

Transcript ~ Republic and Statesman Dialogues

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From the Series: The Dialectic from Plato to Mao

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Part I: *The Republic*

Before considering, again, the Divided Line, together with the "Allegory of the Cave" and the "Myth of Er" in *The Republic*, three of the most important passages in *The Republic* on the *polis* on understanding the Platonic Dialectic, let me mention straight away what is obvious. Plato uses the diagram, he uses an allegory, and he also employs a myth at the end of *The Republic*. Plato is flexible in his formulation, at the same time, he knows the importance and the value of formulation. No formulation can ever contain an answer either for the individual or for society, let alone for politics. Any formulation in terms of the Platonic view of knowledge is as meaningful, as valuable, as a person's capacity to understand it in terms of his own experience, to use it in his own life, to employ it in his own understanding of other human beings and as society as a whole. In other words, any formulation is a basis of knowledge only to the extent to which it is a basis of growing self-knowledge. From this standpoint, these are three extraordinarily potent, continually valid, and yet ever-elusive modes for growing within oneself and coming to increasing insight through a series of progressive awakenings to climactic insights that could be very crucially relevant to one's own life and understanding one's own destiny, and even more relevant to understanding what might be a small and yet a valid hope for the *polis* in an age of corruption.

Now, in relation to the combination of formulations, with a flexibility in attitude to them, the most hopeful words uttered are those of Cornford in his book *The Unwritten Philosophy*. In *The Unwritten Philosophy* Cornford says that all the greatest philosophers have presuppositions of two kinds. There are those presuppositions which they do not reveal, because they take them for granted, they share with the entire zeitgeist, the thought of the age. Every philosopher belongs to an epoch, he emerges out of a society, he inherits a certain lineage of thought conceptions, thought forms, ideas, he

is also limited by the language in which he functions in ordinary life, the more sophisticated languages that he receives through his education. To this extent, no philosopher is free from the limitations of space and time, of language, in the realm of communication. So, to this extent, of course, when he formulates even the greatest formulations of the greatest philosophers, there are certain limitations that are built into his formulation, and he may not be aware of it.

But there is a second class of presuppositions of which the very greatest philosophers have been aware, the most creative minds. Presuppositions which they know but which they cannot share, which is either unsafe to tell, or useless to tell, or inconvenient to tell, or for which human beings are not ready to handle those presuppositions. This is very important to understand about any great philosophical mind, and it is, of course, very crucially relevant to understanding the Platonic Dialectic. Cornford, also in another essay in that same volume, *The Unwritten Philosophy*, begins with a very memorable passage from Shakespeare, the dialogue between Lorenzo and Jessica in *Merchant of Venice*. Lorenzo is a Pythagorean. He makes that memorable formulation of the man who has within himself the experience, which is comparable to that in music, of all those harmonies which helps him to understand and see the whole Universe as a magnificent, vast system of macrocosmic forms in which are displayed perfectly: proportionality, beauty, measure, in which there is a perfect interrelationship between the parts and the whole. So, the Universe itself may be seen in this great Pythagorean image, very common in Elizabethan England, together with the concept of the Great Chain of Being. We find Lorenzo can formulate it, and he formulates it at the very time that Jessica - his, you might say, hippyish girlfriend - she experiences something of what Lorenzo formulates. Jessica, equally, inwardly finds of her experience which is like a peak experience that comes out of love, she is able to experience the truths that Lorenzo informed.

Here there is a distinction between active and passive awareness, and Cornford raises a question: Which is better? He himself is partial to the active formulation, to active contemplation. And then he pays tribute to Pythagoras, who, he says, is the last man in Western history whom we know, united and fused within himself both active and

passive contemplation. In other words, one can only be humble before the possibility of fusing both active and passive awareness. But why, given that men fall far short of that supreme exemplification, why it is more important to formulate rather than merely to experience? This is very important. Experience, for its own sake, is the archetypal criterion of deadness. In an age of corruption, men, to a certain degree of experience, drown themselves, and this becomes a substitute for any minimal kind of effectiveness. doing anything for others, making their lives in any sense, like Thoreau said, life could be a poem with a beginning, a middle, and an end. And therefore, many people drown themselves in the mere glut and the flux of experience and look for that as beautiful. They are rather like the person referred to in *The Republic*, filling all the theaters, constantly going from one thing to the other as if they were paid to attend as many of these occasions as possible. It is the realm of the lower *eros*, it has its own value, time is to spare, but it can also become a substitute for true growth, growth that must begin in ignorance. Therefore, there is a sense in which to formulate is very important.

Now, from this standpoint, we can see here we have a classic formulation of what has sometimes been called "The Divided Line", but which here is presented differently in a manner that has never been presented before, because it unites different facets to the great image in the diagram of Plato that we call "The Divided Line". Now, you will notice in this diagram that on the left we have words that indicate states of mind, you might also say they indicate degrees of knowledge. In other words, the line on the left is seen from the standpoint of the known in relation to states of mind. And the line on the right is seen in terms of objects of knowledge, the reality states, the relative truth value of the objects of awareness, of the objects of cognition. In the middle we have a line which is the knower, because the knower is constantly engaged in different modes of knowing, and at the same time these modes of knowing, if they have to have any reality content, must be focused upon objects of knowledge, objects of knowledge that are independent of himself. So, the line on the right points to that in the world which represents its structure; that in the world which exists independent of oneself. Applicable to politics, it represents the realities of politics: facts, truths, changing truths, relative truths, deeper

truths, more fundamental truths, and also a hope for eternal truths. The knower then, standing somewhere in the middle, between the very process of knowing and the objects of knowledge, he is constantly involved in the interaction between the two. This affects his degree of confidence in himself, this affects his degree of clarity, this affects the extent to which he is brought up with illusions, the degree of his hold over reality. This affects, you might say, his stability in a world of instability.

And at the apex, of course, we find, at the very top, the knower, knowing and the known have become one. That is an ideal and supreme state at the very apex, which is beyond even the conception of ordinary men, except by analogies and by reflections except in precious golden moments. And, therefore, what is even above the process, above the pyramid or the triangle, is the sun. The sun here representing not the visible sun, but the invisible sun, the source of mental nourishment, the source of spiritual light, of creative energy. And that sun is equated here to the Agathon, the supreme Good, the unconditional Good, the absolute transcendent Good, which is reflected in the world and, therefore, is immanent, but is reflected in particular ways, in distorted ways, reflected through images and shadows, degrees of diffused light, and is also to be found in conditions of extreme darkness. So, therefore, the ascent of the Line is an ascent, ideally, to that ultimate vision of the supreme goal, which constitutes a kind of perfection. To assert that the Line is meaningful is to suggest that there is a stimulus for individuals to growth that comes out of the very concept of perfectibility, that no man is wholly lost, no man is irredeemable, every human being, if he makes proper use, and can grow beyond his existing state, he can grow towards greater integration, greater self-assurance, greater clarity. So, therefore, there is a richness, a richness to this diagram, which makes it a worthy object for true reflection, of persisting and recurring contemplation. At the same time, all diagrams are misleading because this is a problem of the Dialectic. The Line itself resolves to the third section, it is a tool, it is an aid to the imagination, it is a tool of thought, the most abstract thought, and because it is concrete, it can deceive us. So, there is a sense in which merely knowing about this, at best, could put one only in the third stage. But if people merely use this "Line" at the level of derived

and borrowed knowledge, they will be in the second stage. And if they merely see it in terms of a fleeting image or impression, which makes them feel good at a certain time, then they will be in the fourth stage in relation to the Line. So clearly, then, we see this is the paradox of the Platonic Dialectic, that to truly know the meaning of the Line is, in fact, to go beyond the four stages, where alone the true Platonic Dialectic, as a dynamic activity, an integrating mode of awareness, comes into full and free play. This, then, is one of the paradoxes in relation to the Line. Nonetheless, we can, knowing that in this sense there is something built into the diagram that makes it extremely difficult to grasp, to attain to, nonetheless, it could be a very useful basis for one's growth, for one's self-assessment, for one's self-correction.

