



VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2

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Coming Events

LIGHT is pleased to announce our upcoming events for September to December 2015. There is *no admission charge* for any of these events, but donations are gratefully accepted.

LIGHT Lecture Series

The talks will be held on the first Tuesday of the month in October, November and December. Attendees are invited to a buffet dinner starting at 6:00 p.m., with the talk to follow at 7:00.

Location: Charisma Restaurant
83D Sherbrook St.

Tuesday, October 6

Douglas Staley: "Spiritual Transformation Through Conscious Attention and Awareness"

The importance of developing conscious attention and choiceless awareness as a means of nourishing inner growth and development is stressed in many spiritual traditions. By learning to objectively observe the workings of our body-mind, we can discover the conditioned patterns of thinking, feeling and sensing which prevent the full flowering of our human potential and a skilful engagement with life. Through the application of mindfulness to the moment-to-moment activity of our mind and body we can directly perceive how unconscious and habitual thoughts, feelings and perceptions create the notion of a self-enclosed ego seemingly separate from the rest of life, thus veiling our true nature of pure awareness and universal consciousness.

Douglas Staley has studied a variety of spiritual traditions over the span of four decades, with the aim of integrating Western and Eastern models of inner development. He is especially interested in exploring the role of mindfulness and awareness in the process of spiritual growth and transformation.

Tuesday, November 3

Tara Maniar: "Ahimsa"

The first of the Yogic principles, *Ahimsa* translates as "non-violence" toward all living beings. It has been recognized throughout history as a force for change and social justice. We will explore the concept of ahimsa and what it would look like in our thoughts, words and actions. Hopefully, you will leave the session with some understanding of how to make ahimsa alive so as to bring more peace and harmony into your life.

Tara Maniar is a certified Chakradance™ facilitator and Spiritual Life Coach who empowers individuals to transform their inner turmoil, identity crises and work/family confusion into enlightened possibilities. She guides individuals to discover their true self, live from their core and be their best at home, work and play.

Tuesday, December 1

To be announced.

(more events on page 2)

Peace Days

The Circle of Peace

Thursday, September 24 - 7:00 p.m.

As part of Peace Days 2015, LIGHT invites you to experience an evening of transcendental music, spiritually-infused chanting, inspirational poetry and guided meditation. Musicians Deborah Judith and Nandita Selvanathan will collaborate with audience members to evoke healing energies to promote and sustain peace and harmony in the world.

Deborah Judith is a gifted pianist, recording artist, teacher and healer. Nandita Selvanathan is a musician from India trained in classical, folk and other Indian styles.

Location: Robert A. Steen C.C.
980 Palmerston Ave.

Fireside Room (side entrance off the parking lot)

No admission charge - donations gratefully accepted.

For more about Peace Days, see the article on page 2.



LIGHT Special Events

Wednesday, October 21 - 7:00 p.m.

Tanis Moore: "Qi Gong Healing Walk"

Join us as we walk in a spiral formation, to the centre and back. This is a simple form of a Qi Gong healing walk, first conceived in China by a woman who cured herself of cancer. The walking technique is easy to learn and use in your everyday life. Tuning forks will be used to clear energy in the body and in the room before beginning the walk. Questions are most welcome!

Tanis Moore has studied many forms of energy work and healing, including Therapeutic Touch, CranioSacral Therapy, traditional Chinese medicine, sound/vibration healing and drumming circles.

Wednesday, November 18 - 7:00 p.m.

Margaret Lavallee: "The Coming of the Pipe: The Seven Sacred Teachings of the Pipe"

The sacred pipe is one of the most powerful and sacred objects for First Nation peoples. By using the pipe we may communicate with the spirits and make our needs known, asking for the things we need in our lives.

Margaret Lavallee is a traditional healer and teacher. Along with her husband Jules she founded the Red Willow Lodge healing centre east of Anola.

LOCATION - BOTH EVENTS:

Harrow United Church - Lower Hall

955 Mulvey Ave. (at Harrow)

LIGHT Lending Library

LIGHT is pleased to offer a new section in our lending library, titled Cosmology. Both science and the world's spiritual traditions present a cosmological worldview, which may be expressed in scientific, religious or mythic form. In order to understand ourselves and our place in the grand scheme of things, we need to understand the laws and principles at work in the universe. G.I. Gurdjieff emphasized the importance of studying both cosmological and psychological teachings when traversing the spiritual path:

Each of us is an image of the world, created by the same laws which created the whole of this world. By knowing and understanding oneself one will know and understand the whole world, all the laws that create and govern the universe. And at the same time by studying the world and the laws that govern the world one will learn and understand the laws that govern oneself.

