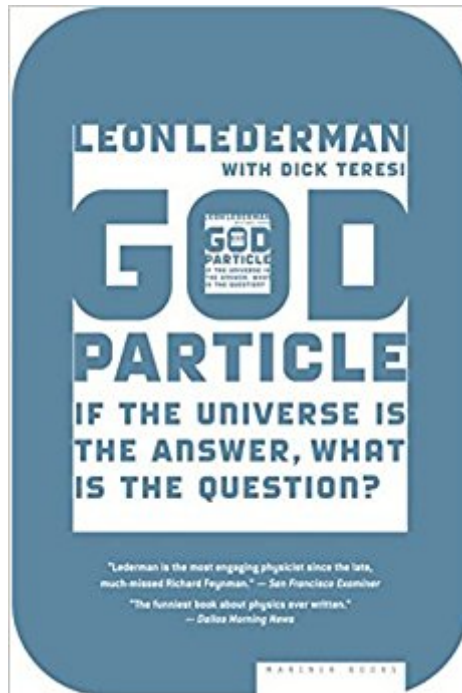


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The God Particle: If The Universe Is The Answer, What Is The Question?



Synopsis

A fascinating tour of particle physics from Nobel Prize winner Leon Lederman. At the root of particle physics is an invincible sense of curiosity. Leon Lederman embraces this spirit of inquiry as he moves from the Greeks' earliest scientific observations to Einstein and beyond to chart this unique arm of scientific study. His survey concludes with the Higgs boson, nicknamed the God Particle, which scientists hypothesize will help unlock the last secrets of the subatomic universe, quarks and all. It's the dogged pursuit of this almost mystical entity that inspires Lederman's witty and accessible history.

Book Information

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: Mariner Books; Reprint edition (June 26, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780618711680

ISBN-13: 978-0618711680

ASIN: 0618711686

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (126 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

As with most physics books we get a history lesson of the long road of discoveries that has led up to our current point in research, in this case the Higgs boson. The history section is probably one of the best written in physics books but unfortunately that's not why I had read the book. The section that actually concerns the title of the book is actually pretty small. The second part of the book is more concerned with the author's history with Fermi lab, winning the Nobel Prize, interesting anecdotes and some friendships with other physicists. The God particle subject is very elusive in this book, as it is in the real world.

Leon Lederman is an experimental physicist and winner of the Nobel Prize in physics (1988). If there will be a Nobel Prize for humor, he will be a double winner. I read more than 100 books about

popular physics, quantum theory and cosmology and this book is certainly in my Top 5 of all time! From the first hand you can read all newest information about what experimental physicists do, where are the problems, what is the next discovery they expect, and how look the atmosphere between scientists in the lab. In this book you can also read a much about history of experimental physics. But the main subject of this book is search for mysterious particle, Higgs boson (God particle). Why all material things have a mass? Nobody knows. God particle is propose to be an answer. Problem is that this particle is never been seen to interact with other particles or even to exist. It is pure imagination. But, if Higgs boson does not exist there will be a lot of serious problems for today's physical theories. 'The God Particle' is written with such a great charm and humor that I can not imagine better style than his. Lederman is first-class mind and in this book there are no speculations and mysticism, but only a pure scientific facts. It seems to me that always a greatest minds (Gell-Mann, Feynman, Hawking, Weinberg,...) write a best book on the subject. This is the one. No doubt 'God Particle' deserve all 5 stars. Enjoy your self!

What I am about to write only reflects my personal thoughts on this book: 1- I find the title of the book misleading, as VERY little is dedicated to the Higgs boson in the book... very disappointing, as I bought the book to learn more about it. 2- I didn't really like the sense of humour used in the book, but I guess that's subjective. 3- I didn't appreciate the lack of humility of the author either, and his unsubtle bragging about Nobel Prize and his work at Fermilab. 4- Finally, the book needs updating, as although it was "recently" published, the content is from 1993. It's probably a good book for those who want to read about the history of physics discoveries, but certainly not for those - like me - who wanted to know more about the Higgs boson...

This is a brilliant book. The book speaks for itself. My words can't do it justice. I think everyone should read this book. The only thing that bothers me about it is that it needs updating. The author of this new edition did explain in the forward that it was written over a decade ago, in anticipation of the SSC, whose funding got cut. However, that is not enough. If the author or publisher did not want to update the text of the book itself, they should have provided footnotes throughout. For example, when it mentions that the top quark has not been discovered, that deserves a comment about its discovery, if not an appendix. It wouldn't take that much effort to just add footnotes, and it would help make the book more timeless. Also, the paper in this edition could be better. The quality is not quite as bad as "mass market paperback", but almost. Regardless of my few negative comments, this is one of the all-time best scientific books written for a popular audience.

Dr. Lederman takes the reader through the history of the search for the smallest building block(s) of the universe, from the thought experiments of Greek philosopher Democritus through today's superconducting supercolliders. Along the way he never fails to entertain with his wit. When I wasn't laughing out loud or bugging my wife by reading her funny snippets, I was wishing I had read this book BEFORE college (where I took four freshman/sophomore level physics classes to satisfy the science requirements for my engineering degree.) After reading this book I understand much more about subjects I allegedly "learned" in college, including the model of the chemical atom, what a quark is, etc. I also feel better about not liking the "hand-waving" involved in quantum physics. (If nothing else, at least I'm in good company with Einstein.) In addition, the insight into how science was and is actually practiced is fascinating. I am giving this as a present to my college-bound nephew!

A tremendously entertaining book covering much of the history of physics by one of the best known particle physicists. Lederman's book is interspersed with some of the most humorous stories I've ever read in a science book and I can't resist sharing two of them here. In an imaginary conversation with the greek philosopher Democritus, Lederman is talking about how elusive the Higgs particle is, and comments that the book's title refers to this particle, but that his publisher wouldn't allow the book to be called "The God-damned Particle. The second is from a discussion of building a piece of laboratory equipment to use in a particle accelerator. They acquired a 12 inch naval cannon to use as a collimator, and needed to fill it with beryllium as a filter, but the inside of the bore had deep rifling grooves. He sent a skinny graduate student inside the tube to stuff steel wool into the grooves. After a few hours of work, the graduate student crawled out all hot, sweaty and irritated and said "I quit," to which Lederman is said to have replied, "You can't quit, where will I find another student of your caliber?"

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