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Molecular symmetry (MS) is an easily applied tool for understanding and predicting many of the properties of molecules. Traditionally, students are taught MS using point groups derived from the equilibrium geometry of the molecule. However, the true basis for MS is not geometrical symmetry. Fundamentals of Molecular Symmetry shows how to set up symmetry groups for molecules using more fundamental ideas. It is no more difficult than doing it using MS, and one obtains MS groups.

The book provides an introductory description of MS and quantum mechanics to show how MS is to be understood and used. The approach taken gives a balanced account of both types of symmetry group. Point group symmetry is derived by approximation from MS group symmetry. Usually the point group is only useful for isolated, nonrotating molecules, executing small amplitude vibrations in isolated electronic states. However, for the chemical physicist or physical chemist who wishes to go beyond these limitations, the MS group is almost always required.



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