CHAPTER 4

KALAM THROUGH THE EYES OF TIWARI

4.1 OVERVIEW

The fourth chapter discusses the conversational strategies and auto/biographical elements in *Guiding Souls: Dialogues on the Purpose of Life* by Kalam & Tiwari and the autobiographical elements in *You are Born to Blossom: Take my Journey Beyond* by Kalam & Tiwari.

4.2 CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES AND AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS IN GUIDING SOULS

Kalam is an unparalleled visionary and an idealist. He tuned the minds of all kinds of people and created internal motivational vibrations among his readers and listeners by producing positive vibes. His knowledge and wisdom shared in simple language made even the ordinary people to be more futuristic. His writings instill self-confidence in them. Tiwari is the Director of CARE foundation, Hyderabad, and the Head of ICT platform based e-learning. He is a writer too. Kalam wrote a few books like *Wings of Fire, Guiding Souls, You are Born to Blossom* and *Squaring the Circles: Seven Steps to Indian Renaissance* along with Tiwari. *Guiding Souls: Dialogues on the Purpose of Life* (2005) is filled with dialogues between Kalam and Tiwari. Kalam and Tiwari are skillful facilitators who have vast experience in various fields. They bring valuable thoughts to the light through their fruitful discussion.
Guiding Souls deals with the purpose of life in this world. Kalam & Tiwari shared their thoughts “over a hundred important affairs, over thousands of desires and concerns, great and small” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Hall (1998) believed that a good playwright includes “exposition” which means “giving background information about characters or plot” as naturally as possible. Kalam & Tiwari discussed the characteristics and ideologies of great leaders. They considered the ideologies of the great leaders as the essence of human life and the characteristics of the leaders as guiding posts. For example, they shared the notable characteristics of the legendary personalities like Tiruvalluvar, King Asoka, Aryabhata, Caliph Umar, Guru Nanak, Thomas Alva Edison, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, Sir C. V. Raman, Satish Dhawan, Subbulakshmi, Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein, Varghese Kurien and Kakarla Subbarao. They conveyed that these leaders are guiding posts showing the path for personal success with which the success of the society is linked. Guiding Souls also served as an auto/biography of Kalam and Tiwari. It creates a platform for Kalam & Tiwari to share their ideologies behind sharing their experiences and beliefs.

David Bohm (1996) said that dialogue

…will make a possible flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding… It’s something creative. And this shared meaning is the “glue” or “cement” that holds people and societies together.

Dialogue reduces conflicts and misunderstanding. It helps to solve the problems too. Bohm (1996) also viewed that “a dialogue is something more of a common participation, in which we are not playing a game against each other, but with each other. In a dialogue, everybody wins”. For David Mamet,
the only reason people speak is to get what they want” (Mortiz 2001). For Pon-Barry et al. (2004), “one can include tactics in dialogue to thrust for more information and to get concrete examples”. Boella et al. (2004) believed that one can study the mental attitude of the participants and their relation, belief, desires, goals and intentions by introducing dialogues. Printer & Walters (2005) also ascertained that dialogue helps to reveal the participants’ distinct personalities through their interaction. Leroy Clark (2005) declared that a good dialogue reveals the will of the character. For Lajos Egri (1972), dialogue reveals the background as well as, it foreshadows coming events. Keeping the importance and impact of dialogue in mind, Kalam & Tiwari wrote *Squaring the Circle* also in the form of dialogue. According to Kalam (2013), Gandhi, Socrates, Galileo Galilee and Abraham Lincoln “sought to understand thoughts through critical questioning and dialogue.”

Hasling (2006) expressed his view on dialogue that “no communication process begins until you have an audience.” Kalam has millions of readers throughout the world. He wrote *Guiding Souls* keeping them in mind. *Guiding Souls* reveals many techniques of dialogue. Though the conversation between Kalam & Tiwari did not represent the role played by Kalam & Tiwari in their collaborative writings completely, it gave a few notes on their collaboration. For example, they revealed that they spent about 200 hours for writing *Squaring the Circle*. According to Kalam, the book *Squaring the Circle* born on that day when he visited the cave in Philopappos Hill, where Socrates was imprisoned. Like these, the dialogues in *Guiding Souls* reveal many interesting facts about the authors and their relationship. *Guiding Souls* is designed as if Kalam talks about the purpose of life and responds the questions and doubts of Tiwari analytically. It pictures Tiwari as a knowledge extracting tool following many strategies to disclose Kalam’s consciousness to share Kalam’s personal experience, thoughts, ideas, philosophies, conclusions on certain complex religious beliefs and general
opinions on which debates arise. It pictures Kalam as one who feels himself as a deep well filled with knowledge and a person who is ready to feed people who have thirst for knowledge.

In *Guiding Souls*, Tiwari produced an appropriate resource to sustain a fruitful dialogue. He seems to establish a supportive environment, where Kalam can confidently share his thoughts for the benefit of the society. He also presented his views, understanding and personal information in a few places of the book without interrupting Kalam’s flow of thought. Keeping the benefit of the society at large, Kalam responded to Tiwari’s questions enthusiastically. He listened carefully to Tiwari’s enquiries and contributed with well structured ideas. He shared his high level of knowledge. For example, Kalam indicated a higher level of thinking when he talked about salvation, truth, essence of life, the soul’s upward journey and backward movement, process of maturation, ego-structure and a human being’s journey towards liberation. Kalam & Tiwari discussed on how they understood the inner concept of experience, thoughts, images, emotions, feelings, sensations, perceptions, insights and knowledge. They also revealed the various manifestations of the soul in its journey. Their discussion connected the past with the present.

