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The Search for the Mystic Element in Weaving

Nasrin Keyhan

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THE SEARCH FOR THE MYSTIC ELEMENT
IN WEAVING

Thesis Proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree
College of Fine and Applied Arts
Rochester Institute of Technology

Submitted by: Nasrin Keyhan - March 1971

Advisor:

Approved by Graduate Committee:

Date:

3-25-71

Chairman:

1. Purpose of the Thesis: The purpose of this Thesis is the search for the mystical elements which ideally exist in the process of weaving.

- II. Scope of the Thesis: My primary areas of research will consist of readings, perception of phenomenological life experiences such as looking at leaves falling from trees and so on, visits to exhibitions, and experimenting of different techniques and methods of weaving.

A minimum of five works will be produced with the hope of maintaining a mystical mood throughout. Variety of different yarns and fibers will be used to obtain the maximum effect.

- III. Procedures: Photographs and sketches will be used in the written thesis to document the steps on the path to my goal.

- IV. Alternative Proposals:
 1. To investigate the religious element found in the "Islamic" Prayer Rug.

 2. Personal Interpretation of "Zelo" Weaving in Persia.

IN SEARCH OF MYSTIC ELEMENTS IN ART (WEAVING)

by

Nasrin Keyhan

Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts
College of Fine and Applied Arts
Rochester Institute of Technology

May 29, 1971

Donald G. Bujnowski, Advisor and Professor

Dedicated to:

"The memories of my father"

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The main motivation that always made me eager to learn and led me to seek knowledge was the desire to understand the world. The roots of that desire have been developing in me from my early youth; the time when I would wonder where the rainbow was and why couldn't I pick it up or touch it. My father was the only person who would give an answer to my many questions. His answers would often lead me to further questions and wonder. It was he who introduced me to the world of books and opened a wide horizon of knowledge for me. The library with its infinite resources became my temple and books my only friends. The library was the world caught in a mirror; I had to climb up on chairs, on tables at the risk of falling down that would have buried me. There at my father's library I found many answers to my questions but, also I realized how much there was to learn and how endless was this endeavor -- understanding the world. This became more of a continuous and endless process which not only required the knowledge of the outer world and phenomenon occurring around me but also an awareness of my inner self. Knowing myself became the first step of this process although not separate from the rest. Any attempt to know anything in the world required knowing myself and that meant knowing my needs and the motivations behind them.

Needs; I classify them in four levels: Physical

(including the basic physiological needs), Mental (including intellectual and emotional), Creative and Spiritual needs. Due to the situation I was born into, my basic needs were taken care of and never did I have to struggle to attain them. School, books and my father supplied my mental nourishment. It was the creative and spiritual needs which I had to search for and develop and I had to find some satisfaction for the religious impulses in me.

I found great delight in art-- more delight in art than in any other subject and I realized that the tremendous thirst for self-expression could be satisfied through art. Art became a way of self-recognition for me and it was through art imagery that I could know how I perceived the world around me.

Before creating any image or form this initial and raw vision had to ripen inside me, like a fruit which becomes ripe, grows into its full shape and falls by itself from the branch independent of man's hand (influence).

My creation had to become an entity which could stand by itself and for itself, and speaks on its own. Art for me is the only tool which can say how I have perceived the world in every given contingency. Of course, the aim is to ripen this perception enough to be able to transcend it until it becomes an awareness of the "I" in me; that very "I" which I have to search for and become one with.

The presentation of art imagery is, of course, very delightful to do when one gets enough material around and becomes totally involved in it. The growth and the development

of one's search is what counts yet this growth doesn't cease to be through mixing paints on canvas or weaving a piece of fabric. It is instead the outcome of it which contains the artist's freedom. It comes into existence when the "I" stands subjectively by itself. Art, before communicating anything to an observer, has to be a living subject; a subject which contains an "I"; the very "I" of an artist in it. Then, it can become a relation. Art has to be a relation because it is the cry of a lonely man who is divested in the world of illusions and absurdities and where there is nothing to assure him of his relationship to the world.

