



Sulphur: The Ragged Philosopher

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REMEDY PROFILE

COMMON NAME: Flower of sulphur, brimstone.
SOURCE: *Sulphur* is mostly derived from the lava or the molten red-hot fiery liquid that erupts from the bowels of the earth through the volcanoes.

PARTS USED: *Sulphur*

A fine, yellow powder, called flowers of sulphur, is extracted from the mineral sulphur and used to make the Homoeopathic remedy. The mineral *Sulphur* is found in every cell of the body and is especially concentrated in the hair, nails and skin. Medicinally, it has been used for more than 2000 years. In the past, many children were given *Sulphur* in the form of brimstone to cleanse the bowels and skin. In orthodox medicine, *Sulphur* is still applied externally for skin conditions such as acne. The Homoeopathic remedy is also used for skin, mind, mucous membranes and digestive complaints. HAHNEMANN called this the 'Prince of the antipsorics'. *Sulphur* is a compound word consisting of "Sul" meaning salt and "Phur" meaning fire. Hence it means "The salt that burns". A great Greek poet refers to *Sulphur* as **Brimstone** ie burning stone. Since on burning it produces a strong smelling gas, it is called **Gandhak** in Hindi because it has a smell of its own. The Latin word Sulphuricum is derived from **Sulphari**, which is a Sanskrit word for *Sulphur* which means opponent of copper. (Dr P SANKARAN writes "We do not know their full range of opposite qualities but we know that *Sulphur* is indicated in lack of reaction while *Cuprum* is needed in cases of violent reaction). Knowledge of the source and origin of substances helps much. We know that *Sulphur* comes from the lava or the red-hot fiery liquid that erupts from the inside of the earth through the volcanoes and this character of source reminding us that *Sulphur* also reflects in the centrifugal force which drives and throws out everything on to the surface, bringing internal peace.

The *Sulphur* patient is lean, lanky, hungry and dyspeptic with stoop shoulders; at many times it must be given to fat, rotund, well-fed people; face is delicate with long, thin eyelashes (*Phosphorus*). *Sulphur* is also suited to lymphatic temperaments. Nervous constitutions disposed to haemorrhoids, with constipation or morning diarrhoea, diseases caused especially by suppressed eruption, peevishness, sudden and frequent flushes of heat all over body, followed by perspiration hot palms, soles and vertex, faintness in epigastrium in forenoon. Dirty, filthy people, prone to skin affections (*Psorinum*).

Sulphur has happy dreams and wakes up singing. There are big egos; very intellectual, selfish, ambitious, obsessive, curious. *Sulphur* will get a crowd around them and they are the centre of attention and reveal all what they know, because they want recognition. They come in, knowing what they want to talk about. They are very selfish and have no regard for others. Strong impulsive tendency to commit suicide by drowning or leaping from a window. Imagine's himself to be a great mean though ignorant, despises literary men and education. Dr HERRING called them as "the **Ragged philosopher**" as they remain in their own world-do not change clothes for days without bathing, have long uncut hairs but working day and night without caring for cleanliness and decency. Tries to reason without any hope of discovery or possible answer. *Sulphur* is always speculating on religious or philosophical subjects. According to Dr P SANKARAN, *Sulphur* is a scientist and goes on questioning everything while *Arsenic* is an artist (the Latin word for Arts is *Ars*). *Sulphur* is associated with ideas of the Lake of fire and everlasting **BURNING** (esp in chronic diseases) by a sort of local congestion. The feet are cold during the day with burning soles at night, wants to find a cool

place for them (*Sang, Sanic*): puts them out of bed to cool them off (*Med*). Cramps in calves and soles at night. The burning may be in parts - patchy or local burning with coldness else where as feet cold with burning heat of face. (In the same way that *Nat-mur* may have irregular distribution of the fluids of the body, as diarrhoea with a dry mouth and tongue, or dryness of mucous membrane with watery secretions elsewhere). Patient of *Sulphur* is hot, keeps doors and windows constantly open. *Sulphur* has heat in spots whereas *Calc-carb* has coldness and perspiration in spots. (The burning of *Arsenic* is violent esp in acute diseases and is > by HEAT except head, with mid-day and mid-night aggravation with fear of death. The burning of *Phosphorus* is found in every organ, eg in internal organs, in spots, along spine, palms and soles; but generally in diseases of nervous system, which is worst in the evening).