According to Boella et al. (2004), commanding, convincing and suggesting are the three persuasion strategies of a dialogue. For them, commanding requires “an authority of relationship that allows the commanding agent to add obligations”. Convincing needs “a strong form of trust which enables the convincing agent to manipulate desires or even intentions”. And suggesting requires only “trust with respect to information”. Tiwari took notes from the paragraphs, passages and lines highlighted by Kalam in his reading to write *Guiding Souls*. But, he gathered more information from his direct discussion with Kalam. His discussion with
Kalam revealed Kalam’s incredible characteristics, astonishing skills, attitudes and vision. Further, the dialogue structure also created a place, where Kalam revealed the identity of Tiwari and Tiwari revealed the identity of Kalam. For example, during their discussion, Kalam appreciated Tiwari “the essence of a writer has already begun to find expression in your effort” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Tiwari viewed Kalam as a caring person. He said, “Sir, I always found you at ease even in difficult situations. You have been so caring and yet so unruffled in the face of adversity, even casual” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Tiwari constructed the dialogue form by keeping Kalam in the commanding position and presented himself as a convincing agent who suggested opinions and shared information. It shows the respect that Tiwari has for Kalam.

According to Hall (1998), a dialogue should represent “one person as an assertive person or as an optimist and another person as a submissive person or as a pessimist”. In Guiding Souls, Kalam showed the light of life and guiding posts to his readers to become leaders. Though Tiwari is not presented as a pessimist, he is shown as an insightful reader and as an observer asking questions, clarifying doubts and asking explanations and elaborations on certain spiritual thoughts and philosophies of life. For example, he clarified his doubts related to nafs (passion), qalb (heart), sirr (a place, where the psychological heart exist), ruh (spirit), purification, soul and the essence of life with Kalam. He played the role of an intellectual learner asking Kalam for explanation, through metaphors and as an attentive director focusing on the destination of the book and looking after the dialogue not to have any diversion. He drew his image as an innocent person, involving in the process of understanding the truth of life and an ordinary person seeking suggestions to be a positive influence in the world. He also played the role of a biographer updating the autobiographical information of Kalam and a lover of India proudly expressing the important events and attempts of national
leaders like Gandhi in the freedom struggle of India. He sought suggestions to solve the problems which collapse the peace of the society. He stimulated Kalam’s inner thoughts and knowledge to come up with fruitful explanations on various aspects of life for a better future generation. He also pictured him as an insightful reader extracting the aspects of guiding souls and as an obedient and submissive student respecting his master and learning from him.

Clark (2005) suggested that dialogue should be filled with a “polished and shining gem perfectly suitable to the character and situation which offers us insight into the character or the situation or the theme”. Clark (2005) also noted that “the first line of the scene should lead us directly into the essence of the scene”. Kalam & Tiwari discussed many important concepts in *Guiding Souls*. Each concept serves as a gem of their book. For example, “interconnectedness” and “trying beyond capability” are the two major concepts that Kalam believes can change an individual’s will power to create a good future India. These themes are also presented in *Guiding Souls*. Kalam not only talked about these concepts in words. The discussion of Kalam & Tiwari proves that these concepts have become part and parcel of Kalam.

Kalam opened his conversation in *Guiding Souls* as “sitting here, I can feel in me something that is immortal. I can see the world as an external dramatization of an internal phenomenon”. He also believes that “separating one’s life from another is like “separating a breeze from the wind”. Even, when he saw the waves with his matured view, his questing mind reminded the thought of Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist Monk who viewed each sea wave as a wave that is separated from other waves but they are not independent of each other of the ocean. The portrayal of the notable characteristics, achievements and inventions of great leaders in *Guiding Souls* also revealed the fact that the world history of the past and present is interconnected with
the future world. These words reveal Kalam’s main motto to make the people to understand the immortality of the soul and the importance of interconnectedness. When Kalam spiritually looked into himself, he found detachment from the world “as the people of the world are running after only the earthly pleasures and possession” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Thus, these words also indicate Kalam’s wish to make the people to understand the importance of interconnectedness spiritually. Kalam called this phenomenon “eternal inter-connectedness”. He believes that the eternal interconnectedness of the souls of all human beings will create peace in the earth.

Kalam’s life reflects the philosophy of “beyond”. He understood the worthiness and effect of the word “beyond”. He thought beyond his level, worked beyond his ability and achieved beyond his dream. Kalam portrayed thinking and doing beyond a man’s capability as one of the successive tools. The word “beyond” is also used in many of the places of Guiding Souls. Kalam’s repeated usage of the word “beyond” in the Guiding Souls on one side acted as cliché and another side it followed the “reverse order of cliché”. Cliché is a word or phrase that has been so frequently used while the meaning is clear and it also conveys little about the character who speaks them. Egri (1972) emphasized that the dialogue should reveal a valid characteristic of the persons who involved in it. The repeated usage of the word “beyond” by Kalam conveys that it became the character of him. The portrayal of notable characteristics and achievements of the leaders also reveals that “one should rise above his narrow perception of self for the larger benefit of the society” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). In the same way, Kalam dealt with negative criticism in Guiding Souls.