A pleasure which sometimes goes so deep as to make us suppose we have direct understanding of the object that causes it, a pleasure which arouses the intelligence, defies it and makes it love its defeat, still more, a pleasure that can stimulate the strange need to produce or reproduce the thing, event, object, or state to which it seems attached, and which thus becomes a source of activity without any definite end, capable of imposing a discipline, a zeal, a torment on a whole lifetime, and of filling it, sometimes to overflowing. Such a pleasure presents a singularly specious enigma, which could scarcely escape the attention or the clutches of the metaphysical hydra. What could have been more worthy of our philosopher's will to power than this order of phenomena in which to feel, to possess, to will, and to make seemed to be joined in an essential and highly remarkable interaction that defied his scholastic, not to say Cartesian, efforts to split up the difficulty. The alliance of a form, a material, an idea, an action, and a passion; the absence of any clearly determined aim or of any result that might be expressed in finite terms; a desire and its recompense, each regenerating the other; a desire that creates and hence causes itself; sometimes breaking away from all particular creation and ultimate satisfaction, thus revealing itself to be a desire to create for the sake of creating-- all this aroused the metaphysical mind: to this problem it devoted the same attention as to all the other problems it habitually invents in

exercising its function of reconstructing knowledge in a universal form.¹

It was not a mere chance that made me study about mysticism but it was that hidden desire in me which urged me to know more about my state of "being."

I always found great joy in reading the beautiful verses of Persian mystic (sufi) poets. In taking this marvel as my theme I noticed the tremendous relationship between craft and mysticism. As I studied more about the Persian mystics, I found out that many of them have been craftsmen; especially weavers and potters.

Craftsmen can reach a remarkable state of spiritual awareness. Their total involvement with their media and their deep concentration on what they are creating bring them to that high state of awareness. Both craftsman and mystics require a discipline which is similar in essence. For example, in a process of weaving, the weaver has to go through a long, strenuous, monotonous process in order to weave a piece of fabric. Weaving, therefore, could be a practical embodiment of the discipline required for mystic growth and development.

Both mystics and craftsmen have to have a complete devotion toward their goals. The craftsman's devotion is toward the growth of the object he is creating and the mystic's devotion is toward God.

Kandinsky in an article which appeared in Der Sturm,

¹Paul Valery, Aesthetics, (New York, 1964), p. XXI.

wrote his description about art:

A work of art consists of two elements, the inner and the outer. The inner is the emotion in the soul of the artist; this emotion has the capacity to evoke a similar emotion in the observer. Being connected with the body, the soul is affected through the medium of the senses-- the felt. Emotions are aroused and stirred by what is sensed. Thus the sensed is the bridge; i.e., the physical real relation between the immaterial (which is the artist's emotion) and the material, which results in the production of a work of art. And again, what is sensed is the bridge from the material (the artist and his work) to the immaterial (the emotion in the soul of the observer). The sequence is; emotion (in the artist)-- the sensed-- the art work-- the sensed-- emotion in the observer. The two emotions will be like and equivalent to the extent that the work of art is successful. In this respect painting is in no way different from a song: each is a communication. The successful singer arouses in listeners his emotions; the successful painter should do no less.

The inner element; i.e., emotion, must exist, otherwise the work of art is a sham. The inner element determines the form of the work of art.

In order that the inner element, which at first exists only as an emotion, may develop into a work of art, the second element, i.e., the outer, is used as an embodiment. Emotion is always seeking a means of expression, a material form, a form that is able to stir the senses. The determining and vital element is the inner one, which controls the outer form, just as an idea in the mind determines the words we use, and not vice versa. The determination of the form of a work of art is therefore determined by the irresistible inner force: this is the consequence of a harmonious cooperation of the inner and the outer.²

I shall say a few words about the nature and meaning of mysticism and the origin and historical development of Sufism in order for me to communicate better with the reader.

The word "mysticism" itself comes down to us from the Greeks and is derived from a root meaning "to close." The

²Kandinsky, Der Sturm, (Berlin, 1913), p. 20.

mystic was one who had been initiated into esoteric knowledge of divine things, and upon whom was laid the necessity of keeping silence concerning his sacred knowledge. The term "mystical", then, might be applied to any secret cult revealed only to the initiated. The philosophers took over the word from the priests and applied it to their own speculative doctrines and thence it passed over into the Christian Church which held itself to be a body of initiates into a truth not possessed by mankind at large. The word was later held to mean closing the mind to the influence of all external things, so that it might be withdrawn into itself and so be fitted to receive the Divine Illumination. But the real meaning of the word, as we use it now, represents something much wider than its derivation. That for which it stands is a tendency not limited to the Greeks, either priests or philosophers, nor bounded by the far-reaching comprehensiveness of the Christian Church. It denotes something which is to be found in a highly developed state in the early religious doctrines of the East; in the Vedic literature; in Buddhism both in India and in China; in a form strangely attractive, considering the apparently barren soil in which this flower has bloomed, in Sufism; the mysticism of Islam, which has spread itself and taken firm root in Persia, Turkey and India as well as Arab lands; in Judaism, again an unpromising environment, to all appearances; and finally, as we have seen, in Greece and in the West.

