

CHAPTER – 4

BEPIN CHOUDHURY'S LAPSE OF MEMORY

❖ Comprehension check Pg-62

Question 1:

Why did the man stare at Bepin Babu's in disbelief?

Answer:

The man stared at Bepin Babu in disbelief because he pretended that he could not believe the fact Bepin Babu was unable to recognize him. His actions made the unsuspecting Bepin Babu think he was losing his mind.

Question 2:

Where did Bepin Babu say he went in October' 58?

Answer:

Bepin Babu said that he went to Kanpur in October 1958. He was sure that he went to Kanpur at that time.

Question 3:

Mention any three (or more) things that Parimal Ghose knew about Bepin babu.

Answer:

Parimal knew the following things about Bepin Babu:

- 1) Bepin babu fell when visiting the Hundroo falls and cut his right knee.
- 2) Bepin Babu's wife deceased in 1948 and he was childless.
- 3) Bepin Babu's brother died insane, leaving a mark on Bepin Babu. So much so, that Bepin Babu didn't want to visit the mental hospital in Ranchi.
- 4) Bepin Babu did not like hotel food and wanted his meals cooked by a *bawarchi*.

❖ Comprehension check Pg-65

Question 1:

Why did Bepin Babu worry about what Parimal Ghose had said?

Answer:

All the things that Parimal said led Bepin Babu to think that he had lost the memory of a particular time from the past. Since Bepin Babu's brother was insane, he feared that this might be the beginning of his going insane too. That is why Bepin Babu worried about what Parimal Ghose said.

Question 2:

How did he try to decide who was right – his memory or Parimal Ghose?

Answer:

After consulting his own memory, Bepin Babu decided to ask Haridas Bagchi, who was the host during Bepin Babu's supposed

Ranchi visit. But Mr. Bagchi was out travelling Japan with his wife. Next, he thought about verifying the matter with Dinesh Mukerji. Parimal Ghose mentioned that Mr. Mukerji was in Ranchi too. But due to the sarcastic character of Dinesh Mukerji, Bepin Babu was afraid of being the butt of his jokes. Finally, Bepin Babu turned to Chunilal for help when he came to ask for a job. Chunilal supported Parimal Ghose's claims apparently without knowing any of it. This is how, Bepin Babu wanted to decide who was right, himself, or Parimal Ghosh.

Question 3:

Why did Bepin Babu hesitate to visit Mr. Mukerji? Why did he finally decide to phone him?

Answer:

Mr. Mukerji was a very sarcastic person. If he smelled a whiff of what was going on in Bepin Babu's life, he would make jokes about and make Bepin Babu's life even more miserable than it already is. This is why Bepin Babu hesitates to visit Mr. Mukerji.

Over the phone it was not possible for Mr. Mukerji to understand what was going on and Bepin Babu could cut the line whenever he wanted. This would stop Mr. Mukerji from knowing the uncomfortable truth. This is why he finally decide to phone him.

Question 4:

What did Mr. Mukerji say? Did it comfort Bepin Babu, or add to his worries?

Answer:

Mr. Mukerji said that Bepin Babu was in Ranchi in fact, adding to his woe.

It agitated Bepin Babu very much and he lost his appetite that night.

❖ Comprehension check Pg-68**Question 1:**

Who was Chunilal? What did he want from Bepin Babu?

Answer:

Chunilal was an old friend of Bepin Babu. Chunilal was in a financial crisis and he hoped that Bepin Basu will help him in getting a job.

Question 2:

Why was Dr. Chanda puzzled? What was unusual about Bepin Babu's loss of memory?

Answer:

Bepin Babu decided after talking to Dinesh Mukerji and Chunilal that he had a very specific partial loss of memory. Therefore, he told his doctor that he forgot only about ever being in Ranchi.

This mysterious memory loss got Dr. Chanda thoroughly confused.

Usual memory losses do not happen to such a particular memory as in the whole memory of ever having been to Ranchi. With all the other memories- short term and long term intact, it's highly unusual that Bepin Babu would lose only the memory of Ranchi.

❖ Comprehension check Pg-70

Question 1:

Had Bepin Babu really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi?

Answer:

No, Bepin Babu's memory was as good as ever. Chunilal misled him into believing that he lost his memory. In fact, Chunilal was playing a prank on Bepin Babu for not helping him out with his financial condition.

Question 2:

Why do you think Chunilal did what he did? Chunilal says he has no money; what is it that he does have?

Answer:

Chunilal wanted to teach a lesson to Bepin Babu. That is why he played a practical joke on Bepin Babu. Despite having no money,

Chunilal had his imagination intact; using that imagination he punished Bepin Babu.

