

The web
of life

Ukraine and Russia
The impact of the war on each of us

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CHE-Salon April 13th 2022

The Center for Human Emergence in the Netherlands (CHE-NL) organised this salon about the war in Ukraine and how this is effecting us all.

We welcomed our two special guests: Hans Ruijs (SDi expert living and working in Switzerland, www.tikla.world) and Anatoly Balyaev. Anatoly lives in Moscow and is a writer and business consultant and creator of the educational program “Evolutionary Intelligence” based on SDi. He’s a science editor and translator of Russian versions of books at Spiral Dynamics and Value Match Partner for Russia. Hans had an interview with Anatoly about the present situation in Russia and what he is experiencing at that side of this immense conflict and clash of values. How can we look from the Integral Framework to this war and especially to what is happening in yourself?

In this paper you will find

- the interview with Anatoly
- reflections of the participants
- a fairy tale written by Anatoly
- and some interesting links.

INTRODUCTION

We are all very deeply touched and confused by the war in Ukraine. We, grown up in the after-war optimism of the peaceful cooperation, feel stunned and ask ourselves where it went wrong? What didn’t we see or didn’t want to see? Despite of the ‘far-away’ wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Georgia, ex-Yugoslav or Syria we felt safe here in Europe. Despite of the violent dictatorships in Chili, de Soviet Union, China, Greece, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Belarus or Azerbaijan, this would not happen again here in Europe. Invading an independent state with military troops and bombing cities and civilians, how is that possible in this 21th century ...? How can we deal with that shock? What is the impact upon our inner system, how to bridge the gap of dissonance that is revealing itself? How to heal our inner Spiral? How to deal with the inner clash between our Green values and our (suppressed) Red? I am looking with wonder, admiration and a feeling of shame to

the determination of the Ukrainian people. I don't see myself doing that, nor we in this country, in such a way fighting for our most beloved values.

This online salon was visited by more than 30 people coming from Brazil, Israel, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Australia, Canada and Russia. A salon of the CHE is not a debate or a discussion. It is an inquiry in which we are listening to each other, to our inner voices and to the voice of the whole. After the interview with Anatoly we worked in breakout groups around the next three questions:

1. Evoked by this Ukraine-Russian war, which values/value systems are conflicting in your inner self?
2. How do you cope with this conflict in order to heal your inner Spiral with its different value systems/ your Soul Life?
3. Supposing you are looking from a broad/large perspective: what do you feel about both the Russian and Ukraine people and where do you feel that in your body?

We listened to the main findings and then had an open group sharing in focused attention. We practiced 'second tier communication': listening and speaking from the heart and from silence, seeing what is emerging about the next three questions:

- What is the meaning/value of this salon for you personally?
- What is the meaning/value of this salon for the world?
- What can we do on this side of Europe (and in other parts of the world) in the battle between the future and the past?

We hope that reading this paper will have a deep impact on you just as we were very touched participating in this salon. And that it will bring you new insights about the difficult world we are living in.

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INTERVIEW HANS WITH ANATOLY



Anatoly Balyaev

Hans: Welcome Anatoly. Thanks for your willingness to share your experiences and perceptions with us. You ensured us that there are no limitations for you, so it is an open conversation with us. I would like to start with a picture. This was in November 2019 in Moscow where I was invited to facilitate a Spiral Dynamics integral (SDi) workshop with you and your group. It was a very openminded and warm-hearted meeting and this was the start of our relationship. We considered this meeting as a gathering to build bridges, not only between the two of us but also between different cultures. We saw our event as a kind of 'island of humanity'. Since then a lot of things changed. After Covid came in, we started to work online with each other. We did SDi applications

workshops, stayed in connection and now we are here. I consider this online gathering with all of us, also as an island of humanity. Anatoly, I would first ask you to introduce yourself: what is your background and who are you?

Anatoly: Hello everybody, I am Anatoly, thank you very much for the invitation. Who am I? I am a technical engineer by my first education. But my life changed a lot. Now I am a psychologist, philosopher, writer (I write fairy tales for adults). I have a son, he is 18 years old. I have a wife, we live together for 29 years and next year we will celebrate our 30 years together. I moved to Moscow three years ago. I was born in Nizhniy Novgorod, a city 400 km to the east from Moscow. I've been doing SD for 15 years. In 2008 we had the first SD article on our website and since then, we gathered more than 4800 participants in our Facebook group and 11.000 people subscribed to our mailing list. Annually we do our online SD course. We found growing interest in this model that is trying to describe the evolution of us, the evolution of meanings, the evolution of worldviews, the evolution of complexity. Well, this is my passion, this is my life. This is what I am all about. I'm trying to explain myself, I'm trying to share this amazing vision that time has a direction and that evolution is not finished. It is continuous within our cultures, in our minds. This vision gives me hope, even now. This is what I do: I share with people the idea of the evolving self and evolving systems.

