

**ENGLISH**

## MY CHILDHOOD

~Summary~

**-by APJ Abdul Kalam**

### Birth, Childhood and First Earning of Abdul Kalam

Abdul Kalam was born in a middle class Muslim family in 1931 in the island town of Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. In his childhood, he was greatly influenced by his parents, his teachers and his friends.

Abdul's father, Jainulabdeen, was not much educated but he was a very generous and kind person. He was not rich but provided a secure childhood to Abdul and his brothers and sisters. Abdul's mother's name was Ashiamma. Abdul inherited honesty and self-discipline from his father and faith in goodness and deep kindness from his mother.

Abdul earned his first wages by working as a helper to his cousin, Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram. When the Second World War broke out in 1939, Abdul was only eight years old. There was a great demand of tamarind seeds at that time. Abdul used to collect these seeds and sell them in market.

### Incidents of Abdul Childhood

In his childhood, he had three close friends - Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindam and Sivaprakashan. All these boys were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. Once when he was in the fifth standard, a new teacher asked him not to sit in the front row along with the high caste Brahmin boys. Abdul found Ramanadha Sastry crying when he got up and went to the last row. This made a lasting impression on Abdul. This matter was brought to the knowledge of Lakshmana Sastry (Ramanadha Sastry's father). He was the head priest of the Rameswaram temple.

He told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. The teacher accepted his mistake.

### Anti-Casteist Action of Abdul's Science Teacher

On the other hand, Abdul was greatly influenced by his science teacher, Sivasubramania Iyer. He learnt the lesson of breaking social barriers from him. Iyer invited him to his home for a meal. His wife was an orthodox Brahmin who refused to serve food to a Muslim boy in her so-called 'ritually

pure' kitchen. Iyer served him with his own hands and sat down beside him to eat his meal. He convinced his wife to serve Abdul with her own hands next time he came, thus, successfully changing the conservative attitude of his wife.

### **Abdul gets Permission for Higher Education**

For higher education, Abdul asked permission from his father to leave Rameswaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram. His father happily gave permission, so that Abdul could develop his own career. His father convinced his hesitant mother by quoting Khalil Gibran, who had said that parents are a means for children to become independent from them - they don't belong to the parents themselves.

### **Conclusion of My Childhood**

The chapter – My Childhood portrays the childhood memories of one of India's greatest aerospace scientists, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and how he spent his early days. He also served as the eleventh President of India from the year 2002 to 2007.