Now, the Platonic Model (or models) which include the Diagram, the "Allegory of the Cave", and the "Myth of Er" may always be seen from the standpoint of the individual, from the standpoint of the *polis* as a whole, from the standpoint of social interaction. In other words, there are at least three ways in which we could use the Platonic Model, and use of the model (or of the various models) gives us greater control in relation to the use, gives us greater insight, becomes the basis by which we could extract meaning out of experience. When used from the standpoint of the individual, the Diagram on the blackboard could become the basis for growth in self-awareness, for becoming an individual, a self-correcting agent, a person who sought a minimum ground of self-awareness and can gain self-knowledge. And as a result of even relative self-knowledge, he could become more controlled in his self-expression, self-knowledge from the standpoint of thought, creative self-expression from the standpoint of language, but also, he could go beyond himself, self-transcendence from the standpoint of reality, the reality that is always larger than himself, the reality that can only be imperfectly represented in language itself. So, from the standpoint of the individual, then, it could be seen either in terms of thought, or in terms of language, or in terms of reality, but in every case, it involves the self. And it involves the growth of that self through painful awareness of former illusions, through a willingness to place one's current and deepest illusions on the table, so to speak, before the light, the inward light, the inward light that

discriminates and selects, that sifts, that isolates the dross from the gold. And there is so much dross, and yet it looks for that which is valid and valuable at any level, in any experience, in relation to knowledge, in relation to thought, in relation to self-expression, in relation to creativity.

But above all, the capacity to do this will depend upon the degree of self-transcendence. A man who cannot go beyond himself will never know himself. A man who cannot go beyond language will never be able to master language. And a man who cannot go beyond his self-image will never gain self-knowledge. This, then, is, you might say, one of the great warnings implicit in the Line. From the standpoint of politics as a whole, we can see that this diagram, as well as the "Allegory of the Cave", as well as the "Myth of Er", helps to see how far, in any *polis*, individuation is possible, not merely a principle, but a practice. What is the proportion of individuals in a Platonic sense that exists in any political society? Obviously, the proportion of individuals will be an index to the quality of political culture of the *polis*, and also contain some clue to its future fate, to its collective destiny. But individuals must also be seen in relation to roles in society.

So, the question, then, becomes: Is a sufficient proportion of individuals placed in those roles, where they could provide leadership to those who are not yet individuals, those who are merely psychic automata, to whom a kind of Skinnerian mechanics would be most applicable? In other words, politics may be seen in terms of creativity, the creative fulfillment of opportunities, the creative use and enlargement of alternatives, and the creative transformation of the *polis* as a whole. And this can only be done at the height by those who are truly individuals, but there is a sense in which all human beings who attempt to become individuals will become increasingly creative, or at any rate, less aggressive, less destructive, less caught up in inner division, less prone to self-destruction. And then also we can see that because self-transcendence is relevant to politics as a whole, and not merely the individual, there is a sense in which ultimately any political society will be as strong, or as weak, as is the possibility of actual collective pursuit of something beyond the *polis* itself, a supreme Good, the good of humanity, the good that pertains to all living human beings, a good that transcends time and goes

beyond history. In other words, a *polis* in history will be as effective as its capacity to pursue a goal that is beyond history. So therefore, we see that self-awareness in the form of individuation, when generalized, and self-expression when applied to the activity and the performance of roles by a variety of men in society, and self-transcendence in its ultimate sense, which is the capacity of the *polis* as a whole collectively to see beyond itself, all of these will become very important in understanding the degree of growth, and the possibilities for any political society.

Now, if one sees it in terms neither of the individual, nor the *polis* as a whole, but purely in terms of social relationships, then one might see this also in three ways: From the standpoint of the quality of fulfillment of roles; secondly, from the standpoint of the degree of flexibility in relation to roles that enables men to fulfill roles without being caught in it; and thirdly, from the standpoint of role transcendence, a man is a man seen as more than merely a person who occupies a particular position in society, or has a particular kind of job, or has a certain kind of power in relation to politics as a whole. The capacities of men to go beyond roles will be very crucial to their becoming flexible in relation to the particular roles that they perform, and these too, in turn, will have a bearing upon the degree to which they could fulfill effectively the opportunities provided to them. So, therefore, any person can begin with becoming more effective in the fulfillment of his own role if he is going, as it were, to gain that kind of flexibility in relation to roles in general, and that kind of transcendence of his own role as well as of all roles which enables him to be a free man. So clearly, then, we see that the Platonic Model, when seen from these three standpoints in relation to the individual, the *polis*, and society as a whole, or social interaction, could be seen to be a model that can accommodate all levels of experience, and at the same time provide a stimulus to growth, and above all, it points beyond itself. What it teaches, or what it exemplifies, is the politics of perfectibility.

Now, when we come to "The Divided Line" seen in this way, here we find that the images are those of ascent and descent. What is involved in descending down the Line is not spoken of at all in *The Republic*, this is spoken of in *The Statesman*. That is why many

scholars distinguish between what they call the earlier Dialectic and the later Dialectic. The earlier Dialectic of *The Republic* is more concerned with ascent. In this particular diagram *The Statesman* is concerned in what is called the later Dialectic with descent, with descent in terms of knowledge, descent in terms of insight and vision. However, both ascent and descent are seen in a different way in the "Allegory of the Cave" in terms of withdrawal and return, and in the "Myth of Er", the same double movement is treated in a very much more difficult way, in terms of necessity and choice. So, if then, you want to really grasp "The Divided Line", then you should see it in terms of ascent, and descent, of course, is implicit in it, but it is not fully treated in *The Republic*. In one sense it is treated in relation to politics, but not in relation to the individual, not in relation to knowledge, there it is more fully explained in *The Statesman*. And you might see the "Allegory of the Cave" in terms of withdrawal and return, withdrawal from the chaos of darkness in the cave of the world, and a return to that, but this, again, is a very complex metaphor. And the "Myth of Er" is seen in terms of the interplay of necessity and choice, not really in relation to the destiny of an individual during life, but in relation to the determination of their destiny beyond his life, before birth, and which becomes relevant after death. So therefore, we have three aims that are very powerful aims.

Now this line in the middle may be seen as a scale, as a scale with certain ratios that are built into it, which ratios are very puzzling, because what is below the middle line is less than what is above. So therefore, the line is not really in the middle. The realm of reality is so much greater than the realm of appearances, and you might say, if you take the scale with C and D, D plus C is to B plus A, as B is to A (below that line) and as A is to B. This then is a very heady matter, and needs by individuals further reflection. In other words, there is inequality between the realms of becoming (ever becoming) and of being, between the realm of appearances and the realm of reality. And this inequality recurs both under the middle line (middle in quotes) and around, under the dividing line (I should say) rather than middle. Because the real division, the real division is at that point, that is where people experience the greatest difficulty. Something like a quantum jump is involved in getting above that line. Hence it is so difficult.

No wonder then the inability of men to get just above that line is what makes them very defensive, insecure, and highly dogmatic in the realm of belief, in the realm of *pistis*, which is the realm of tension, the realm of conflict, where opinions clash and are held with exaggerated fervor, with dogmatic intensity, because somewhere they are aware that they are stuck, that they cannot go beyond. And therefore, it is that people in the realm of *pistis* have got to reinforce themselves by constantly looking down upon people in the realm of images, people who are ineffective, people who will do nothing, whether they're doing nothing by talking about the mass society, or they do it by their contempt of the young. In whichever form it takes, in different societies (and in our own) there is no question that people in the realm of *pistis* build for themselves a false confidence, a relative but shaky security, by looking down upon people in the realm of images. People in the realm of images, of course, can sometimes become obsessed, they can become obsessed with one particular object of experience, with one particular image. They can become so obsessed with what they see that they could become totally blind. People in the second realm of *pistis* could become so tense, so caught up in the confusion that arises out of different shifting and conflicting opinions, that at the extreme they will go mad.

