

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

What were the qualities that Abdul Kalam admired in his parents?

Answer:

Kalam's parents were noble and generous people. Though his father was an austere man, he provided his family with all necessities, in terms of food, medicine or clothes. He admired his father's honesty and self-discipline and his mother's faith in goodness and kindness. He admired his parents for respecting all religions.

Question 2.

Kalam's childhood was a secure one both materially and emotionally. Illustrate.

Answer:

APJ Abdul Kalam called his childhood a secure one because he had loving and caring parents who gave love and guidance to their children and took care of their emotional and physical needs. They provided their children with all necessities, in terms of food, medicine or clothes.

Question 3.

How does Kalam show his father was a simple man?

Answer:

Kalam's father was a simple self-disciplined man. He neither had formal education nor much wealth and he avoided all inessential comforts and luxuries.

Question 4.

What kind of a person was Kalam's father?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's father, Jainulabdeen, was a tall and handsome man. Although he did not have much of a formal education, he was progressive and valued education. He was an austere man and didn't have much wealth, however, he was a generous man and provided both material and emotional security to his family. He was a very practical man with a vast store of wisdom and never obstructed the progressive ways of his children.

Question 5.

How does Abdul Kalam describe his mother?

Answer:

Kalam's mother, Ashiamma, was tall, good looking and very attached to her children. She was an ideal helpmate to her husband. She was a gentle and kind lady with faith in goodness and deep kindness. Like her husband, she was very generous and fed a

number of outsiders daily. Kalam inherited the values of kindness and generosity from her. Kalam inherited the values of kindness and generosity from her.

Question 6.

How was Kalam's appearance different from that of his parents?

Answer:

Kalam did not take after his tall and handsome parents. He was a rather short boy with average looks. Unlike his parents who had quite striking features, his appearance was undistinguished.

Question 7.

Briefly describe Abdul Kalam's ancestral house.

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's ancestral house was situated on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. It had been built in the middle of nineteenth century and was a fairly large, pucca house made of limestone and brick.

Question 8.

How did the Second World War give Abdul Kalam the opportunity to earn his first wages?

Answer:

When stoppage of trains was cancelled at Rameshwaram because of World War II, Kalam's cousin, Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, asked him for help in collecting newspaper bundles which were thrown from the moving train. This helped Abdul Kalam earn his first wages.

Question 9.

What are Kalam's views about his first jobs?

Answer:

As a young boy, Kalam earned his first wage by helping his cousin, Samsuddin, collect papers thrown from a moving train for distribution. Half a century later, Kalam would still feel the surge of pride in earning his own money for the first time.

Question 10.

Had Kalam earned any money before that? In what way?

Answer:

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, there was a sudden demand for tamarind seeds in the market. Kalam collected these seeds and sold them to earn an anna a day which was a big amount for a small boy like him in those days.

Question 11.

Right from his childhood Kalam was very enterprising. Comment.

Answer:

Kalam was an enterprising child who used to make full use of the opportunities that

came his way. During the war, when there occurred a great demand for tamarind seeds in the market, he used to collect these seeds and sell them off to a provision store near his home and earn an anna a day. Thus, he was able to earn some money for himself. Later, he collected newspapers for his cousin, Samsuddin, and earned his first wages. These incidents show that he was very enterprising.

Question 12.

What was Dinamani? Justify your views.

Answer:

Dinamani seems to be the name of a newspaper. Kalam mentions that he gathered information about the World War from his brother-in-law Jallaluddin. Later he tried to trace these stories in the headlines of Dinamani. Since news stories can be read in newspapers, and Headline is the heading at the top of a news item in a newspaper, Dinamani must be a newspaper.

Question 13.

What characteristics does Kalam say he inherited from his parents?

Answer:

Kalam inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father and faith in goodness and deep kindness from his mother.

Question 14.

Who were Kalam's school friends? What did they become later?

Answer:

Kalam's three close childhood friends were Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. All three of them settled well in life. Ramanadha inherited priesthood of Rameswaram temple from his father, Aravindan took up the business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims and Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

Question 15.

"On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups," says the author. Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable?

Answer:

Dr. Kalam mentions two social groups of Rameshwaram—orthodox Brahmins and Muslims.

Yes, these groups were easily identifiable by the way they dressed. Kalam wore a cap which marked him as a Muslim, while Ramanadha Sastry wore a sacred thread which marked him a Hindu.

Question 16.

Despite their differences, the social groups shared friendships and experiences. Elaborate.

Answer:

The social groups shared friendships and experiences and lived in harmony. Kalam's mother and grandmother often told the children of his family bedtime stories about the events from the Ramayana and from the life of the prophet. During the Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, his family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site. When Ramanadha Sastry's father heard that the new teacher tried to segregate pupils on the basis of religious divisions, he called the teacher and advised him to revert his decision or quit. Kalam's Science teacher, Shivasubramania Iyer, invited Kalam to have meal with him. This way he changed his conservative wife's mindset.

Question 17.

There were sharp differences that existed in the minds of some people belonging to these social groups. Illustrate.

