

Class-VIII

Subject- English

Chapter- Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory

Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory- Summary

Bepin Choudhury, popularly known as Bepin Babu, went to Kalicharan's bookshop every Monday after work to stock up on his books to last a week. He lived alone, and did not have many close friends and was not fond of idle talk. One such Monday, when he was at Kalicharan's bookshop looking for his books, a man named Parimal Ghose addressed him as if he knew Bepin Babu. Bepin Babu did not recognise him. The man claimed to have seen Bepin Babu in '58 when Bepin Babu visited Ranchi. But, Bepin Babu had never been to Ranchi. Despite wanting to visit the place, he had not been able to do it, so he told the man that he had been mistaken. But the man knew quite a lot of details about Bepin Babu and did not stop talking. Bepin Babu left the shop and went on a drive alongside Ganga. He was a hardworking man who had a responsible job at a big firm. It was hard for him to believe that he could not remember such an important event of his life and that too, from six to seven years ago. He did not want to think about what the man had said but could not stop doing so. He thought of visiting his friend Dinesh Mukerji who the man said was there on the trip with him. But he did not visit him because he did not want to feel any embarrassment face to face. According to Bepin Babu, he was attending the Pujas in Kanpur and stayed at his friend Haridas' residence. He thought of confirming with him but remembered that he had moved to Japan and he did not have his new address. He was finally calmed after dinner when he snuggled in bed with his new book. It was only the next day in office before lunch that he thought of clearing this on call with Dinesh Mukerji. Dinesh also told him that they both went on a trip to Ranchi in the October of '58. Bepin Babu got more worried. On that very evening, an old friend of his named Chunilal visited him. Bepin Babu knew that he had come to ask for help for a job for which Bepin Babu had told him that there was very little hope for. He told his servant to send him away but he suddenly realised that he could ask Chunilal about his trip. Chunilal, too, remembered about the trip and he claimed to have booked his tickets to Ranchi for the same. Bepin Babu accepted that he had been working too hard and decided to go see a doctor. He visits a physician, Dr Chanda and his case was out of his area of experience and expertise. Still, he suggested that he visit Ranchi once again. Bepin Babu booked a first class ticket to Ranchi. As soon as he stepped out of the train, he realised that he had never been to this place. When he went to visit Hudroo falls, he was found unconscious by two Gujrati gentlemen who had come to picnic with a group. On waking up, Bepin Choudhury realised that there was no hope left for him and he came back to Calcutta. Upon reaching home, he receives a letter from Chunilal elaborating on how Chunilal plotted the entire punishment for Bepin Babu for unfeeling towards an old friend when he was out of luck. When the doctor visits him, Bepin Babu tells him that all is fine with his memory now and wants to get a pain killer for his hip pain that he got after having a fall in Ranchi. The doctor calls it "a unique case".

Comprehension Check (Page 62)

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

A. The man stared at Bepin Babu in disbelief because Bepin Babu did not recognise the man and even refused to have been to Ranchi where they seemed to have initially met.

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

A. Bepin Babu claimed to have spent his October of '58 at a Puja with his friend in Kanpur.

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

A. Parimal Ghose claimed to have met Bepin Babu in Ranchi and he seemed to know quite a bit about Bepin Choudhury. Parimal mentioned that Bepin always carried his bag full of books to sight-seeing locations. He even knew few personal details about Bepin like he had no children and had lost his wife ten years ago.

Comprehension Check (Page 65)

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

A. Bepin Babu worried about what Parimal Ghose had said because Parimal knew very minute and intimate details about Bepin Babu but was only mistaken about his trip to Ranchi. Moreover, it was difficult for him to believe that he had forgotten such an important incident. It was also hard for him to accept that there could be something wrong with his memory.

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

Ans. Bepin Choudhury decided to call his friend, Haridas Bagchi, with whom he had spent the 'Puja' of 1958. Since Bagchi was away in Japan, he rolled up his trousers to see for himself the cut on his knee. He, later, decided to call up Dinesh Mukherji and Chunilal, to get confirmation

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

Ans. Bepin Babu was a little hesitant to visit Mr Mukherji because he thought that it would be quite embarrassing for him to ask details of his life from his friend.

