

A DISCUSSION ON THE SUPREMACY OF SPIRITUALITY, PRAYER AND RELIGIOUS CONVICTION THROUGH APJ ABDUL KALAM'S 'THE POWER OF PRAYER'

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Abstract

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam is known as one of India's most illustrious futurists, viewed mysticism, supplication, and conviction as an essential powers shaping human charisma, consciences and innermost harmony. According to Abdul Kalam, religiousness surpasses the restrictions of organized faith. In fact, it was a pursuit for understanding one's personality and one's perseverance in synchronization with the cosmos. He believes that true devoutness lies in appreciating the celestial occurrence within and serving civilization with consideration and humbleness. In Kalam's philosophy, prayer was not mere ceremonial exercise but a philosophical discourse with the Maker of the universe. The great almighty God is a foundation of métier, intelligibility and ethical direction. He often accentuates that prayer transports inner alteration, allowing individuals to line up understanding, expressions and accomplishments toward virtuous existing. According to him, religion was a pathway leading to unison rather than detachment. Drawing stimulation from the Holy Scriptures such as Bhagavad Gita, the Quran and the Bible, Kalam sustains the universality of convictions and promotes inter-religious congruence as indispensable for national and comprehensive reconciliation. His life replicated an incorporation of science and unworldliness, representing that knowledgeable brilliance and ethical complexity can exist. Thus, Dr. Kalam's reflections on sanctity, supplication and religion offer a universal visualization of human

improvement grounded in trust, provision, and universal friendship. The prime objective of the paper is to discuss the power of spirituality, prayer and religious conviction through the lens of APJ Abdul Kalam's 'The Power of Prayer.'

Keywords: power, spirituality, prayer, religion, humanity, religious perspectives

Introduction

Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam (1931-2015) recipient of the highest civilian award of India, *the Bharat Ratna*, was born in the middle class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram at Tamilnadu. He was one of the most renowned personalities, defense scientist, visionary, leader and teacher. He was known as *Missile Man* of India for his significant role in developing ballistic missile technology especially Agni and Prithvi. He worked as the chief of the India's defense research and development programme. He contributed in Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and later Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). He also played an important role in Nuclear Test named as Pokharan-II in the year 1998. Kalam has demonstrated the potential for dynamism and innovation that exists in seemingly research establishments. He also effectively handled the responsibility of 11th President of India for the duration 2002-2007. He was amiably called as *People's President* due to his humility, accessibility and inspiration to youth. After presidency, he solely dedicated his life as a teacher, motivator and inspirer and dreamt to become India as a developed nation through science, technology and education by the year 2020. He took exit of this world on 27th while teaching to the students of IIT, Shillong. His significant works are: *Wings of Fire*, *Ignited Minds*, *India 2020* and *My Journey*. He advocated for integrity, simplicity and service to the nation. He appeals to the youth of India,

‘You have to hallucinate before your dreams come true. Your dreams will transform into your thoughts and your thoughts will result into action.’

Critical Background / Literature Review

Literature review is the noteworthy feature which explores the former researcher’s clarifications on the hypothetical subject. Here the researcher has characterized the discussion on the power of spirituality, prayer and religion through APJ Abdul Kalam’s *The Power of Prayer*. The indispensable evidences are demonstrated as per the precondition of the occurrences.

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

The researcher has used descriptive, analytical, qualitative methods. Besides this, he has preferred close reading of the primary and secondary sources in order to know the thematic concepts on spirituality, prayer and religion through the lens of APJ Abdul Kalam. It also indorses to stimulate analytical evidences from texts at large scale so that inclusive information can be envisioned and put before the readers interminably. Therefore the researcher has inferred the literary texts for better understanding. Theoretical framework provides deeper insights of religious perspectives.

Textual Analysis / Discussion

The present extract is from Abdul Kalam’s autobiography *Wings of Fire* which describes his life story and how his teachers, parents and mentors played a crucial role in shaping his mind, character and ambitions. The power of spirituality, prayer and religion plays a powerful role in his life and attitudes. APJ Abdul Kalam’s father Jainulabdeen was a boatman, a middle class man and of less wealth. He used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. He also served as an Imam at their local mosque. He was a man with great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. Kalam’s mother Ashiamma was a righteous and prayerful woman. She was an ideal life partner and helpmate for her husband. Her lineage as ‘Bahadur’ was more distinguished than her

husband. They both were an ideal couple in the Hindu and Muslim society. Here Hindus were staying amicably with one another. There was a perfect harmony between Hindu and Muslims. APJ Abdul Kalam was a short boy with undistinguished look. In fact, his parents were tall and handsome. Kalam asserts,

‘My childhood was a much secured childhood, both materially and emotionally.’ (A Pathway to Success: 3)