Pon-Barry et al. (2004) recommended the use of “indicators of prosodic features, disfluencies and gestures” for a lively discussion. Kalam & Tiwari did not give much preference to these phenomena in Guiding Souls.
They used them in a few places. For example, at one place, Kalam said, “just be quiet and sit down”. His words indicate Tiwari’s posture and reveal Tiwari’s emotional attitude in the serious discussion. Printer & Walters (2005) also considered that the description of the characters physical action is good for a dialogue. This phenomenon is also incorporated only in a few places in *Guiding Souls*. For example, Kalam’s physical movement was described in a place as “Kalam picks up a rose in the Mughal Garden and explains, we can experience our soul as a rose unfolding and opening up revealing the implicit forms in her potential” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005).

According to Hall (1998), “a word or a phrase spoken by one character is picked up and repeated by another” in a good dialogue. This strategy could be seen in many places of *Guiding Souls*. An extract from the conversation of Kalam & Tiwari is given below.

A. T.: In the overall context of human affairs, who do you feel made the most difference to people’s lives?


A. T.: Lincoln was a part of the dream you narrated in *Ignited Minds*. …

A. P. J.: … He faced so much criticism bravely.

A. T.: Facing criticism is… (Kalam and Tiwari 2005)

In this extract, Tiwari asked a question and Kalam answered it. Tiwari picked up the key word from Kalam’s answer and extended the discussion. For example, Tiwari picked up the word “Lincoln” and the phrase “facing criticism” from Kalam’s responses and framed the questions. Tiwari’s question acts as a stimulus causing Kalam’s response, which in turn becomes the stimulus of Tiwari’s response. Again, the same process of stimulus
causing response that acts as a stimulus of another response starts in their dialogue.

Egri (1972) added that a dialogue should be constructed based on conflict of thoughts. He felt that “only a rising conflict will produce a healthy dialogue”. Kalam & Tiwari discussed many conflicting topics like the essence and the difficulties of life, eternal interconnectedness, the soul and self-consciousness, psycho-spiritual stages, spiritual journey, knowledge system, flow, genetic continuum and inheritance, etc.

The multiple dimensions of dialogue construction are also reflected in *Guiding Souls*. The discussion on Thiruvalluvar’s *Thirukkural* is one of the best examples reflecting the multiple dimensions of conversational strategies. When Kalam gave some general information about *Thirukkural*, Tiwari intervened and asked, “As a President of India, what teaching of Thiruvalluvar appeals to you most?” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Tiwari’s intervention serves in many ways. For example, it motivated Kalam to list out a number of traditional leadership characteristics suggested by Thiruvalluvar to the heads of the state, in Tamil language and made him to translate a few couplets from *Thirukkural* into English. It helped Tiwari to extract relevant information from Kalam and to maintain a perfect tune with the composition of the key ideas for the book. It enabled Kalam and Tiwari to highlight the universality of *Thirukkural* to the world. They expressed *Thirukkural’s* relation with the modern period through the voice of the contemporaries like V. S. Naipaul. Nobel Laureate, Naipaul viewed modern literature as “largely power centric and it lacks the concern of the poor in it” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). Kalam gave many examples from *Thirukkural* and proved that it has more concern for the poor. He also expressed his opinion that “the manner and style of narration found in *Kural* and Naipaul’s work are brutally honest” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005).
In *Wings of Fire*, Kalam described the characteristics of the personalities who acted as the shaping forces of his destiny. He felt that the shaping forces are his guiding souls. Through his writings, he became a guiding soul of many children, youth and other professionals. In *Guiding Souls*, he presented the notable qualities of great personalities that created a distinction between them and others and made them great leaders of India and world. Kalam highlighted King Asoka’s “ahimsa dharma”, Thiruvalluvar’s “universal dharma”, Gandhi’s “non-violence” Baba Sahib Ambedkar’s “fight for the rights of the down-trodden”, Guru Nanak Dev’s firm belief in “living by discipline”, C. V. Raman’s efforts to “promoting industrial science”, Varghese Kurien’s attempt to improve the status of the farmers through Amul Products, etc. as the distinct qualities. Kalam also believes that Abraham Lincoln’s bravery to face criticism, Edison’s “disability-driven freewheeling style of acquiring knowledge”, Ramanujam’s “mastery over trigonometry at the age of twelve”, and Nelson Mandela’s “sacrifice of his private life for his people for a noble cause” made them great in the world. Kalam also thought that Ashiamma’s “special care and traditional virtues”, “the virtuosity” of M. S. Subbulakshmi and Kalam’s capability of seeing the “real beauty in ugly things” as noble characteristics. Gradually, it is seen that Kalam too is a guiding soul. For example, Kalam had humble beginning like Srinivasa Ramanujan. He did small business like Edison. Like Mandela, Kalam also practices the philosophy, “Love your enemies” in reality.

*Guiding Souls* and *You are Born to Blossom* discuss the essence of Kalam’s knowledge and wisdom he got through his analyses of his personal life, the life of great leaders and glorious personalities of the world and his readings on philosophy, psychology, science, history, literature and spirituality. The dialogues in *Guiding Souls* display the character of not only Kalam but also Tiwari. Further, they describe the personality of India and Indians. For example, Kalam focused on Aryabhata and Guru Nanak Dev
who shined in two different realms of experience, science and spirituality. Gandhi’s fight for Indian freedom, Tagore’s vision for universal peace, Ramanujan’s insight into numbers and Dhawan’s extraordinary scientific leadership are the unique Indian characteristics. Moreover, Kalam compared these with world thinkers like Lincoln, Edison and Mandela. They are the guiding souls of the universe as they exemplify spiritual characteristics like kindness, self-examination, truthfulness, gratitude, purity of heart, enthusiasm, strong loyalty, self-control and love of dharma.

