Vatsala Sperling

Colubrid Snake Remedies

Leseprobe

Colubrid Snake Remedies

von Vatsala Sperling

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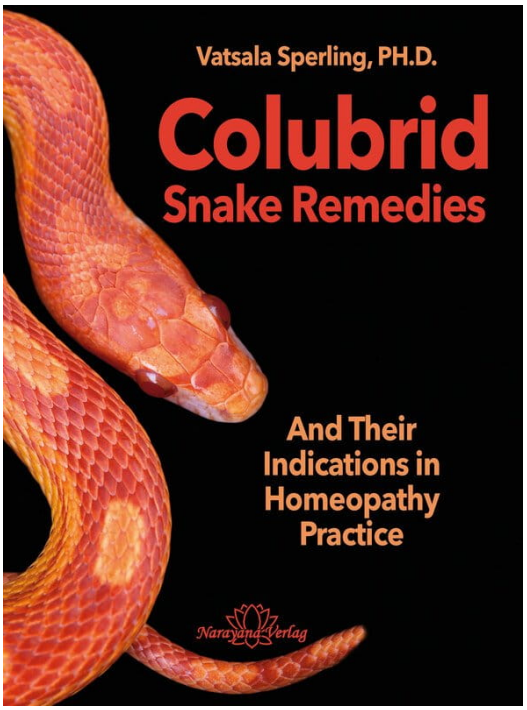

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Introduction

Dear readers,

It is said that questions, arising from the right intent, happen to be imbued with the power to wake up our minds and propel us toward trying to find a solution. We may or may not receive the answers right away, or ever, but questions arising from our minds indicate that we are responsive to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stimuli that come our way, and we are trying to make sense of the world we find ourselves in.

Talking about stimuli, I receive plenty around snakes. With my family, I spend a great deal of time in the rainforests of super-rural Costa Rica. Here, far away from cities and airports, the wild and lush primary jungles are teeming with snakes, including seventeen species of severely venomous serpents, some of them much feared and dreaded, and rightly so – for example, Bothrops, Micrurus, Crotalus, and Lachesis, to name a few. Even a slight bite from these mighty snakes would cause painful death. But the machete-swinging rural natives fearlessly go about their daily lives, working in gardens and fields, fishing in wild streams and natural ponds, tending to their cattle, digging up edible roots, manually mowing pastures to make hay for their cattle, climbing trees in search of exotic fruits. They encounter snakes rather frequently, identify them very quickly, and say, "Oh, no problem, it is a non-venomous snake after all. It looks scary, but does not kill us. It helps keep the rodents down." They choose not to hurt the non-venomous snakes.

So, the stimuli I receive in my day-to-day life about snakes says to me that the mighty venomous ones are rare, hidden deep in the jungle where they find sufficient food and can live and procreate undisturbed and away from the killer gaze of the most dangerous of all predators – human beings. But the simpler, non-venomous, less harmful snakes have found a thriving niche near human habitation where small-size prey like geckos, lizards, puppy dogs, domestic cats, chickens, toads and frogs, rabbits, mice, and rats abound. "These snakes look scary but do not kill us" – what does this mean? Why are these non-venomous snakes such a part and parcel of human habitation right outside the impenetrable rainforests? As a homeopath, how can I make sense of this scenario? For my homeopathy peers, how can I write a book about these snakes that "look scary but do not kill us"? Why focus on harmless snakes when we can focus on

powerful and grand venomous snakes? Many such questions have been swirling in my mind.

Over the course of my study of remedies from the animal kingdom (from 2005 to the present) with various teachers, it became clear to me that all cases requiring bird remedies do not have to be given *Haliaeetus* (eagle) and *Pavo cristatus* (peacock); all cases requiring sea remedies do not have to be given *Balaenoptera* (blue whale) and *Carcharodon* (great white shark); all cases requiring mineral remedies do not have to be given *Aurum* and *Platina*; and all cases requiring mammalian remedies do not have to be given *Lac caninum* or *Lac humanum*. Extending the same logic to snake remedies, we can say with confidence that every case that requires a snake remedy does not have to be given *Lachesis* or *Vipera*.

