The ROD

A paper presented by M.E. Comp. Norman McEvoy
Columbia Chapter No 1. Grand Chapter of BC&Yukon

In the conferral of the RAM Degree there is a point at which the candidates are presented with a Sash ; a **ROD** ; a Jewel & an Apron.
To most of us the reason for the Sash; Jewel and Apron are self evident, however, I have been asked,
WHY the ROD? and it is to answer that question that have dedicated this issue.

To begin, I wish to refer you to some definitions of the word **ROD.**

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary states (in part)
Rod = 1. A straight slender stick growing on or cut out of a tree or bush.
` 2. Osier : 3. a stick or bundle of twigs used to punish.
4. a Shepherd's cudgel
5. (scepter) A wand or staff carried as a badge of office. (as of marshal)

Life Application Study Bible
Rod(s)= Straight wooden stick used as a walking stick; weapon, royal scepter or measuring device.
Refer Psalm 23 Verse # 4.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your ROD & your STAFF they comfort me)

For the purposes of this paper I wish to offer the following definition of the word BATON which, I believe will also add to the clarification of this piece of symbolism.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary states (in part)
Baton= a staff borne as a symbol of Office.

Now let's look at the Degree itself from a purely practical viewpoint.
It should be very clear to all Companions that the Three Principals presiding are representing the RULING princes & rulers of Israel as at that particular place and time.

As Princes and Rulers they are furnished with, and carry, Scepters of Office (rods) specific to their level of authority and are authorized to use same in the discharge of their respective duties.
This equates with all Monarchs, even to this day, who, either have their scepter of office carried before them on ceremonial occasions or in fact carry that Scepter in their right hand and resting on their right shoulder.

In a different scenario we see the Sergeant Major, in commanding his troops, holding his BATON under his right arm.
Without question, in these cases, and probably many others, this SCEPTER &/or BATON &/or ROD is a symbol of power & authority.

Now let me quote you from the RAM Ritual itself:
"We likewise place these rods in your hands as emblems of power and authority and we constitute and appoint you Princes & Rulers in Israel"

Companions, from the information provided above, it is quite possible that when our ancient Companions met together they were all furnished with rods and knew each others position in the Chapter by the style & shape of the Rod/Scepter which they carried.

Today, for whatever reason, (probably pure practicality) none of the Chapters that I have attended, carry out this form of distinction, and so, the meaning of, and the reason for, has become obscured.

Hopefully this short paper will assist in bringing more meaning and clarity for us all, and I must confess that my research on this topic has been rewarding and opened my eyes to yet another one of those niceties that make Royal Arch Masonry so interesting and important in our Masonic Journey.

Comment

Should any of you have questions re the What's and Why's we, in Royal Arch Masonry, do certain things, I would be delighted if you would share those with me as, by researching same, it undoubtedly add to my own knowledge and provide me with topics for future editions.

You may note that I have changed the caption under the "The Investigator" header to read
" In search of that which was lost"
I don't believe any explanation is required.

Norm

PS. For those who wish to further expand their Education in Craft Masonry, may I suggest that you access **The Educator.ca** which is a Website I have created dealing solely with Masonic Education.