A Practical Framework for Understanding the Nature and Activity of Man's Free Will.

Question: What constitutes "Free Will"?

Answer: This is the big question that any thinker is sooner or later confronted with. But to answer this big question, we must also anticipate that it usually encompasses the following sub-questions:

- Does Free Will mean, we can always do as we choose?
- If Free Will indeed exists, what purpose does it serve?
- How does it operate in our lives?

Based on this breakdown, it becomes obvious that the subject has to be approached systematically, otherwise we will go all over the map, and not arrive at any clear and comprehensive answer.

Thus, let us tackle this matter in the sequence outlined.

So, what is Free Will?

Answer: First, we need to distinguish between **Free Will,** and the **ability to freely choose.**

To elaborate, animals make choices, though limited and restricted to their survival needs. For example, they build different types of nests, or dens, even within the same species. They do this for shelter, safety for themselves and their offspring, or to store their foods. Man also makes choices. But our range for making choices far exceeds our survival needs, Illustrated by our choice to inhabit inhospitable climates, like the scorching desert or arctic cold. Also, we build elaborate structures that have nothing to do with shelter, etc. And we do such things through the sheer act of ***will***.

Now, let us examine the concept of **Will**.

It will help to set the stage if we borrow from the concept of a person's Last Will and testament. Here, a Will is the combination of intentions, rules, principles, or laws laid out by an owner, to guide the process by which his or her beneficiaries comply with their intention.

Using this framework, **The Will** is the expressed intention of the "Owner", or in our case, "The Supreme Authority" for Creation. And the processes for attaining this intention are the principles/laws that operate in creation. Just as it is with probate, all who are covered by the Will, are expected to comply with the processes and desire of the owner. Thus, man, and all creatures existing in Creation, are bound to the Will of the Supreme authority. Anything that does not abide

by this Will is subject to expulsion, similar to how a last will and testament can disinherit a person who is disruptive to the process or intention of the deceased.

From this perspective, Creation exists and operates under the Will of the Supreme Authority. This Will is manifest in the processes that we describe as the Laws of Physics, Biology, Adaptation, Genetics, etc.

As we know from observations and the study of our physical environment (i.e., the sciences), the principles or laws that govern activities or processes are inviolable. Meaning that they are unchangeable. This conclusion is strictly applied to all inanimate and animate creatures/objects. Thus, the inanimate world is governed by the laws of Physics, Chemistry, etc. The animate world is, in addition, governed by the Laws of Biology, Genetics and Adaptation.

By complying with these laws, creation operates in complete "Ecological balance", evolving along a path of development which, as any objective observer can see, has been progressive and upbuilding.

Although we may not know the ultimate goal intended by the owner of Creation, it is arguably correct to conclude that ***Ecological Balance*** must be a condition for progressive upbuilding. Indeed, the inviolability of ecological balance is increasingly dawning on man. Therefore, ***Ecological Balance*** must be one of the intentions for Creation. Thus, anything that ***willfully*** disrupts this process is acting against the Will of the Supreme Authority.

Of all the creatures on Earth, the human species is the only one that has the ability to exercise self-initiated willfulness, intentionally or unconsciously. This ability is the real seat and meaning of Man's Free Will. In other words, **the freedom** to choose to comply with the Will of the Supreme Authority. Hence the designation, **Man's Free Will.**

From this, one can see the difference between the ability to choose, and Free Wiil.

With the gift of Free Will, we are endowed with the ability to choose to adapt to the existing laws of Creation, or to conceive our own ideas that may suggest ways outside of what is immediately available or evident around us.

Nevertheless, a thorough grasp of the concept of Man's Free Will has to encompass three critical elements:

1. The Owner (The Supreme Authority)
2. The Laws (The governing principles)
3. The Willful Choice by Man

It should be stated that a Willful choice does not necessarily have to be contrary or disruptive to the laws or intention of the owner. Only willful choices that go against the laws of creation, and produce disruptive effects, oppose The Supreme Will.

Question: How can we tell when we are exercising our free will?

Answer: Man's conscious activities are always preceded by an act of will. This exercise of our Free Will, whether we are aware or not, is the engine behind all of our conscious activities. And every act-of-will automatically triggers the laws of creation to produce corresponding results.

Question: Why is it that we do not always get what we wish for?