Which means that in the third realm above *pistis* there is an attempt to become relatively sane, relatively clear-sighted, to use both eyes, to have some minimum self-assurance in relation to some clarification of the world, to concepts and models, to abstract ideas, to laws and theories, a sufficient clarification to be able to gain sufficient control over the object, or the subject matter, of one's own pursuit, as well as over one's life. And above it, of course, in the fourth realm, there we have that kind of pure clarity, that kind of total assurance, that supreme sanity which may look at times to be a form of divine madness to those below it. And that supreme clarity may seem to be a form of higher psyche which sometimes people call "religious or mystical." But there is no way by which a human being can jump to a secure command over that supreme clarity, that divine self-assurance, without having to go through the earlier stages. And, of course, the man who comes down these stages, he comes down with a control, he can handle anything. He can handle concepts and models, he's not afraid of them, he can handle

opinions, and he's not afraid of them, he can handle images, what is in the realm of his own imagination, and he's not afraid of anything that appears before him as an image. His is the realm of constructive imagination, of *Noesis*, of that kind of vision or knowledge, where he has direct perception, where the relation between the known, the process of knowing, and himself as a knower, has become so close that they have become like three-in-one, though they have still not become totally unified. Total unification is, of course, only at the top. But that degree of unification you see in the stage (the fourth stage of the line) is so rare in the world, so high in relation to the ordinary condition, that even that becomes so ideal as almost to be irrelevant to many men. And the arrogant denial, the insecure insistence that such a state does not exist, actually is a sure sign that men somewhere can recognize it when they see it, but it also threatens them. It threatens them because they want it, but they want it without pain, they want it without detachment, they want it without renunciation, they want it and they want the world as well. And no wonder, therefore, at that point you see there is a quantum jump that is seen in terms of the stark, sharp choice that you find given to us, say, by Jesus when he said that you have to choose between God and mammon, or by other great spiritual teachers who say that you have to die before you could live in that ideal sense, you have to give up the things of this world, the allegiances and attachments that are so important to other men, before you're truly ready to be a philosopher in that supreme sense, where you can give yourself wholly to that, and as a result of which you can see the whole, and see it steadily, and at the same time perform effectively in relation to particulars. So clearly, then, this dialogue is so rich that I can only mention a few points in relation to it that you might think about.

Now, I might just give one more clue in relation to this. This cave can be seen, as I have said, in terms of clarity, it could be seen in terms of confidence, it could be seen in degrees, in terms of degrees of knowledge, but it could also be seen in relation to abundance of wisdom, when wisdom involves a marriage of truth and love. In other words, it is impossible to experience the Line in the full sense without seeing it in terms of love, and not only in terms of truth. Unless a person can grow from lesser loves to

larger loves, unless he can accommodate within his heart a profoundly burning love of the whole, he simply will not receive that wisdom which is in the highest state. No wonder then, people who merely have acquired various excellences of the head, but who are devoid in heart qualities, are terribly sad, at best, when they cannot reach to that higher vision. That vision is the product of that kind of profound love of every living man in the *polis*. Such intense identification with the poorest, with the most wretched, with the disinherited, such an overwhelming feeling that is strong and impersonal, that makes no discriminations, that is impartial, but at the same time so profound, that it can release the bird of wisdom. And wisdom, in this sense, also releases the will. The higher will can only be released through the marriage of truth and love. When a person sees clearly and feels strongly, then he is moved, moved to act, moved first to act for himself, moved to make changes in his own nature, moved to prepare himself for more effective rendering of service to men in the *polis*.

So, clearly then, that Dialectic could also be seen in this diagram, in terms of the will, so you could see it in terms of truth, you could see it in terms of love, you could see it also in terms of the will. Now, if some of you want to work more on this in other ways, you might also try to see it in terms of the movement from the many to the one, from confusion to clarity, from partiality to unity, from illusion to reality, from ignorance to wisdom, from insecurity to true assurance. You could also see it as a movement from fragmentation of consciousness through increasing one-pointedness, or single-mindedness, to a unity of thought and action. And lastly, you could also see it as a movement from a lack of commitment (where your life is meaningless and you cannot give yourself to anything) to a supreme conviction, a total commitment, where there is no problem of commitment. In other words, in terms of all these various standpoints that I have suggested, you could try to work out for yourself the degrees in-between and to illustrate, for example, in relation to truth. In relation to clarity: you have confusion, pseudo-clarity, clarification and clarity. In terms of confidence: you have insecurity, false security, relative security and true confidence. So, you could similarly try to work out from these many standpoints the Line. You might also try to work it out from the

standpoint of the *polis* as a whole (politics as a whole) as a movement from extreme scarcity, extreme plenty, from scarcity to plenty. And this would be a very truthful clue in understanding what will later on be explored in the course.

But when you turn to the "Allegory of the Cave", you have the most beautiful shade of meaning, you have a very different kind of meaning. Here, we totally forget about knowledge in the ordinary sense. The "Allegory of the Cave" is non-cognitive in an intellectualist sense. This is its great advantage. There everything is explained in terms of seeing, seeing the shadows, seeing images, seeing the state of darkness, seeing as it were, in terms of diffused light, seeing the central fire which is burning behind. Most human beings are like prisoners in the cave. And then taking the rough road of ascent from within the cave through a narrow aperture outside the cave, and then the experience of becoming blinded initially by the sunlight outside the cave. The need for patience so that one's eyes can get used to the real light, having for so long sat within a cave where one only had reflected light, half-light, images, shadows and darkness. And then the person makes a further ascent up a hill, and on top of the hill, he is able now to have a vision, a direct vision of the sun, a direct vision of supreme Good. And the vision is so ecstatic, so incredible, that he would like to stay there forever, but he's also moved by compassion, compassion for those like himself, who, within the cave, are still caught in ignorance and insecurity, are still chasing shadows, and out of this profound compassion, he wants to return to the cave. But when he returns to the cave, he finds what is clear within the cave, at best, is extremely blinding to him, the cacophony of the cave, the language of placing blame, the search for status, the distinctions that men make among themselves, these are strange to him. He cannot understand what all the fuss and bother is about. And indeed, he initially stumbles in the languages that men provide, which are the languages of insecurity, of comparison and contrast, languages of inequality, or mechanical equality. And therefore, he himself becomes the object of ridicule, he is laughed at, he is abused, but he persists. He persists because he knows that he will find among the many of those, those few who are dissatisfied sufficiently with what they have, who experience a kind of divine discontent, and who want to hear from

him about the sun, who want to hear from him about that which is outside and beyond the cave. And thereby, he finds his like-minded companions, and they constitute a kind of brotherhood, a brotherhood who is secret, because what they share, they cannot make the others understand. And instead of wasting time trying to communicate to the ungrateful, they strengthen their own inward awareness and knowledge, and out of a profound compassion for the *polis* as a whole, they constitute themselves a kind of saving remnant, giving the *polis* its last chance in an age of corruption, in a time of destruction. So, you can see it's a very moving image, and this, of course, is very much the age in which we live in.

And when one really uses the Allegory properly, then I believe the person is ready to use for himself the "Myth of Er" at the end. If you haven't used the Allegory and the Diagram, I sincerely request you not to assume the unnecessary burden of reading the "Myth of Er" at the end. Please avoid it like the plague, because I know individuals among my many students over many years, who when they read it in a certain mood of calm, they were so moved that they understood themselves in some manner. So, the "Myth of Er" then should not be read unless you are truly ready to read it, and I assure you, you do not have to attend a question on the "Myth of Er" in the examination, or in the midterm unless you want to, totally avoid it if you can't handle the Allegory at the time.

