

## Speculation and Reflection

Jotting down these thoughts on the difference between speculation and reflection came rather suddenly and unexpectedly. It turned out that already I had examined a number of related subjects, some going back a few years, but had no idea at the time they would slam together into an article. Also I had assumed the activities of both speculation and reflection as pretty much the same only with slightly different nuances. Then a minor incident came along which kick started this article, namely, a general but persistent sense of irritation with a common word everyone uses both in conversation and in the media. That word is “talk,” usually with the preposition “to,” as in “I am talking to Mary Smith.” This usage is so common that barely we avert to it. What I found bothersome was the preference for “talk” over “speak” when it comes to interpersonal relationships. The former belongs to discussion about objects whereas the latter belongs more exclusively to persons. It seems the former has drifted into the latter without our realizing the significance of this shift. So if you’re talking *to* Mary Smith—the most common way of putting it—you’re having a monologue, not a dialogue, which is indicative of how we (fail to) communicate nowadays. For all practical purposes, Mary Smith doesn’t have to be present. If you say that you’re speaking *with* Mary Smith, you’re having a genuine conversation. It also means that Mary Smith is speaking with you. You don’t become aware of how pervasive this general usage is until you pause and reflect upon it. Once you do, everyone is “talking to” someone instead of “speaking with” another person. While admittedly a minor point, it points to a larger ailment: the inability to hold down a conversation despite the proliferation of technological devices to communicate, iPhones and all the rest. They’re used for talking *to* people...I might add texting *to*.

In a while we’ll get into the subject of speculation and reflection, but I felt that the introductory paragraph might shed a little light on how the two terms differ. As the common use of “talk to” is to “speak with,” so reflection might differ from speculation. The recipient of both is passive but in different ways. Automatically there comes to mind the example of a mirror which offers some insight into the distinction between these two terms. A mirror is a mediating device enabling us to see the world in miniature where the image seen there makes it easier to remember...but that’s not always the case. While the mirror may remain “out there,” we carry around what we’ve seen as long as we desire to retain the image.

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.” [1] A fascinating verse which is all the more intriguing insofar as it’s set within St. Paul’s most memorable passage on love (*agape*), the entirety of the short Chapter Thirteen of First Corinthians (the verse cited is 12). In the footnote I have inserted the Greek because this essay will proceed with an unpacking of its contents, and these contexts will have bearing upon what is to follow. Keep in mind that the Greek text is quite dense. Some of the unpacking may appear convoluted despite being (hopefully) on target, but that’s part of the fun of the unpacking.

One way to approach the First Corinthians verse (it comprises two separate sentences) is to consider the temporal sequence in sentence #1, “now” and “then” or *arti* and *tote* (they occur as well in sentence #2, the same order).

Both pairs relate to the act of seeing with the verb *blepo* which pertains to everyday sight. *Blepo* as taking place *arti* (now) is situated within the context of a mirror. The ancients lacked glass but had instead highly polished metal. Despite the professional care devoted to polishing (Corinth supposedly excelled at producing mirrors which may have inspired Paul to use this example), they paled in comparison with the cheapest glass mirrors of modern times. And so when considering this verse, the not fully reliable ability to reflect an image must be kept in mind. Close-up images could be reflected reasonably well in a metal mirror though with the hue of the metal pervading it. For example, if the mirror were bronze, the reflected image would be so tinted. Anything in the background is blurred considerably or not even visible. Perhaps a still basin of water would be better, but it couldn't be held upright for the sake of convenience. For our consideration we'll stick with the idea of an *esopton* or as the classical spelling has it, *eisopton*, where the preposition *eis* (into) is prefaced to the verbal root *horaō*. And that root also means to see in the sense of perceiving which differs from *blepo*, to have the power of sight. Thus we end up with an *horaō* which is *eis* or a perceiving which is "into" used in conjunction with the power of sight, *blepo*. To complicate matters further and admittedly much to our delight, *blepo* is used with two other prepositions: first *dia* (through) with regard to *eisopton* and then *en* (in) with regard to *ainigma*, the only use of this term in the New Testament. *Ainigma* means a riddle or dark saying which primarily pertains to that which is uttered, and such utterance is used in the context of *eis-opton* or a seeing-into.

If we follow all this carefully--and it helps to break down the text literally, if you will--we have the power of sight (*blepo*) directed through (*dia*) this mirror (*eis-opton*) which ends up in (*en*) a dark saying or riddle (*ainigma*). We can put it in two other ways: the seeing occurs "through" the mirror followed by "in" the riddle, or that's how the text has it sequentially; which comes first is not specified though obviously both work together *arti* or in the present. The second way consists of seeing through "though" the mirror (two time dimensions of sight are involved, 'now' and 'then') followed by the riddle where one element of hearing is intimated (*en ainigmati*). It should be noted that a mirror, ancient or modern, presents an inverted image such as the familiar "ambulance." To see the correct spelling of "ambulance" one has to look into the rear view mirror of a car which means an instrument is required to interpret the word. So if this idea is carried over into the First Corinthians verse, indeed the inverted image is an *ainigma* which requires interpretation *arti* or "now," the time of our present lives. Keeping in mind the audible nature of an *ainigma*, it is more a riddle that is heard instead of being seen. The haunting, burnished image reflected in an *eisopton* can communicate the image as well as conceal it, both possibilities being present simultaneously. Chances are some ancients, possibly a child, held up a piece of writing to the *eisopton* and marveled at the inverted image which must have made them wonder even further about a mirror's qualities. However, we have no record of the experiment. If it weren't for that phenomenon which must have been known, they'd take the reflected image as an exact replication.

Moving on to the second part of the first sentence, we have *tote* or "then" which presupposes a grasping of what had been presented at a prior time; in other words a memory from the past. This is necessary, of course before proceeding further. Here the power of sight (*blepo*) is carried over into "face," and originally *prosopon* means a mask an actor wore to portray a character different from himself. While *prosopon* evolved in Christian Trinitarian theology about how three persons could be one God, for the moment we can stay with this original meaning because *ainigma* as riddle in the first part of the first sentence is has a certain parallel to it. Because the second half

reads “face to face” we can take it in the literal sense as “mask to mask.” While continuing the passage from *ainigma* into *prosopon*, from riddle as something uttered to a mask, the latter is used twice but with a new-found dynamic signified by the preposition *pros* which intimates direction towards-which. *Pros* pertains to that which is ever in motion with attainment of the goal being secondary. Hence attention is upon movement towards something, not so much grasping the object once and for all, and this can advance indefinitely. To throw in a prosaic, heavily used saying, enjoyment is in the journey, not so much as reaching the goal. In this light *prosopon* is *pros prosopon* or face-towards-face. Such is the chief distinction between *arti* (now) and *tote* (then). However, the latter is contained seminally in the former or within the *ainigma* (again, stress is upon hearing) along with the aide of (*dia* or through) that mirror (again, stress upon the power of sight) and brings the two elements to fruition. Convuluted, to be sure, and perhaps overdone. However, picking apart the Corinthians verse like this is enjoyable as long as we stay do it in the spirit of *lectio divina* where the journey consists union with God. And so *pros* is very important in that it takes pressure off a continual, unchanging face-to-face relationship as rendered in the English. This is not unlike staring. Over the long run this is would be unbearable, a less than desirable image of eternity. *Pros* introduces continuous movement, if you will, which is action with a purpose.

