

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****DIGITAL SOUL: LOSS OR ACQUIRMENT FOR HUMAN  
SPIRITUALITY**

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**Abstract**

In the era of the development of information civilization, the traditional virtues of man, which determine his spirituality, obtain another substance – information. The “pros and cons” of such “relocations” is an acute problem of modern science. The increasingly insistent breaking in of a “digit” in all spheres of our life claims to get into the very core of the individual - the human spirit and soul. The problem takes on a global character due to the fact that even modern education is moving into a remote digital format. The expedient possibility of digitalization of soul and spirituality is the subject of discussion by scholars and theologians today. Is it possible for a man to maintain his original state, originally conceived by the Creator? Will a person be able to preserve and develop his spirituality, as Russian religious philosophers wrote about? How the society can resist to the challenges of technological progress? In this study the scientific methods of analysis, comparison and generalization were used. The subject of the research is the study of possible acquisition by man the new substance for his own spiritual state as well as the possible consequences of such a process for humanity.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Consciousness, digital soul, informational substrate of the soul, spirituality



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## 1. Introduction

The concept of “spirituality” has a fairly rich and ambiguous content. Initially, human thought did not distinguish between spirituality and physicality which can be traced in the first mythological works. In the works of ancient philosophers spirituality is presented as a kind of substrate sometimes with signs of materiality, as the basis of the world, as a formative principle, etc. Further, with the birth of Christian Church and in The Middle Ages spirituality begins to acquire the vital features that have goal-settings in Eternity. The philosophy of modern times develops a rationalistic concept of understanding spirituality through the categories of “mind” and “thinking”.

An attempt to reveal the intellectual aspect of spirituality has been undertaken by representatives of the German classical philosophy. They represented nature as an element of spirituality, revealed the philosophy of spirituality based on logical categories, etc. In the philosophy of positivism, in which the source of true knowledge is only the result of empirical research, the problem of spirituality is not relevant and is possible to study. As for the materialistic philosophy, especially Marxist philosophy - in its “spirituality” - is opposed to materiality and is practically identified with the concept of “consciousness”.

In Russian philosophy psychological understanding of the phenomenon of spirituality can be traced in expressing the fact that the concept of “spirituality” is closely interconnected with the concepts of “mind”, “will”, “feeling”. Spirituality, according to the representatives of the Russian religious philosophy, is an entity that can be established by a number of signs manifesting in a person’s being: freedom, creativity, love, mercy, the desire to transform the world, etc. It is difficult to disagree with this position as freedom and responsibility are two dialectic categories that oblige a person to spiritualize his own activity, limiting one’s freedom to responsibility for possible consequences. In this case, the second dialectic polarity comes into force: individual and collective responsibility. In thinking about the essence of spirituality, it brings to the concept of morality. The human spirit is a force that allows a person to fill in one’s life with good goals. The spirituality of a man reveals in living a full life, taking care of his neighbor, being a good family man, a patriot of his fatherland, a sincere minister of the Church. The unity of the spiritual forms of human existence: faith, love, conscience, freedom, family, homeland, nation are indicators of a way out of the spiritual and cultural crisis for modern society. The concepts of determining spirituality by Russian religious philosophers methodologically can be understood as two main directions: spirituality is the essence of a man and the Highest Ideal to which one should strive. In modern scientific literature the concept of spirituality has several definitions. Therefore, the question of possibility of creating an alternative substrate for it is being decided differently.

One more meaning of “spirituality” may be referred to believers who received the Spirit of God and is teaching by the Spirit (Van der Merwe, 2018).

## 2. Problem Statement

The main problem of the research is the debatable questions of scientists about the possibility of transferring of human spirituality to a new information substrate.

### **3. Research Questions**

The question of possible acquisition by a person of new “digital” substance in his own spiritual world and the possible consequences of such a process arises in the presented research.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

To study the opinions of modern scientists on the problem of creating an alternative substrate for a person’s own spiritual world.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study used the method of an analytical review of scientific literature in order to identify the main trends in the development of modern approaches to the determination of the phenomena of spirit, spirituality, consciousness (Kabul et al., 2018; Shaposhnikov & Pushkin, 2018; Shchukina et al., 2018). Based on the methods of analysis, comparison and generalization, the main positions of contemporaries were studied on the possibility of creating an alternative information substrate for the human spirit and consciousness (Dubrovsky, 2016; Ivanov, 2016).

### **6. Findings**

An appeal to the modern scientific literature describing the study of the problem of spirituality has shown that there are two main directions in the definition of this phenomenon - secular and religious. If the religious understanding of spirituality remains traditional and represents the concepts developed in religious philosophy and theology, then the secular approach is more dynamic and closer to the scientific worldview. In this case the definition of spirituality is based on human psychology and is formulated as a combination of its qualities which are a product of consciousness. These two approaches are brought together by precisely the enumerated human virtues that characterize spirituality in both cases: mercy, conscience, responsibility, good, creative activity, etc. The second feature in the understanding of spirituality in both secular and religious concepts is that it is endowed with the possibility of existence beyond the limits of individual consciousness. The difference lies in determining the substance of spirituality in one case: it is God, in another: a form of collective consciousness (Pisula, 2016; Schmitz, 2018).

