

The Bhau Daji treatment of leprosy / by Stanley Boyd.

Contributors

Boyd, James Stanley Newton, 1856-1916.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

[London] : [publisher not identified], [1893]

Persistent URL

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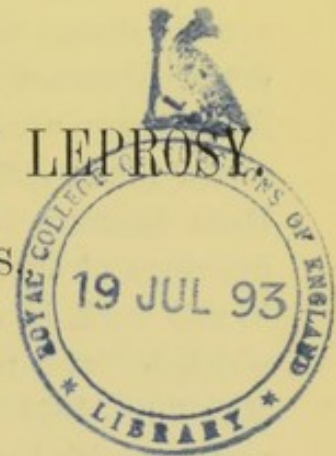
Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
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THE BHAU DAJI TREATMENT OF LEPROSY

BY STANLEY BOYD, M.B., F.R.C.S.

Surgeon to Charing Cross Hospital.



THE above title will probably convey little meaning even to dermatologists, yet it will be understood by all who were practising in the Bombay Presidency between the years 1868 and 1872. Mr. Bhau Daji was a graduate of the Grant Medical College, Bombay. I am informed that one of his teachers, the well-known Dr. C. Morehead, suggested to him that he should study the treatment of leprosy. Accordingly Bhau Daji began a series of careful observations upon the various remedies which had a reputation among the natives for the relief of leprosy. He commenced work upon the subject before 1859, when Dr. Morehead left India, and, in 1862, I find a note of his having stated to Dr. Duff, of Calcutta, that he was trying a remedy in his "charitable dispensary at Bombay which offered a hope even for lepers."

About 1868 letters from people who believed that they had been cured of leprosy by Bhau Daji began to appear in the Indian newspapers, and occasional articles in the *Times of India* show that there was a good deal of acrimonious discussion going on upon the subject of these "cures," and upon the propriety of Bhau Daji's action in keeping secret his method of treatment. Naturally medical men were very sceptical as to the reality of the cures, and the *Lancet*, 1868, vol. ii., p. 238—in the same volume which recorded Dr. Bakewell's report upon Beauperthuy's cases—stated that, among the seventy cases of relief or cure with which the Bhau Daji treatment was at that time credited, not one cure had been fairly proved, and

expressed the opinion that the mode of treatment should be made known.

Bhau Daji, however, made up his mind that the value of his remedy should be proved beyond a possibility of cavil before he made it public property, and the testing of a remedy for a chronic disease like leprosy would evidently require some years. He accordingly raised funds and established a hospital and dispensary for lepers. Here accurate records, in the shape of notes, photographs, and drawings of the cases under treatment were kept. Whilst engaged in this work, in January, 1873, he had an attack of apoplexy, from which he never recovered sufficiently to be able to work. He died on May 30th, 1874, and it was generally believed that his secret had perished with him.

I have been credibly assured that up to the time of Bhau Daji's death his own brother, Narayen Daji, did not know the name of the remedy. But, probably fearing that the value of his work might be lost, Bhau Daji had told it to three European friends, in confidence. This condition all felt to be binding, until one of them, a Civil Servant of high position, after inquiring from Bhau's executors and children whether they had any objection to his making the remedy known, placed the matter in my hands, giving me at the time a specimen of the remedy, his original pencil notes of several cases made on September 19th, 1868, accounts of several other cases which appeared in print, copies of two statements sent by lepers to Bhau Daji, and certain letters from Bhau Daji himself. I ought to remark that the gentleman to whom I am indebted for most of my information was well qualified to make observations in such a matter. A judge by profession, and accustomed to deal with evidence of all kinds, he had recently passed through an all but complete course of study in a London medical school, and his interest in scientific matters of all kinds was well known in Bombay.

