



Autism and the Capacity to Love

The state of the children in this world is a reflection of today's society – our state as a collective. What our children are increasingly mirroring back to us is that we have become autistic. Reductionist science – autistic in itself – looks for answers in the brains of autistic people. However, the pathological changes found in brain cells and synapses say nothing about the patterns underlying autism to be found in humanity.

Autism is classified by the World Health Organisation as a developmental disability diagnosed by impairments to social interaction, communication, interests, imagination and activities. What parents of autistic children notice and which pains their heart is that the exchange of love with their child does not flow as it should. The normal expressions of a reciprocal bond between mother and child are not there. A healthy child is an open source of love and responds spontaneously to affection. An autistic child seems to be imprisoned in a cocoon that to the parent's increasing anxiety does not break open.

Were we to note down the case of the universal autistic child “as if one person” and replace wherever we write “he” or “she” with “we” and vice versa, this would teach us a lot about ourselves and the current state of humanity. It would also show us where we could improve social interaction and communication; where we could show more interest and use more imagination, and where we could increase our activity – in other words what love would do to heal our children.

We relate to our offspring from very early on in an autistic way – including conception, pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. What we are witnessing with the current “epidemic” of autistic syndrome disorders may very well be the downside of the “advances” of modern medicine. It is wonderful that doctors can help to fulfil a maternity wish and can reduce the death rate of foetuses, newborns and children. But, if IVF, induction of labour, epidurals and other forms of anaesthetics, analgesics and sedatives during labour, caesareans and vaccinations predispose to autism or exacerbate the symptoms, we need to use all these techniques only if medically indicated.

The main hormone involved in creating a loving bond between mother and child is oxytocin – the “love hormone”. The level of oxytocin is high during intercourse, during a natural birth process and during lactation. Endorphins – “pleasure hormones” – that lower pain and heighten pleasure are also raised during delivery as well as during coition. Pain and pleasure cannot be divided. If conception, birth and feeding is taking place without the natural peak of oxytocin and endorphins a lack of bonding with the mother is the result. As a consequence the child will have difficulties in building relationships with other people as well. Could it be that, by bringing more and more children into this world through caesareans or painless deliveries and by denying them breastfeeding, we are destroying human society because the cement that binds us together is missing an essential ingredient, namely love? Of course all mothers, in whatever way they receive their children, are capable of loving them, but the unconditional animalistic love between a mother and her young seems to establish itself more easily if they, as it were, get hooked to each other in an unbreakable bond under the influence of endorphins and oxytocin and the consciously shared experience of the birth process and breastfeeding.

The immune system is an expression of how we define the world around us. What do we love? What do we fear? In the homeopathic literature there is now sufficient evidence that vaccination programmes can disturb the relationship with both the surrounding micro-world and our own tissues. On a psychological level, as many cases have illustrated, this disturbance can result in autism.

The authors in this and the next issue on autism show that homeopathy is highly successful in treating autism. To turn the tide though, fundamental changes are needed in our society. Until those changes are manifested, the world will seek to replace its desire for love and community through sugar, chocolate, snacks, drugs, loveless sex and other quick fixes. Homeopathy is dearly needed to treat the effects of these trends until the law of similars has become the basis of human consciousness and behaviour. Like cures like is nothing but an expression of the art of living – loving what is.

Harry van der Zee