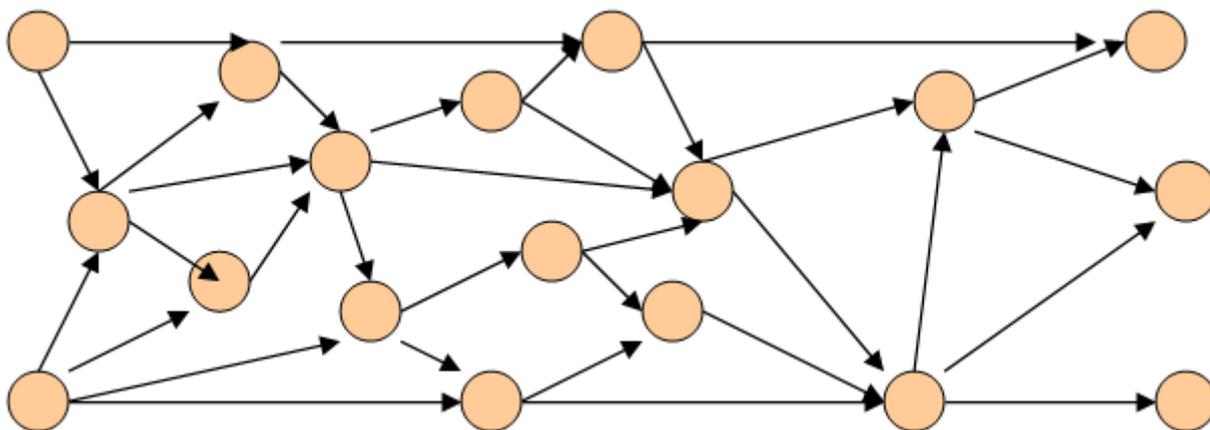


- Weaving

There are two principal sets of systems in the spiritual world – [the Great Work](#) – the plan for how the universe is to evolve - and the [Systems](#) of the universe themselves. Both are in essence systems – one is a system for evolving the universe, the other is the system thus evolved. The one affects the other in that as the Great Work proceeds the systems themselves change, thus in reality we have here one integrated set of functions one which creates, changes and removes function and one which is the functions in operation.

If you put all these functions or transactions together what you find is that they together represent a truly truly vast system with inter dependent transactions both in the plan and the final system. The overall effect is a network of pathways all connected up, looking like a cloth or a loosely woven net curtain.



As we thread our way through these transactions – whether we are simply doing something very ordinary or whether we are executing a part of the Great Work, we are in a sense traversing a path through the network. But we are also leaving our own trail - the perceptions we create, as such we may be said to be weaving our way through life.

Thus behind us we leave a trail of [Perceptions](#) – the [thread or cord](#) and that thread or cord can be linked in life to other threads and cords as we meet people, interact and work together creating a complex pattern of interconnecting threads.

And it is this analogy that gives us the symbolism of weaving. Weaving is the process of both acting out our [destiny](#), and using the systems of the universe.



There is of course a connection with [the Word](#), for if we use the analogy that it is the program language of the universe, the Word is the pattern - the instructions - we execute to produce our own part of this vast tapestry of function.

And the symbolism can be extended, as weaving involves patterns and patterns in life do tend to repeat themselves – not just because

the system of the universe is itself a pattern, but because in life patterns of behaviour tend to get repeated generation after generation unless we break destructive patterns and introduce new more creative patterns. [Learnt function](#) is part of this enormous system and it can improved, removed or endlessly repeated.

We are in this sense the bobbin as it weaves in and out of the cloth of life, bounded by what is possible functionally.

Henry Vaughan

Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God ordered motion, but ordained no rest

Longfellow

Love is ever busy with his shuttle
Is ever weaving into life's dull warp
Bright gorgeous flowers and scenes Arcadian
Hanging our gloomy prison-house about
With tapestries, that make its walls dilate
In never ending vistas of delight

From this symbolism we also get the symbolism of the [Loom](#) and the [Net](#) – all connected and consistent.

Gojusan [translated by Lucien Stryk]

Seamless -
Touched, it glitters
Why spread *such* nets
For sparrows?

