



Yakov  
Perelman

mathematics  
can be fun

mir Publishers Moscow

## About the Author

---

In 1913 in Russian bookshops appeared a book by the outstanding educationalist Yakov Isidorovich Perelman entitled *Physics for Entertainment*. It struck the fancy of the young who found in it the answers to many of the questions that interested them.

*Physics for Entertainment* not only had an interesting layout, it was also immensely instructive.

In the preface to the 11th edition Perelman wrote: "The main objective of *Physics for Entertainment* is to arouse the activity of scientific imagination, to teach the reader to think in the spirit of the science of physics and to create in his mind a wide variety of associations of physical knowledge with the widely differing facts of life, with all that he normally comes in contact with."

*Physics for Entertainment* was a best seller.

Y. I. Perelman was born in 1882 in the town of Byelostok (now in Poland). In 1909 he obtained a diploma of forester from the St. Petersburg Forestry Institute. After the success of *Physics for Entertainment* Perelman set out to produce other books, in which he showed himself to be an imaginative popularizer of science. Especially popular were *Arithmetics for Entertainment*, *Mechanics for Entertainment*, *Geometry for Entertainment*, *Astronomy for Entertainment*, *Figures for Fun*, *Physics Everywhere*, and *Tricks and Amusements*. Today these books are known to every educated person in the Soviet Union.

He has also written several books on interplanetary travel (*Interplanetary Journeys*, *On a Rocket to Stars*, *World Expanses*, etc.).

The great scientist K. E. Tsiolkovsky thought highly of the talent and creative genius of Perelman. He wrote of him in the preface to *Interplanetary Journeys*: "The author has long been known by his popular, witty and quite scientific works on physics, astronomy and mathematics, which are moreover written in a marvelous language and are very readable."

Perelman has also authored a number of textbooks and articles in Soviet popular science magazines.

In addition to his educational, scientific and literary activities, he has also devoted much time to editing. So he was the editor of the magazines *Nature and People* and *In the Workshop of Nature*.

Perelman died on March 16, 1942, in Leningrad.

Many generations of readers have enjoyed Perelman's fascinating books, and they will undoubtedly be of interest for generations to come.

---

# Contents

Part One	Figures for Fun	Page 10
	Preface	
Part Two	Algebra Can Be Fun	Page 188
	Preface	



Ya. Perelman    Mathematics can be Fun

Mir Publishers Moscow