

Chapter - 4

Bepin Choudhury's Lapse Of Memory

Comprehension Check

Q1. Why did the man stare at Bepin Babu in disbelief?

Answer. The man stared at Bepin Babu in disbelief because Bepin Babu did not recognise him even though he was sure that he knew him and had met him in Ranchi.

Q2. Where did Bepin Babu say he went in October '58?

Answer. The man stared at Bepin Babu in disbelief because Bepin Babu did not recognise him even though he was sure that he knew him and had met him in Ranchi.

Q3. Mention any three (or more) things that Parimal Ghose knew about Bepin Babu.

Answer. Parimal Ghose knew the following about Bepin Babu: He had no children. He had lost his wife ten years ago. His only brother had died insane, which was why he did not want to visit the mental hospital in Ranchi.

Q4. Why did Bepin Babu worry about what Parimal Ghose had said?

Answer. Bepin Babu continuously worried about what Parimal Ghose had said because he had shown that he knew many intimate facts about him. He knew about the bag of books, his wife's death and his brother's insanity. Considering that Parimal Ghose knew so much about him, Bepin Babu couldn't say with conviction that he was making a mistake about the Ranchi trip.

Q5. How did he try to decide who was right—his memory or Parimal Ghose?

Answer. He tried to decide whether his memory was right or Parimal Ghose by looking at his right knee where Parimal had claimed that there would be a cut. There was certainly a mark of an old cut. However, he could not decide if the cut was the result of his fall in Ranchi or due to some incident in his childhood. Then, he decided to ask Dinesh Mukherjee, who according to Parimal Ghose was with him in Ranchi. He felt that asking him would put an end to his confusion.

Q6. Why did Bepin Babu hesitate to visit Mr Mukerji? Why did he finally decide to phone him?

Answer. Bepin Babu hesitated to visit Mr Dinesh Mukerji because he was afraid of the ruthless sarcasm he would have to face. He felt that if the whole story about Ranchi was false, then Mr Mukerji would think that he had gone insane. Being constantly troubled by

the incident at the bookshop and having no other means for verifying the claims of Primal Ghose, Bepin Babu finally decided to ask Mr Mukerji. However, he decided to phone him because that way his embarrassment wouldn't be visible to the latter.

Q7. What did Mr. Mukerji say? Did it comfort Bepin Babu, or add to his worries?

Answer. Mr Mukerji said that they had indeed gone to Ranchi in '58. This added to Bepin Babu's worries as he could not figure out how he could possibly have forgotten about the trip.

Q8. Who was Chunilal? What did he want from Bepin Babu?

Answer. Chunilal was an old schoolmate of Bepin Babu. He had been having a rough time lately and had been coming to see Bepin Babu for a job.

Q9. Why was Dr Chanda puzzled? What was unusual about Bepin Babu's loss of memory?

Answer. Dr Chanda was puzzled because he had never dealt with a case such as Bepin Babu's. It was outside his field of experience. The unusual thing about Bepin Babu's case was that he remembered everything in his past except for one particular incident. Dr Chanda said that Bepin Babu must have been to Ranchi. However, due to some unknown reason, the entire episode had slipped out of his mind.

Q10. Had Bepin Babu really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi?

Answer. No, Bepin Babu had not really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi. It was a trick played by Chunilal.

Q11. Why do you think Chunilal did what he did? Chunilal say she has no money; what is it that he does have?

Answer. Chunilal did what he did because Bepin Babu did not help him at a time when he had no money and required a job. However, Bepin Babu did not do anything for him. Chunilal said that he did not have money. However, he had imagination.

Working With Text

Q1. The author describes Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. What evidence can you find in the story to support this?

Answer. The author has described Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. He worked daily in his office. It was a big firm and he was doing a responsible job. He had been with the firm for twenty- five years. He had a reputation for being a tireless, conscientious worker.

Q2. Why did Bepin Babu change his mind about meeting Chunilal? What was the result of this meeting?

Answer. Bepin Babu changed his mind about meeting Chunilal because he thought that it might be possible that the latter remembered something about the Ranchi trip. When Chunilal confirmed that Bepin Babu had been to Ranchi, Bepin Babu decided to see a specialist doctor.

