

## Title:

George's Chants of Peace and Inspiration

## Word Count:

1057

## Summary:

The article is about George Harrison, one of the original members of the Beatles. The article delves into the spiritual life of Harrison, including his fascination with meditation and Hinduism. The selection also details how meditation and Hindu beliefs played a role in shaping the life of Harrison as a musician and as a spiritual seeker.

## Keywords:

meditation, yoga,

## Article Body:

My Sweet Lord, a song written by one of the Fab Four, George Harrison, was his first single as a solo artist. Born in Liverpool, England, he first attended school at Dovedale Infants, just off Penny Lane. Later on, he attended the Liverpool Institute, a "smart school" where he was regarded as a poor student. His contemporaries described him as someone who would "sit alone in the corner." In the mid-1950s, he met Paul McCartney, also a Liverpool Institute student, and later played lead guitar in the band called the Quarry Men, that eventually became The Beatles.

My Sweet Lord was the first number one hit Harrison after the Beatles broke up in 1970. Harrison released a number of albums that were critically and commercially successful, both as solo projects and as a member of other groups. Throughout the 1990s, Harrison, a former smoker, endured an ongoing battle with cancer, having growths removed first from his throat, then his lungs. There was also a 1999 attempt on his life by a crazed fan who stabbed him at his home in Friar Park in Henley-on-Thames. Harrison's lunch was punctured during that attack. George passed away at a home of a friend in Los Angeles, California on November 29, 2001, at the age of 58, due to a brain tumor. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered in the River Ganges. The night after Harrison died, My Sweet Lord was re-released in the UK, where it once again went to number one. Proceeds from the single went to the Material World Charitable Foundation, which Harrison started in 1973 to support charities that work with children and the poor.

East meets West

Harrison's My Sweet Lord is about the Eastern religions that he was studying at that time. The lyrics contain references to the Hare Krishna faith, with some of their mantra written into the lyrics. A closer look at his other songs will reveal that many of his songs were inspired by Hinduism. The Hare Krishna Mantra, All Things Must Pass, Living in the Material World and Chants of India, are some of the songs that directly reveal that he was greatly inspired by Hinduism, especially the Krishna philosophy which advocates love for God and humanity.

His other song, "Awaiting on You All" glorifies yoga, which is practiced not just for exercise and better health, but also as a form of spiritual exercise that combines body and soul, or, as some call it --- meditation in motion. The song "Living in the Material World," seeks a deep craving from the materialistic world of the West through complete devotion to Lord Krishna, the creator of the world, at least, according to Hinduism. "That Which I Have Lost" from the album Somewhere in England reminds the listener of the principles of Gita, the sacred book of the Hindus. All these songs reveal a deep rooted love towards Hinduism that existed in the mind and soul of George Harrison.

With the influence of Eastern mysticism, Harrison added a new flavor to his music that was very distinct from the music of the Beatles. He played Indian musical instruments in his music. He especially loved the "sitar," a traditional Indian stringed musical instrument. He inspired the other Beatle members to go to India to get acquainted with Transcendental Meditation. In 1967, The Beatles learned Transcendental Meditation or TM in Rishikesh, India under the supervision of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the TM program.

### The TM Experience

Transcendental Meditation is a Hindu-based movement that has gained popularity in the United States and in other parts of the world. It is the most widely practiced and extensively researched program of self-development. TM is just one example of the wide variety of Hindu worship --- integrating diverse symbols, offerings, fasting, and dance. TM technique is a simple, natural, effortless procedure where the mind easily and naturally arrives at the source of thought, the settled state of the mind called Transcendental Consciousness. Through this technique, the individual's awareness settles down and experiences a unique state of restful alertness. As the body becomes deeply relaxed, the mind transcends all mental activity to experience the simplest form of awareness. The technique is said to be about the cultivation of pure consciousness and self-referral consciousness, which is the source of all creative processes. Over 500 scientific research studies conducted during the past 25 years in more than 200 independent universities and research institutes in 30 countries have shown that the TM technique benefits all areas of an individual's life: mind, body, behavior, and environment.

### Harrison's Chanting Found Him Peace

In countries like India, China or Japan, the first thing you will notice is that being quiet or modest is a quality which is respected widely. Aggressive expression of self confidence is considered to be almost a sin in that part of the world. There is no room for egotism in most Asian societies. George, who was known as "The quiet Beatle," was well-loved by the people not only in India but also the common people of the East. In 1971, he also helped organize "The Concert for Bangladesh" to raise money for the war-stricken people in that country who were fighting for their freedom. The Bangladesh people loved him and still remember him as a hero who helped them in their time of great despair. He later accepted the Hare Krishna tradition and tried to live a plain and simple life. He deeply believed in the principles of Hinduism. When he died, he left an astounding amount of 20 million pounds for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

In Eastern culture, the goal of life is not to accumulate wealth but to lead a spiritual life that includes the chanting of mantras. The sound of the sitar brings a sense of silent peace and it is really melodious. This musical instrument creates harmony and prepares the mind for meditation. Thus, George Harrison found peace and comfort in the Indian way of life. George Harrison tried to follow this kind of life, with prayer and meditation.

George Harrison inspired his generation with his songs. Before he died, he said that he had found a sense of meaning to his life. He might not be around anymore but his music lives on and is still definitely playing the sitar in another place and dimension, and chanting beautifully together with his Sweet Lord.