

George V, George VI, or any other George  
- Of National Anthems

1. Great Britain

The first written document of the British national anthem goes back to Gentlemen's Magazine, October 1745. It refers to George II:

*God save great George our king, long live our noble king, God save the king.  
Send him victorious, happy and glorious, long to reign over us, God save the king.*

552. *A Song for two Voices. As sung at both Playhouses.*

God save great GEORGE our king, Long live our noble king.  
God save great GEORGE our king, Long live our noble king.  
God save the king. Send him vic - to - ri - ous, Happy and glo - ri - ous,  
God save the king. Send him vic - to - ri - ous, Happy and glo - ri - ous,  
Long to reign o - ver us, God save the king.  
Long to reign o - ver us, God save the king.

2.  
O Lord our God arise,  
Scatter his enemies,  
And make them fall;  
Confound their politics,  
Frustrate their knavish tricks,  
On him our hopes we fix,  
O save us all.

3.  
Thy choicest gifts in store  
On George be pleas'd to pour,  
Long may he reign;  
May he defend our laws,  
And ever give us cause,  
To say with heart and voice  
God save the king.

## 2. United States of America

During the reign of George III, the British lost the American colonies. The first unofficial national anthem of the United States, and one of the most popular American patriotic songs, follows exactly the melody of the British national anthem. However, the lyrics make the juxtaposition clear:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.*

*Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountain side, let freedom ring!*

*Let music swell the breeze and ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song:*

*Let mortal tongues awake. Let all that breathe partake. Let rocks their silence break. The sound prolong!*

*Our fathers' God to Thee, author of liberty, to Thee we sing.*

*Long may our land be bright, with freedom's holy light. Protect us by Thy might, great God our king!*

It is an undoubted historical fact that this new American nation had deep religious conviction. George Washington himself is credited with first speaking the words “so help me, God” after the presidential inaugural oath. However, these words are not, and have never been, part of the official constitutional oath. Every reference to religion in the constitution is in place to re-enforced separation of religion and state. Is it because the framers of the constitution were atheists? Quite the opposite. It is because they knew their history and their politics quite well (too many religious wars in Europe, too many protestant denominations in America). It was a matter of common sense.

3. Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees  
Sweet freedom's song:  
Let mortal tongues awake;  
Let all that breathe partake;  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

4. Our fathers' God, to Thee  
Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing:  
Long may our land be bright  
With freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God, our King!

**1. America**  
(My Country, 'Tis of Thee)

Several nations have used this splendid dignified tune, either as a national anthem, or as a composition of the utmost importance. Parts of the melody have been traced back as far as Dr. John Bull (1562-1628), but the composer of the melody in its final form is still unknown, though many continue to credit it to Henry Carey, an Englishman (1690-1743). The words were written in 1832 by Reverend S. F. Smith, an American clergyman. The song was first sung publicly at a children's celebration of American independence in the Park Street Church, Boston, July 4, of that year. Numerous other verses have been written to this melody. Two of the best are the ones below by Henry Van Dyke.

S.F. Smith Henry Carey (?)

*mf* *Andante con moto*

My coun - try, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty,

5 *f*

Of thee I sing: Land where my fa - thers died! Land of the

10 *ff*

Pil - grims' pride! From ev - 'ry moun - tain - side Let free - dom ring!

The image shows a musical score for the song 'America' (My Country, 'Tis of Thee). It includes the title, a historical note about the song's origin, the composer S.F. Smith, and the arranger Henry Carey (?). The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with treble and bass staves. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score is divided into three systems, with measures 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. The tempo is *Andante con moto*.

### 3. India

George V ascended to the throne in 1910, as King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India. In preparation of George V's visit to India in 1911, Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel laureate, was requested to compose a poem for the occasion of the visit of the "Ruler of All People". Tagore did compose a poem titled "Ruler of the Minds of All People", which today forms the lyrics of the National Anthem of India. Here's a translation, though I am told some is lost from Tagore's original "Jana Gana Mana" written in highly Sanskritized Bengali:

*Ruler of the Minds of All People, by Rabindranath Tagore, 1911*

*O! Dispenser of India's destiny! Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people.*

*Thy name rouses the hearts of Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, the Maratha country,  
in the Dravida, Utkala and Bengal;*

*it echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas,*

*it mingles in the rhapsodies of the pure waters of Yamuna and Ganga.*

*They chant only thy name.*

*They seek only thy auspicious blessings.*

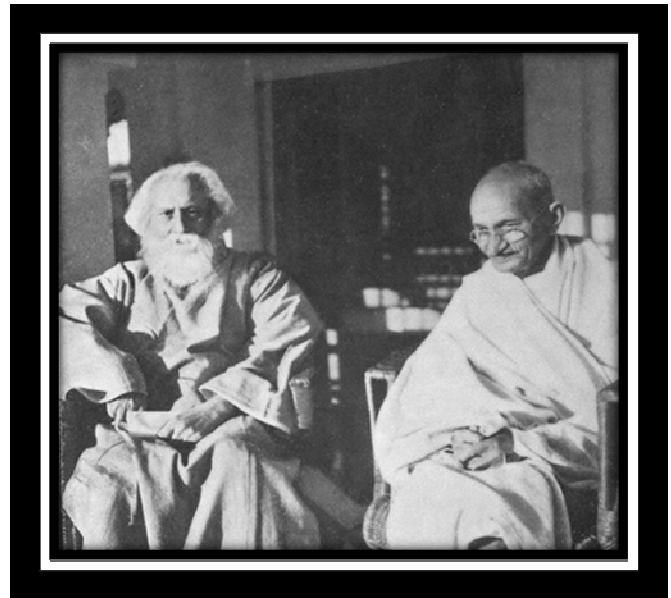
*They sing only the glory of thy victory.*

*The salvation of all people waits in thy hands.*

*O! Dispenser of India's destiny! Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people.*

*Victory to thee, Victory to thee, Victory to thee, Victory, Victory, Victory, Victory to thee!*

In 1937, Tagore himself wrote: "A certain high official in His Majesty's service, who was also my friend, had requested that I write a song of felicitation towards the Emperor. The request simply amazed me. It caused a great stir in my heart. In response to that great mental turmoil, I pronounced the victory in Jana Gana Mana of that Bhagya Vidhata of India who has from age after age held steadfast the reins of India's chariot through rise and fall, through the straight path and the curved. That Lord of Destiny, that Reader of the Collective Mind of India, that Perennial Guide, could never be George V, George VI, or any other George. Even my official friend understood this about the song. After all, even if his admiration for the crown was excessive, he was not lacking in simple common sense."



Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, 1940.