

Dalip Khetarpal

Unexpressed Truths of the World of Poets

The prosaic world
Allows not an inch
For poetry to clinch,
Not a tiny room
To boom,
Not e'en a little space
To breathe.
Sadly, un-sculptured, virtuous and sublime
Thoughts, feelings and emotions
Have failed to hold the sway,
For the spirit of man is dead.
Nothing good can motivate and enliven him
In this world
Of money and profit,
Of epicureanism and opportunism.
Adding fuel to the fire,

Consumption of art and literature is poor
While the number of its producers, rich.

Strangely, one loves to hear music,
Watch T.V., go to theatre,
To fill the vacuum of his emotion
And imagination
With sweet melodies
And fanciful stories,
Heard, seen and enjoyed directly,
Though in poetry and fiction
These are galore, in a form superior,
And also fire one's imagination fiercely.
And because imagination has an infinitely
Vaster range than reality,
Imagined songs appear
Infinitely sweeter than the heard ones,
And stories imagined, more captivating.
But when exquisite truths as such elude readers,
The illusion of poets and writers to be read and savored,
Is exploded to bits,

Making them live like a renegade, a recluse.
But to create a little space to breathe,
A little reputable status,
To experience a little warmth,
A little love, affection,
Sympathy, fellow feeling and company,
They struggle hard to evolve
Their own aesthetic microcosm
In the vast and densely materialistic macrocosm.
Doubtless, it is a cosy, beautiful and bright world
To which one often gets addicted
Since boosting encomia more or less reign supreme.
It is so through media multiple and channels uplifting, viz.
Face-book, internet, critical appreciation,
Favorable reviews, eulogistic evaluations and mass media
That praises are generally levied,
To sometimes, only please, but at times,
Highlight the true merits of the artist----
-----all done for the psychic sustenance of writers
Since their artistic abilities sustain not their life.
Surely, with most writers, writing is only a passion
And never a profession.

A writer at times,
Becomes self-opinionated and vainglorious
On getting undeserved praise.
But then at least he,
Though with some conceit, survives
Who otherwise would, perhaps, have been dead.
Many dead souls are seen resurrected,
Depleted spirits, repleted
With life and vigour, renewed
By feeding day in, day out
Purely on the diet of sumptuous
And healer face-book.
What's the harm if a less competent, but honest poet
Survives on the diet of false praise?
At least he lives, is alive!

The psychic substance of a poet
Is distinct from that of a layman.
Since potentials exist with varying degrees
Of creative ability,
A poet may not rise to Miltonic

Or Shakespearean heights,
But a poet still remains a poet
And will always remain a poet.

Praises, compliments, accolades and awards,
Conferred even on the undeserving poets or writers
Often become an essential fuel to run their life,
To boost their morale.

The poet sometimes is also
Unaware of the insincerity, falsity of the praise.
But then ignorance becomes not only blissful here,
But also, more importantly, the basis for his survival.
And the final naked truth, however, is,

*The whole world survives and thrives on lies
Or sculptured truth
That often hold their sway over immaculate truth,
That dismay even all Gods and heavens,
So, why redeemable lies, acting as a panacea here,
Should dismay anyone?*

Crises of masks

In prehistoric times

Donning of masks was common.

During rituals, celebrations, rite-of-passage,

Times of danger and crises.

Masks are also used to be worn

To ensure a bountiful harvest and hunt,

To escort spirits of the deceased into the life hereafter,

And to mark vital occasions, like new year.

While defending their territory

Ancient warriors, through donning masks,

Protected themselves

From the blows of enemies.

But surely, masks did have explicit aims, meaning,

Structure and purpose during those by-gone days

Much contrary to the false mask worn today

With the sole nefarious design to conceal

Some truth or one's true identity.

Modern men explicitly, wear the fake social mask
To hide or protect their real selves
From being seen or exposed,
To frighten, baffle, corner someone
Or, hamper someone from getting too close,
To protect their mental and emotional territory
From being invaded or attacked
And many reasons, inexplicable.

No wonder, a modern man with a true face,
With some identity
Often complains of facing identity crisis.
But, a man wearing a mask also
Has multiple crises to face.
Inadvertently, if the wrong mask is worn
Chaos is also often created
And if the receiver too errs likewise,
Hell would break loose on both.
Sometimes, when all masked theatrical identities gather
And some clash occurs
The situation assumes a stupid false show,
For, it is not the clash of true selves,

But of lies, cheaters with mismatched masks.
Exhausting it is to live a fake life,
Exhausting and tense too
To put on different masks for different occasions.
When a mask---a mandatory social device,
Is worn sans respite,
It soon inextricably gets fused
Firmly with the face,
Defacing and replacing the true face
By usurping its rightful place,
Rather throwing it into oblivion, forever.
Also in a situation wherein one's empathy
With the other is deep,
Fear of repercussions for unconstrainedly
Letting out something unpleasant
Often compels him to mask his morose or bitter
outpourings
And replace the same by something acceptable.
Likewise, fearing or perceiving insult or mockery
By uninhibited emoting of one's loss or anguish,
One discounts and dismisses those feelings.
But then an attitude as such often generates

A crisis painful between his real and masked self
In its wake.

Masking sorrow for long by blocking feelings
Of suffering or pain as a survival mechanism
Often leads to dysphoria or psychic crisis
With its hidden molten lava fuming,
Restless to rush out.

A mask at times even become redundant,
Especially, when one knows the other inside out,
For, nothing can be done
When one is wont to wearing it round-the-clock.
But, putting on different masks for different occasions
Finally also leads one to forget who he really is.

Since traditions, cultures and old habits die hard,
Even a child is made to don a mask---
---as a part of modern culture.

He gets different masks for different
Needs and occasions
To hide his real self.
He knows not that the mask

Stuck to his face

Will remain stuck

Till he dies.

He also knows not how his true self

Is perennially eclipsed by the mask.

The mask made of the stuff of

Pseudo socio-cultural norms is imperceptible,

Indivisible and indestructible as human spirit

As if composed by divine substance ethereal,

Issued straight from heaven.

It may at times, fall off

When truth surges strongly

When strong emotions build up

And one blurts out his natural

Conscious, subconscious and unconscious thought

And temporarily breaks the protective barrier,

But its amazingly resilient texture

Soon resumes its normal form

To keep it eternally intact.

Man can't invent soul or spirit
But could invent mask whose life
Is never lasting like the soul,
Followed even by reincarnation
For, all successive generations
Will be seen inevitably masked
With masks subtler and supreme,
In tune with the times.



Dr Dalip Khetarpal worked as a Lecturer in English at Manchanda Delhi Public College, Delhi. He worked in various capacities, as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and H .O. D (English) in various academic institutes in Haryana. He was a Dy. Registrar and Joint Director at the Directorate of Technical Education, Haryana, Chandigarh.

Dr Dalip has also started a new genre in the field of poetry, which he would like to call 'psycho-psychic flints'.
