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BIOLOGICAL TEXTS, SPIRITUAL VALUES

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Everything is written down in Books. This also applies to biological organisms. Our DNA molecules carrying the hereditary information are in total more than several billion nucleotides long—a million or so pages of a text like this. Hypothetical Memory engrams are likely to carry even more information. The first “books” of Nature are approximately several billion years older than the first human books—at least relative to our consensus reality (created Nature) time scale.

What is a continuous source of surprise to me as a scientist are spiritual values professed by Religions that survive physical persecution, the spread of atheistic ideas among the seemingly best Minds of Humanity, and various psychological and physical pressures such as those practiced during the last 75 years in our country. Can we really communicate Spiritual Values and Truths by speech and books? Perhaps “communicate” does not always mean “communicate in a Rational way,” perhaps sometimes the term “mediate” is better. In any case, persecutors know it better from a practical point of view. The Communist Party of my country was continually battling any kind of Spiritual literature, from the Bible to various spiritual leaflets.

Having said the above, it might seem a bit shocking to ask for Your opinion about whether there are any sacred books of Nature, not as a poetical metaphor, but as some real, special texts (say, written in biological macromolecules) that mediate Spiritual values? One might feel insulted by the very question and wonder if I am advocating some Pagan revival or Natural Religion. Please, be patient. Perhaps you can readily agree that real spiritual values are expressed not in one's words but in one's good deeds. Need I remind you of the good Samaritan versus the Pharisees and other obvious examples? Let's agree then, that for a human being, even consciously professing some very Noble Religious Truths, it is not words but actions that count.

Now kindly recall that our actions are fixed in our memory. It is only the actual way of writing it all down we are not quite sure of. Two principles (Soidla 1993a, 1993b) seem to be of greatest importance for understanding Memory: (1) its linearity; and (2) its associative Nature. For a molecular biologist like myself, linearity of the life story that is recorded in one's memory suggests that most likely some linear molecular coding is involved in creating the memory engrams. At the same time, it is the Associative memory that has contributed to most of the real progress of psychology in this century. I have discussed this in more detail in several recent papers (Soidla, 1996a, 1996b). Anyway, we can readily agree that the very truth of our Spiritual growth, of our Religious attainment, is written down in our Memory in this way or some other.

But what I am trying to say here is a bit more: I wish to advance an hypothesis that actions expressing one's Spiritual attainment (every step forward on the Narrow Path of one's religious “pilgrimage”) are most likely stored in a condensed form in a special associative memory cluster. I hope that this is not sheer speculation, but quite a likely hypothesis. Alas, it is almost impossible to disprove (falsify) the above statement in a real experiment at this time, so it may have to be left on the uncertain border of science and metaphysics for some time to come. In some recent papers (Soidla 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b) I have developed a concept of these special (spiritual) associative memory clusters within a framework of a global new theory of memory, and have even put forward an hypothesis that these clusters are coded by separate high abstraction level associative memory

engrams that possibly have a very simple structure. [Also I propose that: (a) memory is a result of editing an inherited Human Life Story engram; (b) the editing complex includes growing associative memory and inherited Universal Myth engrams having an instrumental role in editing; and (c) Master Memory engrams consist of In-Time and Timeless parts, the latter ones being coded within Commas (synchronization signals).] This global theory is possibly testable, maybe even in the not-too-distant future.

But don't forget that memory engrams themselves are still hypothetical structures. Let's return to some hard facts about our hereditary macromolecules. By purely statistical considerations, the DNA molecules that carry our genetical information are unique (You have only to imagine $4^{1000000000}$ —of different DNA molecules!) and so contribute to our COSMIC UNIQUENESS: maybe this feeling can lead one to a kind of Adamic Ecstasy, but very far from each other also means very far from the Center, from God, as Father Dorothea (a Syrian mystic of VI-VII centuries, who is most well-known and beloved in Russian Orthodox Christian circles) used to say. So I would like to say, that this uniqueness is rather something to overcome, maybe even a starting point on our way back to the Source, to the Godhead. It is surprising how impressive—truly cosmic in scale—our uniqueness is; our separateness from Nature and from God is achieved and guarded by the results of mostly stochastic processes like Neutral Evolution. This is very important and I repeat it once more: hard facts about hereditary macromolecules seem to tell us of our cosmic scale separateness from God.

To overcome this cosmic distance hidden in the hereditary material in every cell of ours, we know only some very simple (but difficult to do) actions/states: Love (not *ερως*, but *αγαπε*) that we feel towards God and human fellow-beings, and Good Deeds—this means taking the Narrow Path of Spiritual Life.

This path starts a life of difficult choices, but guided by an inner “compass” (during spiritual Mountain climbing one can tell the right path from the wrong one, at least upward from downward!). Perhaps I should also call attention to the act of Believing that anchors the rope of our narrow path safely to the point of destiny.