Although I by no means consider myself an expert or

even a student of Sufism, I shall try to write a brief account of what a Sufi might call freedom or liberation. In attempting to do so, I shall sketch in a broad outline of certain principles and characteristic features of the inner experience of Sufis.

Sufi means "one who is pure in heart" and the name is derived from suf (wool). The common meaning of Sufi has emerged from the fact that most Muslim mystics wear a white woolen robe. The Sufi movement started somewhere around the Ninth Century, A. D., in Egypt, Syria, Arabia and became especially popular among Persian poets.

This phenomenon, however, is not very easy to sum up or to define. It is a kind of mysticism within the framework of Islam, but at the same time Sufis never founded a new religion or a sect. They call themselves Ahl-al-Haqq "The followers of the Real", and their highest aspiration is reunion with the absolute Reality and thereby becoming enlightened and liberated. Although there are numerous definitions of Sufism in Arabic and Persian texts, all of them show that Sufism is indefinable. Jalaliddin Rumi in his Masnavi tells a story about an elephant which was exhibited by some Hindus in a dark room. Many people came to see it, but because the room was too dark to see the elephant, they all touched it with their hands to guess what it was like. One felt the trunk and said that the animal was like a water pipe; someone else felt its ear and said it must be like a huge fan; another felt its long legs and thought it must be pillars; but

nobody could say what the animal really was. So it is with those who define Sufism; they can only express what they have felt and nothing more. Perhaps the following saying of Jalaliddin Rumi illustrates more that Sufism is a word uniting many meanings:

Sufism is freedom and generosity and
absence of self constraint. Sufism is to possess
nothing and to be possessed by nothing.³

Sufis who seek God call themselves "Travellers" (Salik); they go along a "path" (tarigut) to the goal of union with the Reality (fana fi'l-Haqq). Along this path there are seven "Stages" each of them (except the first) the result of the preceding "Stages". The seven "Stages" (Maquamat) are as follows: (1) Repentance, (2) Abstinence, (3) Renunciation, (4) Poverty, (5) Patience, (6) Trust in God, and (7) Satisfaction. These seven "Stages", moreover, must be carefully distinguished from the "States" (Ahwal), which form a similar psychological chain. The ten "States" are as follows: meditation, nearness to God, love, fear, hope, longing, intimacy, tranquillity, contemplation and certainty. A man by his efforts can master the seven "Stages"; the "States", however, are spiritual feelings that a man has no control over.

The Sufi's journey is not finished until he has passed and has become perfect in all the "Stages", and has experienced all the "States". Then, and only then, he reaches the higher level of consciousness which is called "Marifat". The Sufi,

³Jalaliddin Rumi, Masnavi.

then, realizes that knowledge, knower and known are all one. And then he is liberated, he is absorbed in the Absolute Reality and he is "Ego-less."

Farid-uddin Attar, in his famous book, The Birds Parliament, describes this Sufi path in a fascinating story. He tells about a multitude of birds who agree to choose the fabulous Simory as their sovereign. They decide to cross the seven dangerous valleys that lie before the Mount of Truth (Ghaph), where Simory lived. Many of them cannot bear the difficulties of the way and change their mind, but thirty of them, overcoming all the difficulties of the seven valleys, reach their goal and enter the dwelling place of Simory, where they see their own reflection in the mirror of truth and realize that Simory is in reality themselves (Simory in Persian has double meaning; (1) it is a name for an imaginary bird and (2) it means thirty birds).

To attempt to describe the seven "Stages" through which a Sufi has to go is a rather hard task and perhaps could fill volumes of books. I only deal with a few characteristics of their liberation and freedom. Those characteristics are poverty, love and finally the concept of "Fana".

Poverty in its common meaning is to have as few material goods as possible, but the Sufi's idea of poverty goes far beyond this. Poverty is not merely lack of wealth, but also lack of desire for wealth. Poverty is to have an empty heart as well as an empty hand. The true Sufi does not have anything both materially and spiritually. He has to give up his

"Egoness" and his "I-ness" along with any other property he owns. He has to be detached from everything. In fact the true poverty is found to be concerned with self-denial, in the sense that the true lover has no thought for himself; he considers himself as nonexistent. Perhaps a quote from Jalaliddin Rumi makes it more clear.

