

A Case of

Autism

3 year male child

By

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My observation

- Child sitting on the ground barefoot humming a tune to himself looking down (not at camera) playing with crayons.
- Told to keep crayons back in the box – does not hear – does not like to be held and made to do things – continues humming and playing with crayons.
- Father persuading child to keep the crayons back in the box – does not listen. Trying to explore the clinic – climbing up and down – wanting to move about, continuous movements of fingers – looking out of glass panes.

- After a initial glimpse of the child, it is very clear that it is going to be impossible to communicate with him. So the father was requested to keep the child busy outside while the mother was being interviewed.

History about the family background

- Ours is a love marriage – (inter caste)
- I could never really get along with my in-laws.
- We always stayed away but still I could never really get along.
- During pregnancy I went through severe tension
- I had fights with my in-laws and I had fights with my husband also.

- At one time I was thinking of suicide literally when I was in my 4th or 5th month.
- I used to think once this child is born I am sort of stuck. So I should die right now. But I could never make it.
- After his birth also these things continued.
- We have a good relation as husband-wife.
- But when in-laws or somebody comes, from then on it is a big problem.

- I feel my husband is not at all possessive and his priorities are wrong.
- I feel he gives less attention to me, less importance to me and too much importance to his sisters and his parents.
- He is always ready to do anything for them and they never reciprocate these things. Nor are they good to me.

- I feel they always want to take him away from me.
- They show their possessiveness and he doesn't understand anything like common expectations I have from him.
- At times I feel very lonely as I cant tell this to my parents also. So I always kept it to me only, never told it to anybody.

- His parents have been making a show and going and telling my parents that these things can go to divorce also.
- I have always kept my parents away from all this as they are nowhere related.
- I feel I am the only person responsible for all this - the marriage and all the fights. My parents have nothing to do with this.

- The three of us have good time (son husband and myself). We go out; go for picnics, trips, eat out and enjoy good life at home.
- But those tensions points they are there after few days. Frequently they are there.
- (Pause).

Observations..

At this stage, she gives her view of the present situation. There seems to be a disappointment in relationships. As things are getting repetitive and the pauses are getting longer, its best to come back to this later and try a totally different angle. Also the attempt here is to understand if she went through a difficult time, emotionally, during the pregnancy as well or not. And in what way did she perceive that.

Pregnancy history

- 2 – 3 months it was OK. I had severe nausea and those kind of things. I was also working in between for 2 months
- After that we had a big fight and that time onwards things went to the extreme and I felt that I should die.

- But somehow things were sorted out and we came back – He was ok to me and he was taking care of me because I was carrying. He was taking full care of me; I continued with my job till the end of 8th month .
- He bought a new car for me because I had problem going to office and everything was ok. 9th month started and I went home for delivery.

Observations

By now, the pattern that is forming is that if she is left alone with her husband and child things just about begin to get a bit better. There is trust and there is love. But all it takes is a visit to her husband's family and conflict begins again. And one has to work from the beginning to repair the damaged relationship.

In the 9th month

- My MIL made an issue of a small thing. Called up my mother and complained about me and I had to go through tension for 2 – 3 days.
- After delivery also they had problems about the naming ceremony and again there was some tension.
- We never went home for 1 ½ years. We were in Jaipur. Enjoying our child, partying. (Playing with her ring).

Observations..

This observation further confirms the intensity of her state. She wants to get out of this relationship but as there is too much at stake, she realizes she cannot and has to accept it. It seems like a difficult situation beyond easy reach.

When ever she spoke about her difficult marriage, she would twist her wedding ring and get it to the top and place it back again.

- Then I got a computer and started working from home. He used to play by my side and I used to work. So I never really paid too much of attention to him.
- We did not really understand that this is the time he should start communicating and that he is not doing that. We never had any elders around; so nobody pointed out that he is not doing this or not doing that.

- We went home only when he was 1 year 7 months. That time also nobody pointed out that he was not speaking; he was not communicating his needs.
- But after completing 2 years we started worrying about him and took him to a doctor – a pediatrician – that time we were in Punjab – but he could not tell anything – so we waited till December when we were to go home.

- We went to a pediatrician in Sangli and he straight away told us that this seems to be autism
- After about completing his 2 years that tension was always there at the back of our minds that he is not speaking or doing anything.
- He used to go to play school. Continuously for 1 year he has been going to play-school but never pursued any activity as such. He just goes there because he recognizes the faces and stays there with us and plays on his own.



