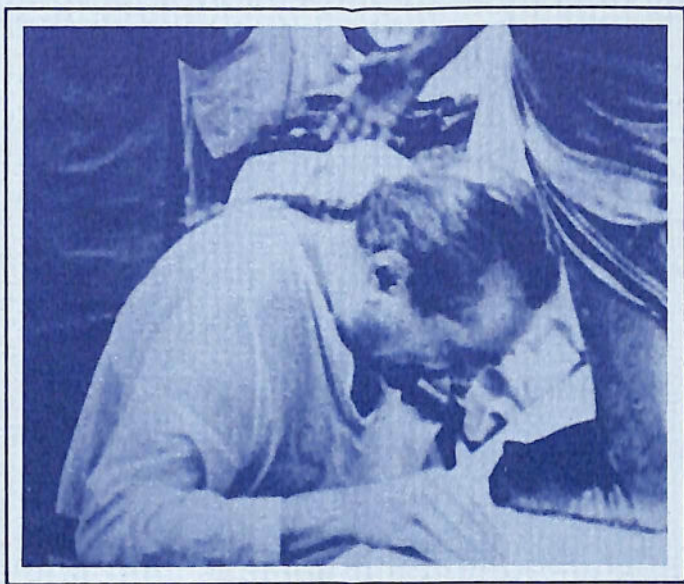


Beautiful Souls in Ugly Cages



Compiled by Lyn and Phyllis Ott

"I am both the Highest of the High and the Lowest of the Low."

"Very soon you will see with your own eyes that I am in the lepers. I am
the resident and inner motivator of every heart."

Meher Baba



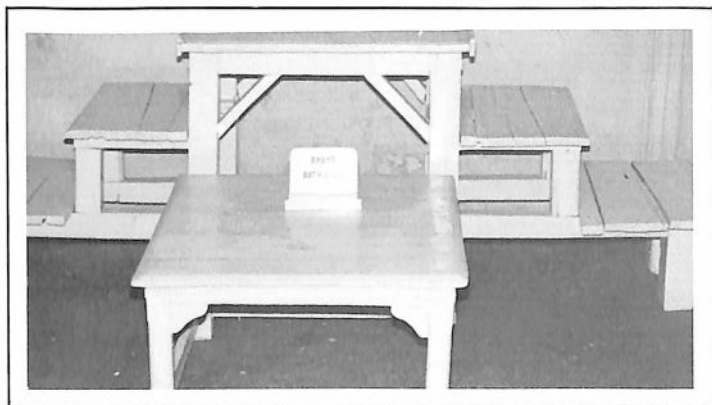
*Meher Baba with Saint Gadge Maharaj washing a leper.
Pandharpur, November 7, 1954*

Beautiful Souls in Ugly Cages

**The Story of Meher Baba
Revealing Himself to His Brother Jal
in the Lepers**

Compiled and Edited by Lyn and Phyllis Ott

R. Grant Narelle, Publisher
Virginia Beach, Virginia



*The stand designed and used by Meher Baba
for washing the feet of the lepers and the poor.*

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This book is dedicated to Meher Baba's boundless compassion and mercy that reach out eternally to a suffering humanity.

Foreword

This booklet was begun at the request of Beloved Baba's brother Jal in a letter written to us on March 17, 1981 "...for the world to see and know that Beloved Baba has performed this only miracle after leaving His body."

Lyn and Phyllis Ott
Meher Spiritual Center
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
June 15, 1982

"To love me for what I may give you is not loving me at all. To sacrifice anything in my cause to gain something for yourself is like a blind man sacrificing his eyes for sight.

I am the Divine Beloved, worthy of being loved because I am Love. He who loves me because of this will be blessed with unlimited sight and will see me as I am."

The last message given out by Meher Baba for all His lovers before the dropping of His body, January 1969.

