



## Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji

By A P J Abdul Kalam, Arun Tiwari

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**Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji** By A P J Abdul Kalam, Arun Tiwari

Pramukh Swamiji, one of the most inspiring spiritual leaders of modern times and the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, is the inheritor of a legacy of enlightened gurus that goes back to the early nineteenth century. Pramukh Swamiji became, through a chance meeting, friend to one of India's most eminent citizens, the eleventh president of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and together they created an unparalleled fellowship of science and spirituality. In Transcendence, Dr Kalam, with his co-author and pupil Arun Tiwari, maps a journey of self-realization reflected in the compassionate eyes of Pramukh Swamiji, painting a delightfully open-hearted portrait of the fusion of spirituality, science and leadership. His candid vignettes from life on the centre stage of Indian technology and societal missions, Indian politics and world affairs are interwoven with revelations of a profound connection with Swamiji. He describes how his path has been illuminated by Swamiji's words and his inspirational, loving presence. Through the life of Pramukh Swamiji and the transnational work of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Dr Kalam traces the contemporary concerns of the Indian diaspora across the world and the emerging Indian identity of a capable, right-thinking and hardworking people. Drawing from the lives of great scientists and creative leaders, Transcendence captures the essence of all religions and is as much a fountain of inspiration and a treasury of wisdom as it is a tribute to the multi-faith, pluralistic Indian society.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **About the Author**

Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was born and raised in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. His passion for learning led him from humble beginnings to the prestigious Madras Institute of Technology, where he became an aeronautical engineer. After a brief stint at the Defence Research and Development Organization of India (DRDO), Dr Kalam joined the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where he became the project director for India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3), which placed the Rohini satellite in orbit. Later, he rejoined the DRDO and played a pivotal role in the development of India's ballistic missile systems. He eventually rose to become the scientific advisor to the defence minister of India and was later appointed as principal scientific advisor to the Government of India, with the rank of a cabinet minister, involved in policy and strategy to transform India into a developed nation and a nuclear weapons state. Dr Kalam is the recipient of many national and international awards, including honorary doctorates from forty-eight universities all over the world. He received India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, in 1997. Widespread recognition, coupled with his extensive national service, made Dr Kalam a popular choice for high office, and he became the eleventh president of India in 2002. His popularity has endured, and he is still affectionately called the 'people's president' for bridging the gap between high office and the common people. In addition to the autobiography *Wings of Fire*, Dr Kalam has written many books, and most of them are household names: *India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium*, *Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power within India*, *Envisioning an Empowered Nation: Technology for Societal Transformation*, *Indomitable Spirit*, *Target 3 Billion: PURA: Innovative Solution Towards Sustainable Development*, *Turning Point, Governance for Growth in India*, *A Manifesto for Change and Beyond 2020: A Vision for Tomorrow's India*. \*\*\* Arun Tiwari did his master's in mechanical engineering from G.B. Pant University and joined the Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL) at Hyderabad as a missile scientist in 1982. He was airframe designer and project manager (system integration) in the first three AKASH missile developmental flights. In 1992, on becoming chief of DRDO, Dr Kalam decided to develop civilian spin-offs of defence technology and appointed Prof. Tiwari as the programme director. As a member of Dr Kalam's team, Arun Tiwari set up the first link of Pan-Africa e-Network of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL). The network now connects universities and hospitals across the African continent with their Indian counterparts. In 1999, Arun Tiwari co-wrote *Wings of Fire*, the autobiography of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The book became a modern classic, going into thirty reprints and selling more than a million copies. It has been translated into eighteen languages. He has written twelve books since then. Arun Tiwari is currently consulting to evolve the blueprint for FDI in the defence sector and towards the creation of a strong Defence Technological Industrial Base (DTIB) in India. He is an adjunct professor in the School of Management Sciences, University of Hyderabad.

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