

# **QUANTUM MECHANICS**

**THIRD EDITION**

**LEONARD I. SCHIFF**

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**LEONARD I. SCHIFF**

Professor of Physics  
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## QUANTUM MECHANICS

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# PREFACE

This volume has a threefold purpose: to explain the physical concepts of quantum mechanics, to describe the mathematical formalism, and to present illustrative examples of both the ideas and the methods. The book is intended to serve as a text at the graduate level and also as a reference book. It is assumed that the reader is reasonably familiar with classical mechanics, electromagnetic theory, atomic structure, and differential equations; prior acquaintance with matrices or group theory is not necessary. In addition, he should have had some contact with complex variables (for Chap. 9) and the special theory of relativity (for Chap. 13).

The author believes that the analytical methods employed in the book will satisfy most theoretical physicists even though no attempt is made to achieve mathematical rigor. For example, there is little or no discussion of the justification for the interchange of sum, derivative, and integral operations or for the use of the  $\delta$  function. On the other hand, the physical reasons for the nature of the results obtained are investigated wherever possible.

Problems are given at the end of each chapter. They are often used to illustrate or amplify points discussed in the text. Original theoretical papers are referred to throughout the book; the list is representative rather than exhaustive. Experimental results are, for the most part, quoted without reference, since the large amount of documentation required for an adequate survey seems out of place in a book on theoretical physics. Several other books and review articles on quantum mechanics and related subjects are referred to for more detailed discussions of particular topics.

The scope of this volume is best outlined if the book is divided into

three parts. The first three chapters constitute an introduction to quantum mechanics, in which the physical concepts are discussed and the Schrödinger wave formalism is established. The next nine chapters present exact solutions of the wave equation for both bound-state and collision problems, the Heisenberg matrix formalism and transformation theory, symmetry, approximation methods, the scattering matrix, particle identity, radiation theory, and some applications to atomic systems. Since Chaps. 5 to 12 include most of the material given in a first-year graduate course, it seems desirable to include a semiclassical treatment of electromagnetic radiation (Chap. 11) even though some of the results are obtained again in Chap. 14. The last two chapters are an introduction to relativistic particle theory and to quantized fields.

The first edition of this book was completed 20 years ago, and relatively few changes were made in the second edition. Thus the present revision is of necessity extensive; at the same time it is intended to retain the comprehensiveness of the original volume without a substantial increase in length. The principal additions are a section on complex potentials and the reciprocity and optical theorems (Sec. 20); a much fuller account of matrices and transformation theory (Chap. 6); a new chapter that discusses geometrical and dynamical symmetries and includes a fairly detailed account of angular momentum (Chap. 7); a considerably expanded treatment of approximation methods for bound-state and collision problems, including the scattering matrix and its applications, analytic properties, and dispersion relations (Chaps. 8 and 9); and a new section on the density operator and matrix (Sec. 42). The principal topics dropped from the second edition are the variational treatment of scattering, the theory of the Cerenkov effect, and the quantization of the Dirac equation; also, the last two sections of the second edition are somewhat condensed and combined into one (Sec. 57) in the present volume. Some changes in notation have been made to conform to current usage, and a table of the numerical values of some physical quantities has been added inside the back cover.

The author wishes again to record his indebtedness to the late Prof. J. R. Oppenheimer and to Prof. Robert Serber in connection with the preparation of the first edition of this book. He is also grateful to several of those who have studied and taught from the earlier revision for their many helpful suggestions. In particular, Prof. E. H. Wichmann prepared a thorough review of the second edition that contributed substantially to the present volume. The author also thanks the many students who studied from the various drafts of the third edition for their comments, and especially Prof. J. D. Walecka for his constructive criticism of particular sections.

