



JEWISH STUDIO PROJECT

MANY MASKS: A CREATIVE PROMPT FOR PURIM

The Purim story is full of characters who reveal different aspects of themselves at different moments, showing that no one is a simple, one-dimensional entity. We celebrate this carnivaleque holiday with rejoicing and merriment in the month of Adar, a time in which tradition teaches us that joy increases. The joy of Purim lies in the playful yet profound act of exploring, shifting, and reclaiming our many identities. Like the characters in the Purim story, we too, contain multitudes. Each of us is a tapestry of different experiences, emotions, and perspectives. On Purim we are invited to consider: What metaphorical masks do we wear—for fun, for safety, for intrigue and mystery, for connecting to our own power? What identities might we want to set down, or perhaps try on? Purim connects us to the joy of knowing that identity is fluid. What is hidden can be revealed. What seems fixed can transform. Embracing and playing with the many facets of who we are is not just freeing—it is sacred.



STEP 1: INQUIRY

Read the following texts either alone or with a friend and explore the reflection questions.

Megilat Esther 5:1

And Esther clothed herself in royalty

וּתְלַבֵּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מְלָכוּת



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MANY MASKS CONT.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What might it mean that Esther "clothed herself in royalty"?
 - What images does this line evoke? What do you picture her doing?
 - Do you imagine that she was simply "dressing the part"? Stepping into a new version of herself? Both?
- How might the act of dressing in different garments—literal or metaphorical—help us loosen and play with fixed or static identities?
- Have you ever "clothed yourself" in a particular identity—whether to protect yourself, step into a role, or reveal something deeper? What did that garment allow you to express or conceal?

STEP 2: INTENTION

Write down an intention for your creative exploration. Look for the spark of curiosity, inspiration, or strong emotion that is calling you to be explored more fully through creating. Write your intention in the present-tense, as if it is already happening – "I explore..., I experience... I discover... I release..."

STEP 3: CREATIVE EXPLORATION

Masks can be used to conceal, reveal, explore, play with, release or transform aspects of our identity. Sometimes the most interesting masks come when we create without knowing exactly what will emerge on the other side. Set a timer for a period of time (e.g. 10 - 20 minutes). Cut out a shape for your mask from a sheet of paper and indicate where the eyes will be. Start with a material that sparks your interest and let yourself create from there adding color, texture and embellishment until your time is up.

STEP 4: WITNESS

When you are finished, put your mask on and look in the mirror. What do you see? Write stream-of-consciousness in response to what you've created and your experience of creating it. Include all observations, associations, and feelings that arise. What draws your attention? What do you feel?. How if at all does your piece or process relate back to your Intention? Notice any sensations in your body as you conclude.