

Chapter 6.

My Childhood

Thinking About The Text

QI. Answer these questions in one or two sentences each.

- 1. Where was Abdul Kalam's house?**
- 2. What do you think Dinamani is the name of? Give a reason for your answer.**
- 3. Who were Abdul Kalam's school friends? What did they later become?**
- 4. How did Abdul Kalam earn his first wages?**
- 5. Had he earned any money before that? In what way?**

Answer. 1. Abdul Kalam's house was on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram in the former Madras state.

2. Dinamani could be the name of a newspaper because Abdul Kalam tried to trace the stories of the Second World War, which his brother-in-law told him, in the headlines in Dinamani.

3. Abdul Kalam had three close friends in school — Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasam. Ramanandha Sastry took over the priesthood of the Rameswaram temple from his father; Aravindan started a business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims and Sivaprakasam became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

4. The Second World War led to the suspension of the train-halt at Rameswaram station. As a result, newspapers had to be bundled up and thrown out from the moving train. This forced Kalam's cousin Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, to look for a helping hand to catch the bundles. Abdul Kalam took up this position and earned his first wages in the process.

5. Yes, he had earned some money when he started helping his cousin. When the Second World War broke out, there was a sudden demand for tamarind seeds in the market. He collected the seeds and sold them at a provision shop on Mosque Street. Usually, a day's collection earned him one anna.

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

Answer. 1. (i) Kalam's father, Jainulabdeen neither had much formal education nor much wealth. Despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a

true generosity of spirit. He avoided all inessential comforts and luxuries. (ii) Kalam's mother, Ashiamma was an ideal helpmate to her husband. She fed many people every day. The author was quite certain that far more outsiders ate with them than all the members of their own family put together. (iii) The author describes himself as one of many children. He was a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. He had a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

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

QIII. 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)?

(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.)

(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?

(iv) Narrate two incidents that show how differences can be created, and also how they can be resolved. How can people change their attitudes?

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

(ii) What did his father say to this?

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

Answer. 1. (i) The social groups that he mentioned were the Hindus and the Muslims. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. Abdul Kalam wore a cap, which marked him as a Muslim. His friend, Ramanadha Sastry, wore the sacred thread as he was a Hindu.

(ii) They naturally shared friendships and experiences. Abdul Kalam was Muslim and his friends were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. However, they were very close friends. During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, Kalam's family arranged boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site. Events from the Ramayana and from the life of the Prophet were the bedtime stories his mother and grandmother would tell the children of their family. All these incidents show that different social groups naturally co- inhabited Rameswaram.

(iii) There were two people who were very aware of the differences among them. One was the new teacher who came to the class when Kalam was in the fifth standard and

did not let him sit with Ramanadha Sastry who was a Brahmin. Also, the wife of Sivasubramania iyer (his science teacher) was very conservative and did not allow Kalam to eat in her pure Hindu kitchen. The people who tried to bridge these differences were Lakshmana Sastry (Ramananda father) and Sivasubramania iyer (his science teacher).

(iv) When Kalam was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to their class. Kalam always sat in the front row next to Ramanadha Sastry. The teacher could not digest the fact that a Hindu priest's son was sitting with a Muslim boy. The teacher immediately asked Kalam to sit on the back bench. Both Kalam and Ramanandha were unhappy with this development. When they narrated this story to their respective parents, Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher and told him that he should not spread the idea of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. The teacher apologized and regretted his behavior. In another incident, Kalam's science teacher Sivasubramania iyer invited him for a meal to his house. His wife, who was very conservative, was horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy eating in her pure Hindu kitchen. Consequently, she refused to serve him in her kitchen. However, Iyer was not disturbed by his wife's behavior. Instead, he served Kalam with his own hands and sat down beside him to eat his meal. When Kalam was leaving, Sivasubramania iyer again invited him for dinner the next weekend. On observing Kalam's hesitation, he told him not to get upset and said that once one has decided to change the system, such problems have to be confronted. When Kalam visited the house next week, Sivasubramania iyer's wife took him inside her kitchen and served him food with her own hands. Hence, in this way, differences can be resolved and people's attitudes can be changed.

2. (i) Kalam wanted to leave Rameswaram for further studies. He wanted to study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.

(ii) Kalam's father said that he knew that one day Kalam had to go away to grow. He gave the analogy of a seagull that flies across the sun alone and without a nest. He then quoted Khalil Gibran to Kalam's mother saying that nobody's children were their own children. They were the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through their parents, but not from them. They may give them their love, but not their thoughts as the children have their own thoughts.

(iii) His words meant that children have to be separated from their parents at some stage in life. They have to be let free so that they can realize their thoughts and goals. A seagull flies away alone and finds its own food and nest. Parents can nurture their kids with love, but they cannot give them their thoughts. The children have their own thoughts. They should themselves develop these thoughts naturally. Kalam's father spoke these words because Kalam's mother was hesitant about his leaving Rameswaram.

Thinking About Language

Q1. Find the sentences in the text where these words occur:

erupt, surge , trace , undistinguished , casualty

Look these words up in a dictionary which gives examples of how they are used. Now answer the following questions.

- 1. What are the things that can erupt? Use examples to explain the various meanings of erupt. Now do the same for the word surge. What things can surge?**
- 2. What are the meanings of the word trace and which of the meanings is closest to the word in the text?**
- 3. Can you find the word undistinguished in your dictionary? (If not, look up the word distinguished and say what undistinguished must mean.)**

Answer. 1. A few things that can erupt are anger, volcano, tooth, rash, riots, unrest, etc. Erupt has several meanings. Their explanation, with examples, is given as follows:

- (i) Start unexpectedly Example: Riots erupted in the city.
- (ii) Start to burn or burst into flames Example: The spark soon erupted into flames,
- (iii) Become active and spew forth lava and rocks Example: The molten lava erupted out of the active volcano.
- (iv) Forceful and violent release of something pent up Example: The difference in their views soon erupted in a fight,
- (v) Sudden appearance on the skin Example: On the day of the party, a pimple erupted on her face.
- (vi) Break out Example: Eruption of the wisdom tooth gives a lot of pain. Things that can surge are pride, anxiety, waves, boats, army. etc.