Hans: Thank you, Anatoly, for this introduction. In this salon we're not looking to the overarching political character of this conflict, but we will explore what this whole field of tension does with ourselves. We can look at our inner value systems, what is the impact of the war on our inner life.

February 24th was a shock for us all with the invasion of Ukraine. We have the uncomfortable feeling that the life conditions we lived in, never will be the same anymore. In my mind and in my heart I was with you Anatoly, and with Dina and other Russian friends. We had several contacts. Looking back now, Anatoly, several weeks later, can you describe how you perceived this period for yourself?

Anatoly: I was in different places, meetings online in January and early February and people saw me, being Russian, and they asked me: will war happen, will it be war? I said several times that I was pretty sure that there will be no war. I was completely 99% sure about that. February 24th was a disaster for me. I was shocked. Day after day news came and each day I started with reading the news, on a lot of different channels, official Russian channels, official Ukrainian channels, a lot of propaganda from both sides, a lot of pictures from my friends, my colleagues from Ukraine, and it was so horrible. So the first two weeks my days were like: I was waking up, I remembered that this was not a dream, this was real, I took my phone, I read the news and I cried all day. So I was completely down. Everything had stopped, all work stopped, all connections stopped.

We had an online SD course in these days. It started in January. It was built up in weeks with specific attention for the different value systems: we had a Beige week, we had a Purple week and war started in the Red week... We said: oh, this is too much. I mean we were talking about it like some sort of synchronicity: what is happening in your own life. When you have your Beige week you might maybe look to some health issues. If we move into our Purple week, you suddenly connect with your relatives. The Red week was a disaster.... And we were thinking: maybe it will be banned in the Blue week: rules must go on. Then we were expecting the end of the war in the Orange week because for Orange it is not acceptable to have war. We waited for the results of negotiations in the Green week, but we only faced the first results in our Turquoise week. And now our online course is finished and the war is still going on.

It was and is a disaster. There is a scale when people for instance hear that they have a cancer: they first deny it and then there are several steps towards acceptance. I am not sure the acceptance is within us but we decided to move on. We decided to re-establish our connections. We decided to rebuild the community that we lost because Facebook was declared a terroristic organisation. We lost all our work. We decided to rebuild the community and we asked people to join our website and create our new community. And it seems like life started again from the beginning. We had 10 registrations, we had 20 registrations, 50 and it felt like all started over.

Hans: You lost all our Facebook connections?

Anatoly: If you use VPN, you can connect to Facebook but our participants are mostly psychologists, coaches, and they don't know exactly how to use additional software. I even with my technical background have issues with that. Sometimes it is not working and I need to choose another instrument to connect to my Facebook account. But for them it is more than difficult. So we see that activity is down. Then we gathered together, my colleagues, my friends and we decided to re-establish the very way to speak about the Integral approach, to survive the Integral discourse in Russian language. And we reinvented the way to do it.

Hans: Can you say something about the reactions on the war within your SDi community, in the beginning and how it is now?

Anatoly: Well, most of my friends are strongly against the war and in the first days of the situation we were publishing, we were signing up several collective letters against the war. And then I don't remember the date, a new law was published that any speech you have against the ... even if you call that 'special operation' the war, you could be punished in several ways and the most strongly way is 15 years in jail. After that I have deleted all my anti-war publications on Facebook and other platforms. I felt very bad about it. I feel responsibility for my family, I feel responsibility for our community. I decided, my wife asked me, my son asked me, please father, be careful about it and I deleted all those anti-war letters and I decided to do what I can do best to have my personal struggle with this situation.

Hans: So you were not going out in the streets? Because it was too risky?

