

Saddam Hussein and Mercurius

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Living Materia Medica - this is the place to connect materia medica knowledge to images already familiar to us. It is a colourful way to look at remedies. We cannot take this too seriously because there is no verification for our reasoning by follow-up and remedy action. However, such analyses are bridges to help us to memorize and understand various aspects of our remedies. If Saddam Hussein can serve us in this way, it may somewhat balance his other activities!

I would like to pick up a few strands of the story of *Mercurius*. Let me say at the onset that I am making no distinction between the separate provings of *Merc. Viv.* and *Merc. Sol.* Both bring out almost identical physical symptoms although complementary aspects of the mind, notably slowness in the case of *Merc. Viv.* and hurriedness in *Merc. Sol.* (c.f. Allen's *Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica*).

Mercury the metal is unique in that it is in the liquid state at room temperature; a feature made use of in the manufacturing of thermometers, sphygmomanometers etc. Kent describes the patient needing *Mercurius* as being a human barometer.

George Vithoulkas speaks of the patient as exhibiting the twin features of instability and lack of reactive power. The metal exhibits many features which are familiar to all, such as its "scattering" property when dropped. By analogy we may infer that the patient for whom *mercurius* is the remedy cannot keep themselves together when stressed, that they fly to pieces and cannot re-establish internal order. Another aspect of mercury is its capacity to amalgamate. Anyone unfortunate enough to have lost a ring of silver or gold to mercury will recall this property, as will those who suffer from mercury amalgam fillings. For mercury is one of the most potent inorganic poisons. It destroys life by ulceration and necrosis. When mercury falls upon the surface of another metal it "eats" into it; the resultant area may firstly become fluid, as in the case of gold amalgam, it "ulcerates". *Mercurius* is the syphilitic medicine par excellence. The collapsed nasal septum is well-known amongst old syphilitic patients, wherefrom, by means of inner, psychic mirroring, we obtain the symptoms, "pulls ones nose in the street" and "takes people by the nose". Death by necrosis is its fundamental note. Its man-

ner of pathologising may be summed up by the word *decomposition*.

The mind symptoms bring out this propensity for it is the only remedy in the rubrics "delusion, fancied living things were creeping into mouth at night" and "living things creep into vagina at night", a natural state for the buried corpse in the "night" of the coffin. This state of mind gives us a sense of what Margaret Tyler called, "the inwardness of drugs". - Even in an early stage of chronic *mercurius* pathology we usually find physical symptoms associated with rotting and decay such as excessive salivation, offensive perspiration, glandular swelling, ulceration with no tendency to heal, and mental symptoms of disgust or hostility. The patient may feel impelled to touch things in order to keep the pervading sense of loathing and evil at bay. It is clear from a perusal of the mind section of the repertory that the primary focus is upon delusions, specifically relating to crimes, injury, mutilation and thieves, while the rubric, "escape, attempts to" further highlights the paranoid state of mind. These internal motifs of persecution and destruction are expressed outwardly as impulses to kill. This is so because any sustained state of the inner being, any "frozen" psychological posture, is compensated for by a reciprocal and opposite gesture towards the world. The inner state is protected by the outer opposite activity or facade. The *Synthetic Repertory* has eleven subrubrics to the major rubric, "kill, desire to". Knives and razors figure frequently. In the light of this syphilitic posture, we can appreciate that *mercurius* is the only remedy listed in bold type in the rubric, "anarchist, revolutionary". It also appears in "moral feeling, want of; criminal, disposition to become without remorse". Naturally, this state of mind represents an advanced state of pathological breakdown and it is indeed unusual for

patients such as these to come into the consulting room.

However, the seed of *mercurius* pathology had already begun to germinate during the childhood of Saddam Hussein, the plant reaching its full height in adulthood. What follows is a resume of information compiled for a British television documentary entitled "The Mind of Saddam" which was screened during January, 1991.

Case History

At the age of 11 S.H.'s mother remarried and left him to face life alone in a society that did not have charity organisations etc. When at school his teacher said "Do not trust S.H. He used to collect firewood and then he and his truant friends set fire to it. He used to put an iron rod on the fire and when it turned red he would rush to stab the stomach of a passing animal and split it open". He grew up believing nobody and nothing other than his iron stick could protect him. He used to carry it everywhere with him, even on his way to school. He depended on nobody, only his stick and strong personality. He never wanted to be a learned man. He shot one of his relatives dead at the age of 15, and was summoned by the Party two years later to assassinate the Prime Minister. He enjoyed building things and enjoyed demolishing things just as much. He builds up alliances then demolishes them. He believed nobody loved him. He does not believe that the thousand songs praising him are true. He believes society does not like him. He used to get uptight when he heard a different opinion. Many of his opponents now, were his allies in the past. S.H. lived isolated from society and education. He did not have a job and he developed his power through the secret organisation which is ruling Iran now. The night of the July Coup (86) S. left his home, and his children ran after him, calling him. He did not turn round to look at them and when they continued following him he kicked them without turning behind to look at them. One of the children was hurt and his wife told him "Mercy, you have a heart of rock". He was not nice to his children, he did not talk to them and when angered would beat them with a water hose.

