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## Salam, Islam, and the Bomb: Exploring the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's Perspective

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### **Abstract**

*For atomic powers, surrendering nuclear weapons is tough but not impossible if their hatred is turned into amity and concord. Even though Islam encourages peace, few scholars have utilized the Holy Quran to endorse nuclear weapons for deterrence, which may incite Muslim states to obtain nuclear weapons. Abdus Salam, a Pakistani academic and scientist, is accused of assisting Islamabad in bomb-making while belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which opposes the introduction/use of nuclear weapons. Similarly, scientist Robert Oppenheimer openly contributed to the bomb-making in the United States which ultimately resulted in the mass murder of innocent Japanese people. This article tackles various people's concerns regarding Salam's ties with Pakistan's nuclear weapons. It is my attempt to refute the studies/allegations that Islam favours weapons of mass destruction for deterrence, security, and peace, so addressing the case of Salam, who became unjustly associated with nuclear weapons.*

**Keywords:** *Abdus Salam; Islam; Nuclear Weapons; Ahmadiyya; Pakistan*

### **Introduction:**

It has already been discussed why states require nuclear weapons. The key motivations are security, power, status, and domestic factors (Sagan 1994: 66-104). Various professionals like politicians, military officials, scientists, and engineers contributed to states getting nuclear. A soldier's principal duty is to defend his/her country; yet, in order to increase security, scientists assist states in modernising armaments. A scientist can be a nationalist, religious, or ideological believer. As a result, depending on the situation and his/her willingness to invite an inhuman weapon, he/she accepts bids from governments. During WWII, scientists demonstrated their connection to ideologies thus a monster device was unveiled to the world by slaughtering innocent Japanese people.

The movie "Oppenheimer" clearly hints that scientists still require time to be recognised as humans with specific obligations in order to avoid initiatives that are harmful to humanity. Robert Oppenheimer reluctantly agreed to drop atomic bombs on cities without warning (Kimball 2023). After witnessing the brutal and merciless killings of innocent citizens in Japan, scientists/engineers in various states are still working on upgrading nuclear weapons to kill even more innocent people in the future. Because nuclear weapons do not distinguish between the good and the bad or the just and the unjust, the question of why we need nuclear weapons emerges.

Oppenheimer and other Manhattan Project scientists cannot deny the fact that they were ignorant about the nuclear winter. As science anticipates the future, it is reasonable to believe that we are on the verge of nuclear annihilation, with more than 12,500 nuclear weapons (including more than 9500)

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in military stockpiles. Nuclear scientists' attitude after the atomic episode in Japan is debatable. Oppenheimer attempted to redeem himself in the eyes of the general public, who saw him as a murderer and an enemy of humanity. His resistance to the use of hydrogen bombs, while admirable, was an attempt to halt an unstable vehicle whose brakes had failed. Scientists associated with the Manhattan Project came from a variety of backgrounds, and their philosophies/ideologies were similarly diverse. In a nutshell, science pushed them to come together for a specific objective. Different philosophies/ideologies, however, compelled scientists to invite a monstrous contraption, an atomic bomb.

Albert Einstein was concerned about the undisclosed German nuclear weapon effort; thus, he advised the former United States President F. D. Roosevelt to follow suit. I believe that science can solve many issues, American scientists attempted to save the world from a German nuclear bomb with a non-German nuclear bomb. Surprisingly, no nuclear state is certain that atomic weapons deter major wars, including nuclear wars, therefore extra initiatives such as missile defence systems, bunkers/shields, and evacuations are added to explain the need for nuclear weapons.

Sharing instances of Oppenheimer and Einstein is linked to this study about Pakistani Ahmadi scientists' relation with nuclear weapons. Abdus Salam discussed numerous scientific facts with these scientists, and the situation was similar for him to assist Pakistan in its search for a great defence gadget to deter India, a Hindu nation. Salam, on the other hand, was a pious man who loved Islam for his scientific achievements. He was a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC), which was found in Qadian, Punjab, India by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The crux of this study is that, while the AMC campaigns against the futility of nuclear weapons globally, Salam, an Ahmadi physicist, is erroneously accused of contributing to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme while being found speaking against them. Because Islam, according to the AMC teaches and supports peace through soft policies, it is unethical, spiritually, and conceptually erroneous to validate the religion for the advancement of nuclear weapons for Muslim protection.

