

and a request has been put out for him to make a statement to the press when he returns.

It was added that the pilot assumed the lights beneath the jet were those of another aircraft at the time they were seen. She said the company had been "snowed under" with inquiries from the press about the sighting.

The Debonair report to the CAA report reads:

"Unidentified bright light below BAe146 at FL280.

"Area below a/c illuminated for 10 seconds by incandescent light which was not considered by reporter to be an a/c landing light.

Reporter stated three other a/c reported seeing it moving at high speed or static. ATC informed but they reported no other a/c in vicinity. Five minutes later a radar return was present at 75 miles on weather radar. Atmosphere reported as stable and no other a/c were in vicinity."

The aircraft involved was a British Aerospace 146, a small four engined jet flying on a chartered flight from Linkoping in Sweden to Humberside Airport in East Yorkshire.

The UFO was reported whilst the aircraft was flying at 28,000 feet, 58 miles off the Danish coast above the North Sea. Tracey Law, of Humberside Airport, said the report was made by the pilot to the CAA on landing, but there was "no mention made whatsoever of UFOs in the original report..it has since been embellished. It was not mentioned to us officially as it happened outside of our airspace."

In particular she mentioned the description of the UFO as being "as big as a battleship" being manufactured by the press, Humberside Airport said they believed the sighting had been caused by "a light reflection from the underside of the jet." Flight Lieutenant Tom Rounds of the RAF at the Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, said the MOD had learned of the report via the Press.

He said stories that the object had been tracked by RAF radar were "laughable" as the UK radar could not pick up objects 58 miles off the Danish coast.

Flt Lieut Rounds said the MOD were not investigating the report, and had not received any report concerning it from the CAA.

[UK 8]*****

Source: BBC News

Publish Date: Thursday 8th April 1999

ET phones home again

It's good to phone home: ET comes back in ads for BT [British Telecom]

Alien film star ET is coming back to British screens - as the star of a new advertising campaign for BT. The telecommunications giant has signed up the creature - created by director Steven Spielberg in the 1982 film - to spearhead its new Stay In Touch campaign.

The advertisements feature ET, who famously wanted to "phone home", inspiring humans to improve their lives in the next century by developing their communications skills.

The ads start on 11 April with a "teaser" - which shows a light streaking across the sky and the alien's hand held out, with one of his long, spindly fingers extended.

The full campaign starts in May, marking the first time ET has appeared in anything since the original film.

Original film broke records

The ads are part of a deal between BT and Universal Studios, as well as Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment outfit.

BT's UK group managing director, Bill Cockburn, said: "When ET

was first on Earth he was only able to phone home.

"As we enter the 21st century, we provide many other options to stay in touch, be it through the Internet, data transfer or multi-media."

ET, which broke box office records at the time, was nominated for nine Oscars in 1983 and won four. It focused on the relationship between the homesick alien and a young boy, Elliott, played by Henry Thomas.

Most of the cast - which included a young Drew Barrymore - were relatively unknown at the time. Harrison Ford did play a school principal, but Spielberg cut his scenes fearing he would be a distraction.

The alien is the latest in a long line of faces promoting BT. They include comedian Hugh Laurie, and actors Bob Hoskins and Maureen Lipman.

He also follows in the footsteps of Buzby, the animated yellow bird who urged Britons to "make someone happy" with a phone call in the late 1970s.

[W 1] ***

Source: Reuters News Service

Publish Date: 19th May 1999

From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

NASA Seeks E.T. At New Astrobiology Institute

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Reuters A new NASA institute will look for extraterrestrial life, but the space agency's chief warned Tuesday against expectations of "little green men or little green women."

"We would like to understand how life went from a chemical condition ... and made the transition to cellular life," NASA administrator Dan Goldin said in formally unveiling the Astrobiology Institute.

People would be wrong to think "we're out searching for little green men or little green women," Goldin said. "We're looking for any form of biological life. Single-cell (organisms) would be a grand slam."

To hunt such tiny organisms in outer space, Goldin said he envisioned shrinking the capabilities of an earthly laboratory to the size of a computer chip, with massive capacity to observe and calculate, and then lobbing it into space.

He also said there might be simulations of some of the unlikely environments -- such as undersea volcanoes -- that support life on Earth.

