



# Is God a Mathematician?

*Mario Livio*

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## **Is God a Mathematician?** Mario Livio

Nobel Laureate Eugene Wigner once wondered about "the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics" in the formulation of the laws of nature. "Is God a Mathematician?" investigates why mathematics is as powerful as it is. From ancient times to the present, scientists and philosophers have marveled at how such a seemingly abstract discipline could so perfectly explain the natural world. More than that -- mathematics has often made predictions, for example, about subatomic particles or cosmic phenomena that were unknown at the time, but later were proven to be true. Is mathematics ultimately invented or discovered? If, as Einstein insisted, mathematics is "a product of human thought that is independent of experience," how can it so accurately describe and even predict the world around us? Mathematicians themselves often insist that their work has no practical effect. The British mathematician G. H. Hardy went so far as to describe his own work this way: "No discovery of mine has made, or is likely to make, directly or indirectly, for good or ill, the least difference to the amenity of the world." He was wrong. The Hardy-Weinberg law allows population geneticists to predict how genes are transmitted from one generation to the next, and Hardy's work on the theory of numbers found unexpected implications in the development of codes. Physicist and author Mario Livio brilliantly explores mathematical ideas from Pythagoras to the present day as he shows us how intriguing questions and ingenious answers have led to ever deeper insights into our world. This fascinating book will interest anyone curious about the human mind, the scientific world, and the relationship between them.

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