As I said, religion can motivate a scientist to modernise weapons. However, in this article, I propose that Islam, according to the AMC, does not advocate weapons of mass devastation, such as nuclear weapons, for the sake of Muslim security and peace. Furthermore, this study contradicts the premise that Islam supports nuclear weapons for deterrence in order to intimidate Allah's or Islam's adversaries. In the instance of Islamabad, this study critically analysed previous investigations that accused Salam of aiding Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme.

Unlike Iran, the AMC has not issued a fatwa against nuclear weapons, but it is working relentlessly to save the world from a nuclear winter. Declaring a fatwa against nuclear weapons would be a political matter for the religious community. The AMC, a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan, claims to be authentic Muslims since they accept the second coming of the Prophet Jesus considering Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The AMC believes that, like Jesus, God sent Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to stop religious wars, condemn bloodshed, and restore decency, justice, and peace. Mirza Masroor Ahmad (2013), the current spiritual leader of the AMC, has written a book to save the world from a possible nuclear winter. As a result, the AMC continues to condemn nuclear weapons as terrible creations. As a result, investigations that claim Ahmadi Nobel Laureate Salam assisted Pakistan in developing nuclear weapons are debatable. Especially since Salam was discovered arguing against them.

In this article, Salam's nuclear weapons connection is investigated in two ways. First and foremost, he was a true nationalist, and secondly, he was an Ahmadi Muslim. Many feeble incidences found him assisting Pakistan in acquiring nuclear weapons, but Salam was executing his national duty, thus

such events cannot be used to prove Salam's involvement in nuclear weapons development. Salam, I argue, used a nuclear weapons programme to fund his civilian research objectives. He could not divorce himself from his country's top priority duty, therefore he found himself in the proper spot to support his country's civilian projects but with the detested route for a good cause. Salam's religion, as an Ahmadi, explains why he divided himself to advocate nuclear weapons for the sake of security and peace.

Before we discuss the question of Salam's relation with nuclear weapons, this article attempted to find the validity of nuclear weapons as a battlefield weapon in Islam.

### **Nuclear warhead cannot be a battle weapon in Islam**

Certainly, every state has a right to defend its sovereignty, but for the Ahmadis, Muslims are restricted to killing innocents in a war because "Prophet Muhammad was sent as a mercy for all mankind" (The Holy Quran: 11: 108) . Also, Islam is a peaceful religion, that allows only a defensive war hence nuclear weapons cannot be a war tool for Muslims. Interestingly, the Holy Prophet of Islam had instructed his followers (Muslim soldiers) during the war event (war ethical code); do not kill an old man and infant, do not kill and harass women, do not kill a priest not fighting you, do not destroy a worship place, do not kill an animal except to eat, do not destroy trees, and do not damage the property (buildings) but to take control of the war booty and distribute equally among the Muslim troops. Thus, according to Prophet Muhammad's rules of war, "no justification exists for either side to attack civilians, property, animals, or anyone who is not an active combatant" (Rashid 2012).

Culture matters for politicians to support their policies. Contrary to this, following these just Islamic principles of war would be the least of concerns of the nuclear bomb which is claimed to be 'Islamic' by some Muslim leaders or politicians in Pakistan. For instance, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto argued that '...all civilizations in the world—i. e. the Christian, the Jewish, the Hindu, and even the Communists—except the Muslim civilisation had nuclear capabilities, similarly, Zia al-Haq in an interview with Saudi Newspaper in July 1978, stated, 'No Muslim country has any atomic arms. If Pakistan possesses such a weapon, it would reinforce the power of the Muslim world' (Salik 2017: 25-26). Additionally, Pakistani Jamaat Islami senator Khurshid Ahmad was interested in providing atomic bomb security to Muslim states (Khan 2012: 383). Zia's statement gives an indication of the power factor of Pakistan's nuclear capability. Apart from the politicians, Mullahs celebrated Pakistan's first atomic tests in 1998 as a victory for Islam (Moore and Khan 1998). Samina Ahmed (2002: 781-793) argues that Pakistan opted to match India's nuclear capability driven by considerations of prestige and status. Such statements strengthened the Muslims to support nuclear weapons to acquire power to face the enemy. In this case, the Nuclear Myth Makers theory is relevant to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. However, opinions in contrast to empirically tested insights cannot justify that nuclear weapons are approved by Islam for the security and power of Muslims.