❖ Working with the text

Question 1:

The author describes Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. What evidence can you find in the story to support this?

Answer:

Bepin Babu was doing a responsible job at a big firm and he was renowned for being a “tireless and conscientious worker”. His responsibility was so huge that he talked for half an hour at a crucial meeting. Moreover, he has been working at the same firm for twenty-five years for now. This affirms that Bepin Babu was a serious and hardworking man exactly like in the author’s description.

Question 2:

Why did Bepin Babu change his mind about meeting Chunilal? What was the result of this meeting?

Answer:

Bepin Babu initially was irritated as Chunilal refused to take the hint that Bepin Babu was unable to help him with his financial situation. However, on second thought he considered the fact that Chuni might be able to verify his doubts on the Ranchi trip in ’58.

That is why Bepin Babu changed his mind about meeting Chunilal.

Chunilal not only confirmed that Bepin Babu was in Ranchi but also mentioned that he himself arranged for the train ticket to Ranchi as he had been a travel agent back then. As a result, Bepin Babu's worst nightmare seemed to come true and the meeting only left Bepin Babu more miserable than before.

Question 3:

Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hundroo Falls that made him unconscious. What do you think was the reason for this?

Answer:

Bepin Babu went to visit Ranchi after his doctor Paresh Chanda asked him to do so in order to stoke his memory of going to Ranchi in 1958. After going there Bepin Babu realized that the station, the streets, the bazaar and everything else seemed new to him. Not a single memory of any kind came back to him. Unwilling to leave any stone unturned, he also went to the Hundroo Falls and realized his last hope was extinguished and no memory was ever coming back to him again. This realization along with the fact that his brother was an insane person, made him sick being the reason for Bepin Babu's unconscious at Hundroo Falls.

Question 4:

How do you think Bepin Babu reacted when he found out that Chunilal had tricked him?

Answer:

When Bepin Babu found out that Chunilal had tricked him into believing an absolute falsehood, he was equal parts relieved and embarrassed. He was relieved that his memory was flawless. On the other hand, he was so embarrassed to have been hoodwinked by an old friend, that he told his doctor a lie.

❖ Working with language

Question 1:

Look at these two sentences.

- He had to buy at least five books to last him through the week.
- Bepin had to ask Chuni to leave.

‘Had to’ is used to show that it was very important or necessary for Bepin Babu to do something. He had no choice. We can also use ‘have to’/’has to’ in the same way.

Fill in the blanks below using ‘had to’/’have to’/’has to’.

- (i) I _____ cut my hair every month.
- (ii) We _____ go for swimming lessons last year.
- (iii) She _____ tell the principal the truth.
- (iv) They _____ take the baby to the doctor.
- (v) We _____ complain to the police about the noise.
- (vi) Romit _____ finish his homework before he could come

out to play.

(vii) I _____ repair my cycle yesterday.

Answer:

(i) I **have to** cut my hair every month.

(ii) We **had to** go for swimming lessons last year.

(iii) She **had to** tell the principal the truth.

(iv) They **had to** take the baby to the doctor.

(v) We **have to** complain to the police about the noise.

(vi) Romit **has to** finish his homework before he could come out to play.

(vii) I **had to** repair my cycle yesterday.

Question 2:

Here are a few idioms that you will find in the story. Look for them in the dictionary in the following way.

First, arrange them in the order in which you would find them in a dictionary.

(Clue: An idiom is usually listed under the first noun, verb, adjective or adverb in it. Ignore articles or prepositions in the idiom).

To help you, we have put in bold the word under which you must look for the idiom in the dictionary.)

(i) at/from close quarters (close: adjective)

(ii) break into a smile (break: verb; look under 'break into something')

(iii) carry on (carry: verb)

(iv) have a clean record (you may find related meanings under both these words).

(v) beat about the bush (verb)

Now refer to your dictionary and find out what they mean.

Answer:

The following table gives the meaning of the idioms.

Idiom	Meaning
(i) at/from close quarters:	Very close to something or somebody; often, uncomfortably so.
(ii) break into a smile;	To start smiling
(iii) carry on:	Continue an activity or task
(iv) have a clean record:	To have no record of any prior misdemeanor
(v) beat about the bush:	Discuss a matter without coming to the point.

Question 3:

Study the sentences in the columns below:

A	B
I saw this movie yesterday.	I have seen this movie already.
Bepin Babu worked here for a week last year:	Bepin Babu has worked here since 2003
Chunilal wrote to a publisher last week.	Chunilal has written to a publisher.
I visited Ranchi once, long ago	I have visited Ranchi once, before.

Compare the sentences in the two columns, especially the verb forms.

