

Masks and Intentions ¹

Beyond known meanings, masks that hide the true nature of one's self/personality are deceptive intentions/speech/actions and manipulative behavior/roles that conceal sincere emotions and true appearance. In this negative fashion, one experiences a terrifying alienation both towards themselves and those they are in contact with. For this reason, world-famous writer Franz Kafka (1883-1924) has said, "**It is hard to remove someone's mask when it is thicker than their face.**"

This alienation, which is not subject to any norm, deals a blow to the ties between people and society, it leads to the disappearance of the state of cultural and moral interaction. This, in turn, causes the carnality and false self within the constitution of duality inherent in human nature to grow in strength, while inducing a blockage in the path that leads to true life and humaneness, which is the essence of humanity. This is a path of recovery and renewal based on the spiritual discipline that predicated on deciphering the codes of the '**spirit**', which is above all kinds of haughtiness, arrogance, ostracism, condescension and scorn. This is the path of spiritualization with the wealth of good deeds. Once on this path, the person takes pleasure in serving the continuity, facilitation, and enrichment of life within the social reality, motivated by the divine/positive values that they discover in their inner world. They accept the uplifting of human dignity during the process of self-realization as a basic understanding. Because they know that carnal passions deaden and expend the spirit. Moral capacities, on the other hand, develop and nurture the spirit.

However, when the personal maps of meaning (inner references) of those who have not comprehended/internalized this understanding and social maps of meaning (external references) come into conflict and contradict one another, masks (and roles) come into play. The power (quantity) of masks over people increases according to the ratio of their perception of absolute truth and of life and the ego. **This is actually the area where human communication gets complicated.** While disrupting inner/personal integrity, masks also expose humans to a disturbing fluctuation between conflict/contradiction. It makes them a slave to the ebb and flow of these conflicts/contradictions. It chains them to worldly addictions by bringing the self into play. Thus forgetting their divine essence, people lose meaning/the Word. They lose their uniqueness and freedom. The meaning/purpose of life becomes lost to them. Because they are unable to maintain the balance between matter and meaning, they only live according to the material world. This state,

¹ During the pandemic, masks have gained much relevance. According to authorities in the field, face masks provide protection against contagious viruses while masks that hide the true nature of one's self/personality are harmful to personal and social life with their viral spiritual illnesses.

which causes a detachment from the divine essence, develops a false self. It causes the proliferation of lustful/carnal dirt/rust/rot. And this paves the way for the proliferation of the masks created by undercurrent pragmatic and selfish attitudes.

In fact, the main purpose on the journey of life is to restrain the false self within the parameters of the maturation process and with inner-outer awareness. If possible, to transform the false self and throw away all masks. To find a zest for life in one's inner world. To put aside relative attitudes and value others. To be able to satisfy their need with servile motives...

Because the most valuable thing in life is "**zest for life**". Also the person's inner world. This inner world is made up of two selves. The first is the true self, the spiritual self. The second is the false self, the carnal self. The true self which brings out zest and energy for life will not manifest until the false self is restrained. All manifestations of the false self which demands selfishness/evil block people on their journeys of self-discovery/knowledge/recognition/realization (who they are, where they come from, where they are going, what their mission in life is). They dull the spirit and obscure inner truth. To obscure inner truth is to cover up divine truths and even to lose them ². Philosopher of ancient times Publius Terentius (195-159 B.C.) says on the subject, "**I am human and nothing related to humans is alien to me.**"

Since ancient times, in every period of history, humans have always been in search of a treasure. Though their efforts have sometimes gone in vain, humans have always searched and will continue searching. **In reality, the treasure humans seek is in their own spirits, meaning that it is nothing more than the pure essence, free from the ego³.** When a person sees and realizes that that holy treasure is in their own inner world, when they begin to know/internalize this at heart, they gain a radical outlook on themselves and on existence. They begin to better understand themselves,