The then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif said that it is wrong to link nuclear weapons to Islam (Moore and Khan 1998). Similarly, in response to Bhutto and Zia's statements, Feroz Hasan Khan (2012: 383) argues that the Islamic bomb is just a part of a political culture. Hasan Askari Rizvi argues that it is Indian and pro-Israeli authors both with and without Jewish backgrounds who were vocal in propagating their unfounded ideas that an Islamic bomb would endanger Israel's security (Salik 2017: xvi). Similarly, Naeem Salik (2017) argues that the so-called Islamic bomb has created the misperception to Israel, that Pakistan might share its nuclear weapons with Muslim states in the Middle East.

As Ahmadis have stated, nuclear weapons have no place in Islam but politicians in Pakistan used the Islamic card to gain moral and financial support for acquiring nuclear weapons (Haqqani 2018). Ahmadis are accused of being impure Muslims thus their statements have no point in guiding the policies of a country. Thus, Salam, a Nobel Laureate, was found impure by most Pakistanis.

## **Salam in Pakistan**

Salam as a scientific advisor of the Pakistani government is a well-known fact. Thus, this part of the article delves into the relationship of Salam with Pakistan's nuclear and space programme. Also, it critically analyses Salam's role in Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. I argue that Salam was a peaceful scientist to help his country to grow scientifically and he detached himself from advancing nuclear weapons for the universal good. Though Salam worked with weapon scientists in Pakistan, his primary work was in the civilian sector. I interviewed Ahmad Salam, son of Abdus Salam to ascertain certain facts related to nuclear weapons which validated my assumptions that Salam argued against nuclear weapons and never advanced these. Besides, Salam's faith motivated him to separate himself from supporting nuclear weapons.

Studies like that of Dombey (2011), Khan (2012), Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014), Salik (2017), and Abbas (2018) alleged Salam for contributing directly or indirectly to the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme. Also, it is claimed that Salam encouraged Pakistani scientists to do weapons research (Qureshi 2016), however, in this regard, the AMC has contrasting opinions. Although Salam was associated with Pakistan's space and civil nuclear programme, there is scarce evidence to prove his direct involvement. Salam's photo was defaced in Pakistan by university students because of his religious beliefs (Rabwah Times 2020), and this article digs deeper into the causes of Salam's suppression in Pakistan despite of being a great scientist. Also, it is useful to analyse the consequences for Pakistan after Salam was ostracised by the authorities. It is important to note that, after his resignation from national duties, Salam was repeatedly approached and asked for help and advice by members of the government of Pakistan, including General Zia-ul-Haq (Ahmad Salam 2021) .

## **Through The Lens of Pure Nationalist**

### **Salam as a Scientific Advisor**

Salam, a proficient mathematician, won a scholarship at St. Johns College, Cambridge in 1946 and he earned a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from Cambridge University in 1951 (Abdus Salam Biography 2020). He returned to Pakistan in 1951 out of loyalty to his beloved country and family (Ahmad Salam 2021) to contribute to science. Salam's love of his country was precious, he understood Pakistan's position as an emerging player in scientific research but the lack of adequate research facilities in a newly created state caused him to leave the country again in the early 1950s (Abbas 2018), when he was offered a lectureship at Cambridge. It is said that Salam was tasked to train students to play football at Government College, Lahore (Cheema 2018). However, overseeing the university's football team was an additional duty the like of which many university staff are occasionally asked to perform on top of their primary teaching role. Salam left Pakistan primarily because of what he described as "intellectual isolation" (Ahmad Salam 2021). He could not develop his mathematical and scientific capabilities by remaining in Pakistan, which at the time lacked any significant post-graduate research capability in the sciences and mathematics. The anti-Ahmadi sentiments in the country at the time were only a contributing factor (Ahmad Salam 2021). The more important thing to note is that the decision to leave Pakistan was one of deep anguish for Salam. To leave his beloved parents, and father, in particular, his family and his whole environment for England

was very hard. It was a time when direct telephone calls were not an option and a letter took three weeks to send and a reply would take another three weeks to arrive. This six week communication cycle that separated him from his beloved parents was a huge emotional price that was only worth it for the pursuit of knowledge, as he himself recounted to his family.