According to Naik (1962), the autobiographer should provide first hand information about him. For Gunzenhauser (2001a), the autobiographer should register his public and private deeds. The conversation in Guiding Souls reveals Kalam’s concern for private and public deeds. It reveals his humanism. It also helps Kalam to provide first hand information about his deeds and thoughts. For example, Kalam expressed his feel that “the soul of his mother is still taking care of him” when Tiwari asked, whether Kalam missed his mother. Kalam convinced him spiritually when his mother died. But, the Arokonam Plane Crash covered his spiritual eyes with tears and moved him emotionally. He rushed to the spot from Bangalore when he heard the news about the incident. He met the families who were suffering due to the loss of their hope in the crash. He was moved internally by the cries of the family members of the Officers who lost their lives in that incident. Their emotional outburst opened Kalam’s spiritual eyes and stimulated his sensitive feelings. Kalam took risks and arranged for a compensation of Rs. 7, 00, 000 for each family. Though Kalam supported them financially, he could not hide the unbearable load of pain in his deep heart for those who lost their life. Tiwari brought the suppressed pain in Kalam through his conversation.
Kalam also remembered the risk that he took to arrange Rs. 60,00,000 for the liver transplantation of his colleague Harithwar. Further, Kalam built a hut in the Mohal Garden of Rashtrapati Bhavan with a great banyan tree, bamboo trees and artificial artisans. He named it “The Immortal Hut”. He explained the meaning and expressed how he felt when he sat there. Thus, Tiwari’s question is personal to Kalam because, Kalam only knew the meaning of the Immortal Hut, where they shared experiences to write their books.

According to Howard (2000), dramatic questions help to find out the personal and cultural values of one’s character. They motivate a character to speak and act. They also reveal a character’s attitude, movement with others, relationship circle and the way, he responds in crisis. Guiding Souls portrays Kalam as a philosopher, a spiritualist, a leader, a teacher, a master, a poet, a patriot and an agent or a servant of God. It also represents him as a human being who helps his colleagues and works for the peace of the world, a traveler who visits many places around the world, a secularist pilgrim who visits various holy places of the world, a good son to his parents and to his nation, a learner, a guide and a sensitive and wise man. It portrays Tiwari as a good observer, analyst, supporter, writer and a person who loves his parents and nation greatly.

As a spiritualist, Kalam registered his views on traditional concepts of psycho-spiritual organs like nafs, qalb, sir and ruh. He discussed the outcome of his meeting with Acharya Mahaprajna at Surat, on his 72\textsuperscript{nd} birthday and Reverend Bishop John at Bulgaria, in November 2003, and about his visit to the oldest Buddhist Monastery in Tawang, the Golden Temple at Amristar, on his 71\textsuperscript{st} birthday on 31 August 2004. His visits to holy places and meetings with monks and priests helped him to understand the meaning of human existence. For example, his meeting with Acharya Mahaprajna enabled him to understand the great truth that shedding the sense
of ‘I’ and ‘me’ gives peace. Similarly, his interaction with Reverend Bhishop John helped him to appreciate the significance of St. Francis of Assisi’s prayer,

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred let me sow love (Kalam & Tiwari 2005).

His experience at the Golden Temple enabled him “to face pain with equanimity.” These philosophies are common to all and relevant to all people of the world.

The dialogue in Guiding Souls proves that Tiwari made Kalam to share his personal information which is not shared in his autobiographies. Kalam provided a few personal details which he did not include in Wings of Fire. He talked about his peculiar characteristic and some notable characteristics of his mother and his father. For Kalam, his parents were the role model for leading a disciplined and spiritual life. He admired his parents’ devotion to each other and their mutual respect and mutual understanding. He revealed his longing for his mother’s care even after her death in Guiding Souls. It is in Guiding Souls that Kalam shared his close attachment with his mother. Kalam remembered the steps she took to make him a well groomed man. She guided Kalam about his dressing, hair style, attitudes and taught him to control his anger. Kalam pointed to the root of Indian traditional womanhood in Kalam’s mother. Once he asked his mother, “why are you taking meals after all the persons of the family took? She replied, “Anyway, more than my own meal, I enjoy seeing all of you eat” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). He understood the meaning of sacrifice from his mother. And, Kalam applies the same nature for a broader purpose.
Kalam recollected his school days. He worked and managed his
time to do his newspaper distribution business and gave his earnings to his
mother. He wondered, when his mother returned him his earnings for his high
school education. He also felt sad for his mother, as she suffered due to his
father who bothered about others. This disturbed him and it might have kept
him away from getting married. He imagined his mother as a symbol of
culture “where honor, respect and family solidarity took precedence over
individual desires” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). He gave voice for some beliefs,
hope and dedication of traditional family woman through sharing his mother’s
feelings and care.

Kalam also expressed his deep concern for his father’s complete
dedication for his family and his village. In some places, he highlighted his
father’s spiritual wisdom and hard work which he learnt through his
experience. He portrayed his father as a symbol of common middle class
village man who did not “dream about becoming a great professional for
leading a luxurious life, but he worked hard for providing the regular basic
needs of his family representing simplicity with the helping tendency for his
neighbours” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). According to Kalam’s mother, his father
“never wanted anything for himself. He only provided for others... Giving
was central to his life” (Kalam & Tiwari 2005). This philosophy became the
major motto in Kalam’s life.

