

# Press Kit

## **The Science of Free Will**

How Determinism Affects Everything from the Future  
of AI to Traffic to God to Bees

By Samir Varma

Foreword by NY Times bestselling author Tyler Cowen

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# Bio

Samir Varma is a physicist, entrepreneur, and inventor whose multifaceted career uniquely positions him to explore the intersection of determinism, free will, and technology. With a Ph.D. in theoretical particle physics from UT Austin where Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg served on his dissertation committee, as well as a BS in Electrical Engineering from Columbia University, Varma brings a deep understanding of fundamental physics to bear on philosophical questions.

His transition from academia to entrepreneurship, founding the hedge fund manager VS Asset Management and co-founding Palm Energy Systems, gives him practical insight into decision-making and risk assessment. As Chairman and Chief Scientist at Applango Systems, Varma developed AI algorithms for business efficiency, providing him with firsthand experience in the capabilities and limitations of artificial intelligence.

Varma's inventive spirit, evidenced by multiple patents across AI, traffic optimization, finance, and medicine, allows him to approach the free will debate from novel angles. His research spans particle physics and chaotic fluid dynamics, informing his unique perspective on determinism and complexity.

This combination of theoretical knowledge, practical business experience, and innovative thinking enables Varma to offer fresh insights into age-old questions about free will, while also addressing the urgent implications for AI ethics and human agency in an increasingly technological world.

A Connecticut resident since 1998, Varma brings both global scientific expertise and local perspective to his writing. *The Science of Free Will* is his debut book, drawing on his diverse experiences to bridge the gap between abstract theory and everyday implications of determinism.

# Target Audience

*The Science of Free Will* appeals to a diverse readership, including:

- Science enthusiasts and critical thinkers interested in the latest developments in physics and neuroscience.
- Philosophy buffs and students grappling with questions of determinism and free will.
- Technology professionals and AI enthusiasts curious about the ethical implications of advanced AI.
- General readers seeking to understand how scientific discoveries affect our understanding of human nature and decision-making.
- Academics and researchers in fields including cognitive science, computer science, and ethics.
- Individuals interested in personal growth and understanding the factors influencing their choices and behaviors.

# Book Preview

## Groundbreaking Book Uses Modern Science To Resolve Whether We Have Free Will

Iff Books is excited to announce the forthcoming release of *The Science of Free Will: How Determinism Affects Everything from the Future of AI to Traffic to God to Bees* by Samir Varma, a visionary entrepreneur and theoretical physicist. Scheduled for release in March 2025, this groundbreaking work promises to resolve the debate surrounding one of humanity's most profound questions: Do we truly have free will?

Endorsed by a dozen eminent thinkers across various fields, *The Science of Free Will* stands out for its rigorous analysis, accessible prose, and the profound human questions it tackles. The book explores how cutting-edge research in neuroscience, quantum mechanics, and AI is reshaping our understanding of free will, with far-reaching implications for personal responsibility, legal systems, the boundaries of human and artificial agency, the limits of predictability, the tension between scientific determinism and belief in a higher power, and the very essence of what it means to be human.

*The Science of Free Will* offers an original, multifaceted perspective that draws upon remarkable findings from animal cognition, the surprising twists of evolutionary processes, and the profound implications of artificial intelligence. Varma's engaging narrative takes readers on a captivating journey through the latest scientific discoveries, exploring the surprising cognitive abilities of creatures like honeybees and crows, and the ethical quandaries posed by advancing AI systems. "As AI grows increasingly sophisticated, it becomes crucial to understanding the boundaries of decision-making and autonomy," Varma emphasizes, highlighting the urgency of reevaluating our concepts of free will in the age of machines.

According to Tyler Cowen, Holbert L. Harris chair of economics at George Mason University, "Varma's surprisingly readable book delivers deep truths that resolve the most important problem in philosophy."

"This book invites readers to embark on a mind-expanding journey through the mysteries of decision-making and the nature of the universe itself," Varma says. "It challenges us to reconsider our deepest assumptions about choice, agency, and the foundations of human behavior in an era where artificial and human intelligences increasingly intersect."

