

# **FROM SHADOWS TO LIGHT**

## **A Philosophia Perennis in Plato's Allegory of the Cave and the Bhagavad Gītā?**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Besides highlighting convergences between Platonic thought and Eastern spiritual traditions, the goal of this paper is to show philosophical similarities and differences between the Platonic Allegory of the Cave and the Bhagavad Gītā, and to demonstrate that Platonic thought and the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā can be articulated from panentheistic perspectives. Although both texts come from different cultural contexts, they share a deep resonance in themes such as knowledge, spiritual enlightenment, and the search for truth. Both texts teach us how one is immersed in the shadows of ignorance, entangled by our material limitations, believing that the shadows are the only existent reality; how the process of changing inner paradigms may be painful and fearful; how one is overwhelmed by the tendency of quitting towards the difficulty of changing perspectives; how the process of understanding these new perspectives relies on the capacity of reasoning; how enlightenment changes one's perspective towards the world and how it's a hard task to oneself adapt to the material world after having contemplated the intelligible.

### **2. Plato's Allegory of the Cave**

"The Republic", a fundamental work by Plato written around 380 BC, is a philosophical dialogue between Socrates and characters such as Glaucon, Adeimantus, and Thrasymachus. Comprising ten books, it addresses wide-ranging themes such as justice, politics, education, and the ideal structure of society. It commences with Socrates being questioned about the essence of justice, leading Plato to expound his vision of an ideal society, the Republic, governed by philosopher-kings dedicated to the pursuit of truth and virtue. This envisioned society would be marked by justice, harmony, class

stratification based on individual aptitudes, and a rigorous educational system aimed at cultivating philosophically inclined leaders.

In Book VII of “The Republic”, we encounter the famous Allegory of the Cave, a powerful metaphor addressing the nature of reality, knowledge, and education. The allegory depicts a group of prisoners confined in a cave since birth, bound by chains, facing the wall, unable to turn their heads. Regarding this, Glaucon remarks on the strangeness of the image, to which Socrates responds as follows<sup>1</sup>

“A strange image you speak of,” he said, “and strange prisoners.”

“Like to us,” I said; “for, to begin with, tell me do you think that these men would have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the shadows cast from the fire on the wall of the cave that fronted them?”

“How could they,” he said, “if they were compelled to hold their heads unmoved through life?”

“And again, would not the same be true of the objects carried past them?”

“Surely.”

At a certain point, one of the prisoners is freed from the chains and forced to stand up (the original passage does not provide elements to identify who carries out this action<sup>2</sup>). The prisoner is freed and dragged onto an ascending path, opposite to the bottom of the cave. Along the way, he finds a small barrier, the height of a man, behind which people talk among themselves and walk with all sorts of objects in front of a bonfire, so that the shadow of these objects is cast on the cave's wall. Devoid of knowledge of the external world, those still imprisoned see only shadows projected on the cave wall and believe that the echo of men's voices is from the objects. They interpret these shadows and sounds as their reality, believing them to be real entities.<sup>3</sup> The freed prisoner first observes the shadows and gradually begins to observe the objects in the hands of the people walking around the fire, realising how they truly are. Then, he is once again dragged and forced to climb the steep path toward the cave's entrance, where he is exposed to the sunlight. After a period of discomfort and suffering caused by his eyes'

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 515a.

<sup>2</sup> The original Greek sentence “ὅποτε τις λυθείη καὶ ἀναγκάζεται ἐξ αἰφνης ἀνίστασθαι τε” has “τις” as the subject, meaning “someone.” “Λυθείη,” from “λύω” (to free), means “was freed.” “ἀναγκάζεται,” from “ἀναγκάζω” (to force), means “was forced.” “ἀνίστασθαι,” a present infinitive from “ἀνίστημι” (to rise), means “to rise.” Thus, the “someone” is a prisoner who is freed and forced to rise by an undetermined agent.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 515a-b.

adjustment to the light, he manages to perceive reality as it is, and not just its shadows and reflections. And after some more time, finally, he can gaze upon the sun. He can then understand, through reasoning, that the sun is the reason for the seasons and the cause of all visible things. However, upon returning to the cave, he needs to readjust to the shadows once again, another adaptation that causes some suffering, but he no longer desires earthly things, because after glimpsing true reality, nothing else makes sense.<sup>4</sup> He then begins to feel compassion for those still there, preferring the light instead of the shadows. The passage questions whether he would value the praises and rewards of the other prisoners for his ability to interpret the shadows, or if he would prefer the freedom of knowledge. It is concluded that he would prefer any suffering to return to ignorance. Socrates further argues that if he tried to free the prisoners he would under the risk of being rejected or even killed by them.<sup>5</sup>

Central metaphysical elements of the Allegory of the Cave, which below will be compared with important teachings from the Bhagavad Gītā, include: ignorance and illusion, illustrated by the cave and its prisoners; knowledge, portrayed by the journey from belief (doxa) to reason; and the ultimate reality, representing the intelligible world.

## 2.1 Ignorance

After his exposition of the Allegory of the Cave, Socrates explains to Glaucon its meaning, that the passage suggests that what is visible can be likened to a prison, with the Sun symbolizing knowledge. Understanding higher truths is akin to ascending out of this metaphorical prison. It emphasizes the importance of grasping the concept of Good<sup>6</sup>, which is portrayed as the source of all that is right and beautiful, guiding individuals towards wisdom in both personal and public realms. In the passage 517b-c, Plato uses the Allegory of the Cave to describe his vision of reality and the pursuit of truth. He compares the sight of the visible world to being in a prison, and the light of the fire inside it to the strength of the sun. He suggests that if we consider the ascent and

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<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 516c-d.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 516b-517a. In this passage, Socrates makes reference to Homer's *Odyssey* (Hom. Od. 11.489), where, in the underworld, Odysseus sees the ghost of Heracles, who laments his past struggles.