Thus, the conversation in Guiding Souls revealed the gems of great
leaders, Kalam and Tiwari. It discussed the auto/biographical information
about Kalam and Tiwari. It brought the way conversational strategies used to
portray Kalam’s personal infromation in Guiding Souls. It pictured the
contemporary reality of India and the world. Even, Kalam described the role
played by the modern civilization, migration and globalization. He felt that
these phenomena separated the son from the family. Kalam represented the
poor economic background of his native people by indicating the source of their income. He added that the people of Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and Madras (chennai) in the list of people who did not like to migrate to other places. According to Jonsson & Dahlback (2000), every dialogue should have the higher goal of serving humanity. As the first citizen of India, Kalam examined ways and means to show a light to the world for a peaceful life to think of the entire planet earth and the universe. In fact, the publishers of Guiding Souls have highlighted this aspect in their description of the book on its blurb.

4.3 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS IN YOU ARE BORN TO BLOSSOM

Sir John Daniel, the President of Commonwealth of Learning, described You are Born to Blossom, “a personal book that recalls many steps in Dr. Kalam’s own emotional and intellectual development in ways that are certain to plunge readers into recollections of the people and institutions that helped them blossom” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). Like Wings of Fire, Turning Points and Guiding Souls, You are Born to Blossom too reveals a few incidents from Kalam’s life to support his experiences. It shows Kalam as a man who follows his words and ideas in action. It shares the essence of his complete maturity. It gives a clear picture of contemporary reality. It also gives a better understanding on Kalam. It is filled with a lot of Kalam’s motivational and inspirational thoughts for all kinds of people. It serves as a book of instruction to the innocent people, inspiration to the people who have thirst for creativity and guidance to those who attained maturity. Kalam usually talks about a few subjects and incidents of his life repeatedly.

You are Born to Blossom fulfills Kalam’s multiple intentions. Daniel asserted, “You are Born to Blossom opens up so many topics for reflection, poses so many practical challenges and asks so many profound questions that each reader will begin his/her unique intellectual journey”
Kalam shared first hand information he got from his “five decades of experience” and the inspiration he got from the leaders, brilliant colleagues and committed juniors for the prosperity of human beings in *You are Born to Blossom*. He also believes that his thoughts and ideas squeezed from his readings of life history and philosophies of Nobel laureates, philosophers, psychologists, scientists, humanitarians, political leaders and literary artists will motivate his readers for creating a new India.

Kalam liked to make every human being to understand that his/her birth in “this world is destined to blossom in this very life” through *You are Born to Blossom*. He also tried to pull off the attention of the people towards the concept that “there is something more to captivate”, the originality existing in every individual. He also answered various questions: what did he learn from the society?, what does he return to the society?, what are the different stages of life?, what is the status of India in the web?, what is real education?, how does he foresee his nation? and what system of education should be followed to attain his vision of India 2020? in it. He dealt with leadership qualities, creative thinking, flow, capacity building, communication, interconnection, etc., which helped him to succeed in his life. He presented his inner being that has been stimulating him to attempt greater things to create equality among human beings. He recollected the words of the French writer Albert Camus and conveyed what relationship he likes to maintain with his fellow citizens and readers. Camus said, “Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead; Just walk beside me and be my friend” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

### 4.3.1 Educationist

Sarah Meer (1995) believes that the power of education would eradicate the evil of slavery. K. R. Maalathi (2013), CEO, Auuro Educational Services, declared that “Our skewed approach to Early Childhood Education
(ECE) is baffling particularly, because it’s an area which needs much attention. Sadly, we gave it the least” (The Hindu, Education Plus, April 1, 2013). Kalam also felt that “The education available to an average Indian child is grossly inappropriate for the requirements of a developed country in the making” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He foresaw education and unemployment as the two major problems of the Indian Society. So, he said, “Let me expand this thought process here, because this concerns the careers of many young readers of this book” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

Kalam discussed the role played by education and the academicians in his life in Wings of Fire. He created awareness about the power of education in it. But, in You are born to Blossom, he presented his image as a revolutionary educationist. He discussed many revolutionary thoughts on education system and its development. This is a book that not only represents the voice of Kalam, but also echoes the voices of the distinguished teachers, children, educationists, spiritualists, scientists and many others. Kalam analyzed the philosophies and views of great educationists like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore, Jiddu Krishnamurthi, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. He analyzed the information, he gathered about the problems in teaching from his discussion with the distinguished teachers, who came to Delhi for receiving awards from Kalam, when he was the President of India.

Kalam gathered information about the quality of teaching from his discussion with the middle-class teachers working in the poor and urban schools of India and from his interaction with millions of school children and youth. For example, Kalam visited Alfred High School now known as Mahatma Gandhi High School, Rajkot, in September 2003, Switzerland in October 2004, Enchey Monastery in Sikkim, Sir Tashi Mamgayal Senior Secondary School in Gangtok in September 2005, Beschi College, in Dindigul, in September 2006, etc., and interacted with the children and teachers there. He also analyzed the ideas he got from the mails. He collected
information about a good education system from his conversation with the spiritual leaders belonging to various religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, etc. He analyzed the collected ideas and drew an outline for a good education institution that can create “intellectually strong individuals who can face the globe with courage” in *You are Born to Blossom*.

### 4.3.2 Problems in Education

Kalam viewed the status of Indian education system from all the angles, recorded many problems prevailing in India and presented the cautionary steps to overcome them. Kalam listed out many problems that hit the education system of any nation. Major among them are the culture, the size of the schools, the motto of the institutions to gain only profit, providing low payment for the faculty members, incompetent administration, lack of optimism and collective commitment, attitudes of parents and students’ socio economic status. He blamed the students, teachers, parents, organizations, government and society for not having a good education system in India. He registered his dissatisfaction with the education system that made the students to rely only on theory, when he visited Sir Tashi Mamgayal Senior Secondary School in Gangtok. He advised the students to rely on experience that helps to identify the truth.