Answer:

Although most people lived together in harmony with each other, there were some people who were very aware of the differences among them and rigidly enforced them. These included the young teacher who joined the Rameshwaram Elementary School and taught Kalam's class, the fifth standard. He tried to separate the Hindu Brahman boy, Ramanadha Sastry and Abdul Kalam, who was a Muslim. Kalam's science teacher's conservative wife also refused to serve Kalam in her kitchen. However, others in society, made them see the error of their ways and harmony was maintained.

Question 18.

What did Kalam's family do during the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony?

Answer:

During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, Kalam's family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond called Rama Tirtha, which was near Kalam's house.

Question 19.

Who asked Kalam to sit on the back bench of his class? Why?

Answer:

A new teacher at the Rameswaram Elementary School could not tolerate that Kalam, a Muslim, sat with Ramanadha Sastry, a Hindu wearing the sacred thread. This was contrary to the teacher's notion of social ranking. So, he ordered Kalam to sit on the back bench.

Question 20.

Do you think the teacher at Rameswaram Elementary School deserved the treatment meted out to him by Lakshmana Sastry?

Answer:

Yes, the teacher deserved the treatment meted out to him by Lakshmana Sastry. He was spreading the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of

innocent children. Spreading such divisive tendencies is a serious crime. If a teacher indulges in such a damaging act, he deserves no sympathy.

Question 21.

“I felt very sad and so did Ramanadha Sastry”. What made Kalam and his friend feel sad?

Answer:

Kalam and his friend Ramanadha Sastry were good friends and sat together in class. They felt very sad when the new teacher ordered Kalam to go and sit on the back bench of the class. Ramanadha was absolutely downcast and as Kalam shifted his seat to the last row, there were tears in his eyes. Kalam could never forget these tears all his life.

Question 22.

What did Ramanadha Sastry's father do when his son told him that the new teacher had sent Kalam to the last seat?

Answer:

Ramanadha's father, Lakshmana Sastry, was deeply distressed to learn that the new school teacher had shifted Kalam to the last bench. He did not approve of this segregation in society. He summoned the teacher and told him not to spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in young minds. He bluntly told him to either apologise or leave the school. The teacher not only regretted his action but also reformed himself.

Question 23.

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

Answer:

Though the Science teacher was a Brahmin, he broke the social barriers and mixed with people belonging to a different religion and community. He invited Abdul home and served him his meal and even sat and ate with him. On the contrary, his wife, at first, was conservative and refused to serve Abdul in her kitchen. However, by the next time, she was also transformed and served Abdul Kalam herself.

Question 24.

Sivasubramania Iyer was “something of a rebel”. Elaborate.

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer was Kalam's science teacher. Though he was a Brahmin, he was something of a rebel. A man of liberal views, he wanted to change the society that was rigid in terms of segregation of different social groups. He invited Kalam to his home for a meal. His wife, an orthodox Brahmin, refused to serve food to a Muslim boy in her so-called ritually pure kitchen. Iyer served him with his own hands and sat down beside him to eat his meal. He convinced his wife to rise above these narrow barriers and thus was successful in changing the conservative attitude of his wife.

Question 25.

Why did Sivasubramania's wife refuse to serve food to Kalam in her kitchen?

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer's wife was an orthodox and conservative Brahmin. She believed the sanctity of her kitchen would be defiled if she served meals there to someone who belonged to a different faith. So, she refused to serve food to a Muslim boy in her kitchen.

Question 26.

How did Sivasubramania react to his wife's behaviour when she refused to serve Kalam (a Muslim boy) in her kitchen?

Answer:

Sivasubramania probably expected such behaviour from his conservative wife. So, without getting angry or perturbed, he served Kalam with his own hands and sat beside him to eat his meal.

Question 27.

Why did Sivasubramania invite Kalam for dinner again the next weekend?

Answer:

The young Kalam was upset by Sivasubramania Iyer's wife's refusal to serve him food in her kitchen. This, coupled with the desire to transform his wife, probably prompted Sivasubramania to make amends to Kalam. So he invited Kalam to dinner again the following weekend. He also told Kalam, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted."

Question 28.

What thoughts crossed Kalam's mind when he was having food at Sivasubramania's house for the first time?

Answer:

Kalam noticed that Sivasubramania's conservative wife was watching him from behind the kitchen door while he was having food. At this time he wondered whether she observed any difference in the way a Muslim ate rice, drank water or cleaned the floor after the meal.

Question 29.

What influence did his teacher Sivasubramania Iyer have on the young Kalam?

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer taught Kalam to confront prejudice. He told him that if he wanted to bring about a change, such problems needed to be confronted. Sivasubramania Iyer, the science teacher, was a Brahmin. When he invited Kalam for dinner, his orthodox wife thought Kalam's presence would make it impure and refused to serve him. Sivasubramania Iyer served him with his own hands, and invited him again. This not only changed his wife's attitude, it also had a profound influence on young Kalam.

Question 30.

Narrate two incidents – one to show how differences can be created, and another how they can be resolved.

Answer:

The first incident to show how differences can be created is that when the new young teacher found a Muslim student sitting beside a Hindu student. He asked Kalam to sit in the last row.

The other incident shows how differences can be resolved. The author's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, though a tried to bridge these differences.

Question 31.

