**MY CHILDHOOD**

**By- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**

**WORD-MEANINGS**

**[PAGE 68] : Middle-class** = neither poor nor very rich,

**island** = a piece of land surrounded by water,

**erstwhile** = former,

**formal** = customary,

**despite**= in spite of,

**disadvantages** = shortcomings,

**Innate** = inner,

**wisdom**= the property of being wise,

**generosity** = kindness,

**ideal** = model,

**helpmate** = helper,

**recall** =remember,

**Exact** = right,

**undistinguished**=ordinary,

**handsome**= good looking,

**ancestral**= inherited from forefathers,

**limestone** = white powder stone,

**austere** = without show

**inessential** =unnecessary,

**luxuries** = items of excessive comfort,

**secure** = safe,

**materially** =economically,

**emotionally** = from the point of view of emotions,

**[PAGE 69]** :

**Broke out** = started,

**tamarind** = tamarind,

**erupted**= came at once,

**provision shop** = groceries shop,

**fetch** = bring

**princely** = royal,

**anna** – about six paise,

**attempt** = try,

**trace** = search

**isolated** = aloof,

**unaffected** = not influenced,

**forced** = compelled,

**allied forces** = combined army,

**emergency** = state of crisis,

**declared** = announced,

**casualty** = disaster,

**suspension** = temporary stop,

**halt**= stop,

**slot** = place,

**wages**= earnings, **surge** = wave, **inherited** = got from parents,; **characteristics** = qualities, गुण **specific** = particular, **environment** = surroundings; **self-discipline** = self-restraint,; **faith** = belief, = intimate, **orthodox** = traditional, **upbringing** = breeding, **priest** = head of a temple, **took over** = took control,

**[PAGE 70] : Pilgrim** = one who goes to a religious place, **catering** = supplying of provisions, **contractor** = one who works on a contract,; **ceremony** = function, **idols** = images; **site** = place, **situated**= located, **events** = incidents, **prophet** =- messiah, **marked** = showed, **row** = line,

**[PAGE 71] : Sacred thread** = holy yarn worn around the neck, **stomach (verb)** = tolerate, **ranking** = position, **downcast** = disappointed**utterly** = completely,**shifted**= went, **image** = picture, **lasting** = permanent**respective** = own, **summoned** =called, **communal**= sectarian, **intolerance** = not tolerating, **bluntly** = frankly; **apologize** =ask forgiveness, **quit** = leave, **regret** = feel sorry, **behaviour** = conduct, ; **conviction** = faith**ultimately** = in the end, ; **reformed**= improved, **conveyed**= expressed,

**[PAGE 72] : Rigid** = stern, **segregation** = separation, = traditional, **rebel** = revolutionary, **barriers**= obstacles**varying** = different, ; **mingle** = mix, ; **on par**  = equal, **horrified** = frightened, **ritually** = religiously, **refused** = denied, **perturbed** = disturbed,

**[PAGE 73] : Beside**= by the side of

**observed** = saw

**hesitation** = feeling of uncertainty

**upset** = disturbed, **confronted** = faced, **imminent** = going to happen,; **unprecedented**= as never before, **optimism** = hopefulness,

[PAGE 74]: **Seagull** = a seabird, **quoted**= spoke the words of, **longing** = desire

**Read the following passages and answer the questions given at the end of each :**

**PASSAGE 1**

I was one of many children–a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19th century. It was a fairly large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes: In fact. I would say mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.

**Questions** :

(i) What does Abdul Kalam say about his parents?

 (ii) Where was Abdul Kalam’s house situated?

(iii) When was his ancestral house built?

iv) Which words show that Abdul Kalam’s father was an austere man?

(v) Which word in the passage means ‘unnecessary”?

**Answers :**

(i)   He says that his parents were tall and handsome.

(ii)  His house was situated on Mosque Street.

(iii) His ancestral house was built in the middle of the 19th century.

(iv) He used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries.

 (v) Inessential.

