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Why I became a Bahá'í

by Martin Wagg, who became a Bahá'í in August 2002

THE FIRST RuhÃ Study course and Bahá'í fireside meetings have had a very strong spiritual effect on me, which in essence have allowed me to reclaim two words into my life, God and Prayer.

Throughout my adult life I have had a deep belief in the underlying religious and mystical meaning of life, and I have followed this path through Philosophy, Buddhism and the Christian Quakers, whom I almost joined fifteen years ago. Ultimately, what stopped me was what I perceived of as the Christian concept of God and the need for acknowledging this Being in a personal way. God to me then did not equate with my Buddhist concepts of the ultimate ground of being, or Sunyata the unattributable void, from which everything arises. I would not admit to prayer but only to meditation.

So the Spiritual study group course led me into concepts with which I was very familiar but had denied.

There is but one God, one people in all their diversity, and but one faith however expressed. Bahá'u'lláh said this to me much clearer than many other such statements, and allied this with what I think is the very Islamic statement that God is unknowable, unnameable, indescribable and undeniable. So that removed my problems with the word God, I stopped worrying about what the word God should mean, I simply do not know, all I can do is bear witness.

After that I found that to begin to practice praying was also not a problem, and neither was starting a conversation with God – I had been holding this conversation for a very long time, but without including the praise and love of God and the name of God in an explicit and personal manner.

So I declared myself a Bahá'í because the Bahá'ís opened my eyes to these gifts, and I realised that I loved them as they loved me and as everyone should love everyone.

Enough of my words, these are a hundred thousand times better:

O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, And open them to the realm of the All Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; Seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, With a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, With a nod He layeth balm on every wound, With a glimpse he freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as he doeth and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, And put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord.

(Á'Abdu'Àl-Bahá: **Selections from the Writings of Á'Abdu'Àl-Bahá**, p.51)

