

Wings of Fire Author: Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



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Two years back when I read 'Wings of Fire', never did I think that the author of that book, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam would become the President of India, someday. Forget about my thinking, even Dr. Kalam wouldn't have thought so. 'Wings of Fire' is an autobiography of Dr. Abdul Kalam written with the help of one Arun Tiwari, who worked along with him for about 10 years. Without any hesitation, I would say that it is a book that should be read by every Indian. I used to get drowned in that book while commuting in the trains/buses and many a times, I have missed my stop. :-)

Having born in a family whose primary business is 'Boat making', Kalam is the first graduate in his family. One couldn't help admiring his determination, when Dr. Kalam describes the trials and tribulations he faced for reaching his destined milestone, right from starting out by vending newspapers.

If India stands proud among the comity of nations with great achievements in Space Research and indigenous missile development in Defence sector, there is no doubt that it is because of the unparalleled efforts of our scientists despite all hurdles. Very often, the common man might not realise that beyond the self-confidence the scientists possess, it requires a great deal of encouragement from the concerned people. One would be able to appreciate the fact very well on reading Kalam's autobiography. The book would also make one realise as how hurting it would be when newspapers and magazines release satiric cartoons on the failure of test launches of satellites.

Another good aspect about this book is that although Dr. Kalam is a high-calibre technical person, he explains things with ease that a common man would find no trouble in understanding them. This book would be a boon for those who love poetry, as they have been very well punctuated across the book, including a few from Kalam's own pen. He quotes Bhagvad Gita with as much ease as he does with Holy Quran.

Kalam's life is an example for how a simple, unassuming Indian with very meagre facilities could make the most out of it by sheer hard work and reach the pinnacle. We can say, "Kalam's life is an inspiration" akin to Gandhi's "My life is a message".

Hard work, Dedication, Determination, Patriotism, Simplicity - these are the few lessons we could learn from Dr. Abdul Kalam's life through "Wings of Fire". While we gloat in the glory of yet another small town boy from "our" place making it up to Raisina Hills, if we could take a leaf out of his life, it would be a small effort towards building a mighty nation.

Dr Chakrapani