Acknowledgments

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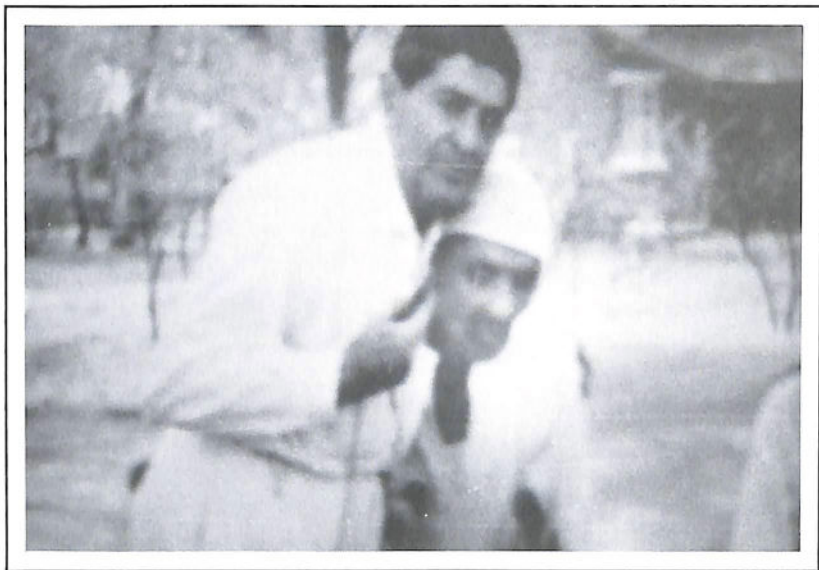
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Filming the Lepers



Jal embracing a leper. June 8, 1971. Leper Colony, Poona, India.

My brother Edward and I were making motion picture films of people intimate with Meher Baba who could give first-hand accounts of what Baba had said and done with them. When we were in Poona, Baba's brother Jal told us that Baba had often asked him to bring lepers to Him because He had work to do with them. We asked Jal to show us how Baba would do this work and what Baba said while Jal was present.

After showing us what Baba would do, Jal said he would take us to the leper colony outside of Poona. On June 8, 1971 loaded down with movie camera and video tape equipment, we went to the colony where the lepers were being treated for their disease and began filming Jal telling stories of Baba's work with the lepers. Here Jal pointed out two lepers that he had previously taken to Meher Baba and with whom Baba did work.

Jal told us how Baba would bow down to the lepers, wash their feet and how He poured His Divine Love on them. Then Jal showed us how Baba embraced the lepers. Jal continued embracing these people for the next two days with all his heart. This was the outer work that Jal could see Baba doing. Baba explained that His inner work with the lepers would have the effect of eliminating the disease or greatly reducing it for humanity.

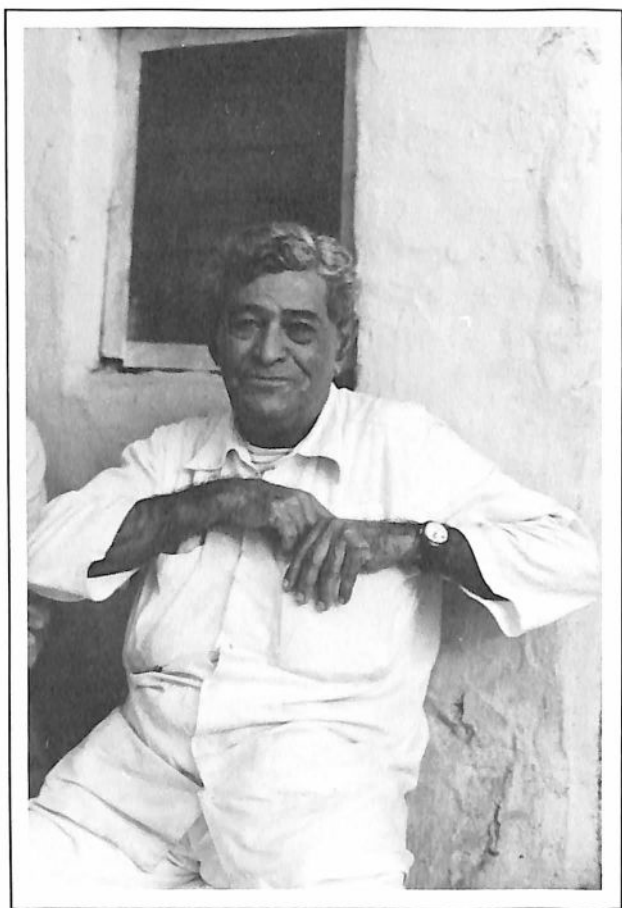
When Jal brought the lepers to Baba, Baba would often say to them: "I bow down to my own self that I see in you. God is equally in you as He is in me but the difference is you are unconscious of your Godhood, while I am fully conscious of it, but I will help you." Baba called them "beautiful souls in ugly cages" and said many other things to them, Baba revealed the Truth of these statements to Jal, and He gave Jal

the experience of that Truth even while we were filming him there in the colony. We were unaware of this until years later when Jal told us what he was experiencing while we were video taping and filming him embracing the lepers.

