

My Childhood – Important Questions

Q. Why did A.P.J. Abdul Kalam call his childhood a secure childhood?

Ans. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam called his childhood a secure one because he had loving and caring parents. He had all necessary things which included food, clothes, medicine, etc.

Q. Who initiated Kalam into catching bundles of newspaper and why?

Ans. Samsuddin, his cousin, initiated Kalam into catching bundles of newspaper. Due to the break out of Second World War, trains did not halt at Rameshwaram. So, newspapers were bundled and thrown from moving train on the Rameswaram road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. Samsuddin needed a helping hand to catch the bundles and thus, Kalam filled the slot.

Q. How did Second World War give opportunity to Kalam to earn his first wages?

Ans. Kalam's cousin was a news agent. The train halt at Rameshwaram station was suspended. So, the newspapers were bundled up and thrown out from a moving train. Kalam helped his cousin to catch the bundles. He was given money for it.

Q. What characteristics did Abdul Kalam inherit from his parents?

Ans. Abdul Kalam inherited honesty and self discipline from his father and faith in goodness and kindness from his mother. Like his parents even he respected all religions.

Q. What was the task of the narrator's family. During the annual Shri Rama Kalyanam ceremony?

Ans. The narrator's family used to help in ceremony by arranging boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the village temple to the marriage site.

Q. What did Abdul Kalam's family do during the annual Shri Sita Ram Kalayanam Ceremony?

Ans. Abdul Kalam's family arranged for a boat with a special platform for carrying the idols of Lord Shri Sita Ram from the temple to the marriage sites situated in the middle of a pond called as Rama Tirtha. His parents even told him stories from the Ramayana.

Q. What did the new teacher in the elementary School do?

Ans. The new teacher could not stomach a hindi priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. So he sent the narrator to sit at the last bench.

Q. Do you think the new teacher deserved the treatment meted out to him? Why/why not?

Ans. Yes, he deserved the treatment meted out to him. He was spreading the poison of communal intolerance among the young minds, which was a serious crime. If a teacher indulges in such a mean act, he deserves no sympathy.

Q. What was the difference in the attitude of the science teacher and his wife towards A.P.J. Abdul Kalam?

Ans. Though his science teacher was an orthodox Hindu, he broke the social barriers, and mixed with other religions and communities. He invited Abdul home and served him meals and even sat and ate with him. On the contrary, his wife was conservative and refused to serve Abdul.

Q. How does Abdul Kalam describe his mother?

Ans. Abdul Kalam describes his mother by saying that she was an ideal wife and a gentle lady. He learnt from his mother to be gentle and kind. She even used to feed a lot of outsiders every day.

Q. How did Abdul Kalam earn his 'first wages'? How did he feel at that time?

Ans. When Kalam was only 8 years old, the Second World War broke out in 1939. There was a great demand for tamarind seeds. Abdul used to collect those seeds and sell them in the market. His cousin Shamsuddin distributed newspapers and employed him as his helping hand. The train would not stop at Rameshwaram and the bundles of newspapers were thrown from the running train. Abdul was employed by his cousin to collect them. In this way he earned his first wages. When he earned his first wages, he felt very proud and had a sense of freedom. This achievement boosted up his self confidence and made him happy.

Q. "Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself." What do these statements by Abdul Kalam's father tell about his love for Kalam ?

Ans. Kalam's father undoubtedly loved his son profoundly. But he didn't want his love to become chain for Kalam. He didn't want his love a reason for Kalam to not pursue his dream and achieve success. For Kalam's father, love was synonymous with sacrifice.

Q. What incident took place at the Rameshwaram Elementary School when a new teacher came to the class?

Ans. Kalam used to wear a cap and Ramanandha Sastry wore a sacred thread which marked him to be a Brahmin. When the new teacher came, he could not tolerate a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. He ordered Kalam to go and sit on the back bench. This made Ramanandha sad. Abdul started sitting in the last row but it left a bad

impression on Abdul. Both the kids narrated the incident to their parents. As a result the teacher was rebuked and reprimanded for spreading communalism and hatred among children.

Q. How does the author describe: (i) his father, (ii) his mother, (iii) himself?

Ans. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam tells us that his family was a middle class Tamil family from Rameshwaram. His father Jainulabdeen was not much educated, wasn't rich but was generous, wise, simple man but very strict and severe. His mother Ashiamma was a generous lady, and used to feed unlimited number of people in their home. Kalam's family respected all religions. They took part in Hindu festivals. His mother and grandmother used to tell him stories from Ramayana. They always showered their love on their children and never forced their thoughts on them.

Q. The story 'My childhood' gives the message that one should follow the religion of humanity. How?

Ans. The story 'My childhood' gives the message that one should follow the religion of humanity in more ways than one. Kalam tells us that his mother fed many people every day irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The religion of humanity teaches us that feeding the hungry and needy is serving God. All his close friends, Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan, were Hindu but they were ignorant of the fact that Kalam was a Muslim. The religion of humanity only acknowledges bond of heart. Infact, when Kalam was made to sit at the back bench by the new teacher in accordance to the social ranking, Ramanadha cried. Ramanadha's father told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. Treating everyone equally is the basis of the religion of humanity.