**The traumatic events:**

Following RR’s referral to the Youth Law [office], RR was referred to a foster family, and the foster family was referred to family therapy at the emergency center, Mivtach Oz. RR is (still) not taking part in the therapeutic process taking place at the center.

RR is receiving individual treatment—separately, and her foster parents are receiving parental counseling, also separately.

When the parents came to the center for treatment, they were full of anger towards RR because she humiliated them in the community; and towards the authorities because they had intervened within their family.

Most of the parents’ complaints are related to the ability to set limits and maintain a consistent and orderly routine: the children were insolent, making a mess, not listening to them. It appeared that the parents were having difficulty creating a tolerant parental position on the one hand, and setting limits on the other hand, for example: the father behaves wildly and mischievously with his children (in vulgar French) and causes them to laugh uncontrollably and inappropriately, and on the other hand, when he thinks they are being impertinent, he sharply berates them, tells them he’s going to leave the house or check himself into the hospital, which creates extremely mixed messages. The mother criticizes the father for his behavior, but does not manage to get control of the situation, and maintain balance and tranquility in the house.

The father describes himself as hot-tempered, and uses educational methods that include physical punishment to handle his “hyperactive” children. He claims that this was the way he was raised as a child in France. Sometimes he uses religious ideology to rationalize his words and deeds, and sometimes the father confesses that he overdoes it.

In view of the father’s descriptions, of his “occasional” use of violence and harsh language with the children, in the understanding that with the therapist and the authorities he apparently minimizes the severity of his actions, it can be understood that RR has apparently suffered severe verbal violence from the father, and even physical violence. A significant point that emerges from the family meetings is the coercive manner in which the father remarks on his daughters’ way of dressing, in a way that is completely inappropriate. It seems to me that such remarks have also been addressed to RR repeatedly throughout the years.

**Difficulties displayed by the child at the time of referral:**

At the time of the initial referral, the child adamantly refused to attend a boarding school. From the school, it transpired that she is smart and talented. At the beginning of treatment, it emerged from the Social Welfare office reports that she had no social ties, but now, after a year in foster care, the reports are different – this is a girl who succeeds and manages to make a balanced and satisfying social connections.

On the other hand, the foster family has reported that the girl had seriously violated limits within their house, for example, of her own accord, she removed the bolt from the door of the parents’ room and installed it in her own room. There were also reports of inappropriate sexual behavior toward the foster mother and foster sisters.

At the few individual sessions with me and at the Social Welfare office committees where I met with her, the girl appeared very stressed out, and spoke in hysterical tones. She transmits that she is the one who decides, and is the “responsible adult” – and tries and insists on making for herself all the decisions that affect her.

The following difficulties arose from the meeting with the girl: it appears that RR acts as if she is unaware of the difficulties she has had with the parents; her tone of voice is hysterical. An initial visit to a psychiatrist indicated the possibility of borderline personality disorder.

**Previous known traumas of the child and the parents:**

Y.’s father is not Jewish, and his mother is Jewish. For Y this is a difficult reality that affects his family and himself. This fact is kept secret from the children. From the father’s life story, it appears that he suffered from physical and verbal violence from his father, he describes his childhood as difficult, during which he also occasionally wished to hit and even kill his father. A significant episode, which recurs in Y’s nightmares, is a description in which, after Y. became Orthodox, when he returned to his parents’ home in France after a long stay in yeshiva in Israel, he laid a mezuzah on the doorway of his room, his father saw it and threw it to the ground, and came to attack Y physically. Y, who was about 21, had learned martial arts in his childhood, stood in combat position to hit back at his father, and his father retreated. As mentioned, the description of this case is traumatic for Y. He described the sharp contrast he felt between his “disgusting non-Jewish father” and the “holy mezuza”.

R. the mother of the family, claims that her husband Y is too rigid with the children, and his religious extremism is not compatible with the religious norms that were customary in their home when they got married, nor even with the norms of the people around them now. She claims the children are embarrassed by their father’s extreme behavior. The mother R described the father’s verbal violence toward the children, and it appears that even in the past there had been physical violence. During the treatment R managed to express for the first time openly her displeasure with this behavior in the treatment room. Various episodes of arguments between the parents are recurring events in the treatment, and the father Y cannot bear any revelation of displeasure, criticism or even a different opinion on the part of the mother R.