At the conclusion of the video tape that we made of these deeply stirring scenes, the lepers all began to shout joyfully, "Jai Baba!" in spontaneous response and praise to Meher Baba.

Irwin Luck

Jal's Story About the Lepers



Jal S. Irani. Poona, India. August 19, 1981.

Framed in the open rickshaw pausing in the Hotel National driveway, Mr. Jal S. Irani, now close to eighty and almost totally blind, is fishing in his purse for the fare. He pays the rupees in change and takes hold of the cab's inside hand-rail to lift himself from the seat and step down the running-board to the bottom step of the six ascending stairs to the hotel's porch.

In Poona, Maharashtra State, India amidst two and a half million people, Mr. Jal S. Irani goes about his elder brother's business. Meher Baba, the Avatar of the age, is that elder brother.

The Avatar's message is unchanging and forever true. The first truth He reveals is the Fatherhood of God; the second truth is the brotherhood of men. If one is born after the Christ, through the same mother, is one a son or a brother of Him?

Well, for Jal, the answer is both: "Meher Baba is my father and my brother." The short man moves slowly up the six stairs to the hotel porch shuffling his sandaled feet to cautiously feel his way for he can barely see. The morning sunlight floods the porch and warms the old man's still handsome face. In the National Hotel dining room, newlywed Baba lovers from the United States are waiting to have breakfast with Jal, and as they glimpse his slowly moving figure through the dining room's open door, both jump up from their chairs to greet him and lead him to a seat at the table.

Janet Luck, the bride, fetches the waiter to bring the tea, bread, and cream that Jal likes. And Irwin Luck, the groom, tries to make him comfortable. "Is the light too strong, Jal?" he asks.

"No, no, it's wonnnnderful, I enjoy the warm light on my eyes, and I like to look into the light." Jal sits in the sunlit dining

room as poised and at home as a longtime resident of an old people's home. For every day Jal comes to the National Hotel where he takes his seat to preside over the morning, the hotel, and the teeming cityscape.

Ramjoo, the barefoot waiter, serves the breakfast. And with a cup of tea, Jal toasts the wedded couple with "Blessings of Baba's love and grace eternally."

"And now," Jal says, "I'm going to ask you both to hear a beautiful true story which I will tell you. It is my wedding gift to you." And Jal closes his eyes, and begins his story.

"Many years ago after joining Meher Baba, I believed in Him only 50 percent. One day He told me to bring three lepers to Him. I told Him I would do anything for Him but I would not want to touch lepers because they are contagious. Baba insisted that I should bring the lepers. Then Baba said, **"Either obey Me or leave Me."** So I obeyed Him, but not very happily.

"I went to the market and found three lepers. I told them, 'You will get money and clothes, and God will serve you if you come with me.' I also told them, 'Don't touch me. Stay away from me, as you are too contagious.'

I brought the lepers to Baba, saying, 'Here are the three lepers.' And then I kept away from them.

"Baba was sitting on a chair in a small room with a table, a bucket of water and a tumbler near Him. He told me to send the lepers one by one to step up on the table so He could wash their feet. I requested and warned Baba, 'Please don't touch them as they are contagious.' Then Baba told me, gesturing with His fingers, **'But I am the resident and inner motivator of every heart. I am in the ugly and the beautiful. I am in the old and the young. I wash my own feet and bow down my head on my own feet because I am in them.'**

"Still I insisted and warned Him not to touch their feet because they are contagious. Baba gestured with his fingers again saying, **'Very soon you will see with your own eyes**

that I am in the lepers.' Even though Baba said this, I would still not touch the lepers while sending them one by one to stand up on the table. I gave water in the tumbler to Baba to pour on their feet. Baba cleaned their feet and then bowed His head on their feet. I was shocked to witness this scene as it was unbelievable that Baba was doing such things. So Baba washed the feet of the first two lepers, one by one, while I gave Baba the water, but I was always cautious not to touch them. When Baba was washing the feet of the last leper, I saw the leper in the form of Baba Himself—the leper looked like Baba. Baba then gestured with His fingers and again told me, **'Very soon you will see me in the lepers.'**