The second sentence commences with *apti* which, of course, brings us back to the first *arti* but from a different point of view, that of knowing (*gignosko*, the common verb). And that knowing supercedes the power of sight (*blepo*). Because we place high value upon the sense of sight, naturally we think in terms of knowledge as what we see. Generally speaking the other four senses have less input to formation of our knowledge, unfortunately so. One classic example is *theoria*, a common word for knowledge, which derives from a root meaning to see. Here in sentence #2 Paul uses the first person singular instead of the first person plural, making the second sentence more personal. The knowing at hand is qualified: it is *ek merous* or literally “from part” as opposed to knowing the whole. As for the *meros* or part at hand, we don’t have it specified. It appears that anyone who has looked through a mirror will discern the quality of the image. If some background is reasonably clear, the more detail will be included though chances are these background reflections will be fuzzy and we won’t remember them. Surely this fuzziness must have made people of a more thoughtful bent to consider life as be not dissimilar.

Let’s consider the second sentence which runs as follows: “Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.” Paul now makes a contrast between the *gignosko* which takes place *arti* (now) and the *epigignosko* which will take place *tote* (then). Instead of the former, there will take place the same *gignosko* but now prefaced with the preposition *epi* or “upon.” And that may be taken as an enhancement of *gignosko*, by no means a diminishment. Thus the unspecified future will subsume the *gignosko* of *arti* or the knowing of now, and enhance it by being *epi* or upon. This will be a knowing-upon akin to a bird’s eye view from above which hadn’t been available previously. As soon as the knowing-upon is attained, Paul says that already—and that extends back to the first *arti* or “now”—he has been understood (‘fully’ is not in the Greek text) where *epigignosko* is used for a second time.

Obviously what had just been detailed is an exaggerated exposition of a scriptural verse. Cumbersome in one sense, but that’s part of the joy of dissecting a verse written in Greek, milking the text for all its worth. It was done,

however, with the hope of presenting a better comprehension of this article's theme, the difference between speculation and reflection. I associate speculation with the exposition of the First Corinthians verse by reason of a mirror's reflective capacity. Note the adjective "reflective" which I came close to omitting because it appears to conflict with the preference for speculation. However, the term is fine if we keep it secondary to speculation and not make it identical to the notion of reflection to be discussed shortly. Speculation derives from the Latin *speculum* or mirror, the equivalent to the Greek *eisopton* already introduced. When you gaze into a mirror it's for a specific purpose, and you don't stand in front of it all day. That was the problem with Narcissus. Instead of using a mirror to behold an image of himself, he chose a pool of water which required that he bend down. Narcissus must have spent many an hour waiting for the wind to die down to get the reflection just right, for the water's clarity far excelled that of a polished mirror. Anyone enthralled with his own image doesn't mind doing this.

So let's say you look into a polished *speculum/eisopton*. The light would have to be just right to keep the metal's glow at a minimum, preferably indirect sunlight, and even that can be tricky. Then you'd have to hold it at an angle to have your image in there as much as possible minus the presence of blurry background images (Narcissus would spend hours trying to get the best view, hence his preference for water). Once you've kept your hand steady as possible, the desired result is fleeting before you put down the mirror. Perhaps the image's quality influenced by the burnished background wouldn't allow you to realize that the image is inverted. Then again, mirrors of that time seemed to have been associated more with women than men and served a function strictly for beauty. As far as holding up a text which would reveal that anything reflected is backward, perhaps no one except a child at play would consider this.

Now that you have gotten the mirror lined up successfully—and for only a few seconds—it's important to retain as best as possible a memory of the image which corresponds to how steadily you were able to hold the mirror. This is the most important task of them all. Given the unclear reflection, repeating the process of holding up the mirror isn't as easy as using a modern one. You may have to repeat the process several times to get what you want. In other words, you have just a second or two to keep the mirror steady. One thing is certain. You do know the image is partial and has a burnished hue due to the metal, and it wouldn't be out of order to apply the word *ainigma* even though it refers, as noted above, to something uttered. The reflection, while accurate, remains unclear. Besides, it moves as you move you're your head to one side or the other thereby proving a moving image, not a static one. Could the *eisopton* be an entrance to another world? There seems to be no evidence of this belief though the mirror can make you pause to think about the world in which you reside. The experience is all the more gripping in that it intimates the universal feeling of being on a stage and watched by someone else as you act out your part in a complex play. Some of this perception comes from the manner in which memory functions, the bits and pieces fed to it which we try consciously or unconsciously to piece together.

Continuing with the example of a mirror, we bring to it a certain expectation of seeing our image reflected there which may or may not live up to our preconceived ideas. Once we've beheld ourselves and have obtained an accurate representation, it's up to us to retain in our memory the image as undistorted as possible. We have an expectation of what we look like which is rooted in our memories. In the ancient world emphasis was more upon

hearing, and a self-image was built up upon what persons heard of themselves, not so much what they saw of themselves. So when they saw their images in a burnished mirror, their expectations must have turned out quite differently from knowledge gained by what they had heard. After memories conditioned by hearing have been brought into the present by the agent of a mirror, our expectation may or may not change (usually the former happens). Then the expectation becomes a perception rooted in the present which, in turn, needs to be extended by recalling it now and then. If we don't do this, everything disappears. Thus automatically we train our minds through the process of repetition. Frequent recourse to a mirror is needed to get this right until it smooths out and becomes a new form of both mental and spiritual attention. It sounds fine on paper but another thing when put into practice because the fits and starts can be discouraging. The advantage, provided with stay with the practice, is that after a relatively short period of time we become adapt at it, and proper image of ourselves then governs our lives. The sign of a successful adaption is a perception of sheer joy and thankfulness of having been relieved of improper images which had weighed upon us. As noted above with regard to the response to reverse image of anything written placed in front of an ancient mirror, we have no record. The same seems to apply to the interaction just detailed, namely, how the preponderance of hearing in ancient culture might have been affected through any visual representation of oneself. Probably we have nothing because of mirrors associated with women and as a rather novel instrument for seeing one's beauty, etc.

A modern mirror is completely faithful to anything placed in front of it. While its reflective power is far more accurate than an ancient *eisopton*, the latter's burnished reflection serves to bestow a certain mystery to the reflection instead of detracting from it. A glass mirror could never provide this effect, cold and impersonal, despite the accuracy. However, the 100% fidelity of reflection allows us to appreciate more readily that the images are inverted as in the familiar "ambulance" example. Regardless of a mirror, ancient or modern, both present reality as inverted which makes us question the nature of reality and ourselves, of how all this fits together. Hence the strange feeling of being on a stage or more accurately, of being watched though not in a threatening manner. Even a modern person, unless he or she is Narcissus incarnate, cannot remain in front of a mirror all day long. So whether we're dealing with an ancient *eisopton* or a ninety-nine cent one from Walmart, the person who had just beheld his image must take careful note of the vision and carry around with him a memory of it. Yet the advantage of an ancient polished piece of metal is that it blots out superfluous elements while a modern one provides too much information.

