

George Harrison Interview

George Harrison
Miles

1967

Editor's Note: Since the Beatles released their newest album ("Sgt. Pepper's Lonelyhearts Club Band"), the American and British press have unleashed a variety of articles on the group. Below is an interview given to Miles of the *International Times* (London) by George Harrison M.B.E. (Courtesy UPS)

George: If you could just say a word and it would tell people something straight to the point, then, you take all the words that are going to say everything, and you'd get it in about two lines. Just use those. Just keep saying those words.

Miles: Like the 'Hari Krishna' chants, except there the meaning of the world gradually fades away anyway.

George: That's right. They get hung up on the meaning of the word rather than the sound of the word. "In the beginning was the word" and that's the thing about Krishna, saying Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, so it's not the word that you're saying, it's the sound: Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna and it's just sounds and it's great. Sounds are vibrations and the more you can put into that vibration, the more you can get out, action and reaction, that's the thing to tell the people. You see it's all very obvious, the whole thing of life and all the answers to everything are in one divine law, Karma action and reaction. It's obvious: everybody knows that if they're happy then usually the people around them are happy, or that people around them happy make them a little happier; that's a proved thing, like "I give to you and you give to me; they all know that but they haven't thought about it to the point of every action that they do. That's what it is with every action that you do, there's a reaction to it, and if you want a good reaction then you do a good action, and if you want a bad one, then you punch somebody. But that's where it is at. Just that one thing. That's why there is the whole scene of heaven and hell; heaven and hell is right now, right at this moment. You make it heaven or you make it hell by your actions...it's just obvious, isn't it?"

Miles: People don't realise all of the possibilities, they don't realise how much they are in charge of the reality of their situation.

George: Well, that's because of ignorance; everybody is great really and has got to be great because they're going to be here until they get straight and that's it...Everybody would like to be good, that's the silly thing, everybody always likes it when they're having a nice time or when they're happy or when it's sunny, they all dig it; but then they go and forget about it, they never really try to make it nice. They think that it just comes along and it's nice if you're lucky, or if you're unlucky it's bad for you.

Miles: People act unconsciously at this level, they don't realise that they are purposely going out to stop things from getting any better.

George: They're all ignorant, they fear new things, they fear knowledge somehow, I don't know why. Everything that I ever learned was always so great. I never thought so at the time, it was just that little bit more in your mind an expansion of consciousness or awareness. Even those of us who are very very aware are still so unaware. Everything's relative so that, the more you know, the more you know you don't know anything...

Christ was the one washing the leper's feet so he was very, very humble, but it's not the way they're putting it down now. They feel as though God is that up there and they are that down there and they don't realise that they are God and that Christ was exactly the same as us but he realises that he was God. That's all it is, we're God too but we don't realise it...

I'm a person who's trying to live within divine law, to the best and it's very hard because it's self-discipline, because the more you realise, the more you've got to get yourself straight, so it's hard, you know. I'm trying and there are a lot of people who are trying, even people who are not conscious that they are doing it, but they are really...doing things for the good, or just to be happy or whatever. But then there's those other people, but you've got to have them to have this...I'm not a part of anything in particular, because it's not really 1967 and it's not half-past eight, that's still what people have said it is. So it's just a little bit of time out of the cycle. There's this Indian fellow who worked out a cycle like the idea of stone-age, bronze-age, only he did it on an Indian one. The cycle goes from nothing until now and 20th century and then on and right around the cycle until the people are really grooving and then just sinks back into ignorance until it gets back into the beginning again. So the 20th century is a fraction of that cycle, and how many of those cycles has it done yet? It's done as many as you think and all these times it's been through exactly the same things, and it'll be this again. Only a few million million years and it'll be exactly the same thing going on, only with other people doing it...I am part of the cycle, rebirth death, rebirth death, rebirth death. Some of the readers will know exactly what I mean, the ones who believe in re-incarnation. It's pointless me trying to explain things like rebirth and death because I've just accepted that, you know, I can leave that.

Miles: The final death comes when the energy of consciousness reaches a point of complete unity with the universal energy flow and then ZAP, no more rebirth.

George: But that's in that book. That is the final release of that bit of you that is God so that it can merge into everything else. ("Autobiography of a Yogi"). It's a far-out book, it's a gas. Through Yoga, anybody can attain; it's a God realisation; you just practise Yoga and if you really mean it, then you'll do it. You'll do it to a degree.. there's Yogis that have done it to such a degree that they're God, they're like Christ and they can walk on the water and materialise bodies and they can do all those tricks. But that's not the point; the point is that we can all do that and we've all got to do that and we'll keep on being re-born because for the law of action and reaction: "What-so-ever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" you reap when you come back in your next birth, what you've sown in your previous incarnation, that's why I'm me and you're you and he's him and we are all whoever we are. From when I was born where I am now, all I did was to be me to get this; Whatever you've done, you get it back, so you can either go on, or you can blow it.

