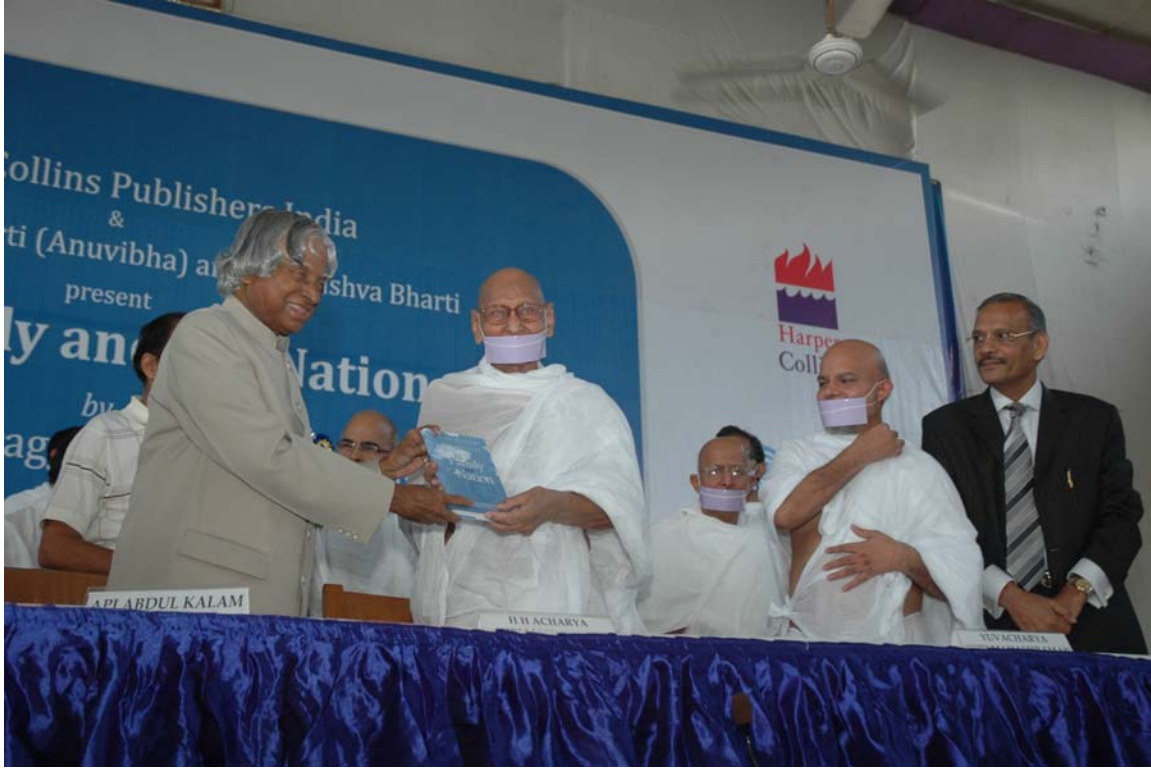


INAUGURATION OF BOOK THE FAMILY AND THE NATION

Jaipur (12th November, 2008)



Inauguration of Book “The Family and the Nation” Co-Author by His Holiness Acharya Shri Mahapragya and H.E. Former President of India Dr A.P.J.Abdul Kalam. The Views expressed by Former President is :

Former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam describes his experiences of life during his visit to different places and also his views on Jain seer Acharya Mahapragyaji

Association with Acharya Mahapragya

I would like to discuss about my first meeting with Acharya Mahapragyaji who has carried out penance for over 78 years and walked over 100,000 kilometers in his mission of promoting Ahimsa Dharma. My meeting took place at the Adhyatma Sadhna Kendra, Mehrauli in October 1999. It was around midnight and Acharyaji had prayed three times with his distinguished Jain monks for the welfare of the nation and the people. After the prayers, he turned to me and said words that still reverberate in my mind. He said, "Kalam, God bless you for what you have done with your team. But God has a bigger mission for you and that is why you are here with me today. I know our country is a nuclear nation now. But your mission is greater than what you and your team have done;

it is indeed greater than what any human being has ever done. Nuclear weapons are proliferating in tens and thousands in the world.