Anatoly: I wasn't. A lot of my friends did and they were caught... It is a very difficult situation because our Ukrainian friends asked us to go on the streets, they forced us, they begged us to go on the streets, and a lot of my friends did. But you know, I don't know how to say it. It is a very brave way but the official machine, I mean the government, they are so much prepared to cut off all the protesting. So I really think that maybe a lot of my Ukrainian friends will disagree with me, but it is no way for us to struggle on the streets because it is useless. It won't happen even if we had a million people marching on Moscow. It is nothing, it doesn't matter for the government anymore. Our

opinions just don't matter. And we will lose everything, they will force us to move away. I actually don't know how to deal with this. I don't know what to do to change it.

The way I have chosen for myself is to re-establish the community, to re-connect the people, make space for them to support each other. This is the best I can do. And it was very hard to make these decisions but I... My Ukrainian friends they are amazingly brave people. I admire them. I think they are great actually. And maybe this is the reason why all of this is happening. They are too great for the Kremlin to stay alive, they are too much free.

Hans: You see a role for yourself: keeping the community alive and together, and partly you have to go underground and find (new) ways to meet online. What do your friends expect from you in this role?

Anatoly: I don't know if they expect something from me, but I think that they look at me and they are waiting for some wise words. They wait for some reasons why it happens. They wait for reasons to continue what they have been doing. In the first weeks we were separated from each other, we were surviving by ourselves. And now it is time to accept the new reality we are in. It is not just ... My first thoughts were like history turned back in the USSR, like we are again in USSR. I remember USSR, I was a student then. But it is worse. And for us, the way to keep hope in some way, keep connections is very important. My friend Victor Shiryaev organised daily morning meditations together. I have recorded and created morning and evening meditations that actually support me, which reminds me what am I. I decided not to read news in the morning because if I do, all day is lost. Now I wake up and I remind myself by this meditation that I have, written and recorded for myself and I asked my friends to use it, who am I and what am I doing. And evening meditation again is like: allow me to let go the situation and to relax and again be myself. So it is a difficult psychological situation, it feels like we lost our culture, we lost our country we were proud of, we lost our future. My son lost his future. All of us lost something in this situation. Every bullet in Ukraine kills something Russian in me. It kills my culture, my way to talk, my way to speak, my way to go, my spiritual ways, my way to be alive. And every day I rebuild myself, reinvent myself to do something that could be considered as useful or important, something like that.

Hans: Each day....

Anatoly: Yes each day. Each day there is a new reality for us. Like in this holiday YouTube has blocked our Parliament channel on YouTube. And they say YouTube must be punished for that. And I believe that YouTube will be blocked as well as Facebook was. And YouTube is a place where teachers, professors, have put a lot of materials, lessons, lectures. My YouTube channel has a lot of lectures, materials about Spiral Dynamics. But also my fairy tales. And all of that could be lost for us. Every day is a new reality. It seems that every day we need to rebuild ourselves and what we should do with our money, with our business, with our meanings of life. We re-assemble ourselves daily. And you know, I am talking to you from Moscow, I live on the fifth floor in a large building. The building is holding still, my ground is not shaking, nothing is exploding outside, it is much worse for Ukrainians, I mean. For them it is a complete disaster in a very survival way for themselves and their children. I feel my pain, my spiritual pain, my existential pain, but my body is not in pain. For them it is a much worse situation.

Hans: You have a profound knowledge of the Integral Theory, Spiral Dynamics, you're teaching it yourself, you are recognised in Russia for this, how can this Integral approach be a personal help for you, now and in the future?

Anatoly: It gives me hope. This is why I must remind myself about those ideas daily. Because Spiral Dynamics gave me the vision, the knowledge, a sort of evolutionary faith, you know. I saw that time has a direction. I saw that our life is growing up, I mean: we grow up, our organisations grow up, our systems grow up and even if something goes wrong, the whole process is not. Because the whole, that vector, that direction of evolution is impossible to turn backwards. Because, maybe some way, in some countries, in some situations, you see, you could have a step back, but the whole thing is moving in a very beautiful way. For me Spiral Dynamics is the story of beauty, the story of complexity, the story of life being amazing. This is the way for me to remind myself. I don't know when, I don't know how, I don't know because of what, but if I close my eyes, if I look inside, I am pretty sure that maybe not us, maybe not our children, maybe our grandchildren will be again together with Ukrainians, Europeans, and we will be proud again of our great culture and we will have some new ways to be human. And again, Russia gives a sort of bad lesson for humanity. We gave a lot of bad lessons in 20th century and we continue to do so in 21th century. If I consider myself as a small person, it is an awful situation, a disaster. If I consider myself as living evolution, as evolution with a face, evolution with a name, if I can see myself this way, my heart feels with hope. And this is why I believe the very idea to have that Integral and Spiral hope inside is very important for us to deal with the situation, to survive, to continue. This is the way for me and I share this vision with my friends, with my students.