What is to be done, O Moslems? for I do not recognize myself. I am neither Christian, nor Jew, nor Gabr (Zoroastrian), nor Moslem. I am not of Nature's mint, nor of circling heavens.

I am not of the empyrean, nor of the dust, nor of existence, nor of entity.

I am not of earth nor of water, nor of air, nor of fire.

I am not of India, nor of China, nor of Bulgaria, nor of Saqsin.

I am not of the Kingdom of Iraqain, nor of the country of Khurasan.

I am not of this world, nor of the paradise, nor of Hell.

I am not Adam, nor of Eve, nor of Eden and Rizwan.

My place is the placeless, my trace is the Traceless.

This neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.

I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one.

One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call.

He is the first, He is the last, He is the outward, He is the inward.

I know none other except 'Ya Hu' and 'Ya man Hu'.

I am intoxicated with love's cup, the two worlds have passed out of my ken.

I have no business save carouse and revelry.

If once in my life I spent a moment without thee, from that time and from that hour I repent of my life.

If once in this world I win a moment with thee, I will trample on both worlds, I will dance in triumph forever.

O Shamsi Tabrez, I am so drunken in this world
that except of drunkenness and revelry I have
no tale to tell.⁴

Now when the individual self is lost -- when the Sufi is poor truly -- the universal self is found. That is to say the Sufi then becomes one with the Absolute Reality, he is then liberated from this worldly prison. In order to reach this stage, however, a Sufi must have a magnificent love and devotion for God. Anybody who is even slightly familiar with the mystical poetry of Persia knows that this aspiration of the soul towards God is expressed beautifully in forms of a mystical poetry. As Ibn-Al-Arabin in a passage translated by Professor Nicholson says:

Oh, her beauty - the tender maid!
Its brilliance gives light like lamps, to one
travelling in the dark. She is a pearl hidden
in the dark.

Hair as black as jet,
a pearl for which thought lives and remains
unceasingly in the depths of that ocean.

He who looks upon her deems her to be
a gazelle of the sand-hills, because of her neck
and the loveliness of her gestures.⁵

Furthermore, love of the beloved is the supreme principle in Sufism. Love, according to Sufi, is self-renunciation and self-sacrifice, the giving up of everything -- wealth, honor, desire, life and whatever man values -- for the beloved without any desire of reward. Ba-Ba-Kuhi in the following passage expresses this clearly:

⁴Jalaliddin Rumi, Masnavi, (Iran, 1341, a Persian year), p. 601.

⁵R. Nicholson, The Mystic of Islam, (London, 1914), p. 125.

In the market, in the cloister --
only God I saw.
In the Valley and on the mountain --
only God I saw,
Him I have seen beside me often in
tribulation;
In favour and in fortune --
only God I saw.
In prayer and fasting. In praise
and contemplation,
In the religion of the prophet --
only God I saw.
Neither soul nor body, accident
nor substance,
Qualities nor causes --
only God I saw.
I opened mine eyes and by the light
of His face around me
In all the eye discovered
only God I saw.
Like a candle I was melting in His fire.
Amidst the flames outflashing --
only God I saw.
Myself with mine own eyes I saw
most clearly,
But when I looked with God's eyes,
only God I saw.
I passed away into nothingness, I
vanished,
And lo, I was the All-living --
only God I saw.⁶

For a Sufi, there is a moment in which he is one with the Absolute Reality, he then calls himself as "Aun al Haqq" -- I am God. This state is called Fana, which includes different meanings. As Professor Nicholson has mentioned, Fana has three meanings:

(1) a moral transformation of the Soul through the extinction of all its desire and passions, (2) a passing away of the mind from all objects through meditation upon the thought of God, (3) the cessation of all conscious thought. This is what the Sufi calls "the passing away of passing away" or Fana al Fana.⁷

⁶Ba-Ba-Kuhi, Persian Poetries, (Iran, 1340), p. 12.

⁷Nicholson, R., The Mystic of Islam, (London, 1914), p. 65.

In the final stage of Fana the Sufi completely passes away from self, forms, and will remain free forever absorbed in the absolute Reality. Abu-Yusid Bastami describes Fana in the following passage:

The first time I travelled to his uniqueness, I became a bird whose body was of openness, and its wings of everlastingness. I continued to fly in the air of howness ten years, until I had travelled to the air a hundred thousand times. I went on flying, until I reached the area of pre-eternity and there beheld the tree of oneness.

I then saw Him, He unveiled, and I saw that I was I, and I was I, turning back into what I sought, and I myself, not other than I, was where I was going.

