

# Is That So . . . .

By Eugene Burns  
Ranger-Naturalist

Consider the tongue, most wonderful of organs.

The cow, without upper teeth, pulls off grass with it.

The dog sweats with his tongue and thereby reduces his body temperature.

The parrot uses his soft tongue for talking — splitting a bird's tongue is senseless.

The hummingbird uses his for sucking up nectar.

The fish, with reversed hinged teeth, for holding his prey.

The snail, with thousands of tiny sharp teeth, for scraping off vegetable matter.

The bat, flying back and forth over a still pool for scooping up tiny mouthfuls of water.

Snake's Tongue Amazing

The chameleon for . . . but wait.

Although the chameleon's body may be but seven inches long, when a fly settles down 12 inches away, that fly will suddenly find itself fast on the tip of the chameleon's flexible tongue which has shot way out like a rubber band, without a movement of its head, almost twice the length of its body.

But even more amazing, it consists of two black cylinders held closely together at the base but separated toward the tips to produce a forked effect. Doubling the tips, of course, increases its sensitivity.

Sensitive as it may be, that still would count for little if it did not keep flicking that evil-seeming though harmless organ in and out at a furious rate.

Why? Because in the roof of the mouth some snakes have pits in which the forked tongue ends fit, called Jacobson's organ. These pits contain quantities of nerve endings, presumably to pick up messages and relay them. And as the tongue flicks back, it may discharge into these pit receptors the latest information.

As a result, the snake has no ears—it doesn't need them. This sensitive tongue has taken over the function of alerting for prey or warning of predators.

Does Work of Eyes

Most snake eyes are weak, too — and again, the long flicking tongue seems to have taken over much of the work of the eyes.

For example, bind the snake's eyes with adhesive tape and the snake will still continue to pick up the slightest sounds with its tongue and veer toward the direction from which the sound came.

So, as this delicate forked tongue is flicking in and out, our snake is experiencing . . . well, what? Perhaps temperature changes. Perhaps scent. Perhaps taste. Perhaps sight. Perhaps hearing. Perhaps feeling. Perhaps a combination of all these which we dullards can't even comprehend.

But one thing, sure, the snake cannot use its complex organ for tongue lashing. That prerogative is reserved for us humans.

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Mohammed Mossadegh closed his defense Saturday night with a tearful plea for Iranian neutrality between East and West and an oil-less economy.

The former Premier, ousted in a coup last summer by Fazollah Zahedi, is on trial on a charge of treason. The proceedings have been dragging on for 34 days and will resume Sunday.

In a weak, weeping voice, the aged Mossadegh declared:

"In my opinion we practically are a member of the Western bloc, but must not officially be so.

"Geographically it is advisable that Iran keep her neutrality because in the case of the outbreak of another world war the Western bloc will not be able to help Iran with troops.

"If war breaks out and they want to violate Iran's independence, whether we are a member of the Western bloc or become one after the outbreak, the result is the same. If we are not attacked Iran's neutrality would be of benefit to herself as well as the eastern and western blocs."

"Neither the Eastern nor the Western bloc pays any attention to the interests of small nations," he added.

He said Iran should develop her economy independently of the oil resources in her ground because exploitation inevitably means interference by big nations in the affairs of small ones.

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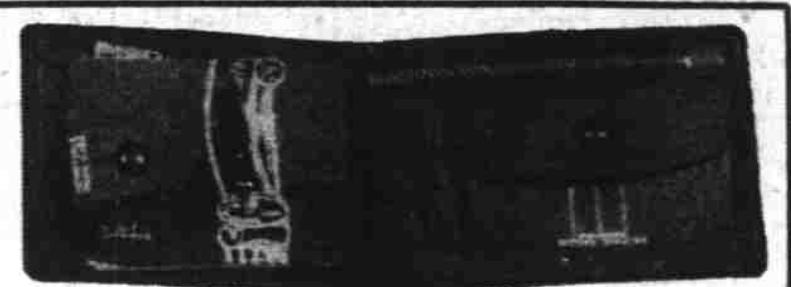
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