Allow me to add here some more speculative thoughts. Maybe one would be quite right in supposing that when God's Will is involved things happen that seem to defy the above rules (note please, that the exceptions do not involve the masses but only a few “chosen” individuals). Some of these cases are possibly not exceptions at all. For example, just a few minutes of a great Sinner's life can result in considerable spiritual growth. Let us remember that in some higher sense we are not to judge our fellow people (God—the eternal Thou and at the same time the Great Insider of our mind—knows better). And there is always a residue we must leave, just a (Wondrous) Secret of Him. (Have we any other choice?) Also, one must not forget a feeling that all good deeds are just dead, merged in a “Dark Night of the Soul”—before God's presence (as a lamp lit in the next room that one is to enter from a dark corridor) makes it all alive. So certainly I must admit that some important points are lacking in this half-metaphysical, half-biological speculation of mine. Alas, although a magnifying glass can reveal some secrets of creation, the price for this perception is seeing only a limited part of it. (And thinking and thinking on all these wonders one must not forget that: “There were many widows in Israel . . . in Elijah's days . . . but Elijah was not sent to any of these: he was sent to a widow of Zarepath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these were cured, except the Syrian, Naaman” [Luke 4: 25-27].)

So, what I am not quite ready to discuss here are the practical paradoxes of the Spiritual path, where achievement and failure can look rather indistinguishable. Even just thinking: “my spiritual achievement”—you are possibly passing (or have passed) into the realm of “spiritual materialism.” There are teaching stories to warn you, but you can just ask your own heart, say, to learn that you

are better not to congratulate yourself but to "change your mind." Words like "love" and "compassion" (or, say, "simple heart") are certainly better signposts along the spiritual road than "achievement" and other related ones. Anyway, one can ask what will the "molecular scribe" write down in a high abstraction level associative memory engram, when, say, both the general public and yourself grow to believing in some crazy "spiritual achievement" or "spiritual breakthrough" of yours—with a noble aim to help all humanity (but that really is just a kind of vulgar Pharisaic "ego gratification")? Here I would like to remind you that one usually knows that there is a point in one's Mind that is never fooled or misled, that this point seems to be always here, even if for some time span one will not be aware of it.

But one day he or she REMEMBERS This "common belief" (that I feel one is possibly justified even to call "knowledge") leads me to suppose that the work of memory registration is usually well done.

How are these most simple actions so powerful? Of course, really I do not know, but let's attempt asking our hypothetical molecular witnesses. Loving and taking the spiritual narrow path, we have to persist in making decisions that are most difficult for us, seemingly against our very nature (some of us would prefer to say, a kind of deautomatization or overcoming the resistances of our Ego). With endless variations, we are consigned to overcome the same resistance over and over again. This simplicity (repetitiveness) of our Life-long effort is to be reflected in the corresponding (spiritual) associative memory engrams. What I would like to suggest (or remember) here, is that it seems to be just your humble and simple "Spiritual attainment book" (special associative memory engram) that carries you over cosmic distances of an invisible battleground. Once more, please, remember (or look through a hypothetical very powerful microscope and see) how every right spiritual decision most likely adds a new block, once more the same kind of block, to a special associative memory engram. So I am leading You to the idea (perhaps intuition) that similar engrams in a way bridge any distances both within our own Heart and between people (once more remember Father Dorothea, please!). Indeed, time and again there surfaces a controversial idea that there exists some connective principle for similar entities (Sheldrake, 1987). As I noted above, I am not the first one to state this, but I am afraid that most people who tried to prove something like this have constructed a kind of pseudoconnection substituting for the Real Thing some artificial simulations of rather low quality. Maybe it would be better to approach the problem from another angle and to note that the idea of interaction between similar structures (Sheldrake 1987; Soidla 1992, 1993a) may seem to be rather simple to test. Alas, some related and also very simple ideas have led to a century-old controversy in psychical research (Alcock, 1987; Ramakrishna & Palmer, 1987). Possibly this means that these kinds of ideas are not really simple but point to some holistic connecting principle of the world. This in turn means that if we undertake an experiment, the input involves (besides the things the experimenter hopes to control) also personal histories of all the often most remarkable people involved (something along these lines I discussed above), and the output includes some events in the life history of the same people (complementing the registered experimental outcome). Of course, I can only repeat that really we do not know, and possibly we have to broaden the experimental (scientific) method itself to learn something along these lines.

I would like to add some even more subjective ideas. First, the Ultimate Attractor—carrier of the pure human engrams of Love, of decisions that are always the most difficult to make, a purest Word of Memory, a Logos—is the Way to bring together the scattered, "lost" engrams of Love and Good Deeds, to put together the different parts of the Cosmic puzzle.

Second, one has possibly encountered a powerful, and, in a way, most impressive poetical metaphor (or even half-witnessed—half-imagined), that a cunning and intensive but short-term use of some of the above principles can help to create an astonishing paranormal display of local mastery above

Nature—but falling short of global attainment. So it seems only too natural to suppose that lasting (stable) pure engrams of spiritual attainment can only result from lifelong loving and humble repeating of simple actions—that would be deadly boring to simulate for a Demonic experimenter.

But here we have reached the twilight lands of imagination—where we must not enter with the too rigid (or maybe still naive?) concepts of contemporary science.

What seems better grounded, what possibly remains important, is the simple truth that every one of us is writing, possibly more literally than it is usually supposed, a Spiritual attainment text in his or her Memory that this way or another seems to be able to bridge the truly cosmic distance from our current separateness (from GOD and from our fellow humans) to some Omega point of reunion.

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