My lessons about non-venomous snakes in Costa Rica challenged me to consider the possibility of these snakes as a source of remedies for cases requiring snake remedies. In my rural practice in Vermont, USA, and Costa Rica, whenever I encountered a case that called for a remedy from snakes, a bell sounded in my mind! I became hyper-alert, extra-vigilant, super-sensitive, very seriously receptive to every little hint the client could drop. Every gesture, every spoken word and unspoken pause, every sigh and every twitch of the muscle, every twist and turn in the narrative of their life – all of these became extremely important to me as I tried to differentiate among various snake remedies. Soon it became obvious that every one of these clients was not calling out for *Bungarus*, *Naja*, *Dendroaspis*, *Elaps*, *Notechis*, *Oxyuranus*, *Sea snake*, *Crotalus*, *Cenchris (Agkistrodon)*, *Bothrops*, *Lachesis*, *Bitis*, *Cerastes*, *Vipera*, or remedies from other mighty and exotic venomous snakes, or remedies from boas and pythons, for that matter. They were calling out for remedies made from much simpler, smaller, harmless, and ubiquitous non-venomous snakes. At this juncture, Rajan Sankaran's book *Survival: The Reptiles,* volume 2, appeared on the horizon, providing much-needed insight into non-venomous snakes from the family Colubridae that I could apply in my practice successfully and help my clients.

Way back in 2005, I was captivated by the saying, "All that slithers is not *Lachesis*."[i] I came across this statement in my casual reading at the time and believed that it was from Sankaran. But later I did not recall exactly where I read it and who had said it first. In a recent Google search, I found that Sankaran and the Ullmans (Judith and Robert) presented a paper in 1995 at the International Foundation

i https://go.gale.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA92282995&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=15254283&p=AONE&sw=w

for Homeopathy (IFH) conference. Their paper included *Naja*, *Crotalus*, *Elaps*, and *Lachesis*, and their thesis was that not every case that calls out for a snake remedy should be given *Lachesis*. There are other options available because, indeed, all that slithers is not *Lachesis*.

The contemporary practice of looking into the behaviour and nature of substances from which remedies are made was proposed by E. A. Farrington, in his book on comparative materia medica. He emphasised the value of learning about the connection between remedies and the behaviour and nature of their source material in the natural world. This idea has been expanded by the homeopaths of our generation – Scholten, Sankaran, the Joshis, Chhabra, Yakir, and Chauhan, to name just a few. In their own way and style, these teachers have drawn upon the characteristics of the remedy source in the natural world and sought to find these characteristics reflected in the narrative and behaviour of their human clients. They have been true geniuses in making such a connection between the natural and behavioural characteristics of the remedy source and the people who require remedies.

In writing my book, as a student of homeopathy, I admit that I am a privileged person who is standing on the strong shoulders of these giants. Their work is the foundation, the soul, and the spirit of my work. But I do see a bit of a gap in the literature. Since the time of Constantine Hering, who first studied *Lachesis*, our materia medica have grown to include many, many snakes other than *Lachesis*. However, available information on remedies from non-venomous snakes of the family Colubridae is rather non-existent. My book is written with the purpose of filling that gap so that the practitioners and students of homeopathy can apply the information as well as insight provided in my book for solving the cases that call out for remedies made from Colubrid snakes, and thereby offer help to their clients.

For this reason, I have written and placed this book in your hands with the hope that you will dig deep into its pages and come away with something worthwhile.

Thank you.

Vatsala Sperling. Rochester, Vermont. December 2021.

Family *Common name*	*Genera* *Species*	*Geographic range*
Xenopeltidae Sunbeam snakes NVH	1 2	Southeast Asia from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, east through Myanmar to southern China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula and the East Indies to Sulawesi, as well as the Philippines
Xenophidiidae Spine-jawed snakes NVH	1 2	Borneo and peninsular Malaysia

Table 2. Infra-order Scolecophidia (blind snakes), 5 families

Family *Common name*	*Genera* *Species*	*Geographic range*
Anomalepidae Primitive blind snakes NVH	4 18	Southern Central America to northwestern South America, with disjunct populations in northeastern and southeastern South America
Gerrhopilidae Indo-Malayan blind snakes NVH	2 18	Southern and southeastern Asia, including Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and New Guinea
Leptotyphlopidae Slender blind snakes NVH	13 139	Africa, western Asia from Turkey to northwestern India, on Socotra Island, from the southwestern United States south through Mexico and Central America to South America, though not in the high Andes. In Pacific South America they occur as far south as southern coastal Peru, and on the Atlantic side as far as Uruguay and Argentina. In the Caribbean they are found on the Bahamas, Hispaniola, and Lesser Antilles.

