

# Reflections of the President of Latvia Egils Levits on the National Anthem of Latvia

Published more than 5 years ago

Published: 07.06.2020.



All national anthems reflect a deeper meaning of a sovereign state, nation, its history, future aspirations and dreams. National anthem of Latvia is no exception, of course.

The main concept of our anthem is Latvia. At the time when anthem was written, the concept of Latvia was rather new. Latvia as one land, not one state yet. Latvia as one and not as Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale. Latvia as a part of the world. Latvia that you can find on a world map.

This new concept of Latvia carried a great power right from the start. I am not sure whether the author of the lyrics and singers were aware of this immense power and its impact, but the revolutionary undertones of this concept immediately (and sharply!) 'resonated' with the oppressive Tsarist regime. The use of the word 'Latvia' was forbidden and it had to be substituted with the word 'Baltics'.

'Our beloved fatherland' is the first line where 'we' are mentioned. Who are 'we'? The answer to that can be found in the second verse of the anthem. We are 'daughters and sons of Latvia'. In this verse the image of dancing and singing is used as a poetic reference to language and culture, and sense of beauty inherent in these young people, a common denominator of 'Letts'. 'Letts' or Latvians as a community bound by the same language and culture, which later evolved into a nation with its own culture.

And these sons and daughters of Latvia, or Latvians, have their fatherland – Latvia. This land, Latvia, is special for Latvians, it is the most special place in the world. It is the fatherland. The land that belongs to Latvians. The land where Latvians belong. And, if this land belongs to Latvians, and they belong to it, we must take care of it. Latvia is the global centre for all Latvians, no matter where they live.

'Let us dance for joy there'. The joy of being ourselves. We want to be free. We want to be able to 'dance for joy' in our fatherland, our Latvia, where we can be ourselves and live free from outside control, free from external pressure. We want self-determination.

National anthems of other countries often refer to dynasties, battles, sagas and heroes. We do not have that. Our anthem is pure and there is certain deepness in its simplicity. It is peaceful and compassionate. And very democratic. Latvians just want to peacefully live here, in their land, which has become a state, without any outside influence. We can, know and want to build our life, our land, our state the way we see it. Just let us dance for joy there!

Our anthem mentions God. Constitutional law contains numerous references to God or *invocatio Dei*. It implies that there has always been something bigger than us. Humans are not the crowning glory of the Earth. It alludes to natural rights, the natural order of things. This concept reaches beyond primitive materialism. It is not just an idea in the traditional thinking of Latvians. It is a universal concept that continues to exist in modern philosophy, which vividly recognises that a human mind is finite when it comes to understanding and predicting the world. We can try as hard as we might to shape our future, but we can never be certain. We cannot foresee everything. Our will and actions do not determine or influence everything. That is why we appeal to the higher force, God, and pray for Him to let us 'dance for joy' in our own land, our own state, our Latvia. God, let us live the way we want.

I believe that we should constantly be aware of the intrinsic characteristics of a Latvian, the Latvian land and state, our language and culture embedded in our national anthem and its lyrics. This is us.

Thank you!

## Related topics

[Egils Levits](#)

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/reflections-president-latvia-egils-levits-national-anthem-latvia>