<sup>6</sup> In Plato's philosophy, the concept of the Good is the highest and most important of all realities. It is the ultimate principle that gives meaning, order, and intelligibility to everything else. The Good is like the sun in the Allegory of the Cave, illuminating the world of forms and allowing the soul to perceive truth and knowledge. It is not just an ethical ideal but the source of all existence and knowledge, making it the ultimate goal of the philosopher's quest.

contemplation of higher things as the ascent of the soul to the intelligible region, we will understand his assumption.

## 2.2 Knowledge

In Book VI (therefore, previously to the Allegory of the Cave) the character Socrates discusses the nature of vision (the physical sense) and compares it to the soul's ability to discern truth. Similarly, Socrates associates the Good with the intelligible world of ideas, as a source of intellectual enlightenment, making use of the analogy that when the eyes focus on something illuminated, it is able to comprehend them as they truly are, whereas, when engulfed by darkness, vision becomes blurred and limited in its capacity for perception. When Socrates initiates his explanation about the senses, specifically vision, he argues that while some things are perceived by vision and not by thought, the opposite is also true: ideas are conceived by thought and cannot be observed physically.<sup>7</sup> Socrates emphasizes the need for light as the third element for vision to materialize. For him, the sun is responsible for this light, thus enabling the perception of the sensible world and contributing to our understanding of it.<sup>8</sup>

The understanding of the analogy of the sun is a crucial part of our study of the Allegory of the Cave, as Plato uses this analogy to illustrate the journey of the soul towards understanding reality and truth, to explain the nature of the Good and how it is related to the idea of justice. The Sun is used as a metaphor for the Supreme Good, which is the source of all forms and true wisdom, because, according to the Platonic character Socrates, knowledge of the Good is essential for the harmony and proper functioning of the ideal city, ensuring that rulers are guided by lofty ethical principles. Thus, Socrates argues that it is the idea of the Good that enables knowledge and perception of truth. He compares the role of the Good in providing truth to the subject contemplating the ideas to the role of the sun in providing light for the subject to see objects in the visible world.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of book VI, Socrates warns us that opinion, for instance, "doxa" (δόξα)

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 484c-d. In other words, sensory perception and intellectual understanding operate in different realms: one is limited to physical observation, while the other deals with abstract concepts.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 508b-509-a. Socrates highlights that vision requires three elements: the eye, the object, and light. He identifies the sun as the source of light, making physical vision possible. Metaphorically, the sun represents the Form of the Good, which illuminates the mind, enabling us to understand and perceive truth in the sensible world.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 508e. Just as the sun allows us to see visible objects, the Good provides the necessary insight to perceive and understand higher forms of truth and justice. Socrates argues that knowledge of the Good is essential for creating a just society, as it ensures that rulers are guided by true wisdom and ethical principles.

in Greek, belongs to the sensible world, since, as we have previously seen, knowledge based on opinions is not reliable, whereas true knowledge belongs to the intelligible world, called in Greek "episteme" (ἐπιστήμη). According to Plato's Socrates, true knowledge does not rely on data from the visible world, but passes directly from idea to idea, doing exactly this dialectical movement<sup>10</sup>, and it is in this way that contemplation occurs where true knowledge is obtained. It is this movement that occurs when, in Book VII [516b-c], the prisoner gazes at the sun and, finally, would come to the conclusion that it determines the seasons and cycles of the year, and governs all things in the visible realm, being the cause behind everything that exists.

The Allegory of the Cave is rich in meanings and symbolism. In it, Plato explores the idea that knowledge as a fundamental aspect of the soul, waiting to be rediscovered through the challenges of life. Plato's Allegory of Er<sup>11</sup>, found within the pages of book X, delves into the idea of recollection, positing that the soul, having traversed the realm of Forms before birth, retains traces of this preexistent knowledge. Through philosophical inquiry and virtuous living, souls can reclaim this innate knowledge, thereby transcending the cycle of reincarnation. Therefore, Plato initiates the elaboration of the conception that the soul manifests an essential vitality in its existence. He elaborates that if the soul is eternal, its existence transcends the sensible world, which is subject to decay, and has the capacity to move towards the essence, the Good, or to distance itself from it, immersing in the sensible world and losing consciousness of its timeless nature. The soul requires effort to remain on course towards the Good, thus transforming this dynamic into a renewing activity.<sup>12</sup> Plato mentions that his idea is that in the region of the known, the last thing to be seen and seen with difficulty is the idea of the Good. When this idea is seen, it points to the conclusion that it is the cause of all correct and beautiful things. The idea of the Good is described as generating light in the visible world and as the authentic source of truth and

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<sup>10</sup> Socrates was primarily known for his questioning methodology known as "maieutic" (μαϊευτική, maieutiké, the art of midwifery). μαϊευτικός, ἢ, ὄν 1 of childbirth 2 skilled in aiding childbirth; ἢ μαϊευτική 3 art of aiding childbirth 4 maieutic (Socratic method). (μαϊεύομαι) (MALHADAS, 2010, vol. 3, p.144)

<sup>11</sup> Plato's Allegory of Er is an allegorical story about the afterlife and the choices souls make. After dying in battle, Er, a soldier, is revived and recounts his journey through the afterlife. Souls choose their next lives based on their previous experiences, and their choices determine their fate. The allegory illustrates Plato's ideas on justice, the importance of moral choices, and the cyclical nature of existence, emphasizing that living a just life leads to better outcomes in the next life.

<sup>12</sup> In Plato's *Phaedrus*, the parable of the charioteer illustrates how the soul must struggle to guide its chariot—representing the rational and irrational parts of the soul—toward the divine and the Good. Similarly, the effort required for the soul to remain on course towards the Good reflects the continuous, renewing activity needed to maintain its alignment and achieve enlightenment.

reason in the intelligible world. Plato suggests that to act wisely, whether in the private or public sphere, it is necessary to have glimpsed this idea of the Good:

This image then, dear Glaucon, we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, [517b] likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison, and the light of the fire in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region, you will not miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear. But God knows whether it is true. But, at any rate, my dream as it appears to me is that in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, [517c] and that when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this.

