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## **BOOK REVIEW**

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### **Name of the book -Wings of fire (An Autobiography)**

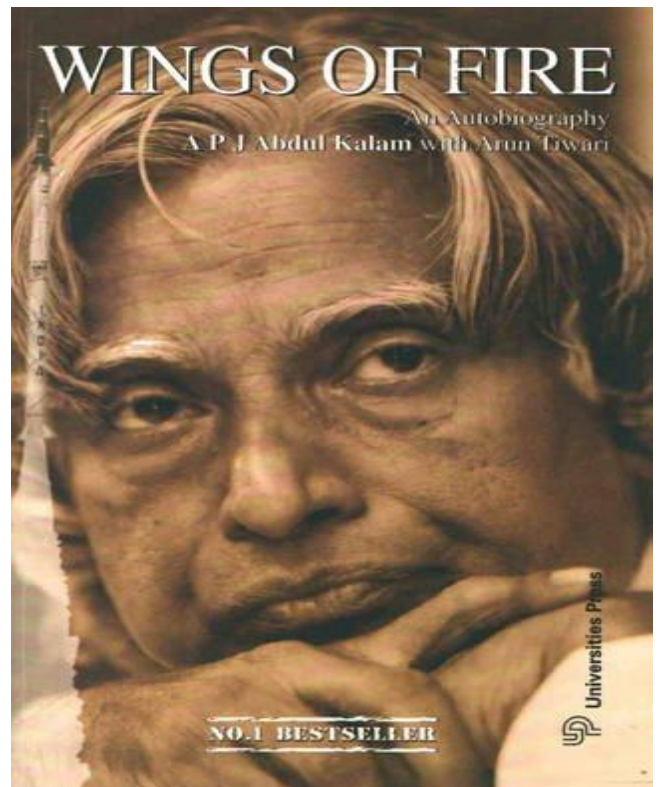
Authors - APJ Abdul Kalam and Arun Tiwari

Published by

University press (India) Private Limited 1999

ISBN 81 7371 146 1

No of pages 180



The book “Wings of fire” is an autobiography of Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India. This book provides a thumbnail sketch of Dr Kalam’s Life. Arun Tiwari worked under Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for over a decade and was involved in the projects on Akash Missiles. He was so fascinated by Dr Kalam’s range of ideas and thought process that he decided to pen down Dr Kalam recollections.

Wings of Fire is the story of a small boy achieving his dreams despite all the odds This real story tells us the role of family, relatives and friends in helping a person in achieving his goals .

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is much admired by the youth of India; this was the sole reason that I preferred this book to be reviewed. This book being based on the concrete life of the great pioneer of science has inspired people from all genres.

The book has 24 pages with photographs associated with life and work of Kalam

The writing style is very simple and lucid.

In this book, Dr. Kalam never fails to acknowledge his co-workers, team members and others of importance. The book is dotted with snippets of poetry and hymns that Dr. Kalam is fond of and has collected over his life time.

His works have put India on the nuclear map of the world and made it a part of an elite club of nations.

According to Dr Kalam each individual creature on this beautiful planet is created by God to fulfill a particular role. Kalam, whatever he has achieved in life is through God’s help. God showered His grace on Kalam through some outstanding teachers and colleagues. Kalam tells several million masses of India, to never feel small or helpless. We are all born with a **divine fire** in us. Our efforts should be to give wings to this fire and fill the world with glow of its goodness.

I feel the title is also perfect.

The contents are divided into following sections:-

Preface, Acknowledgment, Introduction, Orientation, Creation, Propitiation Contemplation and Epilogue

**Orientation** –This is the first session spread into the first three chapters covers 32 years of Kalam’s early life (1931-1963). Born in 1931, Kalam is the son of less educated boat owner in Rameshawaram, Tamil Nadu. This part also includes description of the people who shaped his life- his parents (Father Jainulabdeen and Mother Ashiamma), his best friends and teachers.

Interweaving religion and education is the charming part of the book.

His early schooling at Schwartz High School Ramanathapuram where he met teachers Iyadurai Solomon, Ramakrishna Iyer, for undergraduate education he took admission at St Joseph College, Trichy where he met Rev. Father T.N. Sequeria and obtained B.Sc. degree .Then he joined degree course in Aeronautical Engineering from Madras Institute of Technology where Prof. Sponder, Prof. K.A.V. Pandalai and Prof. Narasingh Rao shaped his thinking. He joined HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) for six months training. Then joined DTD and P (Directorate of technical development and production), Ministry of Defense as a trainee then went to ADE (Aeronautical Development Establishment), Bangalore.

Later he was posted as a rocket engineer at INCOSPAR (Indian committee for space research) at Thumba near Trivandrum. For six months training programme on sounding rocket launching techniques, he went to NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) to the United States.

**Creation** - Traverses six chapters from chapter 4 to chapter 9 and covers Kalam’s life and work for 17 years (1963-1980). It begins with work at NASA at Langley Research center in Hampton Virginia. The rocket launch site blossomed into the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launch Station (TERLS). Real journey of Indian aerospace programme began here.

Several technological aspects are discussed. Prof Sarabhai’s vision, mode of working is very important in this part of the book .The support of Dr. Satish Dhawan as chairman ISRO, Brahma Prakash as Director of VSSC is also mentioned.

He had lost Jallaluddin, brother in law, during this time then father and mother. In spite of great loss, he carried out work efficiently. He visited France and was totally committed. Even colleagues used to call him as workaholic. His agony when the first SLV flight failed to reach the orbit and he took the responsibility of failure Brahma Prakash, Director of VSSC, guided and consoled him. In 1980 the SLV -3 lifted off. There are several attractive observations, poems, personal details of his family, interspersed between the hard technical descriptions that keep the reader glued to the book. This chapter ends in the description of his transition from ISRO to DRDO as the next Director of DRDL.

**Propitiation** (1981-1991) – This part of the book covers Chapter 10 to chapter 14. These ten years constitute the outstanding accomplishments at DRDL and covers the journey towards becoming the Missile Man of India. His excellent leadership qualities as taking up the responsibility of shaping up the guided Missile Development Programme, Kalam was responsible for development of Prithvi, Trishul, Akash, Nag, Agni. He brought together academics and scientist from R and D institutions for reviews ( Jadhavpur University , IISc ,IIT Madras ,Osmania University). A number of meetings were held with members drawn from different projects and disciplines so that learning from one another was resulted.

**Contemplation** -The awards that he received include Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhusahan and Bharat Ratna He was awarded Doctor of Science from Jadhavpur and IIT Bombay

For teachers and students this book must be read so that for teachers to produce more Kalam and students to become successful in life.

This book is a great source of inspiration for those students who wants to achieve something in their lives.

Finally concluding, I would like to mention that this book be declared a must read for every person and not only to be read but be inculcated in one's daily routine to develop a sincere and disciplined life and also to have a sense of affection towards fellow persons in our surrounding. This book will definitely foster the seeds of being a better human being. This will eventually lead

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to the success of **VISION 2020**, the dream of this eminent personality that foresees a developed INDIA.