Hans: Thank you very much, Anatoly. It was touching for me talking with you. To hear how you made this inner transformation: go through the suffering but not staying in the suffering.

Anatoly: I like to say a little bit more. There is an amazing Russian woman who moved in Germany today. Her name is Ekaterina Schulman. She published a very meaningful, an amazing video recently on YouTube. She was asked why all of this was happening and she said that by her opinion - and I agree with her - this is the war between future and past. Because Kremlin wants to be a face of conservative humanity, a face of the old good way to be human. And they saw new ways of being human are arising. And they realised that future is coming and they saw that for them their ways to be alive were closing. So they decided to destroy the future. But again for me it is impossible because you know it is like fighting with God. Because you can consider that growing up, that evolutionary process, that growing beauty and complexity as a God in the process of creation. If we as humanity somehow created new ways to be human, new ways to be alive, it is no use to fight with that. Because it is a sort you know like God's will. Whether you are religious or not and what are you considering as God, it is a way evolution goes. It creates new ways, and you cannot be against it. Because if you would, you will be removed in some way. It is crazy, it is unbelievable, I don't know how to say it, it is ridiculous to fight with the future.

Sometimes I consider myself as an evolution with face. I see you people: you are evolution with faces. All the cosmos, all the biological evolution, all the cultural evolution, it has now become you and you can see yourself and think about yourself as an evolution with a name. And what is Kremlin fighting for? He fights with evolution and it is useless. This is what gives me hope. I don't know how, I don't know when it will happen, how it will happen, but it will fail and we will face another Russia. The very way to fight with the future, it seems like they fight with me, the evolution with name, evolution with face. We have a lot of models to describe the evolution. We try to think about the very way of growing up. And Spiral Dynamics is just one of the models we could use to describe. We try to describe this amazing beautiful process of evolution. And it seems like this war is fighting with this amazing process. And that is useless.

REFLECTIONS

In this part you will find the most insightful, inspiring and touching findings of this CHE-salon.

Some first reactions

- Reinventing yourself and your life each day speaks to the resilience of human beings.
- We are 'evolution with a name', evolution with a face'. We are embodied evolution.
- Time has a direction. We see this evolution from a Spiral perspective. For me this whole situation has been a trip to the past (Second World War)). What is happening is a struggle for freedom, to express ourselves, to have different opinions. This is a wake-up call. I realise myself how much the second generation had lived in this Green dream of the future is beautiful. After the wall came down, it became even stronger. We have to accept that all those systems are there. So we cannot relax in our Green harmony without realising that we need a forceful protection against the Red beasts.
- Life conditions has changed forever.

Group-essences reported

- We come from different places and brought our questions and feelings. We told our stories and we could see how important diversity is. The different views together told us another story, a different scenario that was much more complete.
- Our common feeling was aggression and maybe even fear. The conflict between past and future was shaped in different ways. I was talking about the past of the Jewish people. Ukraine was part of the killing machine of the Nazi's and many Jews were killed there. Ofcourse now I very much sympathise with them. We also felt powerless not being able to do the right thing: to stop the Russian invasion. In our group was a lot of Red energy.
- We exchanged the different perspectives from which we lead your daily life and the implications of this war for us. The tension that you could sense in all our stories and in our bodies was somehow relieved by just exchanging, talking to one another, making space for hope. To make it personal also is very important. The power of this kind of sessions is that you meet people with a different perspective and that as such is very valuable and special.

Question 1: What is the meaning/value of this salon for you personally?