Answer: The automatic activities of the laws of creation always bring to fruition the outcomes that match the real essence of our willful decision, and not what we tell ourselves or try to make others believe. As a result, the form of the outcome may be different from what we expect.

We need to understand that the primary purpose of the granting of a wish by Creation is for us to experience the result of such thinking, not necessarily for our enjoyment or satisfaction. Thus, it is for us to see and assess the outcome in terms of how it supports or disrupts the Balance in Creation.

So, indeed, we always get what we wish for, though we may not recognize it.

Question: If we have Free Will, why do we find ourselves in situations where we are restrained, or compelled to do what we did not choose?

Answer: We shall address this question after establishing the foundational framework upon which we can offer a comprehensive answer to this question.

Question: Ok, can you elaborate some more on how Free Will works at the micro level?

Answer: Free Will can also be seen as a filtering mechanism that allows us to select from *among the possibility of choices* that we see before us. Through focusing and deep experiencing of our choice, we acquire knowledge on the matter. Knowledge leads to recognition and understanding, both of which contribute to the expansion of our awareness and consciousness on that aspect of our environment and Life.

When triggered by insights gained from observations, our new knowledge can open the door to avenues for more understanding of the phenomenon of interest. For example, agriculture, construction, cosmology or manipulation of the forces of nature.

If triggered by intuition or imagination, it can lead to new ideas on how to organize and manage our social environment, artistic expressions, exploration of our inner essence through religious/philosophical thinking, or search for connection with the invisible (Spirituality).

The lessons extracted and the conclusions drawn from these experiences form our World view or "Reality", and the comprehensiveness of our world view defines our Inner Maturity, which we call "**Spiritual Maturity"**.

Comprehensiveness encompasses the breadth and depth of experiences, **plus** how closely our Worldview aligns with the "intention" of Creation. The breadth is reflected in the variety and depth of knowledge about the forces and activities in Creation, and alignment is reflected in the quality of one's contribution towards a harmonious upbuilding in Creation.

It should be stated that Spiritual Maturity is very different from Intellectual Maturity. The latter is limited to brain triggered activities, which is usually restricted to knowledge about the forces and activities in Creation. It seldom takes into consideration the intention of Creation, or the Supreme Authority. Only the Spirit is endowed with the possibility of recognizing the existence of the Supreme Authority, and, in so doing, to choose to align its own will to the Supreme Will.

In effect, a mature Spirit not only swings in the rhythm of Creation, but, through exercise of free will, contributes to the creative process in its immediate environment. This happens through outputs that align with the intention of Creation. Noble developments in the sciences, arts and culture are examples of contributory activities of mature Spirits through the ages. Ignoble acts that cause disruption and imbalances in our physical and psychic environment reflect acts of low levels of Spiritual Maturity.

Thus, exercise of free will is the gate way to inner growth (Spiritual Maturity), or stunted growth (Spiritual Immaturity) when misapplied.

Question: If the exercise of free will can cause devastation, why has the Supreme Authority not restricted choices to only those that will not result in disruptive outcomes?

Answer: This question introduces a dimension to the purpose of human experiencing that is not familiar to many or has been forgotten.

The exercise of free will serves more than the purpose of assuring physical survival of the species, or enhancement of physical existence through the application of insights for material comforts.

As mentioned earlier, each act of will, and the resulting choice that we make, and pursue to its logical conclusion, has outcomes that can produce joy or suffering to the individual and its environment. And we then experience the outcome.

As the saying goes, ***experience is the best teacher***. This is not a man-made saying but a dictum from observing Life. Thus, it is the law of creation that ***the only pathway to spiritual learning is through experiencing***. It is through such learning that the spirit expands its awareness (i.e. consciousness) and grows stronger along the chosen path, becoming more mature or adept.

Although e***very outcome affects both the actor and his environment***, it is natural that the actor will first experience the outcome on themselves. It takes more awareness and a growing sense of empathy to see or experience the impact on one's environment, (including one's neighbors).

Where such awareness is absent, or slow in developing, an actor is less likely to see how their choice adversely affects others, especially when they derive joy from it. Instead, their experiencing of joy will only reinforce the desire to continue in this direction, oblivious to how it affects others. The result is that they become more adept or grow stronger in exercising that line of choice.

But the laws of creation demand balance in all activities.

If one's activity reflects an imbalance in their thinking, the law requires a correction, to help them see the pain their action is causing. And, this lesson can only be attained through experiencing pain, resulting from the actions of another, or a loss suffered from a natural cause.