What does Abdul tell about his days during the World War?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam was only eight years old when the World War broke out in 1939. Although at first, Rameswaram, being isolated, was completely unaffected by the War, but soon India was forced to join the Allied Forces and something like a state of emergency was declared. His brother-in-law Jallaluddin used to tell him stories about the Second World War. He read these stories in the newspaper too. He also started earning at a young age. The War brought a sudden demand for tamarind seeds and Kalam used to collect the seeds and sell them to a provision shop on Mosque Street for an anna a day. He also began working for his cousin, Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers.

Question 32.

How did the Indians feel when the nation's Independence was in full sight?

Answer:

Indians were filled with unprecedented optimism when the Second World War ended. India's independence seemed imminent. Gandhiji declared that Indians would build their own India.

Question 33.

Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameswaram?

Answer:

Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram because the place did not offer any options for higher education. It just had an elementary school. An ambitious Kalam who was keen to study further wished to go to the district headquarters at Ramanathapuram that had many educational facilities.

Question 34.

Why did Kalam's father allow Kalam to leave Rameswaram and go to Ramanathapuram?

Answer:

Though not educated himself, Kalam's pragmatic father understood the significance of education. He did not want to stand in the way of his children's growth in any way. Since Rameswaram had nothing more than an elementary school, his father willingly allowed

Kalam to go to Ramanathapuram to pursue higher studies and persuaded his wife to do the same.

Question 35.

What did Kalam's father say when Kalam sought his permission to leave Rameswaram and go to Ramanathapuram?

Answer:

When Kalam sought his father's permission to leave Rameswaram and go to Ramanathapuram to study, Kalam's father told him that he trusted his son's decision to grow. He gave him the example of young seagulls who leave their parents' nest to learn to fly. So, must the children be allowed to leave home and gain knowledge in the big world outside.

Question 36.

What did Kalam's father mean to say when he quoted Khalil Gibran? Why do you think he spoke these words?

Answer:

Kalam's father meant that every human being must be given the opportunity to build his life as per his wishes and parents should not hinder this effort. He spoke these words to convince Kalam's mother that her son's decision to leave home was right. She should allow him happily to shape his life according to his own ideas.

Long Answer Type

Question 1.

What do you learn about APJ. Abdul Kalam's family from the lesson "My Childhood"?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam tells us that his family was a middle class Tamil Muslim family from Rameshwaram. His parents were good, kind and wise people who gave their children a childhood that was emotionally and materially secure. His father, Jainulabdeen, was not much educated, wasn't rich but was generous, wise, simple man but was austere and used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes.

His mother Ashiamma was a generous lady, and used to feed unlimited numbers of people. The family respected all religions and took part in Hindu festivals. During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, Kalam's family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond called Rama Tirtha which was near their house. Events from the Ramayana and from the life of the Prophet were the bedtime stories Kalam's mother and grandmother would tell the children in the family. The parents always showered their love on their children and never forced their views on them.

Question 2.

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

Answer:

Kalam, who was a Muslim, used to wear a cap and his friend, Ramanadha Sastry, the son of the head priest at the Rameswaram temple, wore a sacred thread which marked him to be a Brahmin. When the new teacher came he could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with social ranking as the new teacher saw it, Abdul Kalam was asked to go and sit on the back bench.

Both the boys felt very sad. Ramanadha Sastry looked utterly downcast and as Kalam shifted to his seat in the last row, he saw tears in his eyes. Both the kids narrated the incident to their parents. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher, and reprimanded him for spreading the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. The teacher was asked to either apologise or quit the school and the island. Not only did the teacher regret his behaviour, but the strong sense of conviction Lakshmana Sastry conveyed ultimately reformed him.

Question 3.

Narrate the incident of new teacher's behaviour in the classroom. Was his action appropriate? What values did the new teacher learn after that incident?

Answer:

When Abdul Kalam was in the fifth standard, a new teacher, who had a conservative and narrow outlook, came to teach them. He saw Abdul Kalam sitting in the front row with Ramanadha Sastry. He identified Kalam as a Muslim as he used to wear a cap which marked him as one and Ramanadha Sastry, who wore the sacred thread as a Brahmin. The teacher could not digest a Muslim boy sitting with a Brahmin boy, that too the son of a priest. In accordance with their social ranking as he saw it, he asked Kalam to go and sit on the back bench.

Abdul Kalam and Ramanadha Sastry, both, felt very sad. His action was not at all appropriate as all human beings are equal. After this incident, Ramanadha Sastry's father, Lakshmana Sastry, called the teacher and taught him the lesson that one must have respect for all religions and work for communal harmony. He told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He bluntly asked the teacher to either apologise or quit the school and the island. His strong sense of conviction ultimately reformed this young teacher.

Question 4.

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

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's cousin, Samsuddin, helped him earn his first wages. He used to collect newspapers from the station and distribute in Rameswaram. It was the time of the Second World War. Initially his area, being isolated, was completely unaffected by this

War. But, soon the Indian forces also joined the Allied forces. A state of emergency was declared. The first casualty of the emergency was the suspension of train halt at Rameswaram.

It affected Samsuddin's business adversely. Now, the bundles of newspapers had to be thrown from the moving train on the Rameswaram Road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. Samsuddin wanted a helping hand who could catch the bundles thrown from the moving train. Abdul Kalam was engaged for this job by him. Thus, he earned his wages for the first time. Abdul Kalam felt a great sense of pride when he earned his first wages.

