



Internet Lodge 9659
United Grand Lodge of England
Province of East Lancashire
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Short Papers Competition 2007

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Paper 32/2007

Title **He Will Never Be A Stupid Atheist**
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“...he will never be a stupid Atheist nor an irreligious Libertine”.

We are also reminded in UGLE's "Freemasonry: An Approach to Life", that "a belief in a Supreme Being is essential and admits of no compromise". This is a first condition of admission into, and membership of, the Order. Not all candidates reflect on this, then a common attitude to some brothers, and the statement that any discussion on religion is prohibited in lodges may be underestimated, such as are other peculiar Masonic traditions. How to reconcile such a crisp requirement with the presence of abstracts from biblical scriptures, of symbols and words of strong religious reminder, of rooted rituals of a consecrated lodge held in the temple?

I believe this situation, that seems only one of many contradictions in the Craft, is a fundamental part of the Masonic experience. The desire to eliminate possible conflict sources should not move away from religious themes in individual studies or comments as this one, arising from Mircea Eliade's "*Traité d'histoire des religions*" reading. Freemasons represent the aim and the means of a development: past, present and future, given the turmoil on the role and objectives that Masonry should be given, undergoing further evolution. Since ancient times, the dualism sacred-profane has marked human life and all experiences have found their place in speculative Freemasonry: it has developed a corpus of theoretical traditions such rites, myths and moral concepts, and we find such themes within the ritual.

Can the sacredness of the temple lead to a place out of profane time, where eternal harmony reigns and where we rejoice those who have gone before us and those who will follow us, in the concept of death and rebirth? Can the rituals, with the drama of their initiatory paths, bring us closer to another dimension, separating the mental level from physical, so much so that we do not allow women in the Craft? Is solstices celebrating in common to ancient popular traditions, over the meaning recognized to the sun since old ages?

Does The Great Architect, which we refer, draw origins from "architettus omnibus", the deity prototype Plautus wrote about over 2,200 years ago? Can the mediation of symbols, in a common initiatory path, allow the elevation of awareness so that shared principles become applicable everyday, with the help of tolerance? Are righteousness, self-respect, humility in harmony with the freedom sought by the knowledge in the three grades path?

Does the transition from a society of basic needs to a society of consumption diminish the values we are talking about? Indeed many different souls found home in Freemasonry and they are still there, waiting for our consideration. Deepen the themes, refine knowledge and practice the virtues so to become better Freemasons and Men!

In the world there is interest on these issues, voluntary activities among young people show the importance of shared values, we may find other people who do not accept prepackaged answers to their intimate questions, and through the common, yet individual, path continue to spread Freemasonry.

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