### 2.3 Ultimate Reality

Finally, it is opportune for us to discuss the significance of the moment when the prisoner, freed from the cave, finally gazes at the sun and comprehends, through reasoning, that the Sun is the cause of all that exists.<sup>13</sup> This passage can be explored by drawing from Plato's dialogues, particularly his work entitled "Parmenides," where the philosopher delves into the complex relationship between the One and the Many<sup>14</sup>. In this dialogue, Plato navigates the tension between the seemingly static and unchanging nature of the One, as proposed by Parmenides, and the ever-changing flux of the Many, as described by Heraclitus.<sup>15</sup>

Plato explains that the concept of unity provides quality to things, highlighting its importance in understanding the qualitative aspects of existence. In contrast, the

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<sup>13</sup> In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, the moment when the freed prisoner sees the sun symbolizes the ultimate enlightenment and understanding of the true nature of reality. The sun represents the Form of the Good, the ultimate source of truth and existence. This realization signifies the highest level of intellectual and philosophical insight, where one grasps the underlying cause and essence of all things beyond mere appearances.

<sup>14</sup> "The One and the Many" is a philosophical concept that explores how a single, unified entity (the One) relates to the diverse, multiple aspects or entities (the Many) within it. It examines the balance between unity and diversity, questioning how a singular essence or principle can encompass or generate various distinct elements.

<sup>15</sup> The Parmenidean philosophy professed the idea of immobility, in which everything was one, being complete, unique, perfect, indivisible, eternal, and immutable, while the Heraclitean thought professed the theory of eternal movement, where we are and are not, of continuous change, where everything flows and where becoming is constant.

concept of multiplicity should be viewed in terms of quantity. Unity (τὸ ἓν) acts as the fundamental principle behind multiplicity, meaning that multiplicity cannot exist on its own without unity. This complex relationship shows that the diversity and variety we see in the world are supported by a single, unifying principle.

According to the platonic thought, the world outside the cave symbolizes the intelligible realm, often referred to as the world of Forms (εἶδη). These Forms are the true reality because they are what they are, each embodying a perfect and immutable essence. They are identical to themselves, divine, and immortal. The Sun, in this allegory, represents the ultimate source of truth and reality. The liberated prisoner's realization of the Sun's significance parallels the philosopher's journey to understand the fundamental unity that underlies and gives rise to the multiplicity of the phenomenal world.

Through this lens, it is possible to appreciate how Plato's metaphysical framework suggests that the observable diversity in the universe is deeply interconnected with a singular, underlying reality. This perspective fosters a profound appreciation for the interconnectedness and unity of all existence, highlighting the importance of both the qualitative essence and the quantitative manifestations in the grand tapestry of reality.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The Metaphysics of the Bhagavad Gītā

One of the most relevant works in Hindu literature, The Bhagavad Gītā, whose name means "the Song of Bhagavat", is widely recognized as the most significant work of Vedic literature<sup>17</sup>, often referred to as "the Hindu Bible" or even "the Indian Bible"<sup>18</sup>. The Bhagavad Gītā is part of the epic Mahābhārata<sup>19</sup>, specifically located within chapters 23 to 40 of its sixth book. Due to its philosophical and religious content, the Bhagavad Gītā is also known as the Gītā Upaniṣad<sup>20</sup>, reflecting the similarity of its teachings to those of the Upaniṣads. It is likely that it was composed between the 4th

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<sup>16</sup> Goldschmidt, p.20-21; Rep. X, 661e

<sup>17</sup> This literature includes the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, as well as epics like the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

<sup>18</sup> THEODOR, 2021, p.16.

<sup>19</sup> The *Mahābhārata*, by Vyasa, is one of the canons of Hindu literature, being one of the oldest and most extensive literatures in the world (four times longer than the Iliad), whose story marks the end of an era and the beginning of another. (RUMBELSPERGER, 2023, p.86)

<sup>20</sup> The Upaniṣads are ancient Hindu texts that explore the nature of reality and the self. They focus on understanding the ultimate reality (Brahman) and the true nature of the individual soul (ātman<sup>20</sup>), emphasizing that everything is interconnected and that realizing this unity leads to spiritual enlightenment.

and 2nd centuries BCE, approximately contemporaneous with the great Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle.<sup>21</sup> The Bhagavad Gītā, composed of 700 verses distributed across eighteen chapters, is divided into three main sections: Karma-Yoga<sup>22</sup> (chapters 1-6), which deals with action and duty; Bhakti-Yoga<sup>23</sup> (chapters 7-12), which focuses on devotion and knowledge of God; and Jñāna-Yoga<sup>24</sup> (chapters 13-18), which addresses spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

The Bhagavad Gītā is set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, right before a great war between two branches of the Kuru dynasty. The battle is fought between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, cousins vying for the throne of Hastinapura. The Kauravas, led by Duryodhana, refused to give the Pandavas their rightful share of the kingdom, leading to war after years of tension. Power, honor, and deep family conflicts fueled the battle, which lasted 18 days and ended with the Pandavas' victory, though at a high cost.

At the heart of this story is a dialogue between Prince Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa, his charioteer and guide. Faced with the task of fighting his relatives, friends, and teachers, Arjuna questions the need for war, the morality of fighting his own kin, and the meaning of life. His doubts give Kṛṣṇa the opportunity to provide profound spiritual teachings on dharma (duty), morality, destiny, selfless action, and devotion.

Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna that the battle is necessary to restore justice and uphold dharma, which have been corrupted by Duryodhana. Arjuna's refusal to fight would violate his duty and responsibilities. His inner conflict reflects the universal struggle individuals face on their spiritual journeys, seeking to align with their true purpose.

In the Gītā, the first moment when Arjuna finds himself overwhelmed by māyā (illusion) occurs at the beginning of Chapter 1 and gets more intense in Chapter 2. Arjuna, a warrior of the Pandavas, is about to enter battle against the Kauravas at Kurukshetra. He asks Kṛṣṇa, his cousin and charioteer, to take him to see the frontline of the opposing army, saying, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up." (Bhagavad Gītā, 1.28).