Cosmological ideas and theories challenge our understanding of reality and raise important issues and themes for contemplation, such as:

- the origin of the universe - what existed before the "Big Bang"?
- the nature of the space-time matrix underlying the cosmos
- the invisible dark matter and energy that constitutes the majority of the universe
- the mutual interrelationship of all levels and all beings in the universe

The cosmology-themed volumes in the library represent some of the most important contributions by scientists, thinkers and spiritual teachers exploring these seminal ideas. They include eminent scientists such as Stephen Hawking (*A Brief History of Time*), Albert Einstein (*The Cosmic View of Albert Einstein*) and Fritjof Capra (*The Tao of Physics*); transpersonal psychologists Ken Wilber (*Quantum Questions*) and Stanislav Grof (*Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*); and spiritual teachers like the Dalai Lama (*The Universe in a Single Atom*).

The Lending Library catalogue can be accessed through LIGHT's website.

Peace Days 2015

Once again this year, Peace Days will be taking place in Winnipeg, with events going on from September 11 to 24. The International Day of Peace is observed around the world each year on September 21. This day has been proclaimed by the United Nations to be devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and all peoples. It provides a unique opportunity to join with people around the world in taking meaningful action for peace.

The mission of Peace Days 2015 is to promote and advance peace and compassion, as well as to highlight the harmony and cultural diversity of the citizens of Manitoba by exposing the population to a multitude of activities and organizations that embody the culture of peace and compassion. Peace Days 2015 will include a diverse, stimulating program of events throughout Winnipeg to appeal to all ages. For further information about Peace Days, you can visit their website at <http://www.peacedays.ca>

LIGHT has participated in Peace Days for the last two years and will be hosting a very special event on Thursday, September 24: The Circle of Peace (details on page 1).



Besides the LIGHT event, you may also be interested in some of the other events taking place during Peace Days, including:

Tuesday September 15, 7:00 p.m.
"Mindfulness, Compassion and Peace"
Plato & Company bookstore
284 Tache Ave.

Wednesday September 16, 7:00 p.m.
"Mindfulness Meditation Talk and Practice Event"
St. Peter's Anglican Church
755 Elm St.

Meeting the Spiritual Challenges of the 21st Century

Human evolution has followed a cultural journey from hunter-gatherer to agrarian to industrial and post-industrial, to the modern world of advanced science and technology. We now live in a world of computers, biotechnology, space travel, robots and artificial intelligence. With each transition there were challenges and opportunities, but also misuses and abuses. Fourth Way author William Patterson describes this progression in *Spiritual Survival in a Radically Changing World-Time*:

If we look back historically, we see earlier forms of human organization were simpler, smaller and more communal. Yes, geography was a protection then, as it isn't now. Great oceans, mountain chains, jungles and deserts divided people, allowing a certain separation and seclusion. Other cultures barely knew each other, if at all. The traditions, religions, values, ways of organizing and living life were relatively stable. Time moved slowly. Nature dominated; the seasons reigned supreme. In terms of great societal movements and reorganizations, we see how our forebears went from a tribal hunter-gatherer to the agrarian, and the forming of villages and eventually towns. Then came the industrial world with its greater centralization, the congestion of cities, colonization, the beginning of world trade. Each new world-time challenged the older order of human life, and in doing so each in its way put the question of physical survival.

We live in a time of remarkable scientific and technological advances which are linking the whole world in an interrelated web of information and ideas, one in which old patterns of thinking, feeling and valuing are being redefined and reformulated. Computers with increasingly rapid processing speed and sophisticated software programs are giving machines capabilities which were once thought to be distinctly human – understanding speech, translating from one language to another and complex pattern recognition. But the marvels of technology are also accompanied by significant dangers: “Technology is the new ideology of the 21st century. It almost totally engulfs us. And increasingly we rely on it to make our decisions.”

- Over-reliance on machines and technology may be potentially catastrophic, as they are essentially dependent for their functioning on the electrical grid (which

is vulnerable to natural or human-made disasters).

- Through mass media and the Internet, events in one part of the world are instantaneously transmitted throughout the globe, with individual and collective consequences far beyond their import, even causing panic in the stock market and major disruptions in the economy.
- The creation of ‘virtual realities’ such as video games replaces embodiment in physical reality with an artificial, fabricated, mental world.
- Although machines can perform repetitive tasks much better than humans, they lack social skills, emotional capacities, conscious thinking, imagination and intuition, and a moral compass – attributes which define us as human beings.
- Over-identification with the consumer products of technology encourages self-centredness, instant gratification and the notion that faster is better. “Should this happen human beings will lose what is most precious and unique – our possibility to evolve, to spiritually awaken.”