"We will need a revolution in communications ... a revolution in organization and scientific thinking," Goldin told a news conference at the institute's home at Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California, which was monitored in Washington.

Goldin made the announcement in the heart of Silicon Valley and said that was no accident: the institute is meant to be "virtual," rather than having a huge physical plant, with participants across the United States linked by computer.

The Northern California location also puts the Astrobiology Institute in close proximity to SETI, which is also searching for extraterrestrial life from a base at the University of California at Berkeley. Goldin said the NASA institute would work with other public and private agencies, and that might include SETI -- the U.S. non-governmental Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute.

The proposed budget for the new venture is \$25 million initially, and Goldin said that could rise to \$50 million to \$100 million a year. NASA's total proposed budget for next year is about \$13.6 billion.

Goldin said Dr. Baruch Blumberg, a cancer specialist who won the 1976 Nobel Prize in medicine for developing a test and vaccine for the deadly hepatitis B virus, would head the new institute.

"The mission is to look for life without any specifications," Blumberg told the news conference. "Nothing in the mission would preclude looking for rather strange and unusual and, as a matter of fact, life forms we can't even imagine right now."

But how do you look for something when you do not know what it is? "That's what basic research is all about," Blumberg said.

[W 2] ***

Source: Fox News
Date Sent: 24th May 1999
From: bernhard.nahrgang@ob.kamp.net (Bernhard Nahrgang)

Earth to Aliens - Physicists Plan to Send Second Message Into Space

By Amanda Onion

NEW YORK - If astronomers are busy looking for signals from outer space, why aren't we trying to send our own signals?

We are. In fact, last January, a team of Canadian scientists announced they plan to send a message into space from a 150-kilowatt transmitter in the Ukraine. Their suggested 22-page written message will take three hours to broadcast and contains information about mathematics, physics, biology and geography. It also includes a diagram, some basic data about our solar system, and a request that the recipients send back a note about their own world.

The scientists also plan to take money from those who would like to include their names on the message. That's a request that Seth Shostak of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence says people at SETI receive all the time.

"I got a note the other day from a broadcast company that wanted to collect money on the Internet and then broadcast their names in a signal," he said. "It may be profitable, but scientifically, it doesn't make sense."

Shostak likens the effort to going to the coast of Spain and sticking a bottle in the ocean with a note, saying, "Please Reply." "It's a lot of fun, but it's unlikely you're going to discover America that way," he said.

In fact, radio and television waves have been traveling into space since the invention of broadcast technology. As Shostak points out, broadcasts of I Love Lucy have already reached a few thousand stars.

While TV reruns may, in their own way, reflect aspects of human culture, compressing the essence of human existence into a single message can become a tricky endeavor. In 1974 an American scientist broadcast the first condensed message into space from the massive Arecibo telescope complex in Puerto Rico.

Frank Drake, the pioneer of SETI, composed the message to the stars, which contained just 1,679 bits (binary digits, or zeroes and ones) of information. The signal contained a rectangular grid that aliens could then reconstruct to provide a basic diagram of the solar system and of a DNA double-helix molecule.

Drake's message is undoubtedly still heading toward distant stars. As Shostak points out, one problem with sending signals to planets hundreds of light years from Earth is there's no point in counting on a reply any time soon.

"It's bound to be a bit of a wait before you can even expect results, let alone, get them," he said. "And not many are interested in winning a Nobel prize 500 years from now when the aliens finally answer."

[W 3]*****

Wednesday, April 21, 1999 Published at 12:54 GMT 13:54 UK
Source: BBC News
Publish Date: Wednesday 21st April 1999

Is anybody out there?
Seti is listening. Is anyone sending a message?

By BBC News Online's Kevin Anderson in Washington

Scientists and theologians who gathered in Washington to discuss the origins of life and the Universe ended their conference by trying to answer the question: "Are we alone?"

Astronomers discovered three planets orbiting a distant star. The question seemed particularly fitting in light of the past week's announcement that astronomers have discovered three planets orbiting a Sun-like star 44 light-years away.

David Latham is an astronomer who has carried out research into extra-solar planets by observing the gravitational pull the planet exerts on the star it orbits, by causing the star to "wobble."

