

NUF January 2018 Reflection

By Rev Tony McNeile

January is named after the God Janus who was the guardian of doorways and passages. Statues or pictures of him would be at entrances. He has two faces, one looking forward and one to the back. Janus is aware of everything. The people began their prayers with one to Janus because he also held the keys to heaven. He would let the gods travel in and out but mortals could only pass in one direction. So Janus was a god of time and life. Look back at life, look forward to the future but don't forget to live in the present.

January is a month for looking back, looking forward, thinking about the present.

January is a month for reflection about life, for taking stock and making plans. And a time to take stock of more than just the material side of life.

There is a spiritual side of life. George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff a 20th century spiritual leader said that most people were spiritual sleepwalkers. They had never woken up to realise they had a spiritual essence connected to a higher life.

How do Unitarians reflect on the spiritual side of life?

Unitarians will say that they come from a non-trinitarian tradition, but that is only the tradition of Christian dogma.

There is still a holy trinity but it is the holy trinity of the self. Of mind,

body and spirit all making one human being. While Janus looks in two directions, we must look in three. The person we are cannot be healthy and whole if one part of that holy trinity is neglected. The most neglected is spirit, and it too has many faces, from enthusiasm and joyfulness through to religious grace.

How out of sorts we can feel if one of our trinity is neglected. Quite often the other two will become sick as well.

The body can be exercised and fed safe food, the mind can be exercised too. But how do you exercise the spirit? In the old days it was enough to go to church but for many the church has ceased to exercise the spirit. Its mistake was in trying to restrain the spirit with prohibitions.

The spirit is best exercised by giving it a time each day for meditation and reflection, morning or evening. It is best exercised by looking at the positives in the world whether in the great outdoors or in the acts of good people. It is best exercised through practising loving kindness. That is another trinity!

Whatever your resolutions for the coming year please remember Janus and please protect the holy trinity of yourself. Mind, body and spirit.

Keep the whole body healthy.

Happy New Year.

I am Tony McNeile.