Leonard I. Schiff

# CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	ix
<b>Chapter 1 The Physical Basis of Quantum Mechanics</b>	<b>1</b>
1 Experimental Background	2
Inadequacy of classical physics. Summary of principal experiments and inferences.	
2 The Old Quantum Theory	4
Bohr-Sommerfeld quantization rules. Practical difficulties. Conceptual difficulties. Quantum-mechanical viewpoint.	
3 Uncertainty and Complementarity	7
Uncertainty principle. Complementarity principle. Limitations on experiment.	
4 Discussion of Measurement	9
Localization experiment. Momentum determination experiment. Analysis of diffraction experiment. Discussion of diffraction experiment.	
5 Wave Packets in Space and Time	14
Space packets. Time packets. Wave formalism.	
<b>Chapter 2 The Schrödinger Wave Equation</b>	<b>19</b>
6 Development of the Wave Equation	20
Traveling harmonic waves. Need for a wave equation. The one-	
	xi

	dimensional wave equation. Extension to three dimensions. Inclusion of forces.	
7	<b>Interpretation of the Wave Function</b>	24
	Statistical interpretation. Normalization of $\psi$ . Probability current density. Expectation value. Ehrenfest's theorem.	
8	<b>Energy Eigenfunctions</b>	30
	Separation of the wave equation. Significance of the separation constant $E$ . Boundary conditions at great distances. Continuity conditions. Boundary conditions for infinite potential energy. Energy eigenvalues in one dimension. Discrete energy levels. Continuous energy eigenvalues. Discrete and continuous eigenvalues in three dimensions.	
9	<b>One-dimensional Square Well Potential</b>	37
	Perfectly rigid walls. Finite potential step. Energy levels. Parity. A simplified solution.	
	<b>Chapter 3 Eigenfunctions and Eigenvalues</b>	45
10	<b>Interpretative Postulates and Energy Eigenfunctions</b>	46
	Dynamical variables as operators. Expansion in eigenfunctions. The total-energy operator. Normalization in a box. Orthonormality of energy eigenfunctions. Reality of the energy eigenvalues. Expansion in energy eigenfunctions. The closure property. Probability function and expectation value. General solution of the Schrödinger equation.	
11	<b>Momentum Eigenfunctions</b>	53
	Form of the eigenfunctions. Box normalization. The Dirac $\delta$ function. A representation of the $\delta$ function. Normalization in terms of the $\delta$ function. Some properties of the $\delta$ function. Closure. Expansion in momentum eigenfunctions. Probability function and expectation value.	
12	<b>Motion of a Free Wave Packet in One Dimension</b>	60
	The minimum uncertainty product. Form of the minimum packet. Momentum expansion coefficients. Change with time of a minimum packet. Classical limit.	
	<b>Chapter 4 Discrete Eigenvalues: Bound States</b>	66
13	<b>Linear Harmonic Oscillator</b>	66
	Asymptotic behavior. Energy levels. Zero-point energy. Hermite polynomials. Harmonic-oscillator wave functions. Correspondence with classical theory. Oscillating wave packet.	
14	<b>Spherically Symmetric Potentials in Three Dimensions</b>	76
	Separation of the wave equation. Legendre polynomials. Spherical harmonics. Parity. Angular momentum.	
15	<b>Three-dimensional Square Well Potential</b>	83
	Zero angular momentum. Interior solutions for arbitrary $l$ . Exterior solutions for arbitrary $l$ . Energy levels.	

