



## Is anyone as merry and joyful as me, mask?

**Abstract:** We shall learn what a mask is, where it originates, and what it means. We shall evaluate the balance between covering and concealing some things, and presenting and revealing others. We shall clarify the connection between masks and costumes, and the Purim holiday and the story of the Book of Esther.

We shall check what use we make of masks and costumes in everyday life, and gain experience in preparing masks.

### What is a mask?

- What is the word's etymology, and what does it teach us about masks?
- We will learn about the phenomenon of masks, and the origins of their use.

### "On the contrary" – why do people dress up on Purim?

- Introduction to the custom of dressing up on Purim.
- Where in the Book of Esther are costumes worn? Where in the Book is there concealment of identity, and why? (Reading of verses from the Book)

### All the world's a stage

- Where do we use costumes and masks in everyday life, and why?

### **Song of masks**

Levin KipnisLyrics:

Nahum NardiMusic:

I have a long beard down to my knees  
My mustache is two cubits long

Is anyone as merry and joyful  
as me mask, ha ha?  
Is anyone as merry and joyful  
as me, mask?

I have horns like a goat  
and teeth like a lion

Is anyone as merry and joyful...

In front of me is a braid with a ribbon  
behind me a tail of such beauty

Is anyone as gay and joyful...



### My mask

- Creating masks (in arts and crafts class), decorating the masks according to aspects of my identity.

## What lies behind the mask?

### Course of the lesson:

1. Literal meaning – write the word ‘mask’ on the board.
2. What other words does the word ‘mask’ remind you of? What other words are hidden within it? (Hebrew words related to mask: screen, sukkah)  
How are the words mask and screen (*masecha*, *masach*) connected? Both are connected with plays, and both can be used to hide things (one’s face or a stage or backstage).
3. Show pictures of masks and ask what they all have in common. How do they look? What are they used for? (see annex)
4. Explanation of masks: A mask is an object used to cover part of the face. Masks are used to create characters at religious events or ceremonies. The etymology of the word ‘mask’ (and Hebrew *masecha*) is apparently the Latin word *masca*, which means ghost. In Judaism, masks are used as an element of Purim costumes. The oldest mask in the world, from the 7th century B.C., was found in the Land of Israel, near Hebron. It was made of limestone, and was probably used in religious ceremonies. In ancient Greece, masks were used as accessories in the theater. The origins of the theater are in religious ceremonies.



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## Reasons to use masks:

- To portray feeling.
- To describe female characters (who were forbidden to appear in Greek theater).
- To amplify the voice – the mask's form enabled amplification of the actor's voice in the open Greek theater. Masks portrayed either humor (satire) or sadness (tragedy).

## Questions:

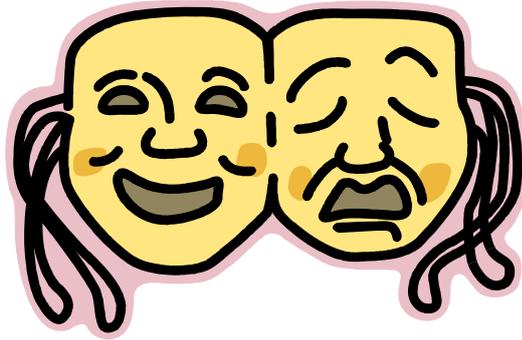
1. What characteristics of masks did we discover by looking at the pictures?
2. What is the oldest mask in the world? Where and when was it invented?
3. What were masks used for in the ancient world? (Rituals, religious ceremonies)
4. What are masks used for today? In what professions do people wear masks?  
(Actor, clown, doctor, welder, soldier)  
(theater masks, gas masks, Purim masks)
5. What is the connection between the word 'mask' and a mask's properties? Mask – concealment; conceals the face either to protect it or portray something else.





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## On the contrary – why do people dress up on Purim?

Course of the lesson:

We shall explain: On Purim it is customary to dress up and wear masks, and conduct *Adloyada* masquerades.

Where does this custom originate? What is the connection between dressing up and masks for Purim?

### Dressing up and concealment in the Book of Esther

Esther hides her identity

**(7) Mordechai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother.**

(8) When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed,... Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. (9) She pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem.

**(10) Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordechai had forbidden her to do so.**

Questions:

1. What names does Esther have? What name is she famous for?
2. Why does she have two names?
3. Why is Hadassah the hidden name, and Esther the revealed name? (Hint: there is a goddess named Ishtar Ashtaroth)
4. What does Mordechai ask Esther to hide?





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5. Why do you think Esther hid her identity? What does this imply about the status of the Jews in Persia?
6. How does the “costume” help Esther?

## Mordechai wears mourning attire

(1) When Mordechai learned of all that had been done, **he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes**, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly [...] (2) But he went only as far as the king’s gate, **because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it.** (3) In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes. (4) When Esther’s eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordechai, she was in great distress. **She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.** (Book of Esther, Chapter 4)

## Questions:

1. Why does Mordechai wear sackcloth? What do the sackcloth and ashes express?
2. Why is it forbidden to enter the king’s gate in such clothing? How should one dress when entering the palace?
3. Why does Esther send clothing to Mordechai?
4. Why does Mordechai refuse to change his clothes? What message does he wish to convey, to her and to others, with these clothes?





