

The end and start of all things we know

A philosophical consideration based on
concepts of Plato and scientific theory

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Introduction

We look at things and believe we understand and know reality.

But there are strong philosophical and scientific indications we don't.

These indications lead to questions and considerations that may or even should convince us to contemplate about the human thinking and condition based upon experience only.

Two sources, a philosophical and scientific theory, indicate a cosmic existence beyond the sensible and experienced reality. We will discuss them to bring more light upon existence.

This paper is a result of a philosophical question about the end and beginning of all things we know. What is happening when we think to understand events and things, but it only seems to be for a moment and partly illusive? Interpretation is a key factor for the way we deal with reality. If we relate knowing only to sensible experiences, human being shortcuts himself. We no longer are able to embrace cosmic inspiration, which is based on connection instead of ending and beginning. To read the paper, an open mind and some philosophical background is recommend.

Why is in the title the word 'end' followed by 'begin'? It is a metaphorical result of quantum physics: if man observe particles of light, photons, they collapse and instead of a flux. Then a particle exists, so a separated part or thing. Think about the implication of the human thinking condition and the way humans are conditioned to see and conceptualize based upon these facts. The physical science give an indication that we should not assume reality as we experience it and, may be more important, conceptualize. Thinking patterns are exceptional and important to study and not taken for granted.

These physical studies seem to have similar concepts and interpretations about reality as Plato's philosophy, as we will see.

Plato was ecstatic about this philosophical experience but memorized it was only an entrance for a few of the lost souls. Maybe modern scientific inquiry is able to stimulate us (in greater numbers) to ask questions about a main stream process and forms beyond seeable reality.

A main connection between the theories is light. We look at things, we want some things we see, we find beauty in life by light, but do we understand the significance of light? In tradition of cultural and religious currents, we may be empowered to understand this in a way.

For example.

The Christian and Jewish Bible states about light: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”(Genesis 1:3)

Light is the first thing God creates, symbolizing the beginning of order, life, and separation from darkness (or chaos).

It is not the light of the sun (created on Day 4), but often interpreted as divine illumination or presence.

Light represents truth, goodness, and God’s presence.

In the Christian New Testament Jesus is called “the light of the world”. (John 8:12)

The Qur’an says “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.” (Surah An-Nur (24:35)). Light is not a created object, but a metaphor for God’s guidance, knowledge, and presence.

The Prophet Muhammad is referred to as a “light” sent to people.

The Rigveda says creation emerges from a primordial darkness whereby light arises from the cosmic order. The sun is a manifestation of cosmic light and order.

“Darkness was hidden by darkness... then desire came upon that...” (Rigveda 10.129)

In the Hindi tradition light is strongly connected to knowledge and with truth and consciousness.

So light means from religious perspective

- cosmic order instead of chaos (beyond physics)

- divine presence and guidance sublimating darkness (direction - out of darkness)

- knowledge, truth (connection)
- consciousness (receptive part)

We focus not on differences between religions, which of course exist. For example, Hindi emphasizes consciousness in moksja (redemption) and Christianity mercy of God and Jesus. This is more the way of spiritual life and the salvation of the soul. In this paper we discuss the end and start of all things. The way we see things is mediated by light.

In this paper we will discuss, by light, what unifies our perspective of all things, in birds view.

So what means light in the elementary religious doctrine (beyond, direction, connection, reception) if we discuss Plato and quantum physics? This is knowledge driven.

Because knowledge and information have high coherence in reality, based upon scientific theory, it is interesting to conclude with a discussion about the science of being which includes the law of thermodynamics. This law is connected with the theory of information and so, human knowledge.

Plato's view

Plato said that it is very difficult to reach out for real knowledge if we look at things. You have to get to the source, beyond the sensible reality. Human being is able to obtain true knowledge, because he has reason, which makes him different from animal life.

To obtain real knowledge, man needs an intuitive and intelligible drive that stimulates him ascending to the path of truth. Plato said this path is not easy and demands several skills but most of all it seems that the rays of the metaphysical sun invites human being by activating a drive he called 'eros'.

The ascending to true reality is illustrated by allegory of the cave.

