Jonathan Hardy

Mammal Remedies in Homeopathy

Sample text

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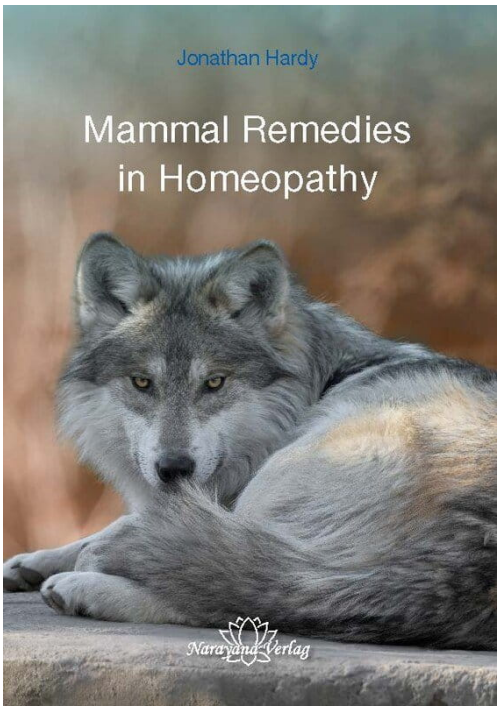
from Jonathan Hardy

editor: Narayana Verlag



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THEMES IN MAMMAL CASES

A mammal remedy reflects both the qualities of mammals in general and the specific animal source.

Milk is the unique evolutionary adaptation of mammals and it is fundamental to our understanding of mammal remedies. It is the source of nourishment for all young mammals. Not only is it essential to the physical survival of the baby mammal but it involves the process of suckling. The infant mammal draws nourishment from the breast of its mother. This means bodily contact and warmth. It also has an emotional element – it is an act of great intimacy: the mother is literally giving of herself to give life to her young.

All these elements of nourishment, warmth, bodily contact, motherly nurturing and intimacy are found in mammal cases.

We could say that being fully nourished, on both a physical and emotional level, with feelings of warmth, intimacy and closeness combine to make the healthy "mammal feeling". As humans we should have this feeling deep within us, as part of our basic inner structure, at a visceral and subconscious level of our being. If we do, it will go a long way towards helping us feel adequate, secure, worthwhile – able to be happy and effective in life. On the other hand, if we do not have this "mammal feeling", we will lack these basic elements which make a secure and stable person. There will be a nagging sense of something missing, an inner insecurity which is very fundamental. This is often experienced in a very physical way – a visceral sense of emptiness, a hole which cannot be filled. A deep feeling that something is wrong with us, we are not complete.

The following are themes which recur in mammal cases.

Suckling

Children requiring mammal remedies can have difficulties at the time of weaning. They do not want to relinquish regular intimate contact with their mother. They can also be abnormally attached to surrogate forms of suckling, for example their dummy or pacifier. There can be huge battles around this and they may cling to it long past the usual time. Thumb sucking, nail biting and fondness for a comfort blanket are other ways in which a child, or sometimes even an adult, will try to mimic the comfort derived from breastfeeding.

Warmth

Mammals are warm-blooded animals: they generate their own body heat and doing this is essential to their survival. We find the theme of warmth often helps to identify the need for a mammal remedy. Especially at times of stress these patients find comfort in being in a warm, cosy place – in bed or wrapped in a blanket. The following are words which recur frequently when describing this:

Warm, cosy, snug, comfort, comfortable, homely.

We also hear words describing the opposite pole – what mammal patients really do not like:

Icy, ice-cold, cool, cold-hearted, cold-blooded, cold-shoulder, frosty, freeze, freezing, frigid, glacial, lukewarm, chilly, hypothermia.

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PRIMATES

There are two hundred species of primates, belonging to eleven different families. Primates include monkeys, apes and humans. Several characteristics of primates are of interest from the homeopathic perspective and can be a significant element in a primate patient's presentation.

1. Grasping Hands

One of the digits of a primate's hand grips against the other four, enabling a firm grip and the ability to hold and manipulate objects.

2. Large Brains

Primates have cerebral hemispheres which are large compared to those of other mammals. This gives them higher intelligence, the ability to learn and a complex repertoire of behaviours.

3. Complex Social Organisation

Many primates have complex social structures. Combined with their intelligence this enables primates to learn from each other and from experience. Not all primates live in groups but they are all acutely aware of their neighbours and adapt their behaviour according to their last encounter. The long period of maternal dependency – childhood – also allows the next generation to learn from their elders' experience. In long-lived species which live in permanent social groups we see the emergence of the role of grandparents. In this way some learned behaviour patterns are passed on, leading to the emergence of culture. This is most obvious in humans and apes who have developed the ability to make and use tools.

Much of primates' social learning takes place while they play with each other. Knowing how to interact safely with other members of the group or with neighbours is important for social success and ultimately leads to reproductive success. The larger the social group the more complex this process can be. These complex social interactions may involve political alliances, careful planning and even deception.