On looking through the evidence, I felt sure that it would be insufficient to convince any one, because the observations recorded were not continued long enough to prove the relief or cure permanent. I therefore used every endeavour to discover what had become of Bhau Daji's papers, photographs, etc., at his death. They are said to have passed to his brother, Narayen, who survived him only six months, but beyond this I have been unable to trace them. A short time ago,

however, I was so fortunate as to discover that a boy who formed the best case of supposed cure in my collection is alive and well, earning his living as a carpenter; and I have received some valuable information concerning two other patients from Colonel Wilson, the present Commissioner of Police in Bombay, who was so good as to inquire after them for me. With these items in hand it seemed to me that I had sufficient evidence to justify me in bringing Bhau Daji's remedy prominently forward, and in asking those who have the opportunity to give it a trial. I hope further, that some of the patients mentioned may still be traced and notes of them sent to the *British Journal of Dermatology*. In this hope I give the names and addresses of patients who wrote to the Bombay papers testifying to the value of Bhau Daji's treatment.

With regard to the nature of the remedy:—My informant told me that Bhau Daji came ultimately to rely upon one substance—the oil of the *Hydnocarpus inebrians*, known among the natives as *kauti*—which he used both for internal and external administration. Sometimes he coloured the oil to render it less easily recognizable. I have statements of the directions given by Bhau Daji to two patients—one European, the other native. From these I gather that in the early morning $\text{ʒ} \text{ x—} \bar{3}\text{ss.}$ of the oil was taken in boiled milk, and it is said to be “not bad to the taste”; then the patient was rubbed all over with the oil; after two hours the oil was washed off in a warm bath. Sometimes the oil was directed to be applied again, and kept on until evening, when the patient wiped himself and went for a walk until he perspired; in other cases no oil was applied after the warm bath until evening, when it was again rubbed in over the whole body, and the patient slept in it. The oil was applied also to affected mucous surfaces: for example, it was to be run into the nasal cavities. The patients were ordered to abstain from pork, beef, and fish; from all alcoholic drinks, tea and coffee; they were allowed as much milk, fruit, and vegetables as they liked; also butter, eggs, mutton, and fowl.

No ill effects were noted in any case which I have come across. Irritation and vesication did not result. Some patients complained that it caused a sensation of hunger. A native clergyman recorded, from observations on himself and others, that the curative effects were best marked after one and a half to two months, when the swellings

subsided, redness lessened, tubercles softened, and ulcers healed. Red or greyish spots, he said, assumed a dark hue and became black, then the skin turned to the colours natural to the patient.

I will next state the cases, which seem to me to show that the remedy deserves a careful trial. I quote the first and most important from the *Times of India*, in which journal the boy's father published more than one statement of his case. The lad was a pure European, and his photograph was taken from time to time by Messrs. Lindley Warren and a Mr. Sergeant.

CASE I.—My son, T. B. H., aged 13, was about three years ago afflicted with leprosy. His arms and hands to the tips of his fingers were much swollen and helpless. His legs, knees downwards, the ankle joints on to the toes the same. The boy was obliged to be carried up and down stairs. He could barely sustain the weight of his body on his feet, and could not wear shoes. His face, nose (nostrils nearly closed), and ears (about four times usual size) were very much swollen and greatly disfigured. He was a most pitiable sight to look at—when one day he was seen by Dr. Blaney (Apothecary of the European General Hospital, Bombay), who at once recognized the disease, and gave me a letter of introduction to Dr. Bhau Daji, who, up to this time, was in all but name a stranger to me. He took the boy in hand, and, by adhering to his instructions, I am happy to say there is a cure for the leprosy. From the poor, frightful, helpless child, unable to stand, he is now as healthy and fine a boy, and I'll back him to walk, run, or jump with any boy of his age in Bombay. He can take a standing jump of $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

C. H.

P.S.—Dr. Sylvester's certificate appended for publication.*
Bombay, August 16th, 1872.

[Copy.]