"It's an exciting time for planet research," he said, adding, "this will have an impact on our thinking about intelligent life elsewhere."

But as to whether these newly discovered planets could support life, Latham said that the planets are nothing like Earth.

Inhospitable giants

They are several times more massive than Jupiter, the biggest planet in our solar system, and just like Jupiter are probably inhospitable gas giants, he said.

But while astronomical observations can detect the presence of planets around other stars, we can only measure the most basic attributes of the planets, such as their orbit and a minimum mass, Latham said.

We have yet to measure whether these planets have features that would support life. According to Ken Nealson, some of these include:

the presence of liquid water, plate tectonics and a magnetic field to shield the planet from cosmic radiation.

Ken Nealson will analyse samples from Mars for signs of life. Nealson is a senior research biologist with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He is working on future missions to Mars, which will look for signs of life on the Red Planet.

The mission will bring back samples from Mars, and Nealson predicts a leap in scientific knowledge similar to the great leap forward in knowledge that took place after the Apollo missions brought back samples from the moon.

The mission has generated great excitement and interest in the scientific community. "We're no longer on the fringe," he said.

Contact

Jill Tarter is the director of Project Phoenix for Seti, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. She is the model for Jodie Foster's character in the film "Contact."

When her daughter was eight years old, someone asked her what her mother did. Tarter's daughter answered: "she searches for little green men."

But, she was quick to note that Seti is "not an investigation of UFO's or alien abduction. It is not a religion or a cult. It is not a way of directly detecting alien intelligence. It is also not politically correct."

Seti was formally a federally-funded project under the auspices of NASA, but the group's funding was cut in 1993. The group now relies on private funding.

Human intelligence

To detect extra-terrestrial intelligence over interstellar distances, they listen for radio transmissions.

But Irven DeVore, an anthropologist at Harvard University, said that six of eight conditions necessary for life are highly improbable.

On Earth, the development of human intelligence was itself highly improbable, if "nothing but fortuitous."

For these reasons, he said, "the chances for communication with another intelligence are vanishingly small."

Although they disagreed on the possibility of extra-terrestrial intelligence, Ms Tarter and Mr DeVore agreed that if we did make contact with intelligent life from another planet, it would be a monumental event.

"Contact with an extra-terrestrial intelligence would be such a momentous event that everything else would pale in comparison," Mr DeVore said.

Seti is ready for the day they hear a signal from space.

Ms Tarter showed a picture of Seti's refrigerator at the radio telescope in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. They have a bottle of champagne waiting ready for the celebration.

[W 4] ***

Source: The Jerusalem Post
Publish Date: Tuesday 8th June 1999

NASA Seeks E.T. At New Astrobiology Institute

By MICHAEL S. ARNOLD

(May 5) - A Rishon Lezion engineer, who claims he is in contact with extraterrestrials, is drawing the attention of believers and skeptics alike.

Adrian Dvir is a huge man, burly and bearded, but at this moment he must feel something like a teenage girl.

It is already 9:20 on the evening of Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars and, while most of the nation has settled down in front of the TV, Dvir is waiting by the phone for a call that was supposed to come on the hour.

He is growing somewhat anxious. Every few minutes he checks his cellular phone and random attachments to make sure they are properly connected. They are, but still there is no sign of Fenix. It could be that Fenix is standing Dvir up.

"I can't promise that he'll call," Dvir says. "I told him that a journalist was coming, and he's also interested in public relations. But I'm not his top priority. Sometimes they have crises or other things come up."

As the minutes tick by one wonders how much grace to give Fenix before thanking Dvir politely and mentioning the long ride back from his Rishon Lezion home to Jerusalem. Eyes wander the walls, taking in the artwork and noticing how curiously appropriate it is to the environment: ghoulish faces appearing out of tree trunks; a bald, hydrocephalic woman with a passing resemblance to Sinead O'Connor; designs of refracted light and interlocking geometric shapes; distorted faces with several levels of eyes. Seventies basement playroom art, in other words.

Finally, at 9:30, Dvir's cell phone rings. The screen registers "private call" but the slow, metallic croak of a voice is unmistakable: he says he is Fenix. The voice is audible over a speaker Dvir has attached to the phone.