Keeping in mind the First Corinthians verse which got all this moving, retention of the image is what we see (*blepo*) right now (*arti*) compared to the "then" (*tote*) of "face to (*pros*, towards-which) face" when we won't require a mirror. However, the nature of *blepo* which will take place "then" is not specified, open-ended, if you will. Thus when a person is gazing at a mirror, he is to keep in mind that the image he beholds now will later blossom into an (unspecified) seeing which is face towards (*pros*) face. As for the "now" (*arti*), we cannot remember all the specifics even though we've taken them in. What we behold is a general image which, in turn, is retained in the memory: not just memory as a bin for indiscriminate images but one that serves to in-form us. The memory bestows meaning to life not unlike the form of a story enabling us to move from *arti* to *tote*, from *eisopton* to that *prosopon pros prosopon*. Here lies the function of speculation (*speculum* as mirror being related to this word) which effects the inverse image and allows us to retain it in memory as much as we choose to do so.

In contrast to speculation, reflection is one dimensional with regard to the *eisopton* and is symptomatic of the incorrect way of seeing. It expresses the power of sight as we've seen with the verb *blepo* but simply bounces back to the person beholding what's in the mirror at its surface value, nothing more. We could say that reflection is an impediment to a proper way of employing the faculty of memory; it takes in a mirror's image one hundred per cent yet forgets it almost immediately, hence its fundamental difference from speculation. On the other hand, a "speculative" person resembles the man in Plato's **Republic** who exits the cave with its shadows, sees the sunlight and promptly returns to the cave with memory of the light to inform those dwelling inside.<sup>[2]</sup> The cave dwellers are not unlike what James has in mind when he says "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he shall be blessed in his doing." [1.23-5]. Here we could substitute for "hearer" reflection and for "doer" speculation. Both types of persons are attentive to the "word" or *logos* whose very nature is something to be heard, not seen. Therefore it requires closer attention to absorb what's being communicated. As James says, the hearer observes himself in a mirror (*eisopton*), the verb being *katanoeo* which literally means putting the mind (*nous*) down (*kata*) as in firmly placing it upon something. Despite the forcefulness of this action, the reflective person forgets what he sees and goes away. His physical sight is perfectly fine but his sight of memory is lacking. It's a strong warning indeed intensified by use of the equally strong verb *epilanthanomai*, to forget upon (*epi-*). In other words, the reflective person does places his *nous* or mind *en ainigmati* or "dimly" as First Corinthians says and leaves it at that. On the other hand, the doer of the *logos*—the one who listens and follows suite—looks into the "perfect law" (liberty), the verb being *parakupto* which means literally to stoop down, and this stooping may be taken as looking with extreme care into that mirror. Instead of continuing with a verb pertinent to sight, James uses *parameno*, to stay beside. Note that this verb's root is *meno* (to remain) prefaced with the preposition *para* (beside, alongside) compared with *kupto* (to stoop). The latter is prefaced with the preposition *kata* (down as well as in accord with). Thus *kata* bestows an exactitude and persistence proper to the doer or person with speculation.

A figure from the Book of Exodus embodies this capacity for speculation, Bezalel. At the Lord's bidding, Moses made him responsible for crafting the ark of the covenant and everything pertinent to worship which centered around the ark. "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship" [31.2]. Bezalel is a "doer" after the heart of James who recognizes that the gifts in his possession come not from himself but from the Lord, and these are four in number; actually they are five, the first being "the Spirit (*Ruach*) of God" which is omitted here by reason of being the source of the others. These four belong to the person endowed with the gift of speculation. Bezalel, if you will, gazed into the mirror of First Corinthians and saw the Lord "face to face" not unlike his master, Moses on Mount Sinai. While Moses' gift was related to leadership, that of Bezalel applies to the practicalities of divine worship. What Moses saw on Mount Sinai was up to Bezalel to reproduce physically for the benefit of Israel. In other words, Bezalel was a mediator for the mediator, the person most responsible after Moses for replicating in deed what Moses had seen and heard. This example can apply to the *eisopton* or mirror, for the ark of covenant and items of worship form a mirror on earth of heaven above. We could say that both Moses and Bezalel were mirrors to each other as they reflected what Moses had received originally from the Lord.

The first gift bestowed upon Bezalel is “ability” or *chakmah*, normally translated as wisdom but applicable more to skill in fashioning things such as the garments for women and Aaron in 28.3: “And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with an able mind, that they make Aaron’s garments.” The second gift is “intelligence” or *tevunah*, the first mention of the term in Exodus and found in 35.31 and 36.1. It imitates the words “To him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever” [Ps 126.5]. The third gift is *dahath* or “knowledge,” from the verbal root *yadah*, which means to know intimately and is the only use of this term in Exodus. “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it” [Ps 139.6]. The fourth and final gift given to Bezalel is “craftsmanship” or *mela’kah*, work proper to an artisan and the natural outflow of *chakmah*. *Mela’kah* is used most famously with regard to the Lord and the work of creation, for example, Gn 2.2: “And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had done.” Thus *mela’kah* is the gift most akin to God as far as active creation goes and fits in well the task given to Bezalel. Because the example of a mirror is central to this article, it’s worth quoting 38.8: “And he (Bezalel) made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.” Bezalel took the mirrors normally used by women to check up on their adornment, symbolic of the one dimensional plane of reflection, and fashioned them into a vessel for sacred worship.

As the paragraph above recounts, the gifts bestowed upon Bezalel from the Lord through Moses can be taken as an example of gazing (*blepo*) into that mirror discussed above. He did it at the Lord’s invitation which had been communicated through Moses *en ainigmati* or as 1Cor 13.12 has it, “dimly” or more accurately as having received something which has been uttered. That’s the meaning of the words of Ex 31.2: “See, I have called by name Bezalel.” If the Lord simply called him, that would be fine. To single him out with the extraordinary ability to fashion holy things requires that the Lord adds “by name” which implies a calling and this within an *ainigma*. “Now” or *arti* Bezalel was capable of seeing *prosopon pros prosopon* (‘face to face’) which, according to the Corinthians verse, belongs not to the present but to the future, *tote* (‘then’). The next time we hear of Bezalel is 35.30–1 when Moses speaks to the Israelites: “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel...and has filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability, with intelligence, with knowledge and with all craftsmanship.” Shortly afterwards Moses continues: “to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded” [36.1]. The apparently insignificant words “in accord with” (‘*asher*’) are in actuality vital because that Hebrew term intimates the making of a transition. ‘*Asher*’ is also a relative pronoun (who, which). By its very nature, ‘*asher*’ stands in between the person performing the action and the person or object receiving it. The trick is to focus not so much upon either pole but upon the action transpiring between them. It’s more difficult than at first glance because instinctively we prefer not to remain there. The very nature of ‘*asher*’ is to be in motion. To stop this motion would make it irrelevant.<sup>[3]</sup> And so when it came for Bezalel to get to work on the sacred objects of worship, he retained in his memory only one intent, namely, to be “in accord with” what the Lord bade him. Perhaps this not unlike the ‘one thing necessary’ Jesus spoke of as it pertained to Mary. Bezalel’s being-in-accord or being-in-‘*asher*’, if you will, enabled him not to worry about the details, innumerable as they were, but to approach the tasks automatically and at the proper pace, far from being a mindless robot.