I command you and you only with all the divine blessings at my disposal to devise a system of peace wherein these very nuclear weapons will be ineffective, insignificant and politically inconsequential." When Acharyaji finished his message, a hush fell over the room. It appeared to me as though there was a divine concurrence with the message. For the first time in my life I felt shaken. Since then, Acharyaji's message has become my guiding light and making it a reality a challenge that has given a new meaning to my life.

Birth of the book

After that meeting, I met Acharya Mahapragya a number of times and all my meetings with him gave me the distinct feeling that our conversations must have a higher purpose and that it must make itself manifest in some way. However, at that time, I did not know how that would happen. On 2 August 2005, I met Acharya Mahapragya again on the occasion of the conferment of the National Communal Harmony Award on him. We were seated together and Acharyaji said, "Kalam, the time has come to translate our thoughts into action - developing a peaceful, happy and prosperous society through the development of the family and nation. And this we will do in the form of a book".

We thought over the question of how a noble nation could be formed and came to the conclusion that its seeds need to be sown in the family. Only an individual, who has been brought up in a family that instills the right values, will be able to realize his or her responsibility towards the nation. Here, I would like to share with you the divine hymn on righteousness.

Righteousness

Where there is righteousness in the heart

There is beauty in the character.

When there is beauty in the character,

There is harmony in the home.

When there is harmony in the home.

There is an order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation,

There is peace in the world.

This premise is the bedrock of the book, which is why we have named it *The Family and The Nation*. We believe that it is possible to evolve a noble nation with the basic foundation of righteousness in the heart. Our people can live in a clean, green environment without pollution, prosper without poverty, experience peace without fear of war and have a happy place to live their lives. Thereby, India can definitely become a peaceful, prosperous, happy and safe nation and become a model for the evolution of such a society in the planet earth. Certainly, "we can do it" and "India can do it".

Unity of minds: Visit to Kerala

I am just returning from Kochi, Kottayam, Trikkur and Thrissur in Kerala. My tasks included thanks giving celebration of Saint Alphonsa at Bharananganam, inauguration of child-friendly school initiative at Kochi, vedic research centre at Thrissur and inauguration of Swami Ranganathananda's birth centenary celebrations at Trikkur. All together, I would have addressed about 2 lakh citizens. There was a pride among the audience that one Indian woman has attained sainthood by her utmost endurance of suffering by virtue of her love for God. There I suggested to each one of the one lakh people assembled to remove the pain of at least one person in a month as a thanksgiving to Saint Alphonsa. The child-friendly initiative was driven by the goal to make children love school rather than taking to studying as a chore. The mission of vedic research centre is to dwell deeply into the rich ancient culture of the country. Swami Ranganathananda represents and has brought the spirituality and multi religious fabric of India to the world.

As I was touring Kerala, the news of ISRO Scientists putting the Indian Chandrayaan into a precise lunar orbit came by, making every Indian proud. On Monday, the historical win of the Indian cricket team made the country jubilant. What messages do we get from these apparently disconnected events, all in a week? All these events if we see in an integrated way, reveals the enriched experience at various events in different parts of the country.

SLV-3 Experience

Two incidents from my own life comes to my mind now. One on the morning of July 18, 1980. I was the Project Director for SLV-3, the first launch vehicle to put the 40 kg. Rohini Satellite into a earth orbit. The launch was to take place at 0830. What was the scenario in my room at 0430 hours? My friend Tarsem Singh who was the Project Director, for Rohini Satellite was reading the Guru Granth Sahib, Dr. Srinivasan who was the Vehicle Director, was reciting some slokas from Bhagavat Geetha. I myself was doing the morning Namaz. All the prayers in unison were towards the success of the mission. Before sunrise, one prayer for success of the mission in an integrated way recited in the multi-religious environment. That spiritual scene, in the scientific environment is indeed the civilizational heritage of India. Acharyaji and myself have brought out this unity of minds in detail in our book.