"I was surprised beyond imagination. 'This must be illusion. How could it be true?' I thought, so I closed my eyes thinking, 'It is illusion, it can't be true!' I opened my eyes and saw Baba gesturing at me saying, **'I told you I am in the lepers.'** The third time I opened my eyes, to my surprise Baba again appeared in the form of the leper. Seeing this made me believe and accept Baba as God in human form. It was a true miracle that Baba performed that I could renounce the world and join Him and accept Him as God. It was a miracle of unbelievable miracles.

"Then, Irwin, some years ago, you and your brother, Edward, told me that you wanted to film lepers with me while I told the story of what Baba said and did with the lepers when I would bring them to Him.* You had brought video tape and movie cameras and we went in a taxi to the government leper hospital, 10 miles from Poona where many men and women lepers were staying permanently. I hugged and embraced all the lepers, I saw only Baba in the form of the lepers, so I was embracing Baba for two days. On the third day the lepers came to me saying, 'You must be crazy or a saint because our own relatives come and visit us once a week and stay away from us because we are lepers. You being strangers, embracing us and hugging us is beyond our imagination.' Then I explained, 'I was not embracing you all in the

*Meher Baba dropped His body on January 31, 1969. The filming of Jal with the lepers took place in June 1971 when Baba was no longer in His physical body.

the form of lepers, I was embracing Meher Baba, Avatar, God in the form of lepers.' They accepted my story and took it as a miracle of God.

"My love and faith in Meher Baba was so deep at that point that I no longer felt their disease would be contagious to me. For three days I did not change my clothes or take a bath, but on the fourth day I became scared and frightened, as I would NEVER touch the lepers. What made me embrace and hug them for three days without changing my clothes or taking a bath? On the fifth day Baba came to me in a dream and said, 'Don't be upset or scared, I made you do all these things just to make you believe in Me, that I'm in everything, that I am the resident and inner motivator of every heart.'

"I take it as a great miracle shown to me by Baba Himself in my lifetime, which has made me renounce the world completely and join Him permanently."

Retold by Phyllis Ott

Jal's Day With the Lepers

June 8, 1971



Jal embracing a leper. Leper colony, Poona. June 8, 1971.

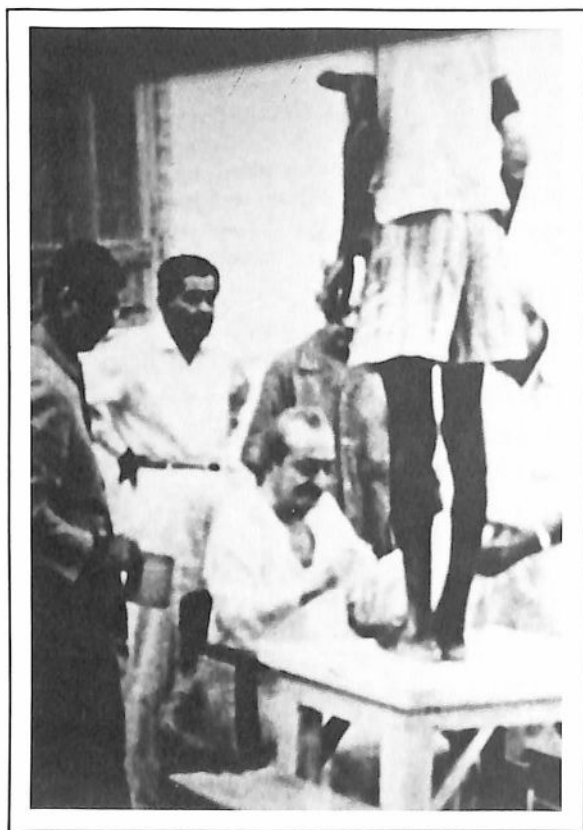
"He's happy that my arm is around him,
and I am happy that my arm is around him.



"Jai Baba. Just look at the condition of their legs, of their faces, their eyes. They think they have salvation, for Baba has washed their feet, bowed down on their feet, and bathed them and kissed them with His compassion."

