Evolution from Space: Update

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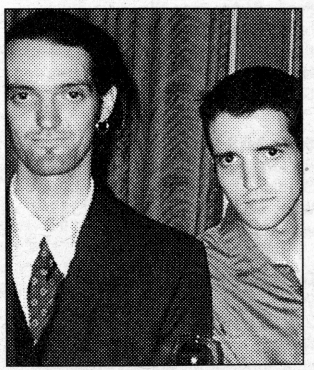
All the Panspermia action is taking place in India these days.

Panspermia is the theory that life is not indigenous to planets but rather arrives from space through various means, perhaps in the form of comet-born microbes, drifting spores or meteors bearing microscopic life. These notions are heretical to most biologists and space scientists, despite rather strong arguments in their favor (see "Evolution From Space" in the *RipSaw* online archives, www.ripsawnews.com/May10_2000/entertainment.html#gonzo).

An experiment has just confirmed that microbes are continually raining down from space, as announced at a scientific meeting in San Diego on July 29. The international team that performed the experiment features Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe and Professor Jayant Narlikar. These two Indian astronomers are both frequent collaborators with renowned maverick scientist Sir Fred Hoyle, longtime Big Bang theory opponent and advocate of the Panspermia theory. Wickramasinghe and Hoyle have co-authored several books on the Panspermia theory.

The experiment sent up cryogenic samplers on high-altitude balloons (launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation) to collect air from the upper stratosphere, 41 kilometers high. This is virtually the edge of space. Strict protocols were followed to insure against the possibility of contamination from earth microbes. The samples were analyzed at Cardiff University, one of Britain's foremost research universities. The many clumps of cells found in the samples were detected using a florescent dye that is only absorbed by living cells. And the way the cell-clumps were distributed in the atmosphere varied with height in such a way as to indicate that the microbes were arriving from space as opposed to percolating up from below. Attempts are being made to culture the cells, which, interestingly, are not working out as of this writing. As Wickramasinghe is quoted from the BBC News (July 31), this fact "gives added confidence that the microbes are something alien. Because, if they were ordinary run-of-the-mill bacterial contaminants, they would be very easy to culture."



Gonzo Scientists

This experiment has collected the hardest evidence yet for Panspermia: living bacterial life forms from the edge of space. As Wickramasinghe is quoted as saying in the *Daily University Science News* (July 30), 41 kilometers is "well above the local tropopause (16 kilometers), above which no air from lower down would normally be transported." In other words, some percolation between atmospheric layers is expected, but nothing like this. No one except the Panspermia theorists expected that microbes would be found this high up.

No matter how you slice it, the experiment is a paradigm-buster. Assuming no earthly contamination (the standard charge leveled against evidence of extraterrestrial microbes—yawn), there are only a couple of alternatives left, each one an outrage to conventional science. The cell-clumps may be from space, which would fully vindicate the Panspermia theory and rewrite biology from the ground up. Or, they are epidemic to the upper stratosphere, which itself is an outrageous idea, and will cause no small degree of harrumphing from traditional biologists and atmospheric scientists.

In light of the facts, we prefer the Panspermia explanation, especially given other recent events in India.

During the last week of July, the Indian state of Kerala was buffeted by rainstorms that included rain of different colors, namely red, yellow, green and black. Dubbed "rainbow rain," scientists immediately began taking samples and subjecting them to analysis, with some interesting results.

After studying the samples, it was announced that the colored rain contained meteor dust, and sure enough, the Center for Earth Science Studies in Thiruvanthapuram reported that a burning meteor had scattered more than 2,000 pounds of dust into the sky. This dust then rained out over Kerala as "rainbow rain."

But during the first week of August, further analyses of the rainwater turned up some red fungal spores, and the meteor theory was seemingly displaced by the fungal spores theory. However, three unsolved details of the fungus explanation stand out to us. One: the exact species of fungus has yet to be identified. Two: the scientists are at a loss to explain the huge amount of spores. Three: no one can figure out why all the spores fell in one place.

The missing piece of the puzzle would seem to be that the meteor and the fungus are not mutually exclusive explanations. The situation resolves without contradiction if we assume that both explanations are correct. We submit that the meteor scattered not only 2,000 pounds of dust over Kerala, but a large amount of fungal spores as well, which it brought from space.

RECOMMENDED READING *Evolution From Space* by Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe; *Diseases From Space* by Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe; *Living Comets* by Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe

NEXT WEEK The Electromagnetic Conspiracy

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