



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Department: ENGLISH

Class: IX

Topic: My Childhood
STUDY NOTES

2021-22

MEANING OF CERTAIN WORDS AND PHRASES:

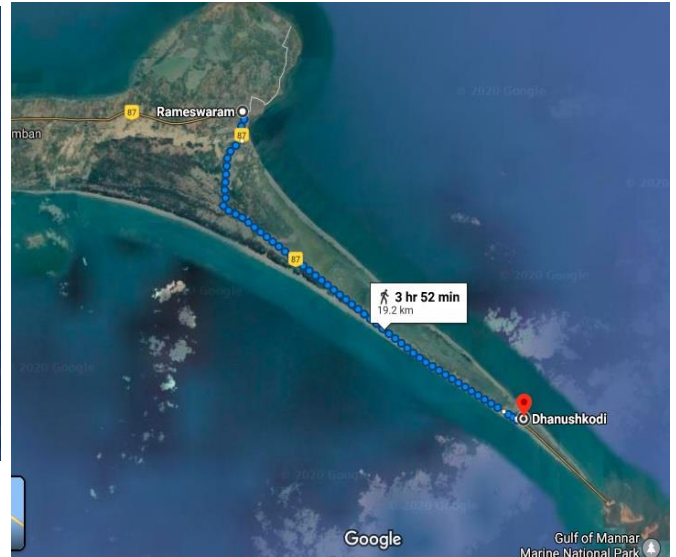
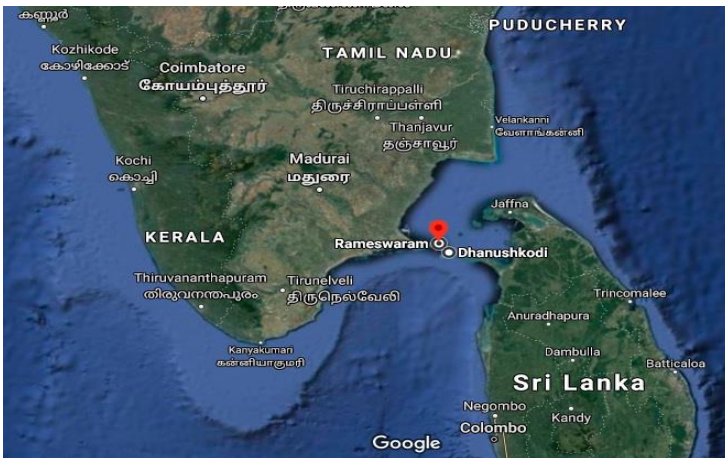
- innate: inborn; (a quality or feeling) in one's nature
- generosity of spirit: his soul sought to help others who were needy
- undistinguished: ordinary or common
- Pucca House means a house made of bricks, cement and limestone.
- austere: simple, strict and severe
- secure: safe
- Materially means in terms of things like clothes food, medicine
- Emotionally means in terms of love and affection.
- tamarind seeds: kind of fruit
- princely sum: generous amount (here, ironic)
- Anna: an old Indian coin, worth about six paise
- Dinamani: a Tamil daily newspaper
- isolated: Lonely, cut-off
- Allied Forces: the armies of U.K., U.S.A. and Russia during the Second World War
- casualty: loss
- suspension: end
- halt: stop
- filled the slot – fit into a place easily
- Pride: sudden increase in the feeling of satisfaction derived from one's own achievements.
- Half a century later means after a period of 50 years.
- Figures of authority: A person who had authority over another person; a person who has the power to give orders or make decisions.
- Inherited means a characteristic, or a quality which you have got from your parents or ancestors.
- socio-economic means in terms of society and money
- orthodox: strict
- could not stomach: could not tolerate
- downcast: sad or depressed
- summoned: called
- Bluntly: speaking in a direct and honest way, even if this offends or upsets people.
- conviction: a strong opinion or belief
- convey: communicated
- rigid: strict
- segregation: separation
- orthodox: one who follows the religion strictly
- conservative: traditional
- rebel: in opposition
- Mingle: interact with each other.
- on par: at the same level

- ritually pure: kept protected from all outside influences for the observances of religion
- perturbed: upset
- he Seethation: doubt, delay
- confronted: faced, tackled
- imminent: about to happen
- Unprecedented: never done or know before.
- Optimism: hope, cheer
- Longing: desire
- For they have their own thoughts: Excerpt from “Your Children’ – Poem by Khalil Gibran.