"They used to garland Baba. Those lepers blessed by Baba, would go to other villages and tell the other lepers who were more seriously afflicted, 'If you want salvation go to Meher Baba and get His darshan, our only hope is His blessing.'"

"He washed their feet, He cleaned their feet with a towel. He bowed down on their feet with His head. He embraced them, even sometimes He garlanded them. And that is their salvation."





"And at times Baba would tell all the lepers to stand in a queue, men and women separate, and afterward Baba would distribute clothing and even money to them. Women were given saris and they would preserve them because they had been given by Baba and it was a blessing, and they did not want them to be lost at any cost."





"See this leper, he is blind, he cannot see, but he can see Baba through the inner eye. He is happy that he can see Baba if Baba just touches him, touches his feet or embraces him, for that is more than enough, that is his real salvation. And he is so happy about it, 'So I don't care if I don't see with my eyes, but I can see with my inner eye, Baba, who is the Ocean of Love and Mercy, our Compassionate Father and Mother. And by His blessings we feel sure we are cured eternally—eternally.'"

"See this crippled old man. He can hardly walk. There are many like him. But when they would hear that Baba had come, they would come miles and miles from their villages, during the rainy season or during the hot season no matter what kind of weather. They would come on foot."





"Then Baba would tell them, 'Even if I don't perform miracles, My blessings are there with you, and I am with you eternally. Always try and remember Me and love Me more and more and do not think about your leprosy. Don't forget I am with you, I am in you. I am God in human flesh.'"

"So hearing these, Baba's words, they would feel very, very happy. You see their faces are smiling and radiant with happiness now that Baba has touched them. So why to worry? Baba is with us eternally."



"See those lepers? They would all come together when Baba called them, then we used to fetch them, old and young."

"Now see? Look at the condition of this leper woman. She is walking on all fours. When she would hear that Baba has come, she would be happy to walk on all fours for miles to come for His darshan and to have His blessings."

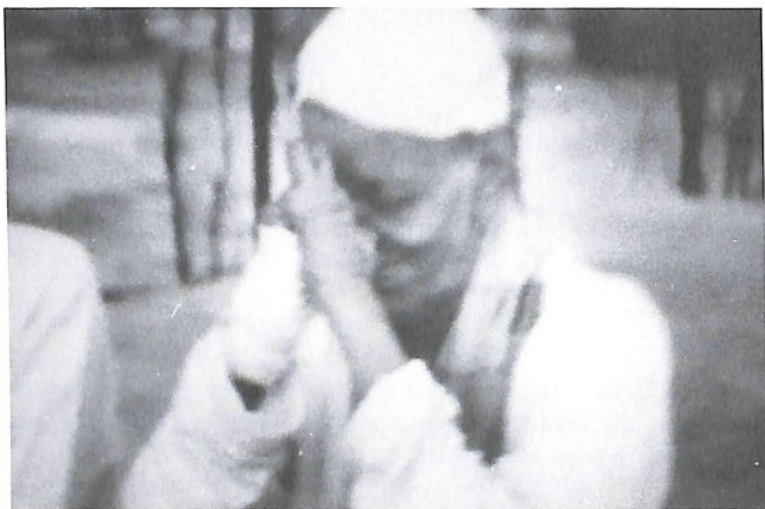


"We used to go in search of lepers in remote villages far away from those places of habitation and select the lepers who are incurable, who need to be touched by Baba and to be blessed by Baba. So we'd bring them to Baba.

"At times it was rather difficult to find the lepers, so we had to search for them in faraway villages and inquire about them. If some were not present, then we had to wait for them to arrive at their houses. We even had to carry them on bullock carts, because some of them could not walk. Some we had to bring by tonga, even by truck. They were so happy that they were going to Baba, and Baba would be very happy that we brought the lepers to Him for His work, for His Universal work.

"This washing of lepers' feet, Baba had been doing for many years. Many times it had been done to the same people who would come great distances, even if they were not feeling well. They would not miss having Baba's darshan. They knew that Baba had been doing these things, washing the lepers, for years and years. I was there so many times.

"He would call them to so many places, to Meherabad, to Meherazad, Ahmednagar and other locations throughout India."



