4. Albert Einstein at School (Snapshot)

Q1: What do you understand of Einstein’s nature from his conversations with his history teacher , his mathematics teacher and the head teacher?

A: Einstein’s behaviour seemed to be extremely unruly. He did not believe in the prevailing system of education at that time. His nature was spontaneous (unplanned). He found learning dates and facts useless. Ideas lured (attract) him more than facts because of which he had a heated argument on education with his history teacher. He was so restless and indifferent to the importance of attending school that he did not mind not attending it all. From his conversation with his mathematics teacher, we come to know that he was a student who actually had some interest in mathematics,. It was the only class in which he paid a lot of attention and never wasted his time. He was not open and outright in front of his mathematics teacher. His behaviour had turned mild before his teacher which showed his level of respect and obedience for elders. Later, when he confronts (face) the headmaster, we find him defensive at the beginning and carefree at the end of the meeting.

Q2: The school system often curbs individual talents. Discuss.

A: School nowadays is about memorizing a bunch of facts and then writing them on exam. There is hardly learning involved. There are many unnecessary topics in syllabus. Students should be taught things of importance. The grading system is also not a proper way to assess a student.

The only aim is to pass the examination, get certificate/diploma/degree. The focus should be on increasing the mental and intellectual aptitude of a student.

The teachers should give individual attention to every student in the class so that their talent can be developed. But one-to-one interaction with the students is not easy and so individual talents like Einstein’s are curbed.

Summary:

1.The lesson begins with Albert’s encounter with his history teacher Mr Braun. The teacher is asking him about a particular date from the past. Albert says he does not like such type of education. He finds it useless to learn dates which can be found in books.

2.Then we come to know the place where Albert lives. He does not like this place at all. There are no civilized people and all the time people are violent.

3. Elsa is his cousin who lives in Berlin. She tells him that it is very easy to pass the examinations. Even the students who are dull than him pass the exams. She tells him to cram the topics without understanding them and it is the best to pass the exam. Albert says he can not do that.

4.Yuri is his friend. He tells Yuri that he can not stay any more in that school, he hated the school because there was over strict discipline in the school. He gets a medical certificate for nervous breakdown with his help from a newly passed doctor Ernst Weil.

5.Before going to submit this certificate to the headmaster for a leave of six months, he goes to his maths teacher Mr Koch to take recommendation letter to take admission in a college in Milan. He was interested only in Maths class and never wasted his time there.The teacher gave him the certificate.

6. Before Albert could take appointment to see the head teacher; he was called in the office. The headteacher told him that he was going to be expelled from the school because he did not let the teachers teach and always created disturbance.

7.Albert happily leaves the school with head held high. He does not bid goodbye to any teacher or student of that school.

8.Before leaving for Milan ,he meets his best friend Yuri, who wishes him good luck for the future.