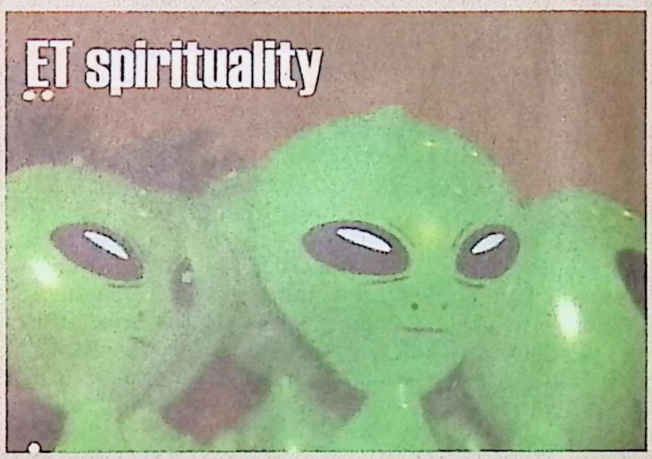
RECENTLY, there have been several talks on extra-terrestrials and spirituality or religion (scroll down for the next blog entry).

At the Space, Science, Environmental Ethics, and Policy Conference at NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California, US, the week before last; David Grinspoon, curator of astrobiology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, gave a talk on Extraterrestrial Spirituality.

There, he said Earth currently has only "dimly intelligent life".



"Our civilisation now we're very clever, but we're not very wise. We can invent these nifty things, but we don't really apply them without ... thought to consequences," Grinspoon told me. He said humans are in a sort of adolescent mindset.

Personally, I'm kind of amused by the idea that we're a bunch of adolescent boys running around blowing things up without considering the repercussions.

Grinspoon, author of Lonely Planets: The Natural Philosophy of Alien Life, says there may be "wise old aliens out there" who have succeeded in integrating science and spirituality. If an advanced civilisation manages to live long enough without blowing its planet to smithereens or polluting it beyond all hope of habitation, it may be that they will live long enough to be detected by us on Earth.

Grinspoon says his notion of alien spirituality is not about religion so much as morality. "The higher power, to the extent that it exists, is the wise civilisation which we ourselves are attempting to become."

I'm not sure I buy that there are highly evolved, enlightened life forms out there, but it's still a little comforting to think about these old granddaddy aliens in their rocking chairs. I'm certain the wisdom of rocking chairs cuts across species.

-Kelly Young

Golden Jubilee of RU Islamic History and Culture department

Aurangazeb Sohel

THE **Islamic History and Culture department** of Rajshahi University (RU) celebrated its daylong golden jubilee (1956-2006) function amidst vast fanfare, festivity and enthusiasm. Marking the completion of five decades of the department, the dazzling programme was a celebration not only for the department but the whole campus. The main programme on 12 April included the inauguration, a colorful rally, a discussion, academic exhibition of photographs and paper clippings, reminiscences and a cultural function.

The day's programme started at 9 am through a colorful rally with a large number of teachers, guests, and former and present students of the department parading the main streets of the campus. The rally was inaugurated by RU Vice Chancellor Professor M Altaf Hossain. The colorful rally launched from the Shahidullah Arts Building (where the department is housed) and concluded at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium.

After the rally, at 9.30 am a discussion was held at the Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium where RU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. M Altaf Hossain was the Chief Guest. Eminent educationalist and Professor Emeritus, Dr. A B M Hossain of the department delivered a valuable speech as Golden Jubilee addressor on "Civilization clash: Recent debate of history". Present Chairman of the Department and Convener of the organizing committee, Professor Dr. Kazi Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman presided over the program while RU Pro-VC Professor Mammununul Karamat and Professor Emeritus A K M Iaqub Ali, Prof. Muklesur Rahman and Treasurer of Islamic History Association Prof. Munsi Monjorul Haq were present as special guests.

Soon after the lunch, a reminiscence program chaired by the senior-most ex-professor Professor Kamrun Rahman was held at the same auditorium. Alumni Association Committee of Islamic History and Culture Department formally launched its journey from this programme.

A cultural evening amid participation of young teachers and students started at the auditorium and continued up to 10pm. The Islamic History and Culture Department started its journey in 1956 with just four students. The department has some praiseworthy achievements. It is a department free of session jams; it holds regular classes and examinations, and ensures a research-based education system.

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