Question 5.

When Sivasubramania told Kalam, "Once, you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted". What system was he referring to? What are "such problems"? What values did he want to teach Kalam?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, was a rebel by nature. He was against the prevalent system of segregation of social groups. He wanted to break these social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily. When he invited Abdul Kalam to his home, his wife, in keeping with the prevailing system, refused to serve Kalam, a Muslim, food in her kitchen.

But, Iyer not only served him food himself but also invited him next week again. He told Abdul Kalam that when one decides to go against the age-old social barriers, one has to face many problems. He proved that if one is determined to face problems ' and change the system, one succeeds. He also tried to teach him that sometimes it is good to rebel. We should fight for right reasons and to achieve higher goals.

Question 6.

How was the Science teacher Sivasubramani Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative wife, an important influence in Abdul Kalam's life? Give incidents to support your answer.

Answer:

The Science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer wanted Kalam to be very highly educated as he recognized his intelligence. He used to spend hours with the young boy and would express his desire that Kalam develops his abilities so that he was on par with the highly educated people of the big cities. He also, wanted to break the social barriers between the Hindus and the Muslims. One day, he invited him over for a meal.

His orthodox wife was totally horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy dining in her ritually pure kitchen. He did not heed anything said by his very conservative wife. He rather served Kalam food with his own hands. He also sat with him and dined together with him. Not only that, he invited him over again for another meal the coming weekend.

Thus, this shows that he was an important influence on Abdul Kalam even though Kalam was a Muslim and he himself was an orthodox Brahmin.

Question 7.

What influence did Abdul Kalam's teachers have on him?

Answer:

Teachers play a very important role in the lives of their students. Abdul Kalam's life, too, was influenced in a major way by some experiences that he had during his school days. These episodes were instrumental in shaping his character and later on his career. Once, when he was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to his class. A man with a conservative and narrow outlook, he could not digest a Muslim boy sitting with a Brahmin boy, that too the son of a priest. In accordance with their social ranking as he saw it, he asked Kalam to go and sit on the back bench.

This was a heart-breaking experience for Kalam. This poison of social inequality and communal intolerance could have demoralized the young Kalam if his friend's father, Lakshmana Sastry had not intervened. He ensured that the teacher not only regretted his action but also reformed himself.

Another very important influence in his life was Sivasubramania Iyer, his Science teacher. He wanted Kalam to be very highly educated as he recognized his intelligence. He used to spend hours with the young boy and would express his desire that Kalam develops his abilities so that he was on par with the highly educated people of the big cities. He also, wanted to break the social barriers between the Hindus and the Muslims. He invited him over for a meal and when his orthodox wife refused to serve food to a Muslim boy in her ritually pure kitchen he served Kalam food with his own hands.

He also sat with him and dined together with him. Not only that, he invited him over again for another meal the coming weekend. He advised Kalam, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted". These two experiences shaped Kalam's outlook as they made him realise the importance of confronting problems and fighting divisive forces.

Question 8.

Why did the narrator's father say, "Does the seagull not fly across the sun, alone and without a nest"?

Answer:

When Abdul Kalam asked his father for permission to leave Rameswaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram, his father did not get upset, nor did he try to stop him. On the contrary, he encouraged his son to leave Rameshwaram and to spread his wings and go to make his own way. He took example of young seagulls who leave their parents' nest to learn to fly. His words have very a very important lesson.

Unlike human beings, most of the animals teach their young ones the skills of survival and allow them to fend for themselves after a certain age. This makes them more independent and courageous. For human also after a certain age certain degree of responsibility and independence is always helpful in making a perfect adult. Kalam's father realised his son wanted to go away to grow.

He was a wise man and was aware of the need of an individual to grow and achieve his/her full potential. He knew that life is not easy. His son would have to make tremendous efforts to face the hardships of life. The sons and Daughters must live their own lives.

Reference to Context

Question 1.

I was born into a middle-class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras State. My father, Jainulabdeen, had neither much formal education nor much wealth; despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. He had an ideal helpmate in my mother, Ashiamma.

(a) Where was Abdul Kalam born?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam was born in the island town of Rameswaram which fell in the erstwhile Madras State.

(b) What qualities did Abdul Kalam's father possess?

Answer:

His father was a wise and generous man.

(c) In what ways was Ashiamma an ideal helpmate for her husband?

Answer:

Ashiamma was a generous person who fed a large number of people everyday.

(d) What characteristics does he say he inherited from his parents?

Answer:

He inherited honesty and self discipline from his father. From his mother he inherited a sense of kindness and faith.

Question 2.

I was one of many children – a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, made of limestone and bricks, on the Mosque Street in Rameshwaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes. In fact I would say a mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

(a) How was Kalam different from his parents in looks?

Answer:

While Kalam's parents were tall, handsome people, he was a short boy with rather ordinary looks.

(b) What does Kalam tell us about his home?

Answer:

Kalam's family lived in their ancestral house, made of limestone and bricks, on the Mosque Street in Rameshwaram.

(c) How do we know that Kalam's father was austere?

Answer:

Kalam's father shunned all inessential comforts and luxuries.

(d) What kind of a childhood did Kalam have?