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<sup>21</sup> THEODOR, 2021, p.16.

<sup>22</sup> Karma-Yoga is a spiritual path in Hindu philosophy that emphasizes selfless action performed without attachment to outcomes, where karma means action. It is based on the Bhagavad Gītā, where individuals engage in their duties and responsibilities as a form of spiritual practice, aiming for liberation (mokṣa) through dedicating actions to a higher ideal or divine principle.

<sup>23</sup> Bhakti-Yoga, another spiritual path in Hinduism, focuses on devotion and love for a personal deity. It aims for union with the divine through practices such as worship, prayer, and surrender.

<sup>24</sup> Jñāna-Yoga, also a path of spiritual practice in Hindu philosophy, emphasizes knowledge and wisdom as pathways to liberation (mokṣa). It involves the pursuit of self-realization through intellectual inquiry, contemplation, and study of sacred texts like the Upaniṣads and Vedānta.



When he sees his relatives, friends, and mentors in the enemy army, he is consumed by intense internal conflict. Arjuna faces a profound moral and emotional dilemma. He questions the value of war and the consequences of killing his own family members and mentors, which leads to an emotional breakdown. He expresses his distress to his friend and guide, Kṛṣṇa, stating that he would rather renounce the battle than commit such violent acts. Arjuna says, "I do not see how any good can come from killing my own relatives in battle" (Bhagavad Gītā, 1.31-32).

As he sees the two armies ready for battle, Arjuna feels disheartened trying to resolve the seemingly unsolvable moral dilemma. At this moment, he seeks guidance from Kṛṣṇa. This state of confusion and despair is a classic example of *māyā*, where Arjuna is unable to see beyond worldly appearances and personal emotions. He is trapped in the illusion of identifying with the body and temporary relationships, forgetting his duty as a *kṣatriya*<sup>25</sup> (warrior) and his higher spiritual purpose.

Thus, Arjuna's dilemma serves as an introduction to the philosophical and spiritual teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā, addressing how to overcome *māyā* and act according to dharma. He seeks Kṛṣṇa's help at this moment:

Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me. (Bhagavad Gītā, 2.7)

At this point, Kṛṣṇa begins to teach the warrior about the nature of the soul, dharma (duty), and concludes with the teachings of Karma Yoga, which involves performing actions without attachment, and Bhakti Yoga, the practice of devotion to God. Kṛṣṇa instructs the warrior about the three *guṇas*<sup>26</sup>- *tamas* (ignorance), *rajas*

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<sup>25</sup> In the context of the Bhagavad Gītā, the duty of a *kṣatriya* —a member of the warrior and ruling class in Hindu society—is to uphold justice, protect the realm, and engage in battle when necessary. This duty involves not only martial prowess but also moral and ethical responsibilities. A *kṣatriya* is expected to act with valor, defend the weak, and enforce order in society. Performing these duties with righteousness and without attachment to the results is considered essential for maintaining cosmic order and fulfilling one's dharma.

<sup>26</sup> The three modes of material nature (*guṇas*) are goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), and ignorance (*tamas*). When the soul comes into contact with nature (*prakṛti*), it becomes subject to these modes of conditioning. This knowledge is explained in a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in verse 14.5 of the *Bhagavad Gītā*: *sattvaṃ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛtisambhavāḥ nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinamavyayam* || 14.5 || The three *guṇas*, *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (ignorance), born of *prakṛti*, O Arjuna, bind the imperishable *jīva* (embodied soul) to the body. (RUMBELSPERGER, 2023, p.91-92)

(passion), and sattva (goodness) - , that compose all reality and the different personalities:

Know that all states of being – be they of goodness, passion or ignorance – are manifested by My energy. I am, in one sense, everything, but I am independent. I am not under the modes of material nature, for they, on the contrary, are within Me. Deluded by the three modes [goodness, passion and ignorance], the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible. (Bhagavad Gītā, 7.12-13)

Kṛṣṇa teaches that those ruled by tamas (ignorance), tied to the material world and its fleeting nature, must rise above this dark view to connect with the absolute reality. Similarly, those driven by rajas (passion), who seek rewards, recognition, and approval, must also move beyond these desires. Rajas keeps people trapped in the cycle of birth and death by attaching them to their desires and outcomes. To break free, one must practice detachment, selflessness, and let go of the ego's need for recognition. Overcoming these impulses leads to spiritual liberation and freedom from suffering, a key goal in many spiritual traditions<sup>27</sup>, guiding individuals to ultimate liberation (mokṣa) or enlightenment (nirvāṇa), where the soul transcends material limits and reunites with the divine. Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to fully develop sattva (goodness), which represents compassionate love and selflessness. Sattva helps channel divine goodness through the individual and is key to achieving unity with the ultimate reality. Kṛṣṇa also teaches that the right attitude, grounded in sattva, is essential, and the paths of knowledge and action should be chosen to cultivate this awareness.

In Chapter 8 of the Bhagavad Gītā, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he is the essence of all existence and that life is eternal. He reassures Arjuna that the war against his relatives is necessary to uphold righteousness, and that death is just an illusion. Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to look beyond this illusion and view the battle as a way to defeat injustice and false perceptions. He reveals that the true nature of life is eternal and that overcoming māyā (illusion) is key to understanding divine truth. Kṛṣṇa also explains that karma (action) shapes all aspects of reality, and by fighting for truth, Arjuna will attain peace and a positive karmic future.

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<sup>27</sup> Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, for example, are spiritual traditions which emphasize transcending worldly attachments to achieve spiritual liberation or enlightenment, aiming to reunite with divine or cosmic consciousness.

The Bhagavad Gītā explains that those who live in sattva (goodness) never face death, while those led by tamas (ignorance) face karmic consequences. People dominated by rajas (passion) are likely to be reborn and continue the cycle of saṃsāra<sup>28</sup> until they reach enlightenment. By the end of the text, Arjuna trusts Kṛṣṇa completely, overcomes his doubts, and envisions his future under Kṛṣṇa's guidance, achieving clarity and unity with the divine.

