

The compass in the ant's eye



We need a map to show us where we are, and a compass to tell us which direction to take. But the black desert ant, which lives along the Mediterranean coast of Tunisia Mahares, can find its way without using either device.

When the Sun rises, the ant leaves the nest to search for food in the desert sands, whose temperatures can rise as high as 70 °C (158°F).

The ant follows a meandering course in an area extending up to 200 meters (650 feet) from its nest, frequently stopping and turning around. Yet despite all these complex zigzags, upon finding food, it follows a straight line back to its nest. Compared to its own size, this journey the ant

undertakes is equivalent to a human being walking 35 to 40 km (21 to 24 miles) in the desert and then returning to his starting point, without neither map nor compass. (*"Hayvanlarda yon bulma" (Direction Location in Animals), Bilim ve Teknik, May 1995, no.330, p. 69*)

The magnitude of this accomplishment can be better understood by bearing in mind the scarcity of signs in the desert to help the ant find its way. It would be yet another miracle for the ant to remember the landmarks it saw on its wanderings and then find its way by searching them out.

Yet the direction-finding system placed in its eyes by God is far superior to either map or compass. The desert ant is able to polarize light—one feature lacking in the human eye. During this process it perceives certain rays that are invisible to us and, using them, can distinguish north and south every time it looks around. It thus always estimates the direction in which its nest lies and has no difficulty in returning to it. How can one account for an ant knowing about polarized light, something that humans discovered only recently, and using it like a compass? It is of course impossible for the ant to know all of this by itself.

Again, it's impossible to account for this ant's complex eye structure in terms of random coincidences. Ever since their first days on Earth, all desert ants have possessed eyes with exactly the same properties—the gift of their Creator, Who created us and all other living things. In one verse it is revealed:

He is Lord of the heavens and the Earth and everything in between them, so worship Him and persevere in His worship. Do you know of any other with His Name? (Surah Maryam: 65)

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