While the example of Bezalel makes for an interesting story from Exodus, does it have practical application for us? This gifted man who had many associates under him was functioning not *en ainigmati* but *prosopon pros prosopon*, to borrow again the words from First Corinthians. At first it's difficult to conceive him being aware of God's presence while engaged in his artistic work, complicated as any task today. That would mean Bezalel had to handle two opposing things simultaneously. The secret to his success was his ability to focus neither upon the Lord nor upon the work at hand but to settle down in that in-between spot suggested by the word '*asher* ('in accord with'). By way of note, '*asher* is not unlike the *pros* in between the two *prosopon*, the Greek preposition more along the lines of direction towards-which. This offers a solution to a dilemma experienced by many people who attempt to balance work and prayer, no easy task in a modern society. A friend intent on reconciling the two once likened it to attempting to scale the slipperiest of mountain slopes.

Most classical texts about work and prayer were composed for people living in primarily an agricultural society. So with the advent of machines and especially computers, the balance between work and prayer may an impossible dream. You could avoid today this by heading for the mountains or some desert place, but few of us have that option. So this relatively new division between technology and prayer makes it hard to believe that the divine presence is at work in our lives. That means we should not shy from making lots of mistakes at setting up the correct relationship. The conditioning we've received about things divine has had a lot to do with this, more difficult than at first glance, for it has favored a sharp division about where to put one's attention: on God or on the task at hand. Now take our friend Bezalel. The work he did was that of an artisan, highly specialized and just as absorbing as any modern computer programmer. He didn't fall into the category of a "Martha" nor a "Mary," the two sisters traditionally representative of the "active" and "contemplative" lives. Rather, Bezalel wouldn't even think in such terms. All the time his attention was fixed upon that '*asher* or "in accordance with" as it pertains to "all that the Lord has commanded."

Could we say that our friend Bezalel followed the dictum "Know thyself?" That could be interpreted as mixing two traditions but not exactly because the issue at hand is how best we can employ our memory, essential for self-knowledge. The First Corinthians verse started off with a seeing (*blepo*) in the present (*arti*) which moved on to (*tote*, 'then') where a face "towards" (*pros*) face" transformation of *blepo* takes place. In other words, the same *blepo* but on a different plane. On this second plane *blepo*—and it is the same as *gignosko* ('to know')—becomes *epignosko*, a knowing-upon, *epi*-. What the scriptural verse does is unite the capacity of sight (*blepo*) first with knowledge (*gignosko*) and then *epignosko*. This makes the difference from "Know thyself" more theological, if you will.

Anyone involved with spirituality and philosophical inquiry (in the original sense of love-of-knowledge) is familiar with the rigors involved. After the novelty has worn off, it's a question of holding in memory the experience delineated in the Corinthians verse which differs considerably from memorizing a text or recalling a past event. The reality presented there is so different from normal experience that for many folks it takes considerable practice to absorb fully, let alone become acquainted with. For such persons the most painful experience is that after an



initial “success,” how easy it is to fall back to where you had been. This means starting all over, quite painful once it has been repeated enough times. Even a few attempts are hard enough and makes you wonder if what you’re doing is worth the effort or even worse, has any basis in reality. Almost certainly this is worse than knowledge of one’s so-called dark side. At least that is pretty much right in front of you while the other is tenuous and hard to put your hands on. Repeated starts and subsequent failures can give rise to boredom after which depression sets in which, if taken to the extreme, leads to a loss of hope.

If at this moment it were possible to step outside ourselves, we’d notice that we have become increasingly passive to events instead of being active. And being passive has a special sense of bearing in memory that reflection First Corinthians has presented. This doesn’t dawn upon you with clarity; instead, the process is slow and gradual like trying to make out that burnished image reflected in a mirror. Here you run into inevitable glitches which mock you with not so much failure to acquire self-knowledge as with “Know thyself” but with degrading images of yourself. If you follow these images, their strength increases which precludes any attempts at making the seeing or *blepo* of the present become a seeing or a *blepo* “face (‘towards’ or *pros*) face.” Nevertheless, the goal is so attractive and compelling that it overshadows the obstacles before us. That can be a good thing, else never we’d make a go of it. If the devil does exist, chances are he doesn’t work on you directly but obscures the mirror of First Corinthians or better, casts before it representations of ourselves so ugly that right away we turn from gazing into the mirror. “Devil” may be taken one way or another, but anyone who has put this into practice realizes after awhile some other agent is at work against us. It seems best to leave it at that and just be aware of its possibility should we come upon this situation.

As for the earlier remarks concerning the apparently insignificant ‘*asher*, closer inspection reveals that it can be an alternative of sorts to an all-pervasive concept at the heart of the collective philosophical and theological traditions of the West. Perhaps this claim is a bit grandiose but worth pondering due to its biblical roots. The concept at hand may be summed upon in one word, form, whose Greek equivalent is *morphe*. The generality of *morphe* can preclude us from thinking it as an issue because it had gone unquestioned for many centuries. However, in more recent decades a perception of its inadequacy has been growing. The concept has served well for a long time and continues to do so in many ways but seems to have lost its original force and has become, well, hardened. This is especially evident in the fairly recent breakdown of long-established religious beliefs and practices. Their fall in little over a generation or two is all the more remarkable in that it wiped away within living memory what had passed as rock-solid and unquestioned. In its place advancements in science, technology and contact with other religions and cultures have shown that alternatives exist where you don’t have to think in terms of form or in terms of one hard thing bumping up against another hard thing. That image is very Industrial Age-like in its mechanicalness. The alternative? Generally speaking it seems to lie in thinking in terms of consciousness or more concretely, awareness. If in some circles you bring up awareness as a possibility of expressing things religious and philosophical, you get pounced upon at once. To some degree this is correct because of underlying associations with Gnosticism and the way religions of the East have been portrayed. All this is quite superficial and has little to do with genuine attempts by Westerners to perceive reality in terms of awareness which is more fluid and subtle. Certainly it isn’t static like thinking in terms of form, *morphe*.<sup>[4]</sup>

