

Mars Curiosity & the Human Condition

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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Religious Scholar Cites 4 Reasons to Support Space Exploration

Despite slashing government budgets on everything from entitlement to defense programs, NASA is proceeding with its \$2.5 billion Mars Science Laboratory mission.

Central to the mission's success is Curiosity – a one-ton rover that continues to impress Earthlings with laser blasts for rock samples, mobility via a joystick and plenty of video and pictures. On all accounts, the mission, which may provide answers to questions of life on Mars, has so far been a wild success.

“With this Mars program, NASA has once again captured the imaginations of people throughout the world, instigating conversations about the universe and even the significance of life not only on Earth, but also on other planets,” says Sanjay C. Patel, (www.SanjayCPatel.com), author of “God Is Real,” a book that explores similarities between modern science and ancient cosmology.

Science and religion do not conflict with each other; they are different languages that ultimately lead to the same truth, he says. As science has done in the past, Patel suspects more data from extraterrestrial locations like Mars will continue to confirm ancient religious theories. He discusses four reasons why the Mars mission is well worth the expense.

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- 2012 meets 1492 – an argument for resources: It's not just science-fiction anymore; prominent scientists like Steven Hawking say Earth's moon, Mars and Titan, a moon of Saturn, have resources people will need sooner rather than later. The main reason – the world's explosive growth in human population and the exponential consumption of land and other necessities. What we might find, Patel says, is a scenario very much like that which early Europeans experienced in the New World: new foods, reams of building supplies, new fuels, land and other resources. We may discover things that will become essential to future human beings.
- A spiritual-scientific connection: Science has confirmed what religion posited more than a millennium ago, Patel says. For example, scientific findings have confirmed what ancient Yogis said: That volcanic fire scorched India about 120 million years ago. Related volcanoes in the ocean south of India submerged about 117 million years ago. "The submarine Fire exists in the ocean," he says, quoting ancient Yogis. "It drinks the seawater and removes its saltiness. It then expels the desalinated water from another opening. ... That perfectly describes the undersea volcanoes and hydrothermal vents near India."
- If we're not moving forward ... Predictions as to where we'd be with space exploration in 2012 were quite ambitious during the race to the moon in the 1960s. But we haven't accomplished a lot since then. Celebrity astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson recently argued that we're still reaping the benefits of the research and development that went into the space race decades ago, and to negate space exploration is to turn off one of humanity's most important dimensions – our ambition to innovate.
- Alien life may not be so alien: As the European discovery of the New World revealed, the meeting of foreign civilizations can have disastrous consequences. However, the discovery of life elsewhere, whether or not it is intelligent or self-aware, can further enlighten us as to our origins, our reason for being, and our role in the universe, Patel says.

About Sanjay C. Patel

Sanjay C. Patel studied theology, Sanskrit, ancient cosmology, advanced yoga and meditation techniques, among many other subjects, earning a degree in Divinity at the BAPS Swaminarayan Ashram in India. He continued studies of modern science and ancient spiritual texts for 30 years. His discoveries regarding the convergence of science and ancient texts were published in mainstream science journals and presented at the 22nd International Congress of

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History of Science in Beijing.