He does not apologize for the delay, but his manners can be

excused. He is, after all, hurtling in his spacecraft at 18 times the speed of light from Uranus back to his home solar system of Arcturus, and it's reasonable to assume that Cellcom's reception is spotty that far out in the galaxy.

Dvir, who has developed a friendship with Fenix after three months of frequent phone calls - he has recorded some 40 hours of the calls on video - begins the conversation by announcing that a journalist is present and wishes to ask Fenix some questions. That deviance from the normal rules will not be allowed, however.

"It is incumbent on me to bring my regrets," Fenix says, his speech slow and halting, his guttural native language translated awkwardly into Hebrew through some kind of synthesizer on the mother ship. "Permission for direct contact, in real time, outside the contact person, does not exist. Please bring questions through you if his desire is in receiving answers."

So begins The Jerusalem Post's first known contact with extraterrestrials. For Dvir, however, such close encounters are the stuff of everyday life. An engineer who develops hand-held military computers for Tadiran Com., Dvir says he has spent the last five years in close contact with aliens.

First they opened a medical clinic in the workroom of his Rishon Lezion home, one of several such supposed alien-run health clinics operating in the city. Those aliens, Dvir says, were of a particularly developed and, apparently, benevolent race.

Fenix's species, the Kliendcontlar, are less advanced but also well-intentioned. Their purpose is to warn us earthlings of the mortal danger we may face in another 50 years from the fearsome Morgolius, a race of cosmic bullies who even now are trying to exterminate the Kliendcontlar and have their sights set next on Earth.

True, the Kliendcontlar do appear to have ulterior motives: they believe Earth's atmosphere is favorable and would like to transfer to Dvir their genetic code for a possible future migration to our planet. Dvir warned them off, Earth being already too crowded. But it would seem the Kliendcontlar wouldn't pose such terrible competitors for the planet's scarce resources - they appear to exist, after all, only in a parallel dimension, imperceptible to most of us humans sadly limited to just five senses.

Dvir's training as an engineer and his methodical work habits may make him an ideal conduit to publicize the exploits of Fenix and his race, but he certainly is not alone in his belief in extraterrestrial beings.

A 1996 Gallup poll purported to show that 40 percent of Israelis believe in the existence of aliens, according to Avi Greif, chairman of the Israeli Center for the Study of UFOs. That still makes us much more skeptical than, say, Americans, some 70 percent of whom believe in extraterrestrials, Greif says.

Surely, contact with aliens has figured prominently in many of the movies that have most profoundly influenced our generation, from Close Encounters of the Third Kind to Star Wars, Star Trek to ET.

Grief, who is not in contact with aliens himself but gathers information on the phenomenon, says nearly 70,000 sightings of aliens and unidentified flying objects are reported around the world each year.

Many of these are recorded in various ways, though their authenticity obviously is disputed. It's anyone's guess what role pop culture images of aliens play in the alleged sightings.

"I'm 100 percent sure that aliens exist," Greif says. "In the end I believe it will be accepted by everyone. There is a lot of proof, but the problem is that this proof isn't known to a lot of people."

The reason for that, Greif and other believers insist, is a conspiracy of silence on the part of governments, militaries and

scientists. Greif alleges a history of contact between aliens and representatives of the US government, a collaboration that may even include the transfer of other-worldly technology.

The US, however, keeps such information under tight wraps, Greif says - "and if the American government denies it, of course the Israeli government will deny it too."

Israel, for its size, appears to have quite frequent contact with aliens. In Rishon Lezion alone, for example, aliens allegedly run at least three medical clinics, treating an assortment of ailments from disc problems to toothaches to anorexia to lupus. Much of the actual work is done by humans who channel the aliens' energy, laying on hands or projecting force with their hands held three to four centimeters above the patient's body.

Sometimes the aliens supposedly do the work all by themselves, while the "healer" sits on the side. That can anger patients, who feel they are being ripped off when the healer then pockets NIS 150. But in fact the aliens work up to 10 times faster than their human conduits, Dvir says, and such hands-off treatment thus is more efficient.