Then I gazed upon Him with the eye of truth, and said to Him, who is this? He said; this is neither I nor other than I. There is no God but I.

Then He changed me out of my identity into His selfhood, and caused me to pass away from my selfhood through His selfhood. Showing me His selfhood uniquely, and I gazed upon with selfhood.

Then he said to me "What are you?" I said to Him "What are you?" He said "I am the truth." I said, "I am through you." He said, "If you are through I, then I am you and you are I."

Then I said, "O You", and He said to me "O You," God's proof to me by Himself, thus, ended.⁸

Having studied all too briefly the chief motives of the Sufi quest, it would complete our knowledge of them to view them engaged upon two of their favourite practices: one distinctly serious, the Zikr; the other, apparently more frivolous, Sama.

It is not easy to find a single English term for the word Zikr. In itself it means "remembrance". As used by the mystics, it denotes the devout invocation and repetition

⁸Abu-Yusid Bastami, Whiteman, J.H.M., The Mystical Life, (London, 1961), p. 468.

of the Holy Name of God, either alone or enshrined in some formula.

A number of religious confraternities (tariqas) have their own form of Zikr constituting the service performed by the "brethren", grouped together often on a Thursday evening. A Zikr may, however, and often is, gone through in private by single individuals. The words should be repeated a great many times, with as great a degree of intense concentration as can be summoned up. Attention should be centered more and more on the meaning or spiritual reality of what is said until the Zakir (rememberer) is not so much busied with the Zikr (remembrance) as with the Muzkur the one invoked or remembered). If the Sufi masters attached so much importance to the practice of Zikr, in the sense explained, it was because they held it to be the best way to impress the mind and to set up the conditions for the achievement of close attention and the concentration of the Soul's powers on that which is the very purpose of the mystical journey. This combination of meditation and invocation produces a climate of confidence and certainty in the soul and prepares it for the state of contemplation, which is the wayfarer's goal and object.

Ghazali, in his Persian poetic work, the Kimyayi Sa Adat (Philosopher's stone of happiness), as well as in his great Arabic work, the Ihya Vlum ed Din, enters into great detail as to the nature and the advantages of this practice. The first degree in it, 'Common Invocation', even though it

may amount simply to the external invocation of the holy name, is of value "since it denotes that the state of carelessness and indifference has been set aside."⁹ Indeed, one who has dismissed carelessness (Ghiflat) is already a Zakir, even if his tongue be silent.

A higher degree comes when the Zakir "tears off the veil of reason and with his whole heart fixes his attention on the Lord."¹⁰ The highest degree of all is that of the Zakir who becomes fani (lost) in truth -- that is God. At first the adept has constantly to take pains lest his soul drift back into its natural state of carelessness and inattention. But, as he acquires greater mastery, the Zikr takes such a hold on him that it can with difficulty be driven out by any other thought or fancy. The supreme degree, however, comes when the one invoked takes possession of the heart, for as Ghazali says, "There is a great difference between one who loves the invoked one and one who loves the invocation."¹¹ Perfection lies in this, that the invocation and all consciousness of it vanish from the heart and He who is invoked alone remains there. Zikr, or remembrance, centered on the repetition of some devout formula, as opposed to Nisyan (forgetfulness).

In the Surat al Kahf we read: "Remember me when you have forgotten". The value comes from the essence of the

⁹Ghazali, S., Kimyayi Sa Adat, (Iran, 1341), p. 900.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 920.

¹¹Ibid.

contents of La ilaha illa llah which is both negation (la ilaha, there is no God) and affirmation (illallah, save God alone). Thus by inculcating the remembrance of God alone, the Zikr is stripped of the clothing of letters and forms and in the glory of the light of the sublime deity, the property of Kullu Shayin halikun illa wazhaha (all passes away except His face) is made manifest.

Having prepared a room which is empty, dark and clean, let him (a murshid is preparing there for his murid) sit there, cross-legged, facing the Qibla (direction of ellekka) laying his hands on his thighs, let him stir up his heart to wakefulness, keeping a guard on his eyes. Then, with profound veneration, he should say aloud La ilaha illa llah. The la ilaha should be fetched from the root of the navel and the illa llah drawn into the heart, so that the powerful effects of the Zikr may make themselves felt in all the limbs and organs. But let him not raise voice too loud. He should strive, as far as possible, to damp and lower it, according to the words "Invoke the Lord in thyself humbly and with compunction, without publicity of speech" (Surat al A'raf).