Answer:

Kalam had a comfortable and secure childhood.

Question 3.

In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

(a) In what way was Kalam's childhood 'secure'?

Answer:

Kalam was provided with all the necessities in terms of food, medicine and clothes. Apart from it, his parents loved him a lot. and took good care of him.

(b) What does Kalam mean by 'material security'?

Answer:

By material security, Kalam means all the necessities of life that one needs while growing up that can be provided with money.

(c) What is meant by 'emotional security'?

Answer:

'Emotional security' is the love and care that one needs to flourish and thrive.

(d) How did his parents provide Kalam with material and emotional security?

Answer:

Kalam's parents provided him with material security by seeing all necessities in terms of food, medicine or clothes were provided for and emotional security by giving him a loving and secure childhood.

Question 4.

I used to collect the seeds and sell them to a provision shop on Mosque Street.

(a) Which seeds did the narrator collect?

Answer:

Kalam collected tamarind seeds.

(b) Why did he collect these seeds?

Answer:

These seeds were collected by Kalam as they were in great demand in the market during the Second World War and could be sold easily for a good sum of money.

(c) What did he do with the collected seeds?

Answer:

Kalam would sell off the collected seeds to a provision shop on Mosque Street.

(d) What light does the extract throw on the narrator?

Answer:

The extract shows that the narrator, Kalam, was very enterprising and hard-working. His faith in dignity of labour prompted him to collect the seeds and sell them off.

Question 5.

The first casualty came in the form of suspension of train halt at Rameswaram station. The newspaper had now to be bundled and thrown out from the moving train on the Rameswaram road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. That forced my cousin Samsuddin, who distributed the newspapers in Rameswaram to look for a helping hand and catch the bundles and as if naturally filled the slot.

(a) What does he mean by first casualty?

Answer:

The first blow that fell on Rameswaram, which had been unaffected by the war so far, was the suspension of the train stop there.

(b) Who was Samsuddin? What did he do?

Answer:

Samsuddin was Abdul Kalam's cousin. He used to distribute newspapers in Rameswaram.

(c) Why did the cousin need a helping hand? How did he help Kalam earn a salary?

Answer:

As the train did not halt at Rameswaram, bundles were thrown off a moving train on the Rameswaram Road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi and had to be caught. Samsuddin needed a helping hand to catch the bundles and he employed Kalam for the job.

(d) How did Kalam feel later about his job?

Answer:

Kalam felt a sense of pride for earning his own money for the first time.

Question 6.

During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam Ceremony, our family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site situated in the middle of the pond called Rama Tirtha which was near our house.

(a) What was the annual event held in Rameswaram?

Answer:

The annual event held in Rameswaram was the Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony or the wedding ceremony of Sita and Rama.

(b) Where did the boats carry the idols of the Lord?

Answer:

The idols were carried from the temple to the marriage site that was in the middle of the Rama Tirtha pond.

(c) Who provided the boats for ferrying the idols of Rama and Sita to the marriage site?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's family arranged for the boats required to ferry the idols.

(d) What light does this throw on the Rameswaram society?

Answer:

This highlights the secular nature of society and the natural Hindu Muslim cooperation in most parts of India. They were aware of their different identities but they were living harmoniously as people do in any normal society.

Question 7.

I inherited honesty and self-discipline from my father; from my mother, I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness and so did my three brothers and sister. I had three close friends in my childhood – Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakashan. All these boys were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. As children, none of us ever felt any difference amongst ourselves because of our religious differences and upbringing.

(a) How does the author describe his father?

Answer:

The author describes his father as an austere man, who looked after all needs of his family.

(b) In what way did Kalam's father show his self-discipline?

Answer:

Abdul Kalam's father was an austere man who kept away from all inessential comforts and luxuries.

(c) What was the difference between the writer and his friends?

Answer:

The other three boys were from orthodox Brahmin families whereas the writer was a Muslim.

(d) How did the difference affect the friendship between the boys?

Answer:

The boys did not feel any difference between themselves and it did not affect their friendship in any way.

Question 8.

One day when I was in fifth standard at Rameswaram Elementary School, a new teacher came to our class. I used to wear a cap which marked me Muslim and I always sat in the front row next to Ramanadha Sastry, who wore a sacred thread. The new teacher could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with our social ranking, as the new teacher saw it, I was asked to go and sit on the back bench.

(a) Name the school, where Kalam studied.

Answer:

Kalam studied at Rameswaram Elementary School in Rameswaram.

(b) Which social groups existed in Rameswaram?

Answer:

Kalam has mentioned Hindus and Muslims as two distinct social groups living in Rameshwaram.

(c) How were these groups easily identified?

Answer:

These groups had their different dress codes and rituals. For example Kalam used to wear a cap while his friend Ramanadham used to wear the sacred thread.

(d) What did the teacher ask Kalam to do?

Answer:

He did not want Kalam, a Muslim, sitting with a Hindu priest's son and so he told him to go and sit on the back bench.

Question 9.

I felt very sad, and so did Ramanadha Sastry. He looked utterly downcast as I shifted to my seat in the last row.

(a) How did the teacher know that Kalam was a Muslim?

Answer:

The teacher realised Kalam was a Muslim because he wore the cap worn by Muslims.

(b) Why did the narrator feel sad?

