

**"Formless art thou, and yet
thou bringest many forms, and then
withdrawest them to thyself." [1]**

"Differentiating itself and yet remaining in itself undifferentiated." [2]

**"By letting go, it all gets done =
the world is won by those who let it go!
But when you try and try
the world is then beyond the winning." [3]**

"in the beginning is the end", vice-versa <- [4]

Ultimate diagram, free space, universal dimension

Last word, to the end

"mania for totality" [5]

Triumph over time, death, oblivion **"a fragrance of eternity [6]**

Totality, unity, finality

wordless essence [6]

One form plays through all art, one cycle, one evolution

Prime pattern

Waste of ritual by minor work

No characteristics except its oneness <-

It is not a thing nor a thing in it

Neither white nor black, neither red nor green, of no color whatever

Beingless, becoming not, nameless

Where there is nothing but the one, nothing is seen [7]

Primary, unique, underivable from anything else

Aweful "absolute **unapproachability**" <- [8]

Supra-rational

Ideogram for what is beyond utterance, "unutterableness

Chain of negations, **Buddhist "theology of negation"** <- [9]

**"No Muslim monarch, however Godless, was guilty of
putting the word of God into the hands of his court
painters for them to work their wicked will upon it" [10]**

NOTES:

0.

IN spite of his inheritance,
The perfect man is a slave
And does the work of a slave.
The law is his outer garment,
Though his inner is the mystic path.
He is famed for knowledge and devotion,
But he is far from all these,
For he is absorbed in the contemplation of the **One**.
. . . When his pilgrimage is over
He receives the crown of Khalifate.

– Mahmūd Shabistarī: *'The Secret Rose Garden' ('The Perfect Man')*, Florence Lederer translation, 1920

In all things
See but **One**, say One, know One.

– Mahmūd Shabistarī: *'The Secret Rose Garden' ('Idols')*, Florence Lederer translation, 1920

1.

O Brahman Supreme! **Formless art thou, and yet** (though the reason none knows) Thou bringest forth many forms; **Thou bringest them forth, and then withdrawest them to thyself**. Fill us with thoughts of thee!

– *Shvetashvatara Upanishad 4:1*

2.

Knowing and seeing sunyata is sunyata knowing and seeing itself; there is no outside knower or spectator; it is its own knower and seer...We are sunyata. ... That is why sunyata is said to be reservoir of infinite possibilities and not just a state of mere emptiness. **Differentiating itself and yet remaining in itself undifferentiated**, and thus to go on eternally engaged in the work of creation – this is sunyata, the prajna continuum. It is not a concept reached by intellection, but what is given as pure act, as pure experience; it is a point fully charged with creative elan vital, which can transform itself into a straight line, into a place, into a tridimensional body.

– Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki: *'Reason and Intuition in Buddhist Philosophy'* presented at the second East-West Philosophers' Conference at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, in the summer of 1949, and subsequently published in Charles Alexander Moore (ed): *'The Japanese Mind, Essentials of Japanese Philosophy and Culture'*, University of Hawaii Press, 1951, p45.

3.

Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching, chapter 48 (translation Raymond B. Blakney, 1955)

4.

The beginning of art is not the beginning.
The finishing of art is not the finishing.
The furnishing of art is furnishing.
The nothingness of art is not nothingness.
Negation in art is not negation.
The absolute in art is absolute.
Art-in-art is art.
The end of art is art-as-art.
The end of art is not the end.

– Ad Reinhardt: 'Art in Art is Art-As-Art', *Lugano Review*, 1966

Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.

– T. S. Eliot: 'Burnt Norton', 1936

**In my beginning is my end.
In my end is my beginning**

– T. S. Eliot: 'East Coker', 1940

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. And any action
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.
We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.

– T. S. Eliot: 'Little Gidding', 1942

The square framed with white was the first form on non-objective sensation, the white field is not a field framing the black square, but only the sensation of the desert, of non-existence, in which the square form appears as the first non-objective element of sensation. It is not the end of art, as people suppose even now, but the beginning of true essence.

