

FREEMASONRY AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE XXI CENTURY

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The XXIst century will be a century of spirituality or will not be at all.

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Abstract. „Freemasonry will, undoubtedly, play an admirable role in the future civilization.” These encouraging words belong to Charles W. Leadbeater who adds: „Nothing would have been worthless, neither preservation of the secrets of sacred ancient rites, nor transmission over the centuries of the powers of these mysteries; because today we are on the brink of a new era which will be announced by the return, once again, of the World Scholar, Lord of Love, because the evolution of the humankind, as we have already seen, is carried out based on cycling laws”¹. And the exceptional author foretells such a destiny for Freemasonry where this one will “turn into splendour, until it rises from within the Temple walls, literally and figuratively”, says he, „the staircase that will be placed between the Earth and Heaven, between humans and the Grand (celestial, a.n.) Lodge, to lead them out of the darkness of the world, towards the plenitude of the Light existing in God, towards the ever blooming Rose in the center of the Cross², towards the Fiery Star, whose glow brings about peace, strength and grace to the whole worlds”.

Until then, Alice (Foster) Bailey talks about “the unknown freemasonry crisis” and she is as blunt as possible: „Today Freemasonry is facing crisis, its future, like the rest of the world, is uncertain”, and a little further she adds “while humankind will have to succeed to capture the spiritual vision of the new times,

¹Charles W. Leadbeater, *Rites Mystiques antiques*, Ed. Adyar, Paris, June, 2009, cap. „Le futur de la Franc-maçonnerie”, pp. 254 - 255; the author is effectively referring to the return of the World Scholar who preached in Palestine for the last time, two thousand years ago, in the same way in which, in the past, each of his coming coincided with a revival or “inauguration” of Mysteries: Thoth in Egypt, Zoroaster in Persia, Orpheus in Greece. „These almighty Messengers of the White Lodge, were in fact, just one, who changed his name and looks and left behind a wonderful initiation Rite capable to lead the humans”; *op.cit.*, p. 255.

²Obvious reference to „Rose-Croix” symbol: Rose-Cross, Cross-Rose, **Rosecross**; see Ștefan Mășu, *Rosecrossers Are Among Us*, Phobos House, Bucharest, 2007, pp. 9-10.

Freemasonry is confronted a little bit later with renewing itself, compared to other fields of human life, like religion and education, and will have the enormous advantage for, meanwhile, the tide would have already changed its course”¹.

Freemasonry in general and American Freemasonry in particular is blamed for lowering the esoteric content of the work in the workshops: the concern to deal with low interest Masonry, especially among the younger generation: while focusing to deal with low interest Masonry, especially among the younger generation, the American marketing machine has brought together a number of concepts and processes, according to some, questionable: large group initiations, initiations on the Internet, attracting family in para freemason activities and structures, anyhow, means outside the esoteric approach, coming even, as the Freemasons author, Christopher Hodapp confesses (and he is not the only one) in advertising and serial production of Freemasons, in fact of "McMasons"².

Here the French Freemasonry enters the stage, raising his voice to conserve the esoteric content of the Masonic work. The refuge territory of the first Masons, the country of enlighten ideas, mother country of the ideals of liberty, equality, brotherhood, mother country of Crusaders and Templers, the greatest mason power of Continental Europe, comes to support the “Lodge” concept as workshop of rite, thinking, esoteric approach and against the temptations of “cybernatization”, “serial production”. It is obvious that the arrow is directed over the ocean, to the American “father” of Universal Freemasonry.

We find ourselves rather on the side of the French concept, especially because the XXIst century could be or not one of religions but will most certainly be one of spirituality.

On another occasion, Alice Bailey also mentions that the Mason Apprentice enters a purification process compared to himself, to his own human features, and it took him seven years to aspire to the next level. In addition, it was the Apprentice’s obligation to require, out of his own initiative, to receive his next initiation, which demonstrated that he had acquired a good enough self control on his own personality for the Brotherhood to give him “a Bonus”, i.e., a raise of his level.

This shows the importance of the second level, of Calf, in Freemasonry training, a level comparable to the second stage in the Mystery School, once gone beyond this point, there is few risks of failure in the development of spiritual life. From that point on, it will be necessary to reach the stage of perfect self control and awareness development before reaching the next level, that of Master. Before,

¹Alice (Foster) Bailey, *L'Esprit de la Maçonnerie*, Association Lucis Trust, Geneva, 1990, p. 125; the reader bears in mind that “today” means, with reference to the issue of our paper, “twenty years ago”.