If we bring this insight to bear upon our reading of Scripture as with the mirror in First Corinthians, divine inspiration certainly isn't negated but becomes more evident through a prayerful dissection of the Greek text. Such is the spirit of *lectio divina* which is more open to thinking in terms of awareness with less emphasis upon form. Unfortunately this has contributed to making it a poor cousin to theological pursuits and the like though the tide seems to have changed. One sign: despite the decline in religion, interest in *lectio divina* has increased considerably. Some may argue that it offers spirituality without commitment, true in some cases, but a deeper reason seems to be that *lectio* is more akin to working in terms of awareness. Let's take an example. An English text such as Ex 36.1 ('to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded') sounds uninspiring to a modern day audience, legalistic in tone. But a close look at this verse reveals the word '*asher*' as "in accordance with," a small but prime example of the text's fluidity, fertile ground for *lectio*. This gets back to the distinction made above between reflection and speculation: the former is one-dimensional whereas the latter is two-dimensional. With the former you end up with a single flat dimension where an image bounces off and that's it. With the latter you get two objects for the price of one. Keeping with the theme here, both reflection and speculation pertain to a mirror which doesn't change in and by itself. Rather, it's up to the individual to come away with one or the other.

The issue at hand is how a person uses his memory, and that gets back to the quote from James who makes a distinction between a hearer and doer of the word: "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he shall be blessed in his doing" [1.23-5]. With this quote in mind, Bezalel is a helpful example of speculation who was responsible for fashioning the ark of the Lord. We could say that he gazed into the mirror...the *speculum* of First Corinthians...and not only saw his image but inserted it into his memory which, in turn, became part and parcel of his daily life. Bezalel walked away with a perfect representation of what he had beheld. Keep in mind, however, that this representation was in reverse which is the crucial difference between speculation and reflection. The person reflecting isn't aware of this dual nature even though the copy, if you will, is perfect in all its details. Such is a refinement of distinction between the gazer and what he gazes into. If we run with this inverse image a bit, we can ask about the way this inverse image plays out. The image is more than a reflection (already pointed out); it is an *eikon* in the theological sense of being made in the divine *eikon* and likeness (*homoiosis*[5]) of God according to Genesis. Bezalel can never walk away from his newly acquired *eikon* because it has become imprinted within his memory. The connection between it and the mirror is "in accordance with" or '*asher*' of Ex 36.1 which binds the two together. That makes Bezalel '*ashry*' or "happy" in a measure foreign to our conventional notions of happiness. So if Bezalel failed to recollect this *eikon*...and this means more than remembering it as we understand it...he loses himself. All his skill then vanishes. But if true to his *eikon*, Bezalel takes what he sees, the *blepo* of First Corinthians, and projects into a knowing, an *epiginosko*. Thus seeing is transformed into a knowing-upon (*epi-*). We know from Exodus the results of this artisan's handiwork, fit for the Lord himself, who decides to take up residence in the ark.

This article went into considerable detail, perhaps too much for some readers, about the example of a mirror in First Corinthians. What gives the image value is the special character of Chapter Thirteen, Paul's exposition on *agape*. Behind these detailed reflections (actually speculations!) lays an awareness that of all religions, Christianity emphasizes the Incarnation, that God became man. But if you consider developments fairly early on to the present, the exact opposite seems to have dominated. A certain form of rarefied philosophizing and theologizing, fine in themselves, took hold to the neglect of the body. Lest it be forgotten, Jesus Christ had assumed a human body or better, became a human being. The "mechanics" of this assumption have taken up a lot of time and energy over the centuries but can leave regular Christian with an interest in spiritual growth confused as what to do. Injunctions to practice virtue and the rest also weigh on a person as well as its failure usually termed as sin. For Christians, even those deemed uneducated, life can be lived in the head with all sorts of thoughts swirling around in there. Such person are just as "mental" in the overall sense of intellectual we attribute to those who are educated. Both general groups of people use terms to describe their Christian living which can be divorced from the physicality of their bodies. Dealing on that level is considered base or even impure, a kind of animal to be brought under control of higher powers such as the mind and spirit. Despite the word "Incarnation" thrown around freely (and that means literally in-the-body), we find that the body contains all hidden secrets for the Christian life. That means attention is to be shifted to our physicality and kept there unswervingly. Sure, it's fine to philosophize and theologize on the body, but history shows it gets too abstract and resorts to both exhortations and warnings if you don't adopt their precepts. Thus an incarnational religion is far from being incarnational, of being-in-the-body.

Reading this article with all its contortions can make the reader say its another example of this over theorizing and intellectual approach. The only defense, if you will, is that by taking apart piece by piece a given scriptural passage (the First Corinthians verse) with an eye toward what the original language has to say in the spirit *lectio divina* do we get any real progress. The results are obviously imperfect which is not the point. What counts is the joy and the resulting gratitude in having the opportunity to write down these reflections. Even sharing them is quite secondary to this.

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Allow me to add a worthwhile appendix, perhaps a bit long to be designated such, but pertinent to what had been discussed. It consists of the first few pages of Plato's famous analogy of the cave in Book Seven of his **Republic**, that is, from 514a through 520a. The translation is from Jowett, common domain, though an up to date translation exists (**Plato: Complete Works**, edited by John M. Cooper, 1997). The excerpt is from a document on this home page where brief notation on the Greek text are made for the entirety of the **Republic**. Please note that references to previous uses of words, etc. are included which concern the **Republic** as a whole. This is more than a simple appendix. It is required reading, if you will, in order to get better perspective on the example of a mirror, of the difference between what is placed before it and the resulting reflection.

**514** And now, I said, let me show in a figure [*apeikazo*: cf. 511a as resemblances] how far our nature is

enlightened or unenlightened [*phusis*: cf. 502a & *paideia*: cf. 503d as education & *apaideusia*: lack of education]. Imagine [*eido*: cf. 510e as behold] human beings living in a underground den [*spelaiodes*: cave-like], which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have

**b** been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads [*periago*: to turn around]. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players [*thaumatopoiros*: a wonder worker, juggler] have in front of them, over which they show the puppets [*thauma*: wonder, trick].

I see.

**c** And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying [*paraphero*: to bring forward] all sorts of

**515** vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image [*atopos*: cf. 501d as unreasonable], and they are strange prisoners.

Like [*homoios*: cf. 475e as imitation] ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows [*skia*: cf. 510e as reflections], or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws [*prospipto*: to strike against] on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their

**b** heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with [*dialego*: cf. 513c as dialectic] one another, would they not suppose that they were naming [*nomizo*: cf. 509a as deemed] what was actually before them?

Very true [*anagke*: cf. 502a as of necessity].

And suppose further that the prison [*desmoterion*: literally, place of binding] had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy [*hegeomai*: cf. 508e as esteeming] when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

**c** To them, I said, the truth would be [*to alethes*: cf. 499a & *nomizo*: cf. a] literally nothing but the shadows of the images [*skia*: cf. a & *skeuastos*: prepared, artificial].

That is certain [*anagke*: cf. b].

