

## Motivational Facets in the Writings of APJ Abdul Kalam

**Sundar Lal**

Assistant Professor of English  
K.G.K. (P.G) College Moradabad  
Research Scholar  
AMU Aligarh, U. P.

HHH

### **Abstract**

*Although A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (1937-2015) was very famous scientist, popularly called 'Missile Man of India and people's President', he was also a great visionary and a thought-provoking writer whose literary compositions are basically produced to inspire the youth of India. On the one hand he was a technocrat and brilliant scientist he became icon of inspirations to all on the other. This convergence is very rare to be understood but Kalam had this innate talent. Apart from his technological accomplishments, his writings are a great contribution to humanity. In him a scientist, an artist, a philosopher and a visionary breathe simultaneously. Throughout his life having rampant expressions and unique attitudes, he kept "looking like a true motivator and teacher. His words and sentences are full of universal appeal.*

**Keywords:** simple, motivational, technology, scientific

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is remembered by everyone in the long period because of his simple living and high thinking", (Jha, Motivator viii). His writings like 'Wings of Fire', 'Turning Points', 'Ignited Minds', 'The Life Tree', 'Songs of Life', 'Inspiring Thoughts' etc. and a few poems included in these writings namely "O Almighty", "Mission in Life", "Message" and "Song of Youth" if superficially viewed, give some inkling that Kalam's writings could be of motivational values and significance. Kalam's "Song of Youth" denotes his love for nation and he tries to wake up the young citizens to look forward. Earlier people would not take to the fact regarding Kalam's achievements and uniqueness seriously but later people of India and those of the world were persuaded to think about this ordinary but great man. Subsequently a swing came in effect and Kalam's writings drew the attention of litterateur, thinkers and scholars, who unanimously expound in Kalam having a voice and a vision leading to the ultimate mission of life. According to Kalam India has modern technology and is rich in scientific knowledge so the youth of his country should make good use of their time. He guides them to think high to make India a prosperous nation. He voices: "As a young citizen of India/ Armed with technology, knowledge and love for my nation/I realize small aim is a crime" (The Life Tree 3).

He is firm faith to let his dream come true so he occurs: "I will keep the lamp of knowledge of burning/to achieve the vision- Developed India". His real intention was to wake up the people of India to look forward. His words always fill energy when one goes through his writings: "If we work and sweat for the great vision with ignited minds/the transformation leading to the birth/of a vibrant, developed India will happen". Kalam throughout his life made hardships to achieve what is destined to him in the universe. So, his life inspires one to get what he or she aspires for. In his famous poem "O Almighty" he prays to God to spread His blessings over human beings specially Indians and urges that He should lit the lamp of knowledge in the hearts of children so that they may achieve or understand the real meaning of life leading to progress. He always uses the word 'we' which denotes his sense of collectiveness. He guides all to be united to lead our nation towards the glorified life. He says if The Almighty awake our people to acquire knowledge all Indians will be grateful for that: "Armed with knowledge we dream and rise to thank you/we pray, we bow, we worship for your grace", (The Life Tree 14). He always instigates the youth to dream high and expects to lit fire in the hearts of the children; his writings feather to their aspirations. He is a true Indian writer who devoted his whole life to the betterment of India. All his writings depict his profound love for his nation. R. Ramanathan in the preface of his famous book 'Who is Kalam: A Good Human Being' writes:

Dr. Kalam has many facets to his life. He is the 'Missile' man for some. He has earned the sobriquet 200% Indian. He is a 'dreamer' for others. For children, he is the 'wings' of inspiration to spread the glow of goodness. His autobiography reveals aspects of Kalam, the man and Kalam, the scientist. But I believe there is still much more to know about this man who retains his humility even after being the recipient of many as award and distinction. So, I have tried to give a better insight into Dr. Abdul Kalam, the Man. So, I do not intend to have another biography- it is an in-depth study of 'Who is Kalam'. Let me confess the bottom line, at the very beginning: he is a very good human being! (VIII)