Now, one of the important points of the Allegory is, which is very important for anyone who wants to understand, is that the beginning is the most difficult. Now that is very true of course in regard to the Dialectic and the Line, but it is more difficult to see in relation to the Line, because one thinks because one has education, one thinks because one knows something which the poor garage mechanic doesn't, or because one has the illusion one is going to write the book to end all books, or whatever, one places oneself wrongly on the Line. Therefore, I'm afraid there is no beginning, no continuation, but in the "Allegory of the Cave", it is easier to see the importance and the difficulty of the beginning. There is no kidding oneself in relation to that allegory. Of course one is a prisoner, of course one's hands are tied, one's will is weak, of course one's feet are tied,

one is immobile, or one is only capable of a frenetic motion, one cannot move at will. So, in that sense of course every man is a prisoner. And of course one is fixed in the darkness of the surrounding confusion, one is immobilized, one is caught in infatuation, one is caught in obsessional responses, reactive responses to the passing images, the fleeting opinions, one is clinging to shadows. And indeed, people when they try to break from that, they experience such a void, such a loneliness that it is very difficult.

So, the beginning itself is difficult because without some withdrawal into oneself, some initial withdrawal, at least a willingness to close your eyes and to think for yourself for a few minutes, you will not be capable of even beginning to think that it is worthwhile to turn around. And there is a very important point in relation to turning around, namely, turning around is only possible when the eye is withdrawn, otherwise, one will never turn around and see the fire. And one has to reach out for that fire even though you have chains, and by a desperate movement out of your desire to reach for the fire, break your chains, and then tread on that rough territory and overcome your fear of the darkness in the aperture, and willing to risk going into the abyss and exploring what is beyond. So that is very, very important. No wonder then even though Plato is talking about politics of redemption, redemption is illusive, because it is a starting point that is difficult, persistence, that is even more difficult. All the long day where people want to live like fireflies, or they cannot even begin to think what it would be like to prepare oneself in 1972 for, say, 2006, just in a few years, to do that now, which will help you to greet the end of the century, to greet the end of the century as a man, as a man who has made something of his life, a man who has something to give other men. It is very difficult, very difficult to handle that kind of thinking without a great deal of preparation, without considerable courage in withdrawing from the clack of mere opinions, without turning inward, turning the searchlight into one's heart and mind, into the very depths of one's being, into one's soul, so that one is moved, moved to make a total change in one's life. Of course, it is very difficult.

So, the "Allegory of the Cave" then makes us humble, but if we have compassion, if we see that the predicament of others is like our own, and we want to do it not for our own

sake, but for the sake of others, for the sake of all, compassion acts as a tremendous force. A person may not give a drop of change for himself, but if he thinks that all prisoners need to be helped, that will give him the extra courage, that will give him the courage that he will need at every point along the return movement to the source and help him to show that kind of courageous compassion which would make him wish to descend back into the cave, the courage that is needed in reentering the cave, the compassion that is needed in continuing within the cave, these would be separations from that unified, courageous compassion that is felt in one great moment, in one high and holy view on the top of the mountain. So, no wonder then, you see, a tremendous, a tremendous relevance of the "Allegory of the Cave" to every one of us.

And one might also add that the cave in relation to eternal truths, in relation to ideal values, the pain in the contemplation of abstractions, that is a pain that oddly enough is understood only by the greatest philosophers, but by many more mystics. Rudolf Otto, in his idea of the holy, spoke of the *Mysterium Tremendum*. There is a kind of terror, he said, before God, there is a terror before the object of the supreme vision, the one light, a terror of becoming one with it. So, therefore, one might say there is a kind of archetypal higher experience of a kind of fear, before one can confront No-thing at the top; before one can penetrate the darkness at the aperture of the cave and face the sun. And that corresponds to the terrible, crippling, paralyzing fear that the chained prisoners experience at the very bottom of the Line of the diagram, that they experience where they are, here and now.

Now, seen in this way then, we could say (even though one may state the ideal, and even though one knows the difficulties in practice, let us be quite realistic) most human beings start off with limitations, they have a kind of response which is valid, they have a degree of fidelity to that response through these great teachings of Plato. And yet we could say that a very wise man could predict at some level what they were going to do before they died, because he will see the way in which they walk, the way in which they talk, the way in which they sit. He will see as it were the limits of the patterns of identities in them now, and a willingness to suffer and to make changes, and he would be certainly

able to test it over a short period of time, in terms of their willingness to go through the preliminary trials. So, there is therefore a very real sense in which, to be truly frank and to be truly honest, is, that by the end most people will settle for a lesser equilibrium. So, the patterns of identity of human beings will link up with patterns of living, with, as it were, a certain interplay between choices they make and what is external to them and is in a state where necessary, with how they meet suffering, so their destinies in one sense, therefore, would all be anticipated, or in terms of Camelot, one could say, go back to the original moment. A wise man will know from the original moment of response to something very great, you could more or less anticipate that something would occur.

There is, therefore, a deep sense in which, even though in the realm of thought one can handle the highest, one's capacity to incarnate, to embody that in life, is a function of one's habits, a function of what one is prepared to give up, what one is prepared to change, one's fearlessness in coming to terms with one's limitations, one's willingness to ceaselessly learn and go beyond existing limitations, one's patience and persistence in gaining through degrees of strength and the abandonment of lesser levels of equilibrium, of that kind of ultimate fearlessness, that kind of supreme strength, which Plato associates with divine manliness, which makes of men godlike—godlike heroes. Every man has it in him to be a hero, every man has it in him to be a man, everyone has it in him to be a god, and in practice, most people will not avail themselves of all the opportunities they have. This then makes for the tragedy of the human condition. All beings have got inserted into a totality of mankind.

See the Trojan women, and then you see the inability of not only the women, but also the men (but especially the more emotional women) the inability to accept the consequences of their own choices, the way they get immobilized, in guilt. The noblest of them all, Hector; he died bravely with detachment and dignity. And his wife, Andromache, had a kind of derivative nobility that she secured out of knowing what was most wonderful in Hector, and which she wanted to see and found, but to whom she was attached. In other words, you see that human beings through attachment are not able to see clearly the connection between causes and consequences. Therefore, if after

death, if, they had an opportunity to review the whole of their life, which could affect their destiny in the next life, in terms of the "Myth of Er", that would depend upon how much detachment and discrimination, self-correction, honesty that they gained during life, otherwise, they would settle for imitations, appearances, they will choose a life by reacting against the insufficiency of the former life. So, a good woman, a noble one, will be reborn as a male athlete, says Plato in the "Myth of Er". The one who came, despair of the whole of humanity, Agamemnon, became a misanthrope, he cannot even re-enter a human form. On the other hand, Odysseus, who was so weary after all his long sufferings, he can return only as a man who has acquired an unimportant life. He wants an opportunity to be left alone, he wants an opportunity, as it were, for that kind of quiet life where he can gather in his inward resources. So, different men make different choices, but alas, the tyrant's role is chosen by a good man, a man who is good only in terms of externals. When he sees the external possibilities of the life of a very powerful king, who in fact is going to be a tyrant, he will choose that. He will be a highly self-righteous man with an insistence that he knows the good, but tyrannical in the imposition of it upon other men. Now, this is simpler also in terms of the three great mythic figures in the "Myth of Er": Lachesis, who stands for the past, Clotho, who stands for the present, Atropos, who stands for the future. And when coming into the world, one has to descend into the "River of Forgetfulness." So, human beings, once they are born, cannot begin by asking whether there is any justice in the universe, because they have a new brain and a new body, they have no point of contact within what sense they deserve to be where they are, but their reactions will be significant. What they dislike, they deserve to have, what they are drawn to could be a recurrence of what they were drawn to before. So therefore, unless a person can go beyond likes and dislikes and reactions, he will not get any clues in relation to his deeper self.

