

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, popularly known as the 'Missile Man of India', held the office of the President of India from 2002 to 2007. He was born at Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu on October 15, 1931. Having graduated in aeronautical engineering from Madras Institute of Technology, he worked in DRDO (Defense Research and Development Organization) and ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization).

His most popular book was his autobiography titled 'Wings of Fire'. The 'Padma Vibhushan' and the 'Bharat Ratna' are among the numerous awards that were conferred on him. He died at the age of 83 in Shillong on

The unforgettable cheque

July 27, 2015. The following anecdote which highlights his integrity is a tribute to him.

Once, Dr. Abdul Kalam visited a book fair held at Tirupur, Tamil Nadu and addressed the gathering. After the function, a man came to meet him. He greeted Dr. Kalam with folded hands and said, "Sir, I am a big fan of yours. Meeting you is a dream come true for me. I have a private company where we make wet grinders. I would like to give you a wet

grinder as a token of my love." The man pointed to a box by his side. Dr. Kalam smiled and replied, "Well, I am badly in need of a wet grinder. But, I will take your grinder only if you accept a cheque as payment for the same." Dr. Kalam signed a cheque and handed it over to the visitor.

The visitor took the cheque but did not encash it. He preserved it as an autograph of Dr. Kalam. Two months passed by. One day,

he received a call from Dr. Kalam's secretary. The secretary asked him, "Why have you not encashed the cheque at the bank? If you do not do so immediately, we will send your wet grinder, which is still unpacked, back to you." The man was thus forced to accept payment for his gift. Ordinary people become extraordinary by their words and deeds, which are guided by noble thoughts.

– ***S.A. Sriranjini, Coimbatore***

