

Psychophysiology of Spiritual Transmission

Results:

Practitioners from a variety of spiritual traditions occasionally report strong psychophysiological reactions when a spiritual teacher (“guru”) who has achieved some level of mastery directs his or her attention toward the practitioner. Close proximity between guru and practitioner is purportedly not a limitation in transmitting or receiving spiritual transmission. We asked a guru to periodically send energy remotely to six recipients, one at a time, while they were isolated in our lab’s electromagnetically shielded chamber some 50 meters away. We recorded the recipients’ EEG (32 channels) and several autonomic measures throughout the testing period. None of the recipients knew the guru, and all were blind to when he was sending energy. Analysis of the resulting data suggested that in some recipients the remote intervention by the guru appeared to produce significant variations in physiology. We also studied the effect on the recipients’ physiology to the physical proximity of the guru, as compared to a “sham guru,” i.e., an actor playing the part of a guru. Again we found indications of differences in physiological reaction in some of the participants depending on whether the guru was real or sham. This preliminary investigation indicates that it is possible to study claims about spiritual transmission effects using psychophysiological methods under controlled conditions, and it also suggests that at least some of the traditionally reported effects about shaktipat might be objectively measurable.

Area(s) of interest:

Spiritual Transmission, telepathy, guru

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