Certifies that, at Dr. Bhau Daji's request, I have examined T. B. H., aged 13. I believe I have seen this boy on a previous occasion among Dr. Bhau's leper patients while watching their treatment. At all events, I have seen photographs of young H., taken from time to time. He was afflicted with tubercular leprosy, which affected his face, chest, thighs, and legs—in fact, it was almost general. He is stated to have been under treatment two and a half years, and is now completely cured, so far as can be discovered. The skin is soft and natural, and the boy's health is apparently sound. I believe the patient has been cured.

Bombay, August, 1872. JOHN HENRY SYLVESTER, Professor of Medicine
and Principal, Grant College.

Quite lately I succeeded in finding the father of T. B. H. He told me that his son, now aged 33, is in perfect health, working in London

* I wrote some years ago to Dr. Sylvester, but have, unfortunately, lost his reply. So far as I can recollect, it did little more than express indignation at the publication of the above certificate.

as a carpenter. There is absolutely no sign of leprosy left about him. The young man positively declined to see me or any doctor, but the fact that the father was able, by destroying his copies of the photographs above mentioned, to keep a second wife ignorant that leprosy had existed in his family shows how perfect the recovery must have been.

CASE II.—Miss J. H. Collins, of Small Colaba, aged 24, European (mother born in Bombay). She was one of three surviving children out of ten. She was vaccinated at five months, and this was followed by ulcers all over her body. Leprosy, soon after an attack of measles, began fourteen years before she came under treatment, and increased steadily. She came under Bhau Daji's care on March 20th, 1868. At this date her face and ears were greatly swollen, and she had large lumps beneath the eyes; the eyelashes were quite gone, the nose fallen in, the hands were much swollen, the legs were much swollen, the skin discoloured, and there were three ulcers on each, the largest being the size of the palm, and very painful, causing frequent loss of sleep. Sensation was lost in the feet. Attacks of fever occurred every other day or even every day, and she was very weak. On September 19 the face was much smaller, the lumps beneath the eyes almost gone, and the right eyelashes were growing again. The hands were much less swollen, and the swelling of the legs had gone, the discolouration was going, sensation in the feet was returning, all ulcers but one were healed, and this was reduced to the size of a dollar, was healing, and the pain was less. There was no fever now. She had gained strength greatly, and slept well. On January 30, 1892, Colonel Wilson reported that this patient was "alive. She gave up the medicine since Bhau Daji's death. The disease remains stationary, not cured but evidently checked." I have failed to get a medical report upon present state. She may be cured, and the trace of former ravages may have been taken as evidence of existing disease.*

CASE III.—Mrs. Cornish, European, living on the Esplanade, aged 31, was born in and had always lived in India. The disease was of nine years' standing. When she came under treatment on March 1st, 1868, she was then very weak and bedridden, the face and ears were greatly swollen, the nose fallen in, the eyebrows gone, the hands were swollen, the nails gone, sores in the legs and arms were fœtid and almost unbearable; one ulcer on the left leg measured seven by four inches. Attacks of fever were frequent. On September 19 she could walk two or three miles and go about her business, the swelling of the face was much less, the eyebrows and nails were growing again (no other statement about hands), all sores, except the largest, which was nearly healed, healed in the first month of treatment. She had had only one attack of fever since the commencement of treatment. This patient stated that the relief given by the oil was experienced within the first week, and that the improvement was quite steady. Colonel Wilson could obtain no information about Mrs. C. It may be worth noting that she had a family.

* Col. Wilson writes, under date June 17th, 1892, that Miss C. declined to allow herself to be photographed, both she and her friends asserting that she was suffering from leucoderma and not from leprosy.

CASE IV.—Mrs. Burrett, aged 18, born in Bombay of Irish parents. Disease of two years' standing. Came under treatment on June 26, 1868. She had swelling of the entire upper and lower extremities, with brown raised patches, swelling of and spots on the face, and swollen nose. Marked improvement occurred in a month: the swellings at the time of the report were entirely gone. Colonel Wilson reports: "As regards Mrs. B. she was not cured, and is dead."*

Of the following cases in natives I have no account other than the hasty pencil notes of the gentleman who gave me the name of the remedy.