Sama (audition). The other method much favoured by the Sufis, in the wake of the great aesthetic Jalaled Din Rumi, with a view to encouraging and reinforcing ecstasy and trance, is known as Sama, literally "listening" or audition. It is good to know that all Persian poetry, the mystical sort not the least, is intended to be chanted either to a regular tune or in free musical improvisation. The best known chant

of this kind, as might have been expected, is that to which the Masnavi of Mulana Rumi is sung. The Persians are very sensitive to the influence of music and song. When the Sufis began to introduce mystical concerts and dances into their regime, they were roundly reproached and condemned by the old orthodox school. Rumi and his followers gave themselves up without compunction to the ecstasy caused by the Sama (audition) of instrumental music or of songs which, on the face of it, often expressed profane love. Dancing was also pressed into the service of the mystical spirit. Rumi composed some of his most wonderful lyrics and couplets while gyrating endlessly around a column in his convent (Khanegah).

Indeed the principal Zikr of the Order of Mevleni dervishes, which he founded, may be said to have consisted in the planetary round where the brethren, in a white robed circle, recited the Zikr in a form which became more and more simplified as they swayed up and down, awaiting the entrance of the chief performer who spun around, arms extended, in their midst for an incredibly long time. This figure is thought to have represented the solar system and recalled, perhaps, the deep rooted mystical belief in the music of the spheres, of which earthly music and rhythm are ecstasy causing reminders (anamnesis).

Mulana Rumi, in the fourth book of the Masnavi, says (in Professor Nicholson's translation):

His object in listening to the sound of the rubath was, like that of ardent lovers of God, to bring to his mind the phantasy of that divine

allocation. Hence, philosophers have said that we received these harmonies from the revolution of the celestial sphere. But true believers say that the influences of Paradise made every unpleasant sound to be beautiful. We have all been parts of Adam. We have heard those melodies in Paradise. Although the water and earth of our bodies have caused a doubt to fall upon us, something of those melodies comes back to our memory.

Therefore, Sama (music) is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure: the fire of love is kindled by melodies.¹²

¹²Rumi, Mulana, J., Masnavi, (Iran, 1341), p. 560.

In studying the Persian mystic, I found some similarities between the Sufi and the true craftsman; the craftsman is obliged to total devotion toward the object which he is creating and intense concentration on the form which is coming into existence. The discipline which is required for both paths are similar in essence.

As for the practical parts, in both paths -- crafts (weaving) and mysticism -- we see great similarities. For example, in the process of Zikr, the Sufi has to clear his mind from everything but God and, time after time, he has to repeat a same sentence. This use of repetition, and monotony exists similarly in the process of weaving. Each time one has to raise a harness and pass a thread through the shed and beat the thread down, and raise up the second harness and so on by becoming totally involved in the process, one can reach the same state of tranquillity.

For me, a medium is only a tool for self-expression. Why I chose yarn goes back to where I came from: Persia. There, every home is furnished with hand woven rugs; a result of many years of hard work and endeavor and hours of concentration. I was always astounded by the Arabesque design of our rugs, and the colorful ornament of the rugs would take me to a world of mystery. For me, art is a way of living and perceiving the world. I always like to work with a sense of anticipation for I never know what will happen. My concern

in weaving relates to the concept and the subjectivity of the piece rather than its factuality. That is, the process of making it, what I go through, and how I come out of it. The things come to be in my head. Suddenly, like a vague dream, when I start it is like participating in the dream. Sometimes I can't complete it. Then I get a bad headache. It stays with me all day and all night. Then, I have to start another piece and not go near the other one until I feel the real urge for it. I never know what my work will look like. The only way to find out is to continue to weave. The work is finished when the arbitrary vanishes and when the thing becomes alive and gains a personality on their own beyond my influence. That is when my dream is completed and I am awake. This is my aim in art: to become awakened by it. My aim is to bring up the inner freedom and the truth which exists in me. Maybe through the rebirth of this inner freedom, I can rejuvenate the freedom and reality which exists in others.

Let me end the paper with another poem by Jaladiddin

Rumi:

I died as mineral and become a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was man.
Why should I fear? When I was less
by dying?

Yet once more I shall die as man,
to soar with angels blest; but even
from angelhood I must pass on.
All except God doth perish.

When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.

Oh, let me not exist! For non-existence
proclaims in organ tones,
"To Him we shall return."¹³

¹³Jalladiddin Rumi, Masnavi, (Iran, 1341), p. 501.

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