In Plato's Republic, the allegory of the cave illustrates how perception, knowledge, and enlightenment work. The allegory is described as follows.

People are chained in a dark cave from birth, only able to see the wall in front of them. Behind them is a fire and between the fire and the prisoners are people passing by with objects. These objects cast shadows on the wall.

The prisoners believe these shadows are the only reality, because that's all they've ever seen.

Some men are able to follow their intuition in combination with a psychological drive Plato calls, as earlier mentioned, eros. These men turn around, see the fire, and eventually leave the cave. This is a philosophical journey, a narrow path which demands intuition, strength of spirit. At first, the light outside is blinding, but he slowly begins to see real things — the sun, trees, people — and realizes the shadows were mere illusions and faint reflections of true reality.

The philosopher goes back to tell the others, but they mock him and resist the idea of a greater reality. They're too comfortable in their familiar shadows and incomplete truths.

It's a metaphor for the human condition: many live in ignorance, only seeing "shadows" of truth, and it takes effort to gain real knowledge.

If man is embraced by the metaphysical sun, he is changed. He understands reality is layered and the sensible experiences he is born in, are nothing compared to this new true reality. With the analogy of the sun, Plato introduces a metaphysical reality.

'The sun provides not only the power of being seen for things seen, but, as I think you will agree, also their generation and growth and nurture, although it is not itself generation... Similarly with things known, you will agree that the good is not only the cause of their becoming known, but the cause that they are, the cause of their state of being, although the good is not itself a state of being but something transcending far beyond it in dignity and power.'

Discussion and interpretation: Plato's view

Beyond sensible experiences and things (shadow world and dungeon) - *beyond the physical world* -, exists an ecstatic reality, that exists in pure spiritual forms. If we are able to ascend to the idea of goodness - *the direction* -, we understand that everything is an abstraction and lesser reality, existing in more chaos by ignorance and shadows.

It is an inner drive, an intuition, the unrest of the searching and wandering soul, the deep angle of remembrance - *the connection* - that urges man to seek for the idea of goodness. It is the conscious soul that is *receptive* for the repentance to the origins of reality, to goodness, that makes man ascend out of the dungeon to the metaphysical sun. The struggle of the stairway is like a renaissance of the renewed embrace of original knowing and remembrance. It is a comfortable choice to keep to the reality of the shadows and sparkles of faint euphoria. There is mental resistance to go the narrow spiritual path of endurance and truth.

In the quantum physics scientist study behaviour of tiny little sparkles of light. Let us see what happens in this area of physical research.

Quantum physics

Quantum physics reveals a dual nature of light, which behaves both as a particle (photon) and as a wave. The double-split experiment illustrates this paradox. When observed, light appears to act as a stream of particles. When unobserved, it behaves like a wave, creating interference patterns. The nature of light is not either/or, it is both simultaneously, depending on how it is measured. This phenomenon, known as wave-particle duality, demands a more nuanced, non-binary understanding of nature.

This means that the study of quantum physics emphasizes that electrons are in a state of superposition until they are observed. If observed, the objects are placed in an abstracted, changeable state in relation to the original position.

The wave-particle duality of light is a fundamental paradox in a single perspective of the observer, but relies on another unmet reality beyond observed particles, the wave.

In quantum theory entities like electrons or photons exhibit a dual nature:

- as particles, they are local and measurable;
- as waves, they are spread out and probabilistic.

This duality is characterized by complementary feature of light. Until measurement, quantum objects inhabit a super positional ambiguity. They are in multiple states at once.

Discussion and interpretation: quantum physics

So before man measures photons, the reality in its smallest concept, behaves for us like a probabilistic wave. This may be compared with the forms Plato described - *beyond physics*. If we measure the tiny bundles of light, the photons collapse and disperse. So the result is dispersion - *the direction* -, out of their probabilistic reality, in a observable condition.

The observation and collapse - *the connection* - becomes the way we see things and determine our knowledge and concept of truth. The observer measures the event and has awareness of the concept of reality - *is receptive*.

