



## **DR. APJ ABDUL KALAM'S WINGS OF FIRE AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT TO SOCIAL DOCUMENT**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is an overview of literary and socio-cultural analysis of Wings of Fire, the autobiography of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. The paper evaluates the role of patience, practice and perseverance in human life. The analysis highlights Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's talent to mix scientific table-talk with metaphysical and moral convictions, publicizing all-inclusive from one place to another to the life and work of human being. Additionally, this paper considers the merit of teachers and individual contribution of number of persons towards in their acquirement and how Wings of Fire attends as all like a call to empower the youth and a guide to principled leadership. This autobiography of Prof. APJ Abdul Kalam supports to indifference of interfaith, communal harmony and youth promotion is assessed with in the current Indian scenario. This research paper demonstrates that Wings of Fire is not only an autobiographical presentation, but also it is an important socio-cultural work that remains meaningful for education and national awareness.*

**Keywords:** Literary, Perseverance, Talent, Secular-Leadership, Socio-Cultural Approach, Nationalism etc.

### **Introduction**

In contemporary literary hub of India, the role of autobiographies considers not only as self-directed chronology but also as socio-cultural documentation in which the ethos and realities of that time are reflected. *Wings of Fire* by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam is *sui generis* autobiographical work which captures the attention of readers. It narrates the story of an ordinary boy of Rameswaram who through tireless efforts, perseverance and determination, rose to become a renowned scientist and eventually served as the



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*Rashtrapati*(President) of India. He was awarded three highest civilian awards of India like Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and Bharat Ratna respectively.

In the thick of *Wings of Fire* by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam sticks out as a powerful and inspiring life narrative, recounting the inspiring rise of a simple boy from the shoreline village of Rameswaram to the highly academic scientific accomplishment and at length, to grace the highest constitutional office of the country. *Wings of Fire* which first released in 1999 highlights a non-identical blend of auto tell-all, scientific narration, and meditative doctrine. This work provides a platform to understand the scientific lookout that formed in post-independence, depicting a republic-nation given over to resilience and creative works headed at accomplishing a remarkable global recognition.

This book *Wings of Fire* has received an honour of popularity on a national as well as global scale and has been rendered into multiple Indian and world languages. His book standing in with his early life and his research work in Indian space research and missile programs. It was very engaging initially, but tended to drag a bit towards the end with a lot of technical details and procedural information of his space research and missile projects. This autobiography of APJ Abdul Kalam is penciled in jointly by Mr. Arun Tiwari and Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. It covers the sketches of his life before becoming the president of India and one more autobiography *My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions* was released in 2013.

Let us observe the some important aspects to understand the real message who wants to disseminate Dr. Kalam towards the society through his writings.

### Critical Observation

When, he wanted to become an officer in Indian Air Force in his younger years, but he could not succeed in the interview. Then he went to meet Swami Shivananda after this falling in failure and we learnt Shivananda's prophetic counselling to Kalam sahib which made him as an inspirational source. In other words, he extracted the positivity from the negativity that's why, he considered this failure as a step of success, such as:

Accept your destiny and go ahead with your life. You are not destined to become an Air Force pilot. What you are destined to become is not revealed now but it is predetermined. Forget this failure, as it was essential to lead you to your destined path. Search, instead, for the true purpose of your existence. Become one with yourself, my son! Surrender yourself to the wish of God.

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In the book I learn how APJ Abdul Kalam began his career in Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) and was involved in the design of a hovercraft. Later he moved to Indian Space Research which was the brain child of Vikram Sarabhai. In 1963, Kalam went to NASA facility in Maryland(USA) as part of a training program on sounding rocket launching techniques. There he came across a painting which depicted Tipu Sultan's rocket warfare against the British.

Here, I saw a painting prominently displayed in the reception lobby. It depicted a battle scene with a few rockets flying in the background. A painting with this theme should be the most common place thing at a flight facility, but the painting caught my eye because the soldiers on the side launching the rockets were not white, but dark-skinned, with the racial features of people found in South Asia.

