

Answer on Question #47980-Physics-Other

We know that any matter falls in the earth due to the gravitational force and it depends on the mass of that matter. But in the Falling matter principle of Galileo there said two matter of various mass falls at the same time when there is no air friction. My question is why the two matter fall in same time as there remains a matter of gravitational force? Doesn't the heavier one will fall down at first?

Answer

Let's say two separate mass m_1 and m_2 where $m_1 \ll m_2$, both fall, from the same instant in a gravitational field

$$\text{Force on } m_1 \text{ is } F_1 = G \frac{M_{earth}m_1}{R^2}.$$

$$\text{Force on } m_2 \text{ is } F_2 = G \frac{M_{earth}m_2}{R^2}.$$

Therefore the forces are $F_1 \gg F_2$.

So, most people think m_1 should accelerate much faster than m_2 .

But as you wrote above $a = \frac{F}{m}$ and substituting F_1 , F_2 , m_1 and m_2 into that formula we find:

$$\frac{F_1}{m_1} = \frac{F_2}{m_2} = G \frac{M_{earth}}{R^2}.$$

Therefore the acceleration is independent of the masses we drop, and is a constant.

Since they are accelerated the same and start with the same initial conditions (at rest and dropped from the same height) they will hit the surface at the same time.