### 3.1 Ignorance

Just as three key aspects of Plato's Allegory of the Cave were highlighted in Section 1, here we focus on three elements: (1) Arjuna's ignorance and confusion about his duty before battle, (2) how he begins his path with Kṛṣṇa's guidance, and (3) Kṛṣṇa revealing his universal form, leading Arjuna to understand the ultimate truth.

In the first aspect—ignorance—Arjuna faces a crisis due to conflicting values. As a warrior, his dharma urges him to fight, but he is torn by the thought of killing his kin and teachers, which would violate dharma and lead to suffering. He doesn't seek victory, wealth, or pleasure from the war, and even if he wins, the loss of loved ones makes the outcome meaningless. He would rather be killed than fight. These doubts start his conversation with Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā, where he presents four main arguments against the war, as outlined by Ithamar Theodor:

- a) Utilitarianism: Arjuna calculates that the costs of fighting outweigh the benefits. He sees no point in winning if it means losing his loved ones and suffering karmically for it.
- b) Avoidance of evil: He fears that fighting will bring negative consequences for himself, both in this life and the next.
- c) Protection of dharma: Arjuna believes that war will weaken moral and social principles (dharma), leading to chaos and suffering.
- 4) Superiority of renunciation: He considers following a spiritual path of renunciation<sup>29</sup> to be better than engaging in worldly conflicts.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Eternal cycle of birth and rebirth.

<sup>29</sup> In the Bhagavad Gītā, renunciation means letting go of attachments and desires to gain spiritual freedom, especially in Chapter 5. It's not just about stopping activities but being mentally detached from their results. The Gītā offers two paths to liberation: selfless action (karma yoga) and renunciation. It suggests that selfless action without expecting rewards is usually easier and more practical, though both paths lead to enlightenment.

<sup>30</sup> THEODOR, 2021, p.60.

In this situation, Kṛṣṇa reapproaches Arjuna for not acting like a noble warrior. Arjuna, initially thinking about withdrawing from battle to avoid facing his elders, quickly regains composure but remains uncertain about his duty and what action to take. Once seeing Kṛṣṇa as a friend, Arjuna now asks him to be his spiritual teacher, showing his willingness to follow Kṛṣṇa's guidance. This marks the beginning of their new relationship, with Kṛṣṇa as the guru and Arjuna as the disciple. Despite this, Arjuna is still confused and hesitant to fight, leading to Kṛṣṇa's teachings.

### 3.2 Knowledge

Arjuna gains clarity in the Bhagavad Gītā through his dialogue with Kṛṣṇa . He is torn between taking action (karma) and renouncing the world (sannyāsa). At first, Kṛṣṇa urges him to fight for practical reasons and fulfill his duty, saying that avoiding the battle would be cowardly and dishonorable. Arjuna also believes that dying in battle while following dharma will lead to heaven, showing a faith-based, duty-driven perspective. Ultimately, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that success lies in doing his duty, regardless of the outcome. He emphasizes that doing the right thing is more important than personal results. Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to fight against his cousins, reminding him of this duty:

Therefore get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O Savyasācī, can be but an instrument in the fight. (Bhagavad Gītā,11.33).

The implication is that, although Arjuna has not yet defeated them, they are considered already defeated because the forces that govern the universe have long been set into motion.

The Bhagavad Gītā discusses true knowledge (jñāna) as a deep understanding of reality and the self. Kṛṣṇa teaches that true knowledge means recognizing the Supreme Being<sup>31</sup> and that the soul is eternal, which go beyond the temporary material world and highlight the unity of existence. This understanding is connected to dharma (duty),

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<sup>31</sup> Advaita Vedānta, founded by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, teaches that *ātman* and Brahman are identical, with perceived duality arising from *avidyā*. In contrast, Vaiṣṇavism, particularly Caitanya's *acintya-bhedābheda*, holds that Kṛṣṇa is simultaneously distinct from and identical to the individual soul, embodying an inconceivable unity-in-difference as the supreme personal Brahman.

where selfless action (Karma Yoga) is a way to gain wisdom. The text outlines different paths to true knowledge: Karma Yoga (selfless action), Bhakti Yoga (devotion), and Jñāna Yoga (intellectual knowledge). Each path leads to realizing the connection between Ātman and Brahman, resulting in liberation (mokṣa) from the cycle of birth and death and union with the divine.

### 3.3 Ultimate Reality

The third aspect, the moment when Kṛṣṇa reveals to Arjuna the true knowledge and his universal form as the cause of all existing things. This moment is considered by some scholars, such as Zaehner, as a paradigm shift for Arjuna<sup>32</sup>,

I shall fully declare unto you this knowledge and wisdom, knowing which nothing further shall remain for you to know in this world. Among thousands of mortals, hardly one strives for perfection; of those who strive and succeed, hardly one knows me in truth (Bhagavad Gītā, 7.2-3)

Before being encouraged to seek detachment from the material world, Arjuna is now urged to attach himself to the Supreme Person<sup>33</sup>. This transition marks the end of the struggle against sensory emotions and the beginning of a new phase, where Arjuna is guided to see the world in an elevated way. The world, once seen as threatening, is now recognized as a manifestation of divine abundance. This is a crucial moment, as Arjuna, having received guidance from Kṛṣṇa, feels prepared to perceive His universal form:

O greatest of all personalities, O supreme form, though I see You here before me in Your actual position, as You have described Yourself, I wish to see how You have entered into this cosmic manifestation. I want to see that form of Yours. (Bhagavad Gītā, 11.3)

Arjuna accepts Kṛṣṇa's divinity and, curious about his divine manifestations, asks for a tangible demonstration of his divinity. Kṛṣṇa grants Arjuna a mystical vision to see the universe and its divine manifestations within his own body, transforming into the

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<sup>32</sup> ZAEHNER, 1969, p.244.