One day, my curiosity got the better of me, drawing me towards the painting. It turned out to be Tipu Sultan's army fighting the British. The painting depicted a fact forgotten in Tipu's own country but commemorated here on the other side of the planet. I was happy to see an Indian glorified by NASA as a hero of warfare rocketry.

The book covers a lot of Behind the Scene, information and technical details about India's satellite and missile program like-

SLV-3,

Prithvi,

Agni,

Thrisul,

Akash

Nag etc.

It may consider technically sound learners, however it is likely to transfer those who collected the biography to grasp the reasonableness of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's vital qualities, merits and steering and advisable thoughts.

His Space and missile missions are gigantic complicated and sophisticated research plans and supervising and directing them is extremely complicating and challenging effortful task. The book provides a glance that he cultivated the methodology of his democratic administration to manage this research journey.

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The book sets apart the minimal personal reflections of the author's life, a highlighting that is an extraordinary autobiographical genre. For instance, we are not acquainted that he chose to stay unmarried or his workout exclusive of research in space, why?

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was a poet and he composed various poems in Tamil and English and his book graces their pages with his poems for example:

Do not look at Agni  
as an entity directed upward  
to deter the ominous  
or exhibit your might.  
It is fire in the heart of an Indian.  
Do not even give it  
the form of a missile  
as it clings to the  
burning pride of this nation  
and thus is bright.

The opening chapters of *Wings of Fire* since it gives a vivid picture of our country during 1930 to 1950s. Kalam was born in Rameswaram, a southern religious town in Tamilnadu. The opening chapters enriches an interesting glimpse of religious harmony which existed before India's partition. The famous Shiva temple, which made Rameswaram so sacred to pilgrims, was about a ten-minute walk from our house. Our locality was predominantly Muslim, but there were quite a few Hindu families too, living amicably with their Muslim neighbours.

The high priest of Rameswaram temple, Pakshi Lakshmana Shastry, was a very close friend of my father. One of the most vivid memories of my early childhood is of the two men, each in his traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters.

One day when I was in the fifth standard at the Rameswaram Elementary School, a new teacher came to our class. I used to wear a cap which marked me as a Muslim, and I always sat in the front row next to Ramanadha Shastry, who wore a sacred thread. The new teacher could not stomach a Hindu priest's son

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sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with our social ranking as the new teacher saw it, I was asked to go and sit on the back bench. I felt very sad, and so did RamanadhaShastry. He looked utterly downcast as I shifted to my seat in the last row. The image of him weeping when I shifted to the last row left a lasting impression on me. After school, we went home and told our respective parents about the incident.

Lakshmana Shastry summoned the teacher, and in our presence, told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He bluntly asked the teacher to either apologize or quit the school and the island. Not only did the teacher regret his behaviour, but the strong sense of conviction Lakshmana Shastry conveyed ultimately reformed this young teacher.

## Conclusion

By putting *Wings of Fire*, we come across some brilliant people who worked behind Indian space research such as Vikram Sarabhai and Dr. Braham Prakash. The book also contains about 24 photos and we found the ones from the early days of Indian space program very interesting. One of the realities that sticks out positive and constructive thinking of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is in every part of the book. He graced many towering portfolios in different organizations across India. Nevertheless, the presentation of the book, primarily keeps away any slighting references and discussions about bureaucratic inefficiency or political corruption. In other words, what the author forsakes undisclosed eventually speaks louder than what is expressed.

His successful accomplishment seems rooted in frequent potency and resilience that helps him to choose the way for upgrading despite the enclosing toxic and surrounding negative environments. The narrative of the book reflects the light on the fountains of his great public popular recognition across the country as well as the world, depicting the image of Kalam sahib as a brand ambassador of simplicity, secular values, and deep humanistic inspiration.

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