



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH- (2023-24)

QUESTION BANK -THE ADVENTURE – by Jayant Narlikar

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

'The Adventure' is written by Jayant Narlikar in a way that is both instructive and entertaining. It transports us to a parallel world where we get to see a different India. The story is an ideal blend of history and science.

THEME

Jayant Narlikar's 'The Adventure' is a science fiction and is based on the conflicting thoughts of a historian. Professor Gaitonde, who is on a journey like never before, his experiences make him feel that history is different from reality. He finds himself in an odd situation where the history he read is different from reality. The misadventures that caused Professor Gaitonde's unconsciousness has been explained on the basis of Catastrophe Theory and lack of determinism in Quantum Theory. Reality is never one-sided but has many manifestations. However, the observer can see only one at a time. Professor Gangadhar Pant Gaitonde is thrust into an unfamiliar world. He decided to travel to Bombay and study history books. Bombay was not at all what he had imagined. The East India Company continues to rule there. As per his knowledge of history, the East India Company was dissolved shortly after the events of 1857. He proceeded towards the library and discovered a missing link of information. After the battle of Panipat, circumstances took a new turn. The Marathas had won the war. In the story we discover that there may be alternate realities other than the one we perceive, and while they may appear realistic, they are all in our heads and a result of our thoughts.

PROFESSOR GAITONDE

Professor Gaitonde is the main character of the story, 'The Adventure'. A session on the implications of the Catastrophe theory in the third battle of Panipat was discussed by the historian. His car crashed into a truck on the way, and he fell into a coma. During the comatose state, he entered a world where history is not as we know it. For example, in the third battle of Panipat, Afghans beat the Marathas, murdering their leader, Vishwas Rao. In a parallel universe, where Prof. Gaitonde had been, the Marathas won that battle, and Vishwas Rao narrowly escaped being shot. The triumph of the Marathas ushered in a plentitude of improvements and reforms across the nation. When the professor regained consciousness, his companion Rajendra Deshpande attempts to explain his weird experience using two scientific theories: Catastrophe Theory and the lack of determinism in Quantum Theory.

THE PARALLEL WORLD

Professor Gaitonde, a professor of History, headed straight from Pune to Bombay. He met Anglo-Indians and the symbolic Union Jack on the carriages in the Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway. In his attempt to understand where the course of history went otherwise, he visited a library and studied four books of history, beginning with Asoka and ending with the third battle of Panipat. The story, 'The Adventure', presents an account of parallel history, where the Marathas won the third battle of Panipat over the Afghans. Following their success, India became a democratic country. Professor Gaitonde rolled up a copy of the book into his pocket unconsciously. Then he arrived at Azad Maidan, where a seminar was in progress. The meeting did not have a chairman to preside over. This was surprising to the professor. When Gaitonde tried to occupy the chair and deliver a speech, the audience did not want one. He was humiliated with rotten tomatoes and eggs.

Some highlights of the story

Professor Gaitonde, a historian, is seen time-travelling into the past. When he travels through time, he discovers himself in Mumbai, in a parallel world, a place he has never seen before. We see him in the real world, conversing with his friend Rajendra.

The Mumbai he is now in is completely different from what it is in his known reality. He arrives at the Victoria Terminus Station, which he finds to be very clean. 'Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway' was written on the train's carriages. The staff was also made up of Anglo-Indians and a few British commanders.

Gaitonde noticed the East India Company Headquarters as soon as he exited the station. Likewise, there were primarily British-branded buildings and British banks. In reality, his son's Forbes office was nowhere to be seen. To tackle the puzzle, he visited the library and read about the Battle of Panipat. After reading, he discovers that the specifics differ from what actually occurred in his world. In fact, he learns that British rule never reached India, which he finds surprising. And from here, the climax of The Adventure starts.

After visiting the library, he went to the Azad Maidan and got into a confrontation with the crowd there. Gaitonde came out of his time-travel experience after being kicked off the stage and was found comatose in Azad Maidan. As a result, he seeks clarification from Professor Deshpande. During his tour, he discovers that reality differs from what we see with our senses. Professor Deshpande, although reluctant initially to believe Gaitonde's account, finds it hard to reject the possibilities of a parallel world upon seeing the piece of evidence from the book Gaitonde was carrying in his pocket. He explains the Catastrophe theory and the lack of determinism in Quantum Theory to elaborate that the reality we live in can take on different forms or aspects.

