Northwestern University Physics and Astronomy Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

Thursday, September 16, 2010, 9 am - 1 pm

Quantum Mechanics

Solve 3 out of 4 problems

If you solve all 4 problems, only the first 3 will be graded.

Solve each problem in a separate exam solution book and write your ID number – not your name – on each book. If your solution uses more than one book, label each book with "1 out of 2", "2 out of 2" and so on.

1. In a simplified model for defects in high temperature superconductors, consider two spin-1/2 copper ions on either side of a spin-1/2 oxygen ion (see figure). Assume that the three spins interact with one another according to the antiferromagnetic Heisenberg Hamiltonian

$$H = a\vec{S}_1 \cdot \vec{S}_3 + b(\vec{S}_1 + \vec{S}_3) \cdot \vec{S}_2,$$

where $\vec{S}_1$ and $\vec{S}_3$ are the spin operators for the two copper ions, while $\vec{S}_2$ is that of the oxygen ion. a and b are constants. a is positive, favoring antiparallel alignment of the copper spins.

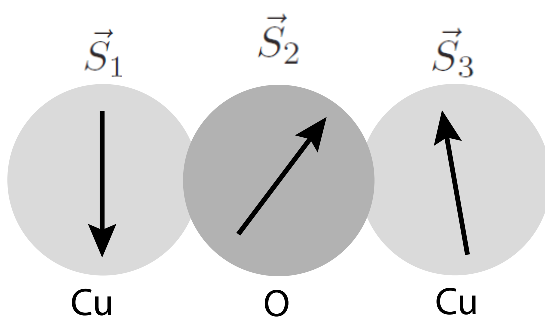
(a) Does the total spin operator $\vec{S}_\mathrm{T} = \vec{S}_1 + \vec{S}_2 + \vec{S}_3$ commute with the Hamiltonian? Justify your result.

(b) For $b = 0$, what is the complete spectrum of the Hamiltonian? Be sure to state the degeneracy of each energy level.

(c) For $b = 0$, what is (are) the ground state wave-function(s)? Express your answer(s) as linear combinations of the states $|m_{z1}, m_{z2}, m_{z3}\rangle$, where $m_{zi} = \pm 1/2$ $(i = 1, 2, 3)$ is the z-component of the spin. [$S_{zi}|m_{zi}\rangle = \hbar m_{zi}|m_{zi}\rangle$]

(d) For $b = a$, what is the complete spectrum of the Hamiltonian? Be sure to state the degeneracy of each energy level.

(e) For $b = a$, what is (are) the ground state wave-function(s)?



2. Two neutrons are placed inside a one-dimensional infinite square well of width $2a$:

$$V(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } |x| < a, \\ \infty & \text{for } |x| \geq a. \end{cases}$$

Throughout, assume that one neutron is found in the ground state while the other is in the first excited state. Both of these states are defined under the assumption that the neutrons do not interact.

(a) What are the possible spin states of this two-neutron system? (For those that have forgotten, neutrons have spin one half.)

(b) What are the possible spatial wave-functions corresponding to these spin states?

(c) Assume that the two neutrons repel each other through the interaction Hamiltonian

$$H_{\text{int}}(x_1 - x_2) = \begin{cases} +V_0 & \text{for } |x_1 - x_2| < b, \ \text{where } b \ll a, \\ 0 & \text{for } |x_1 - x_2| \geq b, \end{cases}$$

where V_0 is a positive constant. Treating H_{int} as a perturbation, compute the induced energy split among the different spin states. In order to simplify your computation and answer, remember to make use of the fact that $b \ll a$.

3. A quantum mechanical system is described by a three dimensional Hilbert space for which we choose the basis vectors

$$|1\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad |2\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad |3\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

In this basis, the Hamiltonian $\hat{H}$ and the observable $\hat{A}$ can be expressed as

$$\hat{H} = \varepsilon \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \hat{A} = a \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

where ε and a are positive constants. At $t = 0$ the system is set up in the state

$$|\psi_0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}|1\rangle + \frac{1}{2}|2\rangle + \frac{1}{2}|3\rangle.$$

(a) At $t = 0$, determine all possible results one might obtain if performing an energy measurement, and with what probability.

(b) At $t = 0$, compute the average energy and its uncertainty.

(c) At $t = 0$, determine all possible results one might obtain if performing a measurement of the observable $\hat{A}$, and with what probability.

(d) What is the state of the system immediately after an $\hat{A}$ measurement? Give an answer for each of the possible results one might obtain (see (c)).

