

Our American Flag...Symbol or Icon?

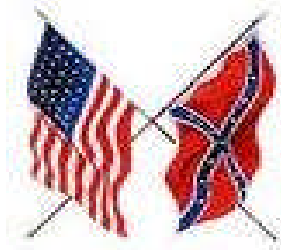


In today's computer and electronics driven world we have instant messaging and all kinds of 'apps', I-Phone's with 3g and 4g, service, plus I-Pad's, BlackBerry's and other odd sounding but seemingly quite necessary devices that help us stay in touch with each other. Likewise, because of computers the word 'symbol' has been replaced with the word 'icon'. A 'symbol' represents something, usually strong, recognizable, well thought of, and yes, even loved. An 'icon' takes you to another place or link, or program on your pc or laptop. But, they can have similar meanings, and in this instance I can make the tie between these two words.

Our flag is a 'symbol' that most of us present here today understand...it's something we grew up with, strong and very recognizable. But, our flag is also an 'icon' in the true sense of the word. It too, can take you to another place...perhaps back to your childhood and the home town parade on Memorial Day, or reciting the pledge in school every morning...remember when school children were allowed to do that? When I was growing up we were also allowed to read the Bible out loud and pray before class started...my, how times have changed!

Our flag represents something that indeed is well loved. But our 'icon' has been maligned for a long time, by many people around the world, and sadly, even by our own citizens. Sometimes, we as a people, lose sight of why we should honor it, and pledge allegiance to it.

This flag in its original form carried our troops into Valley Forge in a bitter cold winter to help establish one of the greatest countries in written history. On a ship in Baltimore Harbor in 1812 Francis Scott Key was awake during the assault on Ft McHenry. In the early morning, as mist and smoke from the battle filled the sky, he was overjoyed when he saw 'This Old Flag', tattered but flying bravely in the morning light signifying that we were indeed, still in charge.



Many lives were lost in the 1860's during our Civil War, this flag was there and eventually reunified our nation. The image of Old Glory being raised atop Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima during WWII was captured on film and the image is still fresh in our minds today. In the 21st century as we are fighting terrorists, whose one goal is to eliminate the USA, our 'icon' is right there in the thick of it. One reason we pledge allegiance to this flag is to remember all those thousands of lives lost to establish and protect the many blessed freedoms we now enjoy.

Masonry teaches us to be proud of this nation, to be peaceful citizens, to stand firm in our support of the principles of the founding fathers. We have been taught from a very early age to salute the emblem, symbol, and icon of this great nation...salute it with honor and dignity, and always be mindful of those who served and paid a dear price to help keep our country free.... they had honor, and valor! Remember too, those who continue to serve here, and on foreign soil.

So, is our flag a Symbol, or an Icon? I say, a resounding, YES!



.....Another 'nugget from the quarry of Freemasonry'. TM

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