"Baba would give them food or clothing, wash their feet, say, **'Not to worry anything, just remember Me.'** and He would sometimes embrace one. After Baba's washing their feet, at times they would bless Him by a touch in humility and gratitude. How fond Baba was of the lepers whatever their condition might be. They were happy to receive Baba's touch. Baba would say, **'Are you happy?'** And the lepers would say, 'Yes, Baba, we are because you have touched us.' The women would be very happy too because Baba had given them clothing. Baba would at times feed them and they were so happy that they had prasad by the hands of the Avatar, God in human form. They performed his Arti, with love in their hearts knowing that they have salvation. They would go off together chanting Baba's name. They would even take Baba's photo with them. Such is the love of the lepers for Beloved Meher Baba. Jai Baba!"



"Baba said that by His helping the lepers now, in the future all the lepers of the world, wherever they may be, will be cured and have liberation."

Comments

How beautiful it is that the God Man will show Himself to His own brother through the form which this brother most fears and dreads so as to make of him a more suitable and useful instrument of God's wondrous working. Baba tells us: **"God alone is real; all else is illusion."** How often it would seem dear Jal reminded us of this. In our daily lives when our human activities and aspirations are centered in love for the Beloved and obedience to His will, then these activities and their results are not in illusion but are instead connected to reality, and belong inherently to the Beloved. Thus we could say that all of conscious life that is obediently centered in God becomes a reality within the illusion. Our brother Jal told us time and time again when we came to visit him in Poona, it is all illusion... "All illuuuusionnn" he says with conviction because he knows that Meher Baba is working to establish the feeling of His Reality within illusion.

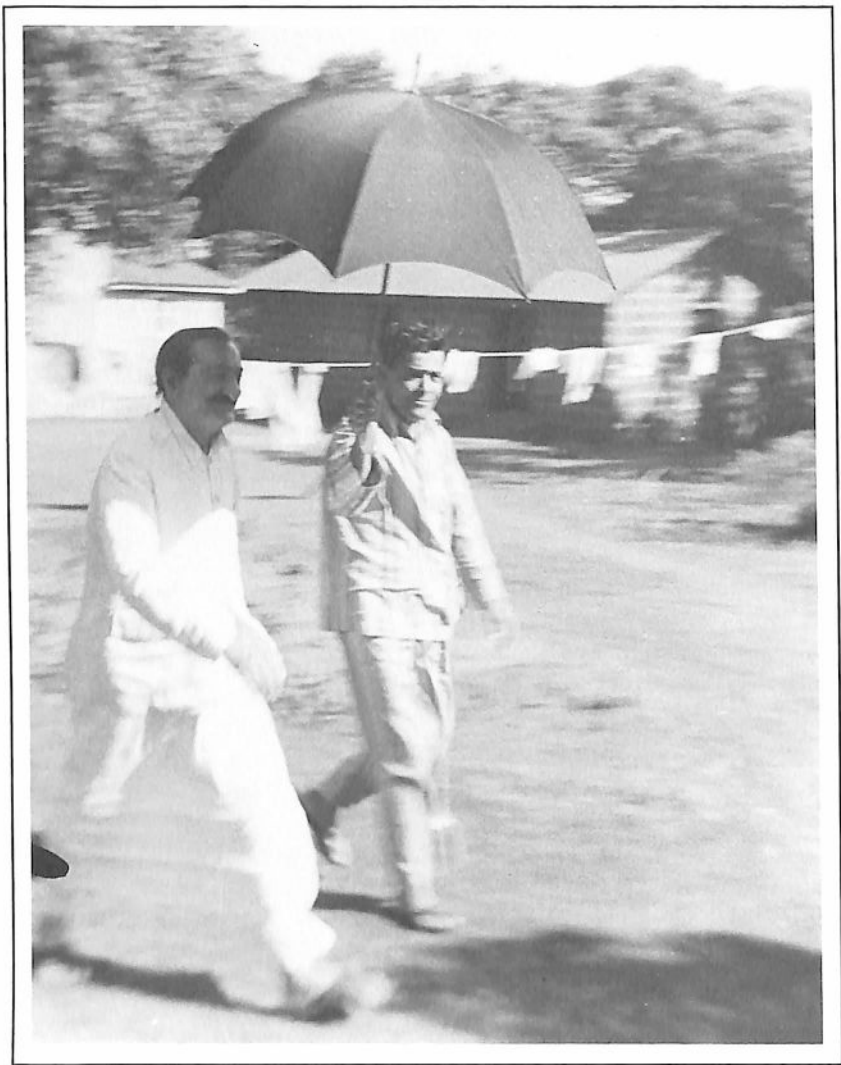
Baba produced a miracle within His brother Jal by erasing from the deep seated levels of Jal's mind his fear and dread of leprosy as it is witnessed in the mutilated exterior appearances of the lepers. In a very real sense, we can say that Baba by showing Himself in the lepers made His brother blind to illusion, and this He did quite some years before Jal became literally blind as he is today.* Jal was able to see His beloved Baba in every one of the lepers whom he fearlessly embraced. It should be kept in mind and heart that Jal was not seeing those wrecks of humanity as they are seen here in these pictures. For Jal that exterior