And before going to the "Myth of Er," Plato also speaks about how everything is corruptible, entropy is built into matter, is built into history, built into Nature. The only incorruptible realm is the realm of pure thought, and even there one will not find an immortal Divine Self or Man, because one has to go beyond even the incorruptible realm

of pure divine thought, the highest thought of which a human being is capable. One has to become so self-transcendent, one has to erase the very root of the sense of selfhood, one has to become a kind of zero, as I said before, so that one can in fact let the universe, so to speak, enter into oneself, or become one with the universe as a whole in a supreme macrocosmic vision, and thereby one can, as it were, gain the highest conception of fulfillment. So, you might then ask, what is the concept of necessity, and what is involved in choice in the "Myth of Er"? How is it connected with choosing imperfectly, choosing wrongly, but choosing genuinely, choosing well, but in terms of a limited understanding, in terms of limited beliefs, in terms of limited perspective? What is involved in better choices, and what is the relationship between choosing in the highest sense and what is external to oneself and imposes itself upon one as necessity? Is there a way in which a man can cooperate with necessity; is there a sense in which, as Spinoza said, freedom is the re-cognition of necessity? Is there a sense in which men, by recognizing limits, limits to what is possible, can maximize possibilities? Is there a sense in which men could actualize their potential, but by not overestimating themselves, or by giving themselves a proper place in the context of the whole?

Seen in this way then, we might say, that the "Diagram", and the Allegory, and the "Myth", give us great, great images: The image of a wise, free man, that is in the Allegory, in the Line, we have a man who is a true individual, but who becomes creative and increasingly selfless, and in 'The Myth of Er', the image is that of a heroic destiny, a coming to terms with necessity, looking for means, freeing oneself. And when all of this is applied to politics as a whole, which we will be better able to do after taking up *The Statesman*, politics comes to be seen as a realm of pseudo-politics, but also meaningful politics. But above all, it points to that which is beyond itself. What is most important in politics is what is left out—Parapolitics. That concept of collective and individual perfectibility, which could never be institutionalized, which could never be attained by the best laws, by the noblest decisions, the finest policies, or the most enlightened rules, because in the end it involves the free cooperative pursuit of voluntary acts of every single human being. Politics is the arena of self-determination, and, insofar, as all men

are relatively capable of becoming self-determined agents, each is limited by the limitations of all. And when a man frees himself from all limitations, he goes beyond the *polis*, he withdraws from the *polis* all together, he is in the *polis* and outside of it, and he can only return to the *polis* either as a hero, a heroic revolutionary, or as a philosopher working upon individuals, or in an ideal situation, he could return to it as a savior, a man who people turn because everything else fails. As I pointed out in relation to the diagram of "The Divided Line", the reason the Dialectic of thought is that the Line itself is only in Section Three, and it is only understood at a second-hand level, it is in Section Two. So, the line by itself does not, so to speak, constitute any kind of wisdom.

Now more generally one might say, if a person exercising his mind and doing more than receiving an image of the Platonic text or the Platonic Dialectic, at its heart, this person is still in the cave, but he has, as it were, closed his eyes, he has begun to think, he has begun to open his mind's eye, and he is still, of course, a prisoner in chains, but because of the enormous value to the first serious and determined effort at self-questioning, in effect, he could, as it were, be turned around. In other words, the greater the impact of the Dialectic, the greater the impact of the message of Plato, of course, upon any individual, the more trusting, the more receptive, the more serious, the more sincere, the more secure, the more confident, the more willing, as it were, to have things happen, the more open, one might say, to the highest kind of magic, which is the magic that has to do with change of the human heart within the human being. The more a person is in this position, in effect, he is turned around, and being turned around, though still in chains, though still caught up in images, though still fragmented in consciousness and insecure, but because of the act of turning around through his contact with Plato and, of course, he is able, as it were, to see the firelight in the cave, and as he looks more carefully, calmly, concentratedly at the firelight, he is able to detect the diffused daylight below the firelight. Now, this does not mean to say that because of all of this, he is going to be able automatically to free himself from his chains or to begin the rough ascent, but this much is a very great deal in human affairs. Because presumably, to take the ideal case, if a person is deeply moved, profoundly stirred, sincerely and wholly affected by this initial

experience, a person might then very calmly ponder upon what is involved in the ascent out of the cave and look more closely at the firelight, be moved by compassion at the condition of other human beings in the cave, and out of that, he might be able to generate the will, the courage that is needed to break free from the chains and to be firm.

Now, this may be put in very simple practical terms in this manner. Once you have entered the stream of awareness of the Platonic model, you can never be the same again, you have had the preliminary equivalent to a kind of rebirth, a kind of second birth. Now, of course, this is extremely delicate and tricky because precisely at the moment when one is allowed to be born again, which means one is dying as well as being reborn, there is a tremendous kickback, a gravity effect, a tremendous intensification of the forces of inertia, mental inertia, moral inertia, the forces of psychological immobility and chaos. This does happen, it's a kind of trial, it's a kind of fever that is caused by first bringing, so to speak, the metal of one's nature into contact with the fire, one is going to get burned. Hopefully, one is going to get purified, purged of elements that one does not need, of excess baggage. One is going to strip oneself, so to speak, and come out of it a stronger person, provided one is not afraid of the pain, the pain of the initial dismantling of the elements, which is what happens. So, therefore, you might say, in this sense, the initial response followed by a persistent and calm willingness to let things happen could be very crucial to a human being. So, this is really a very good question.

Part II: *The Statesman*

Now... Now, Plato, it would already be clear to many of you, is a great master of creative imagination, he is a teacher *par excellence*, who enables the perceptive reader to think for himself with an immense flexibility, but, also with the help of rich metaphors that raise many, many further questions, questions that lead in every direction. Now, there is perhaps no example in the whole of Platonic literature, and I can think of very few examples in the whole range of Western literature, which is as unique as *The Statesman* in one critical respect; *The Statesman* is both an essay on wisdom and also an

essay on method. The Dalai Lama, in a very remarkable short statement on the message of the Buddha, began his statement by saying, first of all, one has to grasp the distinction as well as the connection between wisdom and method. *The Statesman* is unique as a fusion of wisdom and of method. You could read it in turn as a treatise on the method of the downward Dialectic, the Dialectic in terms of collection and division, the Dialectic seen as analysis, as conceptual analysis, as a search for a definition. The whole dialogue could be read entirely from that standpoint, and it yields a great deal of insight. It could also be read entirely as an essay on statesmanship, on leadership, on political wisdom, on the relation between wisdom in different areas, and more specifically, what we may call political wisdom, political wisdom that we expect from our leaders when they occupy positions of authority. It is very important, however, when we look at it as a treatise on wisdom and on statesmanship, not to identify automatically statesmanship with rulers in positions of supreme authority.

One of the most important functions of *The Statesman* is to suggest that if you can understand what statesmanship and leadership and political wisdom are, then you will find that there is no necessary connection between any of these and men in office, there is no necessary connection between executive authority, between positions of political power, and the possession of statesmanship. In other words, it is possible in principle that the wisdom that is implicit in statesmanship may belong to men who do not hold any office, or who are informal advisors to men in positions of authority. It may also apply at all levels of leadership, and this is very important to understand. At the same time, it goes way beyond ordinary conceptions of authority, wisdom, and leadership. Every human being who has any kind of responsibility for other human beings, whether in a family, or in a fraternity, or in a society, or in a sports team, or in any club, he experiences some of the problems that confront all leadership. Those who never occupy any position of responsibility will never understand the peculiar burden, the peculiar privilege and predicament of being in a position of leadership, of being in a position of responsibility, of acting on behalf of others, of taking decisions which have consequences for other men. And on the other hand, it is equally true, those who assume formal

positions of leadership may become insulated from those whom they are supposed to be leading or guiding, or on whose behalf they are supposed to be taking decisions. They may become irresponsible, wanting only the aura, the appearance of leadership, without its responsibility. Then, of course, they will have deep doubts whether they really belong where they do.

