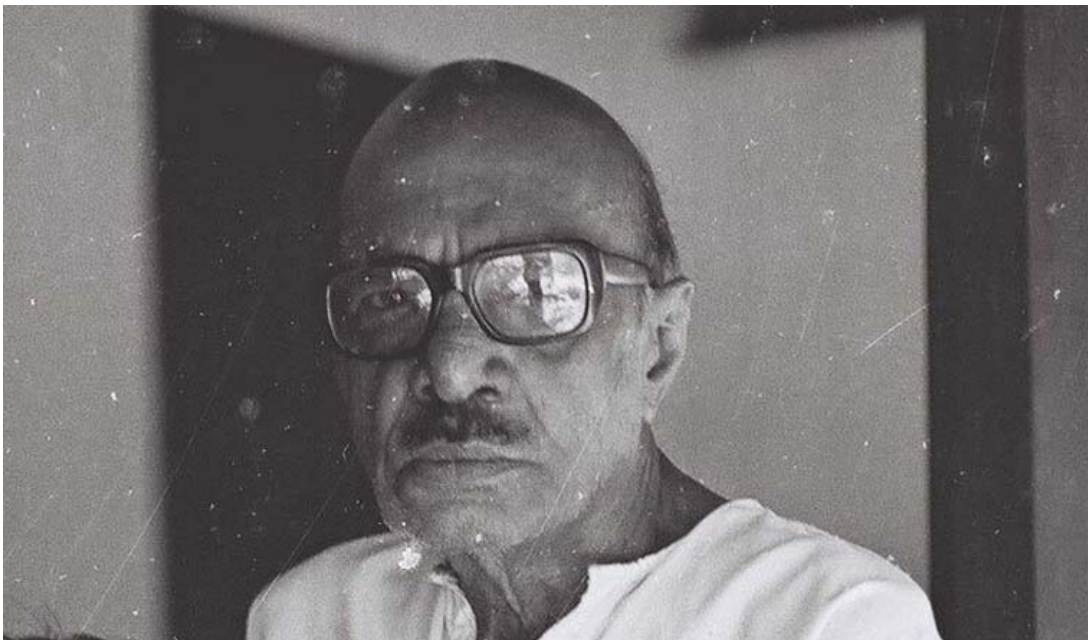




Q & A The Snake & The Mirror

The Snake and the Mirror

By Vaikom Muhammad Basheer



Vocabulary:-

1. **Slithered:** move smoothly over a surface with a twisting motion.
2. **Molten:** liquefied by heat
3. **Reedy:** very thin
4. **Sprinter:** runner
5. **Smear:** apply carelessly

Q2. Answer the following:

1. "The sound was a familiar one". What sound did the doctor hear? What did he think it was? How many times did he hear it? When and why did the sounds stop?

Ans: The doctor heard a familiar sound caused by the movement of something on the beam as he returned to his room after his meal. He thought it was a sound made by the rats that infested his room. He heard this sound three times, when the snake fell down with a thud on the floor as if a rubber tub had fallen down. When he turned, he saw a snake that wriggled over the back of the chair and landed on his shoulder.

2. What two 'important' and 'earth shaking' decisions did the doctor take while he was looking into the mirror?

Ans: The doctor made two decisions after looking at himself in the mirror, the first one was that he would shave daily and grows a thin moustache in order to look more handsome as he was still unmarried, and was in reputed medical profession. The second decision was that he would keep a smile on his face to look more handsome.

Q. 3. "I looked into the mirror and smiled," says the doctor. A little later he says, "I forgot my danger and smiled feebly at myself." What is the doctor's opinion about himself when

(i) he first smiles, and

(ii) he smiles again?

In what way do his thoughts change in between, and why?

Ans: The doctor thought that he had a good smile when he first smiled. But when he smiled a little later, he laughed at his destiny. His life was in danger. His thoughts got changed because of the snake. He was quite near to death.

Write short paragraphs on each of these to get your answer.

Q. 1.

a) The kind of person the doctor is (money, possessions)

Ans: The doctor is a poor man. He does not have much money. His house has no electricity. It is a small rented room which has many rats. He has about sixty rupees in his suitcase. Along with some shirts and dhotis, he also possesses one solitary black coat.

b) The kind of person he wants to be (appearance, ambition)

Ans: He wants to be a handsome person. So he decides to shave daily and grow a thin moustache. He also wishes to accumulate wealth.

