

Supreme Being – What It Means Today To Some

Article by W.Bro. Rob Lund

In the Summer 2011 edition of Philalethes magazine, which is a journal of Masonic Research, there was an interesting article by W. Bro Paul Adams, the Worshipful Master of Oakland Durant Rockridge Lodge #188 in Oakland, California, entitled “The Affirmation of The Supreme Being”. This article, which can be found at the following link:

http://freemasonry.org/pdf/2011_03_sample_article.pdf , mentions the fact that Deists were treated the same as Atheists and, in days gone by, would not have been admitted into Freemasonry. Bro. Adams' article prompted me to write this one.

Many people today, in this the twenty-first century, when asked in conversation whether they believe in God, will answer in the negative. The person asking the question would probably nod or shrug and continue the conversation. These people may be labeled as atheists, even by themselves. However, in my experience, if one digs a little deeper, the truth is quite different. To try to capture conversations like these, which are sometimes long and interesting, would take more space than is available here, so I will mention only the distilled points which come out of the majority of these discussions.

Even if the conversation comes down to the Big Bang theory as the origin of the creation of the universe, questions are raised regarding the source of this primordial material and how it was started, and what created *that*. When pushed, there is an assertion that some great, unknown power or force, something that cannot be determined, defined, or understood by our limited knowledge, is responsible. Here we have now a definition of the creator of the universe, a supreme being. And this view is very much in line with the Hermetic idea of the creator as defined in the Kybalion. Many will say that they believe in a cosmic order, or Karmic Law, under which the universe operates, and that there is a natural balance: that one will reap what one sows.

As Masons, we practice religious tolerance, and we try to understand other religions, since parts of our ritual are drawn from many sources. So we should understand this “belief”. Many men are looking for a more spiritual life, but find the concept of God as espoused in the holy books of the major religions intellectually unacceptable. In looking at different religions, it seems that if one grows up in the Middle East, one is likely to become Muslim or Jew; if one grows up in North America or Europe, one is likely to be Christian; and so on. So, many people's idea of god seems to be based on their upbringing and environment and, intellectually, this is not a satisfying situation. In searching for a spiritual path, these men will have done much reading and research. They will have read, for example, the research into the origins of the Old Testament and how it came to be. Biblical scholars and historians have determined that much of this work comes from Hebrews released from captivity in Babylon, where they learned stories from their captors which they then adopted, and adapted them by changing names of people and places, and created their own book of law. The Babylonian stories were based on the much older, more detailed Sumerians texts which, Biblical scholars generally agree, are the origin of the Hebrew holy books. These Sumerians texts describe a number of ruling gods, who walked among the people and taught them, and gave them laws. Somewhere along the way, the Hebrews chose one God. These origins give cause to believe that the god of the major holy books is not the same as the creator of the universe.

When asked if they believe they will be punished for sin, the answer will be that we reap what we sow.

So then, are these people atheists? Could they become Masons? If you asked them the question that all candidates for Masonry are required to answer satisfactorily: “Do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Being?”, they can answer a very definite “Yes”. Are they fit and proper men to be made Masons? I can answer that as a “yes”, by saying that I personally know many good and well respected Masons who are of this same mind!