

## The Adventure – Important Questions

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**Q. Describe the conversation between Professor Gaitonde and Khan Sahib about the place they had to go.**

**Ans.** It was at Sarhad that Khan Sahib told Gaitonde that the British Raj began from that place. He asked the professor where he was going. As for himself, he was going to Peshawar. For this purpose, Khan Sahib will go from Bombay to Delhi, then to Lahore and then Peshawar.

**Q. What led Professor Gaitonde to believe that ‘history has taken a different turn’ perhaps before 1857?**

**Ans.** Professor Gaitonde noticed an imposing building facing Bombay V.T., called East India House, Headquarters of the East India Company. He knew East India Company had been wound up shortly after the events of 1857. Yet, here it was not only alive but also flourishing. So, he concluded that history had taken a different turn.

**Q. How did the shops and office buildings along Horny Road differ from those he knew well?**

**Ans.** The Bombay he knew had a tower of OCS building. It peeped above the shorter Victorian buildings. There was Handloom House also. There were no such buildings along the Horny Road. Instead, there were Books and Woolworth department stores and offices of Lloyds, Barclays and other British banks.

**Q. How did the victory in the battle of Panipat affect the balance power?**

**Ans.** It was a great morale booster to the Marathas. It established their supremacy in northern India. The influence of Bhau Saheb and Vishwas Rao increased. The East India Company postponed its expansion programme. Vishwas Rao and his brother Madhav Rao had political sharpness and bravery. The company’s influence was reduced to small areas near Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

**Q. What do you think made Rajendra realize that facts can be stranger than fantasies?**

**Ans.** Professor Gaitonde presented two totally different written accounts of the Battle of Panipat as contained in Bhau-Sahebanchi Bakhar. The one he had come across in the other world described how Vishwas Rao narrowly missed the bullet. The account which he had in the familiar world described that Vishwas Rao was hit by the bullet.

**Q. What do you understand by, ‘The lack of determinism in quantum theory’?**

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**Ans.** Quantum theory is based on the idea that energy exists in units that can't be divided. Determinism is the doctrine that all events and actions are determined by external forces acting on the will. The phrase, thus means that the energy contained in electrons is not determined by the external forces that fire it.

**Q. Describe the encounter between Gaitonde and Khan Sahib?**

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**Ans.** Prof. Gaitonde and Khan Sahib were travelling by Jijamata Express. The train was going from Pune to Bombay. After a long tunnel, the train stopped at small station called Sarhad. Here, Khan Sahib spoke to Gaitonde. He informed him that the area of British Raj began at that station. He asked if Gaitonde was going to Bombay for the first time. Gaitonde replied in positive because it seemed that he was in a new world where everything was different from what he had known. Gangadhar Pant, then, asked Khan Sahib how he would go to Peshawar. Khan Sahib said that he would go to Delhi from Bombay, then to Lahore and from there to Peshawar. Thereafter, Khan Sahib spoke a lot about his business which Gangadhar Pant listened with interest. He did so because this was giving him some idea of the life of this new India he was in.

**Q. Gangadhar Pant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him. Elucidate.**

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**Ans.** Gangadhar Pant was an eminent writer of Pune. He had written the 'History of India' in five volumes. During his train journey he was wondering what course history would have taken if the result of the Battle of Panipat had gone the other way, This helped him to make a transition to the other world. India was altogether different country in this world. Unlike the India he knew so well, the India he was witnessing around his was self-sufficient and selfrespecting. It was independent. It had never been enslaved by the white men. It had allowed the British to retain Bombay as their sole outpost. This was done for purely commercial reasons. These buildings and offices in this British Bombay were same as in typical high street of a town in England. East India House, the headquarters of the East India Company was housed in an imposing building outside Bombay V.T. The station itself looked remarkably neat and clean. The staff was mostly made of Anglo Indians and Parsees along with a handful of British officers. The Bombay, he knew, was altogether different. The offices of OCS buildings peeped above the shorter Victorian buildings. There was handloom House as well.

**Q. Describe what Gaitonde read about the battle of Panipat in the library of the Town Hall? What were the immediate consequences?**

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**Ans.** At the Town Hall library, he read that the Battle of Panipat was won by the Marathas. Abdali was routed and chased back to Kabul. The book, however, did not give a blow by blow account of the battle. It elaborated in detail its consequences for the power struggle. The victory established Maratha supremacy in northern India. The East India Company shelved its expansionist programme. The influence of the Peshwas increased and the trouble maker Dada Saheb was relegated to the background. The East India Company was reduced to pockets of influence near Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. For

political reasons, the Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi. The Marathas understood the importance of technological age dawning in Europe. They set up their own centres for science and technology.

**Q. How does Rajendra Deshpande try to rationalize the experience of Professor Gaitonde about his transition to another world and back?**

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**Ans.** According to Rajendra, Professor Gaitonde had passed through a fantastic experience or more correcting, a catastrophic experience. He tried to rationalize it on the basis of two scientific theories that were current then. One was the catastrophe theory. The result of the battle would have been determined by the acts of the leaders and the morale of troops at the critical juncture. The blow of losing the leaders would have led to loss of morale and fighting spirit. An utter rout would have followed. If the crucial event had gone the other way, its effect on the troops would also have been the opposite. Their morale would have been boosted and they might have won. The course of history would have been different. The other explanation, is through the lack of determinism in quantum theory. Catastrophe situations after radically different alternatives for the world to proceed. All alternatives are viable so far as reality is concerned. However, the observer can experience only one of them at a time. Professor Gaitonde made a transition from one world to the other as he had been thinking about the catastrophe theory and Battle of Panipat. The neurons in his brain acted as trigger.