He enjoys vast wealth and deprives Iraq from their own national products. S.H. has no aesthetic tastes. He does not enjoy music, does not like nature, does not read poetry. The only song he likes is "The Magic Carpet" only be-



cause it says "I pass over Baghdad and I could see daggers everywhere, cavaliers everywhere", repeating to himself the word "twisted or bent daggers". He depicts himself as the one who has been wounded so he has to punish the aggressors. He is also said to be immensely brave. But he has a basic amorality. He inhabits the mental world of a six year old. This is a man who can kill his best friend. He thinks what is good for S. is good for the people, what is good for the people is good for the Arabs. So anything which threatens him must be eliminated for the good of mankind. Intellectually he can be cool and sophisticated. Mentally he is very immature. A handsome man who takes pride in his appearance. His eyes are clear and sharp. He seemed to be very aware of peoples expressions and movements. He inspired a fear or awe in people. When he became President he became arrogant, obsessive and paranoid with aspirations of grandeur. S.H. shot the Health Minister himself. S.H. has excesses (e.g. flew with 3 jumbos of entourage). State uniform - orange sash.

Rubrics:

Mind; ANARCHIST; revolutionary
Mind; MORAL feeling; criminal, disposition to become a, without remorse
Mind; DELUSIONS; enemy; surrounded
Mind; KILL, desire to; knife, with a
Mind; FIGHT, wants to
Mind; DICTATORIAL, domineering
Mind; CONTRADICTION, is intolerant of
Mind; POSITIVENESS

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Comments on Saddam Hussein and Mercurius

by George Papaphilippou

Using the 8 rubrics, which Misha used, the only correct remedy is Mercury. The analysis he made is in my opinion very good. However, I think we need more information from the other levels and modalities about sleep, food, sexuality and fears. We should get our information from people of the very close environment of

S. to be sure about the remedy. Is he really paranoid? Is he dictatorial? Is he a revolutionary anarchist? Does he really want to fight? And WHY?

The television information says that S. at the age of 11, was left alone, because his mother remarried. What did the boy S. feel at that time? That his mother does not love him anymore? That nobody loves him anymore? Did he feel jealous about the new father? Or insecure with a lack of self-confidence? When the teacher said: do not trust S. Was he really a strong personality as the report says? Is the reaction to set fire or to ill-treat animals a reaction of self-protection, a normal reaction of a suffering boy or does it show a violent character? We should know what he really feels to be able to understand his remedy.

I believe that the differential diagnosis here should be made between the following remedies:

STRAMONIUM: Is the most violent remedy. In his subconscious he has unpleasant experiences. He was frightened. His expression is wild. Is it perhaps why he inspires a fear or awe in people? To be sure about Stram. we need much more information about his habits, his sexuality, his fears and his sleep.

PLATINA: Is arrogant. Believes he is a very important person. Aspirations of grandeur. They are sensitive people, disturbed internally from their hypersexual instinct. Trying to suppress this instinct, he becomes arrogant or he develops delusions.

BELLADONNA: S. has the characteristic intensity and vivacity, and the explosive manifestations of Bell. But Bell. are usually psychically and mentally well-balanced people. In his delusions the Bell. patient sees soldiers and fires and wars, what is also the content of S.'s dear song.

LACHESIS: Loaded subconscious, full of passion, reacting instinctively. Very clever and very possessive of things and people. They get angry and envious when hindered then later manic-depressive. Is it possible that something similar happened when S. was left by his mother? They are egocentric, suspicious people. (He doesn't believe that the thousand songs praising him are true).

HYOSCYAMUS: Another remedy that would fit very well to the cause of this case because the symptomatology begins after

jealousy (?) or after he feels put aside and abandoned. Here we have great suspiciousness. Fear that his people will poison or betray him. Hyos. can become criminal, like S. did very early in his life.

HEPAR: Likes to set fire in things. They are oversensitive and abusive. They have the urge to kill, but do not do it.. (Violent vehement at trifles: Caust., Hep., Nat-c).

MERCURIUS: Merc. protects himself by trying to avoid stress. Stress for him is that he feels unjustly treated. (Could be very much S's. case). S. went very quick to the impulsive state and started destroying and killing. The reaction of Merc. is not the reaction of a strong personality, as our information says. To become sure of Merc. in S.'s case we need much more information about his physical state.

In the rubric: Mind; Moral feeling; criminal, disposition to become a, without remorse, one remedy is missing in the repertory: Anac. The same remedy appears in other rubrics: Mind; Delusions; enemy; surrounded. However, I believe, Anac., could be a very good remedy for this case:

ANACARDIUM: The man who is mistreated by his mother and by society, he feels suppressed and thinks, "should I stay or should I go?" When he stays, as S. did, he loses his self-confidence and becomes hard, with an inferiority complex. Anac. ill-treats animals. They are hard people, who do not give up easily, but stay to impress the others, to prove themselves. This situation brings inner conflict and division of the personality. They become violent. Anac. thinks the others say that he cannot do this or that, but he waits to prove them wrong. They are easily irritated and misunderstand what others tell them, they feel others try to belittle them. They do not have remorse about their violence. They think everyone is an enemy and responsible for their failure. He does not care about the feelings of others and hits or even kills them. In the state of separation he feels that someone is telling him to do evil and someone else to do good. Later Anac. becomes religious and feels he is good. Perhaps this is also S.H.'s state of mind. When alone he fears that someone will come and try to kill him.

Don't you think these points are similar to Saddam's situation? ☒