Answer:

The narrator felt sad because his new teacher did not let him sit with his Hindu friend in the front row of the class, but sent him to sit at the back of the class.

(c) Who looked “utterly downcast”? Why?

Answer:

It was Ramanadha Sastry, Kalam’s close friend, who looked utterly downcast at being separated from his friend.

(d) Why was Kalam’s seat shifted?

Answer:

The new teacher believed in certain notions of social ranking. He could not bear to see a Muslim boy sitting along with the son of a Hindu priest. So, he shifted Kalam’s seat to the last row.

Question 10.

After school, we went home and told our respective parents about the incident. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher and in our presence, told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal Intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He bluntly asked the teacher to either apologise or quit the school and the island. Not only did the teacher regret his behaviour, but the strong sense of conviction Lakshmana Sastry conveyed ultimately reformed this young teacher.

(a) What incident is the narrator talking about?

Answer:

The narrator is talking about the time when he was in fifth standard, a new teacher asked him not to sit in the front row along with the high caste Brahmin boys.

(b) Who was Lakshmana Sastry? What did he accuse the teacher of?

Answer:

Lakshmana Sastry was the father of Kalam’s friend Ramanadha Sastry, and the high priest of the Rameswaram temple. He accused the teacher of spreading the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.

(c) What brought about a change in the teacher?

Answer:

The strong disapproval of the teacher's behaviour and his sense of conviction that Lakshmana Sastry conveyed to the teacher brought about a change in the teacher.

(d) What kind of society did the speaker live in?

Answer:

The speaker lived in a society that was orthodox, but at the same time was truly secular.

Question 11.

Sivasubramania Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife, but instead, served me with his own hands and sat down beside me to eat his meal.

(a) Who was Sivasubramania Iyer?

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer was Kalam's science teacher.

(b) What was it that could have perturbed Sivasubramania Iyer?

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer's conservative wife had refused to serve Kalam, a Muslim. Since Sivasubramania Iyer had invited Kalam to eat with him, this could have perturbed him.

(c) Why did Sivasubramania Iyer not get angry with his wife?

Answer:

Sivasubramania Iyer wanted to change an existing system. He was prepared for the problems he was sure to encounter. He did not get angry with his wife because he knew she believed in the existing system.

(d) Why did Sivasubramania sit down with Kalam to eat his meal?

Answer:

Sivasubramania wished to make his wife realize that irrespective of their religions all human beings are equal and they all deserve to be treated as we would like to be treated by them.

Question 12.

His wife watched us from behind the kitchen door. I wondered whether she had observed any difference in the way I ate rice, drank water or cleaned the floor after the meal. When I was leaving his house, Sivasubramania Iyer invited me to join him for dinner again the next weekend.

(a) Whose wife is being referred to in Line 1?

Answer:

The narrator refers to the wife of his Science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer.

(b) Why did she watch them from behind the kitchen door?

Answer:

The teacher's wife believed in the segregation of different sections of society. She did not want Kalam, a Muslim, to enter her kitchen and to eat food there. As a result, she hid behind the kitchen door and observed everything.

(c) Why did Sivasubramania invite Kalam again the next weekend?

Answer:

He invited Kalam again the next weekend because he wanted to bring about a change in the conservative attitude of his wife

(d) What was the narrator's reaction to the teacher's invitation?

Answer:

The narrator was reluctant to accept the teacher's invitation because he realised the teacher's wife did not wish to serve him food in her kitchen.

Question 13.

Sivasubramania Iyer invited me to join him for dinner again the next weekend. Observing my hesitation, he told me not to get upset, saying, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted." When I visited his house the next week, Sivasubramania Iyer's wife took me inside her kitchen and served me food with her own hands.

(a) Why was the writer reluctant to join his teacher for dinner?

Answer:

The teacher's wife was opposed to the idea of a Muslim eating in her kitchen. She had refused to serve him the previous time. That made Kalam reluctant to dine with his teacher.

(b) What "system" was he talking about?

Answer:

He is talking of breaking social barriers of religious and caste divide between the people.

(c) What was the effect of this on Sivasubramania's wife?

Answer:

This time she let Kalam into the kitchen and served him herself.

(d) What do you learn about Sivasubramania's character from this episode?

Answer:

The extract shows that Sivasubramania was a very progressive and a broad minded person who treated everybody as equal and who seriously wanted to bring about a change in society.

Question 14.

Then the Second World War was over and India's freedom was imminent "Indians build their own India ", declared Gandhiji. The whole country was filled with unprecedented optimism. I asked my father's permission to leave Rameshwaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram

(a) What did the Indians expect after the Second World War was over?

Answer:

Indians expected India would soon get independence after the war.

(b) What did Gandhiji declare and what did he mean?

Answer:

Gandhiji declared Indians would have to build their own India. He meant each citizen would have to contribute in her/his way in the task of nation building.

(c) Why was the whole country optimistic?

Answer:

The country was optimistic of getting independence from British Rule. Everyone dreamt of a free India.

(d) Where did Kalam decide to go and why?

Answer:

Kalam decided to go to the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram to study further.

Question 15.

He told me as if thinking aloud, "Abul! I know you have to go away to grow. Does the seagull not fly across the Sun, alone and without a nest? "

(a) Who is 'he' in the above lines?

