

PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH FAILURES
OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

DEAR SIR,

Having served as Assistant Director of the Clinic sponsored by the Association for Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders in New York City, I had the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of patients—offenders and others—with Dr. Schmideberg, who reported her experiences in this *Journal*, (April 1970, pp. 195–200).

Dr. Schmideberg's comment that most of the patients had *trivial* symptoms reflects her focus on the healthy aspect of the patient. She relates to patients with openness and directness which communicates that secondary gains (being a good analytic patient) will not be forthcoming for pathology. Symptoms which many analysts would find fascinating are often treated with a folksy interest, rather than the curiosity of a therapist signalling that a goldmine of dynamics awaits their painstaking exploration.

The thrust of therapy is toward 'normalizing' the patient. Dr. Schmideberg does not offer inane supportive therapy; rather she is prone to convey her expectation that the patient is capable of less self-defeating behaviour, and this often stimulates optimism and hope. This is not to be confused with the directive therapist who manipulates a patient because he considers him inferior and incapable of self-help. Patients who are depressed, discouraged, and defeated often show their first spark of movement in response to the therapist's recognition of the healthy aspect of their Ego—offering the possibility that change might just... just... possibly follow in spite of despair.

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YOGA AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

DEAR SIR,

An article on Yoga is welcome in the *Journal*, but may I be excused for raising a small objection to Mr. N. S. Brar's paper in your February issue (pp. 201–6)? The difficulty in writing anything related to Indian philosophy lies to a great extent in language and terminology. That well-known populariser of philosophy, C. E. M. Joad, abhorred 'Indian philosophy with its vague profundities and inexpressible truths which it insists on seeking to express'! Most modern Indologists leave certain words signifying key concepts (e.g. 'Purusha' or 'Brahman') untranslated or unsubstituted without any loss to the lucidity of the explanations.

Mr. Brar's use of the soul concept to explain 'Purusha' of Sankhya philosophy has produced, I think, a fundamental error—that 'Purusha' is subjected to human suffering in an indirect way. All interpreters of Yoga will agree that 'Purusha', which is beyond definitions and categories, remains enmeshed in matter but never is and cannot be acted on by it. Heidegger's 'Being' is the only concept in western philosophy comparable with 'Purusha'. Mr. Brar's use of the words 'conscious' and 'unconscious' is also confusing if not misleading.

Psychiatrists will be more interested in the last section of the article, where the author compares Yoga with psychoanalysis, and the likely question is—*are* they comparable?

To pose the two in opposition and try to prove the superiority of Yoga is, I think, an absurdity. The structure of the psyche as elaborated in Sankhya-Yoga philosophy is strikingly 'modern'. There is a concept akin to the Freudian unconscious ('vasanas', 'samaskaras'); it is said the hidden forces which are the result of memory are always trying to actualize themselves in consciousness. There is a Yogic practice called 'going against the time' ('pratiloman', 'ujana sadhana'), the idea is to 'burn' through subconscious memory traces to the point of birth (and then beyond)!

Here, I think, ends the comparison with Freudian analysis.

What then of all the claims that are made for the efficiency of Yoga in bringing success, peace, and 'integration and perfection of personality' (as Mr. Brar says) to its practitioners? The classical forms of Yoga (there are many) do not aim at these, but at either 'liberation' or mystical union with the ultimate reality. 'Integration and perfection' in Yoga are not what we would understand by these words today.

In spite of all the magical halo, it is doubtful whether the physiological exercises of 'Hatha-Yoga' (the form widely known in the West as the Yoga) by themselves produce any psychological change. They are, anyway, primarily meant as aids to concentration and meditation. However, I do feel that a serious and determined practitioner of Yoga, even without aiming at the ultimate goals, is likely to derive benefit of an analytic nature by the way of breaking down his inauthentic modes of existence.

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