Kalam’s father would take Kalam to a mosque for evening prayers. In mosque, people chant Arabic prayers. Kalam couldn’t able to understand the meaning of Arabic chanting prayers. He was convinced by his father that these prayers reach to god without having the barrier of language. After the prayer, many people of different religions would be sitting outside, waiting for him to discuss the spiritual matters. Many of them offered bowls of water to his father who would dip his fingertips in them and say a prayer. This water was then carried home for convalescents. After their healing, people would visit Kalam’s father to offer thanks. His father always smiled and asked them to thank Allah, the benevolent and merciful. Pakshi Lakshmana Shastry, the high priest of Rameswaram temple, and Vedic scholar and Reverend Father Bodal, constructor of first church at Rameswaram Island, were best friends of Kalam’s father. These trio used to sit together and discuss the community’s problems and find resolutions. Dr. Kalam received the lessons of humbleness from his father. In him, he saw the assortment of simplicity and divinity. Both believed that if one leads a mystical life then that devoutness can lift them out of any kind of misperception, unhappiness or disappointment. In 1960, his interactions with the great scientist Professor Vikram Sarabhai and the Reverend Peter Bernard Pareira, molded his judgments on belief. Here he learnt about the true meaning of sacred service. He shares the secret of contentment and certainty of mortality,

The kernel of a contented life and a diplomatic civilization lies in one sentence: What can I give?

Out of curiosity, one day Kalam asked his father about the relevance of prayer. Jainulabdeen, Kalam's father proclaims,

'There was nothing mysterious about prayer. Rather prayer makes possible a communion of the spirit.....which knows no division of wealth, age, caste or creed. (A Pathway to Success: 3) Kalam's father would convey complex spiritual concepts in very simple, down-to-earth Tamil. He once told Kalam,

'In his own time, in his own place, in what he really is and in the stage he has reached, good or bad.....why be afraid of difficulties, sufferings and problems?' (A Pathway to Success: 3)

He further adds,

'When troubles come, try to understand the relevance of your sufferings. Adversity always.....for introspection.' (A Pathway to Success: 3)

Abdul Kalam reveals his religious perspectives and the divine motive of god and his power as a creator. At the same time, he describes his achievements as a scientist as an act of God,

'Each individual creature on this beautiful planet is created by God to fulfil a particular role. Whatever I have achieved in life is through His help and an expression of His will.....in order to tell the several million mass of India, to never feel small or helpless.' (A Pathway to Success: 3)

Kalam encourages to every human being,

'We are all born with a divine fire in us.....wings to this fire and fill the world with the glow of its goodness.' (A Pathway to Success: 3)

Kalam says that science and faith can together generate a better globe. They must harmonize for the benefit of human beings. Science provides

consideration whereas faith provides discernment. Science accelerates advancement and faith curbs it within rational boundaries. Dr. Kalam's life was sustained by numerous assurances.

Spirituality, significance of prayer and religious convictions observed in Hinduism

Bhagavad Gita is one of the most significant spiritual scriptures of Hindu philosophy. It reveals the spirituality in Hinduism. In fact, it is the expedition toward self-realization, inner synchronization and unification with the Celestial things. It presents devoutness not as an extraction from life but as a controlled way of existing with determination, responsibility and dedication. Lord Krishna converses with Arjuna and asserts that true religiousness lies in accepting the everlasting nature of the *aatma* and performing one's *dharma* with objectivity from substantial conclusions. Spirituality includes mastery over the cognizance, controlling over yearnings and a sensible stance toward triumph and catastrophe. It tells that the pathway of self-sacrificing action, the path of consecration and renunciation and the path of understanding and intelligence are three main components of mystical progression.

Through prayer, one seeks association, regulation and inner decontamination. It exemplifies the kernel of dedication (*bhakti*), capitulation and appreciativeness, imitating the Hindu credence that God populates within all human beings. **Communication with the Heavenly** supplication is the mediocre through which an individual interconnects with God in various forms. Through prayer, the devotee expresses unpretentiousness and complete faith in divine elegance. Hinduism teaches that prayer cleanses the mind, temperament and intelligence. Bhagavad Gita 17:3 asserts,

Man is prepared by his trust. As he trusts, so he is.

Thus prayer uplifts cognizance from the substantial to the mystical level. Thankfulness through prayer brings *adhyatmik santosha* and synchronization

to the mind. In Hinduism, prayer is not just for sophisticated longings but a means to accomplish salvation. Chanting hallowed mantras arouses unworldly liveliness and helps the devotee understand their coherence with the divine soul. It is written in Bhagavad Gita 6:29,

He who contemplates on the Absolute Soul perceives the Self in all human beings and all human beings in the Self.