Kalam criticized the teachers “who did not change his or her own values in order to provide an education ingrained for inner liberation” and the parents who do not concern with the “natural development of their children”. He called the education system which focuses on the “stuff the children with a lot of information” and make them only to “pass examinations” as “the most unintelligent form of education”. He is very much worried about Indian education system as it was criticized for not meeting the aspirations of the society and for being unable to solve the fundamental challenges of living”. He compared technical education and research in India and in developed countries and concluded that in India much importance is not given to
technical education and research. He also found several problems in the education provided in rural areas and the education provided in the institutions run by religious representatives. Finally, he criticized people’s belief which is revealed only in the words but not in action.

4.3.3 Solution for the Problems

Kalam strongly believes that higher education, worthy research, technological innovation, creativity and natural development of the students can build a great nation. He shared numerous ideas to encompass a good education system by analyzing his personal experience and the different points of children, students, youth, parents, teachers, educationists, scientists, spiritualists from the vantage point of the President of India. His analysis from the collective thoughts of many people to create a revolution in the education field clearly revealed the importance that Kalam gives for completeness. He linked his thoughts on education with his visions for India 2020.

Kalam likes to implement changes right from the primary education. For him, “childhood is an indivisible part of one’s destiny” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He asserted that he learnt notable characteristics, personal regulations, self-confidence, sense of self-respect, honesty, the practice to take right choice, helping tendency, respecting the elders and self-estimation from his father Jainulabdeen, mother Ashiamma, sister Zohara and teachers like Iyadurai Solomon. It was in this childhood stage, he identified his vocation to be an Aeronautical Engineer with the help of his teachers. He imagined this incident, when Kalam identified his future as a great turning point of his life. He compared the joy of that moment with the joy that Newton had when he identified the reason behind the apple falling down and the joy that Benjamin Franklin had when he watched “the lightning strike the bunch of keys tied to a kite string”.

Kalam advised the teachers and the parents to help the children in this important process of life. He also advised the teacher to accept the child unconditionally as his own, to adopt the methodology that would fulfill the child’s level of intelligence and needs, to guide them during their problems and to apply strategies that would help improving slow learners. Keeping the view of Buddhism that “the teacher occupies the centre stage”, Kalam likes “the teacher not only to be a source of inspiration but also to be a source that awakens or sustains or directs the interest of the students”. He directed them “not to teach for the material purposes”, but to teach with “compassion” and “to teach their part step-by-step and to explain the sequence of the cause and effect strategically” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

In the mean time, Kalam did not fail to express his belief that genius can be revealed at any stage of life by exemplifying the life of the leaders like the Buddha, Edison, Einstein, Gandhi and Amartya Sen. He identified that these became geniuses in their childhood days except Gandhi who became genius in his later years. He shared his experience from his visit to Mahatma Gandhi High School at Rajkot, in September 2003. Kalam was surprised that as “the man who eventually changed the course of Indian history, scored just 38 out of 100 in History subject in Class VIII” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). Thus, Kalam appealed to the teachers not to maintain a partiality between intelligent and poor students. Kalam emphasized that the intelligent students to maintain it and the poor students to do hard work. He also suggested that the students should develop noble qualities like truthfulness, sincerity, piety, humility, to improve their understanding, to contribute their best to the organization, to respect the authority, to come out of the feelings of marginality and not to be an addict to self-glory during the National Awards Ceremony on the Teachers’ Day in 2006. He expected the students “not to be shaped by the events but to shape the events to suit their purpose” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).
Kalam expected academicians to understand the interconnection between the student and the society before shaping the students community. He articulated the importance of women education through appreciating two great people who played a major role in the educational history of Bengal. They are Rabindranath Tagore and Roquia Sakhwat Hosssain. For Kalam (2008), Rabindranath Tagore was the key behind “Santiniketan institution which offered one of the earliest co-educational programs in South Asia” and Roquia Sakhwat Hosssain played a “pioneer role in awakening Muslim women of Bengal to be educated”.

For Kalam, the strategy trying beyond one’s capability acts as an important agent of success. He revealed his experience during his participation in the Sesqui-centenary celebration of St. George College, Missouri, in September 2004, as “at one particular stage individuals will take on responsibilities beyond their regular careers”. He also considered dream as a major force of success. He believes that “to be without dream is to be without hope”. He accepted the views of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Montessori that “sense must be educated before the intellect”. He insisted that educational institutions to instill a basic sense among the students that “all educated personalities are going to be a part of society and students are going to serve for the harmony of the society” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He supported the opinion of the Scottish psychiatrist, Ronald David Laing that “the society should play a role in the development of an individual’s mind”. He wanted the educational institutions “to design the curriculum on the basis of the richest aspect of culture connected to the cultures of wider world and the sense of interconnectedness” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

 Keeping Anna University as an example, Kalam wanted all the universities to give more importance to worthy research. He suggested that educational institutions should have an hour class every week “to promote moral values and integrated living through reputed teachers”. Kalam also hopes that reading the biography of great leaders motivates the children. He
remembered how Fr. Rector Kalathil, in St. Joseph’s College, Thiruchirapalli, used to give lectures on personalities such as the Buddha, Confucius, St. Augustine, Caliph Omar, Mahatma Gandhi, Einstein and Abraham Lincoln about whom Kalam discussed mostly in his books. He stressed the combination of public and private sectors to provide good education. He shared an important aspect of education by analyzing his views on ego and shadow. He proclaimed that “what man sees about him consciously is called ego and what he didn’t see by his consciousness is ‘the shadow”. He wanted the education system should bring the shadow of man to the light as he believes that “the shadow can represent the God-given characteristics and keep the rejected and unacceptable characteristics in the dark” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