Q.2.

a) The person he wants to marry

Ans: He intends to marry a woman doctor who has plenty of money and a good medical practice. He wishes to have a fat wife so that she cannot run after him and catch him when he would make a mistake.

b) The person he actually marries

Ans: The person he actually marries is a thin reedy person with the gift of a sprinter.

Q.3.

a) His thoughts when he looks into the mirror

Ans: He thinks that he should look smart. So he decides to shave daily and retain his smile. He is happy and contented when he looks into the mirror.

b) His thoughts when the snake is coiled around his arm

Ans: When the snake coiled around his left arm above the elbow, he kept sitting there holding his breath. He became motionless. He was afraid of the snake.

c) How did the doctor show the presence of mind when he encountered the snake?

Ans: The doctor showed great presence of mind on seeing the snake: He neither jumped nor cried out. He sat on the chair holding his breath. His body was still but his mind remained

very active.

d) How did the snake change the writer's opinion about himself?

Ans: The writer was proud of being a doctor. Coming face-to-face with the snake made him humble. He thought he was only a poor and stupid doctor who should not be proud of his profession.

e) While looking into the mirror, what important and earth-shaking decisions did the doctor make? Or

What were the two important decisions taken by the doctor while looking into the mirror?

Ans: The important decision made by the doctor was that he would shave daily and grow a thin moustache, to look more handsome.

The earth-shaking decision made by the doctor was that he would always keep that attractive smile on his face.

f) What did the doctor do on seeing the snake?

Ans: The doctor saw the snake's reflection in the mirror. He, then, went to have a closer look. He got up from the chair and ran away from the house.

g) What type of woman did the doctor in the story "The Snake and the Mirror", want to get married to and why?

Ans: The doctor, who had plenty of money and good medical practice, wanted to get married to a woman who was fat. The reason he gave was that if he, the doctor husband ever made any mistake, and tried to run away, she would not be able to catch him and stop him from escaping.

h) Why did the author of "The Snake and the Mirror" fantasize a fat woman as his wife?

Ans: The author of "The Snake and the Mirror" fantasizes a fat woman as his wife since she would never be able to catch the doctor on his mistakes. She would not be able to run after him and he would be saved of all kinds of punishments. Thus, the author fantasizes a fat woman as his wife.

i) Why did the snake leave the doctor's arm?

Ans: The snake left the doctor's arm because it saw its reflection in the mirror and was

fascinated by it and so wanted to enjoy its own reflection by having a closer look. Like his parents even he respects all religions.

j) What made the doctor utter “Death lurked four inches away”?

Ans: The doctor was under the grip of the snake, and sat motionless as a statue, his body was inactive but mind was completely active. He knew very well that the snake would bite him at the slightest movement. This is what made his utter these words.

Q. 5. Expressions used to show fear

Can you find the expressions in the story that tell you that the author was frightened? Read the story and complete the following sentences.

1. I was turned
2. I sat there holding
3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like

Ans:

1. I was turned **to stone**.
2. I sat there holding **my breath**.
3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like **a stone image in the flesh**.

Q. 6. Report these questions, using if/whether or why/when/where/how/which/what. Remember the italicised verbs change into the past tense.

1. Meena asked her friend, “Do you think your teacher will come today?”

Ans: Meena asked her friend if he (she) thought his (her) teacher would come that day.

2. David asked his colleague, “Where will you go this summer?”

Ans: David asked his colleague where he would go that summer.

3. He asked the little boy, “Why are you studying English?”

Ans: He asked the little boy why he was studying English.

4. She asked me, “When are we going to leave?”

Ans: She asked me when they were going to leave.

5. Pran asked me, "Have you finished reading the newspaper?"

Ans: Pran asked me if I had finished reading the newspaper.

6. Seema asked her, "How long have you lived here?"

Ans: Seema asked her how long she had lived there.

7. Sheila asked the children "Are you ready to do the work?"

Ans: Sheila asked the children if they were ready to do the work.

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