- The story of Anatoly is really expressing the not-knowing. When I was in Russia, my project leader said: now beautiful things are going on but we, being Russian, know somewhere in the back of our mind, that from one day to another the Kremlin can switch, and everything changes. In that time it was difficult for me to understand but now I do and it is painful.
- I became again so aware of our interconnectedness. How historical and collective trauma are triggered in all of us when we are confronted with war. The role that war played in our cultural pasts. and how differently we respond to and cope with that past.
- Since the beginning of the war I feel a lot of Red energy. I wanted to fight because I am very very angry. and I don't know what can I do with this Red energy. This salon could be an opportunity to make the Green energy in me stronger. To hear the story of Anatoly and the exchange about meanings, was very important for me.
- You cannot fight the future, dictators die and damage is done but the world/.humanity will evolve. Like I don't have to tell my children to grow up, because they will do it automatically, it is inevitable for the world to evolve.
- What is the real/universal/cosmic battle that is going on? Can we rise a little bit higher and really see what is the battle? What is state of mind of Kremlin/Putin to destroy a whole people, where is he fighting for and against? Where is Ukraine standing for and what is it defending in the broader perspective of humanity evolving? Evolution has to go on. In what direction we don't know, but there must be a next stage. and I wonder what that will be

Question 2: What is the meaning/value of this salon for the world?

Maybe this salon may reveal the meaning of all this what is happening now.

- We have to learn to deal with uncertainty. In former times we could cling on some certainties, but all is falling apart, all is changing and that will change also something in our collective mind.
- We are searching for something that makes us stronger, gives us hope and leads us forwards.
- We do important work to stay out of the polarisation. Maybe we can somehow build bridges.
- The not-knowing touched me. We are witnessing in this salon what happens when we go into Red or are stuck in the polarisation of Blue. We are looking from Green and Yellow for different ways to find an answer. Do we need to become Red to deal with Red?
- We have the opportunity to redefine ourselves each day anew, This sharing with people from all over the world gives me hope.
- Anatoly: thank you for playing Tchaikovsky in the beginning. Culture is never participating in the war. Many SD experts say that the world is very messy and chaotic now, maybe these are the life conditions for second tier thinkers to arise. But the first thing they have to do, is making their ego less important. I see a lot of people in Ukraine and Russia who think they are right. Being right seems to be like a sort of human 'bug' (as a hacker says) placed in the mind. When you are right, it seems you are on drugs. That passion to be right is very destructive. A war is the place where one rightness fights with another rightness ('US against THEM') and the blood becomes a river. Something new appears only when you don't know, when you could say I don't know whether I am right or you. We need a kind of spiritual practice to get rid of rightness as a drug, as an addiction to be right. The importance of this salon for me and for all of us, for the world could be starting to consider rightness as a drug, as a bug of human being.

Question 3: What can we do on this side of Europe (and in other parts of the world) in the battle between the future and the past?

- The material we're working with makes distinctions. I agree that we shouldn't polarise and at the same time we have to make a distinction between the future and the past. Because the worst our strong Green values can do is flatten the field now. We have to make distinctions between what is a human way of living and what is not.
- Some things are so incredibly wrong for me that I cannot have this distance to get out of the polarisation. I mean people get slaughtered, get raped, get poisoned, tortured, sometimes you have the moral obligation to say this is wrong.
- Anatoly: It is so paradoxical. On one hand we need to distinguish, separating the future and the past. But if you separate it too much, if you are so proud of your decisions, if you feel yourself very good about it (the 'saviour'), there is a problem. You should start to see how the ego works. We can distinguish ego decisions and ego rightness from something wiser, more deeper I don't know how to say, we didn't invent the words for this. We are about making new words, new ways of thinking, in this paradoxical way. And don't be afraid of being paradoxical!!!! We need to go on like Jesus on water, because we have no ground to step on any more but we need to go on. How to separate past and future and yet not being arrogant in this.
- Something new is being asked of us. Not just to approach things differently, but it is like a developmental question. What new capacities do we need to deal with these paradoxes/contradictions that we are feeling and experiencing. I think it is a real call. In some cases outer action is needed, but it is really a developmental issue: rethinking the way we were thinking. And it is asking a very big step for us, individually and collectively. It is very complicated. How do we live with contradictions, how do we embrace that in a way without falling into certainty or rightness. We are going from one crisis to another as if the world is presenting us an accelerated demand to evolve.
- As a human being I experience a conflict in me how to behave, to react, but on the level of values I don't have any doubts.

