

With present-day lifestyles, there is little left of what *was*, say, twenty or thirty years ago. It seems that little has been left of the fabric of life then. So much has changed, we can even think of twenty years ago as the 'olden times'. Whereas then, twenty years ago, olden times were thought of as being maybe a hundred or so years in the past; and now, although it appears that many people are no longer interested in religion in the traditional sense, people, 'we', are talking openly about 'spirit', and are no longer shy of reporting experiences. It seems that we have taken a 'jump' into another dimension of thought and attitude. (To quote a reporter in *The Sunday Times*, 'We may not be getting our spiritual fix in church anymore but if the growth of 'spirit oriented' practices like yoga are anything to go by, our hunger is greater than ever.') We need a 'living faith', that 'something' – the Universal Energy, the life force, God – is a proven presence in our lives, as more and more people are discovering.

'There is a rising tide of consciousness leading to a flood of understanding, an awakening; a spiritual awakening in our time; an awakening from 'the sleep of the senses' in which we mistake our bodily identity for our 'ultimate' essence'.²

And as we reach out to this 'presence', in love and sincerity, with a goodness of heart, gradually, we will see changes coming into our lives; openings, opportunities, occurring; happenings beyond our imagination or expectation as in the 'wonderment' of the proven presence, we witness the unbelievable made real. The unbelievable is made real in, say, a 'deeper than deep moment' we experience it as going 'within', and for whatever reason, we glimpse, feel, become aware of a 'Something'. Perhaps it might be seen as a 'personal saviour', known by whatever name, if any, we care to use, and always able to be in contact, in the form of 'open communication', if we believe in the power of 'prayer' (which is really 'thought'). Let us cultivate our extra-sensory skills, which include considering the relevance of – to name but a few – dreams, coincidence and intuition. A remarkable example of intuition recently, in March 2013, led to the discovery, in a car park in Leicester, of the bones of the Medieval King, Richard III. Following the authentication of Richard III's bones, could this discovery lead to a re-thinking of the current opinion of the king, who was much maligned throughout history, and accused of murdering the little princes in the Tower. Leading historians and archivists, working together, are now beginning to dispute the bad reputation of the king, and argue that he would be more likely to have removed them to a secret place of safety. The research continues.

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Albert Einstein, scientist, is quoted as saying, 'The only real valuable thing is intuition.' Cultivate our extra-sensory skills, and never doubt our own ability to achieve the highest and the best, if we so wish to be truly human.

Thursday was the day of the funeral, the day I decided to spend quietly, watching it on TV in the lounge of The Mercure Grand Hotel. With no one else around, it seemed that it *would* be quiet, as I sat alone on a long sofa, with my notes and papers, a good half-hour before the funeral service was to begin. A long breakfast bar stood behind me, with about ten bar seats and in front of that, set higher on a wall, was the TV. Cleaning the glass-topped tables, was a young woman called Amy, who kindly came over and offered to put the TV on for me, keeping the sound low until the service began. We chatted for a while about the goings-on in Leicester, and how amazing it all was; the discovery of King Richard's remains, and the thousands of people suddenly there from all over the world. How on earth had it all come about? Then she told me, without any hesitation, of two things that had happened in her home, only the previous day. A can of after-shave lotion had just fallen off a shelf, no one near it, no reason for it to fall. Later, having a meal, she put her

knife and fork down, the fork simply lifting itself up to fall on the floor. 'Psychic phenomena,' I said, and she seemed to understand.

Alone again, and with the service about to start, I decided to sit at the breakfast bar, but, just as I was collecting my papers together to make the move, there was the sound of a most terrific crash from somewhere behind me. Startled, I quickly stood up; looking around, all I could see was a metal sheet lying askew, part on the wall, part on the floor, near a corner; could it be from a long radiator which was on the next wall (after the corner)? Then I realised that the radiator was boxed in anyway. Now all was quiet again except for the sound of the TV. The funeral service had just begun.

Amy rushed over, accompanied by one or two male workers from the hotel. Looking more than startled (hair standing on end sort of thing), they made their way over to this metal sheet, carefully, gingerly picking it up to replace it on the wall, next to another. They were obviously a pair; a metal sheet with a picture, 'a print' on the other side. The pictures were of old Leicester, the one that fell was of old buildings with the cathedral towering over them and all along the bottom a row of books by Shakespeare; and in the centre, was a poster, with the words in black, about an inch high, 'The Tragedy of King Richard III.'

We stood, staring at the picture, not saying a word, as if in some hypnotic trance. We all knew that if a picture falls off a wall it falls straight down, not veering two or three yards to the side...



November 2012: Queensland, Australia, celebrated the total eclipse of the sun by the moon, one of nature's greatest phenomena. Tens of thousands gathered to witness this event; however, clouds threatened to spoil the party – but they didn't; the clouds cleared, and the crowds and crowds of people were given a perfect view of totality – the amazing moment when the moon completely covers the sun, and a faint halo appears. Wonderful as it is, to witness such a sight, the truly Greatest Show on Earth (but in the heavens, if you know what I mean), Award must go to The Northern Lights in all their glory – or to give them their proper name, the *Aurora Borealis*.

What a name and what a show! And as they appear, often slowly, hesitantly at first (are there sounds of an orchestra in accompaniment?), to see, the unbelievably vibrant colours careering on finally into patterns; crossing, sweeping, crisscrossing, creating glittering spaces and shapes never seen before – over the whole sky – wondrous patterns, super-human patterns, woven as they go. Heads swivelling this way and that, not to miss anything; lighter and darker shades of every colour, dotted with a sparkling of silver, moving, swirling at great speed; changing, forming yet new patterns as quickly as the old ones have come into being... . The excitement, the scene, the lights perform as if trying to better themselves in answer to the delight of the crowds, now reduced to tears. There are tears falling everywhere; people crying, hugging each other, friends and strangers alike. *We were all one*, on the four nights that we were privileged to witness this spectacle.

We were all one, clapping, cheering, shouting, the 'oohs and ahs' in unison, never before more sincerely or emotionally expressed. The whole of the night sky was dancing and shimmying to the rhythm of the stars. The sky was the stage, the whole world the audience. This was truly heaven being witnessed on earth – in every sense of the word.⁷

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