Through the activity of this balancing law, (The Law of Reciprocal Action) the actor will, sooner or later be placed in a position where they are now on the receiving end of the choices they ones made. Hopefully their painful experience will help them recall their own lack of empathy for pain and suffering inflicted on others.

Through this, we are given the opportunity to learn, by firsthand experience, to expand our awareness, to anticipate how our choices could affect others.

As long as we can only focus on the effect of our actions on ourselves, we fail to develop the expanded vision by which to weigh our choices. And we fail to mature in a way that brings joy to us and our environment.

In effect. Creation uses the mechanism of free will to teach us, through experience, to cultivate choices that are beneficial to the whole. This also leads to growth in maturity of our Spirit.

Furthermore, conscious experiencing of the activities of the laws of Creation, when properly appreciated, brings to the Spirit stronger conviction in the inviolability of these laws. Through this conviction, it also comes to recognize that indeed harmony and happiness are dependent on

aligning our actions with these laws. Eventually, this will lead the Spirit to conviction in the existence of a Supreme Authority, and that as creatures of Creation, we too must be subject to this Will in our actions and behavior. And, that life is not just for our willful exploitations or material pursuits.

Now we can revisit the question: Why should our Free Will be restrained or, we be compelled to do what we have not freely chosen?

Answer: In the preceding question, we discussed how the Law of Reciprocal Action will lead one into a position in life in which they have to experience the consequences of choices that have created suffering for others. Against this framework, the compulsion can be seen, not as unfairness or inequity of life, but as a beneficial regenerative learning opportunity for the person that is compelled, or unable to change their life circumstance.

However, while the laws can compel us to undergo a regenerative experience, we are still free to choose to learn the necessary lesson from the experience or not.

Only we human beings force or restrain the activities of our fellow creatures. Thus, we are the only species that, contrary to the Laws of Creation, violates the exercise of the gift of free will by our fellow human beings.

But as already mentioned, offenders in this regard invariably have to endure their own regenerative experience, in which they have to personally experience the pain and suffering from being forced to live under a similar situation, so that they hopefully learn, and desist.

As an aside, the real spirit behind man's correctional facilities is an attempt to offer regenerative opportunity, as sensed in the activity of the Law of Creation. Unfortunately, the implementation of our penal system is faulty in many respects, although the intention is correct. Notwithstanding, even such experiences yield unseen learning experiences. Whether we learn or not, is again, a matter of exercise of free will.

Conclusion

The most direct and practical take aways from this discussion are:

1. Humans are creatures existing in an intelligently designed ecosystem
2. There is a Supreme Authority responsible for this ecosystem
3. The Will of the Supreme Authority is what we call the laws of the universe

4. These laws maintain and foster balanced and harmonious upbuilding, and take corrective regenerative actions to restore balance, when the conscious or unconscious activities of a creature are disruptive.
5. Man is the only creature on Earth that is granted the ability to exercise self-will, as we wish
6. The Spirit of Man learns only through experiencing the results of our self-will, and matures also through this.

The chaotic situation on earth indicates that the majority of mankind's actions (through exercise of free will) are not in harmony with the Supreme governing WILL of Creation. And what is most important and pressing is for us to learn how to put our Free Will to optimum use, for our Spiritual maturity, and thereby benefit us as individuals, a community and the ecosystem, as intended by the Supreme Will.

Otherwise, Creation will expel any disruption that continues to violates its law of Ecological and Spiritual balance.

Post script

It is perhaps clear to the listener that, the framework used for constructing the answers to the questions in this discussion, is based on a Spiritual foundation that one seldom encounters in discussions of this subject.

Also, the observant listener or reader may see, in the answers offered, ties to the deeper meaning in some of Jesus' admonitions. For example, if properly understood, the admonition "*Love thy neighbor as thy self"* . would have alerted us to always watch for the effect of our actions on our environment, and not just on the pleasure we are deriving. A deeper grasp of, *"What you sow is what you reap"*, would have helped us focus on discovering and learning the lessons contained in the regenerative opportunity resulting from the consequences of our choices, through exercise of free will.

Anyone who is interested in knowing more about the Spiritual framework, and the deeper insights contained in Jesus' teaching, as well as the Laws of Creation referenced here, is encouraged to examine the work, titled: **"In The Light of Truth"**, by Abdrushin. It is also popularly known as *"The Grail Message"*.