

Childhood Beehive

English By A.P.J. Abdul kalam

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Thinking about the Text

I. 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.
2. Dinamani is the name of a local newspaper. It is so because Kalam traced the stories of the war in the head lives in Dinamani.
3. Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Shivaprakasan were Abdul Kalam's school friends. Ramanadha Shastry became the high priest of the Rameshwaram temple, Aravindan a transport businessman and Shivprakasan was the catering contractor for the southern railways.
4. During the Second World War, the newspapers were bundled and thrown out of a moving train. Abdul Kalam earned his first wages by helping his cousin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, to catch these bundles.

5. Yes, Abdul Kalam had earned some money before 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.

II. 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 was not a wealthy or educated person. However, he was an honest and generous man, who possessed great innate wisdom. He was self-disciplined and avoided all inessential luxuries.

(ii) Kalam's mother, Ashiamma was an ideal helpmate to her husband. She believed in goodness and profound kindness, and fed many people everyday.

(iii) The author describes himself as a short boy with undistinguished looks, who had a secure childhood. He is an honest and self-disciplined person, who believes in goodness and deep kindness.

2. He says that he inherited honesty and self discipline from his father. He further says that he inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness from his mother.

III. 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?

Answer

(i) He mentions two social groups of Rameshwaram – orthodox Brahmins and Muslims. Yes, these groups were easily identifiable. For example, by the way they dressed; Kalam wore a cap which marked him as a Muslim. Ramanadha Sastry wore a seared thread which marked him a Hindu.

(ii) No, they were not only aware of their differences but also they naturally shared friendships and experiences.

Kalam's mother and grandmother would tell the children of his family bedtime stories about the events from the Ramayana and from the life of the prophet. During the Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, his 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 his house.

(iii) The people who were very aware of the differences among them, were the young teacher who joined the Rameshwaram elementary school and came to teach Kalam's class, the fifth standard; and his science teacher's conservative wife who refused to serve Kalam in her ritually pulled kitchen. Those who tried to bridge these differences were Kalam's science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer who invited, served and dined with him to break social barriers so that people could mingle easily; and Lakshmana Sastry who conveyed the strong sense of conviction to the new young teacher to reform him.

(iv) The first incident to show that how differences can be created is that when the new young teacher found a Muslim student sitting beside a Hindu student, he asked Kalam to sit in the last row. His friend

Ramanadha Sastry was heartbroken. They informed their respective parents Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher and conveyed the strong sense of conviction which ultimately reformed him. The other incident shows that how differences can be resolved. The author's science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative tried to bridge these differences. People can change their attitudes by observing no difference in the way of Hindu's and a Muslim's eating of meals, drinking of water and cleaning of the floor.

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

(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 him 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 her children were not 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) Abdul Kalam's father's words bear great meanings. First, he inspired his son to go ahead above giving the example of the seagull. Secondly, he explained Kalam's mother to give his son opportunities to get higher education and to make progress. I think he spoke those words to encourage Abdul Kalam and to control the emotional attachment of his wife for Kalam.

Thinking about Language

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

erupt	surge	trace	undistinguished	casualty
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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 undistinguished in your dictionary? (If not, look for the word distinguished and say what undistinguished 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:

(i) Sudden forceful flow

Example: The boy drowned in the surging waves.

(ii) Rise and move forward

The army surged towards their enemy.

(iii) Heave upward under the influence of a natural force Example: The boat surged in the high tide.

(iv) See one's performance improve

Example: Hard work helped to surge Sandra's scores.

(v) A sudden or abrupt strong increase

Example: The surge in the stock market left people in a shock.

(vi) 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'.

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I.

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

Answer

	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. 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. (*un* + distinguished)
- 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 *in-* can also have the forms *il-*, *ir-*, or *im-* (for example: *illiterate –il + literate, impractical –im + practical, irrational – ir + rational*). You may consult a dictionary if you wish.

_____adequate	_____acceptabl e	_____regular	_____tolerant
_____demandin g	_____active	_____true	_____permane nt
_____patriotic	_____disputed	_____accessible	_____coherent
_____logical	_____legal	_____responsibl e	_____possible

Answer

<u>I</u> nadequate	<u>U</u> nacceptable	<u>I</u> rregular	<u>I</u> ntolerant
<u>U</u> ndemanding	<u>I</u> nactive	<u>U</u> ntrue	<u>I</u> mpermanent
<u>U</u> npatriotic	<u>U</u> ndisputed	<u>I</u> naccessible	<u>I</u> ncoherent
<u>I</u> llogical	<u>I</u> llegal	<u>I</u> rresponsible	<u>I</u> mpossible

IV. 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.

V. 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 injured and collapsed). In those days helmets (not worn).

Contractor (hit) on the head by a bouncer from Charlie Griffith.

Contractor's skull (fractured). The entire team (deeply concerned). The West

Indies players (worry). Contractor (rush) to hospital. He (accompany) by Frank Worrell, the Captain of the West Indies Team. Blood (donated) by the West Indies players. Thanks to the timely help, Contractor (saved). Nowadays helmets (routinely used) against bowlers.

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 (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, soya beans 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

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, soya beans 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.

No Men are Foreign (Poem) Beehive

By James Kirkup

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Thinking about the Poem

1. (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 is probably speaking about the uniforms that the soldiers wear at the time of war. The word "uniform" here could also mean the traditional dresses of a country.

(ii) The poet suggests that all people on earth are the same as they breathe, buried, wake, sleep, hate, love and labour. The importance of the sun and air and water is equal for everyone. Everyone needs peace and suffers from starvation during wars.

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

Answer

Words which suggest the five ways in which we all are like are:

Each of us has a similar body

All of us breathe

All of us walk

All of us lie

We live and die on the same earth

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

Answer

There are five common features in stanza 2. These features are the sun, the air, the water, peaceful harvest, hands and the labour.

4. "...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

Whenever there is war, leaders tell people to hate the other country. They tell us to do so because of their personal gains. But we should not act as a puppet in their hands and do as they say. We should understand that war is futile and analyses the situation before jumping to conclusions.. The poet says that if we fight against them, we kill and condemn ourselves.