

Myrmex Paradigm

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Can the future of humanity be seen in the history of another species? If humans are the epitome of evolution, then no. In many ways humans are the leading edge of evolution; however, do we lead in all areas? I think not. Barring extraterrestrial organisms, it would appear that we are the pentacle of individual intelligence. Intelligence is only one of many qualities crucial to life. In fact, intelligence is more a reactive quality than directing. We do not breathe, eat, love, work, or sleep because of our intelligence. We do so because of our physiology, hormones, and autonomic nervous systems.

When we ask ourselves what will be our future, we are really asking **what will be our behaviors, what will interest us and what will occupy our time**. Let us call these and similar parameters the human spirit. Spirit is a defining quality of our being. In this sense, all creatures have spirit. If we could identify a creature with spirit similar to ours, but more evolved with respect to this spirit than us, then we might foresee our future.

Use of animals as models for humans is well-established practice in science. Rodents, cats, dogs and other primates are used as human surrogates in medical research. A dog and a monkey were launched into space before humans. Psychologists and anthropologists study social animals for understanding of human response and behavior. Is it not also reasonable to study other animals for understanding of human evolution?

How do we identify what species share our spirit? Humans, cattle, and wolves are all social creatures, but I would rate humans and wolves more spiritually alike than humans and cattle. A commonality of spirit is not limited by taxonomy. For example, bats and shrews are both mammals, but chimney swifts (birds) have more spiritual likeness to bats.

The key to finding a spiritual model for humans is to identify the most important qualities which identify humankind. Warm-bloodedness, hair, bi-pedal locomotion, size, and so on are characteristics which we share with many other creatures. However, I believe most of us would agree these qualities do not define our spirit. The most important characteristic defining human spirit, I believe, is that **we are social creatures who seek to manipulate our environment**.

What creatures share our spirit? Our closest taxonomic relatives, the other apes, share some of this spirit but appear to be evolutionarily far behind us. So what species are our spiritual mates? The **ants**. This assertion may strike you as absurd or insulting, but remember we are comparing the qualities of socialization and manipulation of the environment, not size, number of legs, or individual intelligence. Some of us might argue that termites should be our model, but I believe ants are more evolved. Termites

probably evolved before the ants. In fact, if there were ant philosophers during their early days, they might have put forth the disturbing hypothesis that termites were a model for the evolving ants. I am sure that many ants were highly insulted to be compared to lowly creatures who evolved from the ancestor to the roach.

In what ways are humans similar in spirit to ants? We are highly social, living together in large aggregates (cities/colonies). We build shelters (houses/mounds). We are highly manipulative of our environments and, like ants, we work cooperatively to accomplish tasks. Like ants, we perform engineering feats, practice agriculture and animal husbandry, practice slavery, use chemical weapons, and wage wars. One might point out that humans do all these things as a single species, while in ants some of these traits are species specific. Such observation just reminds us that although there are similarities between humans and ants, there are also differences. It does not invalidate the ant as a model of evolution for similar creatures. Indeed, the fact that *Homo sapiens* has been able to eliminate all its close relatives probably has slowed natural evolution in humans. However, our great intellect has positioned us to be able to bypass natural evolution and facilitate our own change.

I call using the model of the ants as a vision of future humanity, the “Myrmex Paradigm”. What does such a paradigm tell us about our future? Let us look at two areas: sexuality/reproduction and communications.

With sexuality/reproduction, the comparisons from the **Myrmex Paradigm** are so apparent they seem more observation and reporting than prediction. Ant colonies consist mostly of infertile workers. The industrial revolution very efficiently transformed humans into a worker society. Modern economics are forcing even affluent countries to replace the “male bread-winner” model with the male and female worker model. With birth control measures, we are rapidly becoming a society of infertile workers. In ant colonies, the young are raised in communal nurseries. In developed countries, day-care facilities are flourishing to allow females to increase their time in the work force. A backwards glance at the co-development of public education with the industrial revolution raises the suspicion that role of public education is more in the way of communal nursery than education.

In ant colonies, reproduction is limited to one or more breeder females. Humans have not reached this pentacle, and since we do not lay eggs, we probably never will. However, we seem to be moving in this direction. We already have surrogate mothers, sperm and egg banks. With improving egg collection and storage techniques, perhaps women will choose to bank their eggs early in their life and stop the menstrual cycle. For many years we have had test-tube fertilization. It is only a matter of time until we are able to support laboratory gestation. All these changes fit the **Myrmex Paradigm** like a glove.

