NON-BEING

Darkness, Emptiness, Nothingness, Silence and Space

1. ESSENCE

The eternal parent wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities.

Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration.

Universal mind was not, for there were no celestial beings to contain it.

The seven ways to bliss were not. The great causes of misery were not, for there was no one to produce and get ensnared by them.

Darkness alone filled the boundless all, for father, mother and son were once more one, and the son had not awakened yet for the new wheel, and his pilgrimage thereon.

Book of Dzyan (B.C. 3000?)

In the first age of the gods, existence was born from non-existence.

Rig Veda (B.C. 1200-900?)

All things in the world come from being.
And being comes from non-being.

Lao-Tzu (fl. B.C. 600)

At the dawning of that day all objects in manifestation stream forth from the Unmanifest, and when evening falls they are dissolved into It again. In truth, therefore, there is the Eternal Unmanifest, which is beyond and above the Unmanifest Spirit of Creation, which is never destroyed when all these beings perish.

Bhagavad Gita (c. B.C. 400)

It began of nothing and in nothing it ends.

Gallus (B.C. 70-26)

...And the still deeper secret of the secret:
The land that is nowhere, that is the true home...

Chang Po-tuan (fl. 1000 A.D.)

Silence is the mother of Truth.

Disraeli (1804-1881)

...The limitless ocean of negative light does not proceed from a centre, for it is centreless, but it concentrates a centre.

Samuel L. Mathers (1850?-1918)
2. OPPOSITES

3274 The causes of existence had been done away with; the visible that was, and the invisible that is, rested in eternal non-being - the one being.

Book of Dzyan (B.C. 3000?)

3275 Wherefrom do all these worlds come? They come from space. All beings arise from space, and into space they return; space is indeed their beginning, and space is their final end.

Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)

3276 Wherever there is light, there is shadow; wherever there is length, there is shortness; wherever there is white, there is black. Just like these, as the self-nature of things can not exist alone, they are called non-substantial.

Buddha (B.C. 568-488)

3277 That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be. To the wise, these truths are self-evident.

Bhagavad Gita (c. B.C. 400)

3278 When the Holy One who created the Universe wished to reveal its hidden aspect, the light within the darkness, He showed how things were intermingled. Thus out of darkness comes light and from the concealed comes the revealed. In the same manner does good emerge from evil and mercy from justice, since they too are intertwined.

Zohar (120?-1200? A.D.)

3279 Silence is one great art of conversation.

Hazlitt (1778-1830)

3280 Under all speech that is good for anything there lies a silence that is better, Silence is deep as Eternity; speech is shallow as Time.

Carlyle (1795-1881)

3. INSIGHT

3281 He (The Eternal) created a reality out of nothing, called the nonentity into existence and hewed, as it were, colossal pillars from intangible air.

Sepher Yezirah (B.C. 2000?-600 A.D.)
Cosmic night, the sinking of manifestation into a state of rest, comes about when the forth-rushing expansive force of creation is interlocked and stabilized into equilibrium.

Kabbalah (B.C. 1200?-700? A.D.)

The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world. Non-being penetrates that in which there is no space. Through this I know the advantage of taking no action. Few in the world can understand teaching without words and the advantage of taking no action.

Lao-Tzu (fl. B.C. 600)

Silence is learned by the many misfortunes of life.

Seneca (B.C. 3-65 A.D.)

There is an eloquent silence: it serves sometimes to approve, sometimes to condemn; there is a mocking silence; there is a respectful silence.

La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680)

What is called the spirit of the void is where there is nothing. It is not included in man's knowledge. Of course the void is nothingness. By knowing things that exist, you can know that which does not exist. That is the void.

People in this world look at things mistakenly, and think that what they do not understand must be the void. This is not the true void. It is bewilderment...

Polish the twofold spirit heart and mind, and sharpen the twofold perception and sight. When your spirit is not in the least clouded, when the clouds of bewilderment clear away, there is the true void...

In the void is virtue, and no evil. Wisdom has existence, principle has existence, the Way has existence, spirit is nothingness.

Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645)

None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing.

Franklin (1706-1790)

Our noisy years seem moments in the being of the eternal silence.

Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Three things are ever silent: Thought, Destiny, and the Grave.

Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)
...In a seed, the tree which may spring from it is hidden; it is in a condition of potential existence; is there; but it will not admit definition. How much less, then, will those seeds which that tree in its turn may yield.

Samuel L. Mathers (1850?-1918)

The finest command of language is often shown by saying nothing.

Roger Babson (1875-1967)

When the tree falls
The shadow flies.

Chinese Proverb

4. POSITIVE

The sage manages affairs without action
And spreads doctrines without words.
All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.
He produces them, but does not take possession of them.
He acts, but does not rely on his own ability.
He accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it.
It is precisely because he does not claim credit
that his accomplishment remains with him.

Lao-Tzu (fl. B.C. 600)

If a word be worth a nickel, silence is worth two.

The Talmud (B.C. 500?-400? A.D.)

Nothing is more useful than silence.

Menander (B.C. 342-291)

Health is the greatest possession.
Contentment is the greatest treasure.
Confidence is the greatest friend.
Non-being is the greatest joy.

The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)

Silence at the proper season is wisdom, and better than any speech.

Plutarch (46-120 A.D.)

