

DYNAMICS

⑦ Deduce Newton's law of gravitation from Kepler's law.

Kepler's first law of planetary motion states that every planet describes an ellipse with the sun at one of the foci. This implies that the force of attraction exerted by the sun on the planet is always directed towards the sun. Let us now find the law of force under which the planet describes an ellipse with sun at a focus.

We know that for any central orbit, the law of force is given by

$$P = h^2 u^2 \left[u + \frac{d^2 u}{d\theta^2} \right] \quad \text{--- (1)}$$

is used notation.

Now the equation to an ellipse referred to a focus as pole is

$$r = \frac{l}{1 + e \cos \theta}$$

This gives $u = \frac{1}{r} = \frac{1}{l} + \frac{e \cos \theta}{l}$

$$\therefore \frac{du}{d\theta} = \frac{-e \sin \theta}{l}$$

$$\frac{d^2 u}{d\theta^2} = \frac{-e \cos \theta}{l}$$

Hence ① gives

$$P = h^2 u^2 \left(\frac{1}{l} \right)$$

$$= \frac{h^2}{l} u^2$$

$$\therefore P = \frac{h^2}{l} \cdot \frac{1}{r^2}$$

Thus the force of attraction between the sun and the planet varies inversely as the square of the distance between them.

This is nothing but Newton's law of gravitation $\left[F = G \cdot \frac{Mm}{r^2} \propto \frac{1}{r^2} \right]$

Thus Kepler's 1st law \Rightarrow Newton's law of gravitation