

The Consciousness Column ... on DEVOTION by Michael J. Roads

I noticed that in the last newsletter Carolyn included a small quote from Meher Baba. Interestingly, the Meher Baba centre for Australia is situated just a few hundred meters from where we live. When I go for a walk, I go down our steep hill for a way, then take a bush-track leading among the gum trees. After a pleasing walk, the track emerges next to a housing estate. I then follow a small trail uphill through the forest that takes me through the Meher Baba Abode, a high-energy place of natural beauty.

Just over a decade ago, Treenie and I had a couple of friends who were devotees of Meher Baba, so when a big gathering of devotees came together from all over the Southern Hemisphere, we were invited. People were also a bit curious about me, because it had become known that I met with Meher Baba at the center twenty years after the death of his physical body.

For both Treenie and me, this was our first introduction to a gathering of devotees. Like most people, I was familiar with the term devotee, but I had no idea of what that truly represented. These people impressed both of us with their obvious joy as they sang their praises to Meher Baba. Not of him, but 'to' him! Everything they did at this celebration was based around music, song, and joyous chant; their faces alight with love and appreciation. It was all in their consciousness, and joyfully expressed.

This was the first time I had ever seen 'devotion.' Without any exception, these people were utterly devoted to Meher Baba, and the fact that he physically was no longer with them made not the slightest difference. Had he been physically in the room in their midst, their joy, adoration, and devotion could have been no greater. We were both very impressed by this. To see such adoration and devotion made manifest was very moving.

I come from a Church of England background, Treenie from a Methodist Church. We have both moved on from these religious beginnings, but my memory is one of staid, pious, and even pompous ceremony in the church. I have no memory of joy, or radiant expressions - it was not in their consciousness - just sidelong glances to see who was there, or what they might be wearing. The devotees of Meher Baba clearly expressed from the heart, while all too obviously the church congregation worshiped from the head. Only in one woman, Kitty Willers, did I ever see or experience devotion. And she lived her whole life in devotion to God. High in the belfry, she taught me to ring the church bells, and to this day her sheer bright-eyed 'Godness' and patience shines as a light in my memory.

I experience this devotion. I am devoted to my spiritual growth, to a metaphysical life, and I feel enormous joy and fulfillment in this. To feel ever-greater clarity, ever-increasing insight, to really feel your soul growth year after year, is immensely fulfilling. And to know that there is no end to it . . . Do you have this spiritual devotion, this joyous passion? Believe me, it truly is the fuel for the fire.

In Love and Light, Michael