²See Christopher Hodapp, *Freemasons*, Wiley Publishing, SUA, 2005, p. 269.

in Freemasonry, this period (from Calf to Master) involved five years of sustained efforts.¹

We are on the opinion that it is not only the hope of a Mason but also that of an intellectual that, this first part of the XXIst century will bring about a change in **the Church's official attitude** as well, especially that of the Catholic Church on Freemasonry, because, regardless what might happen in future, "the times of anathema and exclusions are gone; religious belief and laic spirituality are no longer in opposition, on the contrary, they are called to work together aiming at the same goal: primacy of the Spirit" - as expressed in a recent book, Jean-Jacques Gabut.²

This debate is wider and makes reference to the entire concept of **secularism**.³ As long as religious, philosophic, metaphysic, esoteric concepts, etc, belong to private life, they are not under the State competence which must not make any difference between citizens based on this type of beliefs and convictions, if they do not disturb public safety or other people's lives. Within the same concept, religious authorities, in a similar way with the State, have reflected on the boundaries of individual freedom in point of thinking and will understand that this concept defended and promoted by Freemasonry is compatible with the State, Church, being compatible with Freedom, Democracy and Equality. We cannot attack the problem of a century of great spiritual revolution that remains still quartered in thinking and attitudes arising from a medieval experience. In that debate, Freemasonry emerged from contemplation and France is a striking example, where all nine obediences were received together, at their request, by the French President to present a paper on their joint concept (despite the differences and divergences (despite differences and divergences regarding regularity) on secularism.

Between religious and pure spiritual it is felt the need for dialogue without constraint, without any prejudice and the conditions of such a communication are met. Speaking to President Jacques Chirac, at Tours, in September 1996, Pope John Paul II - opened the doors of dialogue: "For Christians, fidelity to the Word of God calls for an attitude of respect for everyone. In their search for truth, they want to create benevolent and constructive relations with all the brothers who live on national territory, regardless of their beliefs." There is in these lines, an invitation to a "brotherhood" of another kind, another opening out of the confessional corsets of Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions, a "universal brotherhood" that leads to the sense of brotherhood cultivated by Freemasons.

¹Alice (Foster) Bailey, *op.cit.*, p. 127; The author laments on the fact that, in our times, "growth periods" are ignored and the various degrees are conferred based rather on esoteric reasons.

²Jean-Jacques Gabut, *Eglise, religions et Franc-Maçonnerie*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, Dec. 2009, p. 8.

³See Ștefan Mășu, *Freemasonry Revealed*, Solaris Print P.H., Bucharest, 2009, p. 373.

In 1782, Joseph de Maistre found out, with great regret that religious schisms were deep and numerous, that belief in God is different among Christians, Muslims and Hebrews and more than that, Christianity was divided into Catholic, Orthodox and Protestants, and many other faiths; then Freemasonry was predominantly Christian. As early as the eighteenth - century, Freemasonry has opened its doors for the family of all denominations, so that today the Christian Freemason is the brother of the Jew Freemason and both of them are the Muslim Freemason' brothers around the concept of a around the concept of unique Divinity, Initial Principle, Creator and Universal, the Great Architect of the Universe.

From Joseph de Maistre, who was talking about "Christianity" to Pope John Paul II who was talking about the "brotherhood of all citizens", human spirituality makes its way towards convergence, to the Entente, not to be confused with uniformity and leveling. And André Benzmris makes it relative, up to the point to consider the classification of esotericism in Jewish, Christian and Islamic as being "abusive". Freemasonry has in it the germs that allow them to contribute, if not to accomplish, "Great Work" of Reconciliation, to which made reference, during their time, Joseph de Maistre, René Guénon and John Paul II.

Even more, André Benzmra talks about the "mission" of Freemasonry: "One day, the work of reconciliation between the three initiating currents will see the daylight. But for the moment, Christian esoteric adepts and suffices remain silent, while in modern times, the project of reconciliation was made visible, by the Freemasons, just because Freemasons are of all confessions and preach universalism, because they seek for harmony between different traditions, because the Order is dedicated to the Great Architect of the Universe which is El Schadaï, the Great Mediator, the Great Conciliator of the Heaven and Earth¹."

