

George's conviction that spirituality should make a tangible difference in the world. How could people call themselves spiritual if they just stood by while others killed each other? Where was the enlightenment in that?

Still, he harbored no illusions about a pop concert bringing peace to a war-torn nation. It was sufficient to "do his bit," knowing that over time little drops of water could wear away a mountain.

George's spiritual journey was not an easy one. His wife Patty left him, in large measure because his commitment to God grew stronger than his commitment to their partnership. Fans derided him for taking his faith onstage and exhorting them to "Chant Krishna! Jesus! Buddha!" when it was rock'n'roll they wanted. The press was occasionally cruel in its judgment of his post Beatles music. And for a while, some bad habits from his rocker days — in particular alcohol and drugs — returned to haunt him.

Salvation from the material world can come in many forms. For George, struggling with depression after the Dark Horse debacle, it came in the form of Olivia Arias, a fellow yoga practitioner who nursed him back to health and later became his loving wife. It came in the form of their son, Dhani, a gentle, talented boy who in time became George's closest friend.

On visits to Los Angeles, George spent time at the Self-Realization Fellowship estate in Encinitas, overlooking the Pacific Ocean and only three miles from Ravi Shankar's home. Ravi had met SRF founder Yogananda in the 1930s and had given his first U.S. concert at the Encinitas retreat in 1957. The organization strictly honored its members' privacy, a privilege George appreciated after the notoriety of his affiliation with Krishna devotees. The quiet ambience of the Encinitas estate and the organization's focus on achieving heightened awareness through Kriya-Yoga had a calming effect.

In later years, George retreated from his pop celebrity into the life of a humble gardener. He took great pleasure in tilling the earth, in planting jasmine bushes, in freeing a magnolia tree from wild brambles, and bringing his neglected Friar Park grounds back to a state of beauty. In India, he had seen people worshipping nature. The Gita calls the earth God's "Universal Form." Trees are the hairs on that divine form, mountains and hills are its bones, clouds form the hair, and rivers are the blood flowing through its veins.

Gardening from that vantage point takes on holy dimensions, a