## Esther dons royal attire

(1) On the third day **Esther put on her royal robes** and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. (2) When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. (Book of Esther, Chapter 5)

### Questions:

1. What was Esther wearing? Why was her attire a matter of importance?
2. How did Esther's "costume" affect King Achashverosh?

### This is what is done for the man the king wishes to honor – clothes of prestige

(6) When Haman entered, the king asked him, What should be done for the man the king delights to honor? Now Haman thought to himself, Who is there that the king would rather honor than me? (7) Haman said to the king: For the man the king delights to honor. (8) **Have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head.** (9) Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor! (10) **Go at once**, the king commanded Haman. **Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordechai the Jew**, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended. (11) So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordechai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor! (Book of Esther, Chapter 6)





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## Questions:

1. What does Haman suggest doing for the person the king wants to honor?
2. What clothing should the man be given to wear? Why such attire? What do royal attire and a crown symbolize?

## On the contrary – change of fate and change of identity

(15) **When Mordechai left the king's presence, wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large gold crown, and a purple robe of fine linen;** and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was merry. (16) **The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.** (17) In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. **And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.** (Book of Esther, Chapter 8)

(1) On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. **On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.** (Book of Esther, Chapter 9)

## Questions:

1. How is Mordechai dressed when exiting the king's palace? What does this lavish dress imply?
2. Why had people of other nationalities changed their identity? How is this different from the beginning of the Book, when Esther hides her identity?
3. What does the expression "on the contrary" mean? What is different on this day?





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## Concluding explanation:

The Book of Esther includes many different costumes, and concealing and changing identities. However, the greatest change is that of the fate of the Jewish people in the Kingdom of Persia – from a persecuted people, in hiding and at risk of annihilation, to a strong people in close association with the throne and in defense of itself. In order to express these changes, we too change our identity for one day using costumes. Masquerading, plays and song are part of the holiday's precept of feasting and joy.



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## All the World's a Stage – Masks and Masquerading in Everyday Life

### Course of the lesson:

1. Introduction: Write notes with the following emotions: Joy, sadness, ridicule–condescension, anger, love, confusion, enthusiasm. On the board (or hang up a placard), write sentences from the Book of Esther:

- From India to Sudan, one hundred and twenty seven countries.
- Relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place.
- What is your petition, what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom.
- This is what is done for the man the king wishes to honor!
- When Mordecai left the king's presence, he was wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold...
- From sorrow to joy; from mourning to a day of celebration.
- Feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

Ask for volunteers. Each volunteer shall receive a note with a feeling, and be required to read on of the sentences with the feeling written on his or her note. The class shall then guess what feeling is being expressed. The winner is the volunteer with the most students guessing the feeling expressed by him or her.

2. Masks and costumes in daily life

Look at the pictures and match the dressed-up person to whatever mask or costume he's wearing from among the following possibilities.

3. What do people use their masks and costumes for?

- Self-defense – gas masks and welding masks.
- Environmental protection – like the doctor's mask.





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- To convey feelings, entertain – actors or clowns.
- To indicate role or status – military uniforms, a king's crown, prison uniform.
- To express affiliation to a group – fans of a sports team.

A mask or costume can also hide what we do not want to show, like Esther concealing her identity; however, it can also be an expression of something we want to display, like the clothes given to Mordechai.

A mask or a costume is not just the physical mask or garment we wear. A mask can also be the expression of a feeling or behavior (like in a game we've started playing).

4. Give examples of situations in which we wear a "mask" or perform "role playing" in everyday life, for example:

- If a friend asks about a new garment they bought that doesn't appeal to us, but we don't want to insult them.
- If we have company and we behave a bit differently, trying to be especially polite.

5. Questions for discussion:

- Does it ever happen that you behave differently in different places? For example, at home and at school or at your favorite extracurricular activity.
- What does this mean, our acting differently in different places?
- Does this mean we are disingenuous? Or perhaps we are flexible and know how to adapt to different situations?



## Summary

We use masks and costumes in everyday life as well: Real masks and costumes, the purpose of which is to signify status or role, affiliation to a particular group or protect ourselves from danger; or, symbolic masks, different modes of behavior in different places and situations. This is not a bad thing; rather, it shows that we know how to change and adapt to our environment; however, one should take note not to change the truly important things. In other words, that we have a true identity that is our alone, and that we remain loyal to the things that are important to us.



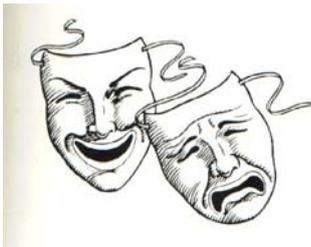


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## Masks and costumes in everyday life

Look at the pictures and match the dressed-up person to whatever mask or costume he's wearing from among the following possibilities.