Discussion and interpretation: Platonic and quantum physics connected

Of course the realms of the philosophical and scientific theory are based upon different fundamentals. Nevertheless there are strong similarities. Like the theory of Plato, quantum physics acknowledges a dual reality. The higher reality of forms is comparable to the probabilistic wave. Both precede and go beyond the seeable and observable world of things that show reflected shadows and collapsed particles on a wall. The pure and probabilistic reality is changed and diffuse and our perception is by receptive condition not pure and less integral truthful as we wish.

Discussion and interpretation: example of giving meaning to experienced reality

An example is that mankind thinks we live in a reality of survival of the fittest. This theory may not be as fundamental as thought if we consider the philosophical theory of Plato and the scientific theory of particles. Our experiences in the 'lower' reality do offer us a perception of the meaning of biological evolution and adaption but on a fundamental discussion, indicating a continuous process of mutation by adaption to environment - beyond the individual physical lifespan. We have made this theory – by our thinking patterns - a struggle of individual life and species - a collapse of tribes for example. The collapse and confrontation that will definitely occur, lead to the connection and affirmation of just point of view by the observer as subject of the judged process, an affirmation within its own circle.

Why is mankind apparently focused on shadows, collapse, beginning and ending of things? Fundamentals in scientific law indicate chaos and dispersion. The dungeon

dominates our perception moreover, apparently. I think a special scientific law subscribes the inclination towards the world of shadows, especially the law of thermodynamics.

Scientific law

The law of thermodynamics consists of four laws. The first and especially the second law are interesting to discuss.

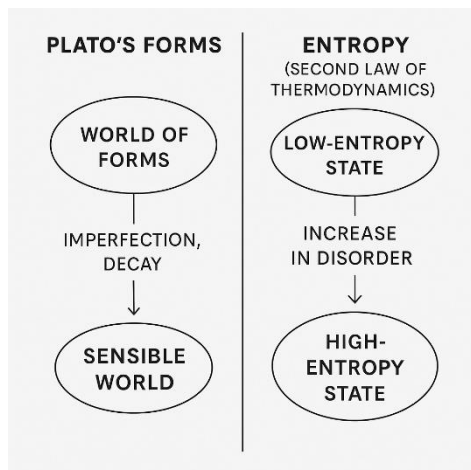
The first law states that energy is conserved in an isolated system: energy can neither be created nor destroyed, only transformed from one form to another. This conservation law is a result of time translation symmetry. This is the idea that the laws of physics and the behaviour of a system do not change if we shift the time of observation. In thermodynamics, this means the total energy in a system remains the same over time, even as it changes structures.

The second law, also known as entropy, states that the total entropy of an isolated system tends to increase over time. This introduces an arrow or direction to time because entropy, which is the measure of disorder, increases in irreversible processes. While the underlying microscopic physical laws (like Newton's laws or quantum mechanics) are time-symmetric, meaning they can run forwards or backwards without changing the outcome, the second law imposes a direction (arrow) in macroscopic systems.

The second law is interesting for the things we experience in relation to the topic, because the law indicates increasing chaos.

The material reality is characterized by change, imperfection and degradation. This reality is described by Plato as the sensible reality.

The increasing chaos is working from an axiomatic point of view, pure static condition, Plato's forms. Although the forms are not physical themselves. These forms are the starting point and source and so the original order of all things. Things as we see move away from forms, like by entropy is directed by an arrow of time, towards shadows and (more) chaos.



Source: Chatgpt

Discussion and interpretation

The law of thermodynamics says that in physical terms, the cosmic order decreases and chaos increases. So the cosmos must have started in ultimate order. So we assume there is a causal relation to a singular point of order, as a starting point of the arrow of time.

Plato emphasized we have to remember an ultimate order beyond physics, mentioning the idea of goodness, a spiritual reality and think of it as *divine direction*.

Light means cosmic order, guidance, truth, receptive consciousness. Like the idea of goodness it institutes a drive and energy to search for and connect to truth.

There may be some awareness in human being, as rational creature, that indicates a special relation to work on truth and moral coherence with higher order. Because if we are conscious creatures that search for light, guidance, order, et cetera, how do we do? In this rational considerations, there seems to be an anchor in physical theory, that may shine some light upon this situation. There seems to be a connection between energy and information.