<sup>33</sup> Parabrahman, embodied by Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the ultimate truth and source of all. Kṛṣṇa reveals to Arjuna that he transcends the material world, is the origin of all beings, and the key to liberation. Surrendering to him leads to true spiritual happiness.

mighty god Vishnu. This revelation is one of the most thrilling in the Bhagavad Gītā, altering the relationship between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa from friendship to one of reverence and awe. Kṛṣṇa, in his divine revelation, is akin not only to the sun, but a million of suns, as both represent the ultimate source of truth and enlightenment, as we see in the following passages:

If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form. At that time Arjuna could see in the universal form of the Lord the unlimited expansions of the universe situated in one place although divided into many, many thousands. (Bhagavad Gītā, 11.12-13)

Just as the sun illuminates and brings clarity to everything it touches, revealing the true nature of the world, Kṛṣṇa's theophany unveils the profound reality of the divine and the cosmos. Astonished and disturbed, Arjuna witnesses the imminent death of warriors and is instructed to be an instrument of Kṛṣṇa in battle. After the theophany, Arjuna requests to see Kṛṣṇa again in his human form and laments his past familiar behavior. The revelation causes a transition from friendship to reverence and submission. The chapter concludes by emphasizing personal devotion (bhakti) as the supreme path to attain and understand Kṛṣṇa.

Further in the Gītā, Kṛṣṇa describes to Arjuna the various aspects of his immanent divinity, including his declaration that he resides in the heart of all beings. Kṛṣṇa then asserts that Vedic knowledge is indeed knowledge of himself and that he is the author of Vedānta<sup>34</sup>. Finally, Kṛṣṇa talks about people who are still trapped in the cycle of life and death, and those who have been freed from it. He explains that he is above both of these states. He ends by saying that real knowledge brings devotion to him. The last verse of the chapter sums up the whole text, saying that understanding the soul and how to be free from this cycle means reaching true wisdom.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Vedānta is a major school of Hindu philosophy that interprets the teachings of the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism. It is based primarily on the Upanishads, which are part of the Vedic literature and explore the nature of reality, the self (Ātman), and the ultimate reality (Brahman). Vedānta focuses on understanding the relationship between the individual soul and the universal reality, and it encompasses a range of philosophical perspectives, including Advaita (non-dualism), Viśiṣṭadvaita (qualified non-dualism), and Dvaita (dualism).

<sup>35</sup> Bhagavad-Gītā, 15.12-20.

#### 4. A Shared *Philosophia Perennis*?

Despite the narrative and contextual differences, the comparison between the texts reveals that both share a similar metaphysical reasoning, with ideas close to Krause's panentheism<sup>36</sup>. The problem of ignorance makes us question what is real, as everything can seem like an illusion. To find the truth, we must first recognize what is not real. Ancient texts indicate that the world we perceive is temporary and misleading, merely reflecting something higher, pure, perfect, and eternal. This means there is a true reality beyond the material world. In Plato's philosophy, this true reality is the world of the Forms, while in the Gītā, it is represented by Kṛṣṇa.

Both the Gītā and Plato's allegory emphasize that the material world is merely a reflection of a higher, ideal world—like shadows on a wall or the reflection of a tree in water. The true reality exists behind these appearances. To perceive this reality, one must be prepared to see the truth, symbolized by the Sun in Plato's allegory and by Kṛṣṇa's radiant presence in the Gītā. Understanding this higher reality is challenging and requires knowledge. This struggle is illustrated in Plato's Allegory of the Cave, where a prisoner suffers when first exposed to the light. Similarly, in the Gītā, Arjuna struggles with accepting his duty and following the guidance given to him.

Starting from ignorance, which appears differently in each text, it is linked to our inability to see things as they truly are, often called illusion (*māyā*, in the Gītā). Plato's cave serves as a universal metaphor for ignorance, while Arjuna's ignorance is tied to his emotional struggle (illusion) and reluctance to fulfill his duty.

Allegory of the cave	Bhagavad Gītā
<p>"Next," said I, "compare our nature in respect of education and its lack to such an experience as this. Picture men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them as having their legs and necks fettered from childhood, so that they remain in the same spot, able to look forward only,</p>	<p>O Govinda, of what avail to us are a kingdom, happiness or even life itself when all those for whom we may desire them are now arrayed on this battlefield? O Madhusūdana, when teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives are ready to give up their lives and</p>

<sup>36</sup> Krause, not Schelling, introduced *panentheism* into philosophy, drawing from the Vedic tradition. Etymologically, *panentheism* means "all-in-God," where the universe exists within God, but God also transcends it. Krause called this philosophy of the Absolute "the teaching of Essence" (*Wesenlehre*) and referred to the Absolute as "God" or "Essence" (*Wesen*). (GÖCKE, 2024, p.31)

<p>and prevented by the fetters from turning their heads. (Plat. Rep. 7.514a-b)</p> <p>“Then in every way such prisoners would deem reality to be nothing else than the shadows of the artificial objects.” (Plat. Rep. 7.515b-c)</p>	<p>properties and are standing before me, why should I wish to kill them, even though they might otherwise kill me? O maintainer of all living entities, I am not prepared to fight with them even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone this earth. What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra? (Bhagavad Gītā, 1.32-35)</p> <p>Sañjaya said: Having spoken thus, Arjuna, chastiser of enemies, told Kṛṣṇa, “Govinda, I shall not fight,” and fell silent. (Bhagavad Gītā, 2.9)</p>
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Both stories depict a journey from illusion to knowledge, but differ in their beginnings. Plato's prisoner is forced out of the cave, while Arjuna seeks Kṛṣṇa's help due to a values crisis. Arjuna's doubt stems from not knowing the right path, and Kṛṣṇa guides him to truth by helping him fulfill his dharma.