Chanting kirtans, stotras or bhajans together creates an atmosphere of divine vigor and strengthens the sagacity of belonging to the heavenly order. Regular prayer promotes quietness, attention and psychological equilibrium. In a real sense, mantras purify individuals and the entire atmosphere. In Hinduism, prayer is **both an act of consecration and a path to deliverance**. It links the human and the godly, cleanses the soul, nurtures appreciation and leads to innermost armistice.

Religious convictions in **Hinduism** intensely inspires the individual, communal, and mystical magnitudes of life. Dharma is the moral law which administers the individual's demeanor. Bhagavad Gita 3:35 rightly says,

Better one's individual obligation though defective than the burden of another well accomplished.

Religious reliance encourages ethical discipline, concern, and self-discipline, controlling every aspect of personal and social behavior. Hindus trust in karma (action and its consequence) and rebirth (movement of the soul). Hindu principle highlights life as a divine journey leading toward salvation from the cycle of birth and death. Bhagavad Gita 2:71 proclaims,

When a man relinquishes all requirements that adhere to the temperament, then he accomplishes harmony.

Religious verdict renovates sophisticated life into a means of self-realization and psychic liberty. Rig Veda 1.164.46 delineates,

Truth is one; the wise call it by many names.

This conviction promotes multiplicity, reverence for other faiths and diplomatic existence. These rituals fortify communal promises and collective religiousness. Temples serve as centers of worship, societal service, tutoring,

and cultural conservation. The unworldly disciplines of yoga instigate from profound spiritual faith. They train individuals to regulate wants, emphasize the mind and live in congruence with environment and others. According to Bhagavad Gita 9:34, God says,

**Fix your attention on Me, be dedicated to Me, ransom to Me,
bow down to Me.**

Spirituality, significance of prayer and religious convictions observed in Islam (the Quran)

The Quran is the holy scripture of Islam. It reveals the holiness as a pathway to innermost harmony, celestial linking and ethical brilliance. It highlights that true religiousness lies in peripheral ceremonies, genuine conviction, self-purification, and sentient cognizance of Allah. The foundation of Quranic devoutness is *taqwa* which means to have awareness of God's presence in every part of life. Surah-Al-Hujurat 49:13 showcases,

The most upright of you in the sight of Allah is the most virtuous of you.

Quran says that one's soul should be cleaned from haughtiness, voracity and abhorrence. Surah-Ash-Shams 91:9-10 declares,

He has prospered who disinfects it and he has failed who perverts it.

Recalling Allah (Dhikr) through supplication, replication and gratefulness brings harmony to the heart.

In the remembrance of Allah, our hearts find peace. (Surah-Ar-Rad 13:18)

Dhikr converts the mind and temperament, helping individuals remain psychologically centered amongst sophisticated disruptions. The meaning of Islam is to surrender completely to God's will and live with harmony under the guidance of God. Surah-Al-Anam 6:162 proclaims,

My prayer, my detriment, my breathing and my fading are for Allah, Lord of the creations.

Serving others is a countenance of affection for God. Surah-Al-Bagarah 2:195 states,

Allah loves them who do good to others.

The Quran communicates that thankfulness (*shukr*) brings transcendent contentment. Surah-Ibrahim 14:7 juxtaposes,

If you are indebted, I will assuredly escalate you in kindness.

Appreciation transmutes everyday life into devotion, keeping the devotee self-effacing and gratified. Thus piety in Islam is universal.

In Islam, prayer is known as Salah. It holds a **consecrated position** in every Muslim's life. It signifies the believer's obedience, dedication and relentless reminiscence of Allah. Prayer is obligatory for every adult Muslim and can be performed five times daily: at dawn (*Fajr*), noon (*Dhuhr*), afternoon (*Asr*), sunset (*Maghrib*) and night (*Isha*). Regular prayer prompts Muslims that life's decisive persistence is to oblige and recall Allah. Surah-Al-Muminun 23:1-2 asserts,

The followers are efficacious, those who are modest in their prayers.

Religious convictions in Islam shape the mystical, honorable, communal and traditional life of every Muslim. They offer an outline for virtuous living, societal impartiality and synchronization, nurturing a sense of unison and resolution within the comprehensive Muslim community. Devout faith in Islam centers on faith in one God (*Tawheed*), responsibility in the future and faithfulness to deific directives. This conviction stimulates Muslims to lead truthful, controlled, and sympathetic lives, guided by the values of truth (*haqq*), justice (*adl*), and mercy (*rahmah*). Trust, supplication, fasting, assistance and excursion are the five props of Islam. Surah-Al-Muminun 23:1-2 asserts,

Fruitful are the devotees, those who meek themselves in their invocations.