Later, Salam was called by the Pakistani government to be its scientific adviser from 1961-1974. Under Ayub Khan's government, Salam went to the West to seek assistance from his colleagues. Salam's intention was to develop his state scientifically and improve the poor research facilities in Pakistan. Salam was a patriot driven by a desire to improve his scientific credentials so that he could improve the capability of his own people and all others from the developing world. It was his opportunity to serve humanity. It was evident that Pakistani students would need to travel to the West if they were to flourish in the sciences. Thus, Salam first proposed the idea for the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) to the Pakistani government, but it was rejected by the civil servants who reported that Salam wanted to build a 5-star hotel for students (Ahmad Salam 2021). Salam tried but Pakistan was not ready in this undertaking. Concurrently, Salam founded the ICTP in Italy in 1964 to improve the abilities of scientists in developing countries.

Though Salam was a great scientist, why did Pakistan not support or acknowledge him? Despite being a scientist who pursued peace, why do some studies relate him to supporting nuclear weapons? Although Bhutto took advice from Salam regarding the nuclear programme, Salam detached himself from advancing nuclear weapons.

Salam was always committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. It was not feasible to delink the Pakistani government's funding of nuclear research for its weapons programme from the money Salam needed for peaceful nuclear programmes. Salam knew the only budget for science in Pakistan was through the nuclear budget and thus, he supported it so he could have some access to funding. It was evident to Salam that Pakistan would need to develop a nuclear power programme to satisfy its burgeoning energy needs. Salam believed the country could only grow through science and technology and these two factors need power. The only source of power for Pakistan was nuclear. It should be noted that as an official or unofficial advisor to the government of Pakistan, it would have been impertinent for him to publicly criticise the government or the leadership's policy on nuclear weapons (Ahmad Salam 2021). That is why he only made public statements on the topic after he stopped advising the Pakistani government.

Salam's troubled years in Pakistan, nuclear weapons, and the Nobel Prize

Salam was undeniably involved in Pakistan's space and civil nuclear programme. In September 1961, he set up Pakistan's national space agency called the "Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission" (SUPARCO) and served as its first director. He travelled to the United States (US) to sign the Pakistan-US space cooperation agreement in the same year. After the establishment of SUPARCO, he was appointed the technical director of the Flight Test Range when Pakistan started to build a space facility in Baluchistan. Also, Salam played a significant role in Pakistan's civil nuclear development. Through his endeavours, Canada and Pakistan signed a nuclear energy cooperation agreement in 1965. In the same year, he led the establishment of the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology. In 1972, he established the Theoretical Physics Group (TPG) in the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). In addition, Salam formed the Mathematical Physics Group in connection with the TPG. During this time, Pakistan was proud of its role in civil nuclear development.

Shortly after the 1971 war, Prime Minister Bhutto accused the Pakistani armed forces of the loss of the 1971 skirmish with India. Bhutto invited scientists to discuss the security of Pakistan under the nuclear umbrella. The ex-military officer and author, Feroz Hasan Khan (2012: 436) wrote that Salam might have suggested Bhutto to assign the theoretical physicists for the bomb-making in Pakistan the way the United States did with the Manhattan Project. After all, Salam had asked two Pakistani theoretical physicists Dr. Riazuddin and Dr. Masud Ahmad working at ICTP, to return to Pakistan because Islamabad had decided to pursue a nuclear weapons programme (Khan 2012: 177-178). However, it was the Pakistani government's decision to go nuclear.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme was intrinsically linked to its civil nuclear power programme, at least as far as the country's leadership and policy were concerned. Salam responded to Bhutto's request for two reasons. He was a patriot and felt an obligation to agree to any request for assistance from his country, he had previously acted in a scientific advisory capacity to President Ayub Khan (Ahmad Salam 2021). He also felt obliged to continue to progress his vision of encouraging and facilitating the development of science and, particularly physics, in Pakistan (Ahmad Salam 2021). He felt obliged to accept the job on those grounds.

Politically, Bhutto was in trouble in the years after the East Pakistan debacle and was desperate to survive in Pakistani politics. Bhutto used the Ahmadiyya card to achieve his desired political ends. In a gory development of bigotry, the Pakistani National Assembly under the leadership of Bhutto declared the AMC as non-Muslim in 1974. This helped Bhutto to gain more support from mainstream Muslims. This negative portrayal of the AMC as a scapegoat has since become a time-tested tool for furthering the careers of many individuals and political parties in Pakistan.

Declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims by the Bhutto government came as a shock to Salam. Thus, he resigned in protest, however, Bhutto told Salam: "This is all politics. Give me time, I will change it" but Bhutto refused to write this down in a private note to Salam (Devasher 2018: 148). To prove his loyalty to Islam, Salam grew a beard and assumed the forename Muhammad to show his pride in being a Muslim and lead the Friday congregational prayers for Muslim students at the ICTP in Italy. Despite all these negative developments in Pakistan, Salam from his institute in Italy continued to support bright Pakistani scientists and students through a scholarship programme.

In 1979, the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded jointly to Sheldon Lee Glashow, Abdus Salam, and Steven Weinberg "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" (Abdus Salam Facts 2020). This was a very big achievement since Salam was the first Muslim to be awarded a Nobel Prize for the sciences. But Pakistan issued a very bigoted statement, saying that since Salam was not Muslim according to their definition, he must not be called a 'Muslim' scientist to have won a Nobel. Salam turned the award into a fund in memory of his parents to help the brightest and most deserving pre-university students from schools in the district of Jhang, Punjab, Pakistan. Rejection from the politicians did not stop Salam from helping underdeveloped states to flourish scientifically. In 1983, he invited a group of eminent scientists to Italy to form an Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, TWAS, to recognize, support and promote excellence in scientific research in developing countries. Today, the Academy has more than 1,000 members from 90 nations. However, the Pakistani government continues to persecute the Ahmadis. In 1984, an ordinance was passed under the leadership of Zia-ul-Haq against Ahmadi Muslims, severely curtailing Ahmadi rights.

Salam's hand in nuclear weapons has yet to be studied adequately. Though Salam was involved in the civilian nuclear programme, his relationship with nuclear weapons in Pakistan needs a more detailed study. Salam's relationship with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (Abbas 2018: 54), his close contacts with Pakistani nuclear scientists (Khan 2012), and his tours to China (Hoodbhoy 2019) and other nuclear states cannot be considered as strong evidence that he helped Pakistan in nuclear weapons development. Such activities could be for peaceful purposes too. Nuclear scientist Samar Mubarakmand (1998), who headed the team for conducting the nuclear tests in May 1998, calls Rafi Chaudhry "the true father of the Pakistani nuclear programme". Abdul Qadir Khan is also referred to as the 'father of the Pakistani bomb,' though he was an engineer (Abbas 2018: 50)

According to scores of Ahmadis, Salam did not help Pakistan in nuclear weapons development. He was a peace-loving scientist who strived to peacefully develop Pakistan in his scientific work. It is said that Salam was welcomed as a guest by the Pakistani government after Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims in 1974; simultaneously, he was not permitted to tour the nuclear laboratories in Pakistan (Qureshi 2016). However, although, not formally part of any science programme, Salam was asked by Zia-ul-Haq and others to advise on various matters well after the Ahmadi issue was prominent (Ahmad Salam 2021). It is unclear that Salam ever wanted to tour the nuclear facilities and certainly it is impractical that he would have been denied permission. Nuclear weapons facilities are highly restrictive and of course, Salam would neither have wanted to visit them nor would have been allowed to do so unless required by the government.

Ahmadis are following certain principles without violating them. Accepting Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a Promised Messiah by Ahmadis agitated Muslims in Pakistan. Subsequently, Ahmadis were wrongly declared impure and threat to the state. However, the labelling of Ahmadis as a threat to Pakistan by the Mullahs and other like-minded Muslims cannot be used to justify Salam's refusal to assist Pakistan in its nuclear weapons development. Salam and other Ahmadis were battling with an identity issue. Also, even after winning the Nobel Prize, Salam still failed to find a welcome place in Pakistan. When Salam died in 1996, Pakistan continued to disown him. He was denied the honour of a state funeral. The media were absent from his burial ceremony at Rabwah, Pakistan. The restyled epitaph at his grave near his native Jhang reads: "First ----- Nobel Laureate," from which the word "Muslim" has been erased under the court orders and even the words 'Pakistani Scientist' are not mentioned.