Placement of snakes in the periodic table of animals

The Joshis used the following criteria for placing snakes in the periodic table – the same criteria they used for all the other animals when assigning them to rows:

- Unique behaviour pattern
- Survival strategy
- Ability for self-defence
- Interaction with members of their group
- Capabilities
- Special features
- Prey-predator dynamics, interactions, and relationships

These criteria enable us to place the members of subphylum Reptiles, order Squamata, suborder Serpentes in rows 4, 6, and 7.

Table 4. Snakes in the periodic table of animals

Row	*Theme*	*Snakes*
1	Dilemma – exist or not	No snakes in this row
2	Complete dependence	No snakes in this row
3	Development of ego	No snakes in this row
4	SELF-PROTECTION	NON-VENOMOUS COLUBRIDAE MIMIC OTHER SNAKES FOR SELF-PRESERVATION
5	Creativity / seek appreciation and attention	No snakes in this row
6	RESPONSIBILITY, LEADERSHIP, DICTATORIAL, HIGH SELF-ESTEEM, AUTHORITATIVE, EXUDE POWER/ STRENGTH	ELAPIDAE: *Naja, Elaps* BOIDAE: *Python* MAKE NEST, BROOD EGGS, SHOW RESPONSIBILITY

Row	*Theme*	*Snakes*
7	MALICIOUS, INSECURE ABOUT LOSING POWER, DESTRUCTIVE, MA-LEVOLENT	VIPERIDS, BOAS, ANACONDAS

When we take a bird's-eye view of humanity pulsing and throbbing around us, it becomes apparent that the majority of us reside in rows 3 and 4 as we deal with the daily issues of relationships, nurturing, security and defence, work, livelihood, competition for mate and resources, and procreation. This is reflected in our prescriptions, as a majority of them come from minerals of rows 3 and 4. After Bhawisha and Sachindra Joshi placed animals in the periodic table's rows and columns based on their biology and behaviour in nature, it became easier to understand the life narrative of patients and locate their strengths and weaknesses in the periodic table. When they come up with issues of several different rows, we begin to consider animal remedies and select one that reflects the energy and main theme of the patients as they present in their narrative.

In the upcoming chapters, the main issue of all cases is centred in row 4 of the periodic table, and the patient's main focus is self-defence. They show characteristics, themes, energy, language, and words that point to snake remedies, but not all of them are calling out for *Lachesis* or other grand and frightening venomous snakes; in fact, they are calling out for significantly less powerful and less dangerous snakes. How to find these snakes? What to do? This is where the genius of the Joshis' method of placing animals in the elemental periodic table rows shines forth superbly and helps us find remedies from snakes that are not lethal like *Lachesis*, but are rather harmless, and their main preoccupation in life is how to deflect danger, preserve themselves in adverse situations, and survive (row 4 theme).



Lachesis muta

(bushmaster, surucucu)

Family – Viperidae
Subfamily – Crotalinae
Genus – Lachesis

Venom

Lachesis venom is lethal and produces both neurotoxic and haemotoxic effects, resulting in what is known as 'Lachesis Syndrome'. Within the first few minutes after the bite, the victim is affected by agonising, burning, throbbing local pain and oedema, ecchymosis, blistering, followed by intense inflammation, bleeding and clotting disorders, kidney malfunction, myotoxicity, tissue necrosis, and autonomic vagal syndrome exhibited as profuse sweating, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, hypotension, bradycardia, uncoordinated walking, and loss of consciousness. If not treated with antivenom, a Lachesis bite can result in a painful death or loss of the bitten limb due to need for amputation.

On receiving dry bites, patients report light-intensity pain, local bleeding, and erythema with or without fang marks. Systemic symp-

toms are absent, but the psychological impact of snake bite results in stress, anxiety, fear, and fast heartbeat as well as rapid breathing.