...

Suprematism is that **end and beginning** where sensations are uncovered, where art emerges 'as such', faceless."

– Kazimir Malevich: *Berlin Exhibition Catalogue*, April - May 1927

Latin phrase: in inceptum finis est / the beginning foreshadows the end. "In the Beginning is the End' was for him at once a programmatic statement and equally a rejection of the traditional understanding of painting" [ArtDaily: 'Josef Albers Museum Opens Exhibition of the Last Paintings Made by Ad Reinhardt' 28.09.2010]

5.

"Art is seized by a real **mania for totality**. It seems possible to bring everything into relationship with everything else, everything seems to include within itself the law of the whole."]

– Arnold Hauser: 'Social History of Art', Volume 4, *Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, 1951

6.

"And then, for the first time, I suddenly understood the reason for this enchantment: the scribbled symbols on the wall represented one of the rare cases where a meaningful and

comprehensive statement about the infinite is arrived at by precise and finite means. The infinite is a mystical mass shrouded in a haze; and yet it was possible to gain some knowledge of it without losing oneself in treacherous ambiguities. The significance of this swept over me like a wave. The wave had originated in an articulate verbal insight; but this evaporated at once, leaving in its wake only **a wordless essence, a fragrance of eternity**, a quiver of the arrow in the blue."

– Arthur Koestler: *'The Invisible Writing'*, 1954

7.

Meister Eckhart: "So long as something is still the object (vishaya) of our attention we are not yet one with the One. For **where there is nothing but the ONE, nothing is seen.**"

– Rudolf Otto: *'Mysticism East and West'*, 1932 (and Meridian Books Inc. August 1957)

Also note, Meister Eckhart: "His inner self breaks forth in activity and the activity is drawn into his inwardness."

8.

It will be felt at once that there is yet a further element which must be added, that, namely, of might, power – absolute overpoweringness. We will take to represent this the term – majestas, majesty the more readily because any one with a feeling for language must detect a last faint trace of the numinous still clinging to the word. The tremendum may then be rendered more adequately; tremenda majestas, or **aweful** majesty. This second element of majesty may continue to be vividly preserved, where the first, that of **unapproachability**, recedes and dies away, as may be seen, for example, in Mysticism. It is especially in relation to this element of majesty or absolute overpoweringness that the creature-consciousness, of which we have already spoken, comes upon the scene, as a sort of shadow or subjective reflection of it. Thus, in contrast to the overpowering of which we are conscious as an object over against the self, there is the feeling of one's own abasement, of being but dust and ashes and nothingness. And this forms the numinous raw material for the feeling of religious humility.

– Rudolf Otto: *'The Idea of the Holy, an Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational'*, 1929 (and Oxford University Press, 1958)

9.

I recall vividly a conversation I had with a Buddhist monk. He had been putting before me methodically and pertinaciously the arguments for the **Buddhist 'theology of negation'**, the doctrine of Anatman and 'entire emptiness.' When he made an end, I asked him then what Nirvana itself is; and after a long pause came at last the single answer, low and restrained: 'Bliss unspeakable.' And the hushed restraint of that answer, the solemnity of his voice, demeanor, and gesture, made more than clear what was meant than the words themselves."]

– Rudolf Otto: *'The Idea of the Holy, an Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational'*, 1929 (and Oxford University Press, 1958)

10.

"...the Bible has provided subject-matter for Christian painters from the earliest period of Christian art, but no such thing as an illustrated version of the Qur'an has ever been known to exist, and indeed to most Muslim minds such an outrage would be inconceivable; the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705) might close the sacred volume on hearing of his accession with the words, 'Now you and I part', and Yazid III (744) might make the Qur'an a target of his arrows, but **no Muslim monarch, however Godless, was guilty of putting the word of God into the hands of his court painters for them to work their wicked will upon it**".

– *Sir Thomas Walker Arnold (1864-1930): 'Painting in Islam, A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture', Oxford, 1928 (and Dover Publications 1965).*