

Solutions to Discussion Questions

The Heritage of All Mankind

1. What decision was Abdus Salam faced with after completing his Ph.D.? If you were in his position, do you think you would have made the same decision? Why or why not?

Answer: He had to decide if he would stay in the West or return to Pakistan. He decided to return to Pakistan, though he moved his family to England three years later, once he realized he could not change university structure to improve research, and after his faith community experienced religious persecution.

2. How does the ICTP support global science?

Answer: ICTP granted funds to associates, scientists employed in their countries of birth, so that they could travel to Trieste, Italy, to work on their research without emigrating from their country. This allowed scientists to maintain professional connections, stay up to date with new developments, and engage in research.

3. There are several themes, or aspects of Abdus Salam's life, shown throughout the biography. Describe at least one and discuss how it motivated Salam.

Answer: Students may identify a number of themes. Three are included below.

- a. Ahmadiyya faith:

Abdus Salam is described as a devout Muslim. He spoke of how physics was an investigation of Allah's creation. He was affected by religious persecution, which deeply saddened him and influenced his decision to leave Pakistan.

- b. Commitment to developing science in countries underrepresented in the global physics community:

Abdus Salam worked with a number of groups in many different roles to develop science in countries underrepresented in the global scientific community. He served as director of the ICTP, which supported scientists who were without research support in the countries. He donated all of his Nobel Prize money to create scholarships for students.

- c. Love for physics:

Abdus Salam worked in theoretical physics for most of his life. He took ten years to develop electroweak theory, and he continued to work on unification after. Salam described the subject in terms of wonder.