

MY CHILDHOOD

HOT QUESTION

Question 1 : “Lessons learnt in our childhood not only shape our personality but also decide the kind of person we become.” Justify this statement with reference to My Childhood.

Answer: In My Childhood, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s early experiences and lessons deeply influenced the person he became. The values of simplicity, hard work, and humility were instilled in him by his parents, especially his father, who taught him about integrity and self-discipline. Growing up in an environment of religious harmony, Kalam also learned the importance of tolerance and respect for all religions. His interactions with friends and teachers shaped his understanding of equality and the need to overcome social barriers. These childhood lessons formed the foundation of Kalam’s character, guiding his life choices and making him a visionary leader, deeply committed to the ideals of peace, humility, and service to the nation.

Question 2: “The theme of overcoming social barriers is prominent in My Childhood.” Justify this statement with reference to the story.

Answer: In My Childhood, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam reflects on how he overcame social barriers, such as caste and religion, through the support of his family and friends. Despite belonging to a lower economic background and a different religion, Kalam’s teachers and friends never discriminated against him. His science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, invited him to his home, defying social norms and barriers of caste. Kalam’s upbringing in an atmosphere of inclusiveness helped him rise above prejudices. These experiences emphasize the theme of overcoming social barriers, illustrating that with the right mindset and support, societal divisions based on caste and religion can be bridged.

Short questions

1. Question: What role did Kalam’s family play in shaping his early life?

Answer: Kalam’s family, particularly his parents, played a crucial role in shaping his character. His father, Jainulabdeen, instilled in him values of honesty, self-discipline, and simplicity, while his mother, Ashiamma, taught him kindness and compassion. Their secular mindset, despite being devout Muslims, encouraged Kalam to respect other religions, shaping his outlook on communal harmony and respect for diversity.

2. Question: How did Kalam’s friendship with Ramanadha Sastry reflect religious tolerance?

Answer: Kalam’s friendship with Ramanadha Sastry, a Hindu, reflected the spirit of religious tolerance in their community. Despite belonging to different religious backgrounds, their friendship was strong and unshaken by social norms. This bond symbolized unity in diversity, as their families also shared mutual respect for each other’s beliefs, promoting a harmonious coexistence of different religions.

3. Question: How did Kalam’s science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, influence him?

Answer: Sivasubramania Iyer significantly influenced Kalam by teaching him the importance of breaking social barriers. Despite the prevailing caste system, Iyer invited Kalam, a Muslim, to his home and served him food. Iyer’s actions taught Kalam the value of equality and courage to challenge societal norms, helping shape Kalam’s progressive views on social harmony.

4. Question: How did Kalam's childhood experiences shape his outlook on education?

Answer: Kalam's childhood experiences emphasized the importance of education in personal growth. His father encouraged him to pursue knowledge beyond their small town, fostering his scientific curiosity. Teachers like Sivasubramania Iyer also motivated Kalam to overcome social challenges. These influences instilled in him a strong work ethic, leading him to believe that education is key to breaking barriers and achieving success.

5. Question: How did the atmosphere of Rameswaram influence Kalam's upbringing?

Answer: Growing up in Rameswaram, a small town known for its religious significance, Kalam was exposed to a diverse, yet harmonious community. This atmosphere of religious tolerance and respect influenced Kalam's upbringing, teaching him the value of peaceful coexistence among different faiths. It also fostered in him a sense of simplicity and spirituality, which became guiding principles in his life.

Question 6. 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 7. 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 8. Why did Lakshmana Sastry summon the new school teacher?

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 disparity. So 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 9. 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 10. 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.

Question 11. What was the reaction of Abdul Kalam's father when he wanted to leave home? What was his mother's reaction?

Answer: Abdul Kalam's father gave him his permission gladly. But his mother was a little worried. At this, his father told her that a child is like a seagull. One day, he has to learn to fly alone like the seagull. This cleared the doubts of his mother.

Question 12. 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.