16	<b>The Hydrogen Atom</b>	88
	Reduced mass. Asymptotic behavior. Energy levels. Laguerre polynomials. Hydrogen-atom wave functions. Degeneracy. Separation in parabolic coordinates. Energy levels. Wave functions.	
	<b>Chapter 5 Continuous Eigenvalues: Collision Theory</b>	100
17	<b>One-dimensional Square Potential Barrier</b>	101
	Asymptotic behavior. Normalization. Scattering coefficients. Scattering of a wave packet.	
18	<b>Collisions in Three Dimensions</b>	105
	Scattering cross section. Relations between angles in the laboratory and center-of-mass systems. Relation between cross sections. Dependence on $\gamma$ . Asymptotic behavior. Normalization.	
19	<b>Scattering by Spherically Symmetric Potentials</b>	116
	Asymptotic behavior. Differential cross section. Total elastic cross section. Phase shifts. Calculation of $\delta_l$ . Relation between signs of $\delta_l$ and $V(r)$ . Ramsauer-Townsend effect. Scattering by a perfectly rigid sphere. Scattering by a square well potential. Resonance scattering. Angular distribution at low energies.	
20	<b>Scattering by Complex Potentials</b>	129
	Conservation of probability. Complex phase shifts. Asymptotic relations. Reciprocity theorem. Generalized optical theorem. Optical theorem.	
21	<b>Scattering by a Coulomb Field</b>	138
	Parabolic coordinates. Confluent hypergeometric function. Scattering cross section and normalization. Solution in spherical coordinates. Modified coulomb field. Classical limit for a pure coulomb field.	
	<b>Chapter 6 Matrix Formulation of Quantum Mechanics</b>	148
22	<b>Matrix Algebra</b>	149
	Matrix addition and multiplication. Null, unit, and constant matrices. Trace, determinant, and inverse of a matrix. Hermitian and unitary matrices. Transformation and diagonalization of matrices. Functions of matrices. Matrices of infinite rank.	
23	<b>Transformation Theory</b>	155
	Unitary matrix $W$ . Transformation of the hamiltonian with $W$ . Transformation of the hamiltonian with $U$ . Transformation of the hamiltonian with $V$ . Representations of operators. A useful identity. Row and column matrices. Hilbert space. Dirac's bra and ket notation. Projection operators. Physical meaning of matrix elements.	
24	<b>Equations of Motion</b>	167
	Schrödinger picture. Heisenberg picture. Interaction picture. Energy representation. Classical lagrangian and hamiltonian equations of motion. Poisson brackets and commutator brackets.	



	Quantization of a classical system. Motion of a particle in an electromagnetic field. Evaluation of commutator brackets Velocity and acceleration of a charged particle. The Lorentz force. Virial theorem.	
25	Matrix Theory of the Harmonic Oscillator Energy representation. Raising and lowering operators. Matrices for $a$ , $x$ , and $p$ . Coordinate representation.	180
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Symmetry in Quantum Mechanics</b>	<b>187</b>
26	Space and Time Displacements Unitary displacement operator. Equation of motion. Symmetry and degeneracy. Matrix elements for displaced states. The group concept. Time displacement.	188
27	Rotation, Angular Momentum, and Unitary Groups Proper rotation group. Geometrical isomorphism. Infinitesimal rotations. Spin of a vector particle. Commutation relations for the generators. Choice of a representation. Values of $m$ , $f(j)$ , and $\lambda_m$ . Angular momentum matrices. Connection with spherical harmonics. *Spin angular momentum. Covering group. Unitary and special unitary groups in two dimensions. The groups $U(n)$ and $SU(n)$ . Generators of $U(n)$ and $SU(n)$ . The $SU(3)$ group. Representation in terms of coordinates and momenta.	194
28	Combination of Angular Momentum States and Tensor Operators Eigenvalues of the total angular momentum. Clebsch-Gordan coefficients. Recursion relations. Construction procedure. Some particular coefficients. Matrix elements for rotated states. Irreducible tensor operators. Product of tensor operators. Combination of operator and eigenstate. Wigner-Eckart theorem.	212
29	Space Inversion and Time Reversal Space inversion. Unitary inversion operator. Intrinsic parity. Inverted states and operators. Time reversal. Antilinear operators. Antiunitary operators. $T$ for a zero spin particle. $T$ for a nonzero spin particle. Systems of several particles. Reality of eigenfunctions.	224
30	Dynamical Symmetry Classical Kepler problem. Hydrogen atom. The $O(4)$ group. Energy levels of hydrogen. Classical isotropic oscillator. Quantum isotropic oscillator.	234
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Approximation Methods for Bound States</b>	<b>244</b>
31	Stationary Perturbation Theory Nondegenerate case. First-order perturbation. Second-order perturbation. Perturbation of an oscillator. Degenerate case. Removal of degeneracy in second order. Zeeman effect without electron spin. First-order Stark effect in hydrogen. Perturbed energy levels. Occurrence of permanent electric dipole moments.	245