The Hebrews, Christians and Muslims can be together in Freemasonry and keep their traditional belief intact, in full freedom. And André Benzmra does not hesitate to explicitly and bravely formulate his belief: "Churches would be inspired to constitute themselves in a Federation of Love of God and Humanity, where each belief would maintain its own specificity after the Masonic Order model that combines a variety of rites and beliefs"². The Federation headquarters should be in Jerusalem, where the starting point and center of the great traditions but also of the great conflicts is located.

To Freemasons, the Grand Architect of the Universe is, as I said, the Supreme Being the Principle Officer governing the Universe. This metaphor retakes Cicero's idea, a hundred years before Christ: "Nothing is more visible and

¹The legend says that Schadaï was killed and chopped in 72 pieces and then restored; separation of Heaven from Earth represents dissociation of the El Schadaï principle into El Elyon and Elohim. See André Benzmra, *op. cit.*, pp. 165 – 170.

²Ibid, p. 176

clearer, when we looked up to heaven and contemplate the heavenly bodies, than the existence of a divinity of superior intelligence, which determines the absolute movements and exerting a direct action on the world, being in a certain way, the architect of so much work and also sees to its maintenance”¹.

Henri Rochais also joins the debate and he is categorical by stating that “Masonic life is a spiritual life”². He regards religion as an essential dimension of human nature; being a rational animal, man is religious, in the same way he is political and social. H. Rochais’ religion “does not identify itself with an institution, a doctrinal system, it is above all, an inner personal attitude, a free and conscious behavior”, it is becoming aware of the presence and our deep intimacy, of the supreme reality through which exists everything, and further on, he finds out a reality, where there is not “a religion”, but where there are “religions” and this plurality excludes universality. And the conclusion is that “religions separate” and what reunites us is Religion, a religion that will unite men “in spirit and truth”. Only such an “in spirit religion” will be able to be universal.

And the author concludes his reflections by showing that **Freemasonry’s role** should consist in educating the people “in the spirit of universal religion”, taking into account the fact that this is part of its vocation.

However, until then, the XXIst century brings in front of the humanity a new reality, or a new stage of an evolving reality, characterized, from the point of view of the matter we are interested in, by the configuration of some **changes in the religious believes**.

Religious communities are no longer homogeneous. Multicultural society develops by cohabitation of different denominations in the same country, a phenomenon within which some strong tendencies come to light.

Christianity remains the main world demographic entity, but, geographically goes further from the Western countries; China and Nigeria will have, soon, the strongest Christian communities. At the same time, the Islam, which knows the fastest growth, twice faster than Christianity, will form a **dominant world religious group**, in the next 30 years.

In 2025, in Europe, about 30 billion Muslims will be living, representing double of the number in 2005. Demographic Islamism will bring about a **radicalization** from economic reasons, on the background of cumulated frustrations; on the other hand, the Islam is also supported by important financial resources in the oil centers. It is estimated that 700 billion dollars, in actives, are managed according to the principles of the Islam law, Sharia: 20% of the clients of Gulf and Asian banks have the (spontaneous) inclination to prefer an Islamic investment in a classic investment.³

¹Xavier Michaud, *La vérité sur la franc – maçonnerie*, Ed. City, France, 2010, pp. 148 – 149.

²Henri Rochais, *Vie maçonnique, vie spirituelle*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, 2001, pp. 50 – 56.

³See Geert Noels, *Econochoc*, Ed. Anthemis, Belgium, 2008, p. 78.

Therefore, the problem we are bringing to discussion is not only of philosophical nature and probably, is not of philosophical nature, in the first place. These changes trigger an impact on spirituality, in general, and on religious spirituality in particular: the humanity will have to learn to operate in differently, with fundamental values like belief, love for the neighbor, restrain from violence, tolerance, which are bound to be preponderantly part of the spiritual profile of a new man, **the XXIst century man**.

Being ranked – remarks Alain de Keghel together with Alain Bernheim – “too religious for atheists, too laic for believers, too revolutionary for conservatives, too conservatory for revolutionaries” the present Freemasonry and especially the one of the future, will have to make proof of courage”, “Courage in Freemasonry, like in politics has to be assumed, otherwise is running away from responsibility”¹.

