

Humanistic Ideas Of Dr. Kalam

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Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is regarded as one of the renowned scientist of India. He has number of achievements in his scientific career. But he did not bound himself till the boundaries of science and scientific innovation. Kalam had a unique ideas and vision of development for the individual, for the society and for the nation. He articulated some detailed plans for the welfare of man and the mankind they all were centered at Humanism. Thus, Humanism was the key thought of his thinking.

Humanism is defined as a belief, method and philosophy that places central emphasis on the human realm⁽¹⁾, also universally accepted concept in the modern world. Modern day civilization is man-centric, and whatever is done or takes place, is measured upon humanistic point of view and analyzed that how far it is in the favour of humankind. And, ideas, thoughts or concepts aimed at human welfare or welfare of human society as a whole are said to be humanistic ideas.

Dr. Kalam, though was primarily an engineer and a scientist, but was a teacher as well as a philosopher also. He had his way of thinking and an opinion on economic, social and political realm. In the later part of his life, he entered in the public life, and was made President of India in 2002.

Simple Nature

Kalam was extremely modest person. During his work as a scientist, whenever a project was successful, he discounted his own role, and attributed it all to the efforts of his team. He had no air or sense of pride or even self-importance about him, and was accessible to all and sundry. His generosity was legendary. He used to quietly distribute food and fruits, which was given to him, among his drivers.⁽²⁾ Kalam remained life-long bachelor and was a pure vegetarian. He lived with simplicity, never liked high profile living or luxurious life. Kalam used to meet and talk children and common masses during his visit over the different parts of the country even neglecting security concern many time as he called them 'my people'.⁽³⁾ Kalam had special care and rapport for children. Whenever he found children in his way, he always responded to them, waived hand to them or if possible meet children and shook hand with them.

In 2012, in a function, in which Dr. Kalam was participating along with some top bureaucrats and ministers. When he came to dais, he spotted that chairs there were of different shape and size. Chair placed for him was taller and most majestic. He requested that his special chair be replaced with an ordinary one.⁽⁴⁾

Deep and Broad Thinking

Kalam said that the law of universal causality represents the core of Indian spirituality. It connects man with the Cosmos and fixes the responsibility of every action performed. There is a concept of transmigration—to move from one body to another after death—indefinitely till the consequence of every misdeed is experienced. The eternal soul, moving from body to body, ascends or descends the leader of a given hierarchy, conditioned on the nature of one's own work of life or life deeds. Even if we choose not to know precisely from where we are ascending or descending, what is important is to feel the urge when it arises.

Kalam had liberal and broad mind. He was above the worldly separation of religions. He believed in the unity of religion and the unity of God. Despite being a Muslim by religion, he used to recite Bhagavadgita together with Holy Quran. Kalam was a scientist-cum-spiritual teacher. he had a mind of scientist, he used to test all that he found in religion on the altar of reason. And because he had the heart of a saint, his altar of reason and judgment was not merely confined to the borders of proven facts but propelled by thoughts of all that is possible. The convergence of science and spirituality often happens at the horizon of this human imagination.⁽⁵⁾

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He believed, real service to the religion is in serving the remotest of villages. True servants of religion will choose to move away from urban comforts and heads to unknown places, in oblivion, where people face unimaginable difficulties. That is how religious service can truly enrich the heart.⁽⁶⁾

Borderless society with no division of caste and community can also arise from borderless minds. It has taken centuries for our society to evolve into the present structure of caste and community. Love, patients, good laws and fair justice are the best instruments for our society to transform itself into a borderless community where 'hands that serve are better than lips that pray'.⁽⁷⁾

Kalam felt many time dejected with the negative and obstructionist attitude of superiors in the organizations in India. He notes, 'What makes life in Indian organizations difficult is the widespread prevalence of contemptuous pride. It stops us from listening to our juniors, subordinates and people down the line. You cannot expect a person to deliver results if you humiliate him, nor can you expect him to be creative if you abuse him or despise him. The line between firmness and harshness, between strong leadership and bullying, between discipline and vindictiveness is very fine, but it has to be drawn'.⁽⁸⁾

Kalam insisted that it was necessary to work for the unity of the minds in society for the smooth functioning of our democracy. The increasing intolerance for others' views and way of life—and the expression of this intolerance through lawless violence against people—cannot be justified in any context. All of us have to work hard and behave in a civilized manner in our day to day life to ensure that the rights of our fellow citizens are protected. That is the very foundation of our democratic values. That is what will make India a beautiful nation.⁽⁹⁾