Miles: Are you concerned with communications?

George: Oh, yes, of course, we are all one, I mean communication, just the realisation of human love reciprocated, it's such a gas, it's a good vibration which makes you feel good. These vibrations that you get through Yoga, Cosmic chants and things like that. I mean it's such a buzz, it buzzes you out of everywhere. It's nothing to do with pills or anything like that. It's just in your own head, the realisation, it's such a buzz, it buzzes you right into the astral plane.

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Nobody can become a drug addict if they're hip. Because it's obvious that if you're hip then you've got to make it. The buzz of all buzzes which is the thing that is God—you've got to be straight to get it. I'm sorry to tell you (turning to microphone) you can get it better or more if you're straight because you can only get it to a degree. You know even if you get it, you only get it to a degree. You know even if you get it, you only get it however long your pill lasts. So the thing is, if you really want to get it permanently, you have got to do it, you know... Be healthy, don't eat meat, keep away from those Night-Clubs and MEDITATE...

The clan. The Klu Klux Klan or whatever they are. Do you know, it's stupid, isn't it, they're only little fellows who just put on their outfit, it's like we could be them; you just get into your outfit and you go out with your little banner shouting at somebody like that. There was all that thing about the "Klan are coming to get us" at a concert somewhere in the States—and there' were about 4 or 5 of them walking up and down, shouting, "Don't go in there..." something about that Christ thing, and there was all the kids shouting at them and laughing at them and that and

then the police came around and told them to move away. It wasn't like you imagine...people with all fiery crosses and coming to burn us. Oh yes that was silly.

Miles: Did you find it easy to communicate with people in India?

George: With most of the people you just communicate you don't have to talk. There are such great musicians; it was so nice and it was really just so...straight. They have a whole thing of trying to be humble, you've got to be humble really to be yourself or to get a chance to be yourself.

If you're not humble, your ego and your big cabbage head are getting in the way. There were these musicians who are all advanced students of Ravi's and he'd been giving them a lesson. We were there just to watch a bit, and he sat in the middle and sang and they all followed him and went through about two and a half hours . improvised the whole lot.

He was singing—which was pretty far out. All these people playing knocked me out so much, it was so great yet they were so humble and saying “It's such a pleasure to meet you,” which was horrible because I was trying to be humble there. I was there for that, not for anything to do with being a Beatle.

Ravi Shankar is so brilliant and these fellows, as far as I was concerned, were very far out... with people you communicate, there is no bullshit, because they don't create it. It's not so much a game as Western thought because they're a bit more spiritually inclined and they just sort of feel...

Miles: Did you just realise this yourself?

George: I felt the vibrations all the time from the people I was with. They've all got their problems but they're just happy and vibrate.

Miles: You didn't search out a Guru?

George: Ravi's my musical Guru, but the whole musical thing was too much just to be able to appreciate it whether I play or not. I've never been knocked out with anything for so long. But then later I realised that there wasn't the real thing, that was still only a little stepping stone for me to see. Through the music you reach the spiritual but the musics very involved with the spiritual as we know from Hari Krishna we just heard. * It's so attuned to the spiritual scene, it depends how spiritual the musician is.

Ravi is fantastic. He just sits there with a bit of wire and just does all that and says all that, things that you know and can't say because there's no words and he can say it like that.

Miles: Why does it come across best in music?

George: Because music is sound, vibrations, whereas paintings are vibrations of whatever you pick up. It's not actually an energy vibration you get from a groovy painting, but music and sound seem to travel along vibrations, you know the whole thing with mantras is to repeat and repeat those sounds...it's vibrations in everything like prayers and hymns.

They don't know about this over here. Prayer is to vibrate, do the devotion, whatever it is, to whoever you believe in, Christ or Buddha or Krishna or any of them. You get the response depending on how much you need it. Those people become that because they give it out, they want it so much, they give out so much, they get back so much, it snowballs until you're Christ. You know we're back to that again.

I'm not really hip to too much of the Zen or the Buddhist point of view, but you see I don't have to be because I just know that they're all the same, it's all the same, it's just whichever one you want to take and it happens that I'm taking the Hindu one...Be straight with yourself just to maybe save a few more people from being stupid and being ignorant. That's what we're doing here now, talking, because we've got to save them, because they're all potentially divine.

Miles: Does that concern you much?