In the relation tradition-modernity, Freemasonry will remain Freemasonry, as long as it will be an initiating organization and, in this line, tradition will coexist with Masonry’s belonging to a modern society with aspirations and necessities different from the previous society, but there is no doubt that, the human spirit in the divinity of its genius will find formulas for the future Masonry, in the same way the same genial spirit, has transformed operational Masonry into speculative Masonry, exactly as an adaptation to a changing society; tradition is not fixism, stiffness, dogma and retrograde spirit, it is fresh water fountain, from Heaven and from the Soul, that springs from the Earth and flows from the peak of the mountain or springs out from an electric or electronic mechanism, a matter of form, not of content.

Cristian Jacq distinguishes several trends and orientations regarding what Masonry should do with priority, according to some and according to others. Quoting the Freemason Marius Lepage, “Masonry ahs not to prepare a better world, it has to prepare people, who, in their turn, will be able to prepare a better world”².

There is a trend of the **Brotherhood Masonry** giving weight to cultivation of relationships used among the members, on the quality of the human relations where profound and honest friendship like Mason help is prevailing to the Brothers’ notoriety and material situation.

There is an orientation towards **philanthropy** and charity, excelling in the U.S.A., according to which Masonry should intensify their preoccupations in this

¹Alain de Keghel, *L'Europe des Francs-Maçons en marche*, Ed. VÉGA, Paris, July, 2009, p. 139. The author is one of the “liberals” who see themselves confronted with “land mark dogmatism” and believe that Masonry will proof the courage to “deal” with the norms of “regularity” or with the “principle of exclusive territorial jurisdiction. ”

²Cristian Jacq, *Freemasonry*, Ed. Lucman, Bucharest, 2005, p. 268.

direction, proliferating philanthropic actions and structures, organizing fund raising events to help the Masons in difficulty and vulnerable social groups.

In the same way the orientation towards **Humanist Masonry** is equally captivating and at the moment is claimed mostly by irregular Masonries; the supporters of this orientation believe that Universal Masonry should focus on defining the human values in their essence and truth, to contribute to the formation of a humanist culture, oriented towards Man's material and spiritual prosperity. For the Belgium Freemason author P. Guelff gives the option for a "humanist spirituality with a lot of symbolism"¹.

Another thesis makes reference to **Engaged Masonry**, to acting Masonry, active component of civil society, which regards itself responsible to participate to the wellbeing of the society; the range is wide open between the thesis of conservative, reserved, "low profile", attitude of the Anglo-Saxon Masonry and the militancy of the Grand Orient of France.

There is also a tendency towards a **Theistic Masonry**, by promoting belief as a way of making people close; without becoming religion and church, Freemasonry of this kind would be situated in the at the forefront of the fight against atheism and anti clergy.

And, finally, Cristian Jacq² mentions, **Esoteric and Initiating Masonry**, whose central focus is to study symbolism and pass it over to the next generations, through initiation because it is only through initiation that human condition can reach perfection and fulfillment.

When dealing with the "initiating demarche", Alain Subrebst decomposes it into **intellectual work** through which both the Apprentice and the Calf accomplish analogies between the tangible reality and the abstract one, followed by a "moral demarche", that he calls the "way of heart" to reach **the spiritual practice** when, "spirit and body are One, during incarnation, when both are fed from both, each of each, in total intimacy in the time of existence"³.

Regardless a emphasis or another, of a main direction or another, it remains nowadays, if not becomes even more nowadays, as we think, the problem of defining the **concept of the secret**, of its magnitude, of the relation secret – discrete, beyond a play on words that satisfies a certain curiosity of the need of openness, of transparency, of "exteriorization of masonry", as defined by M. Delclos and J.-L. Caradeau⁴, even in the homeland of traditions, England, in the

¹Pierre Guelff, *Sur les pas des Francs – Maçons*, Ed. Jourdan, Belgium, 2010, p. 233.

²Cristian Jacq, *op.cit.*, pp. 278 – 280.

³Alain Subrebst, *Petit manuel d'Éveil et de pratique maçonnique*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, June, 2009, pp. 226 – 228.

⁴Marie Delclos, J.L. Caradeau, *Les Symboles Maçonniques*, Ed. TrajectoirE, Paris, March, 2009, p. 600.

18th century, appeared in the *Times*, news of Masonic initiations, solstices and other meetings.