Also, if Dinesh Mukherji would confirm their Ranchi visit, Mukherji would get to know about his state of mind. Therefore, Bepin Babu decided to call him.

4. What did Mr Mukherji say? Did it comfort Bepin Babu or add to his worries? Ans. Mr Mukherji confirmed that both of them had been to Ranchi in the year 1958. This quite obviously added on to Bepin Babu's worries.

Comprehension Check (Page 68)

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

Ans. Chunilal was a very old friend of Bepin Babu. They had been together at school. Chunilal was going through a very rough time as he didn't have a job at present. He had been coming to meet Bepin Babu over and over again for job prospects.

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

Ans. Dr Chanda was puzzled because Bepin Babu seemed to remember everything about his life, except this one episode.

The peculiarity of Bepin Babu's case was that unlike patients who seem to forget parts of their memory, Bepin Babu had forgotten just this one episode of his life.

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

Ans. No, Bepin Babu had not lost his memory or forgotten anything. He had been fooled to believe so by Chunilal that he had made a trip to Ranchi and then he was unable to remember it.

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

Ans. Chunilal had been a very old friend of Bepin Choudhury. He was claiming help from Bepin Babu on account of this age-old friendship. According to Chunilal, the privileged circumstances of Bepin Babu seemed to make him overlook the ill condition of his friend. This deeply hurt Chunilal. As his revenge, he played this trick upon Bepin Babu. Chunilal wrote in his letter that he had no money, but what he did have was his imagination. He was using his imagination now to write a novel which was being reviewed by a good publisher.

Working With the Text (Page 70)

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

Ans. The author describes Bepin Babu as a hard and a responsible worker. He took his job quite seriously and did all his work with great dedication. The proof for this is the fact that even while Bepin Choudhury was quite unwell because of the Ranchi episode and when Dr Chanda recommended him to go to Ranchi once again, he called up at his office, gave a set of instructions before setting on this journey. This clearly proves that even in condition of ill health, he placed his office work at priority.

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

Ans. Chunilal had been coming over and over again to meet Bepin Babu to make appeal for a job. Bepin Babu, therefore, asked him to leave. Immediately, however, Bepin Babu changed his mind because he thought Chunilal might have a fair idea about his Ranchi visit in 1958.

After this meeting, however, Bepin Babu was left further troubled, since Chunilal confirmed Bepin Babu's Ranchi visit.

3. Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls.

What do you think was the reason for this?

Ans. Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls perhaps because that was his lost hope at regaining the lost parts of his memory. He was already in bad health, worrying too much about his lapse of memory and at Hudroo Falls when he fails to recollect that episode, he probably got over burdened by his thoughts and lost consciousness.

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

Ans. Bepin Babu was shocked, dumb founded and embarrassed when he found out that Chunilal had tricked him. He didn't wish to share his embarrassment with anyone and therefore, in keeping with Chunilal's lie told Dr Chanda that on visiting Ranchi he had recollected everything.

(Extra important questions)

1. Discuss a regular feature of Bepin Choudhury's Monday evenings?

Ans. Every Monday, after work. Bepin Choudhury used to go to Kalicharan's bookshop in the new market to buy at least five books that would last him the entire week.

2. According to Parimal Ghose he had arranged a car for Bepin Babu to travel to which place?

Ans. Parimal Ghose had arranged a car for Bepin Babu to travel to Hudroo Falls and Netarhat

3. Why was Bepin Choudhury unable to consult his friend, Haridas Bagchi?

Ans. Bepin Choudhury was unable to call Haridas Bagchi because Haridas Bagchi and his wife had gone to Japan and Bepin babu did not have his new address.

4. What was the nature of Chunilal's last job?

Ans. In his previous job, Chunilal worked at a travel agency.

5. Is Dr Chanda successful in diagnosing Bepin Babu's problem?

Ans. No, Dr Chanda was unable to diagnose Bepin Choudhury's problem. He thinks that it was quite a peculiar case.

6. Where did Bepin Choudhury spend the October of 1958?

Ans. During October 1958, Puja, Bepin Choudhury was in Kanpur with his friend, Haridas Bagchi and his family.

7. Did Parimal Ghose know Bepin Choudhury?

Ans. No. Parimal Ghose was not familiar with Bepin Choudhury. He was merely acting in accordance with Chunilal's instructions.