The red-hot openings of the volcanoes remind us of *Sulphur* which manifests as redness at the mucocutaneous junction eg eyelids (*Graph*), lips (*Tub*), nostrils, meatus of the ears, anus, etc, through which the red-hot burning discharges comes out. *Sulphur* was used in manufacturing of gunpowder by the Chinese several centuries ago, because of its quality of catching fire easily. Water being the enemy of fire, again reminding us the *Sulphur* patients are worse by washing and bathing. (Averse to bath-*Am-c, Sep*). *Antimonium-sulphide* a compound of *Sulphur* and *Antimony-crud* also has aversion to and aggravation from bath. The *Sulphur* patient develops dirty habits. He is himself dirty and offensive and indifferent to dirty and offensive surroundings. Hydrogen sulphide is one of the most offensive gases and this can explain the extremely offensive discharges of *Sulphur* patients. Some of the sulphides are absorbed and destroyed in the organism with the liberation of sulphuretted hydrogen which escapes via lungs and skin, giving a peculiar odour of rotten eggs to the breath and perspiration, others form sulphates and are excreted in the urine. The yellow color of the sulphur element reminds us the yellow staining of the perspiration. Since the skin contains *Sulphur* it has great affinity

for the skin and exhibits various manifestations like eruptions, ulcers, warts, etc. Ointments containing *Sulphur* are used as external applications for various skin conditions particularly scabies in Ayurvedic and Allopathic system of medicine. Itching, voluptuous; scratching>: "feels good to scratching"; scratching causes burning; < from heat of bed (*Merc*).

The experiment of PROF AUGUSTUS BIER is very interesting and gives us some idea of the nature of *Sulphur*. He kept his patient on *Sulphur* 3X and found that the patient started excreting daily 576 mg of *Sulphur*, which is sixty times the normal rate. Even after *Sulphur* was discontinued he was found to excrete 117 mg on the day after, he then averaged 54 mg for ten days, and after 30 days he was still excreting about twice the normal. The seborrhoea about which he had complained was markedly improved and his general well-being decidedly better than before the experiment. The patient was located two years later and agreed for the sake of experiment to make a retrial, although he considered himself cured. When he took *Sulphur* 6 for 10 days, hardly any extra excretion of sulphur was found. *Sulphur* has an antipsoric action independently of its power of "bringing out" rashes. Sometimes, it so happens that the reaction or resistance of the patient is so poor that the system refuses to respond to the well selected remedy especially in acute diseases (in chronic diseases - *Psorinum*), it matters not what the disease may be, whether it is a disease which corresponds characteristically with the symptomatology of *Sulphur* or not, in such cases one or two doses of *Sulphur* will often help to clear up the case and either itself cure the case or open the way for the action of other remedies. (*Ambra-grisea, Ammonium-carb, Capsicum, Carbo-veg, Laurocerasus*). Dr P SANKARAN says that *Sulphur* is a good remedy to close the treatment of acute diseases and to begin the treatment of chronic condition. Because *Sulphur* is an inert powder, when taken in mass, greater part escapes unchanged with the stools, but some of it forms sulphides, mostly sodium sulphide, in the alkaline fluids of the intestines and these cause irritation of the mucous membrane with

consequent increased peristalsis and mild purgation. The depletion by perspiration or diarrhoea may account for excessive thirst and the craving for salt. Insulin contains *Sulphur* and this may explain the craving for sweets and < from sweets. The metabolism itself is disturbed and so the patient is weak, empty, all gone or faint feeling in the abdomen at about 11 am, cannot wait for lunch, he eats well but emaciates. He has also craving for fats. In KENT'S Repertory, 5 remedies are given for desire for fats, viz., *Ars*, *Hep*, *Nit-ac*, *Nux-v*, and *Sulph*. Out of these remedies, *Sulphur* is the only one < by warmth.

There is profuse nasal discharge when outdoors, but indoors feels blocked up. Strong desire for alcohol. Painless morning diarrhoea, drives him out of bed in the early hours of the morning with prolapsus ani. (*Bryonia*- as soon as he moves and *Nat-s* has also loose morning stools with much flatus; worse, after a spell of wet weather). Diarrhoea frequently alternates with constipation, stools hard, dry and black as if burnt. *Sulphur* is generally the remedy when *Aloe* has been abused as a purgative. It is chronic of *Aconite*, *Nux-v* and *Puls*.

Selenium-metallicum is a cognate element of *Sulphur* and close analogus in case of bad effects of mental exhaustion; of seminal losses and impotence. You can differentiate it from its modalities, *Sulphur* < from coffee, whereas *Selenium* < from tea and has also 'tingling in spots'. *Sulphur* is one of the great trios of remedies (*Sulphur*, *Calcarea* and *Lycopodium*), about which CLARKE says, "All the rest of the materia medica can be grouped".

Sulphur has interesting relationship with *Arsenic*. *Sulphur* is complementary to *Ars*, but they are widely different in nature. *Ars* is < by cold and *Sulph* < by warmth. *Sulphur* is indifferent, careless, slovenly and dirty while *Ars* is meticulous, wants everything in its place. *Ars* has excessive anxiety, hurry and restlessness with the euphoric whereas *Sulph* has slow and lazy state.