Answer:

He in the above lines is Kalam's father, Jainulabdeen.

(b) Why did 'he' say so to the listener?

Answer:

He says these words to Abdul as he wants to encourage his son to go to the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram to study further.

(c) What do you learn about Kalam's feelings from the speaker's words?

Answer:

The speaker's words show that Abdul Kalam was a little apprehensive of going away to study alone.

(d) What do you learn about the speaker from the above lines?

Answer:

The speaker was very keen his son got a good education and was very encouraging. He was very wise and didn't believe in obstructing his children's progress. He was of the view that children ought to be allowed to live life according to their own wishes.

Question 16.

"Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. "

(a) Name the writer who wrote these lines.

Answer:

These lines are originally written by Khalil Gibran.

(b) Who quotes these words and to whom?

Answer:

These words are quoted by Abdul Kalam's father, Jainulabdeen, to Ashiamma, Kalam's mother.

(c) Why does he speak these words?

Answer:

After finishing his elementary education, when Kalam sought his father's permission to leave Rameswaram and study at district headquarters in Ramanathapuram, his father said these words to Kalam's mother who was a bit reluctant to send her young son away.

(d) What does he mean by 'Sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself'?

Answer:

Kahlil Gibran says one's children are not one's own. It is Life that expresses through them. Parents are merely the soil from whence they take birth.

Question and Answers

Answer these questions in one or two sentences each.

1. Where was Abdul Kalam's house?

A. Abdul Kalam's house was located on the Mosque Street in the town of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu state.

2. What do you think *Dinamani* is the name of? Give a reason for your answer.

2. Dinamani is the name of a newspaper. It is a vernacular daily, printed in Tamil language. I think so because Kalam says that he traced the stories of the war in the headlines of the Dinamani.

3. Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they later become?

A. During his childhood, Abdul Kalam had three friends. Their names are Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. When they grew up, Ramanadha Sastry became the priest of the Rameswaram temple, Aravindan started a business of transporting pilgrims to and from the Rameswaram temple and Sivaprakasan became a caterer for the railways.

4. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?

A. Abdul Kalam earned his first wages by catching the bundle of newspapers thrown out of the moving train at the Rameswaram station. He helped his cousin in distributing newspapers in Rameswaram.

5. Had he earned any money before that? In what way?

A. When the second World War started, there was a great demand for tamarind seeds. Kalam would collect them and sell them to a grocery store located on Mosque street. He would earn an anna which was a meagre sum but for him, it was a handsome sum of money.

Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (about 30 words)

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

A. (i) Kalam's father's name was Jainulabdeen. He was not educated and was not a wealthy man. Kalam says that despite this, his father possessed innate wisdom, honesty and was a generous man. He did not believe in wasting money on luxuries but provided them with all the necessities of life like food, clothing and medicine.

(ii) Kalam's mother's name was Ashiamma. She supported her husband in his decisions. She was a kind – hearted woman. Kalam recollects that his mother would feed meals to numerous people. He inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness from her.

(iii) Kalam was short and had ordinary looks while his parents were tall and looked handsome. He was brought up in a secure atmosphere. He grew up to become an honest and self – disciplined man. He believed in goodness and deep kindness.

2. What characteristics does he say he inherited from his parents?

A. Kalam's inherited honesty and self – discipline from his father. His mother imbibed in him faith in goodness and deep kindness.

Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.

1. "On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups," says the author.

(i) Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable (for example, by the way they dressed)?

A. The social groups mentioned by Kalam were the Hindu Brahmins and the Muslims. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable by the way they dressed. As Kalam was a Muslim, he wore a cap which distinguished him from his Hindu Brahmin friends who wore the sacred thread.

(ii) Were they aware only of their differences or did they also naturally share friendships and experiences? (Think of the bedtime stories in Kalam's house; of who his friends were; and of what used to take place in the pond near his house.)

A. No, they were not aware of any differences. Kalam and the other children listened to bedtime stories from their mother and grandmother. These were from both the Ramayana and from the life of Prophet. The family participated in the Hindu festival of Shree Seetha Rama Kalyanam by arranging boats for transporting the idols from the temple to the pond located near their house.

(iii) The author speaks both of people who were very aware of the differences among them and those who tried to bridge these differences. Can you identify such people in the text?

A. The people who were aware of these differences were the young teacher who came to teach Kalam's class in fifth standard. He ordered Kalam to sit on the last bench as he belonged to a lower caste. His science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer's wife was an orthodox Hindi Brahmin. She refused to serve him food as she felt that his presence would render the kitchen impure.

The people who bridged these differences were Ramanadha Sastry's father Lakshmana Sastry and Sivasubramania Iyer. Lakshmana Sastry was the priest of the Rameswaram temple. He scolded the young teacher and asked him to apologise for sowing the seeds of religious discrimination into the innocent minds of the children. Upon his wife's refusal to serve, Sivasubramania Iyer served food to Kalam and sat beside him to eat which reformed his wife.

2. (i) Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameswaram?

A. Abdul Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram and go to Ramanathapuram for higher studies.

(ii) What did his father say to this?