The Masonry of the future will have to be, above all, “reduced to its genuine origins”, to identify and embrace them and only in this way “**modern mysteries**” will get consistency and strength through their legitimate descent from the “**ancient mysteries**”. In demonstration of this truth, Alexandre Lenoir returns to the ancient Greeks and ancient Egyptians, when the Initiated had to face a long and tedious testing for forty days, fasting, penances, corporal punishment, and only in this way, he could fully enjoy the honor of Initiation; after the oath, Hierophant devoted him “proselyte of Isis, Mother Nature, Goddess of Wisdom, of Osiris, Horus and Benefactor of mankind and Horus, the God of Reason and of Silence. After this consecration, the new Initiated received a white belt with blue stripes and found out the signs of recognition by others who, like him, received the **second Initiation**.”¹ All the Initiating Ceremonies ended with a pompous procession, called “**Initiated manifestation or triumph**” where the officinal showed the crowd the “Man of excellence” Back to priestly College, the participants continued for three days, they glorify the gods, through sumptuous dining and magnificent concerts, all veiled in the Ritual of glory and celebration. Here in the second degree, in this second Initiation in the great secrets, stopped the “Common Initiation”, including foreigners: the Magi and the priests of Isis had deeper and more sacred mysteries they shared only with the Egyptians in the framework of a **third degree**. If the future Masonry will head towards these roots, it will be a shaking construction, leaving its foundation and making its structure fragile.

As far as we are concerned, we believe that the **Future Masonry** will continue to be a Masonry based on **tradition and initiation**. In an era of technology, when writing, calculating, programming, taking all kinds of orders (supply, tourism, etc), children’s games are taken over by computers that are invading the daily life of the individual, when communication is being depersonalized at large scale, the Masons live in the society of the time and share this “de-spiritualization” pressure. J. P. Bayard finds that in the USA, Masonry becomes preponderantly, a philanthropic society, activity which keeps then in a favorable public eye, while consuming, up to exhaustion, the political value it held in its glory, as well as the symbolist value of the Rituals.

The decline of the American Masonry, the strongest in the world, lead to the identification of “solutions”, so that the American fertile land has produced initiatives meant to resolve Masonry’s problem of “number”: collective initiations, interpreted by professional actors, where the Initiated become

¹Alexandre Lenoir, *La Franc-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine*, Ed. Maison de Vie, Paris, 2009, pp. 150 - 154.

spectators, tax payers, up to the highest degrees, skipping the stages of the Lodge work.

On the other hand, being aggressed by this “technological materialism”, the man, as a human being, has a reflex of resistance, from attitude of nostalgic regret to attempts to rediscover the spiritual values; the same communication technology enables, this time, to engage debates, access to information, religion.

The same J. P. Bayard believes that a new religion is being installed: man needs to create Gods, a new conscious integration of Divinity and sacred values is being produced, according to another rhythm of life.¹ Therefore, the future Masonry will be an Initiating Masonry, based on tradition, but not on dogma referring to religious traditions.

In this future Masonry or in such a future of Masonry, the Mason finds himself exactly with the fundamental duties Oswald Wirth was systemizing.² When he talks about the Calf’s **assiduity**, he mentions that “any indifference towards the collectivity he freely adhered to weakens his connections with this” one and, consequently, cannot ask for a “Salary increase” for the second degree, one cannot have the benefit of the Masonry’s vital force unless he and his Lodge become one body.

Oswald Wirth’s Masonry Calf manifests vigilance and towards his elementary duties, in without which the expected perfecting progress cannot be reached: **punctuality** in the workshop is not a minor question, an organizational detail, but an expression of **discipline**, giving the Lodge the necessary strength to exercise effective action both on its own members and on the outside world as well³.

Therefore, the Calf no longer has the eyes covered by the bandage, and, consequently, he walks, determined, towards the Light; a long, difficult journey, but which is leading him, the one who has seen the fiery Star, to **Enlightenment**; he will have to permanently train himself, “the important thing being not to know a lot, but to know well what he knows”. Now, Glorification of labor makes sense, because he will have to “polish the Stone” for the rest of his life to get close to perfection, as close as possible, being aware that, as Irène Mainguy emphasized, “Perfection cannot be reached in this world.”⁴

¹Jean - Pierre Bayard, *Credo Maçonique*, Ed, Dangles, Franța, 2006, pp. 161 - 162; the author quotes “the initiations from the Great Lodge In New Jersey, on March 19, 2005., when the three blue grades were conferred in the morning, then at 15:00, they were at the 32nd grade in R.S.A.A.

