Why Nothing Ever Truly Stops

By: Ahmed Ramadan

On a quiet night, I was sitting in a park, drinking a cup of tea under a tree. Everything around me felt completely still. The air was calm, the sounds were soft, and I was doing nothing but breathing peacefully and thinking about an issue that had been on my mind for a long time.

In that moment, I felt as if time itself had paused. Then, a strange thought suddenly crossed my mind.

If I am not moving at all, and everything around me feels silent. Am I truly still, or is stillness just an illusion?

At first, the question seemed unnecessary. Anyone would say that if you are not moving, then you are obviously still. That is what we learn from a very young age. But the more I thought about it, the less convinced I became. Something about this simple idea did not feel as obvious as it first appeared.

So, I began to think more deeply. I wanted to understand this idea not just as a feeling, but in a more scientific way. That is when I came across the concept of relative motion.

I realized that motion cannot be defined on its own. In order to say whether something is moving or not, we must always compare it to something else. In other words, motion is not absolute, it is relative.

This “something else” is what we call a reference point. Without a reference point, we cannot determine the position or motion of any object. At first, this seemed simple. But then another question appeared: what is the correct reference point? What should we use to decide whether something is truly still?

The answer is not straight forward, because everything depends on the reference we choose.

For example, imagine that you are sitting on a chair, and someone else is sitting beside you. From your perspective, both of you are completely still. There is no movement at all. But now imagine that another person is watching both of you from a moving car. To that observer, you are not still, you are moving along with the Earth and everything on it.

Another example is when you are inside a car. If you are driving forward while another car is moving toward you in the opposite direction, it will seem as if both of you are moving very fast. However, if both cars move in the same direction at the same speed, it will feel as if nothing is moving at all. In that case, you might even forget that you are in motion.

These examples show something important: stillness depends entirely on the observer. What appears motionless in one situation may appear to be moving in another.

This brought me back to my original question. If stillness depends on the observer, then what does it really mean to be still? Is stillness a real physical state, or is it just a way of describing motion from a certain point of view?

That night, I fell asleep while still thinking about this question.

In a dream, I saw myself lying on the surface of the Earth, doing nothing, just looking at the sky. I felt completely at rest. But then I imagined someone far away in space observing me.

From their perspective, I was not still at all. I was moving at an incredible speed, carried by the rotation of the Earth and its motion around the Sun. Even though I felt completely motionless, I was actually traveling through space at a speed beyond anything I could feel or imagine. When I woke up, the idea stayed with me. It felt strange, but at the same time, it made perfect sense.

We feel still only because we move together with everything around us. We do not notice motion when we are part of it. Our senses are limited, and they only detect changes that are relative to us.

If everything around us moves in the same way, then we feel no motion at all. But that doesn't mean that motion doesn't exist. It only means that we cannot detect it truly.

This leads to a deeper realization. Stillness is not something that exists on its own. It is not a fixed property of an object or a place. Instead, it is something that depends entirely on how we observe the world.

A body may be at rest relative to one observer yet moving relative to another at the same exact moment. Both observations are correct, even though they seem to contradict each other.

So, does anything in the universe ever truly stop?

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that the answer might be no. There is always some form of motion, even if we cannot see it or feel it. Planets move, stars move, galaxies move, and we move with them.

Even when we feel completely still, we are part of a much larger motion that never ends.

Perhaps stillness is not a real state of the universe, but an illusion created by our limited perspective. We call something "still" only because, from where we stand, it appears that way. But if we change our point of view, that stillness disappears.

In the end, I realized that nothing ever truly stops. We only believe it does because we can't see the motion that carries us.