One of the most tragic, poignant, and revealing things about the American Republic, shown in recent years in relation to the presidency, is that even a man who manages to win an election by an immense majority, throughout his period in office, has doubts whether he is really president. The extreme example, of course, is that of Lyndon Johnson. One felt like saying to him, "We know you're president, relax". But in fact, the man is constantly worrying that he doesn't quite belong there, constantly looking for reassurance, extremely suspicious of criticism, wanting to be surrounded by sycophants who are bought like the furniture in the White House, who create the illusion of invulnerability around the president. This is a deeply tragic situation, deeply poignant. In other words, where a man has doubts that are fundamental about himself, putting him in the highest position will make no difference to his doubts. But alas, his doubts about himself in the highest position would have terrible consequences for a lot of human beings. This is too big a problem to be solved merely by psychiatric examination of men who compete for office; the issue goes much deeper. Recently, a political scientist, Professor Lasswell, pointed out that almost all politicians, especially in the modern age, even when they have enormous confidence, let us say confidence up to say 97% in the extreme case, the 3% which they lack makes them peculiarly paranoid in some very distinctive sense. That little lack of confidence in a Hitler, in a Stalin, in all the men in positions of authority, turns out to be very tragic, there is no cure for that, there is no necessary fit between a man and his office.

Now, in *The Republic*, which is the English translation of the word, *Politeia*, Plato's concern was with politics as a whole, was also with politics in relation to the constitution. He was explicitly giving attention in *The Republic* to what is involved in the structure of society and what is the connection between that social structure, in his ideal model, and

the structure of the psyche, or of the psychology of the individual. *The Republic*, of course, also has many other things. As I said, it's a treatise on education, it's a treatise on wisdom, it is also an exposition of the Dialectic, the upward and inward ascent of the individual, which has relevance both to him and has wider applications. But in *The Statesman*, the emphasis is upon men, men in positions of authority, whether they hold power or they do not.

If *The Republic* centrally focuses upon justice, *The Statesman* concentrates upon leadership. The Greek word for "statesman" is *Politikos*. The *Politikos* is a man who has the affairs of other men, other citizens in the *polis* at heart. He is a man who cares. So, the *Politikos*, then, is defined in terms of his fellow feeling, his concern, his compassion, his love, his feeling for the whole of society made up of living, passing, sentient human beings. So here, then, the emphasis is very much upon the flesh and blood figures who move upon the political scene. However, in talking about leadership, Plato here is not concerned with social structure or with psychology, he is concerned with the relation between men and laws, between men and rules. He is also concerned with the relationship between men and roles. He is also concerned with the relations between men, between men and the relations between men, between men and roles, between men and rules. And also, he is concerned (some people think primarily, but I suggest very secondarily) concerned with forms of government, different types of constitution. So, he is concerned, you might say, not with the fundamental structure of society or psychology, but the relationship between men, rules, roles, and forms, forms of government.

Now, there is one metaphor that is common, both for the public and *The Statesman*; this is the memorable metaphor of shipwreck. It is the origin of all subsequent conceptions of political societies as having to weather storms, as experiencing the bindings of fate comparable to ships, the notion of the ship of state, the ship of state which has to chart a course along the stormy seas of human existence. This metaphor is common both to *The Republic* and *The Statesman*. Now, there is a very subtle binding thread between *The Republic* and *The Statesman*. In *The Republic*, if one thinks in musical terms, the movement

is in terms of an ascent and a descent, but the descent is the shadow of the ascent. In other words, the only sense in which we descend in *The Republic* is to see that there is corruption, corruption and disintegration, and the other implicit sense is that given corruption and disintegration, there is meaningfulness in a deliberate involvement in the *polis* out of compassion. But though there is meaning to that, there is no guarantee that this involvement would be possible, that this involvement would be acceptable in the *polis*, that this involvement would be fruitful, that this involvement would save or redeem the *polis*.

The question then comes up, if we withdraw and disengage from the political realm as a result of leaving *The Republic*, what is the degree of involvement that we can afford? Many people alas, think of being involved in the outer world in terms of a passive animal-like response to external stimuli. This is not because they are implicitly inferior beings, but because of the collective pressures, and because of the false ideas, mechanistic and behavioristic, that they have received. That is how people have been treated in the school system, that is how they are treated generally. So, they have a conception of externality which is entirely seen in terms of mechanical or passive adaptation, and understood at best, in terms of success and failure seen from the outside. There are no internal criteria of creative success and fulfillment, or of a failure that is a steppingstone in the direction of further growth. However, in *The Statesman*, it is pretty clear that throughout the dialogue we are concerned with involvement in the *polis*. The movement here is not of ascent and descent, but of descent and ascent, *The Statesman* descends.

Now, this is symbolized even in the very fact that the main speaker is not Socrates, but a stranger, a stranger from Elea, a guest. The Eleatic Stranger descends upon the scene, and this descent upon the scene from the outside is symbolic, symbolic also of the cosmic significance of divine kingship, a descent of the divine principle into the world. So, kingship then has a macrocosmic and theogonic significance. Therefore, it is a royal and a divine art, but at the same time it also has micro-applications at many levels. This is, of course, one of the most incredibly beautiful aspects of *The Statesman*, the pointing to the heavens and the pointing below. But in addition, we are shown that withdrawal and

involvement, or disengagement and constructive leadership, cannot be understood at many levels, except in the context of historical cycles. We do not have a linear movement in human history. Humanity is not like a train that began at one starting point and mechanically moves towards a predetermined terminus, whether it is predetermined by some god, or some blind fate, or by various men who assert what is the *theosis*, the purpose of human life, the object of human evolution, that is not the Platonic picture, that was not the Greek view. Rather, there is a cyclical movement in human affairs, there is an alternation of phases comparable to what we see in the seasons, to the alternation of day and night, to the movement of heavenly bodies around the sun, and the movements of the sun from the standpoint of the earth. All of these have analogues in human affairs. Human beings are born, they grow, they change, they decay, and they die, so do societies, so do groups of individuals, and that is true of the *polis*. Therefore, we have to understand this historical movement, and this historical movement in the Platonic conception is seen in terms of a particular view, a particular doctrine of cycles.

This is crucial to understanding the "Myth". So, this is why the "Myth" is so fundamental to *The Statesman*. the "Myth" establishes, once and for, that before you can truly re-enter into the world of facts and events, before you can truly understand the facts, classify the facts, make proper identifications and specifications of particulars in terms of wholes, you must see beyond the facts, you must see beyond the totality of politics, you must see beyond politics in the visual and empirical sense. the "Myth" points to Parapolitics, what is beyond and above politics is crucial to understanding politics. It is important because without it, we will not be able ever to gain some insight into political destiny, political destiny in time, political destiny over time, the relation between a *polis* in time and space to eternity, and its movement over time, which is history. Therefore, one must, in terms of this larger macrocosmic, Parapolitical perspective, try to see what are the possibilities, and what are the limitations in any particular period. When you understand possibilities and limitations, you also have clues in relation to what is necessary and unavoidable on the one hand, and on the other hand, to the possibilities of freedom.

