



**GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS AT THE CENTENNIAL MEETING HELD ON 25
SEPTEMBER 2009 ENTITLED "FROM THE LEGEND TO OUR DAY"**

(Widescreen Digital Projection/Motion Picture)

Hilton Convention Centre Istanbul

We have presented you with a brief story of the history of Freemasonry and the past 100 years of our Grand Lodge. We know that Freemasonry has witnessed many troublesome incidents in the world and in our own country during the course of its history and that our Brethren overcame all these incidents without giving in at all or compromising any of its 300-year-old principles and have thus succeeded in ensuring that our craft has survived unto this day. Such an inheritance is in our entrustment. It is incumbent upon all of us to be well aware of this.

Freemasonry teaches through its initiation and esoteric system and is a life-long manner of living. This in fact is what we should attain to. It is thus that we can take up our places in a structure that becomes water-tight, where we as one of the dressed stones within this fabric that forms the Temple of Ideals for Humanity can become a whole with the other stones of this edifice. This may be a Utopia, but let us not forget that there have been many Brethren who have even sacrificed their lives for the sake of this Utopia.

Nowadays we observe efforts within Masonry that attempts to reconcile the Masonic world with the affairs of the external world. From time to time, we do witness the presence of those Brethren in our own jurisdiction whose thinking is in this direction. Regular Masonry well knows that controversies in religious and political discussion can be a major source that sows seeds of animosity and which leads to divisions and even to conflicts between people. Trying therefore to involve Masonry in this direction is behaviour that needs to be avoided. Regardless of conditions, Freemasonry aware of this fact needs to distance itself from such current actualities.

Freemasonry is not an international institution. Contrary to what is quite frequently alleged, there is no world centre of Freemasonry. Freemasonry is an institution that is administered by the Grand Lodge of each country and within the boundaries of that country. Therefore, "The Grand Lodge is an independent and sovereign institution governing itself and which was founded and has been sustained by the Freemasons within the boundaries of a predetermined geographical area".

Although we all very much resemble each other, the structures of the Grand Lodges are not identical to each other from the point of origins and traditions. All the Grand Lodges are equal to each other and have the same rights. In brief, Freemasonry is a national institution within the country it exists.

This situation does not mean that Freemasonry has no international relations. The Grand Lodges too, just like states do, recognize each other. An exchange of recognition between two Grand Lodges means that they appreciate the Masonic outlook of the each other and that they accept the members of one other as though they were their own. The extent of relationship between Grand Lodges under the concept of recognition would not proceed beyond this point.

The Grand Lodge of Turkey has continued its existence from the past until the present day without making any concession in the basic tenets of Masonry, as contained primarily in its own Constitution. It has adhered to the internationally accepted principles relating to the Regularity and the Recognition of Grand Lodges based upon reciprocity.

Our Grand Lodge is in amity with 145 Grand Lodges within the Community of mainstream Masonry. It has always considered the Grand Lodges that it has recognised are equal with itself irrespective of their date of foundation, number of members, geographical proximity, religion, language or race.

It is for this reason that the Grand Lodge of Turkey has without exception attended meetings of the Grand Masters or of the Grand Secretaries that meet from time to time without agenda and are of consultative nature. Furthermore, meetings other than the above mentioned in which no decision is taken nor any announcement is published, the Grand Lodge of Turkey does not participate in as it considers them to be against Masonic principles and that of Grand Lodge's independence. It airs that such meetings may cause harm to Masonry.

In addition to this, our Grand Lodge is in close cooperation on Masonic and administrative matters with those Grand Lodges that are located in countries, which it considers to be culturally, and geographically close to itself. These Grand Lodges are desirous of collaboration because of our Grand Lodge's 100-year old experience in Masonic applications and in administrative or financial aspects. This Grand Lodge fulfils such requests, when received, to the extent of its means.

Furthermore, our Grand Lodge accepts that it is a duty on behalf of Masonry and a mission incumbent upon itself that new Lodges start working in countries where the light of Masonry has not yet been lit and which it considers to be culturally and geographically close to itself. It is for this reason that it has permitted the foundation, under its jurisdiction, of two lodges outside Turkey's boundaries.

The first is the Worshipful Hazar Lodge in which our Azerbaijani Brethren are members and for the time being labouring in Ankara while the second is the Worshipful Lefkoşa I Lodge in which our Brethren from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are members and started to operate in the Northern Republic of Cyprus. Both Worshipful Lodges labour in full awareness of the duty they have undertaken. The results of this worthy labour will be a joy felt by and honour to our Grand Lodge.

We have in fact become similar to and a whole with the structure of all the Grand Lodges that form part of the Universal Chain of Brotherhood, by our adoption of "Universality" in mentality and an "National" outlook in the administrative formation, through a maturing process and by applying these concepts to our lifestyle. We are subject to only one thing and that is the unchanging universal rules and traditions of Freemasonry. We are therefore here today with the obligation to preserve and to carry

forward these universal rules and traditions, so that a brighter future can result from our labours. We are here today to extend our help in this. The whole issue is to bring forth this reality, to exalt this light, and to well realize our great responsibility for introduction to and informing non-Masons of this. That this light is being lit by a Jurisdiction labouring in large and luxurious buildings, or in which the matriculation count is large is not at all important. What is of significance here is that the Freemasons who are groomed and are being taught to satisfactorily represent Masonry in its full form.

I would like us to reflect in remembrance on who we are, as Freemasons, in the historical sense. The history of Freemasonry is very old and is based upon our Masonic forefathers who gave us the light and who gave us direction in the beginning. We are a family brought together by these forefathers. For this reason, we should accept our being together as mutual family visits with each other. Perhaps one of the foremost duties of Freemasonry is to, in principle, respect every Jurisdiction's practice and regulatory measures, as well as of any issue that may arise in that country.

We know that there is no religious, language or racial differentiation in Masonry and that there are no different principles in the Masonry that is named together with each of the nations and that Masonry is one. The goal should be to be of service to Masonry.

Our duty is to be faithful to our oaths and to adhere to the Basic principles and traditions and to carry forward the light by proceeding on the path illuminated by Masonry. It's our solemn obligation to ensure that this does take place.

May the Grand Architect of the Universe Bless our labours and always help us.