More about the emotional state during pregnancy

- Husband's sister is in Bombay and I never really wanted to go to her place. Every time we used to come home on leave we had to change trains in Bombay.
- I used to feel very out of place. I feel out of place with his relatives. There is too much difference in culture and lifestyles, I used to feel very lonely.
- He and his elder sister they have a very good relationship.



More about husband's sister.

- They are very close to each other but that bothers me a lot. That too much of closeness.
- She is very rich & beautiful and that she goes on doing favours for everybody. (Gives big gifts which I don't like).
- The things which we can't reciprocate, I don't like.
- When we go to their home, they will both leave me alone at home and go to the market or out eating a pizza or those kind of things. This kind of things I really don't like. So I used to kind of resist going there.

More about the family

- All his other family members insist we go there.
- At times she would keep on advising - do this do that; I never used to like it and I really kept on resisting.
- They feel before we got married they had a very good and nice family and I have spoiled the family. His family wants him and I also want him and there is clash of interest.

- My In-laws always say, now that you are married here you have to follow the ties of the family; but I feel they are too much.
- My priority is only my husband and I feel his priority is otherwise. His wife comes last. This used to be the fight.
- My husband never expresses himself. At times for days together it will just be a normal conversation about routine things. I don't really know what he is feeling from inside but I guess he too must be suffering.

- He is also hurt somewhere. I can see that but he never really tells me, so at times tension arises and things are suppressed.
- I would still say that the three of us share a good life. Our son is the center of our life and in the Air Force we have a very good social life. We made lots of friends. People feel very comfortable in our place.
- I was quite introvert types but over last few years I have changed myself; I have started participating in all social activities at the Air Force station.

Observations..

There is a big resentment towards her sister-in-law. In her own words the feeling is that she is beautiful, rich and very lavish with her gifts. On one hand this person who is also very close to her husband represents two things which she herself does not possess or feels inadequate about, namely beauty and wealth.

Moreover what also becomes clear is that she does not like being in a situation where she has to feel obliged to somebody.

So in what way would you feel out of place?

- I feel they never use to involve me in anything. If we go to their place, all the family members will sit in the bedroom & chat. I cannot really go there comfortably. I will sit alone outside in the drawing room.
- They have never taken me or introduced me to their relatives. They never really made me feel that I am going to be part of this family.

- At the time of marriage too, they wanted a reception and my parents said no. So they did reception but they never invited any of my relatives.
- They never gave importance to my parents. Even if they come home because of some reason they won't really talk to them.
- They have a feeling that Gujurati's (I am Gujurati.) are backward people. They feel they are superior. They may not be feeling that but I get that feeling.

- At times I have gone to the extent of asking him not to see his relatives.
- Maybe I have reacted in an exaggerated way some times. But with him I have to be loud so that he understands.
- I know he is close to his relatives and they too have a right over him, but I feel left alone. Probably my own insecurities.

- There is a big show of love and affection in their family. It's a bit of a sham.
- After marriage too when his sister used to write him a letter, she would not even mention my name! Just praising each other.
- They are friendly, its OK, but somewhere I am left out. That's what I feel.

Observations..

The last question was posed to rule out a feeling of division between herself and others. As this is a different theme belonging to a separate group of remedies. She clarifies that it is more the hurt and disappointment of not being accepted as part of a family of the man she loves.

She makes some effort from time to time to improve the situation but then accepts and resigns herself at other times.

- At this stage it is clear that she has chosen to bare it all. This seems to be the right time to take her to a deeper level. One way of doing that is by asking the dreams. Even if its is not during the pregnancy, it still is very relevant.
- What one must always remember that this entire exercise is to draw a link between either parent and that of the child, as one has to consider that possibility.

Dreams

- I see people whom I know, but they don't know each other. Some are my friends and some are my relatives. And they are talking to one another; having a friendly conversation.
- Strange dreams – Once or twice I have seen someone dying in my dreams. Next day my heartbeat is faster.
- Sometimes I dream of appointments that I am going to keep with my people.

- Strange kind of procession. Probably Parsis (a community from Iran). They are all dressed in white clothes. They have a few things wrapped in white clothes. They are seated on horses. People are giving them way, as if it's very important. This dream is very vivid.