²Oswald Wirth, *La Franc - Maçonnerie rendue intelligible à ses adeptes. Le Compagnon*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, 2002, p. 47.

³Ibid, p. 89

⁴Irène Mainguy, *La Symbolique maçonnique du troisième millénaire*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, 2004, p. 373.

We also believe that, Masonry will have to evolve and **will evolve**; it is a major challenge that of making, further, its way through an evolving society and to evolve, sticking to the great tradition. This journey can be done, to the extent to which Masonry will return to the cultural elite of the society; an elite that does not necessarily mean professors and members of academies only, although these are the ones that will make it credible again; an elite of elevated attitude, intellectual common sense based on a healthy education, good faith and culture.

Treating the “elite notion” René Guénon remarks the belonging to a traditional ancient language, attached to the initiating symbolism, before being “deformed”, up to caricature and parody, by the profane usage¹. “And there is no reason - continues the great esoteric – “for the abuse of a term to lead us to avoiding it”; as it is about “the elected” the distinction is operated at superior level, where Guénon believes that the expression “intellectual elite” can be regarded as a pleonasm, because an elite cannot be other but intellectual, to which he adds, in a quite inspired way, ‘or spiritual” giving way to more nuanced definitions and classifications. Anyways, according to the Freemasonry acceptance, the elite represent the assembly of those the features required for initiation and who represent, obviously, a minority of the population; and further on, according to the same acceptance, the shift from one degree to another creates “an elite within the elite” and the most eloquent example is the passage from Apprentice to Calf.

It is part of the definition of Freemasonry to be **a school of wisdom, a life philosophy**, cultivating, in an etymological sense, “love for wisdom (philosophy). Marc Halevy points out the **mason wisdom**, the fact that it does not belong to “doxia” and “praxis”. A school of wisdom whose final rational is to reside in forging **the quality men**, of highly ranked laborers, engaged in the construction site in this world, of the Great Architect Glory (dedicated) Temple. A school of going beyond self, where we learn to look at the world and into ourselves with God’s eyes and looking from “there up”, we will realize how ridiculous and primitive the “great” vanity battles taking place “down there” appear to us, having the same mediocrities, betrayals and vulgarities since the man is a man².

Jean Mourgues was questioning, many others like us, if Masonry has a future and if so, what this future is like³. He expresses his optimistic, conditional view, which we share: “I am convinced that in a discrete way, in the initiating accomplishments and behind the political scene, the Mason Order will finally succeed in giving a **genuine** face to those who are in search of wisdom”⁴. This

¹René Guénon, *Aperçus sur la Initiation*, Edition Traditionnelles, Paris, 2002, pp. 272 - 276.

²Marc Halevy, *Philosophie maçonnique*, Ed. OXUS, France, 2008, pp. 215 -216.

³Jean Mourgues, *La Francmaçonnerie, société initiatique des temps modernes*, Ed. DERVY, Paris, 2002, cap. „Vers l’avenir”, pp. 215 – 261.

⁴Ibid, p. 254

thing is possible if the Temple remains a Temple of the spirit. How is the millennium Masonry going to make its way in a future society, it is may be, another Masonry mystery, but if “it will make a freemason a good, brave, helping, man, a Brother for his fellows, he will not betray our hopes”¹. But if, on the contrary, he will detach from his initiating vocation, under the threatening pressure of living in and through technology, the Lodges will bent under the pressure of the political power of certain influencing political economical, financial groups, from the country and from abroad, then the Square and Compass become useless and the official dress in the Lodge becomes a play, where the spectator still thinks of his business meetings on the next day or at the meal at the restaurant he is going to have after the end of the show.

Neither Paul Naudon sees an incompatibility between science and technology, on the one hand, and esoteric, on the other hand, when he finds that “discoveries in science have brought to attention the alchemists of old times”², and it is him also to conclude that, this science aiming at framing the world within a formula, brings back to honor, the hermit principle of Unity: EVERYTHING lies in EVERYTHING. The prestigious author demonstrates that the notion of “Divine” itself gains, in the light of science, a new aspect and it is not an exaggeration to believe that the principles of “Absolute” “Perfect”, including in their expression of “God” or in “Supreme Reason” or the Great Architect of the Universe” are built on knowledge, on accumulation of **knowledge**, and may be of scientific knowledge in the first place³.

