

George held India's sacred texts in high regard, but his realizations were experiential rather than academic. In his post Beatles songs, he only occasionally referred to philosophical terms and preferred writing simple, sing-along lyrics. In "Living In The Material World" (1973), for instance, he declared "Senses never gratified/Only swelling like a tide/That could drown me in the material world." The lines offer a terse rendering of several verses from Gita chapter two, which describe "While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops ... then anger ... then delusion ... then bewilderment of memory ... then loss of intelligence ... [after which] one falls down again into the material pool."

Inspired by the Gita's injunction that the divine energy animating all life has no material name, George called himself spirit soul rather than Hindu. Perhaps it was because of this deep respect for God's universality that he never took formal initiation into any one tradition. "The *guru-shishya* (teacher-disciple) relationship is an exceptionally powerful one," he wrote in Ravi Shankar's autobiography *Raga Mala*. "In order to gain the benefits of the received wisdom of the ages, the student must yield completely to the demands of the guru in a submission of the ego [and] must accept without question what he is taught." If he'd learned anything as a Beatle it was to question authority, and pledging himself exclusively to one teacher, it seems, was a step he never felt prepared to take.

Still, George appreciated those who had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, and as often as his busy life allowed, he spent time with his fellow chanters. On several occasions, after a day of recording, he invited us to his home in Friar Park north of London. We'd arrive at Henley-on-Thames, a quiet town thirty-six miles west of London, and George and Patty would greet us at the gates of their sprawling property with a wave and a smile. When devotees visited, George flew an Om flag from the tower of his gothic manor.

Signs of George's devotion to yoga and meditation filled his home. Incense sweetened the air. A small altar sat on the mantle of the fireplace. Pictures of favorite teachers and paintings of deities from India's scriptures decorated the walls: Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune; elephant-headed Ganesh; Krishna playing with his friends in the cowherd village of Vrindavan. George found Indian theology exciting and sensual, filled with meditative