

Chapter 6 - The Ghat Of The Only World

Question 1:

What impressions of Shahid do you gather from the piece?

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

As the text is a very brief description of Agha Shahid Ali, we can never judge his character completely. However, it can be said from the text that, even after he realised that he was dying, Shahid remained an extremely lucid person and didn't lack enthusiasm of life. Just like any other normal man, he was afraid of dying. He ignored reassurances given by people and lived his life fully till his last breath. He was a man who wanted to stay alive in people's memories not through spoken recitations of friendship but of written word. Even when he reached a very serious stage of his illness, Shahid did not let his illness impede the progress of the friendship between him and the author. He had the extra-ordinary ability to transmute the mundane into the magical. He was very fond of company. His social life included festivity at home every day. He could be awarded for his prowess in the kitchen. He was a believer of exactitude and authenticity and thus, could not tolerate any deviation from the traditional methods of cooking. Shahid worked his way through poetry in almost all spheres of his life.

Question 2:

How do Shahid and the writer react to the knowledge that Shahid is going to die?

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

"Oh dear! I cant see a thing...I hope this doesn't mean that I am dying," The fear of death was very vividly visible in Shahid's tone of voice and usage of words. He got scared when he felt for the first time that he was dying. When his occasional memory lapses became more serious with passage of time, the realisation of death drawing nearer becomes stronger. When he was in a conversation with Amitav Ghosh, he said in a clear ringing voice- "When it happens, I hope you will write something for me." The writer could think of nothing to say on such a topic. At last, he had to promise, "I'll do the best I can." From that day, the writer started keeping a record of all the conversations and meetings he had with Shahid. This record helped him to fulfil his promise.

Question 3:

Look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'diaspora'. What do you understand of the Indian diaspora from this piece?

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

The word 'diaspora' means a dispersion of an originally homogeneous entity, such as a language or culture. With reference to the context, Indian diaspora becomes more prominent in Ghosh's writings.

From this text, we come to know that a number of Indians have settled in different countries of the West, especially England and America. Agha Shahid, his brother and two sisters, Suketu Mehta and the writer form part of the Indian diaspora in America. Shahid belonged to Kashmir and migrated to America in 1975. His elder brother was already settled there. His two sisters also joined them later. These people, though living in another land, never forgot about their roots. These Indians feel a sense of unity and keep meeting each other on various occasions