

# CHAPTER - 11

## MY CHILDHOOD

### Extract Based Questions (3 marks each)

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

**Q.1.** 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.

**(i)** What was the annual event held in Rameshwaram ?

**(ii)** Where did the boats carry the idols of the Lord ?

**(iii)** Find a word from the passage that means "images of God". (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-014)

**Ans.** (i) The annual event held in Rameshwaram was Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam Ceremony.

(ii) The boats carried the idols of the Lord in the middle of the pond on the site of the marriage (or ceremony or function).

(iii) Idols.

**Q.2.** 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. Events from the Ramayana and from the life of the Prophet were the bedtime stories my mother and grandmother would tell the children in our family.

**(i)** How did the speaker's family help in Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam Ceremony?

**(ii)** What light does the passage throw on speaker's family ?

**(iii)** Find the word in the passage which means the same "the place where some event takes place". (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-016)

**Ans.** (i) The speaker's family used to help in Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam Ceremony by arranging boats with a special platform for carrying idols.

(ii) The passage shows that the speaker's family is a truly secular family which respected other religions also.

(iii) Site.

**Q.3.** 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 apologize 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.

**(i)** What brought about a change in the teacher ?

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

(iii) Find the word/phrase in the passage which means "strong opinion or belief".

(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-017)

Ans. (i) The strong sense of conviction that Lakshmana Sastry conveyed brought about a change in the teacher.

(ii) The speaker lived in a society which was truly secular.

(iii) Conviction.

**Q.4. 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, Sivasubramaniam invited me to join him for dinner the next weekend. Observing my habitation, 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 next week, Sivasubramaniam Iyer's wife took me inside her kitchen and served me food with her own hands.**

(i) Why did the teacher's wife watch them from behind the kitchen door ?

(ii) Why was the narrator hesitant to eat food, with a Hindu family ?

(iii) Find the word from the passage that means "to deal with" (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-017)

Ans. (i) The teacher's wife believed in the segregation of different people. She did not want APJ Kalam to enter her kitchen and serve food. She as a result hid behind kitchen door and saw everything.

(ii) The narrator felt hesitant to eat food with a Hindu family because he felt he was not welcomed in the family.

(iii) Confronted

One day, he invited me to his home for a meal. His wife was horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy being invited to dine in her ritually pure kitchen. She refused to serve me in her kitchen.

**Q.5. Sivasubramaniam 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.**

(i) Who is "he" and "me" in the first sentence ?

(ii) Why was his wife horrified ?

(iii) Find the word from the passage that means "agitated/upset". (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-019)

Ans. (i) "He" is Sivasubramaniam Iyer, and "me" is Abdul Kalam.

(ii) His wife was horrified at the idea of serving food to a Muslim boy in her kitchen.

(iii) Perturbed.

## **Short Answer Type Questions (2 marks each) (About 30-40 words each)**

**Q.1. Why did A.P.J. Abdul Kalam call his childhood a secure childhood ?**

(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-015)

OR

**"Kalam's childhood was a secure one, both materially and emotionally". Illustrate the fact. (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-042)**

Ans. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam called his childhood a secure one because he had loving and caring parents. He had all necessary things which included food, clothes, medicine, etc.

**Q.2. Do you think the new teacher deserved the treatment meted out to him ? Why/why not ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-016)**

Ans. Yes, he deserved the treatment meted out to him. He was spreading the poison of communal intolerance among the young minds which was a serious crime. If a teacher indulges in such a mean act he deserves no sympathy.

**Q.3.What was the difference in the attitudes of the science teacher and his wife towards A.P.J. Abdul Kalam ?(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-029)**

**Ans.**Though his science teacher was an orthodox Hindu, he broke the social barriers, and mixed with other religions and communities. He invited Abdul home and served him meals and even sat and ate with him. On the contrary, his wife was conservative and refused to serve Abdul.

**Q.4.How did Second World War give opportunity to Kalam to earn his first wages ?(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-030)**

**Ans.**Kalam's cousin was a news agent. Train halt at Rameshwaram station was suspended. So, the newspapers were bundled up and thrown out from a moving train. Kalam helped his cousin to catch the bundles. He was given money for it.

**Q.5.How does Abdul Kalam describe his mother ?(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-035)**

**Ans.**Abdul Kalam describes his mother by saying that she was an ideal wife and a gentle lady. He learnt from his mother to be gentle and kind. She even used to feed a lot of outsiders every day.