Q3. Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls. What do you think was the reason for this?

Answer. Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls because he had a fall. He had broken his hip.

Q4. How do you think Bepin Babu reacted when he found out that Chunilal had tricked him?

Answer. After finding out that Chunilal had tricked him, Bepin Babu must have been filled with remorse for his 'unfeeling behaviour' towards an 'old friend down on his luck'. He would have realised that he had indeed been a victim of forgetfulness as he had forgotten the meaning of friendship in a time of 'affluence'.

Working With Language

Q1. 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.

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(vii) I had to repair my cycle yesterday.

Q2. 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. Do Attempt It.

Q3. 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 hesaw?

(iv) Which column suggests that the experience of visiting Ranchi is still fresh in the speaker's mind?

Answer. (i) Column B (ii) Column A (iii) Column B (iv) Column B

Q4. Given below are jumbled sentences. Working in groups, rearrange the word sin 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. One sentence has been worked out for you as an example. Jumbled sentence: vanished/ The car/ seemed to/ into thin/ have/air. Ans: The car seemed to have vanished into thin air. Idiom: vanished into thin air: disappeared or vanished in a mysterious way

(i) Stop/and tell me/beating about/what you want/the bush Ans: _____ Idiom: _____

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

(iii) The villagers/tried/the crime/on the young woman/to pin Ans: _____ Idiom: _____

(iv) Bepin Babu/orders to/telling people/under/loved/doctor's/eat early/that he was Ans: _____ Idiom: _____

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

Answer. (i) Stop beating about the bush and tell me what you want. Idiom: beating about the bush - avoiding the main topic, not coming straight to the point

(ii) If you don't pay attention to the announcement, you might board the wrong train.
Idiom: pay attention - listen carefully

(iii) The villagers tried to pin the crime on the young woman. Idiom: pin the crime - place the responsibility of the crime

(iv) Bepin Babu loved telling people that he was under doctor's orders to eat early.
Idiom: under doctor's orders - in complete necessity

(v) The teacher raised his eyebrows when the students said that they had revised all their lessons. Idiom: raised his eyebrows — expressed doubt/surprise

Speaking And Writing

Q1. 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. I thought Bepin Babu must have got angry when he found the truth about Chunilal's trick. But at the same time, Bepin must be upset, regret himself for not helping his old friend in his weak time when Chunilal needed him most. He could have helped his friend by money or could help in finding a new job.

Q2. Imagine you are Bepin Choudhury. You have received Chunilal's letter and feel ashamed 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 friends? Describe the prank in a paragraph.

Answer. Dear Chunilal, I got your letter and am feeling ashamed and guilty for not bothering to help my old friend in his down luck. I am sorry, I was a bit unsympathetic towards you _ I was so engulfed in myself that I did not even think of our old friendship. You played the trick on me and have taught me a right lesson. A person like me should be taught like this and have learned my lesson. I promise to you, would never repeat this kind of mistake with anyone. But now, I have decided to help you out. I have talked to one of my publisher friends to consider your novel and he has promised me to help you. Besides this, I have talked to my Company's manager and asked him to fix a suitable job for you. I want to apologise for my unfriendly behaviour. Please forgive me and meet me as soon as possible. Yours Bepin

Working With The Poem

Q1. Who is the speaker in the poem?

Answer. The speaker in the poem is a man who is looking for work.

Q2. "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. (ii) power

Q3. The old man offered the speaker a lot of money. Why did he turn down the offer?

Answer. The old man offered the speaker a lot of money. However, he turned it down because he realised that money cannot give him what he actually desires. He had not till then realised that what he actually desired was happiness. When the old man was counting the gold coins, the speaker realised that once the money was finished or the work the old man wanted to hire him for was done, he would again be out of work. More than that, he would be bound in this bargain. It did not satisfy him and therefore, he turned it down.

Q4. Find in the poem, lines that match the following. Read both one after another.

(i) I have nothing to give you except goodwill and 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:

(ii) 'Her smile paled and melted into tears'.

(iii) 'But his power counted for naught'.

Q5. How did the speaker feel after talking to the child on the beach?

Answer. After talking to the child on the beach the speaker felt extremely happy.