So, politics may be seen as an interaction of freedom and necessity, but this interaction does not take the same form at all times and in all places. In some epochs, there are certain possibilities, but there are many more limitations. We live in the Age of Zeus, which is the age of constant crisis, everything tends towards disorder and anarchy, there is a constant proneness to a disintegration of the *polis* as a whole, to break down on the part of individuals. At such a time, different considerations apply, and at such a time, we might wonder whether there was another kind of time in the past, or whether it could exist in the future. Whether we locate The Golden Age in the past or the future, The Golden Age would be so fundamentally different from the age in which we live that at best, for most people, it is a romantic illusion, they do not have criteria to characterize it, but that is not true in *The Statesman*. With the help of the "Myth", we do have a way of understanding functionally and impersonally what is involved in roles and in relations in the age of Kronos. Kronos has a double meaning, Kronos is Saturn, Kronos is eternity, but Kronos also is the infancy of mankind, eternity in time, Kronos is both eternity and The Golden Age. Or, Saturn presides over The Golden Age, but at the same time, Saturn, who is often known as 'the god of gloom', is the one who has no patience with the illusions of men and nations, and they will only see him as grim destiny. Sometimes the great image of Kronos was seen as a serpent eating its tail, as a serpent which is eating its tail because there is continuity, there is a constant return to the beginning. And every time a man tries to break out of that circle, he can only break out in a limited sense, even if he draws a tangent to the circle, but the tangent itself is contained within a larger circle. There is a sense, therefore, in which no man can totally live and behave as if the universe is irrelevant, no society could behave wholly as if it can opt out of the historical process, even if it begins a new historical period, it will be put back into history. That, of course, we have experienced in the last two hundred years in the story of the United States of America.

Now t in Plato is deliberately put in terms of a fundamental contrast. In earlier versions of the "Myth", it was put in different ways. We find the "Myth" first of all in the Hindu epics, and there it took the form of a fourfold division: the Age of Gold, the Age of Silver,

the Age of Bronze, and the Age of Iron. Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, adapted this older view for his own purposes and made it a fivefold division. He included, in addition to the forementioned, the Heroic Age, which is between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, because he felt this fitted the facts of the Homeric Age. Plato, however, deliberately concentrates on the contrast between gold and iron, between Kronos and Zeus, and that is because Plato is very concerned to show what inversion means. He is not only concerned with perversion, but with inversion, so that men, so to speak, standing upside down could re-invert themselves. This is very important; that's the key to the Platonic use of the "Myth".

For Plato, in the Golden Age, we have a pure form of divine guardianship that goes back to the earlier idea of the Egyptian hierophant, the King Initiate. He is both a divine shepherd, like Apollo, Osiris, Krishna, but he is also a divine ruler, like the pharaohs. It is a combination of two notions, the notion of the archetypal savior, who is a shepherd, who can help to heal human beings and guide them to pastures new, but also, he is in a position of exercising a natural and spontaneous authority, which is voluntarily accepted. So therefore, in the Age of Kronos, there were divine demigods we are told. In all parts of the Earth, there was nowhere in the world that human beings were deprived of the inspiration and guidance of men who were so perfected in relation to themselves that they were like gods, they were like divine men, and it was essential that in this Golden Age, the relationship then was one of total trust. At best it could be the relationship of gurus and chelas, but it would also be more often like a patriarchal relationship, like of fathers and children. In this certain age, there was no labor, there was abundance, there were no wars and no conflicts, and therefore there is no room for politics as we know it. At the same time, such pastoral affairs, if they existed, must be too good to last.

Human beings can grow only to some extent and no more in such an age, human beings must eat the apple of knowledge, they must assume the burden of choice, they must be left on their own initiative, and this then helps to give meaning to the dark Age of Zeus. There is no necessary fit between the external possession of wealth, or of

degrees, or of knowledge, or of external claims, and the inward embodiment of that to which they purportedly correspond. This is the age in which we live. Scholars are not really scholars, priests are not really priests, rulers are not really rulers, so-called gurus are not really gurus; and so it compounds, husbands are not really husbands, wives are not really wives, children are not really children in a proper state of respect towards parents. In other words, everything is inverted, everything is topsy-turvy. In such an age, it is very difficult to imagine whether at the establishment level there could be anything comparable to what is in the Golden Age. But not only that, even if we could, it would not be legitimate. In the Age of Zeus, men can only pretend to the kind of voluntary compliance, the spontaneous allegiance, the total trust that men showed in The Golden Age. And if men are to be freed from pretension and deceit, hypocrisy and conventional allegiance they must be treated as thinking men, they must be respected as self-conscious agents. Therefore, leadership must be totally different, leadership must address itself to men as moral agents, as free agents, as thinking beings. Therefore, it cannot possibly be patriarchy. But unfortunately, though this is what leadership must do, there is no guarantee that it will do it. People who appear to do it will drive and coerce, seduce and threaten, plausibly persuade other men, but they will not necessarily respect their true free will, they will not treat them as true equals. And therefore, it's an age in which there is enormous tragedy, universal frustration.

Nonetheless, one might argue, despite this frustration, there is hope and meaning to this age, even though the burden of freedom is too great. Well, that may have been an example, we have already had several in this course. People are afraid of freedom, afraid to choose, choose freely among alternatives, terrified of thinking for themselves, they would much rather hand over the burden to some external authority. This is the great tragic theme of Erich Fromm's book, *Escape from Freedom*. He thought that what Nazi Germany went through was only an extreme form of what we find in all societies, a terrible dislike of the burden and responsibility of freedom. People want to be free in terms of likes and dislikes, but they do not want the responsibility that goes with freedom, they want other people to tell them what coincides with their own

predilections, they are not willing to choose deliberately and effectively, and they are not willing to accept the consequences of choice. In other words, in the Age of Zeus, the burden of freedom requires men to gain a new kind of maturity, a new kind of maturity where they will not look for external saviors, but at the same time they will be able to show a proper and spontaneous recognition of true leaders, truly wise men, wherever they may find them. This, then, is a peculiar burden for human beings in the Age of Zeus. Sometimes this has been expressed in terms of the new race or the society of tomorrow, other myths are in terms of science fiction. Some of you may have read Dune, other works of science fiction.

One of the most interesting statements in this connection is that of Carl Rogers, who wrote an essay on the person of tomorrow. He felt that the person of tomorrow has already begun to emerge, he has several characteristics. He mentioned two: One, that he is a man who is willing to enter freely into any relationship spontaneously, at the same time, he is not dependent upon any relationship, he accepts the fact that he is alone in this world, and that he cannot put his emotions, so to speak, into the externalities of relationships. Another criterion he gave is that this man is absolutely determined not to compromise on certain principles, he will not work, let us say, for defense industries (to give one example) or in some other way he will show that he cannot be bought, that he will not compromise. But he is so sure of himself because of this, in the moral sense, that he is immensely flexible, he avoids quick judgments, he is extremely un-American, he does not put people into boxes, he is open to the open texture of human nature, he enjoys the wonder and the complexity of human beings. It is a tremendous, tremendous metaphor, similar to that of Maslow in his conception of a self-actualizing man.