4. Communication

The complexity of primate social structures necessitates sophisticated communication.

Various types of information are communicated between group members: Where are you? What are you doing? How are you feeling? Are you friend or foe? Are you sexually receptive? This information is relayed using the senses of smell, sight, sound and touch. Among the most important modalities are facial movements: these are the most varied and subtle in the animal kingdom. Body language can involve whole body stance or movement. These signals are sometimes emphasised with vocalisation or odour.

VISUAL SIGNALS

These are especially important in primates and some species have evolved physical features to emphasise such signs:

Patches of coloured skin on face or genitals

Tufts of hair on the ears, eyebrows or lips

Bony or fleshy protuberances on the face

Some examples of facial expressions include:

Yawning – this can indicate nervousness or stress.

Flipping the upper lip – this exposes the teeth and is a threat.

Lip smacking – this means "I want to groom you" and is used to invite a friendly encounter or defuse aggression.

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SURICATTA SURICATTA

Meerkat

Remedy: *Suricatta suricatta* Meerkat fur

Meerkats are small mammals belonging to the mongoose family. They live in parts of Southern Africa. A group of meerkats is called a mob, gang or clan. A clan often contains about twenty animals but some families have fifty or more members. They are small, burrowing animals living in large underground networks. They are very social, living in colonies. Animals in the same group regularly groom each other to strengthen social bonds. The alpha pair often scent-mark subordinates of the group to express their authority, and this is usually followed by the subordinates grooming the alphas and licking their faces. They

are primarily insectivores but also eat lizards, snakes, scorpions, spiders, plants, eggs and small mammals. Meerkats forage in a group with one sentry on guard watching for predators while the others search for food. Meerkats demonstrate altruistic behaviour within their colonies: when a predator is spotted the meerkat performing as sentry gives a warning bark and other members of the gang will run and hide. Sentry duty is usually approximately an hour long. Baby meerkats do not start foraging for food until they are about one month old, and do so by following an older member of the group who acts as the pup's tutor. Meerkats also babysit the young in the group. Females that have never produced offspring of their own often lactate to feed the alpha pair's young, while the alpha female is away with the rest of the group. They also protect the young from threats, often endangering their own lives. On warning of danger, the babysitter takes the young underground to safety and is prepared to defend them if the danger follows. If retreating underground is not possible, she collects all young together and lies on top of them.

SURICATTA SURICATTA CASE

Woman aged 34
Chief complaint: Menstrual disorders

P: I started getting period pains again as soon as I came off the contraceptive pill which was about a year ago.
Right now I'm having sharp pains in my lower abdomen. I have to bend over. They're like the period pains I used to get when I was a teenager. My period is two weeks late which is very unusual for me but I am getting these pains which are like period pains. Also my periods have got much longer, even two or three weeks long and now I haven't had a period for six weeks. Normally they are very regular.

D: Are you having any other symptoms?

P: I'm getting spots on my face and last week on my back which I've never had before, little pimples. (She speaks fast and is quite animated).

D: Anything else?

P: I've lost weight. I've been doing a lot of exercise, I've been running.

D: Anything else?

P: I'm constipated the last few months. I used to go twice a day and now it's once every two or three days.

She's written on her form she gets a sugar dip in the afternoon. I ask her to describe that.

P: I've always had that. I'm very active in the morning and I have loads of energy in the morning and I get lots of stuff done then I have lunch and then it feels like I've used up all my energy. The working day should end at 3.30! I eat chocolate then, I like sweet. (As she says this her fingers are moving around her mouth).

D: If you don't have that chocolate then does anything happen?

P: I have a dip in energy. And when I get home from work I have another dip – I need to eat. I pick at food, I have an empty feeling in my stomach.

Later in the consultation:

D: I need to get a good impression of what you are like as a person, try and describe yourself to me.

P: I am outspoken and active, especially at work. I am confident. I know what I am doing. My peers and bosses respect me, some people would say … aggressive is not the right word but I push to get things done. Maybe I'm tactless.

I'm very close to my family – I speak to my mum every day and I visit my father on the way home from work every day. I speak to my sister every day. I phone my granny. It's quite funny, I come home from work and it's mum, dad, sister, gran, one after the other speaking to them! We're close, we care for each other a lot. My sister says I'm too caring – she doesn't bother phoning them for a week or so. It's to do with that bond between us.

I'm sociable, I have lots of friends, I'm always the one getting up dancing first. I'm confident and comfortable to just be, I don't like being by myself, I like hanging around with people. It's nice to be surrounded. I guess it's because when we were younger we all lived together in quite a small space. You have to make compromises and spaces for each other but it's also nice to have that warmth. (She does a gesture with her hands coming together).

D: Say more about not liking being on your own.