General, maternal, predatory, and anti-predatory behaviour

A herpetologist experienced in handling Lachesis on a daily basis reports that it has a "calm disposition and delicate constitution." Lachesis shows a social behaviour toward its own species and also the large rodent that digs the burrow where females lay eggs. Male and female pair occupy a rodent burrow together for 1 to 3 months of breeding season. The male leaves the burrow before the female lays eggs. Once the male leaves, the pregnant female will not let him return to the burrow. He has no choice but to go away. The pregnant female guards the burrow with exceptional ferocity, chasing away its male partner, other bushmasters, and any other intruders, by using a set of threat displays. She elevates her head up to one third of body length, arches and stiffens her neck, rattles her tail, and body-blocks the entrance to the burrow. Expectant females become so aggressive that they mount an attack even on a passing shadow. She broods over the eggs for more than 3 months by curling her body over them and keeping them safe from all intruders until they hatch. This is the very best of maternal instinct a snake is capable of showing. The Lachesis male is wary of the pregnant and brooding Lachesis female because of her intense ferocity, and he is known to leave her alone.

As a viperid and night-feeder, Lachesis has heat-sensitive receptors for locating and following prey with precision. A heat-sensitive receptor is also an anti-predatory organ. Lachesis responds to any surprise with vehement ferocity and goes after the source of surprise with aggression.

Once a predator or prey comes within range for Lachesis to inflict a bite, Lachesis strikes repeatedly, bites, and then holds on tighter if the target moves so that more and more venom is injected. Lachesis does not release its grip. Since these snakes use heat as a signal for biting, and upon detecting any source of heat, they go after it with speed, accuracy, and intense aggression; they do not bite anything that is cold.[76-83]

Human expressions

Based on our understanding of Lachesis and its behaviour in nature, we may see the following themes in the human narrative:

- Extreme sensitivity to heat, anger, strong aversion to surprise.

- Revenge – going after a heat-emitting offender with total, killer aggression.
- Striking/attacking repeatedly (meaning of the word surucucu in the ancient Tupi-Guarani Indian language) and holding its grip till the offender or prey surrenders.
- A sense of ferocious devotion to progeny, at least for a small amount of time.
- There might also be themes about power over its prey, predator, or the domination of males of its own species and how this power is displayed by the female.
- Advertising, amusement, entertainment, catching attention, promoting oneself and putting others down, outdoing rivals, ridiculing someone who is struggling to come up.
- Intense jealousy, quest for being successful, earning name and fame.
- Desire to deal with antisocial terrorists, cut them up into pieces and teach them a lesson, as well as exhibition of one's power and success.

Figure 12. ERICK: 2008 Complete Repertory waffle graph without filter

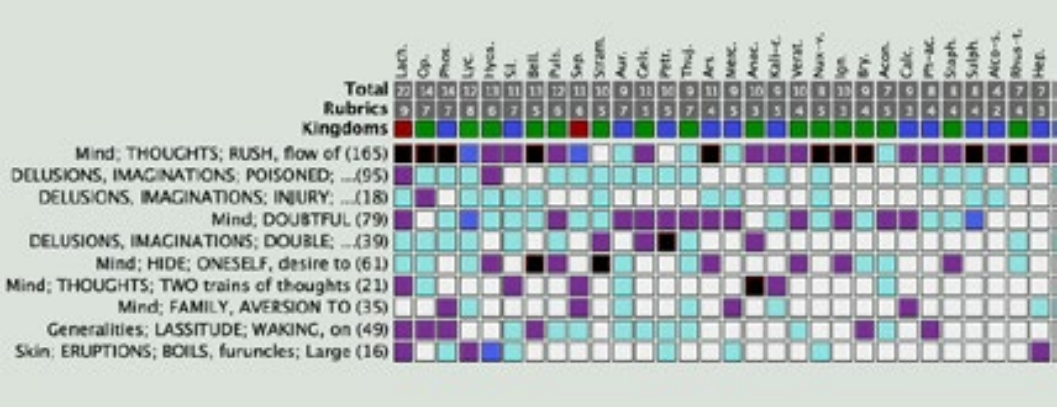
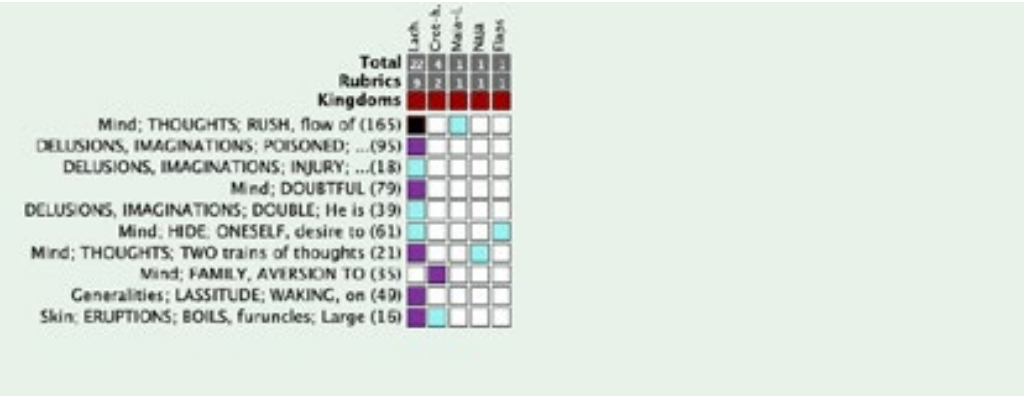