32	<b>The Variation Method</b>	255
	Expectation value of the energy. Application to excited states. Ground state of helium. Electron interaction energy. Variation of the parameter $Z$ . van der Waals interaction. Perturbation calculation. Variation calculation.	
33	<b>Alternative Treatment of the Perturbation Series</b>	263
	Second-order Stark effect in hydrogen. Polarizability of hydrogen. Method of Dalgarno and Lewis. Third-order perturbed energy. Interaction of a hydrogen atom and a point charge.	
34	<b>The WKB Approximation</b>	268
	Classical limit. Approximate solutions. Asymptotic nature of the solutions. Solution near a turning point. Linear turning point. Connection at the turning point. Asymptotic connection formulas. Energy levels of a potential well. A quantization rule. Special boundary conditions. Tunneling through a barrier.	
35	<b>Methods for Time-dependent Problems</b>	279
	Time-dependent perturbation theory. Interaction picture. First-order perturbation. Harmonic perturbation. Transition probability. Ionization of a hydrogen atom. Density of final states. Ionization probability. Second-order perturbation. Adiabatic approximation. Choice of phases. Connection with perturbation theory. Discontinuous change in $H$ . Sudden approximation. Disturbance of an oscillator.	
<b>Chapter 9 Approximation Methods in Collision Theory</b>		298
36	<b>The Scattering Matrix</b>	298
	Green's functions and propagator. Free-particle Green's functions. Integral equation for $\psi$ . Integral equation for the propagator. Use of the advanced Green's function. Differential equation for the Green's functions. Symbolic relations. Application to scattering. Unitarity of the $S$ matrix. Symmetry properties of the $S$ matrix.	
37	<b>Stationary Collision Theory</b>	312
	Transition matrix. Transition probability. Scattering cross section. Green's functions for stationary case. Green's functions as inverse operators. Stationary propagator. Free-particle propagator. Scattering amplitude. Ingoing waves. $S$ matrix for stationary case. Angular momentum representation.	
38	<b>Approximate Calculations</b>	324
	Born approximation. Validity of the Born approximation. Scattering from two potentials. Distorted wave Born approximation. Partial wave analysis of the DWBA. Approximate expression for the phase shifts. Scatterer with internal degrees of freedom. Elastic and inelastic cross sections. Electron scattering from hydrogen. Production of a cloud chamber track. Second-order perturbation theory. Evaluation of the second-order matrix	

	element. Discussion of the cross section. Eikonal approximation. Scattering amplitude and cross section. Perfect absorber.	
39	<b>Analytic Properties and Dispersion Relations</b>	344
	Radial solutions. Jost function. Enhancement factor. Jost function for large $ k $ . Bound states. Dispersion relations for the Jost function. Dispersion relation for $\ln f_l(k)$ . Effect of bound states. Levinson's theorem. Effective range. Forward scattering amplitude. Dispersion relation for $T(E)$ . Subtracted dispersion relation.	
	<b>Chapter 10 Identical Particles and Spin</b>	362
40	<b>Identical Particles</b>	363
	Physical meaning of identity. Symmetric and antisymmetric wave functions. Construction from unsymmetrized functions. The symmetric group. Distinguishability of identical particles. The exclusion principle. Connection with statistical mechanics. Collisions of identical particles.	
41	<b>Spin Angular Momentum</b>	371
	Connection between spin and statistics. Spin matrices and eigenfunctions. Collisions of identical particles. Electron spin functions. The helium atom. Spin functions for three electrons.	
42	<b>Density Operator and Density Matrix</b>	378
	Expectation value and projection operator. Density operator. Equations of motion. Projection operator for a spin $\frac{1}{2}$ particle. Density matrix for a spin $\frac{1}{2}$ particle. Polarization vector for a spin $s$ particle. Precession of the polarization vector.	
43	<b>Rearrangement Collisions</b>	384
	Notation for rearrangement collisions. Alternative expression for the $T$ matrix element. $T$ matrix element for rearrangements. Presence of a core interaction. Elimination of the core term. Exchange collisions of electrons with hydrogen. Relation between amplitude and matrix element. Effects of identity and spin. Exchange collisions with helium.	
	<b>Chapter 11 Semiclassical Treatment of Radiation</b>	397
44	<b>Absorption and Induced Emission</b>	398
	Maxwell's equations. Plane electromagnetic waves. Use of perturbation theory. Transition probability. Interpretation in terms of absorption and emission. Electric dipole transitions. Forbidden transitions.	
45	<b>Spontaneous Emission</b>	406
	Classical radiation field. Asymptotic form. Radiated energy. Dipole radiation. Angular momentum. Dipole case. Conversion from classical to quantum theory. Planck distribution formula. Line breadth.	

