

Summary of 1997 Scientific Research Papers



From the conference:
*In Search of the Self:
The Role of Consciousness
in the Construction of Reality.*

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At a conference in Yelm, Washington in February 1997, a distinguished panel of 12 scholars — including scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and religious experts from such diverse institutions as Chicago Theological Seminary, Temple University, Colgate University, the University of California, the University of Oregon, and Birkbeck College at the University of London — concluded that JZ Knight, who had been channeling Ramtha the Enlightened One, a spiritual teacher for the previous twenty years, “is not a fraud,” according to Dr. Stanley Krippner, a psychologist and the leading parapsychology researcher in the U.S. who rigorously tested Knight at Ramtha’s School of Enlightenment (RSE) in Yelm over a period of 18 months.

“She’s not faking it,” added Ian Wickramasekera of San Francisco’s Saybrook Institute of Graduate Studies, “because when we hooked her up to test her physiological responses, we got results which could not have been manipulated.” According to Wickramasekera, when Knight left her body and Ramtha took over, the heart rate hit a low of 40 beats per minute and then raced to 180 beats per minute. In her normal resting state, Knight’s heart rate was between 85 and 90.

According to conference organizer Gordon Melton, Wickramasekera was initially not interested in being involved in the study and did not expect to come up with such significant results. “You might see this in someone who is jogging or having a serious panic attack, but at the time Ms. Knight was sitting completely still,” said Wickramasekera, who used state-of-the-art equipment to test Knight. He conducted the physiological tests three times and the results were consistent in all three runs. “Science demands repeatability and Ms. Knight allowed us to perform these tests three times.”

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Wickramasekera explained how eight standardized, physiological, psychological, and behavioral tests were administered. “When you go fishing you use a big net,” Wickramasekera said. “What we didn’t expect was to find fish in all eight nets.” The results of the physiological tests showed that when Knight is channeling Ramtha, her muscle tension, pulse, and galvanic skin response increase while skin temperature and blood volume both decrease. Wickramasekera affirmed that Knight could not have voluntarily changed or faked all eight of these results.

Knight also participated in a number of psychological tests, along with a number of the RSE students, including the Stanford test for hypnotic ability, the gold standard measure of hypnotizability. “Knight and the students tested extremely high in their hypnotic abilities,” said Dr. Stanley Krippner, a former divisional president of the American Parapsychological Association and Psychology Professor at Saybrook Institute. Krippner explained that that was a significant finding because the relationship between hypnotic ability and bipolar personality (schizophrenia) and other mental disorders is counterbalancing — when one goes up, the other goes down. Krippner said, “She got validation that she’s not a fraud and she’s not mentally ill.”

Gail Harley, a professor of religious studies from the University of South Florida, presented a report comparing JZ Knight to other women spiritual leaders over the past 150 years, such as Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christian Science, and Helena Blavatsky, originator of the Theosophical Society, and obstacles they faced in unfolding their system of teachings. “We should all remember that there really is no such thing as a cult,” Harley told the conference, “there are only new religions. And don’t forget that all religions were new at one time.”

One paper presented at the conference was published in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research: The Ramtha Phenomenon: Psychological, Phenomenological, and Geomagnetic Data*, published in the January 1998 edition, volume 92, number 1. The book of the conference proceedings and a second paper presenting the physiological data are due out soon.

The team of researchers observed various examples of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis while studying the students of RSE “and, while acknowledging the possible contribution of other explanations for their successful accomplishment, were struck by the frequency of their achievements.”

In comparing Knight’s abilities to dissociative disorders, the researchers stated, “she has access to Ramtha through a voluntary-induced procedure, whereas the ‘multiples’ afflicted with dissociative identity disorder are taken unaware by their ‘alters.’ ”

A small increase in geomagnetic activity was measured from the time of Ramtha’s arrival to the time of his departure. The researchers were unable to draw conclusions from the small sample of data but agreed that “the observed phenomena are provocative enough to warrant continued utilization of geomagnetic monitoring in further research,” since reliable correlations could contribute to further understanding of how Ramtha appears and leaves.

One of the exciting implications for further research was the recognition that “focusing” can be trained and then entered into voluntarily. The participants’ results on the different tests consistently “suggest that they have potent and reliable abilities to use their minds to alter their sensory perceptions, memories, and moods to drive physiological changes.” The magnitude of the group’s results was higher than previously observed in other similar groups. Finally, JZ Knight’s individual results demonstrated “a robust and reliable capacity for mind-body interaction.”