Sulphur is related to the effects of both the sun and the moon COOPER cured many cases of neuralgia < at noon or at mid night. He regards every twelve hours as the most characteristic periodicity, but it

may be multiples or divisions of twelve. SKINNER gave to a man who had paresis of the lower limbs a single dose of *Sulphur* CM, with instructions to take it on a certain date (when the moon was full). The man recovered almost suddenly. (Some other medicines which aggravated at full moon are *Alumina*, *Calc-carb*, *Graphite's*, *Nat-carb*, *Nat-mur*, *Sepia* and *Silicea*). The *Sulphur* child is subject to catarrhal discharges from nose, eyes, etc and mothers will tell that her child will eat the discharges from the nose. Child doesn't like to bathe because the skin is sensitive and also because he/she doesn't want to take the time to do it. It is best suited to emaciated big-bellied, restless and hot children who kick off clothes at night and have worms (*Cina*).

In women, *Sulphur* is effective for premenstrual syndrome symptoms, for example, headaches, irritability and insomnia and menopausal symptoms such as flushing, dizziness and sweating. Menorrhagia, has not been well since her last miscarriage. "A single dose at new moon"- LIPPE.

VON GRAUVOGL writes, In case of Hydrocephalus *Sulphur* 6 is given as preventive to the mother in pregnancy.

'Never well since chest trouble'- S R PHATAK.

Regarding the time and seasoned aggravation of remedies Dr F BERNOVILLE says, "For functional remedies it is better to apply them one or two hours before the time of aggravation". The month of June is the month of *Sulphur* whereas the month of *Phosphorus* is July. These remedies for "burning" are really useful at a time when the days are the longest during the years. "In amenorrhoea and in hypermenorrhoea *Sulphur*, *Graph*, *Puls* and *Kali-c* form the quartet of the remedies. Apply high dilution of *Sulph* 8 or 10 days before the period. If you apply it at a time nearer to the period, it will not bring back the menses which is delayed.

Chronic alcoholism; dropsy and other ailments of drunkards; "they reform" but are continually relapsing (*Psor*, *Tub*).

Sulph, *Calc-c*, *Lyc* Or *Sulph*, *Sars*, *Sep* frequently follows in given order - ALLEN.

Calc-c must not be used before *Sulphur* - ALLEN.

Syphilinum will act in old syphilitics aggravated by

Sulphur, who had the symptoms of this remedy. *Syphilinum* is an antidote of *Sulphur*. When *Sulphur* fails to act or patient is aggravated by *Sulphur* and when *Pulsatilla*, another antidote of *Sulphur* does not give any results, we must always think of latent syphilis. *Psorinum* can be tried when *Sulphur* fails to act.

CLARKE says that if a patient is sleepless, *Sulphur* may

be given at night. If the patient sleeps well it is best to give in the morning, as it may disturb sleep if given at night.

MODALITIES: < Suppression, heated by over exertion, in bed, atmospheric changes, talking, periodically 11 am, < 5 am (diarrhoea), standing; full moon, close room, bathing, cold damp weather; > doors and windows open, sitting or lying.

Big Boss: The Third Eye

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The Homoeonagarites wanted to know the mental makeup of its citizen. It was decided that the creatures of the Materia Medica be kept in a closed room away from their near and dear ones for a week to know about them under the watchful eyes of the Big Boss Mr Repertory. He knew what kind of children he will have to look after in the absence of their parents. Nevertheless he had to execute that 'huge' task.

Tarentula the dancer quickly puts on the music system and started dancing to the tune of the music. He danced with a great zeal. *Platina* the egotistic played her piano with such fineness that one had just to see, to believe it. *Coff* the hypersensitive child, who could hear far off noise easily, had the impulse to pinch someone and he found *Cham* as the best target. He pinched him with such an enthusiasm that *Cham* cried with pain and in return he sprayed all the possible abusive words at him. *Puls* did not like the idea of closing them in a room. In fact she was of the opinion that it should have been held in an open air under a huge tree. But she did not have the courage to oppose them. *Arg-nit* had the queerest opposition to what was proposed. He was claustrophobic and could not withstand crowded place. *Nux-v* ate the junk food bought for the inmates and constantly

went to the washroom as if he had ineffectual desire to pass stool. *Croc* the serial kisser was extremely happy and affectionate. He wanted to kiss everyone and in that endeavor when he went near *Cina*, who was busy picking his nose, the latter rebuked him as he had strict aversion to be touched or carried. *Hyos* was standing at the window and humming an obscene Bollywood song. Just then the naughty *Tarentula* crawled behind her and pulled down her skirt. Instead of being angry *Hyos* liked it and shed all her clothes without realizing the repercussions it would have on the general public. *Fl-ac* could not resist the temptation of advancing towards *Hyos* with sexual feeling but was held midway by the Big Boss who admonished both of them. The clumsy, fat and dirty *Caps* was getting home sick and wanted to commit suicide. *Nat-m* sitting in a corner all alone was in deep thoughts. He took great pleasure in recalling old grievances and crying over them. He did not want to be disturbed so he did not show the actual tears in his eyes and cried secretly.

The Big Boss was aghast on seeing the state of affairs of the inmates. He went in the Confession Box, which was meant for the inmates, and vowed that no sooner they are out of this mess he will appoint a Homoeopath to bail them out of this dire circumstances.