



The Grip of Gravity: The Quest to Understand the Laws of Motion and Gravitation

Prabhakar Gondhalekar

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Gravity is one of the most inexplicable forces of nature, controlling everything, from the expansion of the Universe to the ebb and flow of ocean tides. The search for the laws of motion and gravitation began more than two thousand years ago, a quest that Prabhakar Gondhalekar recounts in *The Grip of Gravity*. Beginning with Aristotle and concluding with Planck, Gondhalekar outlines a 'genealogy' of gravity and lucidly explains how previous explanations have shaped the most recent development in the field, string theory. In this work, physicist and astronomer Gondhalekar describes experiments, both planned and proposed, and clearly explains natural phenomena like ocean tides, seasons, ice ages, the formation of planets, stars, and exotic objects like black holes and neutron stars, which are all controlled by gravity. Including anecdotes and thumb-nail sketches of the personalities involved, *The Grip of Gravity* provides an introduction to the foundation of modern physics and shows how the current developments in string theory may lead to a new and radical interpretation of gravity. Prabhakar Gondhalekar is an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College, London. Until his retirement in 1998, he was the head of the Space Astronomy Group at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, where he had been a researcher for 18 years. His research has included a number of topics in galactic and extragalactic astronomy, with his major work focusing on the interstellar medium and active galactic nuclei. Gondhalekar has been awarded Royal Society, Leverhulme Trust, and NATO Research Fellowships to do research in universities in the United States and Israel.

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