The book is organized into three main parts:

- **Foundations:** Explores the fundamental concepts of determinism and free will, and their historical debate.
- **Modern Science:** Delves into cutting-edge research in physics, neuroscience, and computer science that informs our understanding of free will.
- **Implications:** Examines the practical consequences of our new understanding in realms including personal decision-making, AI ethics and legal systems.

Each chapter has thought-provoking questions designed to spark further discussion and reflection.

The question of free will has perplexed philosophers for millennia; Varma's book finally gives us the answers we need as we embark upon the upcoming age of Artificial General Intelligence.

# Book Excerpt

## **The Science of Free Will: How Determinism Affects Everything from the Future of AI to Traffic to God to Bees**

By Samir Varma

The following is an abbreviated excerpt adapted from the introduction of *The Science of Free Will*, which encapsulates the book’s central themes.

Jane slammed her fist on the cafe table. “I don’t care what physics says!” she yelled. “I know I have free will.” Her mind reeled from her quantum physics class, where she’d learned that every particle in her body followed predetermined laws. Did this mean all her choices were illusions?

Determined to prove her free will, Jane devised an experiment. She wrote five tasks on slips of paper, vowing to complete whichever she randomly drew. When she picked “call your brother,” with whom she’d recently fought, Jane hesitated. Steeling herself, she made the call, reconciling with her sibling.

Later, Jane asked her physics professor, “Isn’t the unpredictability of human actions proof that we have free will?” The professor replied, “Some believe so. But there could be a level of complexity to particles’ interactions that we cannot calculate, even if the interactions themselves follow exact laws.”

Seeking further understanding, Jane consulted her computer science friend, who introduced her to the concept of computational irreducibility. Jane’s eyes lit up with understanding. “So even if physics says determinism is true in theory, the complexity makes outcomes unpredictable in practice—like free will emerging from particles!”

This excerpt introduces the book’s core concept: the tension between deterministic physics and our lived experience of free will. It highlights key themes such as the complexity of particle interactions, the unpredictability of human behavior, and the concept of computational irreducibility. Through Jane’s journey, readers are introduced to the book’s exploration of how determinism might coexist with practical free will, setting the stage for deeper discussions on physics, philosophy, and the nature of choice in both human and artificial intelligence contexts.

# Key Selling Points

1. **Unique Perspective:** Offers an original viewpoint that reconciles determinism with the practice of free will, bridging a long-standing philosophical divide.
2. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Draws upon findings from physics, philosophy, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence, providing a comprehensive exploration of free will.
3. **Accessible Writing:** Presents complex scientific and philosophical concepts in a clear and engaging manner, making the book approachable for a wide audience.
4. **Timely AI Relevance:** Addresses crucial questions about the nature of decision-making in both humans and AI systems, contributing to current debates on AI ethics and development.
5. **Paradigm-Shifting Potential:** Challenges readers to reconsider their fundamental assumptions about choice, responsibility, and the nature of consciousness.
6. **Practical Implications:** Explores how understanding determinism and free will can impact daily decision-making, personal growth, and societal structures.
7. **Cutting-Edge Science:** Incorporates the latest research in quantum mechanics, neurobiology, and computer science, keeping readers at the forefront of scientific understanding.
8. **AI Ethics Framework:** Provides a novel framework for approaching ethical questions in AI development, particularly relevant for policymakers and tech industry professionals.
9. **Thought-Provoking Scenarios:** Uses relatable examples and thought experiments to illustrate complex ideas, stimulating readers' critical thinking skills.
10. **Worldview Impact:** Offers readers a transformative perspective that can reshape their understanding of human nature, morality, and the foundations of reality.
11. **Future-Focused:** Anticipates the philosophical and practical challenges of advancing AI technology, preparing readers for upcoming societal changes.
12. **Interdisciplinary Appeal:** Attracts readers from various fields including science, philosophy, technology, and psychology, fostering cross-disciplinary dialogue.