When Dvir became aware of his abilities several years ago, he attended an institute for spiritual healing in Holon, and in 1995 received diplomas in energetic healing and advanced spiritual healing. His first book, Healing, Yeshuyot Vehutzanim (healing, beings and aliens) has just been published by Gal and is available at Steimatzky's. His clinic is mostly closed now while he concentrates on writing a book on his experiences with the Kliendcontlars.

For demonstration purposes, however, Dvir does a bit of work on his wife, Adriana, who often feels that her left arm is falling asleep. Dvir maneuvers his hands above her body, guided, he says, by the aliens, who intuitively find the trouble spot. After a few minutes of energy transference, Adriana says she feels pins and needles in her arm, a sign that circulation is returning.

Greif says he is not sure of the veracity of Dvir's alien contacts, though they seem credible. What inclines him to believe is the fact that four other people have reported contact with the same race and back up Dvir's account of their appearance, location and social structure.

In any case, the UFO group will meet at the Netanya library on May 18 to discuss Dvir's claims.

"It's hard to prove whether it's true," Greif says. "I want it to be true, but I need proof. The question is what would be [Dvir's] motivation, what does he get out of it. He's a serious person, he's not trying to make a living off this. But it could be that tomorrow we'll find out that someone is just playing around with him. Even today I'm not 100 percent sure about it."

Dvir was born in Bucharest and moved here in 1965, at the age of eight. As a child he was a science fiction fan, but his psychic abilities did not manifest themselves until he was an adult. Dvir's first experience with the paranormal was a dozen or so years ago, when he was lying on a bed at his parents' house and felt something cold on his leg.

It was a dead aunt, asking Dvir to look after her children.

Dvir says he didn't think about the experience much. "I figured I had a fertile imagination," he says.

But the encounters with dead relatives continued. Several years later, shortly after his grandfather died, Dvir encountered the old man shuffling around his apartment, looking for a newspaper. After his father died of cancer, Dvir came out of work to find his spirit sitting in Dvir's car. Lucky thing, too, because his father warned him to be careful, and Dvir says he then escaped a collision with a truck that seemed to materialize out of nowhere.

Dvir's psychic connection was not just with his loved ones. Working on his computer one Shabbat, Dvir began to feel that he was a medium for messages from other-worldly beings, asking them

questions and then typing out their answers, a sort of human Ouija board.

Dvir needed someone to talk to and turned to his mother, who believed in these sort of things. Rather than dismissing him as crazy, she urged him to visit a professional medium in Rishon Lezion, Valerio Burgosh.

Burgosh also saw the spirit of Dvir's father, conversed with him and told Dvir personal facts that he could not otherwise have known.

"It was very difficult for me to accept this, but [Burgosh] helped me," Dvir says. He began reading and taking courses to develop his psychic abilities.

At one such course, in 1993, Dvir says his encounters with aliens began in earnest. Looking up, he saw all manner of strange beings walking around him, imperceptible to most people but visible to Dvir with a sort of extrasensory perception.

"I think they tagged me as a sort of contact person," impressed by his charisma and perceptivity, Dvir says.

Since then, it seems, the aliens have never left Dvir alone. Day and night he is accompanied by a shifting cast of at least two aliens, even while talking in a seemingly normal and solitary manner with a reporter.

Around 1992, Dvir went to visit Haya Levy, a healer who had opened an alien-run clinic in her Rishon Lezion home. Indeed, upon entering her house Dvir saw a gallery of aliens. He found her treatment effective and her support important. The aliens began negotiating with Dvir to open another clinic in his apartment.

Levy's contact with aliens began some 15 years ago on the Negev moshav, Sadot, where she lived at the time. Sitting with her children in the garden of her home, Levy received a telepathic SOS from a spaceship that needed a spot for an emergency landing. She invited them to land at Sadot.

A little while later, Levy was in her kitchen when she felt a strong impulse to go outside. There she found a small, petrified man with a strange accent. She invited him in for a cup of tea.

After the tea, the man disappeared without a trace or even so much as a thank you, but Levy's contact with aliens had begun. Most of the aliens with whom Levy has contact look like human beings, she says, but not all. Prof. Bach, for instance, has skin like a lizard and is completely bald. Maya has silver skin and blue eyes like those of a fish.

