

# **The Fellowcraft Mason's Lessons**



**The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge  
of  
Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania**

## WHAT IS A FELLOWCRAFT MASON?

"Fellowcraft" is one of a large number of terms, which have a meaning peculiar to Freemasonry and are seldom found elsewhere. A "craft" is an organization of skilled workmen in some trade or calling: masons, carpenters, painters and barbers. A "Fellow" means one who holds membership in such a craft, obligated to the same duties and allowed the same privileges. Since the skilled crafts are no longer organized as they once were, the term "Fellowcraft" is no longer used in its original sense.

Because the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree lies between the Entered Apprentice Ma-son's and Master Mason's Degrees, you must not fall into the error of considering it a halfway station, a mere transition from one to the other. It has the same completeness and importance as each of the others, with a definite purpose. Many great lessons are embodied in the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree, which if you understand them will lead you into an understanding of others. One of these is adulthood.

The Entered Apprentice Mason represents youth standing at the portals of life, his eyes on the rising sun. The Fellowcraft Mason is a man in the prime of life, experienced, strong, resourceful and able to bear the heat and burden of the day. First, the Fellowcraft Mason must gain direct experience from his contact with the realities of life. A man garners such experiences only with the passage of time. Each day he comes in contact with facts. What he learns one day must be added to the next, and so on, from year to year, until at last, he comes to understand the world in which he lives, how to deal with it and how to master it.

Second is education, an enhancement to an individual's limited experience. Education is symbolized in the second degree by the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Perhaps you were somewhat confused to hear what was said about grammar rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy, and wondered what such schoolroom topics had to do with Masonry. The explanation of these subjects was not intended as an academic lecture. Like so much else in the degree, they are symbols, signifying all that is meant by education—our training by others in skill and knowledge to do or to understand certain tasks.

Third is wisdom, which is more important than experience or knowledge. Experience gives us awareness of the world at points of immediate contact. Knowledge gives us competency for special tasks in the arts, professions, callings

and vocations. Wisdom enables us to apply the experience and knowledge, along with the insight and good judgment we possess, to our everyday activities.

## INTERPRETATION OF THE FELLOWCRAFT MASON'S DEGREE

My Brother, when the degree began it was important that you symbolically acted the part of a man approaching King Solomon's Temple.

Following a natural progression, we will first deal with the two pillars at the entrance to the temple. The two pillars of King Solomon's Temple had no structural value, as they stood on the porch way or entrance before the temple. The entrance to the temple faced east; therefore, according to scriptural record, in passing out of the temple, facing east, Boaz was on the left in the north, and Jachin on the right in the south.

The pillars teach us that, after a proper moral training, the acquisition of wisdom is the next necessary preparation for useful life. Their names, Boaz meaning strength and Jachin, God will establish, demonstrate stability. Boaz can also be thought of as power and Jachin as wisdom, and together they symbolize that power is useless, even harmful, unless applied with wisdom and the perpetuity and providence of God. They are in Masonry, symbols of a living faith. The modern Fellowcraft Mason may see in them the faith and the means by which he may travel a little farther or a little higher.

As a Fellowcraft Mason, you have advanced another step and as this degree is emblematic of a young man, so it is here that the intellectual education begins. Here, at the very spot, which separates the porch from the sanctuary, where childhood ends and manhood, begins. He must approach it with faith. Nothing is clear before them but the next step.

He must believe there is a top; that if he climbs long enough he will reach a goal, a place of light. This is to teach you that after you have passed beyond the years of irrational childhood and commenced your entrance upon manhood, the laborious task of self-improvement is the first duty placed before you. Only gradually, do we achieve and realize appreciation of the great values of Life, Religion, Brotherhood, Art, Science, Literature and Citizenship. The satisfying values of life, whether they are spiritual, moral, intellectual or physical, must be earned and achieved through patient and sustained effort.

The letter "G" is of particular significance in all English speaking Lodges, as being the first letter of our name for the Deity.

In summary, the pillars mark the entrance to the Masonic manhood.

## SYMBOLS OF THE FELLOWCRAFT MASON'S DEGREE

There are many impressive and important symbols of this degree. They are the Working Tools and the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Working Tools made use of in this degree consist of the Square, Level and the Plumb.

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. The use of the word, with these implications, has become almost universal both within and without the Fraternity. The direction of the two members of the square form an angle of 90 degrees or a right angle, so called because this is the angle stones must have if they are to be used to build a stable and upright wall. When Brethren part upon the Square, they go in different directions but in full knowledge that their courses will be according to the angle of the square, right, until they meet again.

