

னியில்கால் யூச் கதுயிலைக் (யூல) Department of Manipur Government of Manipur

Lesson: 10

The Mark of Vishnu

NOTES:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Khushwant Singh born in 1915 was an Indian author, lawyer, diplomat, journalist and politician. His experience in the 1947 partition of India inspired him to write Train to Pakistan which because his most well known novel.

SUMMARY:

'The mark of Vishnu' written by Khushwant Singh weaves a story around the superstition and blind reverence towards the snakes. The servant Gunga Ram, a Brahmin was illiterate and full of superstition. He believes in the trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva-the creator, the preserver and the destroyer and he is the devotee of Vishnu and therefore he smears his forehead every morning with V mark sand wood paste to honour Vishnu. To him all life was scared even if it was a serpent or scorpion or centipede. Daily he puts saucer full milk outside the hole near the wall for Kala Nag, the cobra and by the morning finds the milk gone. Gunga ram believes Kala Nag had drunk the milk while the children of the family where he work make fun of him saying it was drunk by the cat. The boys even threatened they will kill Kala Nag. So one day after a heavy rain where every hole was full of water, Kala Nag was seen basking in the sun. the boys a set of four tough brothers attack and beat him mercilessly and put it in a biscuit tin to take it to their science teacher. And they inform Gunga Ram that they are going to put his snake in spirit at school. When the teacher open the box Kala Nag attacked him with his hood spread out and with fear and quick movements escapes. While escaping through the door the snake encounter another obstacle – Gunga Ram keeping saucer full of milk before him and bowing with his head to the ground craving for forgiveness. The snake with all the anger bites on his forehead exactly where he had smeared V mark. The poor servant collapsed with his hand covering his face. The poison blinded him and he turned pale and blue. When the teacher wipes the little drops of blood on his forehead there was the V mark where Kala Nag had dug his fangs.

WORD MEANINGS

1.	Saucer	-	a small swallow dish on which a cup stands.
2.	Methylated spirit	-	alcohol for use as a solvent or fuel made unfit for
			drinking by the addition of methanol and a violet dye.
3.	Smeared	-	coat or mark with a greasy or sticky substance.
4.	Gutter	-	a shallow trough beneath the edge of a roof or a
			channel at the side of a street for carrying off rain
			water.
5.	Sullen	-	silent and bad- tempered
6.	Suspicious	-	having a feeling that someone has done something
			wrong.
7.	Excitement	$\mathcal{O}_{\mathcal{P}}$	a feeling of great enthusiasm and eagerness.
8.	Hysterically	-	being affected by wild or uncontrolled emotion.
9.	Furiously	-	very angrily.
10.	Dragged	-	pull along forcefully roughly or with difficulty.