(e) Assuming no measurement was performed at $t = 0$, what is the state of the system $|\psi(t)\rangle$ at $t > 0$?

(f) Under the conditions outlined in (e), determine all possible results one might obtain if, at $t > 0$, one performs a measurement of the observable $\hat{A}$, and with what probability. Make a sketch of the probability(ies) as a function of t.

4. An isotropic three dimensional simple harmonic oscillator (mass m, natural frequency ω_0) is subjected to a time dependent perturbation given by

$$H_P(t) = \left(f\hat{x} + g\hat{y}^2\right)\frac{e^{-t^2/\tau^2}}{\tau\sqrt{\pi}},$$

Where f, g, τ are constants and $\hat{x}, \hat{y}$ are the operator associated to the x-coordinate and y-coordinate of the position vector $\vec{r} = (x, y, z)$, respectively. In the infinite past ($t \to -\infty$), the system was prepared in the ground state of the unperturbed Hamiltonian.

(a) To the lowest order in perturbation theory, in which states of the unperturbed Hamiltonian can the system be found in the infinite future ($t \to +\infty$)?

(b) To the lowest order in perturbation theory, compute all of the non-zero probabilities to transition from the ground state to an excited state, $P_{g\to e}$. Sketch your results as a function of τ.

36. CLEBSCH-GORDAN COEFFICIENTS, SPHERICAL HARMONICS, AND *d* FUNCTIONS

Note: A square-root sign is to be understood over *every* coefficient, *e.g.*, for $-8/15$ read $-\sqrt{8/15}$.

Notation:

		J	J	...
		M	M	...
m_1	m_2			
m_1	m_2	Coefficients		
.	.			
.	.			

$$Y_1^0 = \sqrt{\frac{3}{4\pi}}\cos\theta$$

$$Y_1^1 = -\sqrt{\frac{3}{8\pi}}\sin\theta\, e^{i\phi}$$

$$Y_2^0 = \sqrt{\frac{5}{4\pi}}\left(\frac{3}{2}\cos^2\theta - \frac{1}{2}\right)$$

$$Y_2^1 = -\sqrt{\frac{15}{8\pi}}\sin\theta\cos\theta\, e^{i\phi}$$

$$Y_2^2 = \frac{1}{4}\sqrt{\frac{15}{2\pi}}\sin^2\theta\, e^{2i\phi}$$

$$Y_\ell^{-m} = (-1)^m Y_\ell^{m*}$$

$$d^\ell_{m,0} = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi}{2\ell+1}}\, Y_\ell^m\, e^{-im\phi}$$

$$\langle j_1 j_2 m_1 m_2 | j_1 j_2 J M\rangle = (-1)^{J-j_1-j_2}\langle j_2 j_1 m_2 m_1 | j_2 j_1 J M\rangle$$

$$d^j_{m',m} = (-1)^{m-m'} d^j_{m,m'} = d^j_{-m,-m'}$$

1/2×1/2

m_1	m_2	J=1, M=+1
+1/2	+1/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=1, M=0	J=0, M=0
+1/2	−1/2	1/2	1/2
−1/2	+1/2	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=1, M=−1
−1/2	−1/2	1

2×1/2

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+5/2
+2	+1/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+3/2	J=3/2, M=+3/2
+2	−1/2	1/5	4/5
+1	+1/2	4/5	−1/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+1/2	J=3/2, M=+1/2
+1	−1/2	2/5	3/5
0	+1/2	3/5	−2/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−1/2	J=3/2, M=−1/2
0	−1/2	3/5	2/5
−1	+1/2	2/5	−3/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−3/2	J=3/2, M=−3/2
−1	−1/2	4/5	1/5
−2	+1/2	1/5	−4/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−5/2
−2	−1/2	1

1×1/2

m_1	m_2	J=3/2, M=+3/2
+1	+1/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=3/2, M=+1/2	J=1/2, M=+1/2
+1	−1/2	1/3	2/3
0	+1/2	2/3	−1/3

m_1	m_2	J=3/2, M=−1/2	J=1/2, M=−1/2
0	−1/2	2/3	1/3
−1	+1/2	1/3	−2/3

m_1	m_2	J=3/2, M=−3/2
−1	−1/2	1

3/2×1/2

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=+2
+3/2	+1/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=+1	J=1, M=+1
+3/2	−1/2	1/4	3/4
+1/2	+1/2	3/4	−1/4