R’s parents divorced in her childhood, the father “disappeared” from the house, and cut off contact with his children, a break that remained throughout her entire childhood and adolescence, according to R. Her mother paid a heavy price for the children – and lost “marital harmony” – a price that Rivka says she is not willing to pay at this time.

**Parent’s Assessment of the Child**

R. the foster child, refuses to meet with the parents, but at family meetings with the three daughters, and the one large family meeting that took place with everyone in the family, there is evidence of a warm family atmosphere.

**Current treatment setting**

a.

The setting alternates between joint meetings of the parents and separate meetings, because the father cannot sit with his wife when she criticizes him. Sometimes the tension between the couple is somewhat reduced, and they manage to come together to a few meetings in a row.

b.

In addition, there are family meetings at which the three adult daughters who live at home are present – sometimes with the parents and sometimes without the father, and sometimes without the mother. The need for these meetings arose from the understanding that a significant portion of the difficulties reported together by the parents on the children’s behavior stems from the children’s lack of ability to speak productively between themselves, and between themselves and their parents. An additional understanding that supported this setting is that there is a need to move the focus from the “problematic” foster child to family themes.

**Additional details relevant to the case**

On 22 September 2016, a report was received from the police that the son Yaakov, 12 at the time, was found by the railroad tracks in Yavne. A check by the Youth Law social worker with his school in November 2016 found that Yaakov had not been at school for a long time. Discussions with his parents revealed that Yaakov was in psychiatric treatment and in a severe emotional state. According to a letter from the psychiatrist, Yaakov had displayed dangerous behavior and could not be at the school until the emotional state was balanced.

From a discussion with school staff, it was revealed that all the years had been difficult with Yaakov at the Talmud Torah. Discussions were held with the parents and they had refused to sign the placement committee form to send him to another school. Yaakov would skip school and did not arrive on time in the morning for prayers. There were even several cases where he had run away and disappeared for several days, so there was concern to bring him to the Talmud Torah lest he flee along the way.

**First insights of the therapist after the evaluation process**

In my assessment, the family has several factors that could have brought it to its current state:

-The family has some incestuous lines, the sexuality is not modulated in several shades , the mother is boyish (not very feminine), the girls are flirtatious, the father reacts violently to the “immodest” dress of the girls.

-Regarding the couple, the father figure that the father lacks is projected onto the husband and is used in her fantasy as a source of protective power that actually has become a destructive force for her children.

-In recent months, there has been a serious attack by the father on the therapeutic setting, the father doesn’t come or comes for only fifteen minutes, the maintenance of the setting (which was done with joint intervention with the Social Welfare office) diagnoses, in my mind, the father’s difficulty in coping with his weakness and fears – the presence in the room, and on the other hand his desire to keep the existing object.

**If treatment has already begun, attach a record of a therapy session, or part of one**

Record A.

Y: How are you?

A: Thank God okay, and you?

Y: I’m fine, today I arrived at this time, because this evening I’m traveling to Rashbi.

A: You’re going straight from here?

Y: No, I’m going home to rest a bit, and then I’ll travel later. You’re not going?

A: [smiling]

Y: Too bad, you know, the power of a righteous man.

A: [silent]

Y: One must believe in the power of a righteous man, who can help us.

A: It’s not easy to get here, is it?

Y: Yes, at first I would come, but then I realized that everything was recorded, and you speak with the principal, and you can also report to the Social Welfare office.

A: Yes, it really is complicated.

Y: Yes, when a person goes to a psychiatrist, or a psychologist, that’s something else; here…

A: Yes, it’s really not so simple, I work with the Social Welfare office, and if there’s something serious I have to report it, and I understand that it’s hard for you to trust and believe.

Y: Yes, their rules and laws.

A: I really think that on the one hand you’re right – it’s really frightening everything that happened, and what might happen if you tell everything, and at the same time, I think that this is also an opportunity, The Holy One Blessed Be He sent you [all] here, and this is an opportunity to improve the family situation, it’s really a question of how we can work together and trust, how we can do the dance together, it’s not obvious, there are laws and obligations and a desire to change.

Y: What, everything I say here is sent to the principal?

A: Not everything you say, but she is informed of the process…

Y: [bursts out] Really, according to Jewish law it’s not so simple, there are things that have ethical issues if you tell them to the Social Welfare office.