The several meanings it has can be explained with the following examples:

- (a) Sudden forceful flow Example: The boy drowned in the surging waves,
- (b) Rise and move forward The army surged towards their enemy.
- (c) Heave upward under the influence of a natural force Example: The boat surged in the high tide,
- (d) See one's performance improve Example: Hard work helped to surge Sandra's scores.
- (e) A sudden or abrupt strong increase Example: The surge in the stock market left people in a shock.
- (f) Rise rapidly Example: As time passed, her tension surged.

2. The following are the meanings of the word trace:

- (i) Follow, discover, or ascertain the course of development of something
- (ii) Make a mark or lines on a surface
- (iii) To go back over again
- (iv) Pursue or chase relentlessly
- (v) Find or discover through investigation
- (vi) Make one's course or travel along a path; travel or pass over. around, or along
- (vii) Read with difficulty The closest meaning of the word 'trace' in the text is 'to find or

discover through investigation'.

3. No. the word undistinguished does not exist in the dictionary However, its meaning can be derived from the meaning of the word distinguished', which denotes the special or eminent appearance or behaviour of a person'. Thus. undistinguished symbolises ordinary appearance or behaviour of a person'.

QII. 1. Match the phrases in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

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

2. Study the words in italics in the sentences below. They are formed by prefixing un – or in – to their antonyms (words opposite in meaning). • I was a short boy with rather undistinguished looks. (undistinguished) • My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts.(in + essential) • The area was completely unaffected by the war.(un + affected) • He should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance. (in + equality, in + tolerance) Now form the opposites of the words below by prefixing un- or in-. The prefix incan also have the forms il-, ir-, or im- (for example: illiterate –illiterate, impractical – impractical, irrational – ir + rational). You may consult a dictionary if you wish.

___adequate	___acceptable	___regular	___tolerant
___demanding	___active	___true	___permanent
___patriotic	___disputed	___accessible	___coherent
___logical	___legal	___responsible	___possible

Answer. 1.

	A		B
(i)	broke out	(c)	began suddenly in a violent way
(ii)	in accordance with	(f)	according to a particular rule, principle or system
(iii)	a helping hand	(d)	assistance
(iv)	could not stomach	(b)	was unable to tolerate
(v)	generosity of spirit	(a)	an attitude of kindness, a readiness to give freely
(vi)	figures of authority	(e)	persons with power to make decision

2. (i) Inadequate (ii) Undemanding (iii) Unpatriotic (iv) Illogical (v) Unacceptable (vi) Inactive (vii) Undisputed (viii) Illegal (ix) Irregular (x) Untrue

QIV. 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.

Answer. 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.

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

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 (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.

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, soybeans 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.

Answer. 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 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, soybeans and sunflower seeds. Olive oil is used for cooking, salad dressing etc. Olives are shaken from the trees and gathered up, usually by hand. The olives are ground 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.

Speaking

Q1. Here is a topic for you to
1. think about;
2. give your opinion on.

Find out what other people think about it. Ask your friends/seniors/parents to give you their opinion.

‘Career Building Is the Only Goal of Education.’

or

‘Getting a Good Job Is More Important than Being a Good Human Being.’ You can use the following phrases

(i) while giving your opinion:

- I think that ...
- In my opinion ...
- It seems to me that ...
- I am of the view that ...
- As far as I know ...
- If you ask me ...

(ii) saying what other people think:

- According to some ...
- Quite a few think ...
- Some others favour ...
- Thirty per cent of the people disagree ...
- Fifty per cent of them strongly feel ...

(iii) asking for others’ opinions:

- What do you think about ...
- What do you think of ...
- What is your opinion about ...
- Do you agree ...
- Does this make you believe ...

Answer. Do Attempt yourself.

Writing

Q1. Think and write a short account of what life in Rameswaram in the 1940s must have been like. (Were people rich or poor? Hard working or lazy? Hopeful of change, or resistant to it?).

Answer. Do Attempt yourself.

Thinking About The Poem

Q1. (i) “Beneath all uniforms ...” What uniforms do you think the poet is speaking

about?

(ii) How does the poet suggest that all people on earth are the same.

Answer. (i) The poet speaks about the various dresses that people of various countries wear but beneath them. the human body is same.

(ii) The poet says that nobody is different and peculiar. No country is foreign. A single body breathes beneath all uniforms. Moreover. the land is the same everywhere.

Q2. In stanza 1, find five ways in which we all are alike. Pick out the words.

Answer. In the first stanza the poet says that there is no difference between the body of a citizen of one country and the citizen of another country We have same kind of body we wear same kind of clothes. We walk on the same planet. and the end of each individual is the same.

Q3. How many common features can you find in stanza 2? Pick out the words.

Answer. The following common features are given in the stanzas: 1. sun 2. air 3. water. 4. Peaceful harvests required for human survival 5. same hands

Q4. "...whenever we are told to hate our brothers ..." When do you think this happens? Why? Who 'tells' us? Should we do as we are told at such times? What does the poet say.

Answer. Sometimes some selfish people instigate the innocent to harm others. They do it for their own benefit The common or ordinary man does not understand their tricks and starts hating his fellow human beings. They tell them to cause riots. The poet says that one should not follow anybody advice without brooding over The poet repeatedly says that there is no difference in them and the foreigners. The people of the entire world are the same.