**Q.6.What did Abdul Kalam's family do during the annual Shri Sita Ram Kalayanam Ceremony ?(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-038)**

**Ans.**Abdul Kalam's family arranged for a boat with a special platform for carrying the idols of Lord Shri Sita Ram from the temple to the marriage sites situated in the middle of a pond called as Rama Tirtha. His parents even told him stories from the Ramayana.

**Q.7.What characteristics did Abdul Kalam inherited from his parents ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-043)**

**Ans.**Abdul Kalam inherited honesty and self discipline from his father and faith in goodness and kindness from his mother. Like his parents even he respected all religions.

### **Long Answer Type Questions (4 marks each) (About 80-100 words each)**

**Q.1.What do you know about A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's family after reading the lesson "My childhood"? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-013)**

**Ans.**A.P.J. Abdul Kalam tells us that his family was a Tamil middle class family from Rameshwaram. His father Jainulabdeen was not much educated, wasn't rich but was generous, wise, simple man but very strict and severe. His mother Ashiamma was a generous lady, and used to feed unlimited numbers of people in their home. Kalam's family respected all religions. They took part in Hindu festivals. His mother and grandmother told him stories from Ramayana. They always showered their love on their children and never forced their thoughts on them.

**Q.2. What incident took place at the Rameshwaram Elementary School when a new teacher came to the class ? (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-023)**

**Ans.** Kalam used to wear a cap and Ramanandha Sastry wore a sacred thread which marked him to be a Brahmin. When the new teacher came he could not tolerate a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. He ordered Kalam to go and sit on the back bench. This made Ramanandha sad. Abdul started to sit in the last row but it left a bad impression on Abdul. Both the kids narrated the incident to their parents. As a result the teacher was rebuked and reprimanded for spreading communalism and hatred among children.

**Q. 3. How did Abdul Kalam earn his "first wages" ? How did he feel at that time ?**

**(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-024)**

**Ans.** Kalam was only 8 years old when the second world war broke out in 1939. Then there was a great demand for tamarind seeds. Abdul used to collect those seeds and sell them in the market. His cousin Shamsuddin distributed newspapers. The train would not stop at Rameshwaram and the bundles of newspapers were thrown from the running train. Abdul was employed by his cousin to collect them. This way he earned his first wages. He felt very proud on earning his first wage.

**Q.4. "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted." What system is being refer in the sentence from the chapter "My Childhood"? What are such problems ?(Board Term 1,2012, ELI-025)**

**Ans.** System means system of discrimination on the basis of religion. The system includes the narrow-mindedness and poison of social inequality and communal intolerance. The Brahmins did not allow Muslims to enter their kitchen. The science teacher – a rebel by nature, invited Kalam to his home and proved that if one is determined to face problems and change the system, he will definitely succeed. Though, such indifferences come in everybody's life but a person should have a broader outlook and overcome the obstacles.

**Q. 5. How was the Science teacher Şiva Subramaniam Iyer, though an orthodox. Brahmin with a very conservative wife, a friend of Abdul Kalam. Give incidents to support your answer. (Board Term 1,2012, ELI-025)**

**Ans.** The Science teacher, Siva Subramaniam Iyer, wanted to break the social barriers between the Hindus and the Muslims. He wanted Kalam to be very highly educated as he recognized his intelligence. One day, he invited him over to a meal. His orthodox wife was totally horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy dining in her ritually pure kitchen. He did not mind anything said by his very conservative wife. He rather served the food to Abdul by his own hands. He also sat with him and dined together as well as invited him over again for another meal the coming weekend. Thus, this shows that he was a friend of Abdul Kalam even though Kalam was a Muslim and he himself was an orthodox Brahmin.

### **Value Based Question (4 marks)**

**Q. 1. 'Childhood' is the formative period of a child's life. The lessons learnt here always stays with a person. Comment on it in the light of the lesson A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.**

**Ans.** A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is one of the finest scientists in our country and was also our eleventh President. From his autobiography "Wings of Fire" it is amply clear that lessons learnt in our childhood not only shape our personality but also decide the kind of person we become. He learnt the lessons of religious tolerance, honesty and self-discipline early in his life. These qualities stayed with him throughout his life and have helped to make him one of the finest President of our country with so many diverse cultures.