Ultimate Freedom: Transcending Belief and Desire
By
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Summary

“How dare you!” said Greta Thunberg addressing the members of the Climate Summit who spoke of their hope that youth would solve the problem of climate change. In those brief remarks, she expressed her conviction, that whatever they believed and desired, they had freedom of choice to accept scientific evidence and to prefer what reason dictated. Whether you agree or disagree with Greta about climate change, there was general agreement with what her expletive implied. The members of summit had freedom of choice to accept and prefer to act on the evidence she presented.

There is a distinction between a system of response they followed, what I call a first order system, what Daniel Kahneman called system 1, and a higher order system of response, system 2 of scientific analysis. Freedom of choice is an expression of attention to the higher order system. What is often called free will, is often just doing what you desire, a response that neglects consideration of options. Freedom of choice acknowledges those options. Preference among them forms in response to the acceptance of evidence. One may suppose that in responding to beliefs that one has attended to evidence. But that is a delusion. Higher order acceptance of evidence may be overwhelmed by the fixation of first level belief.

What is the difference between just doing what you desire because it feels good and acting on what you prefer because of scientific acceptance as Greta demands? There is a form of preference that is the ultimate explanation of choice. The preference empowers us as agents. I call it a power preference. It is a preference that loops back on to itself, a fixed-point vector, and suffices to explain choice. This theory of such a power preference includes scientific explanation and consistently accommodates determinism. It is itself a scientific and philosophical explanation, indeed, an ultimate principle of explanation. I call freedom of choice expressing that preference -- ultimate freedom. Ultimate freedom is the source of our knowledge and agency both in theory, directing what we rationally accept, and in practice directing freedom of choice.