P: Well, when I was at university sharing a house with my girlfriends they'd all be happily do-

ing work in their rooms and I'd be putting my head round the corner saying "What are you doing?" Wanting to bounce off people. I like my job because I have to talk with everybody and coordinate and manage. At home if I'm on my own I feel "What will I do with myself?" When I'm not interacting with others I feel I'm missing out on something. I like to know the people I'm with are close by. I suppose it's a fear of losing them. I want to have them close by and if they're not close by I want to speak with them to check they're alright.

D: Say about this fear of losing them.

P: I don't think that they'll die. If anything happens to anyone in the family the first thing they do is telephone me. I feel responsible for all of them – I want to make sure they're all alright and I'll be there for them if they need help. I like to stay in touch.

D: Do you have any goals or aims in life?

P: My ambition is to have a nice family life. I would sacrifice my big career in manufacturing to just have a simple job where I feel I'm contributing and adding value. I like to be involved in something that's good. I like to be creative, to be involved in manufacturing because we are making things that people use.

D: Say more about making things, creating things, using things.

P: If you don't then you don't add value, you just take. I dislike people who just think it's their right to take things. People should contribute. If everyone focussed on creating and doing a bit extra then there wouldn't be wars and there wouldn't be recession. We shouldn't be greedy.

When I was a child I was a tomboy, I liked playing with tools and making things. I studied engineering because it's practical and I'm logical. We take for granted all the things that are useful in our day to day life which engineering provides. But when there's a power cut everyone thinks "Oh no! Where's the electricity?" (She sits up straight and looks rapidly from side to side as if she is anxiously scanning the horizon).

D: Say a bit more about your childhood and being a tomboy.

P: I was always out playing. I was friends with the boys and I had lots of girlfriends as well. I was buddies with all of them. I also felt more comfortable in male company. I prefer a mixed company to just all girls. I can't gossip. I like to look nice but I'm not

too fussed – I'd rather be comfortable than go out of my way to look something that I'm not comfortable in or with. I'd rather be warm and I like layers and layers of clothes and being warm!
I liked hanging around with my gran and my mum and dad. We always had a good bond, it was a nice family life, we stuck together.

D: Are you an organised person? (This question is asking about mineral qualities).

P: No – I'm not tidy and I cut corners.

D: How are you with plants?

P: I kill them (animal people often say that they kill plants).

D: What about animals?

P: I love our dog, I love to groom him and cuddle him. I'm scared of horses, they can trample you. I don't like cats, they can be vicious.

D: Any animals you either love or have a fascination for?

P: I like meerkats because they all love doing things in a group. (She does the same gesture of sitting up straight and looking rapidly around as she has done previously).

D: Say more about meerkats.

P: Everyone says that I do the same thing as meerkats – when I sit up and look around thinking "What's going on over there?"
I like them because they are inquisitive and they live in groups – they're not individuals, you never see them on their own, you see them all together. Maybe that's why I like them.

D: Say more about that.

P: They do stuff together, they all turn their heads at the same time and then they think "Let's all go over there" and they all go over there together! They seem to look out for each other and like hanging out together.

Case Analysis

ANIMAL THEMES

Aggressive

MAMMAL THEMES

Sugar dip
Hand gestures around mouth
Empty feeling
Warmth
Comfortable
Layers and layers of clothes
Caring

Bond
Fear of death of loved ones
We should not be greedy
Tomboy

GROUP ANIMAL THEMES

Close
Sociable
Hanging around with people
Buddies with all of them
Wanting to bounce off people
A nice family life
People should contribute

MEERKAT THEMES

We all lived together in quite a small space
Sitting up straight and scanning the horizon

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SOURCE

How she describes meerkats is really a description of her own nature: "They do things together, they look out for each other, they like hanging out together ..."

Prescription

Suricatta suricatta 200C – one dose

Follow Up at Two Weeks

D: How are you?
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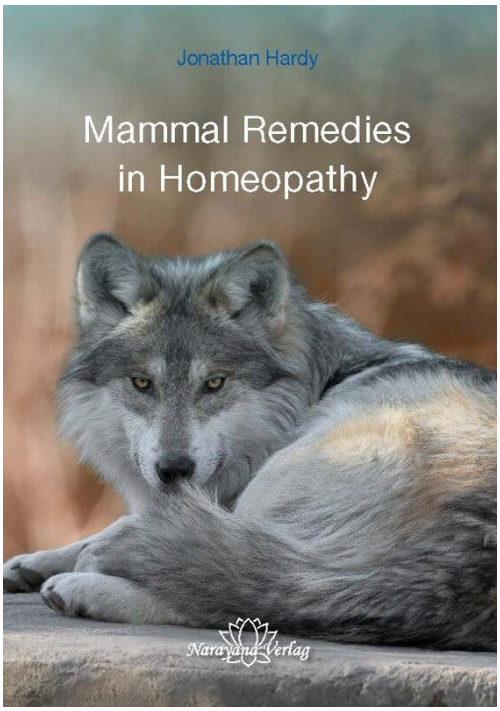

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