Observations..

- At this point, the dreams may not seem very connected. So it is best to leave it alone, and later explore it fully. Now let us probe into more specific issues and ask her to elaborate on them.

This suicidal feeling during pregnancy?

- We had a big fight. I was alone at home. About 6 – 7 of his family members were all around me and were telling me that whatever I was doing was wrong and they made me cry.
- They said that they will complain about me to my parents. This has to end. If your husband wants a divorce, we too will support him.
- They told their son to stay away from me. I actually had to say sorry against my wishes.

- I did not feel I had done all that wrong. They made me beg to take me along with them (holding back tears).
- So I had the feeling then that this relationship can't be improved.
- I also had the feeling that once this child is born we will be stuck with him. So its better to commit suicide before that.
- Probably if someone had given me poison at that time I would have gone ahead with it. But since nothing was around, no means were available, I survived.

In what way would you be stuck with the child?

- After me no one would be there to look after him. But if I give birth to him, I cannot leave him after that. I have to be there then to look after my child throughout.
- After that I can't think of suicide (after his birth). That was the feeling.

What was the only thing that kept you going?

- Nothing. There was no poison around. Probably that is the only reason. That was for a short while. After his birth, things were OK for some time.
- After his birth for about 2 months I went through a strange kind of depression. I used to feel there is nothing in life. Its all empty.
- Bringing up a child is not a job. Any child just grows. So I don't have anything to do in my life.

- I could not eat due to nausea during this phase.
- I could not feed my child; that depression was also there. I used to feel very empty. What to do all day?
- I am an Electronic Engineer.
- I had a good career before.



Say more about this emptiness.

- I don't know.
- I had a bout of jaundice and never had that hunger feeling. Did not want to eat anything. No enthusiasm to go out and buy clothes for the child.
- Then there was the tension of birth ceremony from his parents.
- It was like waiting for something for 9 months – when it comes, one has gone through it; and it's suddenly all empty. You keep on waiting for the birth. When it's done, then what next? That kind of emptiness.

- It's like when you are waiting for some goal and once you have achieved it suddenly there is nothing again. Some sort of emptiness, unless you have some other goal ahead.
- I am very much goal based. I have to have some goal ahead. Then I feel I have achieved something. Then I have the achievement feeling.
- I was a brilliant student. Kept on achieving things.
- After marriage also I wanted to work, but after his birth I stopped and started enjoying motherhood.

You are normally achievement oriented. Why the lack of need to achieve or give your best to your child ?

- I used to feel that a child will grow up anyway. What's the big deal ? What is the achievement in that ? This child will also grow up.
- Nothing great I would be doing. At that time, bringing up a child was such a great task.

Observations..

Two important issues come up by now-

One is the fact that in moments of severe depression, she gets very suicidal and if there was any means to end her life, she probably would have done so.

The second is that she has raised herself to believe that one gets a feeling of self-worth only by what you achieve. This has made her a career woman who likes to be fiercely independent. Raising a child does not seem to be a priority as much as building her career. And now that she has had to stop working it leaves her with a feeling of emptiness and lack of self-worth.

- I am not very close to my parents. I love my parents but I have never felt that they are the best thing to have happened to me. I am not really that close to my parents. Could never talk to them about whatever was going on in my mind. Always kept things inside, to myself. I used to be actually scared to my mother. If I do something wrong she may scold me. I have never opened my mind or my heart out to her.
- I had one best friend, who was my husband's cousin sister. But now I don't have much relations with her too. That's a different story altogether.

Can you say more about your relationship with your mother.



- I know my parents love me. But they were never like other parents who care much for their children. They have always believed that children should be independent. My mother was a career woman. One never felt that when one returns home, there will be a mother to welcome us. So learnt to be very independent. They only provided food and money. But the emotional closeness was never there. Things have changed a bit for the better since my marriage. Now when I go home she tries to do things for me, makes my favourite dishes. But as one daughter can talk frankly to her mother, that I can never do.

Did you feel they were like that to your siblings too?

- Yes, in fact, a little partial to me as I was brilliant.
- Do you feel I am a big problem case? Many times I feel I should talk to a psychologist or a counsellor. But then I feel it is foolish. I feel I am a big problem case. (Silence).
- It is not like that. But I am glad you are talking. That is important.