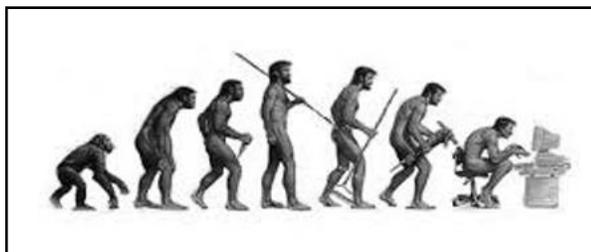
The impact of technology is so pervasive that the intrinsic value and worth of each individual’s unique inner experience and creativity is devalued. William Patterson: “The danger is not from technology itself, but rather the part of us that so identifies with technology that we allow our purpose and meaning as human beings to be defined and limited in the rational part of ourselves so that, unwittingly, we will only want to become better machines – faster and more accomplished.”

The revolutionary technological changes enveloping our world have occurred in a remarkably short period of time, measured in decades, not centuries or millennia. How can humanity meet

these unprecedented challenges?

Conscious change is necessary to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances of our contemporary world. Scientists Robert Ornstein and Paul Ehrlich argue in *New World New Mind* that both biological and cultural evolution are clearly inadequate to enable humanity to meet the challenges of the modern world: Human beings, like other organisms, have to adapt to the environment in which they live. For most of the history of life our ancestors evolved biologically, as do all living things. (Biological evolution consists of changes in the information encoded in our genes. It typically operates over thousands of generations.) Then, for the relatively brief period of human prehistory and history – a few million years – adaptation took place primarily by means of cultural change: the development of language and tools; the invention of agriculture, cities, industry and high technology. Cultural evolution can be much more rapid than biological, for it involves alteration of information stored in minds or in books, tools, art, and other artefacts of societies. Cultural evolution can make significant changes in a matter of decades or less. But the rapid changes that human beings are making in the world now have made even the pace of most cultural evolution far too slow. As a result we are losing control of our future. The serious and dangerous mismatch is this: civilization is threatened by changes taking place over years and decades, but these changes are too slow for us to perceive readily. At the same time, the changes are much too *rapid* to allow biological or cultural evolutionary processes to adapt people to them. *We are out of joint with the times, our times.*

Humanity is now at a crossroads in terms of evolutionary development and requires a dramatic shift in consciousness to embrace a more universal and holistic worldview. A shift towards a view of humanity as one organism might enable us to take the selfless steps that could begin to solve our collective problems. Ornstein and Ehrlich advocate a healthy altruism which is concerned with the welfare of *all* people – our human family. Compassion, service and generosity can become reflections of our sense of common humanity.





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**LIGHT's membership year
begins on September 1.**

To become a member:

- **Fill in a membership form**
- **Attach \$20 (cash/cheque)
or provide your credit card
information and signature**
- **Leave it at any LIGHT event
or mail it to the address at
the bottom of the form**

The Wit and Wisdom of Mulla Nasrudin

In these challenging times of world change (both natural and geopolitical), a healthy dose of humour can place the foibles of human nature in a wider, more universal perspective. In the Sufi tradition, Mulla Nasrudin plays the role of the "wise fool" to illuminate how our unexamined assumptions and preconceptions colour the way we view and interact with the world. Here is a sampling of the Mulla's "wisdom" from Idries Shah's *The World of Nasrudin* and *The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin*:



"I can see in the dark," boasted Nasrudin one day in the teahouse. "If that is so, why do we sometimes see you carrying a light through the streets?"

"Only to prevent other people from colliding with me."

"There is nothing without an answer," said a monk as he entered the teahouse where Nasrudin and his friends sat.

"Yet I have been challenged by a scholar with an unanswerable question," observed the Mulla.

"Would that I had been there! Tell it to me and I shall answer it."

"Very well," said Nasrudin: "Why are you sneaking into my house through a window by night?"

"Why are you sitting at the crossroads, Mulla?"

"One day something will happen here, and a crowd will gather. When that comes about, I may not be able to get close enough – so I am putting in my time now."

The King decided to test Nasrudin's wit. "I have thought of a tricky problem for you, Mulla. See if you could offend me in such a way that your explanation will be a hundred times worse than the original faux pas." Nasrudin agreed. Several days later, the two men were out walking when Nasrudin grabbed the King by the head and kissed him on the mouth. "What on earth are you doing?" spluttered the horrified monarch. "Forgive me, Your Majesty," replied the Mulla. "For a moment I confused you with your wife."

A certain conqueror said to Nasrudin: "Mulla, all the great rulers of the past have honorific titles with the name of God in them: there was, for instance, God-Gifted and God-Accepted, and so on. How about some such name for me?" "God-Forbid," said Nasrudin.

The King's guards were building a high wall around the treasury. "Why are you doing this?" asked Nasrudin. "To stop thieves from getting over," replied one of the men. "Those from inside or outside?" asked the Mulla.