And now look [*skopeo*: cf. 513d as appear] again, and see what will naturally follow [*sumbaino*: cf. 505c as acknowledge] it if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error [*luisis*: a loosening & *iasis*: healing & *aphrosune*: folly, thoughtlessness]. At first, when any of them is liberated [*luo*: to loosen] and compelled suddenly [*anagkazo*: cf. 505c & *exaiphnes*] to stand up and turn [*anistemi*: to wake from sleep & *periago*: cf. 514b] his neck round and walk [*badizo*: to go slowly] and look towards [*anablepto*, with *pros*: to look up at] the light, he will suffer sharp pains [*algos*: distress]; the glare will distress him [*marmaruge*: a flashing, quick twinkling] and he will be unable to see [*kathorao*: cf. 476d as distinguish] **d** the realities of which in his former state he had seen [*horao*: cf. 508b as recognized] the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion [*phluaria*: silly talk, nonsense] but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being [*eggus*: at hand & *ontos*: cf. 513c] and his eye is turned towards more real existence [*blepo*: cf. 421b as look to & *orthos*: cf. 465a as good & *ontos*], he has a clearer vision, what will be his reply [*apokrino*: cf. 414a as reject]? And you may further imagine [*oiomai*: cf. 506c as thinks] that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them. Will he not be perplexed [*aporeo*: cf. 505e as hesitating]? Will he not fancy [*hegeomai*: cf. a] that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer [*alethos*: cf. 500d] than the

objects which are now shown [*deiknumi*: cf. 505b as explain] to him?

Far truer.

**e** And if he is compelled [*anagkazo*: cf. c] to look straight at [*pros*: towards-which] the light, will he not have a pain [*algeo*: to feel bodily pain, distress] in his eyes which will make him turn away [*pheugo*: to flee & *apostrepho*: to turn to flight] and take in the objects of vision [*kathorao*, with *pros*: cf. c as see] which he can see, and which he will conceive [*nomizo*: cf. c as would be] to be in reality [*tauta to onti*] clearer [*saphos*: cf. 448e as clearest] than the things which are now being shown [*deiknumi*: cf. d] to him?

True, he said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up [*helko*: cf. 494e as taken captive] a steep and rugged ascent [*anabasis*], and held fast until he's forced [*exelko*: to drag out] into the presence of the **516** sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated [*odunao*: to suffer & *aganakteo*: to be vexed]? When he approaches [*erchomai*, with *pros*: cf. 445b as we are near]: the light his eyes will be dazzled [*mestos*: filled], and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities [*alethos*: cf. d].

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed [*sunetheia*: acquaintance] to the sight of the upper world [*horao*: cf. 515d as had seen & *ano*]. And first he will see [*kathorao*: cf. 515e as vision] the shadows best, next the reflections [*eidolon*: cf. 443c as shadow] of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he **b** will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Finally [*teleutaios*] he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections [*phantasma*: cf. 510a] of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place [*kath' auton*], and not in another; and he will contemplate [*theomai*: cf. 513d] him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue [*sullogizomai*: cf. 365a as to draw conclusions] that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian [*epitropeuo*: to be an administrator] of all that is in the visible **c** world, and in a certain way the cause [*aitios*: cf. 508b as author] of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold [*horao*: cf. a as sight]?

Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered [*anamimnesko*: cf. 507a as remind] his old habitation [*oikesis*: cf. 418c], and the wisdom [*sophia*: cf. 504a] of the den and his fellow prisoners, do you not suppose [*oiomai*: cf. 515d as imagine] that he would count himself happy [*eudaimonizo*: cf. 466a as making unhappy] on the change and pity them [*metabole*: cf. 452b as innovation & *eleo*]?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe [*kathorao*: cf. a as see] the passing [*pariemi*: cf. 506e in context of sentence] shadows and to

**d** remark [*mimnesko*: cf. 502e as remember] which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future [*apomanteuomai*, cf. 505e as having a presentiment] do you think that he would care [*epithumetikos*, adverb: cf. 442a as concupiscent, adjective]: for such honors and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer, "Better to be the poor servant of a poor master and to endure anything" [*Odyssey*, xi.489-90], rather than think [*doxazo*: cf. 413a as higher value] as they do and live after their manner?

**e** Yes, he said, I think [*oiomai*: cf. c as suppose] that he would rather suffer [*poneo*: to labor] anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation;

would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

To be sure, he said.

And if there were a contest [*diamillaomai*: to contend hotly], and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak [*ambluno*: cf. 490b as blunted], and before his eyes had become steady [*gnomateuo*: to form a

**517** judgment] (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit [*sunetheia*: cf. a as grow accustomed] of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous [*gelao*: cf. 506d as will bring ridicule]? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think [*peirazo*: cf. 489d as laid to the charge] of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question, he said.

This entire allegory [*eikon*: cf. 510e as reflections], I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the

**b** previous argument; the prison house [*desmoterion*: cf. 515b] is [*aphomoioo*: cf. 500c in context of sentence] the world of sight [*hedra*: seat & *phaino*: cf. 508d as radiant & *opsis*: cf. 507, sight], the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards [*anabasis*, with *ana*: cf. 515e as ascent & *thea*: cf. 467e as see] to be the ascent of the soul [*anodos*: a way up & *psuche*: cf. 513d] into the intellectual world [*noetos*: cf. 513d as reason & *topos*: cf. 509] according to my poor belief [*elpis*: cf. 496e as hopes], which, at your desire [*epithumeo*: cf. 494a as please], I have expressed whether rightly or wrongly God knows [*theos*: cf. 492a as divine & *eido*: cf. 514a as imagine]. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good [*idea* & *agathos*: cf. 508e] appears [*phaino*: cf. b as sight] last of all, and is seen [*horao*: cf. 516c as behold] only

**c** with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred [*sullogizomai*: cf. 516b as draw conclusions] to be the universal author [*aitia*: cf. 491e in context of sentence] of all things beautiful and right [*kalos*: cf. 508e as beautiful & *orthos*: cf. 515d in context of sentence], parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source [*parecho*: cf. 508e as imparts & *kurios*: cf. 508a as lord] of reason and truth in the intellectual [*nous*: cf. 513d & *aletheia*: cf. 513e & *noetos*: cf. b]; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally [*emphronos*, adverb: sensibly], either in public or private life must have his eye fixed [*eido*: cf. b as knows].

I agree [*sunoiomai*: to give assent], he said, as far as I am able to understand you [*tropos*: cf. 501a as plan].

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder [*thaumazo*: cf. 491b in context of sentence & *sunoiomai*: cf. c] that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling [*thelo*: cf. 475c in context of sentence] to descend to human affairs [*prasso*: cf. 505e as actions]; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world [*psuche*: cf. b & *epeigo*: to press down, hurry & *ano*: cf. 516a] where they desire to dwell [*diatribo*: cf. 472b in context of sentence]; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory [*eikon*: cf. a] may be trusted.