The first thing to note is that in modern science there are still discussions about the nature of consciousness. Here are the most interesting moments of the materials of the “Round table” posted on the pages of “Voprosy Filosofii” (*“The Issues of Philosophy”*) Journal.

Ivanov (2016) believes that in determining the subjectivity of consciousness, one should not confine oneself only to the level of human consciousness, because subjectivity is also characteristic of other living organisms. The phenomena of subjective reality can be transferred through the mechanisms of mental representation to another medium so that other subjects can see them, but the original will always remain unique.

In our works we introduced the term “quasi-subject” to denote artificial subjectivity. But in our understanding a quasi-subject does not have subjectivity, it only plays the role of the subject. Even if highly

intelligent machines are capable of independently making and making decisions, they do this not of their own free will but by the will of the subject, i.e. human. And here it is appropriate to recall our preface about spirituality which has been understood as the determinant of human behavior from the ancient times. Our passions are ruled by nature, and by virtues - God and society. And speaking of the increasing informational abilities of modern man, a third determinant of his behavior arises - information technology and technology. Mikhailov (2016) does not deny this possibility.

Further discussion brings us to the problem of existence of the subject in principle. We are talking about the concepts of a vanishing subject of the socio-constructionist approach. The rejection of a subject will lead us to the rejection of its spirituality which dissolves in information networks and loses its unity. If consciousness needs only a carrier then its change will lead to the possibility of transferring spirituality beyond the limits of subjective reality of a person. There is the possibility of the existence of alternative Spirit that determines the behavior of people. Dubrovsky (2017), who studies the abilities of the brain and consciousness, answers the question about the possibility of transferring consciousness to an artificial carrier in the future, positively.

Continuing the discussion about the possibility of transferring human spirituality to a different carrier from consciousness we also talk about the possibility of its distortion, transformation. The spirituality - understood in a way what God gives a man - should be maintained through constant spiritual work during his life, traditionally and practically does not change for millennia. In this case, the theologian and psychologist are very close in their actions, for they save the human soul from sin and disease. This possibility exists because our consciousness and the unconscious are informational phenomena, i.e. managed complex informational self-organizing system (Revunov et al., 2019).

That is why a person as an informational being has the right to be called such only if he has generic informational qualities: consciousness, language, activity and communication. That is why there is an additional opportunity to change the principles of spirituality determined by society, and not God Gushchina (2017). Scientists have expressed alarming concerns about this, especially in terms of destroying personality identity (Ramirez & LaBarge, 2018).

In the new sociocultural information environment the principles of communication are changing. Live, inspired communication of people with each other is replaced by communicative acts, the transfer of information that technologies can transmit (Ignatiev, 2017; Stokov, 2020). The loss of a sense of spiritual intimacy in communication leads to the optional orientation to the other (love your neighbor), responsibility for the process and result of communication (purity of thoughts). A man is forced to change his cognitive and learning abilities (Belinova et al., 2020; Markova et al., 2020). In order to develop informational immunity and adaptability in the new information world, a new kind of intellectual virtue is being formed, the development of which is included in educational programs (Heersmink, 2018).

All this gives to a person the possibility to realize information hunger, get an education, etc. without much mental expense (Vaganova, Pavlova et al., 2020; Vaganova, Rudenko et al., 2020). On the one hand, one receives broad opportunities for intellectual development, almost an unlimited range of communicative activities, the possibility of realizing his own ambitions and developing creative abilities (Vaganova, Pavlova et al., 2020; Vaganova, Rudenko et al., 2020). The traditional principles of spirituality, at the same time, depart on the second, third and even more distant rows. They prevent a modern man from realizing

the opportunities that open before him to achieve excellence and technological effectiveness without which it is not possible to survive in a developing technogenic civilization. We ceased to notice the fact that the desire to make money and live better than others - and even better at their expense - is a trend that exists in the information socio-cultural space of modern society. If we turn to studies of the modern educational system, for example, in our country, we can see that the low level of spirituality of modern teachers of all levels is now of particular concern (Razdorskaya et al., 2018). A generation of teachers, educators and mentors who were spiritually educated, had the principles necessary for the education of the younger generation, practically left the educational institutions. But a highly spiritual person does not need enhanced measures of control and punishment for his behavior on the part of society. Such a person, by a definition, cannot transgress the principles of spirituality in everyday life.

## 7. Conclusion

The study showed that the possibility of creating an alternative information substrate for human soul is quite possible and technically feasible in the future. The main danger, according to modern scholars, is in doubling or cloning the spiritual world of a man which can lead to creation of unmanageable and uncontrollable self that can gain power over the primary spiritual world of a person. Religious leaders and researchers of the biblical texts are also aware of certain future global events, predicted in the Holy Scriptures, than no man could buy or sell without a mark on one's head or an arm.

This question requires a special philosophical study, which includes various aspects of the problem of spirituality: pedagogical, social, psychological, religious, theological, etc. This topic will be the subject of study in our future research.

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