IMPORTANT POINTS FROM THE CHAPTER

- *A.P.J Abdul Kalam was born into a middle-class Tamil family and his place of birth - Rameswaram is an Island town in the state of Tamil Nadu, in the Bay of Bengal. Today, we know this state as Tamil Nadu but when he was born, at that time the state was known as Madras state.*
- *APJ Abdul Kalam’s father’s name was Jainulabdeen. APJ says that his father was not very rich, he did not have wealth, he was not highly educated but despite these disadvantages, he had some other qualities- he was naturally very wise and was generous too.*
- *APJ’s mother’s name was Ashiamma. She used to help his father. She was a great support and help to him. APJ’s mother was also generous and kind hearted. Every day she used to feed a lot of people. She fed a greater number of people from outside than the total number of the members in their family.*
- *Abdul Kalam had many siblings and he describes himself that he had short height and common looks, he did not have any exceptional looks. On the contrary, his parents were very tall and handsome. They were good looking. APJ did not inherit their physical qualities.*
- *APJ Abdul Kalam’s ancestral house was very old. It was built in the nineteenth century. It was a pucca house, which was made of bricks and limestone. It is located on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.*
- *APJ’s father was very simple but he was strict also. He wanted to live his life in a simple way and he used to teach his children not to waste money on unnecessary things. APJ says that his father used to avoid any kind of inessential comfort and luxuries. He provided them all the necessary things like food, clothes and medicines. APJ says that his parents fulfilled all his needs - whether it was any tangible thing, or their love and affection. This shows that he has the quality of gratitude. APJ is thankful to his parents for whatever they did for him.*
- *APJ was eight years old when the Second World War broke in the year 1939. So, we can calculate that he was born in the year 1931.*
- *The demand for tamarind seeds increased in the market. APJ used to collect and sell the tamarind seeds to a provision shop located on Mosque Street. He would earn a mere sum of one anna which equals six paise. When he addresses it as a ‘princely sum’ – something very great and valuable, he is being ironic as the amount was very meagre. At that time, this one anna meant a lot of money to him.*

- APJ Abdul Kalam's brother –in-law Jallaluddin used to tell him the stories of the ongoing World War. Later, APJ used to read the newspaper 'Dinamani' and used to look for the news of the same stories.
- Rameswaram was a small island town, far away from land. So, it was not affected by the World War in the beginning. But after some time, India had to join the war and combined with the Allied Forces. Then a state of emergency was declared in the country. (During emergency, the President's rule is implemented in the country. It is like a curfew in the country. A lot of privileges which are given to the people are withdrawn.)
- The first impact of World War II on the people of Rameswaram was the cancellation of the train stoppage at the Rameswaram station. Earlier, the train which came from India used to stop at Rameswaram station and then, went further to Dhanushkodi. But now, the halt was cancelled, and the train went from India to Dhanushkodi without stopping at Rameswaram. With this, the newspaper bundle which used to come for Rameswaram, was thrown out of the moving train as it reached Rameswaram road. (DO YOU KNOW: Dhanushkodi is now a deserted town? Find out why?)



- APJ Abdul Kalam's cousin Samsuddin, used to distribute the newspapers in Rameswaram. As the train stoppage was cancelled, and the newspaper bundle was thrown out of the moving train, he needed someone to help him catch it. APJ helped Samsuddin by catching the bundle and distributing the newspapers. In return, Samsuddin paid him a salary which was APJ's first earning.
- For a child, the figure of authority is his parents and the next figure of authority can be his teacher- a person who has authority over the child. APJ is saying that whenever a child is born, he has some qualities which he acquires from the elders in his family. These depend upon the social status of the family and the environment at home. From his father, he inherited honesty and self-discipline and from his mother he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness. His siblings also inherited these qualities from their parents.
- APJ had three best friends during his childhood. Their names are Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. All of them belonged to very strict Hindu Brahmin families and were ardent followers of their religion.