In Kalam's view, education had key role in bringing about unity of minds and creating a sense of equality among the children who are the future of our nation. Teachers should strive to remove different forms of societal discrimination such as those based on social status and gender and economic disparity from their classrooms and from the minds of the children. They can do this by treating all children equally, without any bias, irrespective of whether is a boy or a girl, comes from a rich or a poor family, or belongs to a particular region or religion.⁽¹⁰⁾

The stability of any society is a vital factor that determines peace. It revolves around providing people's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and safety and security. People who are economically or socially in the lower strata are vulnerable to exploitation by those in the higher. One way to curb the **exploitation is to narrow this divide. Visionary policies should emerge at the global level to eradicate poverty** and to ensure that the basic needs of every human beings are met, thereby reducing the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

The world over, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are driving forward the forces of anger and violence. These forces link themselves to historical enmity, tyranny, injustice, ethnic issues and religious fundamentalism, resulting in an outburst of terrorism worldwide. We need to address the root causes of such phenomena—poverty, illiteracy and unemployment—to create a peaceful and harmonious world.⁽¹¹⁾

Scientist with Human Heart

Kalam' life was an ideal one. He led very simple life and served for the nation and the humanity throughout his life. Starting from Senior Scientific Assistant at Directorate of Technical Development and Production, Air; DTD&P(Air), in 1958,⁽¹²⁾ Kalam reached to the post of Director of DRDL, and later in 1998, was appointed as scientific advisor to the government. His role in the development of Satellite launch Vehicle (SLV) and missile development program was remarkable and a great service to the nation.

Kalam always tried to use science and technology for human welfare. One such effort was the development of Kalam-Raju Stent, which was developed by defense lab and Dr. B. Soma Raju of

Hydrabad. The stent, which is used as a scaffolding to dilate constricted arteries after a heart attack, costs Rs. 25000 against Rs. 60000 for an imported one. Kalam also contributed to the development of artificial foot for crippled disable people. The foot made of the composite material developed for Agni missile, proved to be much strong but light and cheap as compared to the conventional one.

Sensitive President

Dr. Kalam was always sensitive toward people and people affairs. He kept always the people and their voice at the top priority. Anyone could send message to him on his e-mail ID and he would get a reply in 24 or 48 hours. Nothing, no letter or message was unimportant to Kalam. All letters sent to him by the people were discussed. He used to receive letters from people whose sanity was doubtful, but even those letters were considered and discussed. For Kalam, everything was important. Be it a bee or an animal—all were human beings, 'good fellows'! he treated them like a respected human being, and he wanted all the people to be good human beings. The invariable question he asked whenever any file went to him for appointing persons in various institutions was, 'Is he a good human being?'⁽¹³⁾

Kalam seemed to be always worry about the numbers of cases pending in different courts all over the country and suffering being faced by the people engaged with them. Whenever he addressed the Judiciary, he emphasized the need for quicker dispensation of justice.

After becoming the President, Dr. Kalam got repaired and beautified staff quarters and buildings in President's estate so that staff could have good rooms to live. Gujrat was chosen by him for his first official visit, which was badly hit by riots a few months earlier. His intention of visit for there was to be of some use to remove the pain, and also accelerate the relief activities, and bring about a unity of minds. He said that no one had the right to endanger the unity of minds, because unity of minds is the lifeline of our country, and makes our country truly unique. Every citizen has a right to live with dignity, every citizen has a right to aspire for distinction.

Kalam's address in the European Parliament on 25 April 2007, titled 'Dynamics of Unity of Nations' emphasized need for a confluence of civilizations, based on Indian historical experience, instead of a conflict of civilizations, his speech highlighted the evolution of enlightened citizenship, which had three components: education with a value system, religion transforming into spirituality, and societal transformation through national development.⁽¹⁴⁾

Conclusion

Dr. Kalam was a complete humanistic personality. He believed in the sanctity of the basic structure of the Constitution, Secularism, harmonious Center-State relations, and empowerment of women. There were, two aspects which bear notice. Firstly, he emphasizes the primacy of national security—not surprising, given his background; secondly, he focuses on the environment, social justice, India as a knowledge society, with a fierce reiteration of his belief that children are the future, and need to be given good education, healthcare etc. to realize their potential. In other world, he envisioned national security and welfare issues as being linked together, and not as a separate entities.

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