# What Sets This Book Apart

1. **Unique Synthesis:** Unlike many works that focus solely on philosophy or science, *The Science of Free Will* uniquely combines cutting-edge physics, neuroscience, and AI research to offer a fresh perspective on the age-old free will debate.
2. **Practical Implications:** This book goes beyond theoretical discussions, exploring how our understanding of free will impacts everyday decision-making, legal systems, and the development of AI technologies.
3. **Accessible Complexity:** While many books on this topic are either overly technical or overly simplified, Varma strikes a balance, making complex ideas understandable without losing their depth.
4. **Future-Focused:** By incorporating discussions on AI and emerging technologies, this book addresses not just historical debates but also pressing questions about the nature of choice in our increasingly automated world.
5. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Varma's diverse background allows him to draw insights from multiple fields, offering a more comprehensive view than single-discipline approaches.
6. **Conversation Starter:** Each chapter has thought-provoking questions designed to spark discussions among readers, making it ideal for book clubs, classroom use, and dinner table debates.
7. **New Scientific Insights:** By incorporating the latest research in quantum mechanics and neurobiology, this book offers new scientific perspectives on free will that many classic philosophical texts don't address.
8. **Bridging Theory and Practice:** Unlike purely theoretical works, this book explores how our understanding of free will can be applied to real-world scenarios, from courtroom decisions to AI ethics.

# Suggested Questions for Media Engagements

1. What inspired you to write *The Science of Free Will*, and how does your background in physics and entrepreneurship inform your perspective on this topic?
2. Can you explain in simple terms how modern physics challenges our traditional notions of free will?
3. How does your book address the tension between deterministic physics and our everyday experience of making choices?
4. You discuss the concept of “Free Will in Practice.” Can you elaborate on what this means and how it differs from traditional ideas of free will?
5. How might understanding determinism change the way we think about personal responsibility and our legal systems?
6. Your book touches on artificial intelligence. How does the free will debate relate to the development of AI, and what ethical considerations should we be aware of?
7. Can you share an example of how the ideas in your book might apply to a common decision-making scenario in everyday life?
8. How do concepts like quantum mechanics and chaos theory factor into your analysis of free will?
9. You discuss some fascinating research on animal cognition in the book. How does this research contribute to our understanding of free will?
10. What do you hope readers will take away from your book, and how might it change their perspective on their own decision-making processes?
11. Can you explain the concept of computational irreducibility and its implications for free will?
12. How do you think our understanding of free will might evolve as technology advances, particularly in areas like brain-computer interfaces or advanced AI?

# Testimonials

**Tyler Cowen, New York Times bestselling author of 19 books and Professor of Economics at George Mason University:** “I am delighted to see this work come to fruition. Samir Varma breaks down barriers in this fascinating book on determinism. Even if physics leaves no room for free will in theory, you effectively have ‘Free Will in Practice’—you are part of the causal chain steering your actions in complex, unpredictable ways. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and believe many readers will gain profound insights from it.”

**Silas Beane, Professor of Physics at the University of Washington, renowned for his work in theoretical nuclear physics and computational science:** “An intellectual tour de force, this book delves into the timeless debate surrounding free will’s existence. Bridging theory and practice, it weaves an exhaustive interdisciplinary study through science, mathematics, computer science, and philosophy. With compelling evidence and insightful caveats, it challenges readers to reconsider the boundaries between determinism and human agency.”

**Alex Tabarrok, Chair in Economics at the Mercatus Center, George Mason University, and noted researcher in political economy:** “The Science of Free Will is a wonderfully entertaining case for determinism. I learned a lot about wave functions, computability, and Artificial Intelligence. Was I convinced that I lack free will? Well, no. But that can hardly be blamed on the author! Convinced or not, I learned a lot, enjoyed the book, and I predict you will too!”

**Jay Kesan, PhD, JD, distinguished professor, highly cited legal scholar, accomplished author, and a respected voice in tech innovation with extensive expertise in intellectual property law and technology:** “A thought-provoking and stimulating read on fate, destiny, and free will, with fascinating examples that will keep you engaged and yearning to learn more! Physicist, entrepreneur, and hedge-fund manager, Samir Varma, draws upon physics, computation, and plain logic to present some surprising and persuasive connections!”

# Additional Materials

## High-Resolution Author Photo



## Marginal Revolution Mentions

Samir Varma has been featured numerous times on Marginal Revolution, one of the world's most popular blogs. Here are some of the mentions and discussions that highlight him by name: <https://bit.ly/3dYW9Di>.