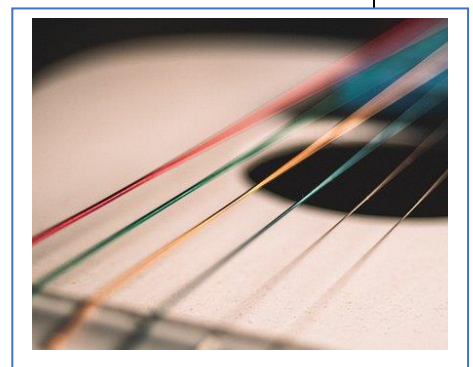
- This is part of holding the contradictions. I love my own values and at the same time I see that people can have other values that are conflicting with my values. How to deal with that?
- Anatoly: It is important to see what lies beyond the ugly surfaces. Every time you see something ugly it is a sort of a spiritual practice to see how beautiful the values lying beyond the surface are. Those values are ALWAYS beautiful, they just don't know how to show themselves in a good way. But often we see something ugly and start to consider ourselves BETTER than that. This is the ego problem. How to be human without being addicted to rightness?
- Pema Chödrön talks about connecting with the pain in yourself. The Spiral means 'transcend and include': all the values that we are talking about, are part of ourselves. When you connect with all those parts in yourself, you probably can better understand other people.
- Peter Merry talked about the spiral not only as a way to understand value systems and evolution, but there also is the line of compassion. I am missing that in the Geopolitical analyses on TV. I can understand a lot of perspectives but can I really feel it? and forgive people? That is the real practice and that is really tough.
- I can understand why somebody does what he does and I can set a clear boundary. For me that is not a paradox. This is what we are and we defend ourselves. We don't need to dehumanise other people to do that. I think that is one of the mistakes that we collectively made, by wanting to see all the perspectives. We lost our own sense of setting boundaries for what we really value. For some of us it is easier than for others. For Anatoly to go on the streets has a lot of personal consequences. I am happy I don't have to make that choice, So it is easier for me. But if the tanks would be rolling through The Netherlands, I would be prepared to protect what we have.
- We have to differentiate. When somebody is crossing my border, I have to answer with Red and set boundaries. If someone is not listening, there is no other possibility. Then my Reddishness is not from righteousness but for defending my own personal space and my own value system. But I am not entitled to cross the border of another and attack. The Red is not a system that we like to use but we need it to set boundaries.
- We have to find new ways to be human

We all are very grateful to Anatoly for sharing his thoughts, feelings, insights and experiences.

Off the record: The string metaphor

Anatoly: we don't talk about levels while we are teaching SD. We use the metaphor of coloured strings. Beige string, Purple string. We consider human systems as music and the musical string-metaphor gives us more possibilities than the level metaphor. If you explain SD through the levels, every time there will be a person who wants to be on the highest level. If you explain it through strings, it is more open. You can be a master on a guitar with 4 strings. If you add a 5th string, a 6th string, your music becomes more complex. And it also can become a mess. Better to have beautiful music with 4 or 3 strings than having a mess with 7 strings. This is a nice metaphor of complexity. Because

if you see levels as a ladder, every level is the same, like one colour. But if you see this complexity as a growing number of strings, it means that you have to become a master, be more quick, need to feel the music deeper, have to exercise. The string metaphor is great and I would love to explain it in this way. You have more variations. You can play your music on a Blue string, your Red string could be strong and sound great, but your Blue string is maybe comme ci comme ça. It must be tuned up. The growing-up process is like tuning-up your guitar, you're tuning up your previous ways to be human. This is an amazing way to explain the spiral.



A FAIRY TALE

There are a lot of beautiful words in Russian language. One of them — the word you can sound like «svazano». It means a connection between things. At the same way it means knitting, carving, linking, attaching, fixing, bringing together. It was difficult for me to translate it in English, so I decided to leave it as is. When you'll see «vso svazano» in the text of this fairy tale you can think about it as «all is connected», «all is knitted», «all is linked» together. «Vso svazano» is a mystical, lovely, warm, Russian way of thinking. Please try to feel it deeply. Author

[This is the link to the story](#) in original Russian



Vso svazano

My grandma loves to knit. She is a true master. Last night, I dreamed of her multi-coloured rainbow threads again. I woke up, and I am sitting silently on the edge of my bed. I rub my eyes, and open them wide. Granny has already washed the floors this morning — they sparkle in the bright sunlight shining through the windows. The oven is lit — it is nice and cuddly warm in the room, and Grandma has baked a pie (I want some of granny's pie!). Now, she's sitting at the table knitting a new warm sweater for grandpa. The hens are clucking and the chains are clanking — that must be Lucky who came out of the doghouse to sip some water. I smile and I think about how funny it looks when he sticks his tongue into the water with a splash.

«Granny, I wo-o-oke u-u-up».

«Good morning, my dear Stitchy! Do you want a piece of pie?»

«Uh-huh».