² While dividing the self / nafšo into three in his Syriac work, titled "**Hevath Hekemtho / The Cream of Wisdom**", Mor Grigorius Yuhanun Barebroyo (1226-1286), who reached literary fame with the name Abulpharagius, writes, "**When one of these grow stronger, the other grows weaker. Rational power: also called the Spiritual self. Through this self, people learn of what exists. Angry power: It is the animal self. Through this self, people endure hardship. This self desires victory, respect, vain praise. Lustful power: also called the Wild self. Because of this self, people desire entertainment, pleasure, luxury, food and drink, sexuality. Basically, the number of human virtues should be based on these powers.**"

³ That treasure is a person's immaterial/spiritual self. Love, which is high life energy, does not flow into life as long as that self remains undiscovered. Because the mud which covers the spirit is not cleared away, positive energy coming from divine dimensions flows into life in a negative state. This, in turn, causes hardships in the flow.

other people, society, the world, life, the universe, and divine order. In other words, through the inner relief and self-management supplied by this, they learn of the harm of using masks/roles while being aware of emotions, thoughts, behaviors and egoistic passions and carnal attitudes. Because separating from the ego and moving away from it is a journey toward the purpose of existence/creation. This journey requires partaking in life and accepting responsibility. But unfortunately people cannot know themselves or discover their essence, their true nature, worth, love, respect, and strength without first disposing of the masks they acquire after birth. Sadly, as long as they retain these masks, they cannot reach that divine essence, that unmatched potential which is theirs from creation/birth but obscured afterwards. The brilliant genius of Syriac literature Hebraeus of Malatya (1226-1286) writes the following while associating the matter with clearing the mud: **"Before cleaning ourselves of mud, we cannot drink from the fountain."**

On this topic, famous modern writer Osho (1931-1990) says, **"To be honest is to be true; to be real is to not be false, not use masks. Show your true face, whatever it be, whatever the cost. Do not forget, this does not mean that you must pull down the masks of others; if they are happy in their lies, it is their decision to make. Do not try and pull down other people's masks because people generally think this way."**

Intentions are very important in all areas of life, especially in one-on-one relationships and on our life journey. **"Action without intention is worthless, insincere intentions are soulless"** stresses the importance of intentions not efforts. Because in a healthy life, all the difference is an intention that maintains the **"principle of mutuality and usefulness."** Any warped and selfish attitude and behavior that does not maintain this and disregards a person because of their pure intention is harmful. On the other hand, impure and bad/ulterior intentions that carry any manifestation of selfishness are like contaminated water. They contaminate and muddy one-on-one relationships based on sincere interaction. They disturb companionship and the spiritual world. And this inevitably produces reflexes and reactions that lead to separation. It does well to think more about the meaning of the following verse, which stresses sincere interaction, pure intention, blessing, and the awareness of absence and appreciation: **"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them"** (Matthew 18:20).

Famous author Dostoevsky (1821-1881) says, **"Wearing a mask is a burden for people. Both for the wearer and the one trying to understand."** For him, masks undermine goodwill, wearing people out and exhausting them. Because every false emotion and behavior draws people further from their essence/true self. And this means more masks. Those who have mastered the self, pride, ego wear no masks. Any form of love, respect, sincerity, responsibility and loyalty that is

unobscured by masks and is motivated by good intentions increases life energy and brings out a zest for life. People grasp life's fabric, scent, and its visible and invisible dimensions through the spirit of these five things (love, respect, sincerity, responsibility, loyalty). They get a taste life through this spirit. They find meaning in life as long as the can preserve this spirit. They find the meaning of life. They bring its blind spots to light.

Sometimes it is not people that change but masks that fall. Being conscious of this, when we behave with the awareness of the high spiritual energy of good intentions, when we direct our attention, we add some unprovoked/unconditional value to the people/places we come in contact with. We really need this for a happy life and salvation.

Lest we forget, at the end of the day, we will achieve comfort and peace not in proportion to our many roles and masks, but rather the purity of our intentions, closed off to exploitation/abuse/ domination. As it is written, **"In the darkness of masks, all roads are longer."**

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