Marius Scheider

Unhappy is the poor spinner who leaves her skeins to dry on the river bank and finds them gone

Weaving in different cultures

There are any number of myths and legends in cultures worldwide that incorporate the idea of weaving – the loom of interconnected life, the loom on which the Creator created the systems of the universe, spinning of the thread of life and the loom that links the fates of things. For example:-

Egypt - In pre-Dynastic Egypt, *nt* (Neith) was already the goddess of weaving (and a mighty aid in war as well). She protected the Red Crown of Lower Egypt before the two kingdoms were merged, and in Dynastic times she was known as the most ancient one, to whom the other gods went for wisdom. Nit is identifiable by her emblems and most often it is the loom's shuttle, with its two recognizable hooks at each end, upon her head. According to E. A. Wallis Budge (*The Gods of the Egyptians*) the root of the word for *weaving* and also for *being* are the same: *nnt*.

Greece - a number of goddesses were associated with weaving, and in Homer's legend of the Odyssey, Penelope the faithful wife of Odysseus was a weaver, weaving her design for a shroud by day, but unravelling it again at night, to keep her suitors from claiming her during the long years while Odysseus was away.

Norse - For the Norse peoples, Frigg was the goddess associated with weaving. The Scandinavian "Song of the Spear", quoted in "Njals Saga", also gives a detailed description of Valkyries as women weaving on a loom, with severed heads for weights [[beheading](#)], and [arrows](#) for shuttles, which are both symbolically important

England - A high-born woman sent as a hostage-wife to a foreign king was repeatedly given the epithet "*weaver of peace*", linking weaving and 'the familiar role of a woman as a dynastic pawn'. A familiar occurrence of the phrase is in the early English poem *Widsith*, who "*had in the first instance gone with Ealhild, the beloved weaver of peace, from the east out of Anglen to the home of the king of the glorious Goths, Eormanric, the cruel troth-breaker...*"



China - In Tang Dynasty China, the weaving goddess floated down on a shaft of moonlight with her two attendants, showed to the upright court official Guo Han in his garden that a goddess's robe is seamless for it is woven without the use of needle and thread, entirely on the loom. The phrase "a goddess's robe is seamless" passed into an idiom to express perfect workmanship. This idiom is also used to mean a perfect, comprehensive plan.

symbolism of weaving by Adrian Snodgrass

The warp threads are the immutable and principal radii originating from the Centre and passing through the states of existence; the weft threads are those states themselves, the variable and contingent applications of the Principle to particular conditions. The image is that of the rays of the Sun (the warp threads) irradiating the worlds (the weft threads), with the Sun removed an infinite distance so that its rays are parallel,⁶⁶ and the concentric circles they traverse, being circumferences of infinite extent, having become straight lines.⁶⁷

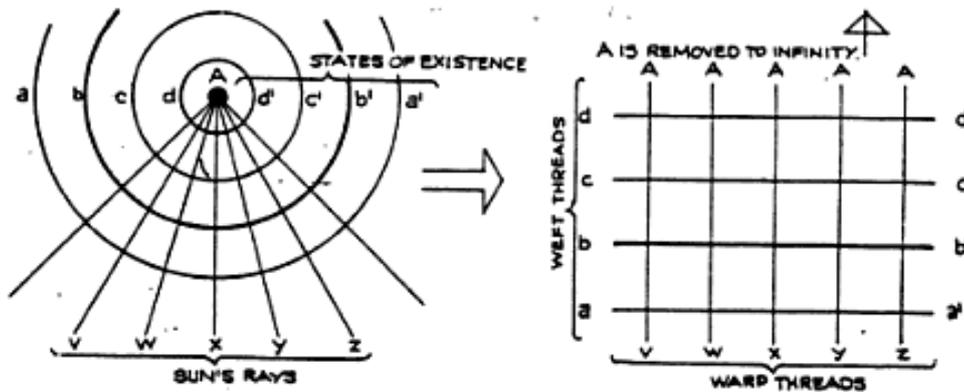


Fig. 56 : The assimilation of Sun and loom symbolisms

The loom is the cosmos. The warp (top) beam is the Essential pole of the universe; the bottom beam is its Substantial pole; or, transposing the symbolism, the upper beam is Heaven and the lower beam is Earth. The weft threads are the planes of existence or the levels of being; the warp threads are the rays of informing Light or Breath, linking the upper and lower Principles. Joined together by its supporting side beams the loom forms a rectangle framing an interlaced gridwork of threads, which is precisely the form of the mandala.⁶⁸