The Level is a symbol of equality. The equality expressed here does not mean that of wealth, social distinction, civil office or service to mankind. Masons use the term to refer to the internal and not the external qualifications. Each is endowed with a worth and a dignity, which is spiritual, and not subject to man made distinctions. The equality practiced in Masonry recognizes that one man may have greater potentialities of life, service or reward than another, but believes that any man may aspire to the heights, no matter how great. Thus, the level dignifies labor and the man who performs it. It also acknowledges the equality of manhood as being equality without regard to station.

The Plumb is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. In Freemasonry, it is associated with the Plumb Line, which the Lord promised Amos he would set in the midst of his people of Israel, symbolizing his standard of divine righteousness. The Plumb in the midst of a people should mean that they will be judged by their own sense of right and wrong and not by the standards of others. A Freemason, understanding the Plumb, is to judge each Brother by his own standards and not those of another. When the Plumb Line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an upright life and the conscience by which each must live.

It is interesting to observe the use of odd numbers within this degree as well as Masonry in general. The following will show you some examples of numbers in Masonry; you can probably find more. The number three: three Steps, three Degrees, three Great Lights, three Philosophical Attributes: Faith, Hope, and Charity, three Working Tools, three Tenets: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, three Stages of Life: Youth, Manhood, and Age.

The number five: five Steps, five Orders of Architecture, five digits on each arm or leg.

The number seven: seven Steps, seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, seven days in a week.

The seven Liberal Arts and Sciences represent education in its broadest sense. If we do not learn, we do not improve. If we do not improve we are no better than the profane, they profit nothing from Masonry or any other great experience or truth.

## **THE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF A FELLOWCRAFT MASON**

The duties of a Fellowcraft Mason are quickly described. Your first and foremost duty is to live according to the obligations of the degree and to obey the rules, regulations and laws of the Fraternity. In addition, it is expected that you will attend the Lodge, when open in your degree, as often as possible. If you are earnest and sincere, you will study to understand the meaning of the degree as a preparation for your Masonic life in the future.

Your limitations are equally as plain. You can sit in your Lodge when open in the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree or Entered Apprentice Mason's Degree, but not when the Lodge is open in the Master Mason's or third degree. You may also visit or sit in any regular Lodge opened in the first or second degree, if vouched for by a Brother who has sat with you in Lodge. You will be coached and instructed and may be counseled by well-informed Brethren; make yourself known to other Fellowcraft Masons by modes of recognition, and within the necessary limits enjoy the social fellowship of the Lodge.

A Mason remains an Entered Apprentice Mason and a Fellowcraft Mason in every respect as long as he lives. This statement may confuse you. To make it plain let me ask you to imagine the taking of the first degree as being like the drawing of a circle. The second degree is then a circle drawn around the outside of the first. The third degree is still a larger circle drawn around the other two and containing them both. A portion of the whole of Freemasonry is contained within the first circle; another portion is in the second, a third portion is in the last. The Entered Apprentice Mason's and Fellowcraft Mason's Degrees are not like the stages left behind in a journey, and therefore to be abandoned or forgotten, but rather they are taken up, preserved and incorporated in the third or Master Mason's Degree.

The ideas, the ideals and the teachings of the second degree belong as permanently to Freemasonry as those in the third degree. The moral obligations continue always to be binding. A Master Mason is as much the Brother of Entered Apprentice Masons and Fellowcraft Masons as other Master Masons.

Freemasonry has many faces. The first degree is the Masonry of the conscience, where we are taught how necessary obedience, apprenticeship and industriousness are if we are to become good men and true. In the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree, we are put into the possession of the Masonry of the mind. In the third degree, as you will learn in due time, is the Masonry of the soul, in which a candidate learns the secret of the spiritual life. Running through all three degrees is the Masonry of fellowship, goodwill, kindness, affection and brotherly love. We also learn of the Masonry of benevolence, expressed in relief and charity. Again, we

have Masonry as an institution, organized under laws and managed by responsible officers. Masonry also holds above and before us those great ideals of Justice, Truth, Courage, Goodness, Beauty and Character, which we can always pursue but never overtake.

Along with these, and having equal value and necessity, is the Masonry of the mind. What is Masonry of the mind? It is the Masonry, which has as its motto "Let there be Light." It holds aloft the Liberal Arts and Sciences as a great symbol of the trained intellect. It declares ignorance to be one of the worst misfortunes and one of the deadliest enemies. It proclaims that enlightenment is one of the great fortunes of life and it holds that a man must be a Mason in his head as well as his heart.

This Masonry of the mind is the inner essence and real meaning of the second degree. It is what is truly signified by the word "Fellowcraft" in the system of Masonry so that hereafter, whenever, as a Mason, you prove yourself a friend of enlightenment; whenever you become a champion of the mind's right to be free to do its work without check or hindrance, or become the enemy of bigotry, intolerance and apathy; whenever you labor to translate into fact and action the motto "Let there be Light," then you will be living out in your life the teachings of the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree.

