



QUESTION BANK - MY CHILDHOOD (2020-21)

Class: IX

Sub: ENGLISH

**Q.1. How did Abdul Kalam earn his ‘first wages’? How did he feel at that time?**

**Ans.** Abdul Kalam’s cousin, Samsuddin, used to distribute newspapers in Rameswaram. The Second World War broke out in 1939. Now the train’s halt at Rameswaram was suspended. The bundles of newspapers were thrown out from the moving train on the Rameswaram road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. Now Samsuddin needed a helping hand to catch the bundles which were thrown out of the moving train. He employed Abdul Kalam to do this job. Thus Abdul Kalam earned his first wages. This was a great moment for him. He felt a great wave of joy and pride in earning his own money for the first time. Even after many years Abdul Kalam clearly remembered that day.

**Q.2. “Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted.” What ‘system’ is this sentence referring to? What are ‘such problems’? Does the text suggest that the problems have been tackled?**

**Ans.** The above sentence refers to religious differences between people. DR. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam belonged to Rameswaram. At that time, the small society of that town was rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups. This system was prevalent in the whole of the country. The high caste people did not like to eat or drink with the people of low castes. The new teacher in Abdul Kalam’s class could not tolerate that a Muslim boy should sit with the son of a Hindu priest. He sent Abdul Kalam to the back bench. But some people have tried to fight these problems. Abdul Kalam’s teacher, Sivasubramanialyer’s served Abdul Kalam with his own hands. He sat down beside him to eat. Later, his wife realised her mistake. The next week, she served Abdul Kalam in her kitchen. Yet these problems are deep-rooted in India. These have not been tackled even now.

**Q.3. What does Abdul Kalam say about his parents in the lesson ‘My Childhood’?**

**Ans.** Abdul Kalam is full of praise for his parents. He was born into a middle-class family of Rameswaram. His father was Jainulabdeen. He was neither educated nor rich. Yet he had plenty of natural wisdom. He was also very generous. Abdul Kalam’s mother was Ashiamma. She was a kind and helpful lady. Kalam’s parents were generous. A number of outsiders daily ate with the family. Their number was more than all the members of Kalam’s family put together. Abdul Kalam was greatly influenced by his parents. His father taught him the value of self-discipline and honesty. From his mother, he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness. His parents were not rich but they provided their children all the basic necessities of life like food, clothes and medicines. Thus, Abdul Kalam’s parents greatly influenced him.

**Q.4 How does Abdul Kalam describe his three close friends?**

**Ans.** Abdul Kalam says that in his childhood, he had three close friends. Their names were Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. All these boys were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. Ramanadha Sastri was the son of Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry. He was the high priest of the Rameswaram temple. When Ramanadha grew up, he took over the priesthood of the temple from his father. Aravindan went into the business of arranging transport for the pilgrims who visited Rameswaram. The third friend, Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways. Abdul Kalam says that although they were from different religion, none of

them ever felt any difference among themselves because of different religious backgrounds. Their parents were also liberal and generous. Ramanathan's father rebuked the new teacher for spreading the poison of social inequality in the minds of innocent children.

**Q.5. In this chapter, A.P.J.Abdul Kalam describes two of his teachers. What is the difference in the outlooks of these two teachers?**

**Ans.** Abdul Kalam describes two teachers of his school days. When he was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to the class. Abdul Kalam was sitting in the front row, next to his close friend Ramanadha Sastry. The teacher could not tolerate that a Muslim boy should sit with a Brahmin boy. He sent Abdul Kalam to the back bench. It made both Abdul Kalam and Ramanadha very sad. Later, however, the teacher realised his mistake.

The attitude of Abdul Kalam's science teacher was quite different. His name was Sivasubramanialyer. He did not believe in social barriers and tried his best to break them. One day he invited Abdul Kalam home for a meal. His wife was a traditional lady. She refused to serve a Muslim boy into her kitchen. But Iyer served Abdul Kalam with his own hands. Then he sat down beside him to eat his meal. Thus, we find that there is a lot of difference in the outlooks of the two teachers.

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

**(i) The name of the book written by Abdul Kalam is—**

- (A) Wings of Fire (B) My Childhood  
(C) My Autobiography (D) Wings of Science

**Ans. (A) Wings of Fire**

**(ii) How old was Abdul Kalam when the Second World War broke out in 1939.**

- (A) eight years (B) nine years  
(C) ten years (D) eleven years

**Ans. (A) eight years**

**(iii) Who of the following was not Abdul Kalam's close friend at school?**

- (A) Ramanadha Sastry (B) Aravindan  
(C) Sivaprakasan( D) Samsuddin

**Ans. (D) Samsuddin**

**(iv) The first that earned money for Abdul Kalam was**

- (A) Collecting and selling tamarind seeds (B) collecting and selling newspapers  
(C) Both (A) and (B) (D) none of the above

**Ans. (A) collecting and selling tamarind seeds**

**(v) Who was Sivasubramanialyer ?**

- (A) Abdul Kalam's new teacher in 5th standard (B) Abdul Kalam's science teacher  
(C) Both (A) and (B) (D) None of the above

**Ans. (B) Abdul Kalam's science teacher**

### **RTC Question 1.**

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

1. Which social groups does he mention? Were these groups easily identifiable (for example, by the way they dressed)?
2. 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.)
3. 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?
4. Narrate two incidents that show how differences can be created, and also how they can be resolved. How can people change their attitudes?

Answer:

1. The author talks about the people who belong to various castes and follow various religious preachings. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. Their dressing, traditions, culture and rituals were different.
2. They did share their personal experiences and friendships. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher who separated the author and his friend in the class and told him that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children.
3. The school teacher encouraged communal differences and Lakshmana Sastry and Sivasubramania Iyer discouraged this malpractice.
4. The influential people can do both the things. A teacher has the ability to bridge communal differences and can play with sentiments of the innocent and ignorant people. This is what the new teacher did. But the Science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer changed his wife's attitude and showed her the right path.

Question 2.

Why did Abdul Kalam want to leave Rameswaram?

What did his father say to this?

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

Answer:

1. Abdul Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram to study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.
2. His father said that he knew he had to go away to grow. He gave the example of a seagull and said that a seagull flies across the sun alone and without a nest.
3. He spoke these words because he intended to hone his skills. He knew the harsh reality of life that children may have to live far from their parents to make their career and earn their livelihood. So he showed his wisdom and intelligence in uttering these words.

**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.

*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.