Information and knowledge

Plato's view, quantum physics and physical law are knowledge based theories. These theories use information. Information and so knowledge may be seen as part of the flow of energy, particularly within the framework of modern physics. In physics, energy and information are deeply connected. Information can be thought of as a way of describing the state of a system, while energy governs how systems evolve over time. In thermodynamics, for example, entropy is closely linked to the flow of energy. The second law of thermodynamics teaches us that systems evolve toward a state of higher entropy, which means an increase in fragmentation, disorder and uncertainty. This law reflects not only a physical principle but can also be understood as a fundamental relationship between energy and information. Where information is present and on purpose directed, structure emerges. This may be seen as an attempt to manage chaos and bring order to reality.

But when information disintegrates or is lost, uncertainty grows. The world falls into disarray. In this sense, information is not merely a tool of communication, but a force and a key to stability and symmetry, to 'hold up the sky' (as I mentioned in the article Atlas), preserving coherence in a disintegrating world.

At the same time a paradox arises. As soon as human beings study information as part of a broader cosmic context, they become bound to subsystems, limited by the laws of their own thermodynamic and cognitive frameworks. According to Plato, there exists an unchanging idea (of Goodness), a perfect order beyond time and space. But this static perfection remains inaccessible to us as long as our thinking remains confined to fragmentation and separation.

And so, chaos persists. We are unable to grasp the whole or fully 'enlighten' reality, because our minds are conditioned by a linear and analytical mode of thought. True knowledge demands a reversal: the letting go of conditioned reasoning and the embrace of a different, often intuitive way of understanding.

It is striking that people are naturally drawn to man who embody this alternative approach (religious leaders, mystics, philosophers). They seem to stand outside the divided system, and therefore evoke both confusion and admiration. Initially, they are rejected or even attacked, but ultimately, they are revered. They point toward a different state of being, one that does not dissolve into the growing chaos of a world falling apart, beyond the experienced reality, an intuitive knowing over the edge of things that seem to end.

Discussion and interpretation

The physical law can also be seen as a metaphor for the human condition: a cosmos that, without guidance, falling apart, losing coherence and connection. In contrast to this lack, *privatio*, lies a hidden reality, a cosmic order that does not arise from mere physical interactions, but that transcends the material reality - *a source beyond experienced physics*.

We use information often to know more about things we see in the material world. Because of the faint reflection of things in relation to forms, things loose on a natural physical way structure and meaning, in a way humans think they start (arising in a structure) and end (fall apart in for human understanding meaningless fainting condition without conceptual reflection).

Information should not become just a mere scientific measure, but a sacred connection of reality. It is the principle by which meaning holds form, trying to conceptualize in thought forms, by which reality resists disintegration and fragmentation. Human being tries to conceptualize the start and end of things as guiding intelligence that leads consciousness out of darkness.

Darkness, in this context, is ontological unfolded form. If intelligence meets faint reflections, it is connected with fragmentation and dissonance. If it is directed to the form principle, in remembrance, it paths a way to transcendence and metaphysical connection. As such, the divine is not only a force within the cosmos, but also a presence beyond the physical subsystem so to speak, orienting the whole, contemplative repentance.

Truth and knowledge, then, are not merely products of reason or sensory experience, but *acts of connection*. To know is to touch the pattern beneath the normal experience. But this alignment cannot come from analytical thought alone. The human mind, conditioned by separation and fragmentation, must shift its mode, from control to communion and from extraction to *reception*.

Consciousness, in its deeper form, is not the projector of reality, but its receiver. It listens. In such a state, the human being becomes a vehicle — not of isolated thought, but of informed awareness. Isn't this what mystics, philosophers, and prophets have long hinted at: that true knowledge is not achieved, but received, like a resonance between self and cosmos, between part and whole? The individual transcends to meaning in receiving, not achieving, which is an important thought to remember nowadays, in times of emphasizing individualization.

In this way, information emerges to a more divine and sacred meaning, not just technical application and use. It is the means by which the divine speaks order into being and the path by which the human soul may return to its source. Against the background of entropy and the threat of collapse, the reception of this higher resonance is a metaphysical, an ethical and spiritual way: to hold the sky (in symmetry - like Atlas), to preserve the song of creation from falling silent.

Erik Heemskerk, May 17th 2025

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