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1. Clown – funny mask.
2. Soldier's uniform – uniformity and blending in with conditions in the field.
3. Soccer fan – to display affiliation with the team.
4. Doctor – gown and protective mask from germs and infection.
5. King – to display status and honor.
6. Gas mask – to protect from toxic gases.
7. Welding mask – facial protection from sparks.
8. Theater mask – for an actor conveying feeling.
9. An Orthodox (Haredi) Jew – belonging to a group and tradition.
10. Prison uniform – to differentiate from free people, uniformity.



## My mask

In the following activity we shall create personal masks. It is recommended to create plaster masks in arts and crafts class. After they dry, paint them with gouache paints; however, the activity may also be performed using oil pastel on Bristol board cut in the shape of masks.

### Guidance:

- Think about what characterizes you. What are your qualities? What do you like? What groups do you belong to?
- When drawing your mask, think of how to express the things that characterize you.
- Remember that the mask both conceals and displays externally.
- On the inner part of the mask, you can paint things you do not show...

At the end of the activity, you can make a mask exhibition, or have each person present and explain his mask. The masks may be shown in groups, and the group members guess why each person chose to design their mask the way they did.



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## Teacher's annex

### Mask

"... There are two way in which a mask may be presented in relation to a person's identity! One approach sees the person as a main fundamental personality, that the material or metaphorical mask covers in different events; hiding it and even misleading people when presenting itself as the real personality. For example, the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) used the term 'persona' in order to emphasize the way in which people adapt themselves to a particular social order, while concealing their special and intimate qualities.

The other approach assumes that each of a person's manifestations is a different real identity. Our entire lives are one manifestation or another of our identities, with the mask presenting the multitude of identities. On the one hand, from the social aspect, the mask helps a person to hide; protect himself from harm, and adapt himself to existing norms. On the other hand, it needs to match a person's "real" personality, the soul that it is protecting. ..."

<http://www.alternativit.co.il/Levy3.htm>

### **The Persona – The Soul’s Mask / Avi Baumann**

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players”, said Shakespeare. In our times, this statement is strongly reaffirmed.

In the Jungian theory of the psyche, the external image, the social face the individual presents to the world is called the “**mask of the psyche**” or “**persona**” (Latin for role). The mask that the psyche wears is basically similar to the role an actor undertakes to perform on stage. This role is agreed and predetermined, representing some defined character, such as: “Teacher”, “principal”, “psychologist”, “artist”. The persona enables identification with social roles, work organizations and commitment.

The persona is supposed to create the right interface between outside and inside. On the one hand it needs to conceal and protect, adapt itself to existing norms and enable functioning, while on the other hand, it needs to match a person’s “real” personality to the soul it is protecting.

The psyche’s mask should not be far from the personality’s traits, not too rigid, removable or changeable and, mainly, aware of its owner. Without such compatibility the inner, living breathing psyche could be stifled behind the mask.

In order that a person be aware of his mask, he must look inside himself, discover his real private nature and qualities. He needs to awaken his secrets, fears and angers, his innermost secrets, wishes and complexes, his self-deceits as well as his creativity and internal life impulses.

From: *Mishkafayim*, June 1998

Dr. Avi Baumann is a Jungian clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst

## **The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life / Erving Goffman**

When an individual enters a social environment, the natives of that environment seek information on him, or check the information they already have. They are interested in his general socio-economic status, his concept of self, his regard for them, his skills, his reliability, etc. Information on the individual helps in defining a situation, and enables others to know in advance what he expects of them, and what they can expect of him. In such a way, they will know how best to act in order to bring about the desired response from him. If they do not know him, they may compare him to similar individuals who preceded him or, more importantly, apply unchecked stereotypes to him. ...

We shall now examine the point of view of the individual presenting himself to others. ... Regardless of his goals and motive with regard to a particular goal, his interest will be to oversee their behavior, particularly the way they regard him. In general, this oversight is achieved by influence over the definition of the situation, as described by the others. He can influence this definition by presenting himself in such a way that will cause the others to act according to his plan. Thus, when the individual appears before other, he will strive to create an impression that suits his interests.

...

When we assume that the individual projects a definition of situation when appearing before others, we need to see that the others too, to the extent that their role will appear passive, effectively project a definition of situation of their own, by their response to the individual and by lines of behavior they attribute to him.

...

... We should not ignore the main fact that each definition of situation has a unique moral character. ... Society is organized according to the principle that each individual with certain social qualities has a moral right to expect others to regard him and evaluate him in accordance with those qualities... When an individual projects a definition of



situation, and therefore claims implicitly or explicitly that he is a certain type of person, he automatically applies a moral demand on others, by obligating them to treat him in a way that people of his type should be. He implicitly waives being somebody else, and waives the regard appropriate for such a person.

The others therefore find that the individual has informed them who he is, and how they must view him.

From: Roth (Editor) The Individual and Social Order, Am Oved Publications, 1974 (pp. 14-21)