Spirituality, significance of prayer and religious convictions observed in Christianity (the Bible)

Christian spirituality centres on a subjective connection with God through **belief in Jesus Christ, the son of God**, directed by the Holy Ghost. It underlines adoration, unpretentiousness, compassion, and service as the kernel of a transcendent life. As per the holy bible, true religiousness is inward conversion and not simply devout compliance. It says that one should be like Jesus in understanding, word and action. Spiritual progression is the work of the Soul transmuting humanoid nature. In 1 Corinth 3:16, it is written that,

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Galatians 5:22-23 asserts,

The Spirit generates nine *fruits of the Spirit* such as affection, happiness, harmony, endurance, gentleness, kindness, authenticity, tenderness and self-control.

In fact, love is the vigorous consideration and self-sacrificing service. Prayer is the heartbeat of Christian devoutness. They communicate with God and try to fulfil the will of God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 claims that one should pray continuously. Prayer is the spiritual revival. It takes the believers in the presence of God and keep him away from sin. Prayer occupies a **dominant and consecrated place** in the life of every Christian. It is the primary means of **communication with God**, expressing faith, dependence, gratitude, and love. Through prayer, believer can directly speak with God, seek his will and experience his presence. Jeremiah 33:3 says,

You call me and pray to me, I will listen to you.

Through prayer, Christians develop a personal association with Divinity and can build their trust, love and obedience. Prayer acknowledges God's

holiness, forgiveness, guidance and favour. It is the act of faith. It teaches us to trust on the love, wisdom and power of God. Matthew 21:22 says,

And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.

Prayer empowers believers to practice God's amity that excels consideration which offers comfort in life's prosecutions. Prayer allows believers to acknowledge iniquities and pursue God's clemency through Christ. Through genuine prayer, the Christian sentiment is cleaned, rehabilitated, and reunited with God.

Religious convictions in **Christianity** inspire every Christian to live by assurance, affection, compassion, and service. They influence personal conduct, form social ethics and reinforce the comprehensive Christian community through consideration and harmony. Faith in Christ stimulates believers to practice certainty, integrity and forgiveness, reflecting the ethical principles of God in daily life. Believers attempt to overcome immorality, advance merits such as endurance, understanding and benevolence. Conviction in God's capacities gives supporters optimism beyond sophisticated skirmishes.

Influence of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity on APJ Abdul Kalam

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was a visionary scientist. He was a man of **mysticism, ethical values, and worldwide humanism**. Though he born into a Muslim family, his character was deeply influenced by the instructions of **Hinduism, Islam and Christianity**. He reflects his faith in the harmony of **convictions and the widespread quest of certainty**. Kalam respects the inner castigation accentuated in Hinduism. Dhyandharna (meditation) fashioned his tranquil, engrossed, and meditative nature. He recurrently refers to the principles of duty, devotion and selfless action from *Bhagavad Gita*. Hinduism's admiration for nature and all beings enthused his moral attitude to science and leadership. Kalam worked untiringly for downgraded societies, underlining service over self-interest. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's life demonstrates the **pleasant incorporation of Hinduism, Islam and**

Christianity. Hinduism encouraged his nonphysical restraint and sense of obligation. **Islam** implanted humbleness, devoutness, and moral accountability. **Christianity** strengthened kindness, service, and worldwide humanism.

Pedagogical Implications

According to Kalam, religiousness in instruction meant developing the inner realization of students to appreciate their caliber and determination in life. For him, prayer is the castigation of the cognizance and emotion, nurtures humbleness, gratefulness, and inner harmony. These qualities are indispensable for moral governance and accountable nationality. Kalam says that religion was not restricted to ceremonial or doctrine but was an amalgamating power endorsing reverence for multiplicity and entire comradeship. His instructive hallucination highlighted assimilating principled and mystical values into the curriculum through empirical erudition, stimulating teaching, and service to civilization.

Results, Main Arguments and Major Findings

The major findings of this research are as follows.

1. It is observed that prayer is an intimacy that surpasses separations.
2. Prayer is a dominant apparatus that fortifies inner pliability and determination.
3. Spiritual verdict leads to principled accomplishment and consideration.
4. It is widely accepted that supplication and mysticism are harmonious with scientific annoyance. They can be reciprocally underpinning.
5. In Kalam's life, spiritual advisors and family formed persuasion about prayer.
6. It is observed that prayer is a communal binder and a foundation of ethical management.
7. Kalam says that prayer is a basis of psychological forte and can progress inner prospective.

Conclusion:

Abdul Kalam blends faith, science and humanity. He demonstrates that spirituality and prayer are pathways to inner peace, strength and universal harmony. Kalam says that prayer connects the individuals with the divine consciousness, nurturing humanity, compassion and moral strength. For him, spirituality is the foundation of self-discipline and ethical living. He proclaims that rational thought and divine faith are complimentary forces that guide human progress. Spirituality, prayer and religion together empower human beings to transcend ego, embrace universal brotherhood and dedicate their lives to the service of the others.

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