*Jal passed away on February 21, 1982.

impression had given way to love manifesting in the form of Meher Baba.

When Jal was only six years old, his brother Merwan was the perfect boy of fourteen. How he must have adored that elder brother and looked up to him as so wise and good and loving. When I was riding with Jal one day in a rickshaw through the streets of Poona, he pierced my heart on referring to me as his little brother. To be the little brother of that little man made me feel as though I had finally climbed to some lofty hilltop of humanity where one's heart is flooded with the transfiguring brotherhood of man.

Lyn Ott



*Jal holding umbrella over Baba to shield Him from the sun,
while trying to keep pace with God-Brother's stride.*

Meherabad, 1954

Epilogue

Open letter from Meherazad

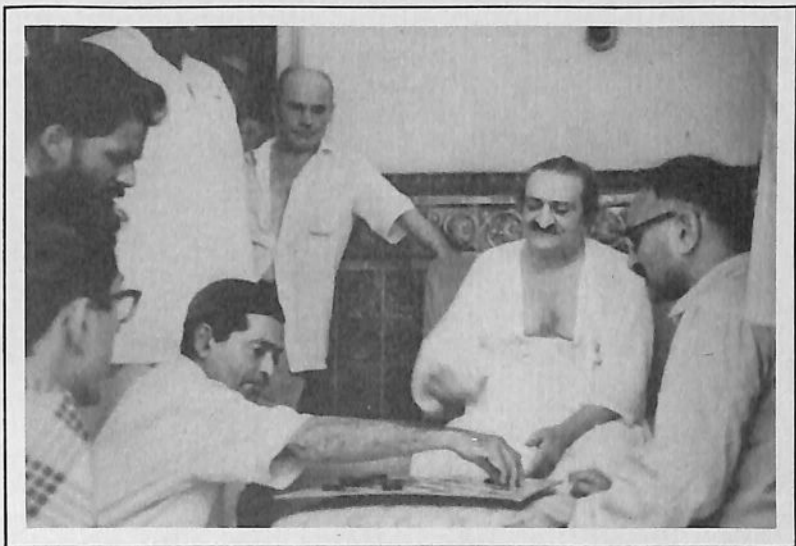
"Baba was very much with Jal, I was witness to that. One day while I was standing by Jal's bed and looking into his eyes, I was overwhelmed by Baba's compassionate presence coming through him!...I was with Jal (in Poona) for about a week; and as the doctors felt there was no chance or hope of recovery, it appeared to be a long goodbye. So, when I kissed him gently at parting, I wished him Godspeed to God-Brother Baba."

Jai Baba = Mani

Glow International

May, 1982

"On February 21, 1982, Brother Jal breathed his last with Beloved Meher Baba's picture pressed gently to his breast. The family around him could not describe in words Baba's overwhelming presence in the room."



Baba watching Jal and Kumar play a game of checkers on the verandah of Guruprasad, Poona. (Francis Brabazon standing to Baba's right.)

"The feeling and inspiration for things sublime, and Divine Love, are imparted by a real Messiah to anyone who comes in contact with Him. A false Messiah cannot do this. Through His Divinity the true Messiah gradually attracts the world to Himself, and the people come to know and feel that He is real. The knowledge and feeling of confidence in His words and works grow gradually into certainty, and masses follow Him drawn by an irresistible force. A mirage attracts the thirsty, but soon it is discovered to be an illusion and not the life-giving water. A false Messiah may attract the attention of people through outward appearances, by force of personality, or by intellectual dissertations about spirituality; but he cannot do that which the true Messiah can do, i.e., arouse the highest ideals in men and touch the hearts of millions."

Meher Baba