# Next Steps

We invite you to be part of the conversation that *The Science of Free Will* is sure to spark. Here's how you can engage with this groundbreaking work.

## For Booksellers:

- Order copies for your store: Contact your National Book Network (US) or Wiley & Sons (UK) representative or visit their website to place an order.
- Host an author event: Reach out to us to arrange a book signing or discussion with Samir Varma.
- Feature the book: Consider highlighting *The Science of Free Will* in your staff picks or local author sections.

## For Media Representatives:

- Request a review copy: Email us to receive an advance copy for review purposes.
- Schedule an interview: Contact us to arrange an interview with Samir Varma for your publication or program.
- Access additional resources: Visit our media page at <https://samirvarma.com/press-kit/> for high-resolution images and more.

## For Educators:

- Consider for course adoption: Email us for information on desk copies and bulk ordering for classroom use.
- Invite the author to speak: Contact us to discuss having Samir Varma give a guest lecture or participate in a panel discussion.

Don't miss the opportunity to be part of this important dialogue on free will, determinism, and the future of AI. Reach out today to get involved.

# Advance Information Tip Sheet

# Science of Free Will, The

How Determinism Affects Everything from the Future of AI to Traffic to God to Bees

By Samir Varma

Every individual, from the most profound thinker to the casual observer, is composed of atoms - approximately  $6.71 \times 10^{27}$  of them. These aren't just any atoms ... they're the same ones that construct galaxies, stars, and the vast expanse of the universe. Predominantly, we're made of water molecules and a diverse mix of organic molecules. Intriguingly, every single one of these atoms operates under the deterministic laws of quantum electrodynamics. These laws, known since the 1950s, form the bedrock of chemistry, biology, and by extension, life as we know it. If the laws of physics fully determine the motion of every atom in our body, how could we possibly have free will - or do we have it after all?

## Author Bio

Educated at Columbia University and the University of Texas, Samir Varma pursued his passion for physics under eminent physicists including Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg. However, the cancellation of the Superconducting Supercollider prompted a pivot. Recognizing the changing landscape, Samir founded a futures trading company in 1993, becoming an early adopter of chaos theory in finance. He lives in Cos Cob, CT.

Online: [Twitter](#)

## Endorsements

I am delighted to see this work come to fruition. Samir Varma breaks down barriers in this fascinating book on determinism. Even if physics leaves no room for free will in theory, you effectively have 'Free Will in Practice'—you are part of the causal chain steering your actions in complex, unpredictable ways. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and believe many readers will gain profound insights from it.

**Tyler Cowen, New York Times bestselling author of 19 books and Professor of Economics at George Mason University**

## Promotional Plans

Tyler Cowen, bestselling author, renowned economist and co-founder of Marginal Revolution has written an excellent foreword (his blog is read by millions and he has 229,000 followers on Twitter). As he is a best-selling author and very well known amongst the target audience, the book will certainly get exposure on his incredibly widely read blog where the author has been featured 170 times. Given Tyler's emphatic endorsement and foreword, we have a shot at getting some mainstream media to review it. Author has over 1,200 Twitter followers. Internationally, he has been promised exposure for the book via a TV interview in India with one of India's most popular TV anchors (<https://twitter.com/Priyascorner>). He will also be promoting the book through his own businesses (<https://www.vsasset.com/team> & <https://palm.energy/company/>). Guest posting, podcast appearances, blog tour, virtual book tour all planned.

## USP

The central thesis reconciling determinism with free will is an original perspective not seen before. This paradoxical concept that we have free will in practice but not in theory is a distinctive and thought-provoking idea.

## Competing Books

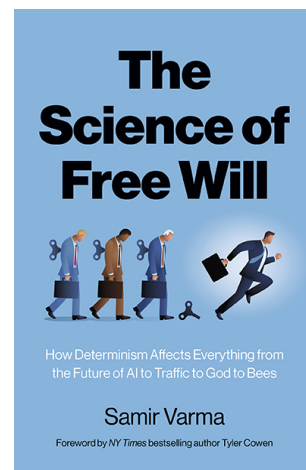
Is Intelligence an Algorithm? 9781785356704, by Antonin Tuynman, John Hunt Publishing Ltd., 2017

## Categories

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