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=0	J=1, M=0
+1/2	−1/2	1/2	1/2
−1/2	+1/2	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=−1	J=1, M=−1
−1/2	−1/2	3/4	1/4
−3/2	+1/2	1/4	−3/4

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=−2
−3/2	−1/2	1

2×1

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+3
+2	+1	1

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+2	J=2, M=+2
+2	0	1/3	2/3
+1	+1	2/3	−1/3

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+1	J=2, M=+1	J=1, M=+1
+2	−1	1/15	1/3	3/5
+1	0	8/15	1/6	−3/10
0	+1	2/5	−1/2	1/10

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=0	J=2, M=0	J=1, M=0
+1	−1	1/5	1/2	3/10
0	0	3/5	0	−2/5
−1	+1	1/5	−1/2	3/10

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−1	J=2, M=−1	J=1, M=−1
0	−1	2/5	1/2	1/10
−1	0	8/15	−1/6	−3/10
−2	+1	1/15	−1/3	3/5

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−2	J=2, M=−2
−1	−1	2/3	1/3
−2	0	1/3	−2/3

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−3
−2	−1	1

3/2×1

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+5/2
+3/2	+1	1

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+3/2	J=3/2, M=+3/2
+3/2	0	2/5	3/5
+1/2	+1	3/5	−2/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=+1/2	J=3/2, M=+1/2	J=1/2, M=+1/2
+3/2	−1	1/10	2/5	1/2
+1/2	0	3/5	1/15	−1/3
−1/2	+1	3/10	−8/15	1/6

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−1/2	J=3/2, M=−1/2	J=1/2, M=−1/2
+1/2	−1	3/10	8/15	1/6
−1/2	0	3/5	−1/15	−1/3
−3/2	+1	1/10	−2/5	1/2

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−3/2	J=3/2, M=−3/2
−1/2	−1	3/5	2/5
−3/2	0	2/5	−3/5

m_1	m_2	J=5/2, M=−5/2
−3/2	−1	1

1×1

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=+2
+1	+1	1

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=+1	J=1, M=+1
+1	0	1/2	1/2
0	+1	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=0	J=1, M=0	J=0, M=0
+1	−1	1/6	1/2	1/3
0	0	2/3	0	−1/3
−1	+1	1/6	−1/2	1/3

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=−1	J=1, M=−1
0	−1	1/2	1/2
−1	0	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=2, M=−2
−1	−1	1

2×3/2

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=+7/2
+2	+3/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=+5/2	J=5/2, M=+5/2
+2	+1/2	3/7	4/7
+1	+3/2	4/7	−3/7

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=+3/2	J=5/2, M=+3/2	J=3/2, M=+3/2
+2	−1/2	1/7	16/35	2/5
+1	+1/2	4/7	1/35	−2/5
0	+3/2	2/7	−18/35	1/5

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=+1/2	J=5/2, M=+1/2	J=3/2, M=+1/2	J=1/2, M=+1/2
+2	−3/2	1/35	6/35	2/5	2/5
+1	−1/2	12/35	5/14	0	−3/10
0	+1/2	18/35	−3/35	−1/5	1/5
−1	+3/2	4/35	−27/70	2/5	−1/10

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=−1/2	J=5/2, M=−1/2	J=3/2, M=−1/2	J=1/2, M=−1/2
+1	−3/2	4/35	27/70	2/5	1/10
0	−1/2	18/35	3/35	−1/5	−1/5
−1	+1/2	12/35	−5/14	0	3/10
−2	+3/2	1/35	−6/35	2/5	−2/5

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=−3/2	J=5/2, M=−3/2	J=3/2, M=−3/2
0	−3/2	2/7	18/35	1/5
−1	−1/2	4/7	−1/35	−2/5
−2	+1/2	1/7	−16/35	2/5

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=−5/2	J=5/2, M=−5/2
−1	−3/2	3/7	4/7
−2	−1/2	4/7	−3/7

m_1	m_2	J=7/2, M=−7/2
−2	−3/2	1

3/2×3/2

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+3
+3/2	+3/2	1

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+2	J=2, M=+2
+3/2	+1/2	1/2	1/2
+1/2	+3/2	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=+1	J=2, M=+1	J=1, M=+1
+3/2	−1/2	1/5	1/2	3/10
+1/2	+1/2	3/5	0	−2/5
−1/2	+3/2	1/5	−1/2	3/10

