Freedom

Ton Haarmans · Wide Open Windows



While working on this project, I gradually became aware of something I had not expected.

Because it is neither possible nor, as far as I am concerned, even desirable to adopt a neutral, absolute standpoint from which to anchor oneself philosophically or spiritually, I was suddenly overcome by an unexpected feeling of freedom.

For a long time I had assumed that every philosophy ultimately had to arrive somewhere. There had to be a final foundation. A place from which reality could finally be explained.

Many traditions claim to have found such a foundation.

Everything is Consciousness.

Really? How do we know?

Or:

Everything is Energy.

Or quantum fields.

Or vibration.

Or the Divine.

Or countless other ultimate explanations that promise to reveal what reality truly is.

None of these claims can simply be dismissed. They may offer profound insights and meaningful ways of understanding experience. But neither can they be demonstrated from a position outside experience itself. Every one of them remains rooted in a particular way of seeing.

The difficulty is not that these views are necessarily false.

The difficulty is that we can never step outside our own world-making in order to verify that we have finally reached the ultimate ground.

We may abandon one worldview and embrace another. We may replace materialism with idealism, science with spirituality, or spirituality with science. But every transition remains a transition within experience itself.

At some point I realized that this was not a limitation.

It was a liberation.

If no philosophical or spiritual position can ever establish itself as unquestionably absolute, then there is no need to defend one as if everything depended on it. I can explore different ways of seeing without having to settle permanently in any of them. Each may reveal something. Each may also conceal something. None of them can claim the final word.

This, to me, is what freedom means. Not the freedom to possess the right worldview, but the freedom to recognize every worldview as a way of seeing rather than the final way of seeing. We may never be able to stand outside experience altogether, yet we can become less confined by the worlds we inhabit. Perhaps freedom is nothing more, and nothing less, than discovering that every window remains a window, however wide it may open :-).