46	<b>Some Applications of Radiation Theory</b>	416
	Selection rules for a single particle. Polarization of emitted radiation. Conservation of angular momentum. Selection rules for many-particle systems. Photoelectric effect. Angular distribution. Cross section for the atomic photoelectric effect. Improvement on the Born approximation.	
	<b>Chapter 12 Atoms, Molecules, and Atomic Nuclei</b>	424
47	<b>Approximations in Atomic Structure</b>	424
	Central-field approximation. Periodic system of the elements. Thomas-Fermi statistical model. Evaluation of the potential. Hartree's self-consistent fields. Connection with the variation method. Corrections to the central-field approximation. <i>LS</i> coupling scheme. Selection rules. <i>jj</i> coupling scheme.	
48	<b>The Alkali Atoms</b>	436
	Doublet separation. Doublet intensity. Effect of a magnetic field. Weak-field case. Strong-field case. Quadratic Zeeman effect.	
49	<b>Molecules</b>	445
	Classification of energy levels. Wave equation. The hydrogen molecule. Potential-energy function. The Morse potential. Rotation and vibration of diatomic molecules. Energy levels. Effect of nuclear identity.	
50	<b>Atomic Nuclei</b>	455
	General properties of nuclei. Two-nucleon interaction. Neutron-proton system. Arbitrary shape of potential. Relations for the phase shift. Effective range. Exchange operators. Proton-proton scattering.	
	<b>Chapter 13 Relativistic Wave Equations</b>	466
51	<b>Schrödinger's Relativistic Equation</b>	467
	Free particle. Electromagnetic potentials. Separation of the equation. Energy levels in a coulomb field.	
52	<b>Dirac's Relativistic Equation</b>	472
	Free-particle equation. Matrices for $\alpha$ and $\beta$ . Free-particle solutions. Charge and current densities. Electromagnetic potentials.	
53	<b>Dirac's Equation for a Central Field</b>	480
	Spin angular momentum. Approximate reduction; spin-orbit energy. Separation of the equation. The hydrogen atom. Classification of energy levels. Negative energy states.	
	<b>Chapter 14 The Quantization of Wave Fields</b>	490
54	<b>Classical and Quantum Field Equations</b>	491
	Coordinates of the field. Time derivatives. Classical lagrangian equation. Functional derivative. Classical hamiltonian equations.	

	Quantum equations for the field. Fields with more than one component. Complex field.	
55	Quantization of the Nonrelativistic Schrödinger Equation	498
	Classical lagrangian and hamiltonian equations. Quantum equations. The $N$ representation. Creation, destruction, and number operators. Connection with the many-particle Schrödinger equation. Anticommutation relations. Equation of motion. Physical implications of anticommutation. Representation of the anticommuting $a_i$ operators.	
56	Electromagnetic Field in Vacuum	508
	Lagrangian equations. Hamiltonian equations. Quantum equations. Commutation relations for $\mathbf{E}$ and $\mathbf{H}$ . Plane wave representation. Quantized field energy. Quantized field momentum. $\mathbf{A}(\mathbf{r}, t)$ in the plane wave representation. Commutation relations at different times.	
57	Interaction Between Charged Particles and the Electromagnetic Field	521
	Lagrangian and hamiltonian equations. Elimination of $\phi$ . Quantization of the fields. Inclusion of static fields. Perturbation theory of the interparticle interaction. Einstein-Bose case. Fermi-Dirac case. Radiation theory. Transition probability for absorption. Transition probability for emission.	
	Index	535