A. His father said that he knew Kalam had to leave home as he had to fulfil his dreams. He gave the example of the Seagull bird which flies endlessly over long distances and does not have a nest too. He pacified Kalam's mother by quoting a few lines from the poem 'Your children' by Khalil Gibran. He said that her children were not her possession

but were life's desire for itself. She should not impose her thoughts on them but should allow them to fulfil their thoughts.

(iii) What do you think his words mean? Why do you think he spoke those words?

A. Abdul Kalam's father's words had a deep meaning. He inspired Kalam to follow his dreams, to fly high like the seagull. He wanted him to pursue higher studies and so, allowed him to go to Ramanathapuram. He explained to Kalam's mother to allow him to go and pursue higher education. He spoke these words to encourage Abdul Kalam and to control the emotional attachment of his mother.

Grammar Exercises

Match the phrases in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

	A	B
1	broke out	(a) an attitude of kindness, a readiness to give freely
2	in accordance with	(b) was not able to tolerate
3	a helping hand	(c) began suddenly in a violent way
4	could not stomach	(d) assistance
5	generosity of spirit	(e) persons with power to make decisions
6	figures of authority	(f) according to a particular rule, principle, or system

A.

	A	B
1	broke out	(c) began suddenly in a violent way
2	in accordance with	(e) persons with power to make decisions
3	a helping hand	(d) assistance
4	could not stomach	(b) was not able to tolerate
5	generosity of spirit	(a) an attitude of kindness, a readiness to give freely
6	figures of authority	(e) persons with power to make decisions (f) according to a particular rule, principle, or system

Form the opposites of the words below by prefixing *un-* or *in-*.

_____adequate	_____acceptable	_____regular	_____tolerant
_____demanding	_____active	_____true	_____permanent
_____patriotic	_____disputed	_____accessible	_____coherent

_____logical	_____legal	_____responsible	_____possible
--------------	------------	------------------	---------------

A.

inadequate	unacceptable	irregular	intolerant
undemanding	inactive	untrue	impermanent
unpatriotic	undisputed	inaccessible	incoherent
illogical	illegal	irresponsible	impossible

Rewrite the sentences below, changing the verbs in brackets into the passive form.

1. In yesterday's competition the prizes (give away) by the Principal.
2. In spite of financial difficulties, the labourers (pay) on time.
3. On Republic Day, vehicles (not allow) beyond this point.
4. Second-hand books (buy and sell) on the pavement every Saturday.
5. Elections to the Lok Sabha (hold) every five years.
6. Our National Anthem (compose) Rabindranath Tagore.

A.

1. In yesterday's competition the prizes were given away by the Principal.
2. In spite of financial difficulties, the labourers were paid on time.
3. On Republic Day, vehicles are not allowed beyond this point.
4. Second-hand books are bought and sold on the pavement every Saturday.
5. Elections to the Lok Sabha are held every five years.
6. Our National Anthem was composed by Rabindranath Tagore

Rewrite the paragraphs below, using the correct form of the verb given in brackets.

1. *How Helmets Came To Be Used in Cricket*

A. Nari Contractor was the Captain and an opening batsman for India in the 1960s. The Indian cricket team went on a tour to the West Indies in 1962. In a match against Barbados in Bridgetown, Nari Contractor (seriously injure and collapse). In those days helmets (not wear). Contractor (hit) on the head by a bouncer from Charlie Griffith. Contractor's skull (fracture). The entire team (deeply concern). The West Indies players (worry). Contractor (rush) to hospital. He (accompany) by Frank Worrell, the Captain of the West Indies Team. Blood (donate) by the West Indies players. Thanks to the timely help, Contractor (save). Nowadays helmets (routinely use) against bowlers.

A. 1. *How Helmets Came To Be Used in Cricket*

Nari Contractor was the Captain and an opening batsman for India in the 1960s. The Indian cricket team went on a tour to the West Indies in 1962. In a match against Barbados in Bridgetown, Nari Contractor got seriously injured and collapsed. In those days helmets were not worn. Contractor was hit on the head by a bouncer from Charlie Griffith. Contractor's skull had fractured. The entire team was deeply concerned. The West Indies players were worried. Contractor was rushed to hospital. He was accompanied by Frank

Worrell, the Captain of the West Indies Team. Blood was donated by the West Indies players. Thanks to the timely help, Contractor was saved. Nowadays helmets are routinely used against bowlers.

2. Oil from Seeds

Vegetable oils (make) from seeds and fruits of many plants growing all over the world, from tiny sesame seeds to big, juicy coconuts. Oil (produce) from cotton seeds, groundnuts, soya beans and sunflower seeds. Olive oil (use) for cooking, salad dressing etc. Olives (shake) from the trees and (gather) up, usually by hand. The olives (ground) to a thick paste which is spread onto special mats. Then the mats (layer) up on the pressing machine which will gently squeeze them to produce olive oil.

A. 2. Oil from Seeds

Vegetable oils are made from seeds and fruits of many plants growing all over the world, from tiny sesame seeds to big, juicy coconuts. Oil is produced from cotton seeds, groundnuts, soya beans and sunflower seeds. Olive oil is used for cooking, salad dressing etc. Olives are shaken from the trees and are gathered up, usually by hand. The olives are grounded to a thick paste which is spread onto special mats. Then the mats are layered up on the pressing machine which will gently squeeze them to produce olive oil.