About eight years ago, when Levy was suffering from disc problems that had confined her to bed, the aliens offered to treat her, she says. She was skeptical, but after just an hour of treatment she was able to walk again. After five days of treatment she was fully mobile and able to carry things.

When the aliens proposed the joint-venture clinic, Levy accepted. Alien treatment has an 87 percent success rate, she claims.

"My ex-husband is my No. 1 client. He's the biggest believer," Levy says. "The results speak for themselves."

Levy's importance for Dvir goes beyond her status as a role model. When the Kliendcontlars began calling, Dvir was skeptical. He asked his cast of resident aliens, who said Fenix and crew were legitimate, but Dvir wanted more corroborating evidence.

He spoke to Levy, who did not know of the Kliendcontlars but ran a background check with her aliens. They supposedly vouched for Fenix and his race, confirming certain crucial details such as Arcturus' red sun and the planet's ecological problems.

On January 22, Dvir and Adriana were on their way to a restaurant when his cellphone rang. It was Dvir's 41st birthday and it might have been a wellwisher, but the caller kept hanging up.

During dinner the phone rang again, and this time the caller stayed on the line. He identified himself as Forth, a 358-year-old Kliendcontlar whose job it was to make contact with other civilizations, according to Dvir.

Dvir spent most of the dinner talking not to his wife but to the alien.

Dvir asked Cellcom to check the origin of the calls, but the company said the number was blocked. In any case, as the telephone connection continued and the aliens offered consistent answers to Dvir's questions, he began to believe.

"At first I thought someone was making fun of me, but when he kept calling I realized it was serious," he says. "You know it's not someone from here doing it, because they would do it for one day, two days, and then get tired of it."

Forth initiated the first few conversations and then, being near retirement age - the race's life expectancy is some 400 years - he handed the Dvir file to his deputy Fenix, who at 200 is just entering the prime of Kliendcontlar life. (Forth died this week, alien sources informed Dvir.)

Certain details about the race and Kliendcontlar society emerged from Dvir's inquiries, he says. The Kliendcontlars stand about one meter tall - "above ground level, of course," in Fenix's words - have gray skin, two arms and two legs, three fingers on each hand, green blood and DNA composed of four basic building blocks.

Their society is rather totalitarian: religion is outlawed on pain of death and the government determines each newborn Kliendcontlar's spouse and profession, performing genetic improvement surgery shortly after birth to prepare him for his career.

Our conversation with Fenix proceeds on two tracks. Dvir asks more sophisticated questions fit for an anthropologist: what is the Kliendcontlar's justice system like, do they have the death penalty (yes), does the Whole Universe Organization's charter require member states to help a starship in distress (yes), can workers in different tasks be identified by uniform (yes).

My questions are more prosaic: does Fenix have a family (wife and children, all of whom work in communications), does he laugh (yes, although he hasn't told a joke in 100 years), does he speak English (no), does he know anything about Israeli politics (no), what does he eat (the microwave story), what proof can he offer that he really is an alien (it's not his concern, "facts will come about," whether humans believe him or not).

Fenix appears baffled when I ask if he will have to pay for the 85-minute phone call from the environs of Uranus. Dvir has to explain to him that on our planet one pays the makers of telecommunications equipment for their service, a concept foreign to Arcturus, where there is no money.

Fenix appears delighted to hear of The Jerusalem Post's international circulation - "this is excellent," he says - but declines the invitation to deliver a message to the human race on its pages.

At one point Fenix grows tired of my questions, many of which he has answered in previous conversations with Dvir.

He lights into Dvir in his slow, tortured, alien way. "At this moment it is my wish to give you a sort of friendly advice," he tells him. "If additional contact will be made with you, with extraterrestrial contact people, my advice is, it is upon you to prevent rhetorical questions. This thing does not add anything.

Information that you ask a question on, and you know the answer to it, this thing bears witness, thus the extraterrestrial contact man thinks about you as a character lacking understanding, lacking culture, lacking principles. Because this thing is very important, it is upon you to prevent rhetorical questions."

Dvir accepts the reprimand with grace. At the end of the

conversation, they make a date for another conversation the following morning.

"This is real," Dvir says to me at the end of the conversation. "This is a real alien."