# 1

## The Physical Basis of Quantum Mechanics

At the present stage of human knowledge, quantum mechanics can be regarded as the fundamental theory of atomic phenomena. The experimental data on which it is based are derived from physical events that lie almost entirely beyond the range of direct human perception. It is not surprising, therefore, that the theory embodies physical concepts that are foreign to common daily experience. These concepts did not appear in the historical development of quantum mechanics, however, until a quite complete mathematical formalism had been evolved. The need for quantitative comparison with observation, which is the ultimate test of any physical theory, in this case led first to the formalism and only later to its interpretation in physical terms.

It seems desirable in introducing the subject of quantum mechanics to depart from the historical order and preface the mathematical development with a discussion of the physical concepts.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we first review briefly the experimental background and the ideas of the old

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of the historical development, see M. Jammer, "The Conceptual Development of Quantum Mechanics" (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1966).

quantum theory, then discuss the newer physical concepts of uncertainty and complementarity, and finally lay the groundwork for the formalism that will be developed in its most familiar form in Chap. 2. No attempt will be made to deduce the structure of the formalism from the fundamental experiments; we shall try to make the theoretical development seem plausible rather than unique. The justification for the theory, then, will rest on the agreement between deductions made from it and experiments, and on the simplicity (in principle more than in practice) and consistency of the formalism.

## 1 □ EXPERIMENTAL BACKGROUND

Experimental physics prior to 1900 had demonstrated the existence of a wide variety of phenomena, which for the most part were believed to be explicable in terms of what we now call *classical* theoretical physics. The motions of mechanical objects were successfully discussed in terms of Newton's equations on both celestial and terrestrial scales. Application of this theory to molecular motions produced useful results in the kinetic theory of gases, and the discovery of the electron by J. J. Thomson in 1897 consisted in showing that it behaved like a newtonian particle. The wave nature of light had been strongly suggested by the diffraction experiments of Young in 1803 and was put on a firmer foundation by Maxwell's discovery in 1864 of the connection between optical and electrical phenomena.

### INADEQUACY OF CLASSICAL PHYSICS

The difficulties in the understanding of experimental results that remained at the beginning of this century were largely concerned with the development of a suitable atomic model and with the late discoveries of x-rays and radioactivity. However, there were also difficulties associated with phenomena that should have been understood but actually were not: such things as the spectral distribution of thermal radiation from a blackbody, the low-temperature specific heats of solids, and the appearance of only 5 degrees of freedom in the motion of a free diatomic molecule at ordinary temperatures.

The beginning of an understanding of the second class of difficulties was made by Planck in 1900, when he was able to explain the blackbody spectrum in terms of the assumed emission and absorption of electromagnetic radiation in discrete *quanta*, each of which contains an amount of energy  $E$  that is equal to the frequency of the radiation  $\nu$  multiplied by a universal constant  $h$  (called *Planck's constant*):

$$E = h\nu \tag{1.1}$$

This quantum idea was later used by Einstein in accounting for some of the experimental observations on the photoelectric effect. In this way the dual character of electromagnetic radiation became established: It sometimes behaves like a wave motion and sometimes like a stream of corpuscular quanta.

At about this time, the existence of discrete values for the measurable parameters of atomic systems (not only of electromagnetic radiation) became apparent through Einstein's and Debye's theories of the specific heats of solids, Ritz's classification of spectral lines, the experiment of Franck and Hertz on the discrete energy losses of electrons on collision with atoms, and (somewhat later) the experiment of Stern and Gerlach, which showed that the component of the magnetic moment of an atom along an external magnetic field has discrete values.

#### SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL EXPERIMENTS AND INFERENCES

The theoretical physics of the first quarter of this century thus contained two important inferences, obtained from the experiments and their interpretations, that had not existed in 1900: the dual character of electromagnetic radiation and the existence of discrete values for physical quantities. The relations between the principal experimental conclusions and the theoretical inferences are shown schematically in Table 1; for a more detailed discussion and a bibliography, reference should be made to a book on atomic physics.<sup>1</sup>

A third theoretical inference appeared in 1924 with the suggestion by de Broglie that matter also has a dual (particlelike and wavelike) character; he assumed that the relation between the momentum  $p$  of any particle and the length  $\lambda$  of the corresponding wave is<sup>2</sup>

$$\lambda = \frac{h}{p} \quad (1.2)$$

Up to that time all the evidence had indicated that matter was composed of discrete newtonian particles; in particular, sharp tracks of charged particles such as electrons and helium nuclei had been observed in expansion cloud chambers like that invented by C. T. R. Wilson in 1911. Shortly after this, however, Davisson and Germer (1927) and G. P. Thomson (1928) independently observed the diffraction of electrons by crystals and thus confirmed de Broglie's principal supposition.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, F. K. Richtmyer, E. H. Kennard, and T. Lauritsen, "Introduction to Modern Physics" (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1955); M. Born, "Atomic Physics" (Hafner, New York, 1951); G. P. Harnwell and W. E. Stephens, "Atomic Physics" (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Equation (1.2) is also valid for light quanta, as may be seen by dividing both sides of Eq. (1.1) by the velocity of light,  $c$ ; for a directed beam of light  $p = E/c$  and  $\lambda = c/\nu$ .



**Table 1 Relations between experimental interpretations and theoretical inferences**

Diffraction (Young 1803, Laue 1912)	}	Electromagnetic waves
Blackbody radiation (Planck 1900)		
Photoelectric effect (Einstein 1904)	}	Electromagnetic quanta
Compton effect (1923)		
Combination principle (Ritz-Rydberg 1908)	}	{ Discrete values for physical quantities
Specific heats (Einstein 1907, Debye 1912)		
Franck-Hertz experiment (1913)		
Stern-Gerlach experiment (1922)		

## 2 □ THE OLD QUANTUM THEORY

What is now called the *old quantum theory*<sup>1</sup> was initiated by the work of Planck on blackbody radiation and was carried farther by Einstein and Debye. However, only after Rutherford's discovery in 1911 that an atom consists of a small, massive, positively charged nucleus surrounded by electrons could the theory be applied to a quantitative description of atoms.

### BOHR-SOMMERFELD QUANTIZATION RULES

The first step in this direction was taken by Bohr in 1913, when he made two postulates concerning the electronic or extranuclear structure of an atom. The first of these was that an atomic system can exist in particular stationary or quantized states, each of which corresponds to a definite energy of the system. Transitions from one stationary state to another are accompanied by the gain or loss, as the case may be, of an amount of energy equal to the energy difference between the two states; the energy gained or lost appears as a quantum of electromagnetic radiation, or as internal or kinetic energy of another system. The second postulate (in agreement with that of Planck and Einstein) was that a radiation quantum has a frequency equal to its energy divided by Planck's constant  $h$ .

These two postulates by themselves provided some insight into the Ritz combination principle and the Franck-Hertz experiment. To obtain specific results for hydrogen, Bohr proposed a simple rule for the selection of the circular orbits that are to constitute stationary states: The angular momentum must be an integral multiple of  $h/2\pi$ . A more general quantization rule was discovered independently by W. Wilson (1915) and by

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion than is presented in this section, see the books cited above, and L. Pauling and E. B. Wilson, Jr., "Introduction to Quantum Mechanics," chap. II (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1935).