Physicist, Rajesh Deshpande feels that there are more universes other than the one we can perceive with our eyes. He further reveals that Gaitonde went to a parallel reality and saw things based on his last thoughts before hitting the coma. Since he was in a coma as a result of an

accident, he found himself in a world where catastrophe theory was applied in the context of the third battle of Panipat, the very last thought he was having before he hit the comatose stage.

I. Answer the following questions in brief.

Q1. 'Facts can be stranger than fantasies, as I am beginning to realise'. What are the facts considered by Rajendra Deshpande to be stranger than fantasies?

Ans-. Rajendra's initial thought were that Professor's mind was playing tricks. However, the copy of Bhausahebanchi Bakhar and the torn page were the vital piece of evidence, this made Rajendra admit that experience has not been fantasy but a fact stranger than fantasy.

Q2. How did Rajendra relate the lack of determinism in quantum theory to the Professor's experience?

Ans- The path of an electron fired from a source cannot be determined. In one world, the electron is found here, in another there. Once the observer finds where it is, we know which world we are talking about. All those alternative worlds could exist just the same, catastrophic situations offer radically different alternatives for the world to proceed. All the alternatives are viable but the observer can experience only one at a time.

Q3. How did Professor Gaitonde make the transition from one reality to the other?

Ans- At the time of collision, Professor Gaitonde was probably thinking about the catastrophe theory and its role in wars. Perhaps he was wondering about the Battle of Panipat and the neurons in his brain acted as a trigger.

Q4. What aspects of the India he had seen, did Gangadharant appreciate?

Ans-. A country that has not been subjected to slavery of the white man. It had learnt to stand on its feet and knew what self- respect was. The British was allowed to retain Bombay for purely commercial reasons.

Q5. How did the victory of the Peshwas in the Battle of Panipat help them?

Ans- It built their confidence; established their supremacy; as a result, the East India company deferred its plan.

Q6. What strange thing did Professor Gaitonde face as he emerged from the station in Bombay?

Ans- Professor Gaitonde emerged from Victoria Terminus Station. He found himself facing an imposing building. It was the headquarters of The East India Company. He was shocked and surprised. The East India Company was wound up after the uprising of 1857. It had no business to be there. Here it was, not only alive but flourishing So history had taken new turn', perhaps before 1857.

Q7. Describe Professor Gangadharant's experience at Forbes building.

Ans. Professor Gaitonde wanted to meet his son Vinay Gaitonde. He entered Forbes building and enquired about him from an English receptionist. She informed him that no person of that name worked there or in any of their branches. This blow was not totally unexpected. 'If he himself

were dead in this world' when The East India Company was still alive, then his son might not even have been born!

Q8. Why did Professor go to the Town Hall and what did he do there?

Ans- Professor Gaitonde had come to Bombay with a special mission. He would go to a big library and browse through history books. He entered the reading room and asked for a list of history books including his own. His five volumes duly arrived on his table. He browsed through all the volumes till it was time for the library to close.

Q9. What was the change that 'evidently had occurred in the last volume?

Ans. Out of his five volumes, only in the fifth history had taken a different turn. The style of his book was, of course, his own but the description was different. While describing the Battle of Panipat, it was mentioned that the Marathas won it handsomely. Abdali was routed. He was chased back to Kabul by the victorious Maratha army led by Sadashivrao Bhau and his nephew Vishwasrao. The book also mentioned the consequences of the Battle.

Q10. Why did Professor decide to browse through Bhausahebanchi Bakhar and what important clue did he find in it?

Ans- Professor Gaitonde had to find out how the Marathas won the Battle of Panipat. Although he seldom relied on the Bakhars for historical evidence, he found them entertaining to read. He came across a passage in Bhausahebanchi Bakhar which described how Vishwasrao escaped a narrow death. ... God was merciful. A shot brushed past his ear. So Vishwasrao was saved. Professor Gaitonde got the clue he needed the most.

