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Perelman Explains Why He Refused $1M

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Legendary mathematician Grigory Perelman, a notorious recluse, explained in a one-off interview why he has rejected a $1 million cash prize for solving a century-old mathematical problem.

His research is too interesting due to its vast implications — both practical and philosophical — to spend time on other matters, Perelman said in an interview published Thursday in Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Applications for his studies range from space industry and nanotechnologies to social sciences and fundamental questions about the nature of the universe, Perelman said.

"I know how to control the universe. Tell me, why would I need to chase a million [dollars]?" he said.

Perelman, 44, was awarded the cash by the Clay Mathematics Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in March for proving a theorem known as the Poincare conjecture, but turned down the award, saying the institute ignored the equally important input of another mathematician, Richard Hamilton.

Perelman, who lives with his mother in a rundown apartment in St. Petersburg, had not given any interviews, but broke his silence for a producer of Moscow-based movie company President Film, Alexander Zabrovsky, who is planning to shoot a documentary about the world's leading mathematicians.

Perelman also blamed the bad manners of journalists, not an aversion to publicity, as the reason why he has stayed away from the media. He cited the popular habit of shortening his first name to an unceremonious "Grisha" in publications as an example of their disrespect.

Zabrovsky described the mathematician as "a sensible man" with no trace of eccentricity in his own interview to Komsomolskaya Pravda.

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