Kalam also listed out a number of teaching ethics in *You are Born to Blossom*. For him, a good education system would show the ways to the students for changing their understanding, thinking and actions. It should connect their understanding of life with the larger picture. It should avoid the fragmenting process of human brain. It needs to create optimistic desire in them. It has to create “a learning space where the individual can express his thoughts and feelings and give voice to his concerns and passion” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). It should give a joy of inner liberation for all. It needs to have a space for self evaluation, avoid sensual enjoyment, remove the self-centered activities, and promotes moral values. It should make the students and teachers understand the value of giving. It must train them to overcome difficult situations. It should care for the traditional values and societal and economic growth of a nation. Kalam believes that even traditional Indian joint family system teaches lots of ethics. Kalam wishes the educational institutions not to teach religion but to teach spirituality to the students in order to create a moral sense as he believes that spirituality can encourage one to have harmonious relationship with others.
4.3.4 Spirituality

Apart from education, Kalam usually deals with spirituality, science, motivation, work and personal philosophies in his writings. He discussed these ideas in *You are Born to Blossom* also. According to Aikman (2001), confession, pilgrimage, insight into spiritual factors and becoming an ascetic are some of the aspects of spiritual autobiography. Spiritualists like Kempe and Baxter searched for their spiritual understanding and their relationship with God in their autobiographies (Barbour 2001). Kalam also displayed his image as a spiritualist in *You are Born to Blossom*. He talked about his visits to various religious places like Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh in September 2003, St. George College, Missouri, in September 2004, Holy Shrine Garib Nawaz at Ajmer in November 2005, etc. It is in *You are Born to Blossom* that Kalam revealed the reason for being unmarried. While expressing the reason itself, Kalam revealed the spiritualist in him. He articulated that, “the monks in early Christendom, the Tibetan lamas, or Buddhist monks and Sufi’s were not supposed to have married life and children. I feel that, I unconsciously followed this tradition” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He also talked about his address on “Secularism” delivered in the silver jubilee celebrations of “The Art of Living” movement founded by Sri Ravi Shankar organized at Jakkur Airfield, Bangalore, on February in 2006.

Kalam discussed a few of his thoughts on spirituality and religion. He looks at religion, community, economical and educational status and rational attitude as partiality creating giants. He wishes the human beings to serve the humanity without any partiality like the sun, moon, ocean, rain, air and the earth serve the living beings. He believes in “faith-based giving”. But, he dislikes religions that convert people out of compulsion and the religious clashes happening either directly or indirectly. He registered his views on idol worship. He believes that “serving to one’s own greed, passion, temper and
envy is also a kind of idol worship”. He explained the real status of man’s personality through the words from *Discourse of Rumi* by Arthur John Arberry as,

> The angel is saved through knowledge
> The beast through ignorance
> Between the two struggle the people of this world (Kalam & Tiwari 2008)

Kalam leaves the option of choosing either to be an angel or to be the beast to the readers. He also mentioned the same in *Guiding Souls*.

### 4.3.5 Science

As a scientist, Kalam initiated many steps to promote science in India during and after his Government service. He believes that science can help the development of a nation and it also can create more career opportunities for the youngsters. In *You are Born to Blossom*, he expressed that many students do not opt for science now a days. He said, “the students cannot get through engineering schools alone are studying science”. Kalam articulated that this trend would affect “the quality of science in India”. One of the attempts that Kalam took to promote science in India is organizing conferences. For example, Kalam invited scientists and science administrators to Rashtrapati Bhavan and had a fruitful discussion to find out “the existing and potential applications of nanotechnology” on April 29, 2004.

Kalam discussed the dual role played by science in the earth and the issues between science and religion. He registered the advantages of nanotechnology, nuclear power, computer science, biotechnology, food technology, industrial chemistry, the dialysis machine, artificial valves,
antibiotics and vaccinations and wide range of other drugs in the medical
field. He also pin pointed the role of science in polluting environment,
producing global warming and creating major climatic changes. But, Kalam
kept the blame on humanity for using the negative face of science. He said,
“We can either use science for producing electrical energy or use it for
making nuclear weapon. The choice lies with the user.” He was very clear in
pointing out that “science chooses no sides” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

4.3.6 Rural Development

Bawa (1999) underscored the importance that Gandhi gave to rural
revolution as “Gandhi … was inadvertently yet explicitly brings out the fact
that the development had no meaning … if the bulk population is not brought
in the mainstream of economic activity.” Kalam tries to bring the huge rural
population of India to the mainstream through sharing his thoughts in his
writings and through his deeds. He believes that “only the education
development in rural places of India will balance Indian education system”
(Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He encouraged leaders, children and youth to work
for rural development in all the fields. The struggles, he registered in Wings of
Fire represent the pathetic condition of rural village people. Keeping the
condition of villages in mind, Kalam decided developing the villages in India
as his main motto, when he became the President of India. He introduced the
PURA Project especially for this purpose. He attempted to visit all the
villages in India. He appreciated people who come forward to help the poor
village people. For example, he appreciated Raj Reddy, Professor of
Computer Science and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, as an
enthusiast, because Raj Reddy decided to set up a 21st century Gurukulam, a
postgraduate residential IT academy for the rural graduates in Andra Pradesh.
4.3.7 Work