Q11. What was the vital piece of evidence that Professor Gaitonde produced to Rajendra Deshpande and how did the Professor acquire it?

Ans. The vital piece of evidence was a torn page from Bhausahebanchi Bakhar. As Gangadharant left the library, he had unknowingly slipped the Bakhar in his pocket. He discovered his error and wanted to return it the next morning. But everything was lost in the melee of Azad Maidan. Only that torn-off page remained. That page described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet and the Marathas won the battle. It was a vital evidence of history taking a different turn.

Q12. What is the meaning of the statement, "The lack determinism in quantum theory"?

Ans- The basic idea behind the quantum theory is that the energy exists in units and that can't be divided, determinism says that all events and actions are determined by external forces acting on the will. Thus, the theory means that the energy contained in electrons is not determined by the external forces that fire it.

II. Answer the following questions in detail.

Q. 1. Describe Professor Gaitonde's fantastic Town Hall experience in the library.

Ans. As Professor Gaitonde emerged from Victoria Terminus Station, he found himself facing an imposing building. It was the headquarters of The East India Company. The East India Company

had been wound up after the uprising of 1857. But it was still there alive and flourishing. He had to find out why and how it was still there.

Professor Gaitonde went to the Town Hall library. He asked for a list of history books including his own. His five volumes were on the table. In the four history was as he knew it. But in the fifth volume history had taken a different turn. The book mentioned that the Battle of Panipat was won by the Marathas. Abdali was routed and chased back to Kabul. After the Battle the Marathas established their supremacy in the north.

It was mentioned that Vishwasrao missed the bullet. The Mughal Emperor was just a puppet of the Marathas. The Britishers gave up their expansionist programme. They offered aid and help to the Peshwa. In return Bombay was leased to them till 2001. Then he went through Bhaushebanchi Bakhar. It also wrote that 'a shot brushed past Vishwasrao and he survived'. Professor Gaitonde was surprised how his fifth volume and the Bakhar presented a distorted view of history. Absent mindedly, he shoved the Bakhar into his left pocket and came out.

Q2. How did Rajendra Deshpande try to rationalise Professor Gaitonde's fantastic or catastrophic experience?

Ans. Professor Gaitonde had slipped the Bakhar in his pocket as he left the library. He lost the book but only a torn page remained with him. Luckily for him, the page contained vital evidence. Rajendra read the page. It described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet and the Marathas won the battle. Then Gangadharpant produced his own copy of Bhaushebanchi Bakhar. It read how Vishwasrao 'was hit by the bullet'. There were two different accounts of the same battle. In one account Vishwasrao was hit by a bullet and killed. In the other he escaped the bullet and survived and Marathas won the battle of Panipat.

Rajendra tried to explain this fantastic experience on two scientific theories. If the catastrophe theory was applied to the Battle of Panipat, the murder of Vishwasrao was the turning point. It led to the defeat of the Marathas. Losing their leader was crucial for the army. But on the torn page history had taken a different turn. Vishwasrao survived. The battle had gone the Marathas' way.

Rajendra Deshpande explained that reality is never unique. But it is limited to what we see. The behaviour of electrons can't be predicted. They may be here, there, anywhere. Alternative worlds can exist but the observer can see only one at a time. He remained unconscious for two days after his collision with a truck. He experienced two worlds at a time. The one he lived in now and the other where he spent two days. One world presents history as we know it. But the other presents a different version of history. The Battle of Panipat separates the two worlds.

Q3. Describe Professor's bitter experience in the Azad Maidan. Why did he convey his regrets to the organizer's of the Panipat seminar?

Ans. Professor Gaitonde was in Bombay. He had a frugal meal and then set out for a stroll towards the Azad Maidan. In the Maidan he found a crowd moving towards the pandal. The lecture was in progress. He was staring at the platform. There was a table and a chair but the latter was unoccupied. The presidential chair unoccupied! The sight moved him deeply. He swiftly moved towards the chair. The speaker stopped in mid-sentence. He was too shocked to the latter was continue.