His colleagues at Tadiran have mixed feelings about his alien contacts, Dvir admits. Some come to him for treatments. Others grow visibly uncomfortable when he begins to discuss his experiences and ask him to stop talking about it. A company spokesman declined to be interviewed.

Dvir's wife Adriana is a little skeptical too. She does not see the aliens who traipse around her apartment day and night.

"I'm more rational. I want to see proof," she says. "But who knows, maybe it's true? Maybe I'm the limited one and I'm missing out. He's always been more sensitive."

Dvir's 9-year-old son, Effi, appears a little confused by it all. Asked if he believes in the aliens, at first he says no. Asked to elaborate, he doesn't answer.

Asked again if he believes, he is noncommittal. Adriana asks Effi whether or not he believes, and this time he says yes.

"Of course he believes," she says, then turns back to Effi. "What, do you think your father is talking nonsense?"

Effi shakes his head no.

Considering how unusual his ideas sound, Dvir has gotten a surprising amount of attention from the media, appearing in television, radio and print interviews. The publicity has apparently reached across the heavens; shortly after the first news article appeared, Dvir says he got an introductory e-mail from an alien named Ayami from the solar system Sirius. Ayami bore greetings from his King Agnemnon, and said he would contact Dvir again in five years.

Perhaps the media attention can be explained because of the seriousness of Dvir's day job and his obvious intelligence; he does not come across as a flake. This week Dvir appeared on Judy Shalom Nir Mozes' television program on Channel 2, Jude Morning, but Shalom Nir Mozes came away unconvinced.

"I made fun of him with all my strength, but very gently," she says. "It's nonsense. I don't believe in any of these things. But I'm in favor of freedom of expression and letting anyone speak."

It is tempting to see Dvir as a lonely man of faith. It is not considered outlandish in this day and age to believe in God, who doesn't even bother to telephone. But mention aliens - even those considerate enough to call on your birthday - and you're immediately dismissed as a little wacky.

"People have quirks," Shalom Nir Mozes says simply when asked how she thinks Dvir himself can believe in aliens.

Tel Aviv University psychiatrist Ilan Kutz says the phenomenon of alien contact is the same experience that in former times might have been called prophecy.

"If you look at what these people are really saying and you take the aliens out of it, the message is that I've been chosen by a special power and endowed with a special force," Kutz says. "It's very reminiscent of stories we hear throughout ancient times. This experience requires an external entity to make the experience whole. In former times this used to be the experience of revelation or the religious experience. It has to be somebody not only far away but far above."

Part of the move from religious terminology to the realm of science fiction stems from shifting cultural references over time, Kutz says.

"These claims are not new, it's the language that is new," Kutz says.

"The language today has changed from religious language to

scientific language. In former times paranoids used to say that they are Napoleon or that somebody speaks to them in a holy voice; now they say the TV speaks to them. Napoleon is out of fashion."

This is not to say, Kutz stresses, that aliens do not exist; he believes the chances are as good as not that they do. Yet without firm proof of their existence, the choice to believe in them is essentially a highly religious one.

"We all need to believe in a higher being in one form or another," Kutz says. "From an evolutionary point of view it gives us a big advantage.

It allows us to withstand difficulties, even at times against all odds, because there is all the time the promise that there is somebody out there looking out for us and safeguarding the world order. I think it's built in in humans to turn to a mightier power because it really maximizes survival."

Kutz dismisses the physical descriptions Dvir and others offer of the aliens they see.

"It's always the same story, always the same lack of evidence," Kutz says. "People are feeding off each other. When I was a child, aliens were green and had big antennae. Once the pictures of aliens with big eyes were shown, then everyone started seeing them."

Dvir and Levy say their belief in aliens is not a matter of faith, but of proof - proof that the rest of us can not see because of our limitations.

"It's all a question of openness," Levy says. "If you're open, you can believe in things you can't see physically. If you're not open, you trust only your five senses. Those people are limited, in my opinion."

Dvir believes the day will come when interaction with aliens will be considered normal.

"People who had contact in previous incarnations, they know it's possible. Others are scared and they don't want to know about it," he says. "But there are aliens out there. One day we'll have to meet. We'll have no choice but to get to know one another."

---continued in part 3 -----

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