Kalam is well-known for his hard work. He viewed “hard effort” as “burning oneself completely like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of himself in his attempt of doing something”. Even in his nineties, he engaged himself with various activities. He shared his observation on the present working condition, the characteristics of various generations and work philosophies in *You are Born to Blossom*. He divided the work ethos as classical type and creative individual type. He categorized himself as following both the types by evaluating his works and involvement. His experience which started as a Senior Scientific Assistant and ended as the Chief in DRDO and ISRO comes under classical type in which “one just needs to move along with the said path”. His innovative work of developing Floor Reaching Orthosis (FRO) with the help of B. N. Prasad comes under creative individual type in which “one needs to rediscover his work profile constantly”. According to Kalam, “Floor Reaching Orthosis, is a prosthesis with which polio-affected children could walk more conveniently and comfortably” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). Kalam believes that generating more creative individuals leads to development of a nation because it would help to “create new domains or enterprise and make it possible for others to have more jobs”. He advised the present generation “to invent a career in a field that does not exist”. He positively evaluated the present working condition of India. He divulged that it is for the first time in India all four generations namely Quiet Generation, Pushers, Idealists and Globals jointly working. He advised all the generations to consider themselves as “free agents responsible for their life, career, family and society” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

4.3.8 Motivation

Kalam shared many thoughts to motivate the children, to build confidence and courage in young minds and even to activate the stable experience of the elder people for producing developed society with morals.
He asked, “Why should it be surprising that people who have carved out unique lives for themselves, surrender to a monotonous end?” and “Why should not they approach the end-phase of life creatively?” to the older and retired people. He showed the path to lead a positive but fruitful life through his life and philosophies. Kalam talked about the great personalities like Marie Curie and Mother Teresa who lead a meaningful life. Marie Curie won two Nobel Prizes for her achievements in science in 1903 and 1911, and Mother Theresa got Nobel Prize for peace in 1979. They used their skills in their old age for the benefit of the society.

Kalam also presented his life as a role model to the old age people. In his old age itself, Kalam has been engaging himself to do many useful things for the society. He sees the old age positively. Tiwari noted this nature as a character of guiding souls. Kalam does not like to live his old age only by recollecting his wonderful achievements for India. He shared his experience with the next generation through his addresses and writings. He learns with the belief that “learning is a lifelong process”. Usually, Kalam prepares to “pursue another exiting goal, when he finds one career is about to be over”. In his seventies, he created a biodiversity park in Rashtrapati Bhavan. He wrote Wings of Fire with Tiwari and India: 2020 with Y S Rajan. He met the school children and ignited young minds, lent helping hand for the young generation to have better performance not only in academics but also in their careers and planned to be an academician in Anna University when he was about to retire from Government Service.

4.3.9 Philosophy of Life

Kalam shared his philosophy of life. He believes in a society of equality and prosperity. For him, “whatever happens either it gives pain or pleasure, it happens for a reason”. From his experience, he suggested a man should accept “when big responsibility knocks at his door without hesitation”.
Kalam hesitated when Dhawan asked him to be the Project Director for SLV 3. But, Dhawan’s words “if one does not venture out, he stays in his shell…” changed Kalam’s mind. This mind set-up created a great space for Kalam to achieve big things for the nation. It also made him to motivate the vast humanity. For example, his words “the country does not deserve anything less than success” changed the negative hope of the 2000 workers and scientists of DRDL and motivated them towards the success of Agni Launch. His words generated positive energy in them.

Kalam believes that failures and struggles teach human beings many things. He dealt with this concept in most of his writings. He felt that the moments he faced struggles were the most beautiful moments of his life. It reflects Sigmund Freud’s thought that “one day in retrospect the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). Kalam also stressed that when one wants to know the truth “he/she must learn to embrace those opposites as one” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). He elaborated his thought by quoting the words of the Nobel Prize Laureate Niels Bohr as “Opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but opposite of a profound truth can be another profound truth” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008).

4.3.10 Other Aspects

Kalam also discussed inner beings, courage, capacity building and other leadership qualities. For example, he remembered his experience, when he flew a Sukhoi-3- MKI fighter plane, with Wing Commander Ajay Rathore as his co-pilot on June 8, 2006, from Lohegaon Airport near Pune. After the trip Kalam was asked “you are a courageous President. In spite of being 75, did you not fear?” Kalam answered “I did not have time to fear as I was continuously busy with the control of the instruments of the aircraft” (Kalam & Tiwari 2008). It shows Kalam’s optimistic attitude, courage and his total commitment for the responsibility taken. His nationalism made him to give
suggestions at the same time to create cautions about India’s future. Kalam gave cautions about oil and water crisis in India too. Thus, *You are Born to Blossom* is constructed on Kalam’s ideas and strategies, which served as inspirational forces of Kalam’s inner mind. It confirms Kalam’s broad view from his heart and his love for his fellow human beings.

4.4 SUMMARY

Thus, this chapter discussed the conversational strategies and auto/biographical elements in *Guiding Souls*, which reveal the characteristics and ideas of Kalam and Tiwari. It also discussed the autobiographical elements in *You are Born to Blossom*. It examined the major aspects of Kalam’s personality through evaluating the characteristics, ideas, beliefs, actions, thoughts and philosophy of Kalam.

The next chapter will discuss the biographical elements found in R Ramanathan’s *Who is Kalam?* and P M Nair’s *The Kalam Effect*. 