The future Masonry will have to be, unconditionally, **a tolerant Masonry**, if it wishes the society to be tolerant with it, in a century Bruno Etienne⁴, as well as André Malraux⁵, define as “ a century of religions’ with a redefinition a some basic formulas, with new ways of believing, with new modalities of “religious sociability”, the way to redefining religion is full of hesitations, controversies, conflicts; integration and fundamentalism which, among other things, “ give also answers to distortions of modernity and irrationality” tend to gain the clothes of “social demand”. In front of such “spirituality offers”, producing orthodoxy and dogma, Freemasonry will have to present an original way, leading to “an

¹Ibid, p. 260

²Paul Naudon, *La Francmaçonnerie*, Ed. PUF., Paris, 2006, cap. „Influences et perspectives d’avenir”, pp. 119 - 125.

³Ibid, p. 122

⁴Bruno Etienne, *La Spiritualité Maçonnique, pour redonner du sens à la vie*, Ed. Dervy, Paris, 2006, pp. 80 – 87.

⁵He is quoted as author of the statement “the XXIst century will be a century of religions or will not be at all”, also J.P. Bayard gives another version: „the XXIst century will be a century of spirituality or will not be at all”, see J. P. Bayard, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

autonomous ethics” leaving everyone, as Spinoza used to in his time, to decide and to choose the morals.

In its future mission, Freemasonry will be able to count on what Mircea Eliade discovers in MAN, this “thirst for sacred” of the individual, dreaming for a better world and who, through scientific knowledge reaches the “spirit of criticism”; on one condition, though, that of introducing God into the Man”¹. Let us correlate this last idea with what Jean – Jacques Wunenburger says in his work on “the Sacred”, where he also talks about “a return of the religious”, as a solution for what he considers to be “a crisis of the contemporary culture” ; the sacred, probably needs not so much knowledge, and even less science, but it needs silence and quiet or “a scholar ignorance”². We will see if the Man of the end of the XXIst century will perceive the sacred “ as trace of divine divinity” and if he will feel in the same way as in 2009, when he is in front of the sacred beauty of a statue or a Requiem or listening to a poem or even watching the greatness of a sunset.

Masonry will continue to do, what it does through its millenary vocation, “to put together” what it is dismantled, spread, disarticulated (*rassembler ce qui est épars*). As Julien Behaeghel, also remarks “the multitude of the worlds torn us apart and spread us in the entropic circumvolutions of unconscious matter, of undirected, unengaged on the axis of climbing, of consciousness rise”³. The dismantling we are talking about is the one of Osiris, chopped in 14 pieces, a god spreading himself into “the created” to infuse spirit: it is Christ crucifixion, who, through incarnation, accepts his Father’s will, and the Father’s will is not the death of His Son, but the death of ignorance, of the unconsciousness, of the dark.

Thus, Masonry that is **esoteric in content, humanist in expression and engaged in attitude**. Talking about “Masonic humanism”, it is not enough to admit that “man is above all values” or to quote from Trento’s: “Nothing is of everything that is human is not strange to me” or J.P. Sartre: “Man is free or else there is no Man.” As Henri-Tort Nougès, points out “ Freemason remains a humanist in the traditional sense of the notion, he is the one that picks up from the cultural past of humanity all the best, most noble, most elevated and most beautiful things”⁴, and, to this spirit Trento’s famous expression remain valid. Freemasonry will stick to its “project” of “waking up human consciousness” and to **safeguard the values**, in order to give and give back, when necessary, a **reason** to the life of the society without which this one enters “clinical death.”

¹Ibid, p. 163

²Jean – Jacques Wunenburger, *Le Sacré*, Ed. PUF, Paris, 2009, pp. 122 – 123.

³Julien Behaeghel, *L’Apprenti Franc – Maçon et le Monde des Symboles*, Ed. Maison de Vie, Paris, 2000, pp. 163 - 170.

⁴Henri-Tort Nougès, *L’Ordre Maçonnique*, Ed. VÉGA, Paris, Dec. 2008, p. 192.