- There is a lot more actually. My parents, they too never got along. Lots of fights. I have not seen my father being nice to my mother. I have seen him cursing my mother still he was a good provider.

When you say not good, what do you mean?

- It was obvious he did not like her. I can't say who was right or wrong.
- (Long pause).

- Probably that's the reason I am not much in favour of my husband's strong family ties. As I have not seen it much myself. But in their family it is too much. And for me it's too less.
- I don't really have good memories of my childhood.
- (Long pause)

By now its also clear that she feels a big disappointment in her relationship with her parents in spite of her being the favoured one in comparison to her other siblings.

- I always have to go through embarrassing situations because of my husband. If some of my relatives have invited him, he says yes and then vanishes and I have to be answerable. At times when he should be there he just vanishes.
- Once I had to be picked up at midnight from the station and he did not turn up. I had to take an auto-rickshaw. But I never blamed him and would always cover up for him. But somewhere inside I used to feel that he has done a wrong thing. He has behaved carelessly. I have never complained about him to anyone.

- Ours was a love marriage. It was my choice, so my responsibility. I loved him. Even though my parents said no. So now I don't have a face to complain about it. It's not a good thing to complain about your husband.
- He is not totally wrong. There seems to be something wrong between us. My expectations and his is a mismatch.
- (Long pause. Looks downcast, not looking me in the eyes).

Observations & Analysis

Now she narrows down in a more specific way. The one person to whom she has entrusted her life and love, has not only disappointed her but also has become a source of embarrassment to her. But she is stuck in this relationship.

There are times she makes efforts and at other times she just gives up. Then the effort has to start all over again. This seems to be the theme to the Ringworm Miasm. Also the need to maintain the security of a relationship or the insecurity due to the lack of it is the quality of mineral remedy.

Observations & Analysis

By now her state becomes clear. She feels a hatred towards the people who have not accepted her in spite of all her efforts. She feels there was a stage earlier where she gave it her best but it was never reciprocated so she has almost given up. There are yet sporadic attempts from her side to make efforts but she has given up hope and given up trying.

Observations & Analysis

The initial impression one gets is of Natrum Muriaticum. There is a feeling of inadequacy and severe disappointment.

But two aspects in the case take us to Natrum Sulphuricum. One is the embarrassment issue she faces from the person she loves. The other is the suicidal impulses where she has to restrain herself, especially when she is alone, as there is so much at stake.

Observations & Analysis

When the father is interviewed, his state does not seem to match the intensity of the case. In a case like this it is difficult to get much confirmation in the child's case. Things are presented in subtle ways.

The craving for salt and salty foods both in the child and mother is only a confirmation. Although in a case of autism, indifference to the surroundings is a common feature, in this case it is the failure to communicate at all which is the main theme in the mother's case and translated to the child.

Observations & Analysis

What was also seen in the initial moments of the case is a child who although does not communicate, is curious to see, explore and feel things for himself. This is very much a Sulphur theme. The ringworm further establishes the remedy.

Observations & Analysis

Although Natrum Sulph has long been understood and viewed as a sycotic remedy, my experience in several cases makes me feel that it is a Ringworm Miasm remedy. There seems to be in this case, themes of the psoric struggle as well as the sycotic acceptance. This is the theme of the Ringworm Miasm.

Outcome of the case

- The child was given a dose of Natrum Sulph 200C
- Within 2 weeks of the dose, the ringworm started to get more active.
- The concept of inside-out in the form of an exteriorization, that was essential in such a case was explained to the parents
- During this period as there was the skin flare up the child started to emote a bit.⁵⁷

- This was followed by expressing pain and anguish at being injured after a fall or a bump.
- The skin started to clear up on its own.
- The child would show both joy and sorrow as per the situation
- The parents were very encouraged to see this response, and this helped their relationship to improve too.

- As they were often stationed at remote places where not much occupational therapy was possible, the child was only on homeopathy.
- As there was no facility for a special school, he continued at the local air force school that was available
- He missed a few years as he could not keep pace with the others, but soon started to show interest in all kinds of learning

- The child was followed up for 3 years and the results were very encouraging.
- The dose of Natrum Sulph 200 was repeated when ever there was a slow down in responses, and he would always respond to the same.
- The case shows the relevance of the mother's intense state during pregnancy.
- It shows the concept of state transfer. ⁶⁰