A: Look, I feel that on the one hand you come and are helped, and you say and have said in the past that that helps you get here, and on the other hand, you ask yourself can you trust me, can we make progress from here.

Y: Everything we had with the Social Welfare office, and the embarrassing things, and the trial, now we are in such paranoia with everything that’s happened, and for us now, the Social Welfare office…

A: I understand, you have gone through a difficult process, it’s really not simple, everything you went through with RR, and look, even if we forget about the Social Welfare office for a moment, and when you come every week and say that everything is fine, the question is how can we find together the way to help your family.

Y: [bursts out] Even when I told you that everything was fine, I didn’t say that everything wasn’t fine, for what, that I progress it’s better, not that I told you that there’s progress, I just didn’t tell you that from time to time there’s a blow here, I didn’t tell you that I scream at this girl, this is my assessment that these are private subjects, it’s my private life, and it’s not right to tell you that, there are people walking around in underwear at home, or spitting, it’s private I don’t need to tell, it’s private, and though they know it’s like that, we have good character traits, we are complex people, I’m from the element of fire, Leah she also overdoes it, she pushes us, also pushes my wife, someone who is fire and sees that, it’s annoying, you are demeaning your mother, you’re demeaning me, it’s disgusting, I learned [karate] I know how to thrash a person, I give a measured blow, not demolishing blows, and everything my wife tells you, this and that, it’s psychosis, but since she lost a daughter, and sometimes I speak in a very aggressive way, or hit someone, then she “ahhhh” (is frightened) but you know my son told me in all kinds of families, the father also hits the children, and the Social Welfare office didn’t take the children away, I didn’t tell you because it’s private, and also if in our holy Torah, and also according to the Rambam, it’s okay, but I know that it’s not okay, and also aggressive talking, according to the holy Torah, even if it’s permitted, it’s not okay, and the people in the Social Welfare office think differently, they don’t understand all that, everything I’ve told you here, “no it’s forbidden, it’s terrible” they have other laws, “we think differently”, they can’t understand a hot-tempered person who doesn’t want to be like that, but sometimes it just happens to him, who am I the Hafetz Haim I turn into something else in a second, it can’t be.

**Record B (with the wife)**

Silence

Y: Say something.

A: This is your time; you are invited to use it in the way that’s right for you.

Y: Everything I felt in court, all the sorrow that I have inside, and all the aggravation, and that I know that everything is my fault, and I’m bad…

A: It was very difficult to get here today Y. And I understand that in recent times it’s been hard for you to come, and you tell me that it’s very hard for you and you are ashamed of yourself, and you also tell me Lior don’t give up on me I am trying to get here.

Y: Yes, I’m really choked up and sometimes I pray to the Creator to take me, or I’ll give my wife a Jewish divorce and everything will be over and I know it’s not the right way.

A: It’s so hard for you that you don’t see the light at the end of the tunnel, you give up on yourself, yes I also see the tears, it’s really deep the sorrow that you carry inside of you.

Y: And also yesterday when I argued with my son and everything we spoke about you know, there’s no need to go over it, and I prayed lots of prayers that I would come today, and that it would be okay and I wouldn’t argue with my wife, and all the crying and sorrow that I had and that I know that everything is my fault, and even that this generation is impudent, but I have no patience, and also that I heard from Rebbetzin Kuk how to behave with children but I don’t always succeed, and that I’m embarrassed to see? Frankel (Youth Law social worker) who tells me that.

And outside I am successful and people think I’m a tsaddik and at home I’m nothing, full of despair and failure, and at home in the evening I can’t sleep, and then I’m tired and play with the Game Boy – and I know that the whole situation at home is my fault.

A: I hear that you are telling me, that even when it’s hard for you with the children and you’ve given up on them, you’ve really given up on yourself, and are embarrassed for yourself, and you want me not to be ashamed of you, and to find the way to help you and the family so that you’ll suffer less from the hell that you describe that you have at home.

**Questions that arose**

1. What is the process that can get the father and mother to discuss the sexual issues that come up within the family?
2. What is the “quiet” that the family is running away from?
3. Should the father be helped to get treatment for himself? How?
4. I believe that the father’s problematic focus stems either from narcissism or unregulated sexuality or both.