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=0	J=2, M=0	J=1, M=0	J=0, M=0
+3/2	−3/2	1/20	1/4	9/20	1/4
+1/2	−1/2	9/20	1/4	−1/20	−1/4
−1/2	+1/2	9/20	−1/4	−1/20	1/4
−3/2	+3/2	1/20	−1/4	9/20	−1/4

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−1	J=2, M=−1	J=1, M=−1
+1/2	−3/2	1/5	1/2	3/10
−1/2	−1/2	3/5	0	−2/5
−3/2	+1/2	1/5	−1/2	3/10

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−2	J=2, M=−2
−1/2	−3/2	1/2	1/2
−3/2	−1/2	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=3, M=−3
−3/2	−3/2	1

2×2

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=+4
+2	+2	1

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=+3	J=3, M=+3
+2	+1	1/2	1/2
+1	+2	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=+2	J=3, M=+2	J=2, M=+2
+2	0	3/14	1/2	2/7
+1	+1	4/7	0	−3/7
0	+2	3/14	−1/2	2/7

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=+1	J=3, M=+1	J=2, M=+1	J=1, M=+1
+2	−1	1/14	3/10	3/7	1/5
+1	0	3/7	1/5	−1/14	−3/10
0	+1	3/7	−1/5	−1/14	3/10
−1	+2	1/14	−3/10	3/7	−1/5

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=0	J=3, M=0	J=2, M=0	J=1, M=0	J=0, M=0
+2	−2	1/70	1/10	2/7	2/5	1/5
+1	−1	8/35	2/5	1/14	−1/10	−1/5
0	0	18/35	0	−2/7	0	1/5
−1	+1	8/35	−2/5	1/14	1/10	−1/5
−2	+2	1/70	−1/10	2/7	−2/5	1/5

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=−1	J=3, M=−1	J=2, M=−1	J=1, M=−1
+1	−2	1/14	3/10	3/7	1/5
0	−1	3/7	1/5	−1/14	−3/10
−1	0	3/7	−1/5	−1/14	3/10
−2	+1	1/14	−3/10	3/7	−1/5

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=−2	J=3, M=−2	J=2, M=−2
0	−2	3/14	1/2	2/7
−1	−1	4/7	0	−3/7
−2	0	3/14	−1/2	2/7

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=−3	J=3, M=−3
−1	−2	1/2	1/2
−2	−1	1/2	−1/2

m_1	m_2	J=4, M=−4
−2	−2	1

$$d^1_{0,0} = \cos\theta \qquad d^{1/2}_{1/2,1/2} = \cos\frac{\theta}{2} \qquad d^{1/2}_{1/2,-1/2} = -\sin\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^1_{1,1} = \frac{1+\cos\theta}{2} \qquad d^1_{1,0} = -\frac{\sin\theta}{\sqrt{2}} \qquad d^1_{1,-1} = \frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{3/2,3/2} = \frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}\cos\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{3/2,1/2} = -\sqrt{3}\frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}\sin\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{3/2,-1/2} = \sqrt{3}\frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}\cos\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{3/2,-3/2} = -\frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}\sin\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{1/2,1/2} = \frac{3\cos\theta-1}{2}\cos\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^{3/2}_{1/2,-1/2} = -\frac{3\cos\theta+1}{2}\sin\frac{\theta}{2}$$

$$d^2_{2,2} = \left(\frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}\right)^2$$

$$d^2_{2,1} = -\frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}\sin\theta$$

$$d^2_{2,0} = \frac{\sqrt{6}}{4}\sin^2\theta$$

$$d^2_{2,-1} = -\frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}\sin\theta$$

$$d^2_{2,-2} = \left(\frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}\right)^2$$

$$d^2_{1,1} = \frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}(2\cos\theta-1)$$

$$d^2_{1,0} = -\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}\sin\theta\cos\theta$$

$$d^2_{1,-1} = \frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}(2\cos\theta+1)$$

$$d^2_{0,0} = \left(\frac{3}{2}\cos^2\theta - \frac{1}{2}\right)$$

Figure 36.1: The sign convention is that of Wigner (*Group Theory*, Academic Press, New York, 1959), also used by Condon and Shortley (*The Theory of Atomic Spectra*, Cambridge Univ. Press, New York, 1953), Rose (*Elementary Theory of Angular Momentum*, Wiley, New York, 1957), and Cohen (*Tables of the Clebsch-Gordan Coefficients*, North American Rockwell Science Center, Thousand Oaks, Calif., 1974).