

The Road to Reality - A Complete Guide to the
Laws of the Universe By Sir Roger Penrose
An appreciation by an educated pedestrian

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- Q. Who is Sir Roger Penrose? Can you introduce this author to the average Malayalam reader?
- A. I agree that the average Malayalam reader may not be familiar with the author of this book viz. Roger Penrose. He is one of the greatest thinkers of modern times and since Bertrand Russell there is no one who has made as much impact as Penrose in crucial and fundamental areas of scientific philosophy, especially in the subject of consciousness studies. Since he is touching upon some sensitive areas, which grazes on certain regions of eastern upanishdic thoughts, he has been little controversial too. (In my opinion, it is high time that the average Malayalee should get to know the true intellectuals other than those paraded by our literary snobs.)

Professionally, he is the Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University. Borne in 1931(Colchester, Essex, England), he is the son of scientist Lionel S. Penrose, FRS. One of his brothers, Oliver is a mathematician and the other, Jonathan Penrose, is a ten times chess grand master. Sir Penrose has made lasting original contributions to mathematics, cosmology and philosophy. His method of tiling an area with tiles of pentagonal shape is known as Penrose tiling. Actual crystals having such pentagonal symmetry, supposed to be impossible, were later found to exist as predicted by Penrose and they are called *quasicrystals*. He has been collaborating with Stephen Hawking in Cambridge University in unraveling many problems in cosmology and especially those related to black holes. He incidentally shared the prestigious Wolf Prize in Physics in 1988 with Stephen Hawking. Penrose is the inventor of the so-called *Twister theory*, which helps to map geometrical objects into 4 (or higher) dimensional space-time. He also invented the *spin network*, which later came to form the geometry of space-time in the so-called *loop quantum gravity*, a theory that hopes to explain all the forces in nature. Three of his popular books are:

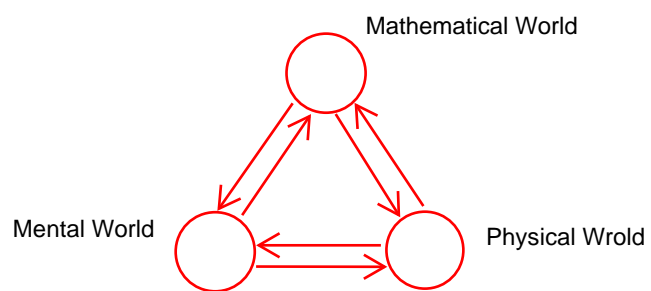


Fig 1. Scientists view of Universe

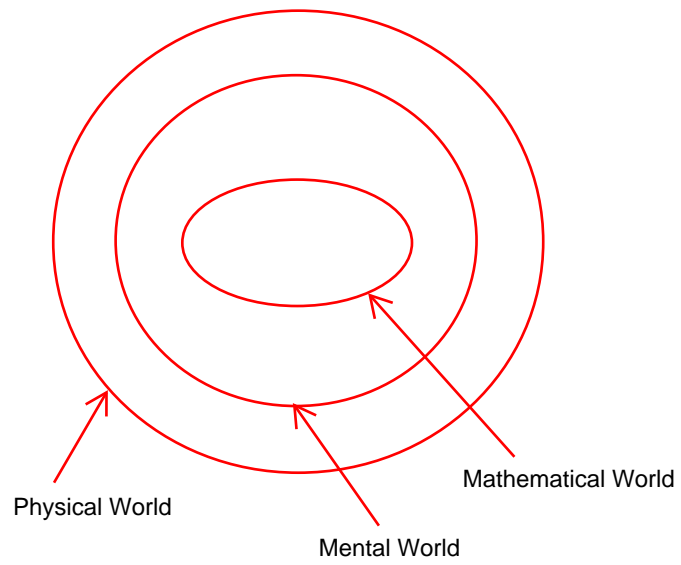


Fig 2
Materialist's view of the universe

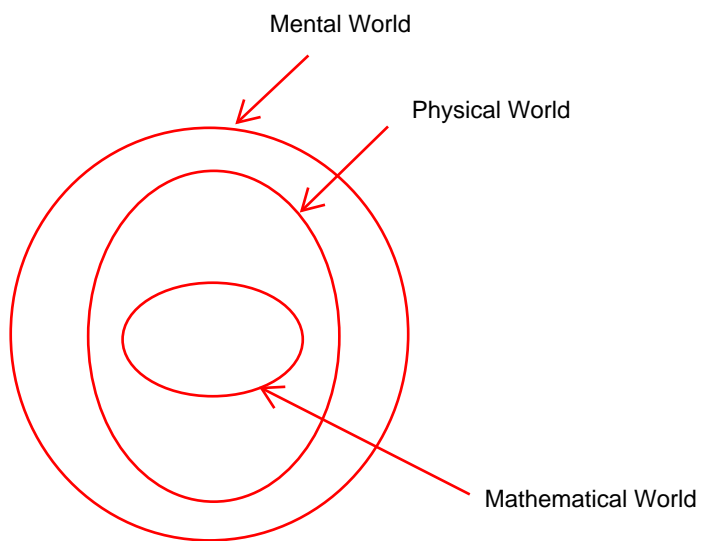


Fig 3
Spiritualist's view of the universe