Allegory of the cave	Bhagavad Gītā
<p>“When one was freed from his fetters and <b>compelled to stand up suddenly</b>” (Plat. Rep. 7.515c)</p> <p>“Someone should <b>drag him thence by force up the ascent</b> which is rough and steep, and not let him go before he had drawn him out into the light of the sun” (Plat. Rep. 7.515e)</p>	<p>[Kṛṣṇa says:] The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy. O son of Pṛthā, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. <b>Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise</b>, O chastiser of the enemy. (Bhagavad Gītā, 2.2-3)</p> <p>[Arjuna says:] Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul</p>



	surrendered unto You. <b>Please instruct me.</b> (Bhagavad Gītā, 2.7)
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#### 4.1 Knowledge

The difference between true reality and false appearances is a key theme in both texts. In the allegory of the cave, the shadows symbolize illusions that distort our understanding of reality. Similarly, Arjuna's worries about the material world and his relationships are seen by Kṛṣṇa as illusions that hide spiritual truth. Both texts highlight the struggle between what appears real and what is truly real, stressing the need to look beyond these illusions to find the truth.

In both texts, learning is a slow and often uncomfortable process. When the prisoner in the cave is freed and sees sunlight, his eyes hurt because they aren't used to the brightness. If someone told him the shadows weren't real and that he was now closer to the truth, he would be confused and still believe the shadows were real. Looking at the light would be painful, and he might prefer the familiar shadows. Even if forced into the sunlight, the adjustment would be hard, and he wouldn't see clearly at first. But over time, he would adapt, first seeing shadows and reflections, and eventually real things, including the sky and sun.

In the Gītā, Arjuna struggles to see the truth. He is caught in a narrow view where the battle seems pointless, and his compassion and attachment to family cloud his understanding of his higher duty. Kṛṣṇa, as his guide, helps him see beyond appearances (the illusion of māyā) and grasp deeper truths about dharma, the cycle of life and death, and acting without attachment. Arjuna's hesitation reflects the inner struggle that arises when spiritual or philosophical truths challenge deeply held beliefs. He questions how to act in the world, especially in war, without being morally affected.

Allegory of the cave	Bhagavad Gītā
When one was freed from his chains and suddenly forced to stand up, turn his head around, walk, and lift his eyes toward the light, he would experience pain. Due to the brightness of the light, he would struggle to see the objects whose shadows he had	[Kṛṣṇa says:] O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of

previously observed. Now, if someone were to tell him that what he had seen before was mere deception and illusion, and that now, being closer to reality and facing more real things, he was seeing more truthfully, what do you think his reaction would be? If someone also pointed out each of the objects passing by and forced him to identify them, wouldn't he be confused, believing that what he had seen before was more real than the things now shown to him?

Certainly, he would find the earlier shadows far more real. And if he were compelled to look directly at the light, wouldn't it hurt his eyes, causing him to turn away and retreat to the things he could see more clearly, considering them to be more certain than the newly revealed objects? Indeed, that is likely. Now, if someone were to forcibly drag him up the steep and rugged ascent, not letting him stop until he had been pulled out into the sunlight, wouldn't this cause him great discomfort? And when he finally emerged into the light, wouldn't his eyes be so overwhelmed by its brightness that he wouldn't be able to see even a single thing we call real?

Certainly not immediately, he said. There would indeed be a need for adjustment to allow him to see the things above. At first, he would most easily recognize the shadows, then the reflections of men and other things in water, and later, the things themselves. From there, he would go on to contemplate the appearances in the heavens and the heavens themselves, more easily at night,

Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

(Bhagavad Gītā, 2.14)

Arjuna said: O Madhusūdana, the system of yoga which You have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady.

The mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Kṛṣṇa, and to subdue it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind.

(Bhagavad Gītā, 6.33-34)

O scion of Bharata, O conqueror of the foe, all living entities are born into delusion, bewildered by dualities arisen from desire and hate.

(Bhagavad Gītā, 7.27)

looking at the light of the stars and the moon, rather than by day, when faced with the sun and its light.	
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(Plat. Rep. 7.515c-516d)

#### 4.2 Ultimate Reality

The two texts explore the conception of ultimate reality in both perspectives, offering a rich comparison between Platonic and Gītā's philosophies. In Plato's thought, Truth is symbolized by the Sun in the famous allegory of the cave. In this context, the philosopher's journey is represented by the freed prisoner, who, upon finally contemplating the Sun in its true essence, realizes that it is the cause of everything that exists, illuminating and giving life to the visible world. This discovery reflects the understanding that the Sun is responsible for the seasons, the cycles of the year, and all the phenomena observed in the sensible reality. The allegory symbolizes the quest for understanding the world of Forms (εἶδη), perfect, immutable, and eternal entities that represent true reality. These Forms are the essence of everything in the sensible world and can only be attained through intellect and reason.

In the sensible world, we see many things, but they are all supported by a single reality, which is unity itself. For Plato, understanding this unity is what Truth is all about. The diverse things we observe are just imperfect reflections of the intelligible world, where the true Forms exist. Discovering this Truth requires an intellectual awakening, where the philosopher moves beyond appearances to grasp the unifying principle of reality.

In the Bhagavad Gītā, Truth is embodied in Kṛṣṇa. For Arjuna to see Kṛṣṇa in his universal form, his ordinary "material eyes" must be transformed into "divine eyes," even if just for a moment. During this revelation, Kṛṣṇa shows himself as the ultimate cause and sustainer of the universe. This moment profoundly changes Arjuna, helping him move from a limited, material view of the world to an understanding of the divine reality that underlies everything. Kṛṣṇa reveals that the universe's diversity is a manifestation of his divinity. He is the Sun but also more than the Sun; he represents the light that reveals ultimate Truth and the deeper meaning of existence. The Vedas, in

general, emphasize that the Absolute is everywhere in this world and beyond. The Viṣṇu Purāṇ explain it in the verse 1.22.53:

Just as the sun remains in one location while its light spreads throughout the solar system, there is one God whose infinite power permeates the three worlds.

By witnessing this divine vision, Arjuna realizes that Kṛṣṇa is not just a friend but the Supreme God, the ultimate Truth that encompasses the entire cosmos. This experience changes Arjuna's relationship with Kṛṣṇa from friendship to deep reverence and devotion. According to the Bhagavad Gītā, Truth is not just an intellectual concept but something to be experienced through devotion (bhakti). With the mystical vision granted by Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna understands that the true nature of reality is divine and that true knowledge and salvation come from union with this divinity.