The world would be happier if men had the same capacity
to be silent that they have to speak.

Spinoza (1632-1677)

Silence is the genius of the fool
and one of the virtues of the wise.

Bonnard (1744-1784)
There is a silence, the child of love, which expresses everything, and proclaims more loudly than the tongue is able to do.

Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803)

The temple of our purest thoughts is silence.

Sarah J. Hale (1788-1879)

Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together; that at length they may emerge, full formed and majestic, into the delights of life, which they are thenceforth to rule.

Carlyle (1795-1881)

Silence provokes no man's envy, and wounds no man's self-love.

Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)

Silence is the universal refuge, the sequel to all dull discourses and all foolish acts, a balm to our every chagrin, as welcome after satiety as after disappointment.

Thoreau (1817-1862)

Silence, when nothing need be said, is the eloquence of discretion.

Bovee (1820-1904)

But let me silent be:
For silence is the speech of love,
The music of the sphere above.

Richard Stoddard (1825-1903)

I have noticed that nothing I never said ever did me any harm.

Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933)

5. NEGATIVE

We cannot conceive of matter being formed of nothing, since things require a seed to start from... Therefore there is not anything which returns to nothing, but all things return dissolved into their elements.

Lucretius (B.C. 99-55)

Slight is the merit of keeping silence on a matter, on the other hand serious is the guilt of talking on things whereon we should be silent.

Ovid (B.C. 43-18 A.D.)
Nothing can be born of nothing,  
nothing can be resolved into nothing.  
Persius (34-62 A.D.)

Nothing proceeds from nothingness,  
as also nothing passes away into non-existence.  
Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.)

There is no reply so sharp as silent contempt.  
Montaigne (1533-1592)

An horrid stillness first invades the ear,  
And in that silence we the tempest fear.  
Dryden (1631-1700)

Nothing's new, and nothing's true, and nothing matters.  
Sidney Morgan (1789-1859)

A life of nothing's nothing worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth,  
To that last nothing under earth.  
Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

6. ADVICE

Clay is molded to form a cup,  
But it is on its non-being that the utility of the cup  
depends.  
Doors and windows are cut out to make a room,  
But it is on its non-being that the utility of the room  
depends.  
Therefore turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility.  
Lao-Tzu (fl. B.C. 600)

It is better either to be silent, or to say things of more  
value than silence. Sooner throw a pearl at hazard than an  
idle or useless word; and do not say a little in many  
words, but a great deal in a few.  
Pythagoras (B.C. 582-507)

Choose silence of all virtues, for by it you hear  
other men's imperfections, and conceal your own.  
Zeno (B.C. 335?-264)

The first virtue is to restrain the tongue; he approaches  
nearest to the gods who knows how to be silent, even though  
he is in the right.  
Cato the Younger (B.C. 95-46)
Silence is the safest course for any man to adopt who distrusts himself.

La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680)

Let us be silent, that we may hear the whispers of the gods.

Emerson (1803-1882)

Be silent and safe - silence never betrays you.

John O'Reilly (1844-1890)

7. POTPOURRI

Darkness which may be felt.

Exodus (B.C. 1200?)

The Eternal is the intensest form of existence, pure being unlimited by form or reaction; but it is existence of another type than that to which we are accustomed, and therefore it appears to us as non-existence because it conforms to none of the requirements we are accustomed to think of as determining existence.

Kabbalah (B.C. 1200?-700? A.D.)

The Imperishable - It is not coarse, not fine, not short, not long, not glowing like fire, not adhesive like water, without shadow and without darkness, without air and without space, without stickiness intangible, odorless, tasteless, without eye, without ear, without voice, without wind, without energy, without breath, without mouth, (without personal or family name, unaging, undying, without fear, immortal, stainless, not uncovered, not covered), without measure, without inside and without outside...

The Imperishable is the unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the ununderstood Understander. Other than It there is naught that sees...hears...thinks...understands. Across this Imperishable is space woven.

Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)

Although one perceives non-existent reality, Who can believe in its non-existence? How could a painted peacock Devour real pearls?

Nagarjuna (c. 100-200 A.D.)

When the light is made to move in a circle, all the energies of heaven and earth, of the light and dark, are crystallized. That is what is termed seed-like thinking, or purification of the energy, or purification of the idea. When one begins to apply this magic it is as if, in the middle of being, there were non-being.

Lu Yen (fl. 800 A.D.)
Where every something, being blent together
Turns to a wild of nothing.

Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Dark night that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes,
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.

Shakespeare (1564-1616)

How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven-down
Of darkness till it smiled.

Milton (1608-1674)

Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
Nor eye, nor list'ning ear, an object finds;
Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse
Of life stood still, and nature made a pause;
An awful pause! prophetic of her end.

Young (1683-1765)

The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The Moon, their Mistress, had expired before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; darkness had no need
Of aid from them - she was the Universe.

Byron (1788-1824)

And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

Blessed are they who have nothing to say,
and who cannot be persuaded to say it.

James Lowell (1819-1891)

Silence more musical than any song.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Why and Wherefore set out one day,
To hunt for a wild Negation.
They agreed to meet at a cool retreat
On the Point of Interrogation.

Oliver Herford (1863-1935)

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word.

Edgar Lee Masters (1869-1950)
They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars - on stars void of human races.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Robert Frost (1875-1963)