Ironically, in India, Salam is acknowledged and his day is celebrated annually by the Department of Physics, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. In Italy, ICTP was renamed "Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics" in 1997. Also, in 2023, Imperial College London renamed its central library the Abdus Salam Library to recognise his contribution to science (News Desk, The Express Tribune 2023). People all over the world continue to pay rich tributes to Salam on the anniversary of his death, but Pakistan is the only state which has continued to reject him and his contributions. Salam's only 'fault' was that he belonged to the AMC. The sincere efforts for Pakistan's progress made by Salam were thwarted by the pseudo-Mullahs and myopic Islamic scholars who had large political clout.

### **Through the Lens of a Religion**

#### **Salam's Islam**

Being born into a minority group is always full of challenges. Professor Salam, a renowned theoretical physicist, and a Nobel Laureate, belonged to Pakistan's minority AMC. The AMC was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889 in Qadian, Punjab, India. The community differed from mainstream

Muslim communities when the teachings of its founder were perceived by them as confounding a couple of key tenets of Islam. This perception ultimately led to a government declaration of Ahmadis as a non-Muslim minority in Pakistan resulting in their persecution by extremists. Though Salam was an excellent scientist, his faith remained the fundamental issue for the authorities in Pakistan. Islamabad refrained from acknowledging Salam's scientific contribution to Pakistan. After his death, no memorial honouring Salam was created in Pakistan.

Although Salam was falsely accused of disrespecting Islam, he praised the Holy Quran for his success in exploring space and science. During his visit to India in 1981, he was interviewed by *Illustrated Weekly of India* (Virk 2020). The question was asked, what is your concept of God? Salam replied that there are many concepts of God. Some people believe in the God of history, a God who controls history. Then there is the personal God, to whom we pray. Once he was asked, can God be described in a mathematical equation? to which he replied, "That is rubbish." To the question if there was a liberty of scientific discussion and belief in Islam? Salam observed, "I am both a believer as well as a practising Muslim. I am a Muslim because I believe in the spiritual message of the Holy Quran. As a scientist, the Holy Quran speaks to me in that it emphasises reflection on the laws of nature, with examples drawn from cosmology, physics, biology, and medicine as signs for all men." These words of Salam regarding his faith could have attracted the lovers of the Holy Quran in Pakistan. However, the initial political rhetoric against Ahmadis changed into narratives, and these false narratives have now attained the status of 'truth' regarding the Ahmadis in Pakistan. And, for the Mullahs, the only punishment that Ahmadis deserve is death for supposedly violating Islamic principles. However, for Salam, it was the Holy Quran that directed him to improve his abilities to study science.

Unfortunately, although Salam was disowned by Pakistan in life and death, he proudly lived and died both as a Muslim and Pakistani national. On Fridays, Salam used to arrive at London's Fazl Mosque early with his notebook. Salam did not find religion and science mismatched. For him, his faith and his scientific work were inseparably intertwined. According to Virk, "For his scientific work, which spans over 40 years and 250 scientific papers, he found inspiration in the teachings of Islam, his unswerving faith in God, which was the bedrock of his life" (Virk 2020). While Pakistan cast out Salam, that did not deter physicists of high stature, like Peter Higgs who followed Salam and won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2013, from acknowledging Salam's contribution towards his research (Singh 2019). It was Salam who independently predicted the existence of a subatomic particle (the God Particle) now called the Higgs Boson. Salam did not fail as he earned respect globally for contributing to science and encouraging other like-minded people to do the same. Pakistan as an Islamic state failed to improve scientifically as a result of their failure to accept him. Salam belongs to the contemporary world, but Pakistan has become a rented, client, and military state (Paul 2014; Ganguly 2016; Haqqani 2018).

Though Pakistan is proud of its nuclear force, it is still searching for defence assets because of its huge conventional gap with India. Salam could have helped Pakistan to improve scientifically, which in turn might have improved the economic condition of Pakistan to pay for a stronger defence. Zia al-Haq romanticized his ideology based on hate and discrimination and, thus, paid the price. Pakistan's economic instability is enduring. The former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan tried to seek advice from a noted Ahmadi economist, Atif Mian of the Princeton University, for economic stability, however, the Mullahs also warned Imran Khan not to acknowledge the Ahmadis in Pakistan (Chaudhry 2020).