Professor Gaitonde went to the mike and gave vent to his views. He told the audience that an unoccupied presidential chair was like Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark. But the audience was in no mood to listen to him. They shouted at him to keep the platform empty. But Gangadharpant kept on talking. He soon became a target for a shower of tomatoes, eggs and other objects. Finally, the audience swarmed to the stage and ejected him bodily. In the crowd Professor Gaitonde was nowhere to be found. All he knew was that he was found in the Azad Maidan in the morning. He remained unconscious for two days after he had a collision with a truck. The incident left him a broken and bitter man. He decided never to preside at another meeting. Hence, he conveyed his regrets to the organisers of the Panipat seminar when they approached him to preside at the seminar.

Q4. What was the difference in the actual events of the Battle of Panipat and the ones reported in the alternative universe?

Ans 4 - Professor Gaitonde wanted to look for accounts of the battle itself, so he went through the books and journals before him. At last, he found Bhausahebanchi Bakhar'. There he found one now in a three-line account of how close Vishwasrao had come to being killed but the 'merciful God had saved him. A shot had brushed past his ear and he had missed death by inches. However, in this world in which Gaitonde had written his volumes of history, Bhausahebanchi Bakhar' reported that Vishwasrao had died fighting. God had 'expressed His displeasure. He was hit by the bullet'. The entire history seemed to have changed radically.

Q5. But we live in a unique world which has a unique history. Why did Professor say so?

Ans 5- Rajendra tried to rationalize Professor Gaitonde's experience on the basis of two scientific theories known today. He had passed through a catastrophic experience. He applied it to the Battle of Panipat. The Maratha army was facing Abdali's troops on the field of Panipat. There was no great disparity between the latter's troops and the opposing forces. So, a lot depended on the leadership and the morale of the troops. In the history known to us Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed. This proved to be the turning pointing in the battle. Whether Bhausaheb was killed in battle or survived is not known. The soldiers lost their morale and fighting spirit and were defeated. However, in the alternative universe the bullet missed Vishwasrao, and it boosted the morale of the army and provided just that extra force that made all the difference. But, Professor Gaitonde felt comparable statements are made about the Battle of Waterloo, which Napoleon could have won. But all this is assumption. we live in a inimitable world which has a distinctive history. This idea of "it might have been' is not acceptable for reality.

III. Briefly explain the following statements from the text.

1 "You neither travelled to the past nor the future. You were in the present experiencing a different world."

Ans 1- Gangadharpant made a transition from one world to another and back again. After his collision with a truck he became unconscious. He was able to experience two worlds although one at a time. The one he lived in the present and the one where he spent two days ago. His body remained in the present but his mind was experiencing a different world. In this world history

had taken a different turn. He assumed that the Battle of Panipat was won by the Marathas. This world clashed with the other world which presented the other version of the same battle.

2. "You have passed through a fantastic experience: or more correctly, a catastrophic experience.

Ans 2- Rajendra tried to rationalise Professor Gaitonde's fantastic experience on the basis of the catastrophe theory. His experience was 'fantastic' as it was unusual. More correctly it was a catastrophic experience. Catastrophic situations offer radically different alternatives of the same reality. The juncture at which Vishwasrao was killed proved to be the turning point. For the troops that particular moment was crucial. The loss of the leader resulted in the loss of their morale and the battle. But on the torn page, the crucial event had gone the other way. Their leader survived. It boosted the morale of the army and they won. According to the catastrophe theory, reality is never one-sided it has different manifestations.

3. "Gangadharpant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him."

Ans 3- Gangadhar faced two different manifestations of the same reality. One aspect presented before him the country he knew. It was India as it was described in the books of history. The Battle of Panipat that was fought in 1761 ended with the rout of the Marathas. The history as he knew it showed Abdali winning the battle. The other presented a different version of history. The separation took place in the Battle of Panipat. The second version presented most of India being ruled by the Marathas. They got victory in the battle. It presented a strong and prosperous India. The East India Company was only to aid and help it grow more self-sufficient. Gangadhar compares two nations that he saw. He knew about an India which saw the fall of the Peshwas and was under British slavery. He appreciates India which he saw in two days. It was completely different. It was not a slave of the British. It was independent and had self-respect. He was comparing both these countries – the one he already knew and the one he was seeing around him. Both these countries had very different histories.

4. "The lack of determinism in quantum theory!"

