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A Godsent Particle

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Scientists, especially those working at the Large Hadron Collider who may have recently found the Higgs Boson, are acutely embarrassed by the media referring to it as the 'God particle'. They take great pains to point out that even Mr Peter Higgs, who first proposed the particle's existence and is an atheist, is displeased because the term could offend people who are religious.

However, two points need to be made. Firstly, the media actually picked up the moniker from science itself: a book written by Nobel Prize-winning physicist Leon Lederman called *The God Particle: If the Universe Is the Answer, What Is the Question.*" Therefore, it's hardly moot now to say that he had originally called it the 'Goddamn Particle' that was edited down because, the fact is, Lederman and his publisher wanted to popularise the book and they succeeded hugely.

Secondly, let's see why the Higgs and its associated field are so important. For starters, if it was not there, all subatomic particles would be massless and flying around at the speed of light without ever binding together to form clumps of atoms and molecules — the basic building blocks of matter found in galaxies, stars, planets and people with theories about the universe.

Yet, now we know the invisible Higgs field pervades all space everywhere and as the particles try to move through it, their interactions with it cause them to appear to have mass. As a result, everything that is in existence can exist because 'empty' space is, well, not empty. If that sounds familiar, who can blame Lederman or the media?