His works *Guiding Souls*, *The Indomitable Spirit* and his poetry *The Life Tree* and *'Songs of Life'* may convince one that as a man Kalam was different from Kalam the scientist and also that he was holding distinctly two sets of vision, the humanitarian vision and the scientific vision, which serve worldly ends to contribute to the prosperity and security of the nation and uplift the conditions of the poor and the downtrodden. He was so simple in his nature that one cannot believe, "he is such a brilliant man with highly qualified background" pertaining to his greatness and talents (Jha, Motivator 17). He involved himself with the children and also became child to teach them the simplicity of life and inspired them to achieve what God aspires to them. One could never notice as Kalam ever swaggered about his talent because he followed the paths of 'simple living and happy life'. He always thought of good for the children. He expects the young children to dream big having a vision leading to a mission, for according to him, every success can be achieved through hard work, endurance and firm determination. Nothing is impossible he said. He never cared if anybody laughed at him but kept himself busy doing the great deeds to achieve the final goal but people get inspired with his strange behavior later. Behind his great success his simplicity was the milestone that always kept him on the right path. His nature and diligence inspired millions of hearts to follow the right paths of life. He was sociable and always thought of the betterment of society. Kalam's philosophy of life is seen when he says: "My needs are so little. I do not need all the money. It should be put to good use. I want to give to those organizations which work for the welfare of the poor children and elderly people", (Who is Kalam 15).

Kalam has been the second such President of India whom the intelligentsia of the world knew even before he was elected as President because of his attainment and performance in scientific fields. He is a novel name in the golden realms of literature and is famous for his motivational quotes in the world. The whole account of his life is in itself an inspiration to all that tells us about his journey from an ordinary poor boy to the highest post of India as president. How he achieved such a very prestigious post is a remarkable thing to be memorized. His first book *Wings of Fire* which happens to be a commendable contribution to the corpus of autobiography was published before he took up the office as the President of India. After he demitted the office of the President, the sequel to *wings of fire* was released revealing the turning points of his life which cannot be read in isolation, the metamorphosis of this great nation. These accounts reflect that his life becomes an ideal to his readers. Autobiography is generally read having the prejudices in the mind that it

inspires others and paves the way to the readers to understand the truths of life through the experiences prevailed in the account. On knowing about his life, we come to know that he "was one person who is becoming to the natural definition of greatness", (Jha 5).

Kalam's works are packed with the essence of naturalness in behavior and leave a great message to the society. He gave impetus for the knowledge society with regard to India and his literary output shows extremity of Indian-ness. He respected his countrymen equally so all Indians belonging to any class, caste, religion and political party, loved him very much and regarded him as a good human being ever born in India. This quality of his nature became inspirations to all as well. He was a great leader who leads all his colleagues and ignites their minds to think higher. He always as a motivator and human being, focused on the purpose of life. 'What is the purpose of one's life?' he claimed, and commended all by saying that knowledge is power. Though he is president of India, his identity is not limited to this one post that he holds. Prof. Faruqe Qurashi in his book *Abdul Kalam: India's Scientist President* says:

The most striking feature about President Kalam is his acceptance, love, and respect for various religions. Born in a middle-class Tamil family in Rameswaram in 1931, he grew up to become a secularist and a true Indian. Unlike the pseudo-seculars and fanatics that our society is full of, Dr. Kalam, much like Sant Kabir, imbibed the virtues of various faiths as he writes in his autobiography, *The Wings of Fire*, "I never doubted that prayers in the temple reached the same destination as the ones offered in the mosque". (50)

Kalam is an author known for his motivational writings, especially meant to help people overcome their various difficulties by giving them a series of practical examples. He is a very learned and highly read author in the social section of the literary world. He has motivated and helped millions of readers with his inspirational books, highlighting short incidents and quotations. His book *Wings of Fire* is in fact not a simple document on his life incidents but a highly philosophic plea for hard labor and struggle to attain the utmost goal. It reflects true pleasure as the outcome of hard labor and struggle. Whatever is achieved easily is lost hastily. The value of an achievement depends on difficulties faced in its attainment. Otherwise, the achievement looks ordinary. Ends are important but means are more important for they justify ends. True success stands afar if mind is not resolute enough to attain goal passing through doing something with active mind whether in pain or suffering. He puts forward for consideration: "Don't pretend to be a

candle, be a moth. Know the power hidden in serving", (My Journey, 90). He admonishes the youth to be strong and determined to assess their inner capabilities. His writings not only motivate students and children of the nation but also all the writers in the world. He has become an icon for all kinds of people so he is admired by all from the core of the heart. His whole life from an ordinary child to his presidency teaches us a lesson of diligence, patience and humanity. Dr. Jai Ram Jha and Mrs. Amilata Taye Mili write in his book Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam: The Motivator thus:

Although Kalam has become the impetus for all the writers in the world and his life since birth to death is a real torch bearer for human beings. Undoubtedly, the view and philosophy are really practical and thought-provoking to everyone. A man who has seen the extreme poverty in his life, in his native place and he has also seen the extreme highest post of the country without any paradox. That is why he is loved and respected by the people of the country not only as a president but as true a teacher and a dedicated man towards education. (Jha & Mili vii)