Yes, very natural.

And is there anything surprising [*thaumastos*: cf. 502b as no miracle] in one who passes from divine contemplations [*theios*: cf. 500e as heavenly & *theoria*: cf. 486a as spectator] to the evil state [*kakos*: cf. 501e] of man, misbehaving [*aschemoneo*: to behave unseemly] himself in a ridiculous manner [*geloios*: cf. 505b]; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed [*sunethes*: habituated] to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice [*agalma*: glory, honor & *skia*: cf. 515c & *dikaios*: cf. 506c as right], and is endeavoring to meet [*diamillaomai*: cf. 516e as contest] the conceptions of those who have never yet seen **e** [*hupolambano*: cf. 466d as suggest] absolute justice [*dikaiosune*: cf. 506d]?

Anything but surprising, he replied.

**518** Any one who has common sense [*nous*: cf. 517c as intellectual] will remember [*mimnesko*: cf. 516d as remark] that the bewilderments [*epitaraxis*: confusion] of the eyes are of two kinds and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true [*nomizo*: cf. 515e as will

conceive] of the mind's [*psuche*: cf. 517c as soul] eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak [*thorubeo*: cf. 438a as confusion & *adunateo*: to lack strength], will not be too ready to laugh [*alogistos*, adverb: not to be reckoned & *gelao*: cf. 517a as ridiculous]; he will first ask [*episkopeo*: cf. 490d as enquire] whether that soul [*bios*: life] of man has come out of the brighter light, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light [*marmaruge*: cf. 515c as **b** glare]. And he will count the one happy [*eudaimonizo*: cf. 516c] in his condition and state of being [*pathos*: cf. 488a as manner & *bios*: cf. a], and he will pity [*eleeo*: cf. 516c] the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh [*gelao*: cf. a] at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh [*katagelastos*: cf. 493d as ludicrous] which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.

That, he said, is a very just distinction [*metrios*, adverb: cf. 504b as fair measure].

But then, if I am right [*nomizo*: cf. a], certain professors of education [*paideia*: cf. 514a in context of sentence] must be wrong when they say [*epaggello*: to proclaim] that they can put a knowledge into the **c** soul [*entithemi* & *episteme*: cf. 513c as science & *psuche*: cf. a] which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.

They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

Whereas, our argument shows [*logos*: cf. 510c as account & *semaino*: cf. 440a s meaning] that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul [*dunamis*: cf. 509b & *organon*: cf. 374d as tools & *katamanthano*: cf. 493b as attending & *eniemi*: cf. 508c] already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn [*strepho*: cf. 497b as warped] from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned [*periakteon*: verbal adjective as one must bring round] from the world of becoming into that of being [*eis to on kai tou ontos*], and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being [*anecho*: cf. 483a as tolerate & *theoreo*: cf. 413c as contemplates & *tou ontos*], and of the brightest and best of being [*to phanototon tou ontos*], or in other words, of the

**d** good [*agathos*: cf. 517b].

Very true.

And must there not be some art [*techne*: cf. 513c] which will effect conversion [*periagoge*: a going around, revolution] in the easiest and quickest manner [*rhadios*: cf. 489c: as not likely & *anusimos*: efficacious & *tropos*: cf. 517c in context of sentence]; not implanting the faculty of sight, for that exists already, but has been turned [*metastrepho*: cf. 367a as perverting] in the wrong direction [*orthos*, adverb (with *ouk*): cf. 495a as quite right], and is looking [*blepo*: 515d as turned towards & *diamechanaomai*: to bring about] away from the truth?

Yes, he said, such an art may be presumed.

And whereas the other so-called virtues of the soul [*arete*: cf. 500d & *psuche*: cf. c] seem to be akin [*kinduneuo*: cf. 454b as danger & *eggus*: cf. 515d as approaching nearer] to bodily qualities, for even

**e** when they are not originally innate they can be implanted later by habit and exercise [*ethos*: cf. 497b as character & *askesis*: cf. 404a as training], that of wisdom [*phroneo*: cf. 505b as knowledge] more than anything else contains a divine element [*theios*: cf. 517d] which always remains, and by this conversion [*periagoge*: cf. d] is rendered useful and profitable [*chresimos*: cf. 505a & *ophelimos*: cf. 457b]; or, on **519** the other hand, hurtful and useless [*blaberos*: cf. 457b & *achrestos*: cf. 499b]. Did you never observe [*ennoeo*: cf. 507d as see] the narrow intelligence flashing from the keen eye of a clever rogue [*poneros*: cf. 499b as corrupt & *sophos*: cf. 466c as wisely]—how eager he is, how clearly [*drimos*: piercing] his paltry soul [*psucharion*: diminutive of *psuche*] sees the way to his end [*trepo*: cf. 508c as directs]; he is the reverse of blind, but his keen [*phaulos*, with *ou*: cf. 496a as vile] eyesight is forced into the service of evil, and he is mischievous in proportion to his cleverness [*ergazomai*: cf. 406c as must attend & *kakos*: cf. 517d as evil].

Very true, he said.

But what if there had been a circumcision of such natures [*periekope* & *phusis*: cf. 514a] in the days of their youth; and they had been severed from those sensual pleasures, such as eating and drinking, which, **b** like leaden weights, were attached to them at their birth, and which drag them down [*strepho*, with *kata*: cf. 518c] and turn the vision of their souls [*opsis*: cf. 517b as sight & *psuche*: cf. a] upon the things that are below—if, I

say, they had been released [*apallaso*: cf. 491d as contrast] from these impediments and turned [*strephe*, with *eis*: cf. b] in the opposite direction, the very same faculty in them would have seen the truth [*alethos*: cf. 516a as realities] as keenly [*oxus*: cf. 403a as keener] as they see what their eyes are turned to [*strephe*: cf. b] now.

Very likely.

Yes, I said; and there is another thing which is likely [*eikos*] or rather a necessary inference [*anagke*: cf. 515c as certain] from what has preceded, that neither the uneducated and uninformed of the truth [*apaideuo* & *apeiros*: cf. 409a as no experience & *aletheia*: cf. 517c], nor yet those who never make an

end of their education [*diatribo*: cf. 517c as dwell & *paideia*: cf. 518b], will be able ministers [*epitrepo*: cf. 487a as entrust] of state; not the former, because they have no single aim of duty [*skopos*: cf. 452e as standard & *stoicheo*: cf. 462a in context of sentence] which is the rule of all their actions [*prasso*: cf. 517c as affairs], private as well as public; nor the latter, because they will not act at all except upon compulsion, fancying that they are already dwelling apart [*apoikazo*] in the islands of the blest [*nesos* & *makarios*: cf. 506e as sweet].

Very true, he replied.