What about the males. Male ants have only one purpose, to mate with the fertile females. We call the fertile females “queens,” but we do not call the fertile males “kings.” Instead we call them “drones.” The name says it all. Other than their genetic contribution, drones are useless to the colony. Could human males follow a similar fate? Listen to the news reports. Men are being urged to get in touch with their feminine sides. Traditional male behaviors are branded as undesirable, antisocial,

even criminal. Testosterone and the X-chromosome can be controlled during reproduction and growth.

There is no dispute that child abuse and spousal abuse are tragic episodes. On the other hand, it is abundantly clear that the laws which we enact and enforce in attempts to prevent these abuses greatly move the focus of control and power from individuals and families toward communal authorities. Most of us probably view these laws as being necessary reactions to severe social problems. In light of the **Myrmex Paradigm**, these laws and actions could be interpreted as proactive steps in our evolution.

Communication is vitally important to social creatures. We humans are presently in the mist of massive changes in the ways we communicate. No other creature on Earth communicates as much and in as many varied ways as humans. We exceed all other creatures in the quantity, quality and speed of our communications. However, we still have some important things to learn from ants. Even though ants do not communicate Shakespearean plays, they do communicate very effectively on a social level. As we continue to evolve from the hunter-gather bands of our ancestors to the megacity inhabitants of our progeny we will undoubtedly change how we communicate. So what does the **Myrmex Paradigm** tell us about our future communications?

Ants have a much more dispersed seat of intelligence than humans. The individual ant's brain consists more as a series of ganglia nodes than just a central brain located within the head. Individual ants are tiny and their brains are tiny. But they are the most successful of all social creatures. En masse army ants can scour the countryside sending all other creatures fleeing while simultaneously transporting their queen and her court. Such feats rival the best campaigns of humans. Ants must be doing something right in their communications. The clear human superiority to ants, as far as communication goes, appears to be largely quantitative. Qualitatively, we are probably behind the ants in our communication skills.

Ants appear to communicate primarily through the transfer of brain chemicals from individual to individual. This transfer is surely through the antennae and may even include oral ingestion. Vital information is transmitted throughout the colony from ant to ant in much the same way as information is transmitted within our individual bodies through our nervous systems. Ants probably do not have a consciousness like humans, certainly not the individual ants. Even if they did, this transfer of information would not be like gossip among humans for the individual ants do not have to evaluate the information, only pass it on. It is information transfer at a subconscious level.

Social creatures such as ants and termites which communicate in such a fashion are sufficiently different from other creatures so as to be given a category of their own. The degree of difference between an ant and firefly, I believe, is as fundamental as the difference between an amoeba and a flatworm (single-celled to multiple-celled organism). I call creatures such as ants **multifarius** organisms, since their colonies are more properly viewed as single organisms composed of multiple bodies.

The **Myrmex Paradigm** tells us that our communications will develop more and more along a subconscious pathway. We will increasingly develop our sense of community and lessen our perception of individuality. Whether we, today, believe this

direction is desirable is irrelevant. We will be swept toward our destiny just as the ants were to theirs. At some point humans will be classified as *multifarius* creatures also.

What will this subconscious path of communications be? If given enough time, it could be natural as in the ants. However, humans have moved beyond the bounds of Darwinian evolution. I expect we will engineer brain to brain communication in ourselves. We are on the verge of this ability today. Rapid advances being made in understanding the brain's functionality. We are already sending impulses directly into the brain with successful and predictable responses.

Another happening which follows the **Myrmex Paradigm** is the development of the Internet. The Internet with its synapse-like communications technology is a crude model of *multifarius* communication. We are about to develop superhuman intelligence, that is, human intelligence which is beyond the comprehension of any individual.

I expect most of us today view the future of humanity as foretold by the **Myrmex Paradigm** with dislike. This is natural, since the future human will not be the same as we are now. However, such dislike is natural for all significant evolutionary changes. Further evaluation of the consequences of these predicted changes will reveal remarkable and, perhaps even desirable, attributes. Predicting the speed of these changes is risky, but I think they will occur sooner than expected. Perhaps some persons alive today will see or even become *multifarius* humans! Changes in our sexuality and reproduction are already upon us.

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