When one studies Kalam he comes to know that there is no happiness except in realization that one has accomplished something; this is the real sense of fulfillment that comes from hard work as Thomas Carlyle claims that "a man must get his happiness out of his work" (Labor 1). Kalam got fame in the world with his inspirational writings and for over the years his life and great deeds have emphasized the dignity of life and work; a life of purpose, and has been a source of motivation for the countless men and women as done by Khalil Gibran when his views of love, happiness and success were spread over the countries. His Inspiring Thoughts, a storehouse of some gripping, persuasive and energetic sayings, is regarded as "a selection of the best of APJ Abdul Kalam's thought-provoking and inspiring words: words which will make you reflect, rethink and rejoice along with this journey of life", (Inspiring Thoughts, cover page). This stunning book teaches the children how to acquire knowledge. He focused on actions leading to education, leadership, positivity and creativity. While reading this book one comes to know about Kalam that he is a great visionary who always keeps preaching right paths of life. He guides all students to be creative to attain the ultimate goal of life. He sermonizes as "Encourage all children to dream for themselves. Unless they have dreams, they will not be motivated to attain them", (Inspiring Thoughts 6). He emphasizes on thoughts which lead to motives of life and action which is the midway to attain the motive so he suggests that thought and action is supplementary to each other. One should focus on both the traits. He writes:

"Motives and traits exist at the innermost or core level. If we can identify those performance dimensions which are most highly correlated with job success, we can put them together to form a blueprint for outstanding performance in both thought and action", (Wings of Fire 82). Keeping this fervor in his mind and soul Kalam worked hard in his own life and his life reflects ways to dream. He poured his honest ideas in his books to motivate the gentry. He makes us energetic by saying thus: "dream, dream, dream/ your dreams will transform into thoughts/ thoughts lead to honest work/ work will result in actions/ and you will succeed", (Inspiring Thoughts 13).

The supreme mission of Kalam's life was to bring about social, political, moral and scientific reformation in his country. After holding the post as a president Kalam saw that most of the people of India were passing their lives under the extreme poverty, total exploitation and gross negligence. Kalam came to know about the reason behind the poverty and pitiable conditions of the poor as the rulers being tyrants. They were ignorant for the basic need of the common people. The poor were actually the victims of religious and political exploitation. Kalam generated the social and moral awakenings in the minds of the people by writing motivational books. Kalam's writings show that the common people should get not only the necessities of their lives but justice from their rulers. So, he taught moral and social values to the politicians and the members of the parliament. He ushers all kinds of people of the world to be honest with all their colleagues. He not only motivates the children of his nation but also the leaders of his country as well. Regarding honest and innovative initiatives, he writes:

Creative leadership is  
 Exercising the task to change  
 The traditional role  
 From commander to coach,  
 From manager to mentor,  
 From director to delegator and,  
 From one who demands  
 Respect, to one who facilitates  
 Self-respect. (Inspiring Thoughts 10)

He wrote devotional and inspirational poetry full of great ideas. Most of his poems prove that he was not only a distinguished scientist but he also a benefactor of the whole humanity at large who always kept delivering suggestions and guidance to the people. He tells us about the secret of success, the success mantra: "love for your work and/ faith in your dreams, there is no force on earth/ that can shatter your dreams!", (The Life Tree 41). His sudden death, while delivering a lecture was mourned

by a large number of persons of different religions, castes, races, countries far and near. He is remembered on any occasion for his words of blessings for his nation. Thus, Kalam's style of writing or saying the things is always inspirational for it deals with the real fact of life related to the joy, happiness, struggle for success etc. hence it is visionary in gist. Kalam's poetry is a guide to the young people. In the poem "Mission in Life" he talks about the mission of the youth: "I am great in thinking and in action. /I firmly believe that I can do any mission", and if somebody goes with this mantra, he or she must be able to shout one day: "I will achieve what I dream/I will also reach any part of our galaxy". With these ideological perceptions Kalam wants people to believe that nothing is impossible to achieve if determination is kept intact. He was truly committed to do hard work for his dream to be fulfilled. He did not get anything by luck but with a great labour however he never permitted his victory or accomplishments to subjugate his deliberation. Jai Ram Jha rightly says: "Abdul Kalam is a role model to the young India today. He has inspired the youth of India by dreaming big and achieving the goals. Youngsters

admired him for his 'low living and high thinking'. He is also known for his positive attitude that is admirable, while his rise from poverty to the office of president was extremely impressive", (Motivator 8).

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