



The Heritage of All Mankind

Dr. Abdus Salam

Early Life & Education

- Born in 1926, in Jhang, Punjab, Pakistan
- Studied math and physics on scholarship
 - Government College University of Lahore, Punjab State
 - Mathematics BA & MA
 - St. John's College, Cambridge University
 - Physics & Mathematics BAs
 - Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge
 - Theoretical Physics PhD
- By the time he earned his PhD, he was recognized internationally



Return to Pakistan



- Headed the Mathematics Department at the University of Punjab and taught at Government College University, Lahore.
 - Faced difficulties in developing research
 - Experienced isolation
- 1974 Anti-Ahmadiyya Riots
 - Ahmadi Muslims, including Abdus Salam, were targeted by several political parties
 - Largest killing and looting against Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan
 - Salam and his family take refuge

Supporting Pakistani Science Abroad

- Relocated family to England
- Professor at Imperial College
- Maintained commitment to Pakistani and global scientific efforts.



International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)



- Abdus Salam founded the ICPT in 1964
- Located in Trieste, Italy
- The ICPT funded associates from countries underrepresented in the international physics community

First Muslim Nobel Laureate

- Awarded the 1979 Nobel Prize along with Steven Weinberg and Sheldon Glashow
 - “for their contributions to the theory of the unified weak and electromagnetic interaction between elementary particles, including, inter alia, the prediction of the weak neutral current” [1]
- Donated all of his prize money
- Pakistan did not legally consider him Muslim
- He spoke of his faith in his banquet speech



Image courtesy of the Emilio Segrè Visual Archives

[1] Nobel Media, “The Nobel Prize in Physics 1979,” <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1979/summary/>>

Sources

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Discussion Questions

1. What decision was Abdus Salam faced with after completing his PhD? If you were in his position, do you think you would have made the same decision? Why or why not?
2. How does the ICTP support global science?
3. There are several themes, or aspects of Abdus Salam's life, shown throughout the biography. Identify at least one and discuss how it motivated him.