CASE XVIII.—The Rev. Vishnu Bhaskur Karmarkar, of the American Mission in Ahmednuggur, wrote a careful account of his own case in the *Dhyanodaya* of September 1, 1868, from which the following is an extract: He had been ill four or five years before coming under Bhau Daji's treatment on April 1, 1868. "In two months I felt considerably better, and now, after four months, I am half cured. The shining of the skin of the whole body is gone. The swellings in different places have become less, and the veins of the hands, etc., which could not be made out before, are now seen distinctly. Most of the redness of the face is gone. The swelling of the ears still exists, but far, far less than what it was before. The hairs of the eyebrows, which had dropped off, have commenced to grow again. The feeling of improvement internally is even greater than the external improvement. The appetite is good, and the food is digested easily. I am in better spirits, and my strength is double what it was. Formerly, from ulceration in the interior of the nose, blood used to pass, and, not being able to breathe through the nose, the mouth had always to be kept open. From this, especially at night, the mouth used to be very dry, causing distress which has now gone. The ulceration in the nose still exists, but very slightly. The sense of smell, which was lost, is now mostly restored; the voice, which had acquired a nasal twang, is now clear."

CASE XIX.—In the same paper this gentleman refers to the cases of certain other lepers under the same treatment whom he had watched, and with whom he had often spoken. Among them the following seems the most promising: Rustomjee Byramjee, compositor in the *Times of India* printing office, living at Chira Bazaar, aged 20. Had the disease during his sixteenth year. In the seventeenth year it increased considerably. Those doctors who treated him are ready to certify that he really has leprosy, and that their treatment did him no good. He had swellings in different places, the nostrils were much swollen, and there were reddish tubercles on the face and hands, neck and ears. In this state he came to Dr Bhau Daji. The doctor was then only giving a trial to his new remedy, and thought the young man was a good patient. He got him to agree to take the medicine a long time, and to strictly observe the diet and regimen. Six months after taking medicine the disease completely disappeared. He has ceased taking medicine for 2½ years, and he has not observed the same strict diet. No one would now believe that he had had leprosy, so clean and healthy does he look.

Marked improvement is noted in all the cases mentioned.

* Col. Wilson reports further (June 17, 1892) that Mrs. B. died of dysentery; but that the disease was then far advanced owing, according to the statement of her husband, to persistent neglect of all treatment.

I cannot close without saying a few words upon the fact that Bhau Daji did not publish his mode of treatment, a fact which caused it to be freely said that he concealed it for his own advantage. I do not know when he began to use kauti oil as his sole remedy, but not until 1868 do we find public notice taken of his "cures." Counting this year in, he had five years (1868-72) in which he was able to work at the matter, not too long one would think, especially when the result of Koch's premature publication is remembered. It is stated in the obituary notice in the *Times of India*, June 5, 1874 (both the proprietor and editor knew Bhau Daji), that, "while ill, he was most anxious that his manuscripts should be collected and got ready for publication." Evidence is easily obtainable that in the majority of instances his leper patients were treated gratuitously, and that often he supported or assisted them during the treatment, conduct which is entirely in keeping with the generosity and public spirit for which he was remarkable. My informant knew Bhau Daji as well, probably, as a European ever knew a native, and could hardly have failed to detect, had they existed, the meanness and baseness which were attributed to him; nor is it at all likely that a native of low character would have been honoured by the friendship of Sir Bartle Frere and many of the best Europeans then resident in Bombay. Bhau Daji certainly had no need to seek honour as the vendor of a secret remedy, for there have been few men in our profession of whom more, or even so much, could have been said as we find in the obituary notice above referred to.

[The records of other cases, Nos. V. to XVII., do not appear to us sufficiently complete to be worth publishing in detail. In all of them great improvement is spoken of, and in two, almost complete recovery.—ED.]