### THE TEACHINGS OF MASONRY

Already you have discovered that Masonry's method of teaching is unlike that of schools. Freemasonry uses ritual, symbols, emblems and allegory. This is not as easy to follow as the schoolroom method, but it has this great advantage: it makes a Mason think and learn for himself. It forces him to search out the truth. It compels him to take the initiative, as a mature man should, so that the very act of learning is of educational value. The purpose of secrecy is not to keep a candidate in the dark, but to stimulate him to seek the light. The symbols and emblems do not conceal the teaching, they reveal it, but in such a manner that a man finds the truth for himself. Only when a man finds the truth for himself does it remain a permanent possession.

A few interpretations of Masonic teaching can only suggest what you will discover by your efforts, how you will find it, and where. There can be no exhaustive exposition of Masonic truth, because by its very nature it is something that each man must discover for himself.

Freemasonry has three Tenets, or great teachings, which are presupposed throughout: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Brotherly love is the relationship of blood brothers, a type of relationship of one Mason to another. Relief is the principle of benevolence and charity. Truth is not only that which satisfied the mind, but also sincerity of conscience, and soundness of character and truthfulness in act as well as in thought and speech.

Freemasonry is devoted to Brotherhood. Brotherhood rests on a religious basis. We are all Brothers because God is the Father of us all; therefore, religion is one of the foundations of Masonry. As evidence, an Altar is placed in the center of every Lodge room on which rests an open Volume of the Sacred Law and meetings begin and end with a prayer.

Masonry teaches the necessity of morality, requiring its members to be good men and true, righteous when tried by the Square, upright when tried by the Plumb, their passions kept in due bounds by the Compasses, just in their dealings with their fellows, patient with the erring, and charitable, truthful and honorable to all. Nor are these high sounding but empty aspirations. A candidate must possess such a character to be qualified for admittance and a Mason must persevere in them to retain his membership.

Of Faith, Hope and Charity our Craft says, as did the Apostle, "The Greatest of These is Charity." Each of us is blessed with a conscience and feels obligated to extend a helping hand in relief of an unfortunate Brother, or to his dependents. Masonry does not advocate a charity carried to the limits of fanaticism. There is a cabletow, which defines the extent of ability and opportunity and we are not asked to give relief in damage to ourselves or hardship to our families.

Another of Masonry's great teachings is equality, symbolized by the Level. This does not represent that impossible doctrine which would erase all distinctions, and holds that in all respects all men are the same. In many respects, men are very unequal, as in physique, talents, gifts, abilities, and in character. It is, rather, the principle that we owe Goodwill, Charity, Tolerance and Truthfulness equally to all and that within our Fraternity all men travel the same road of initiation, take the same obligations, pay the same dues and have the same duties, rights and privileges.

A like importance is attached to the need for enlightenment. Almost the whole of the second degree is a drama of education. It is expected that our candidates will study the degree, consulting with well-informed Brethren and making use of the Working Tools. To encourage the Liberal Arts and Sciences is one of our most ancient traditions. The Mason is a good citizen, loyal to his government or the country, which provides him with protection, and conducts himself as a moral and wise man.

In summation, Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the down-trodden, guard the Altar, support your country, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, hope for happiness and implore the mercy of his Supreme Being.

## PROFICIENCY IN THE SECOND DEGREE

Now that you have received your second Masonic degree, the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree, your Mentor Program Committee will help you gain proficiency in this degree. The plan of this second proficiency meeting will be similar to the first proficiency meeting you had. You should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the second list of proficiency questions. Have you been able to ask questions of your committee? By this time, you should feel at ease and comfortable with your Masonic educational program.

The Fellowcraft Mason's Degree is the degree that has its purpose in intellectual development. This degree symbolizes education through the seven liberal arts and sciences. You will gain knowledge for all of your life through the study of these components of the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree. This knowledge gives us the competency to enrich our daily lives and to enhance our appreciation of Masonry in its history and the glory of its degrees.

### FELLOWCRAFT MASON'S DEGREE PROFICIENCY

1. Describe how you were prepared for the second degree.
2. What is the normal waiting period between your first and second degree?
3. What is an Operative Mason, a Speculative Mason?
4. What is the importance of the cable tow?
5. Explain the significance of the letter "G."
6. Relate portions of the obligation you took. What have you sworn to and what is the penalty?
7. What are the Seven Liberal Arts?
8. Give steps, signs, grips and words of a Fellowcraft Mason.
9. How is the apron worn in this degree?
10. Name the working tools used in this degree. What is the symbolic significance?
11. Describe position of "The Three Great Lights of Freemasonry" in this degree.
12. Why are political and religious disputes never allowed within the Lodge?
13. How many United States Presidents were Freemasons? Name three —
14. What can I tell a non-Mason about the Fraternity?
15. What are the five principle orders of Architecture?