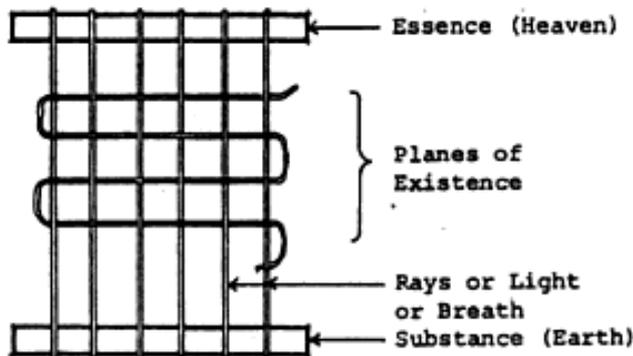


Fig. 57 : The loom as an image of the cosmos.

In this symbolism the plane of the mandala is seen as vertical, with Heaven above and Earth below, so as to represent a cross section through the multiple states of existence. Whether the loom stands vertically or

66. As they are considered to be in the physics of light.

67. There are cases where the warp threads are strung from a centre or from a ring rather than from a warping beam.

68. See above, p. 104.

horizontally, the same symbolic considerations apply, since it is possible to transpose a vertical symbolism of this type to a horizontal plane by taking one of the directions as "up". When oriented in this way the grid-lines of the mandala can be taken to represent the Breath-threads of Essence, running vertically, and the Breath-threads of Substance, running at right angles to them and horizontally. The nodal points of their crossings are then so many "concentrations" of Breath, each representing an "object" or a phenomenon of the plane of existence or plane of being under consideration and each in this way representing a pneumatic hierophany.

Alternately, in a complementary symbolism, the plane of the grid-lines can be taken as horizontal rather than vertical and in this case it represents the plan of a level of existence : the warp and weft Breath-threads are so many reproductions of the directions emanating from the centre of the plane. Each crossing is implicitly a three-dimensional cross; a vertical passes through each and every point upon the plane of existence (or of being) that the cloth represents, linking that point back to the Centre. In this symbolism, as in the former, the points of intersection are so many "specifications" of Breath; at each point Breath reveals itself as some aspect of form.

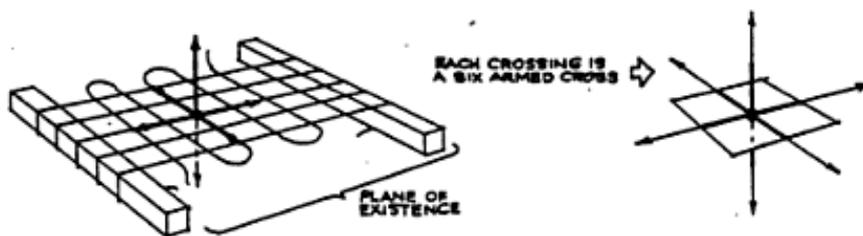


Fig. 58 : The loom as a horizontal plane or level of existence.

d. The Symbolism of the Spider's Web.

The same formula is expressed in the image of the spider and its web.⁶⁹ In the myths of many cultures the spider is associated with the Moon, which weaves the destinies of men,⁷⁰ but in the *Brāhmasūtras* it is specifically equated with the Sun that centres the cosmos.⁷¹ "Like a spider, the one God surrounds himself with threads drawn from primordial Substance (*pradhāna*)";⁷² "As a spider spins its threads... even so from the Self comes forth all breaths, all worlds, all divinities, all beings";⁷³ "Just as a spider emanates and draws in (its thread)... so from the Imperishable the universe comes into being";⁷⁴ and "Just as a spider produces its own threads itself... even so Brahman creates the world unaided by any extraneous means".⁷⁵

69. The symbolism of the spider's web is developed by Coomaraswamy, 1935b, pp. 396 ff.; 1977, 2, p. 76, n. 40; Eliade, 1965, p. 172; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1973, 1, p. 92, s.v., *Araignée*.

70. Eliade, 1958b, p. 181; Cirlot, 1962, p. 290. 71. KB XIX.3.

72. *Śvet. Up.* VI.10. 73. *BU* II.1.20. 74. *Muṇḍ. Up.* I.1.7.

75. *BSSB* II.1.25.