The Second World War broke out in 1939 when I was eight years old. For reasons I have never been able to understand, a sudden demand for tamarind seeds erupted in the market. I used to collect the seeds and sell them to a provision shop on Mosque Street. A day’s collection would fetch me the princely sum of one arena. My brother-in-law Jallaluddin would tell me stories about the War which I would later attempt to trace in the headlines in Dinamani. Our area, being isolated, was completely unaffected by the war. But soon India was forced to join the Allied Forces and something like a state of emergency was declared.

**Questions :**

(i)   When did the Second World War break out?

(ii)   How old was Abdul Kalam when the Second World War broke out?

(iii)  What thing rose. in sudden demand after the Second World War broke out?

(iv)   When was a state of emergency declared?

(v)   Find words in the passage which mean the same as :

        (a) exploded (b) bring.

**Answers :**

(i)   The Second World War broke out in 1939.

(ii)   He was eight years old.

(iii)  It was the demand for tamarind seeds.

(iv)  A state of emergency was declared when India was forced to join the Allied Forces.

(v)   (a) erupted (h) fetch.

**Short Answer Type Questions  (30 to 40 words)**

**Q.1. What kind of poison was the young teacher spreading in the class?**

**Ans.** He did not like that a Muslim boy was sitting with a Hindu Brahmin boy. Thus the young teacher was spreading the poison of social inequality and communalism. He was poisoning the minds of children.

Q.2. What was the reaction of Abdul Kalam’s father when he wanted to leave home? What was his mother’s reaction

**?**

**Ans.** Abdul Katam’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.

**Q.3. What was Sivasuhramania lyer’s wife reaction when she came to know that a Muslim boy wasinvited to have a meal with them by her husband?**

**Ans.** Sivasubramania lyer’s still life was horrified to know this. She refused to serve food to a Muslim boy in her ritually pure kitchen. But the teacher was not perturbed at this. He served Kalam with his

**Q.4. What made Sivasubramania tier’s wife change his mind?**

**Ans.** Sivasubramania lyer’s wife watched Kalam having his man from behind the kitchen door. She did not find any difference in the way he took his meal ‘fins made her change her mind. On his next visit to the teacher’s house, she took Kalin inside the kitchen. She served him food with her own hands.

**Q.5. How did Lakshmana Sastry reform the young teacher?**

**Ans.** Lakshmana Sastry was Ramanadha Sastry’s father. When he came to know that the young teacher had shifted Kahan to the last row he got very angry. He summoned the teacher. He told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He asked him either to apologize or quit school. Thus the teacher regretted and he was reformed.

**Answer Type Questions- to be answered in about 100 -150 words each**

**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 Ashiarnma. 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 bask necessities of life like food, clothes and medicines. Thus, Abdul Kalam’s parents greatly influenced him.

**Q10. Teachers can either ‘make’ or ‘break’ their students’ lives. Cite two incidents from “My Childhood” to prove the truth of this statement.**

**Ans:** Abdul Kalam’s life was influenced in a major way by some experiences that he had during his school days. They were instrumental in shaping his character and later on his career.

Once, when he was in the fifth standard, a new teacher came to his class. He did not like Kalam, a Muslim boy, sitting next to Ramanadha Sastry, a Brahmin. So, he shifted Kalam to the back seat simply because it was in accordance with the social ranking of that time. This was a heart-breaking experience for Kalam. This poison of social inequality and communal intolerance could have demoralized the young Kalam if his friend’s father, Lakshmana Sastry had not intervened. He ensured that the teacher not only regretted his action but also reformed himself.

Another experience that made Kalam a stronger and wiser person was when his science teacher Sivasubramania lyer invited him to his house for a meal. During the meal Iyer noticed that Kalam was upset at his wife’s attitude, so he invited Kalam to another dinner the following weekend saying, “Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted”.

These two experiences could have had disastrous consequences for Kalam in particular and Rameswaram society in general, had they not been dealt with Farsight and wisdom by kalam’s teachers. Thus, from these incidents, it is clear that teachers can ‘make’ or ‘break’ their students’ lives.