Ans4-There is lack of determinism in quantum theory. Reality is never one-sided. Imagine many world pictures. Alternative worlds can exist at the same time. When an electron is fired from a source it may be here, there and anywhere. There is lack of determination. Once the observer finds where it is, we know which world we are talking about. In the first state, we have the electron in a state of higher energy. In the second state, it is state of lower energy. Such transitions are common in microscopic systems. They can happen in a macroscopic level too.

5. "You need some interaction to cause a transition."

Ans5- Catastrophic situations provide radically different alternatives to proceed." As far as reality is concerned, all alternatives are viable. But the observer can experience only one of them at a time. By making a transition, we are able to experience two worlds although one at a time. We need some interaction to cause a transition. In Professor Gangadharpant's case it was the

Battle of Panipat that caused a transition. He experienced that What would have happened had the battle gone the other way.

IV. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q1. ‘Yes, the reply was factually correct’. On the basis of this statement, pick up the correct option.

1. Gangadhar Pant was going to Bombay for the first time.
 2. Gangadhar Pant had been to Bombay before.
 3. Gangadhar Pant was travelling to a different Bombay for the first time.
 4. Gangardhar Pant wanted to hide the details of his journey from Khan.
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 3 and 4
(d) 1 and 4

Q2. Why did the Peshwas, in spite of their supremacy, not drive out the East India Company?

- (a) They wanted to avoid further conflicts in the region.
(b) The East India Company was too weak to be taken seriously
(c) The East India Company had aid and experts in science and technology that would make the local centers self-sufficient.
(d) The Peshwas lacked the military power to overcome the Europeans.

Q3. Which of the following is not part of the different India Gangadhar Pant had seen?

- (a) India was not ruled by the British
(b) It allowed the British to stay in Bombay for purely commercial reasons
(c) Marathas were routed by Abdali in the Battle of Panipat and the Marathas’ influence weakened.
(d) The Shahenshah of Delhi is the ceremonial head of the state of India.

Q4. “Sometimes buried in the graphic but doctored accounts...”. Pick the option in which the meaning of ‘doctored’ is NOT the same as it is in the passage.

- (a) He was accused of providing doctored evidence.
(b) He did more than practice medicine. He doctored people
(c) He plays Cricket well on doctored pitches.
(d) He doctored my speeches to suit the illiterate villagers.

Q5. ‘Facts? What are the facts? I am dying to know!’ The expression indicated what Professor Gaintonde was feeling. Pick the option that correctly states these feelings

1. Terror
2. Surprise
3. Curiosity
4. Displeasure

5. Approval

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 4 and 5

Q6. 'Like planets around the sun...' What is the topic or tenor of the comparison here?

- (a) Electrons
- (b) Peshwas
- (c) Bakhar
- (d) Quantum and catastrophe theories

Q7. 'Like a piece of iron attracted to a magnet, he swiftly moved towards the chair. The image of 'magnet' is used to describe

- (a) Gangadharpant
- (b) The Chair
- (c) The public lecture
- (d) A metal

Q8. But I cannot make such an assertion for the electron. 'Such an assertion' refers

- (a) Movement in a precise path towards a specific target
- (b) Unpredictable movement with no definite destination
- (c) The transition from one world to another
- (d) The existence of alternative worlds

Q9. 'The troublemaker, Dadasaheb was relegated to the background and he eventually retired from state politics. The phrase 'relegated to' here means-

- (a) Lowered to
- (b) Promoted
- (c) Upgraded
- (d) Discarded

Q10. 'The train began to slow down beyond the others and stopped only at its destination, Victoria Terminus.' professor Gaitonde noticed as the train entered the British Raj territory that-

- (a) The station was neat and clean
- (b) The staff comprised of Anglo- Indians and Parsees
- (c) There were no Britishers
- (d) Both a and b

IV. MCQs Answers:

1. b) 2 and 3
2. The East India Company had aid and experts in science and technology that would make the local centres self-sufficient
3. Marathas were routed by Abdali in the Battle of Panipat and the Marathas' influence weakened
4. He did more than practice medicine. He doctored people
5. b) 2 and 3
6. electrons
7. the Chair
8. a movement in a precise path towards a specific target
9. Lowered to
10. d) both a and b

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