

# THE ARMOUR

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## Psychological Armors and Defenses.

### Intent of the Story:

- ✓ *To become aware of our psychological defense mechanisms and what they do to us*
- ✓ *Defense mechanisms are like psychological armors wherein we lock ourselves avoid pains and hurts,*
- ✓ *They rob us from our spontaneity, of self-hood, and make us feel lonely and cut off from others.*

## THE STORY

Good King Leonard was constantly attacked by his neighbors. His life was in danger. One day, his friends advised him: "Your Majesty, what's the use of a shield and a few guards here and there to protect your life in battle? Pray, have a steel amour made for you. It will protect you from head to feet."

And so, Leonard had his armor made. It was strong, safe and impenetrable. It afforded him a safe protection. When he first put on his armor, he found it difficult to move. He was feeling very uncomfortable. Yet, it was safe!

The first time he went to battle with his amour on, it proved its worth. Every bullet, dart and arrow bounced off the armor. Leonard chuckled with laughter at his enemies:" Fools! Can't you see? Nothing harms me anymore! .Ha...ha!... ha!. No one or .anything will ever harm me anymore!"

The more Leonard wore his armor, the more comfortable he would feel in it. After all, in it, he was secure, protected, and invulnerable! Slowly, despite the remonstrations of his friends, Leonard refused to take his armor off. It had become sort of second nature to him. He even slept in it! He muttered to himself: "Any anything, moment may happen. Even at night I have to take precautions and be forever ready for an attack."

Though the armor would offer Leonard secure protection still it cut him off from his friends, from nature, from social life. His armor made him stiff, artificial and unnatural. His armor, his protection turned to be a little prison.

Locked within his armor, Leonard was feeling alone and lonely. Nobody could touch him, caress him or embrace him. He could not touch, caress or embrace others either! All intimacy, spontaneity and closeness to anyone were impossible.

Leonard's friends were very sad for their beloved king Leonard. Formerly, so full of life and cheer, now he was as good as dead! Finally, one day, led by their love and concern for their

king and friend, they plotted a loving strategy. In order to celebrate the last victory of Leonard in the battle field, they threw up a big dinner. At dinner time, they got him drunk.

At night, under the cover of darkness, on their tiptoes, they crept into Leonard's chamber. The king was fast asleep. Gently, they lifted off the amour, part by part, and freed their king and friend from his little prison. Then triumphantly, they walked away carrying off the spoils.

Early morning, next day, longing to see, touch, embrace and kiss their beloved friend, they called at the palace. But, lo! And behold, Leonard was dead!

## **THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION**

### **Building Psychological Defenses**

- There are things in us which we do not quite like accept.
- A 100 % self-acceptance is an unattainable ideal. Yet, we have to strive to come as close as possible to it.
- The closer we reach to 100%, the greater our peace of mind and emotional satisfaction will be..
- If we dislike or reject ourselves or part thereof, we cannot expect others to like and accept us totally either
- When we see in ourselves things we dislike, we disown it, and try to hide them from others.
- Consciously or unconsciously, we are afraid that others will not like it, and so reject us as we are
- We are \scared they may not love us, criticize us, hurt us, put us down, despise us ,
- To protect ourselves from all the darts and missiles of criticism, rejection, and ridicule, we fabricate amours or defenses to hide our failures and shortcomings.
- For instance, at the physical level, if I am bald and I do not like it, I'll put on a wig, If my hair is grey, I'll die it black; it, if am short I try may wear high heels shoes, if my body is a bit deformed I'll tailor my clothes in a way that they hide my deformities, etc.
- At the psychological level- even more - we do the same. We do not want others to see our shortcomings, our real or imaginary deficiencies, namely, what we do not like in ourselves.
- In such event, we take recourse to what we call psychological masks, armors, defenses and playing roles.
- By playing roles, consciously or unconsciously, we force ourselves to project a mistaken image of what we are.
- Playing roles means, "Acting in the stage of life, not as what we really are, but according to the person we would like to be".
- For instance, if I am shy and afraid, I may act as a bold and aggressive person.
- If a feel useless and untalented person I may brag and as a proud and boastful character
- If by nature, I feel sad and sad and dispirited, I may play the joker's role

- By putting on masks, uniforms and playing roles, we become phony and artificial; we force ourselves to show others what we are not.. Naturally, we look and sound unnatural and not genuine.

### **The Results of it All Are**

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- We cannot enjoy satisfying human relationships, true friendships, intimacy and love.
- We remain locked within the prison of our armors and roles.
- Since we are afraid that others may discover our true selves, we spend most of our energies in keeping up appearances, safeguarding our armors, playing and replaying our chosen roles.
- Finally, we feel tired, exhausted, lonely, unwanted and unloved.

### **How Can We Free Those Imprisoned in Their Armors**

- To free those imprison in their armors, and in their pretences and role-playing , we have to make them feel that we love them unconditionally as they are, we have to have long patience to slowly make them discover their true worth and help them love themselves as they are.
- \Removing or breaking their armors and defenses too soon or all of a sudden, it's harmful.
- Doing that, his friends made King Leonard die of exposure