- As APJ was from a Muslim family, he says that during his childhood, all the children were so close to each other that they never felt they belonged to different religions. Religion was not a barrier in their friendship. There is a very famous temple in Rameswaram- the Rameswaram temple. APJ's best friend Ramanadha Sastry was the son of Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, the priest of this temple. When these three friends grew up, Ramanadha Sastry took the priesthood of the Rameswaram temple, Arvandan started a business of transporting the pilgrims to and from the Rameswaram temple and Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the southern railway- he was in-charge of the catering for the railways.
- Rama Kalyanam ceremony is known as Kalyanotsava. It means marriage festival. In South India, marriage is known as Kalyanam. So, Lord Ram and Seetha's marriage is called Seetha Rama Kalyanam ceremony. It is the ceremony of the depiction of the marriage between Seetha and Rama.
- Whenever the Shri Seetha Rama Kalyanam ceremony used to take place, APJ's family also took part in it. They used to arrange the boats for it. They used to make a special platform on the boats on which the statue of Ram and Seetha were placed and transported from the temple to the marriage site which was in the middle of a pond named Rama Tirtha. This pond was near APJ's house. When he was growing up, he never thought that there was any difference between Hindus and Muslims as they participated in the Hindu festivals wholeheartedly.
- APJ says that they listened to stories from the Ramayana and the life of the Prophet from their mother and grandmother as bedtime stories. So, they listened to stories of both Hindu Gods and Muslim Gods. There was no differentiation on grounds of religion.
- As APJ Abdul Kalam belonged to a Muslim family, he used to wear a cap on his head, which identified him as a Muslim. His friend Ramanadha Sastry who was the son of the priest of the Rameswaram temple belonged to a Hindu Brahmin family and used to wear the sacred thread worn by Brahmins. When these children were in class five, a new teacher came to their class. APJ Abdul Kalam recalls an incident which happened then.
- This new teacher could not tolerate that a Hindu priest's son was sitting next to a Muslim boy. He told APJ to go and sit on the last bench as he belonged to a lower rank of the society. Both the children felt very bad. When APJ changed his seat and went back and sat on the last bench, Ramanadha felt very bad. APJ still remembers the image of his friend Ramanadha crying. It left a lifelong impression on Kalam - of his friends' feelings for him.
- Both children went home and told their parents about this incident and Ramanadha's father, Lakshmana Sastry called the new teacher and scolded him. He told him not to kill the children's friendship by putting the venomous discrimination of caste and religious into their innocent minds. Lakshmana Sastry was very clear in himself. He told the teacher- either you ask sorry for the wrong you have done or else leave the school and Rameswaram town also. The teacher asked sorry for the mistake he had done and due to Laskshmana Sastry's determination, his thoughts about religion and caste changed.
- The division of society into four groups - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras was strictly followed in Rameswaram. Abdul Kalam's Science teacher

Sivasubramania Iyer was a religious person, an orthodox Brahmin but was a rebellious type of person. He did not believe in distinction on the basis of the caste system. He worked very hard to break these social barriers. He wanted that people of different castes should interact with each other. He encouraged APJ Abdul Kalam to work hard so that he could be at the same level as the highly educated people who lived in big cities.

- *Sivasubramania Iyer's wife belonged to a traditional and orthodox Brahmin family. She followed the religion very strictly and to keep the kitchen 'pure', no one from an inferior religion was allowed to enter the kitchen. When Sivasubramania Iyer called APJ Abdul Kalam for dinner at his home, his wife feared that a boy from a Muslim family would make her kitchen impure. She refused to serve him food in her kitchen. Sivasubramania Iyer was neither upset nor angry. He himself served food to APJ and sat down beside him to eat. His wife stood beside the kitchen door and looked at APJ while he was having food. APJ says that he doesn't think that she felt there was any difference in the way he was having his food or the way he was drinking water or in the way he cleaned the floor after the meal. He wants to highlight that religion does not matter as it does not alter the way in which a person eats food.*
- *When APJ was about to leave Sivasubramania Iyer's house, he invited him for dinner once again. When Sivasubramania Iyer saw that APJ Abdul Kalam was unsure, he asked him not to be upset. He added that if he had decided to change the system, to go against the norms of the society, he had to be strong and brave and confront the situation.*
- *When he visited Sivasubramania Iyer's home for dinner the next week, his wife made him sit in the kitchen and served him food with her own hands. This is the change that happened.*
- *When the Second World War got over in the year 1945, India was about to get freedom which happened in the year 1947. MK Gandhi, known as the 'Father of the Nation' was a crucial part of India's Freedom struggle. He said that Indians would build their own India. The entire country was filled with hope and happiness. Everyone was experiencing such a feeling which they had never felt before. Everyone was hoping that now they would get their freedom.*
- *APJ asked his father to allow him to go to Ramanathapuram, which was the district headquarters for higher studies. In reply, his father told him that he knew that APJ needed to go away so that he could move ahead in life. He gave the example of a seagull (Seagull is a bird.) which flies away in the sky all alone and does not have a nest. It means it does not have a home of its own as it keeps on flying from one place to another.*
- *When APJ's Mother came to know that he was about to leave home and wanted to go to Ramanathapuram for higher studies, she got upset. APJ's father tried to calm her down and told her a few lines from a famous Poem titled 'Your Children', written by Khalil Gibran. He said that your children are not your children, they are the children of life. Don't think that you can rule your children. They are a result of life's desire for itself. They have their own thoughts. He asked her to give them freedom to fulfill their thoughts.*