«Then, come. I'll get you a glass of milk, too».

I get dressed quickly. My slippers are made of wool, warm and soft, with little ears, and they carry me quietly over to my granny. She is so big, she has to be hugged first thing in the morning. I snuggle up to her and sink deep into her soft arms. I stand there for a while sniffing. Finally, I climb onto the stool, turn around towards the table, and take a piece of pie from the plate («Take the one that looks at you»). I am eating it, and drinking the cold milk, dangling my feet.

«Granny, where's grandpa?»

«He is shearing the sheep».

«Why?»

«To get wool».

«Why?»

«To spin yarn».

«Why?»

«To weave threads».

«Why?»

«To roll them into balls».

«Why?»

«So that I can knit a new jacket for you».

«Why?»

«Because you've outgrown the old one».

«Why?»

«Why are you growing up? That's something you need to find out for yourself, my little Stitchy, granny says with a smile».

Granny is smiling and I am smiling back at her. I eat my pie up, and drink up my milk. Then, I pull my sketchbook out, put it on the table, take a pencil, stick out my tongue, and start drawing flowers. Suddenly, an idea flashes through my mind, just like a spark: the coloured lines that I have drawn on the paper look like granny's threads. I start laughing:

«Granny, look at the flowers I have knitted!» — This makes me laugh out loud, so much that I can't stop myself.

«Well, well», — granny puts her glasses on (for some reason she knits without glasses) and examines my scribbles on the paper with a serious face, — «Good job. Soon you will learn how to really knit».

«Granny, can you teach me?»

«Teach you? I can only show you how to knit, and then you'll learn it later yourself».

«Show me now, please, granny».

«No, wait a little. It's too early for you to knit. You'll be bored».

«But gra-a-a-nny, come on sho-o-ow me, I won't be bo-o-ored, gra-a-anny!.. Pleaaaase!»

Granny looks at me over the rim of her glasses and beckons me over with her finger. I happily slip down from the stool and jump onto her knees. Granny says:

«OK, my Stitchy. I'll show you how to knit. Only, I know it's too early for you. But, o.k., if you insist, I'll show you. If you want to, you'll knit, if you don't, want to, you won't. Only there's one secret, promise me you will tell absolutely no one about it».

I catch my breath, and I turn into a small ball of anxious excitement.

«Dear granny, honestly, I swear, I will never-ever tell anyone!»

«Well, you can tell of course, but no one will believe you. Some will laugh, others will think you're silly. People know nothing about knitting and about thread, they put on clothes, whatever clothes they have, they wear them and think that trousers and skirts grow on trees. So, watch me carefully, and if someone asks you how your granny knits, you smile at them and say: «She sits and knits, what difference does it make to you?» OK?»

«OK, granny. And when will I learn how to knit myself?»

«To knit? People learn how to knit, dear Stitchy, when they remember what a thread really is». — I don't understand, what she means. I open my mouth to ask, but granny suddenly kisses my forehead.

And then it happened! I felt as if I was sliding down from a big steep hill in a small cart, like the one I rode in the park one time. Down and up, and then to the side, and again down and up. I was screaming from surprise and a rushing, infinite multi-coloured joy. The joy was so great that it felt like I was woven of a sparkling light. I looked around and it seemed like the shining hills on which I was riding in my cart had no end — all around was a tangled web of curves and zigzags, and I was riding fearlessly, at a crazy speed, and it was pure happiness. It was amazing that some threads could be seen and others couldn't, even though I knew they were there. Suddenly I understood that there was no cart, no rails, and that all there was, was one beautiful network of thick threads, which let me go in whatever direction I wanted. And then, somehow, I found myself at the bottom looking up at a surface, shimmering with all the colours of the rainbow, and woven from my joy. I laughed out loud, when I understood that what I saw was just the top of our table. I looked back and I caught my

breath, filled with delight- everything around me was woven, knitted and braided together: the walls, the floor, the ceiling, the door, the table, the windows, the pictures on the wall, the stove, which was burning with a multi-coloured light. I noticed every little thread. And how delicately it was all done! I saw the tree rings in the wood of the table, and I laughed: every single layer was knitted from a thread of different colour. Even the scratch on my skin, with its uneven edges, was very accurately and delicately carved- woven.

«Gra... nny...»

