because the rest of society may not yet be able to comprehend these kinds of concepts. Progress in human development can only be realized by looking at reality in a different way and this is facilitated through the sacrifices of enlightened leaders.

It is also interesting to note how man can resign himself to a life of reality if he does not limit his mind to his perceptions. One’s conception of truth and reality can affect one’s capacity to access education and be changed by it. It can also affect one’s spirituality and one’s ability to reach real spiritual consciousness.

It also permeates public life and the way politics plays out in people’s lives. The mistaken belief in limited perspectives of the sensations eventually permeates in everyday life and therefore makes one’s existence flawed. It all starts with the mind since everything else is as a result of a decision made by one individual. Human beings have an innate fear of new ideas. This normally occurs because such ideas will expose the limitations in one’s former thinking. In fact, such fears are so intense that instead of questioning the new ideas, humans would rather take the short way out and kill the bearer of the message. Great reasoning naturally offends its listeners and thinking is not a thing that is taken in stride.

The prisoners in the cave were offended by the assertions of the prisoner who had seen the light because ignorance is blissful. This illustrates that when one is bound in the world of sensations, one can ever really embrace knowledge. Such a person will try to question it or may try to resort to other drastic measures. This means that without truly engaging the mind, one can never really be virtuous. One would always be willing to employ radical methods in order to resist ideas. This allegory is also important in illustrating the difficulties that the mind goes through during transitions from light to darkness and darkness to light. The prisoner who had been removed from the cave soon came to find out that it was going to be very difficult for him to adjust from the darkness to the light.

He almost felt like he was being blinded by it. On the other hand, after studying the sun, the seasons and reality, he also found it very difficult to adjust back to the darkness in the cave. Putting knowledge into his mind is what assisted in these transitions. He was able to get past these difficulties through knowledge. Therefore one can assert that real adjustment occurs when the mind is continually fed with ideas (Watt, 191).

## Conclusion

The mind must be truly engaged in order to get to the truth. This may involve loosening one out of the chains that emanate from false beliefs. These beliefs are brought on by one’s experiences with the material sensations.

Consequently, for one to get to the truth, one must supersede this superficial existence. However, the truth is often not told or explained through language, it must be experienced by the mind by specific individuals. Enlightenment also creates good leaders because their minds have already overcome the ignorance and darkness of the visible world.

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