Figure 13. ERICK: Waffle graph with filter for animal kingdom



The snakes appearing on this graph are described in Chapter 3. A quick review of human expressions from cases requiring *Lachesis*, *Crotalus*, *Naja*, *Elaps*, and *Maiasaura* indicates clearly that Erick does not belong in their league. Erick's main expressions are:

- **Creates fear in others for his own safety. Hiding is a good technique but not all the time.**
- **Manipulates his wife and creates fear in her for self-defence.**
- **Quite scared, but he does come off as scary,** and generally, people either do what he tells them to do or they leave him alone. Appears scary for self-defence.
- **Faking to be strong, worthy, eligible so he could inherit. Faking for self-preservation.**
- Has to be at his best to win the dating game. Puts on a bright, strong, happy face, be the loudest mouth in the bar… so the girl will want him.

there is a good match of energy and main behavioural characteristics. If we are able to match the core energy and theme of a case with the core energy and theme of genus, it is fair enough; we do not have to go into species details. The remedy will work and elicit a healing response just as envisioned in the ancient scriptures, the Vedas.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah
Sarve Santu Niraamayaah.
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu
Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet.
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih.

Meaning:

1: Om, May All Be Happy,
2: May All Be Free from Illness.
3: May All See What is Auspicious,
4: May No One Suffer.
5: Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

As I wrote in the introduction to this book, I have shared with you my experience, and not expertise; and in the present chapter, I have dared to share with you some of my thoughts, and not foregone conclusions. Add your own experiences and thoughts to these and run with them. Explore, be excited about the possibilities, and be humbled by the synchronicities and surprises that come along the way as you witness the interconnection of energies of various sentient beings that have in them the capacity to heal each other.

THANK YOU. P. S. My patients on Colubrid prescriptions are doing well and getting on with their lives, and Hahnemann has said in Aphorism #9, "In the healthy human state, the spirit-like life force that enlivens the material organism as dynamis governs without restriction and keeps all parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation as regards both feelings and functions, so that our indwelling rational spirit can freely avail itself of this living, healthy instrument for the higher purpose of our existence."[12]

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336 Seiten, kart.
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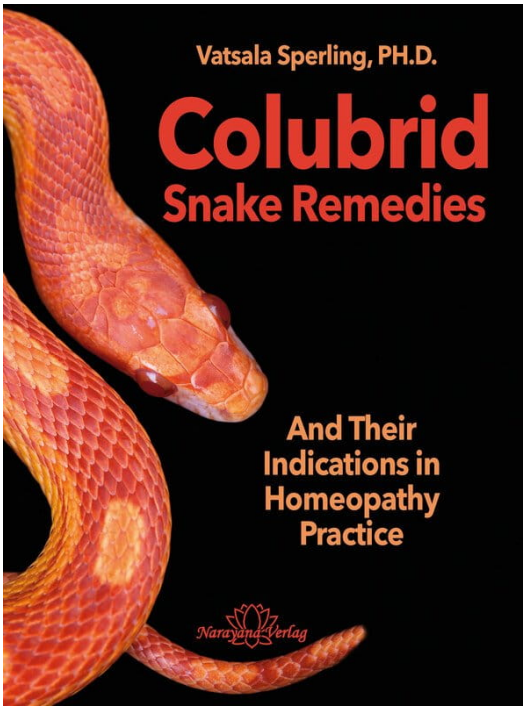

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