Allegory of the cave	Bhagavad Gītā
<p>“And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water or phantasms of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place.” “Necessarily,” he said. “And at this point he would infer and conclude that this it is that provides the seasons and the courses of the year and presides over all things in the visible region, and is in some sort the cause of all these things that they had seen.” (Plat. Rep. 7.516b-c)</p>	<p>[Kṛṣṇa says:] I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts. (Bhagavad Gītā, 10.8)</p> <p>But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. Therefore I give you divine eyes. Behold My mystic opulence! (Bhagavad Gītā, 11.8)</p> <p>If hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form. (Bhagavad Gītā, 11.12)</p> <p>Your form is difficult to see because of its glaring effulgence, spreading on all sides,</p>

	<p>like blazing fire or the immeasurable radiance of the sun. (Bhagavad Gītā, 11.17)</p> <p>O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness. (Bhagavad Gītā, 13.34)</p> <p>The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of fire are also from Me. (Bhagavad Gītā, 15.12)</p>
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It is important to emphasize that when Platonic Socrates explains that everything that exists in the material world is like reflections in water (just as shadows projected on a wall), this statement is consistent with the following verse from the Gītā:

It is said that there is an imperishable banyan tree that has its roots upward and its branches down and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is the knower of the Vedas. (Bhagavad Gītā, 15.1)

Prabhupāda (2011) describes the material world as a distorted reflection of the spiritual world, a concept found in the Bhagavad Gītā. This idea resembles Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, where people are confined in a cave, seeing only shadows on the wall and believing those shadows to be reality. Similarly, Gītā’s philosophy views the material world (*prakṛti*) as a temporary illusion that obscures true spiritual reality. Just as the shadows are a misleading representation of the truth, the material world is an imperfect reflection of spiritual existence.

Plato teaches that to realise the ultimate Truth and the Good, one must escape the cave and see the sun, which represents these ideals. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gītā

encourages detachment from the material world to reach spiritual truth. Both emphasize that true knowledge comes from looking beyond worldly illusions. In both cases, breaking free from ignorance is key to understanding and connecting with eternal reality.

## 5. Conclusion

Plato's metaphysics and the Bhagavad Gītā share a common view of a transcendent reality that goes beyond the sensory world, both distinguishing between the material and the spiritual. For Plato, the Ideas or Forms represent the true, eternal essence of things, accessible only through reason, while the sensory world is an imperfect reflection of these Forms. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gītā describes Brahman as the supreme reality and the supreme being, transcending the material world and revealed through spiritual perception.

In both philosophies, the material world is seen as transient and shaped by a higher, eternal principle. Despite differences in method and implications, both systems view Truth as the ultimate reality, transcending the material world and underpinning all existence. For Plato, Truth is grasped through reason and contemplation of the immutable Forms, while in the Gītā, the eternal reality of Ātman is realized through spiritual practice. Both perspectives point to an underlying unity that governs multiplicity, guiding the soul toward knowledge of the eternal. Conversely, in the Bhagavad Gītā, Truth is personified in the divine figure of Kṛṣṇa and manifests as a mystical revelation and a spiritual and emotional experience. Here, Truth is a living presence, immersed in the world and human experience, yet also transcending material reality. The multiplicity of the world is not merely an imperfect copy but a direct expression of the supreme divinity, which must be understood and revered.

Despite their distinct approaches, both Plato's philosophy and the Bhagavad Gītā share the view that the ultimate Truth transcends the material world and is the foundation of all existence—whether as the unity of the Forms in Plato or the divine presence permeating the cosmos in Gītā's thought. In both perspectives, ignorance is seen as a turning away from this Truth, from the Idea of the Good or Brahman, and true knowledge illuminates the soul or mind, enabling it to recognize the ultimate reality.

In Platonic thought, knowledge is the soul's ascent from the sensory world to the intelligible world of ideas, with the Good as the supreme principle that reveals Truth. This journey is primarily intellectual and contemplative. In contrast, the Bhagavad Gītā

emphasizes practical wisdom—knowledge that guides actions in accordance with dharma, or moral and spiritual duty. Here, correct action, performed with detachment from the results, is a path to Truth and spiritual liberation.

In both philosophies, partial knowledge remains opinion or incomplete understanding<sup>37</sup>, while true knowledge—whether philosophy in Plato or the realization of Brahman in the Gītā—represents direct insight into the Absolute (that we may understand as the Forms and Kṛṣṇa). However, while Plato's intelligible world is grasped through reason, in the Gītā, intelligence reaches the Absolute only by Brahman's consent, reflecting the divine's active role in revealing ultimate Truth.

The articulation of these perspectives with Krause's panentheistic philosophy allows for an understanding of Truth as both immanent and transcendent, encompassing and surpassing the cosmos<sup>38</sup>. Both texts explore Truth, showing that reality is both one and many, transcendent and present in the world, fitting a panentheistic view of connection between the one and the many. Göcke reminds us that, according to Krause, if the Absolute is one and complete, then the world and everything in it are connected to and based on the Absolute in both existence and understanding. Thus, the world helps define the Absolute.<sup>39</sup> In panentheism, the ultimate reality supports diversity while being present in every part of existence. Krause argues that if the Absolute is a singular, complete being, then the world and all finite things are rooted in the Absolute, making them fundamentally similar to it. This concept is reflected in verse 7.7 of the Gītā:

O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.

Therefore, Krause's idea that the finite world is grounded in the infinite Absolute further aligns with these perspectives, as the finite realm is intrinsically linked to the Absolute.<sup>40</sup> This means that the world, being created by and limited by the Absolute, is also a part of the Absolute. Plato shows how unity gives meaning to diversity, while Gītā's thought shows how the divine acts within the world's many forms.

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<sup>37</sup> GÖCKE, 2024, p.41.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 2018, p.176.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2024, p.48.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2024, p.48.

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