The point that should be stressed is that the hate against the Ahmadis is not based on Islam itself. The narratives have been built by pseudo and myopic Mullahs against Ahmadis since Pakistan was



created in 1947. The Mullahs have great sway over the masses, and they misuse their religious authority to spread hate against Ahmadis. They argue that killing infidels or apostates is something that one must be proud of. Killing infidels is a reasonable way to enter paradise. The Mullahs use the same Quran that Salam used for exploring science to justify the killing of apostates. The masses of believers have accepted this doctrine that killing infidels and apostates is the highest duty of a believer because it must come from a Mullah. The Mullahs hold a huge monopoly on defining what it is to be a Muslim in Pakistan and have become the de facto judge and jury in deciding the fate of sizeable minorities.

### Ahmadis and the Bomb

Surprisingly, I came across a brief opinion piece written by an Ahmadi member that defended Salam's role in Pakistan's nuclear weapons development (Nasir 2021). As a peaceful community, AMC advocates globally against the folly of nuclear weapons, but at the same time, some Ahmadis defend Salam's role in Pakistan's nuclear security because Ahmadis are falsely accused of being Islamabad's adversaries. Whether Salam contributed to the development of nuclear weapons or not, it is well documented that Ahmadis contributed to Pakistan's progress (Raja 2020: 765-795). However, undoubtedly, Muslims in Pakistan regard those who contributed to nuclear security as true heroes. Salam, a Nobel Laureate, cannot be an icon for fundamentalists who have no connection to peaceful science in Pakistan. This study finds that the contradicting conditions prompted the minority community to associate Salam with nuclear weapons in order to legitimise Ahmadis' commitment to Pakistan's security.

The fourth successor of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mirza Tahir Ahmad accused global powers of pressing scientists to invite a monster device, an atomic bomb. He said that scientists who contributed to the making of nuclear weapons cannot be blamed for this advancement. "It is the great world powers which are invariably responsible for such cruel and senseless decisions of global magnitude" (Tahir Ahmad 2009: 620-621). This statement from a spiritual leader appears to diminish Salam's alleged connection to nuclear weapons. However, to attain their vested interests, politicians forced scientists to wash their hands with blood. The question is whether any reasons in Islam, according to AMC, prompted Salam to give Pakistan a helping hand to go nuclear.

Ahmadis, according to the AMC, should be loyal to their state (Sherwood 2016). Furthermore, Islam, according to the AMC, requires Muslims to defend the sovereignty of their state. In this scenario, Salam had no choice but to play a critical role in promoting Pakistan's security. Similarly, Michael Krepon (with the support of Faiqa Mahmood) (2015) in his article titled "Islam and the Bomb" argues that the concept of deterrence (by nuclear weapons) is implied in the Holy Quran: "Prepare against them whatever forces you [believers] can muster, including warhorse, to frighten the enemies of Allah and of yours" (08: 60/61) .

However, AMC has a different viewpoint regarding nuclear weapons. Ahmadi scholar, Malik Ghulam Farid (2010: 389) says that the above verse refers to the Pagan Arabs, Byzantine, and the Persian Empire with whom Muslims had to fight soon after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad . Thus, "whatever armed forces" cannot be nuclear weapons for frightening the enemies of Allah. Due to their enormous destructive power, these weapons might devastate the biodiversity within minutes after their use in a certain area. Also, these weapons failed to provide deterrence to nuclear states, thus, MDSs have been built to destroy nuclear missiles which might help to provoke a nuclear war. In another place, the Holy Quran states that nuclear war will be a punishment from Allah (Farid 2010: 1163) , hence nuclear weapons might not be a war tool for Muslims to frighten the enemies of

Allah. So far as interpretation of the Quranic verses is concerned, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (2007: 28), the founder of the AMC, argues that there should be other testimonies present in the Holy Quran to support the interpretation of the verse of the Holy Book. Thus, it seems that Faiqa Mahmood had poorly translated the verse (08: 60/61) in Krepon's (2015) article to justify the assertion that deterrence by nuclear warheads is implied in the Holy Quran.

Krepon (2015) concludes in his article that the acquisition of nuclear weapons for deterrence may be allowed in Islam, but first use is never permitted, because Muslims are not permitted to be the aggressors. The verse "Fight in Allah's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: Allah does not love those who overstep the limits" (02: 190) restricted Muslims from being the aggressors.