So therefore, we might say we can use this myth in a manner that is very creative, but this was already anticipated by the Eleatic stranger. The Eleatic stranger wasn't merely telling a story before Plato, he makes an explicit reference, which is made much more elaborately elsewhere in the dialogues, to Prometheus. Prometheus is the giver of the gift of self-consciousness. In the age of Zeus, men can gain self-awareness, and what we have now experienced today on the world plain is that all over the world human beings have

much more awareness than they can represent in institutions. All over the world, there is a greater awareness of the criminality of war, but the gap has also grown between the awareness in the human heart and the institutions that men have devised. So, you get a peculiar poignancy that men know much more within than they are able to translate into institutions. In other words, the Promethean gift may be seen in terms of self-awareness and suffering, and in that sense we are all Prometheans, we suffer because we see too much, see more than we can handle, see more than we can do something about. But it also has another meaning, the Promethean gift is also that of foresight. If we really want to do something, we have to see ahead, and that means out of deliberation with a larger perspective to act now as if we might be able to make some difference to the year 2000. In other words, it requires enormous courage, the courage of commitment on a voluntary basis, the courage of becoming individuals. So, there is a sense in which, paradoxically, in our age, in the Age of Zeus, the ideal kingdom is an individual ideal as it shapes a picture of the free man, the man who is king over himself: Just, gentle, wise, but man, exempt from all, worship, degree, tribes, classes, nations. This is a picture of a man who is a sovereign unto himself, and unless men emerge who are truly capable of self-rule to this degree, they will not be able to create a society of free men, they will not be able to create a society that corresponds to the anarchistic vision.

So, we see that there are many, many paradoxes that arise out of our contemplation of the "Myth". However, it was also recognized that Plato's purpose is very much, and in the whole of *The Statesman*, while equating what he does in the "Myth" to concentrate on identifying statesmanship and exhibiting the Dialectic. Therefore, the "Myth" is brought in as seemingly irrelevant and is too long for some individuals, but at the same time, it has no relationship, and it is not meant to have any relationship, to the structure of the argument, the progressive search for a true definition of *The Statesman*. And this search may be seen in terms of three attempts at definition.

The first attempt involves distinguishing between men and animals, unless we can distinguish between men and animals, we will not be able to identify human needs, the political problem must be connected with the human predicament, human needs will

only become clearer when the differentia between human beings and animals are established. But nonetheless, to define leadership, statesmanship, as the art of collective nurture of human beings, is inadequate. There is an irony to this definition. Human beings are not merely tame, featherless, hornless bipeds who eat and drink only among humans. And indeed, we know that they do have horns, they are often wild and far from tamed, and they do not know what it is to be erect in a moral sense as well as a physical, and they do not know what it means to interbreed only among humans in many different senses of that word. So, you might say, human beings, alas, fall below the human estate. So therefore, we must see that despite this fact, we cannot compromise in the very act of definition. The relationship between the leader and the led can never be like that between the cowherder and the cattle. This is a flaw of the first definition.

The second definition is the art of concern for creatures who voluntarily accept it. Here, of course, we are getting closer, we are getting closer because the word 'concern' is much better than the word 'nurture'. It is no man's business to free other human beings; no human being has a right to bring up other human beings in some kind of eugenic sense. Human beings are free agents, they have a right to be educated, but not to be manipulated and maneuvered. What they need is concern, true concern for themselves, for themselves as growing agents, but this concern is only meaningful if it is not exacted forcibly but freely given and freely received. This is very crucial; there is no substitute for the reciprocity that is essential to make human interrelationships meaningful and creative. Seen in this way, then, statesmanship, because it involves the art of being concerned with all human beings in a society, is an architectonic art, and therefore, is understood by means of the example of weaving or wood-making. An example which is deliberately made tedious, as he himself suggests, the Eleatic Stranger at the end. This is very relevant to conceptual analysis. Haste makes for less speed. And through this, one must be willing to give examples, spread out the elements in a paradigm case and keep spreading them out without, as it were, any restriction until you have come to the core, until you have identified what is a natural division, and all your natural divisions can stand in relationship to each other in a symmetrical tree, a kind of conceptual pyramid.

This is very difficult, and I shall speak a little more about this when I talk next time about the Dialectic in *The Republic* and *The Statesman*.

So, the third definition then requires one to emphasize that statesmanship involves the practice of an art, an art that is based upon a science. The science is a master science or political science in the old sense, which can take decisions in relation to all the other sciences. But the art is much more than a mere acquaintanceship with that science, it is an architectonic and therapeutic art, and in this therapeutic art there is a wisdom that comes from experience that is not connected with rules and laws. Here, then, you get the great image with a doctor. The doctor in the old Paracelsian sense is one who sees the patient as a whole, knows his medical history, spends time with him, finds out whether or not he knows about his own body.

The Statesman then is a man who knows more than anything put down under rules. He has got that innovative wisdom that cannot be confined in any rules, therefore he could never be imitated. Even if our presidents studied every decision of Lincoln, studied every decision of a great president, they would never be able to imitate him. There is no imitation from the outside, no imitation in terms of externalities. Genius is inimitable, it transcends formulation in terms of rules. For statesmanship is architectonic also because it involves coordination and blending, blending of courage and moderation. *The Statesman* combines the two himself, he is both hard and soft, like in *The Republic*, he is both quick and calm, like in *The Republic*. But he also is able to draw out all the vigorous and the virile, the courageous and the heroic in society, their qualities, without letting them take over. On the other hand, he can also make use and draw out the cautionary wisdom, the reliable contributions of men who are steadfast. His concern is with the total fabric, weaving the fabric of society as a whole. And this is not for its own sake; this is a particular kind of art which only has meaning in relation to its ends. The architectonic art is aimed at a harmonious fellowship and a concord of all the men in the *polis* in voluntary service of the maximum common good. The aim is universal fulfillment.

For every man to maximize the possibilities of fulfillment of true happiness, it is necessary that there must be a mobilization of all the resources of society for the sake of

universal good. But in this, of course, there can be many imitators, many individuals who pretend. This brings one then to excess and measurement of excess, deficiency and measurement of deficiency. As long as we do not have norms, we do not have standards, all our judgments will be relative: Shorter and taller, better and worse, lesser and greater. Whereas it is only by the exercise of the Dialectic and the discovery of standards and norms that *The Statesman* will be precise in relation to what is due measure, due time, and due performance.

This, then, is the essence of political wisdom. Political wisdom is not bound up with any contract, it is not bound up with any sovereignty, with any once and for all justification of authority. It is in men and their relationships, not in roles, it is not in rules, it is not in classes, and it is logically independent of formal consent. Political wisdom is a skill in varying the modes to meet the varying needs of varying situations, and therefore, seen in this sense, in all constitutions and forms of government, there would be both the danger of finding no political wisdom, and some possibility of political wisdom. When we take the six forms and arrange them in three sets, in terms of the most important criteria, whether these societies are law governed or they are lawless, we make an immense discovery. In terms of lawless constitutions, the best is democracy. Best here means the most liberal, says the Eleatic Stranger. The next is oligarchy; the worst is tyranny. But in law-abiding constitutions, the best is divine kingship and its equivalents, true leadership, that is centralized, true statesmanship. The second is aristocracy, in the pure original sense, ruled by those who embody excellence. And in that criterion democracy is the most anarchic, the worst. So here, then, you get on the one hand, a skepticism with regard to all political forms, all externalization of political good, because statesmanship is a sentiment, it is a sentiment which cannot be identified with any of the forms. And you might make an exercise for yourself, in what form is it most likely to appear in each of the six constitutions, and your answers will be very different? But though there is skepticism with regard to all political forms, you have a paradox that democracy is both the worst, and it could be the best of all governments, a subdued case is made for a democracy without illusions.

And here I might give you, as a closing thought, those two statements: One is of Sir Winston Churchill, who said, “Democracy is a very bad form of government. Only the alternatives that we know are worse”. And an even more perceptive observation of E.M. Forester, the novelist, who said, “Two cheers for democracy, but no third cheer” — two cheers, but only two. A limited case could be made for a democracy without illusions, but that case will never be made by a full glamorization of democracy. The important thing then, is not the forms, but political wisdom, and political wisdom in a democracy without illusions may help to create that kind of social structure, that kind of voluntary and partial approximation to the Golden Age, in which men are able to cooperate voluntarily, provided they can re-cognize, recover soul memory; recognize those who are true leaders, recognize real statesmanship, real wisdom, wherever and forever they may find it.