

### **Discussion Questions for “The Myth of the Cave” by Plato**

1. Why does Plato use an analogy of men living in a cave to describe the human condition?
2. How does Plato use the metaphor of the prisoners seeing shadows on the wall to describe ultimate reality? Is Plato saying that what we see is only a shadow of what is real?
3. Plato seems to indicate that our senses cannot always convey reality to us. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
4. Plato seems to say that if one of the men in the cave is released from the cave, and is allowed to go outside, he will not understand what is happening. Gradually, as the prisoner acclimates to his new environment, he will begin to understand that what he knew before was only partially true. If the prisoner returns to the cave and attempts to tell the others what he has seen, he will not be believed. Does this sequence of events seem to ring true?
5. How does Plato make the connection between the world of the cave and the real world in which he lives?
6. Why does Plato say that men who attain the understanding of the true nature of the world will have a difficult time dealing with everyday human affairs?