Surely, Muslims are directed to use all sorts of implements of war for security as well as to frighten the enemies of Allah. However, nuclear weapons cannot guarantee absolute security or deterrence. Nuclear weapons failed to frighten states like India and Pakistan which fought a Kargil war in 1999 under a nuclear umbrella. Also, Arab states attacked Israel though it crossed the nuclear threshold in the 1967 war (Cohen 2020). Thus, Kenneth Waltz's deterrence theory based on fear is faulty. Waltz (1981) categorically justified deterrence theory based on fear and a second-strike capability.

The next question arises: How can nuclear weapons be declared as an instrument of war or deterrence due to their lethal repercussions? Nuclear weapons do not differentiate between combatants and non-combatants, or the just and the unjust, thus, such weapons are simply against Islamic principles. Though realists support nuclear weapons for deterrence, these weapons have been popularized for battlefield use. According to the 2017 nuclear report published in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, there are nearly 15000 nukes located at some 107 sites in 14 countries and surprisingly some 1800 nukes are on high alert and ready for use on short notice. For many scholars, nuclear deterrence is a myth and a psychological condition (Vanaik 2015), and someday nuclear deterrence will fail due to military biases (Sagan 1994: 93).

Another question related to the idea that Islam does not permit an expensive and destructive war. It is stated in the Holy Quran that after an enemy has initiated an attack, it is the duty of the Muslims to keep warfare within limits (Mahmood Ahmad 2016). To extend the war, either territorially or with respect to weapons used, is wrong (Mahmood Ahmad 2016). Thermonuclear devices, better known as hydrogen bombs can unleash inconceivable amounts of destruction. The deterrence by nuclear systems is economically expensive (Perry 2015: 46) and, in the case of an atomic war, it will be a huge loss to biodiversity followed by a nuclear winter. Thus, it can be argued that weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons as a battlefield weapon after the arrival of MDSs are clearly in violation of the Islamic war ethical code.

## **Conclusion**

Nuclear weapons are considered inhuman warheads since they cannot be used to win any combat. According to Islam, killing an innocent person is equivalent to killing all humanity (05: 33) . According to the Holy Prophet of Islam, whoever sheds the blood of an innocent person is not a Muslim. Such people were considered sinners and weak in faith by the Prophet Muhammad. The "Islamic Bomb," or any nuclear state's atomic weapons, will cause massive violence and destruction. Thus, nuclear weapons have no place in Islam as a means of protecting Muslims from Allah's enemies.

Salam's objective was to help developing countries thrive scientifically (Abdus Salam 1998: 08-10). Salam's devotion to Pakistan was invaluable. He used the money from the Atoms for Peace Medal to

pay for the young Pakistani physicist's trip to the ICTP. He was a benign scientist, and Islam did not drive him to create a monstrous gadget capable of destroying the entire planet. Salam once wrote: "The Holy Quran enjoins us to reflect on the verities of Allah's created laws of nature; however, that our generation has been privileged to glimpse a part of His design is a bounty and a grace for which I render thanks with a humble heart (Abdus Salam Biography 2020)." Myriad interpretations of the Holy Quran justify Muslim divisions. While Salam saw the Holy Quran as a source of good in furthering space research and science, others in Pakistan utilized it for conquest, bloodshed, and political change. Salam could have transformed Pakistan into a scientifically sophisticated nation if corrupted leaders and militant generals had adopted an Islam that promotes peace and growth. Bhutto and Zia squandered Pakistan's scientific growth potential by prioritising their image and power. To divert public attention away from such state failures, Pakistan went nuclear in May 1998 (Hoodbhoy 1998: 73).

The Ahmadis organised an international conference in London in December 2020 to unite religion and science (Masroor Ahmad 2019). Their current spiritual leader, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, used the example of Salam to establish peace in this world. The Ahmadis' mission is to serve humanity globally and Salam is a role model they hold up for uniting religion and science. In contrast, the Mullahs in Pakistan are busy organising seminars on the "finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad" promoting conquest and violence and spreading hate against the Ahmadis for allegedly violating Islamic principles. Ahmadis, argue, on the other hand, that one can both accept the "finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad" and the development of science and peace.

## No Conflict of Interest.

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