And rereading Trento's phrase again, this time in its initial sense, Trento's phrase, The true Freemason is aware of all his weaknesses and imperfections, but he will permanently strive to "polish the rough stone" and to reach the Cubic stone in the peaceful Temple and to walk on, higher, on the road of knowledge and love; **love of man** is the synthetic expression of the mason humanism, where man-mankind is close to each Mason. Hard task, requiring time, work, hard work, patience, help on behalf of Brothers, until the discovery of the Light. A never ending, never accomplished task, remaining permanently an everlasting "construction site", and this construction site is the **Mason Lodge**.¹

If Freemasonry does not remain in the middle of the society, it will not keep the path with it, and will see itself in the impossibility of accomplishing its mission, in one of the fundamentally accepted missions, respectively that of **not changing the society**, but in making it better. To this aim, Masonry will be careful to, as Pierrick l'Hyver suggests "to permanently clean its spectacles" look to the society in a subjective way, be it modern: the **Mason Ideal** will imply **modern thinking**, a modern conception on reason, an overlapping between the **Masonic Ideal and the Truth**, between the **Masonic Ideal and Progress**, even if, in the specificity of his work, Masonry will always give up superficial language to reach the concise expression, symbolizing its truths, because as long as Masonry is Masonry "there is everything"².

And, from this perspective, "The exegesis of the second grade Rite, that of the Calf, is more interesting than the one for the first (degree); being more unequivocally, it is illustrative for the form developed by modern ethical thinking."³ The same Pierrick l'Hyver enters the deep symbol of the five Journeys leading the Apprentice to Calf, and from this present and future perspective. In their first Journey, there takes place the modification, amelioration and development of the faculties, as well as the integration of duty of complying to the rule: in this "spiritual state" the Apprentice discovers, then, the method leading to "perfecting", enabling him, respectively, to rationalize and systemize the constructive attitude. Then, follows the discovery of science, a real tool (Lever) in the hand of the man to rule nature and himself. But the Lever has to remain in the service of man, of the good, beauty, justice; the human effort finds its place, crossing human subjectivity, in its concern of helping the humanity, which should be, says Pierrick l'Hyver, everybody's concern, as the fifth Journey, under the sign of Glorification of Labor, symbolizes assuming the sense of duty and co-participation to the collective effort.

¹*Ibid*, p. 197

²Pierrick l'Hyver, *Car içi tout est symbole*, Ed. VÉGA, Paris, 2008, pp. 257 – 272.

³*Ibid*, pp. 238 – 240.

Even if the Ideal is part of the idea and it exists only in thinking, the tendency to accomplish this ideal pushes us forward and makes our existence “positive”. In this vision, to Viviane Starck, the Mason Ideal is high, it tends to build the Temple of Humanity and this ideal enables the Mason to learn to build and to come to understand his own inner Temple, as well as to share this (inner) Temple with the others; through the perspective of his Ideal, Freemasonry is a school of life, a favored spiritual way, a demarche to set free, a reason for which it is a Royal Art¹, in the same way we detail in the book called *The Mason Master and the Royal Art*.²

We believe in a future of Masonry, a Masonry that should stick to the principle of non involving that lodge in political and religious disputes, but a Masonry that cannot be indifferent at the major concerns of the society it belongs to: poverty and welfare, war and peace, democracy and dictatorship, tolerance and fundamentalism, harmony and violence: a Masonry better than the society it is part of, with Masons who, taken individually, each of them is at the same time a “good man”, “a scholar”, a serious, respectable and respected man and taken together to be articulated in synergy, in aggregation, and in this way they will release a greater force than the algebraic sum of those who are composing it; A Masonry that is politically equidistant and outside games and manipulations, A decent and discrete Masonry, tolerant, above intrigues, businesses and group pressures. Such a Masonry, if it will emerge and clear up, will be a respected and strong Masonry, a vector of culture and progress, through its specific means, and if not, the humanity of the end of the XXIst century will talk about it in the past, like about an interesting, mysterious story, the world believed in, as much as they believed; a story, that, like any other story begins with: “Once upon a time...”

¹Viviane Starck, *Introduction à la pensée maçonnique*, Edition de la Hutte, Bruxelles, 2009, pp. 66 – 67.

²Ștefan Mășu, *The Mason Master and the Royal Art*, RAO P.H., Bucharest, Sept. 2010.

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