Then, I said, the business [*ergos*: cf. 501e in context of sentence] of us who are the founders [*oikistes*: cf. 378e] of the state will be to compel [*anagkazo*: cf. 515e] the best minds [*beltistos*: cf. 506c & *phusis*: cf. a as natures] to attain that knowledge [*aphikneomai*: cf. 435e as come & *mathema*: cf. 505a] which we have already shown to be the greatest of all—they must continue to ascend [*anabaino* & *anabasis*: cf. 517b as journey] until they arrive at the good [*agathos*: cf. 518]; but when they have ascended and seen

enough [*hikanos*, adverb: cf. 513c as perfectly] we must not allow them to do [*epitrepo*: cf. c in context of sentence] as they do now.

What do you mean?

I mean that they remain [*katameno*: to stay behind] in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend [*katabaino*: cf. 327a as went down] again among the prisoners [*desmos*: bonds, fetters] in the den and partake [*metecho*: cf. 513e as have] of their labors and honors, whether they are worth having or not [*phaulos*: cf. a as reverse & *spoudaios*: cf. 425a as virtuous].

But is not this unjust [*adikeo*: cf. 440c as wrong]?, he said. Ought we to give them a worse life, when they might have a better?

You have again forgotten [*epilanthano*: cf. 441d], my friend, I said, the intention of the legislator [*nomos*: cf. 502b as laws], who did not aim at making [*mechanomai*: to construct] any one class in the state happy [*eu*: cf. 496b] above the rest [*diapherontos*, adverb: cf. 491e as pre-eminently]; the happiness was to be in the whole state, and he held [*sunarmozo*: cf. 443d as has bound together] the citizens together by persuasion and necessity [*peitho*: cf. 502b as obedient & *anagke*: cf. b], making them

benefactors [*metadidomai*: cf. 369c as exchange & *ophelia*: cf. 459c as good] of the state, and therefore benefactors of one another [*koinos*: cf. 464a as in common]; to this end he created them, not to please [*trepo*: cf. a as sees way to the end] themselves, but to be his instruments [*katachraomai*: to make full use of] in binding up [*sundesmos*: a fastening] the state.

True, he said, I had forgotten.

Observe [*skeptomai*: cf. 466a as consider], Glaucon, that there will be no injustice [*adikeo*: cf. 519d] in compelling [*prosanagazo*: to force] our philosophers to have a care and providence [*dikaios*, with *pros*: cf. 517e & *epimelomai*: cf. 467a as educating & *phulasso*: cf. 484b as guard] of others; we shall explain to b them that in other states, men of their class are not obliged to share in the toils [*metecho*: cf. 519d as partake & *ponos*: cf. 403e as labors] of politics: and this is reasonable, for they grow up at their own sweet will [*automatos*: cf. 427a as naturally], and the government [*politeia*: cf. 501c as constitutions] would rather not have them. Being self-taught [*autophues*: cf. 486d as spontaneously], they cannot be expected to show any gratitude [*prothumeomai*: cf. 506d as zeal] for a culture [*trophe*: cf. 491e as education] which they have never received. But we have brought you into the world to be rulers [*hegemon*] of the hive, kings of yourselves and of the other citizens, and have educated [*paideuo*: cf. 493a as teach] you far better and more perfectly than they have been



educated, and you are better able **c** to share [*metecho*: cf. b] in the double duty. Wherefore each of you, when his turn comes, must go down [*katabaino*: cf. 519d as descend] to the general underground abode [*sunoiikesis*] and get the habit [*sunethisteon*: verbal adjective] of seeing in the dark [*theomaî*: cf. 516b as contemplate & *skoteinos*]. When you have acquired the habit [*sunethizo*: to become habituated], you will see [*horao*: cf. 517b] ten thousand times better than the inhabitants of the den, and you will know what the several images [*gignosko*: cf. 509b & *eidolon*: cf. 516a as reflections] are and what they represent, because you have seen [*horao*: cf. c] the beautiful and just and good in their truth [*kalos*: cf. 517c & *dikaïos*: cf. a & *agathos*: cf. 519c & *alethos*: cf. 519b]. And thus our state which is also yours will be a reality [*oikeo*: cf. 473b as mal-administration], and not a dream only [*onar*: cf. 476d], and will be administered in a spirit unlike that of other states, in which men fight [*stasiazo*: cf. 470c as disorder] with one another about

**d** shadows only and are distracted in the struggle for power [*archo*: cf. 465a] which in their eyes is a great good [*agathos*: cf. c]. Whereas the truth is that the state in which the rulers are most reluctant [*prothumos*: cf. 598c as earnest] to govern is always the best and most quietly governed [*astasiastos*: cf. 459e as breaking out into rebellion & *oikeo*: cf. d], and the state in which they are most eager, the worst [*enantios*, adverb: cf. 396c as opposite].

+ The End +

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[1]

The original Greek of this verse runs as follows: **ble/pomen ga'r aÁrti di' e)so/ptrou e)n ai'niçgmati, to/te de\ pro/swpon proj pro/swpon: aÁrti ginw?skw e)k me/rouj, to/te de\ e)pigw?somai kaqwÜj kaii e)pegw?sqhn.**

[2]

This article has a lengthy excerpt from the **Republic** about the cave with some brief notations within the text. I decided to add it as a supplement to the discussion, of how the person who exits the cave returns there with a memory of the sun shining outside it and how this affects the cave dwellers.

[3]

The nature of ‘*asher*’ as a relative pronoun can be illustrated in Ps 1.1: “Happy the man who does not go.” The adjective is ‘*ashrey*’ and the relative pronoun is ‘*asher*’ with “the man” being *ha’ysh*. ‘*Asher*’ and ‘*ashrey*’ are from the same root, indicative that the nature of happiness is not static but dynamic, always in transition and never at rest. Therefore “man” or ‘*ysh*’ partakes of this continuous dynamism.

[4]

I might add that *morphe*, at least in the Platonic sense, has gotten a bad rap not so much by his writings but by later interpretations of them. All one has to do is pick up a dialogue or two and see the person of Socrates in action as he discusses, often playfully, *morphe*.

[5]

While patristic theology gives plenty of attention to *eikon*, *homoiosis* seems to receive less attention but in many ways is more important. It is the actualization of *eikon*, putting it into practice. While both Western and

Eastern Christianity are familiar with both terms, consider the original Hebrew for the two terms respectively, *tselem* and *demuth*. The former means a shadow whereas the latter a model, appearance. Because verbal roots are important in Hebrew, the root for *demuth* is *damah* or to be silent, to cease. Thus one could say that *demuth* “rests” within *tselem* insofar as a person actively recollects the nature of his image. It isn’t permanent, obviously, because we alternate between (too) long periods of forgetfulness and short ones of this rest. As for the “shadow” nature of *tselem*, constantly it adheres to the person who casts it, not unlike the collection between it and the mirror. That presupposes the role of sunlight without which no *tselem* would exist.

So if the human *tselem/eikon* is an inverse image of God, you have the likeness (*demuth/homoiosis*) as the memory of the image, which if perverted, un-inverts the image in a mirror. Thoughts and emotions of a troublesome nature are the working out of this problem which need to be exchanged to make this unique structure shine forth.