



The Adventure -

Jayant Vishnu Narlikar is a famous cosmologist and astrophysicist. He was born on July 19, 1938 at Kolhapur, Maharashtra. His father Vishnu Vasudeva Narlikar was a well-known teacher and mathematician. He was professor and Head of the Department of Mathematics in the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. His mother, Sumati Vishnu Narlikar was a Sanskrit scholar. Jayant inherited the intellectual brilliance from his parents and always did exceptionally well in his class and obtained top position. He also studied at Banaras Hindu University and got his B.Sc. degree in 1957. Then he went to Cambridge University, England for higher studies in mathematics in the year 1957 and joined Fritz William House. He obtained his master's degree in 1964 and then Ph.D. in 1963. As a research scholar he won the prestigious Smith's Prize in 1962 and then Adam's Prize in 1967.

In the same year he secured his Sc.D. degree from the Cambridge. He married Mangala Sadashiv Rajwade, a scholar in mathematics. They have three daughters. At Cambridge he was a student of the famous astronomer and astrophysicist Fred Hoyle. He was also a founder staff member of the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy which was set up at the Cambridge University under the guidance and inspiration of Fred Hoyle in 1966. When he returned to India in 1972 he was appointed Professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research at Mumbai. Narlikar has won many honours and awards. In 1978 he got the S.S. Bhatnagar award for physical sciences and then F.I.E Foundation's Rashtrabhushan Award in 1981. In 1993 he was given B.M. Birla Award.

The Adventure by Jayant Narlikar is a unique story in which the author has tried to concoct a new blend of history and physics. In this story he writes about Professor Gaitonde's unique experience. He time-travels into the past and experiences something that never ever existed. He finds himself in a Bombay that never ever existed.

The Bombay Gangadhar Pant saw in a different world was quite different. As the train stopped at Victoria Terminus, he found the station to be extremely neat and clean; the blue coaches of the train carried GBMR, "Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway". The working staff consisted of Anglo-Indians and a few British officers.

As he came out of the station he saw the Headquarters of East India Company; while walking on Hornby Road, he saw buildings of British brands, such as Boots and Woolworth departmental stores, imposing offices of Lloyds, Barclays and other British banks. The most startling thing was at the Forbes building where his son worked, he did not find him there.

Then he went to the Library of Asiatic Society to solve the riddle of the history. As a historian it was his duty to find the truth and the reality related to the battle of Panipat. He wanted to know the details of battle of Panipat. And as he read the book he was amazed to find the details totally contrary to what had actually happened. In the book he read the Marathas' morale was very high because their leader, Vishwasrao successfully pierced the enemy defense line without being hit by the so many bullets that were fired at him. Thus they succeeded in defeating Abdali's troops.

Not only the Marthas had defeated the troops of Abdali, but they had also kept the British at bay. They had successfully established their kingdom in North India and through political acumen steered India to a state of prosperity and power. They had managed and administered India efficiently in all spheres such as finances, defense, and international trade. He was wonderstruck at this phenomenon.

After leaving the library he went to a guest house and took a light meal. Professor Gaitonde went to Azad Maidan where he found a lecture going on; on the stage he noticed the presidential chair unoccupied. There he had an argument with the audience regarding the unchaired lecture, which turned out to be violent. The audience got on the stage and threw Professor Gaitonde off the stage.

The throw had an effect on the professor as it was after this experience he came out of the other world experience. He had been found unconscious in Azad Maidan.

In order to solve the mystery of this unique experience, Professor Gaitonde went to Professor Deshpande. The latter tried to give scientific explanation to the former. According to professor Deshpande, reality is something we experience through our senses which are kind of instruments. These senses or instruments have limitations. What we call reality may have other manifestations or dimensions.

Physicists have found there are many worlds existing besides the world we see through our senses. They have also found something startling during experiments on small systems of atoms and their particles. The behavior of these systems is unpredictable. This is called lack of determinism. Keeping this law in mind it can be said what we call reality may be different in another world.

According to Deshpande, Gaitonde made transition from one world into another during his unique experience about battle of Panipat. The reality is he was visiting Bombay in coma. He met with an accident and went into a coma; at the time of accident, Professor Gaitonde was thinking about Battle of Panipat and the possible consequences of theory of catastrophe on it. He also found history to be changed in which India had never ever become slave to the British. He also found that Marathas had defeated the troops of Abdali at Panipat. During the time he was in coma, his consciousness experienced an experience of British India in which he always wanted to see; but that India had never existed in reality; it existed in Gaitonde's mind only.