Answer the following questions about each pair of sentences.

- (i) Which column tells us that Bepin Babu is still working at the same place?
- (ii) Which column suggests that Chunilal is now waiting for a reply from the publisher?
- (iii) Which column suggests that the person still remembers the movie he saw?
- (iv) Which column suggests that the experience of visiting Ranchi is still fresh in the speaker's mind?

Answer:

- (i) Column B tells us that Bepin Babu is still working at the same place.
- (ii) Column A suggests that Chunilal is now waiting for a reply from the publisher.
- (iii) Column A suggests that the person still remembers the movie he saw.
- (iv) Column B suggests that the experience of visiting Ranchi is still fresh in the speaker's mind.

Question 4:

Given below are jumbled sentences. Working in groups, rearrange the words in each sentence to form correct sentences. You will find that each sentence contains an idiomatic expression that you have come across in the lesson. Underline

the idiom and write down its meaning. Then use your dictionary to check the meaning.

(i) Stop/and tell me/beating about/what you want/the bush.

(ii) don't pay/If you/ attention/you might/the wrong train/to the announcement/board

(iii) The villagers/tried/the crime/on the young woman/to pin.

(iv) Bepin Babu/orders to/telling

people/under/loved/doctor's/eat early/that he was.

(v) the students/The teacher/his eyebrows/ when/said that/all their lessons/raised/they had revised.

Answer:

(i) Stop beating about the bush and tell me what you want.

Idiom: Beating about the bush = discuss a matter without coming to the point.

(ii) If you don't pay attention to the announcement you might board the wrong train.

Idiom: to board: to take/ to ride

(iii) The villagers tried to pin the crime on the young woman.

Idiom: Pin the crime: to accuse someone of the crime.

(iv) Bepin Babu loved telling people that he was under doctor's orders to eat early.

Idiom: Under doctor's orders: absolutely essential

(v) The teacher raised his eyebrows when the students said that they had revised all their lessons.

Idiom: Raised his eyebrows = doubting the truthfulness of a situation or statement.

❖ Speaking and Writing

Question 1:

What do you think happened after Bepin Babu came to know the truth? Was he angry with this friend for playing such a trick on him? Or do you think he decided to help a friend in need?

Answer:

After Bepin Babu came to know the truth, he was relieved and embarrassed in equal parts. He was relieved that his memory was flawless. On the other hand, he was so embarrassed to have been hoodwinked by an old friend, that he told his doctor a lie.

Question 2:

Imagine you are Bepin Choudhury. You have received Chunilal's letter and feel ashamed of that you did not bother to help an old friend down on his luck. Now you want to do something for him.

Write a letter to Chunilal promising to help him soon.

Or

A prank is a childish trick. Do you remember any incident when someone played a prank on you or your friend? Describe the prank in a paragraph.

Answer:

I remember a prank that was pulled on my best friend Sumana in the pool car on way to school. We were sitting in our usual side of the car, when Ravi came to talk to us about homework. He never finishes his homework so we were surprised. Anyway we talked; later when we got off the pool car at the school gate, everybody was laughing at Sumana. Looking at her I started laughing too cause she was sporting a tail. In reality, Ravi took a rope and tied it to her belt. This made the rope look like she had a tail. Sumana was furious!

❖ The Last Bargain - Working with the poem

Question 1:

Who is the speaker in the poem?

Answer:

The speaker in the poem is a person looking for work. He is not a very usual man, but somebody with a depth of persona.

Question 2:

“The king, sword in hand” suggests

(i) wealth (ii) power (iii) more power than wealth

Mark the appropriate item in the context of stanza 1.

Answer:

“The king, sword in hand” suggests (ii) power. What the king has but no one else has to match him, is power. The king might as

well be the wealthiest person in his state but it is power that sets him apart from any of his men.

Question 3:

The old man offered the speaker a lot of money. Why did turn down the offer?

Answer:

The old man offering money was not enough to hire the man as money is the most material thing. That is why he turned down the offer.

Question 4:

Find the poem, lines that match the following. Read both one after another.

- (i) I have nothing to give you except goodwill & cheer.
- (ii) Her happiness was no more than sorrow in disguise.
- (iii) The king's might was not worth much.

Answer:

- (i) "I hire you with nothing." –said by the child.
- (ii) Her smile paled and melted into tears- this is said about the fair maid.
- (iii) But his power counted for naught- said about the king who boasted of his power.

Question 5:

How did the speaker feel after talking to the child on the beach?

Answer:

This was no ordinary child as the child represented God Himself. The joy and happiness that God gives is compared to none. That is why the speaker felt bliss after talking to the child on the beach.