I don't know how much time I had spent sitting like this and looking excitingly at everything around me. Suddenly, I felt like looking at the sweater I was wearing, but I caught sight of my hands sticking out. Hands of many-colored threads! Can you believe it: my hands were woven of many-colored shining threads! I was so surprised, that I simply couldn't breathe for a few seconds...

«Granny... Threads...»

«Yes, my dear».

«Look, I'm also knitted!»

«Of course, my sweet girl».

«But how...»

«Just like that. Vso svazano».

«Vso svazano? All and everything?»

«All and everything. Even me».

I turn to my granny and... I can't say a word... Granny... she is joy and love. Dear granny. I see how granny loves me. And how I love her. Multi-coloured threads.

«Granny...»

«Do you see now?»

«I see... And who has knitted all this?»

«What do you mean who? Your own granny has knitted it. Me».

«You??? How is that?»

«How? Like this. With needles».

«Granny... Your needles are knitted, too...»

«Of course they are knitted. What else could they be?» — Granny laughs.

«Wait granny... I got all tangled up...»

«Don't get tangled up, dear, get untangled», — granny laughs.

«Oh...»

For some time we sit quietly. It feels so good just watching the things around me.

«Granny... And who makes the threads?»

«What do you mean, who? Grandpa does. He shears the sheep, makes the wool, the yarn. I've already told you that».

«Granny, and these threads...»

«Sweet girl, don't you see? It's only one big thread. But one made of many colours.»

«Ah, I see...»

«Granny... are we really knitted from one and the same thread?»

«Look. Do you see?»

«Yes, Granny, I see. But who am I then?»

«What do you mean, who? You're my Stitchy, of course», — granny smiles.
«Stitchy...»

«Granny... But this thread... Won't it rip?»
«Rip? Look, how you've just knitted this very word from the same thread. You see? Do you think it can ever rip?» — My granny and I laugh.

«Granny... Can I learn how to knit?»
«You? Haven't you always been knitting already?»
«I guess that's true...»

«Granny, but why do people not notice this?»
«Some people are tied up in a knot, others are tied to something. They think — the better the knot they tie, the better it is. They are so proud of themselves, and then forget about the thread».
«Yes, I see... You can always recall this thread...»

«Granny, and if someone saw the thread, couldn't that help the others to get unravelled?»
«Why get unravelled?» — Granny laughs, — «it might help them to get loose, but people get unravelled later...»
«Granny, will you get unravelled?»
«Your granny is not that old yet to unravel completely. First, I need to help you become a master knitter, so that you won't forget about the thread».
«Oh, granny, how I love you! You are still so young!»

«What about grandpa... He makes the threads, you knit... And what about me?»
«You? You draw, write, and read. Maybe someday you will come loose and learn to knit».
«And now?»
«Now, you are not really loose yet».
«And when that happens, will I still be Stitchy?»
«When you come loose, you will simply understand that you are a thread, always have been, and always will be».
«I think I get it...»
«Really?» — Granny looks at me in a strange way.
«Rea...»
«My dear, sweet Stitchy, my lovely Stitchy... Go to sleep a little more and then, wake up».

...

My grandma loves to knit. She is a true master. Last night, I dreamed of her multi-colored rainbow threads again. I woke up, and I am sitting silently on the edge of my bed. I rub my eyes, and open them wide.

Anatoly Balyaev

INTERESTING LINKS

Jon Freeman: It's time to see Red.

<https://www.spiralfutures.com/index.php/major-articles/it-s-time-to-see-red?fbclid=IwAR2fuDBGIKeejntSI7LOXBguVVTCzxCGHDalj2g6ISEKlzPyoAjJBDWNbkE>

Paul Zuiker: SDi and the Ukrain.

[Paul Zuiker SDi and the Ukrain - Center for Human Emergence](#)

Said Dawlabani: Spiral Dynamics, Integral Theory and Europe's new reality.

https://www.memenomics.com/2022/03/07/spiral-dynamics-integral-theory-and-europes-new-reality?fbclid=IwAR0yITmg_Do0PcOYb1tdcT_EuvjCYBFbdw1WH1itpgV1oKCxPAhidnqgzc

Achtergronden over Rusland door een Finse vroegere geheime dienst officier (2018)

<https://youtu.be/kF9KretXqJw>

Otto Scharmer: Putin and the power of collective action from shared awareness

<https://medium.com/presencing-institute-blog/putin-and-the-power-of-collective-action-from-shared-awareness-a-12-point-meditation-2df81cd54b1e>