George: I couldn't cut off from everyone, because I'm still leaning on them, so if I'm leaning on them then there's someone leaning on me, only very subtly. I'm part of a structure that's going on and rather than cop out now, just at the moment, because I'm not ready, I'll wait. Maybe later on I'll get into where it's peaceful. We're already getting going, so that we'll have somewhere nice to be, because that's what it is you know, everybody should just stay at home and meditate and they'd be so much happier. That'll all come for us, because we are going to make it. “You make and preserve the image of your choice.” But still we've got to communicate. We've got to be doing things because we're part of it and because it's nice. You've got to have an outlet. It's like having a big intake in the front of your head and there's so much going on, and it's going through all this, and there's a little exhaust-pipe on the

back, that goes POW and lets a bit out. The aim is to get as much going out the back as is coming in. You've got to do that because for everything you get in you've got to give something out. So the Beatles, and whatever our own personal interests are, what we're doing from day to day, then that's like our little exhaust, coming out the back.

Miles: Which seems to be getting bigger and bigger?

George: Well it's got to be but it's great, just the realisation of it all, everything feasible because it's all only a dream anyway and that gives you infinite scope. You just go on and on and on until you go right out there. The thing is we could go; there's times, I'm sure, where we hold back a lot with things like "Strawberry Fields." I know there's a lot of people who like that who probably wouldn't have liked us a year ago. And then there's a lot of people who didn't like it who did like us a year ago. It's all the same really. Just some people pretend it's not happening. But they know, they simply must know. Because we're all together on this thing, we're just part of it and we'd like to get as many people who want to be a part of it with us. And if we really freaked out...

Miles: Do you think you're bringing most of them along with you?

George: Well, we're losing a lot but we're gaining a lot too, I think. I dunno. But what I think, whatever it is, It's good. When somebody does something which everybody really wants to do, then it makes everyone else try a little bit harder and strive for something better, and it's good. If ever we've done something like that, then everybody's been there. We're as much influenced by everybody else as they are by us, if they are. It's just all a part of the big thing. I give to you and you give to me and it goes like that into the music you know.

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George: The Guru and Disciple relationship is where the person has a 100% belief in the Guru and that way you put your trust in the Guru, that he's going to get you out of this mess. If you are a Christian, then Christ is your Guru, and they're all disciples of Christ. If they are. So to put your full belief in your Guru, because it's for your own good, because you've decided that...It's just having a lot of respect for the person and it's like that with music as well...You should love your instrument and respect it. Whenever Ravi does a concert he'll put his special thing on, and get nice and clean and washed up and get his joss-sticks going. He's very straight, he doesn't drink or smoke or anything like that and by his real devotion he's mastered the thing. By his own discipline. He's playing for 18 hours a day for about 15 years, that's why he's that good. I've got no illusions about being a sitar player, I mean it's nothing like that. I really see it in perspective because he's got about 10,000,000 students who are all so groovy playing the sitar and yet he's only got hope for one of them to really make it, so that's me out for a kick-off. But that's not the important thing you see. The thing is, that however little you learn of it, it's too much, it's too much. Indian music is brilliant and for me, anyway, (this is only personal) it's got everything in it. I still like electronics and all sorts of music if it's good but Indian music is just...an untouchable you can't say what it is, because it just is.

Your religion, or whatever you're doing, so if you're putting out something to make people happy and something that's a bit devotional. It's got to be. If you spend all your life in a studio; you can't last out if it's not. Stockhausen (he's the one we mention in the *International Times*, Stockhausen, he's really IT), and all the others, they're just trying to take you a bit further out or in, further in, to yourself. The way out is in. It's since the newspapers started the drug craze. That's it, you see, isn't that a bizarre scene, I mean you're the only honest paper, really, when you get down to it. What I mean is, that thing about the sales, that's all they're concerned with, how many...all this bullshit, on the front page how many papers we've sold today, and we're selling more than the *Daily Express*, hup yer. All their silly games, all that crap. And another thing they're always saying, "The *Daily Mirror* carried 13,000 inches of advertising—and fuck-all to read, just a lot of shit. Actually bragging about how, it's stupid isn't it, it's a newspaper, anyway, we forgive them, as always. But this is the great thing. When you've got yourself to a point where you've realised certain things about life and the world and everything like that, then you know that none of that can affect you at all because you know it's the same thing now with those newspaper people they were always writing all that, just making it up. The thing is we know what the scene is, and we know them, they're all those little fellows. They'd all really like to be happy and they try to be happy but they're in a nasty little organisation and it's great really. The whole thing of hate, anybody who hates, I feel sorry for them you know, that they are in that position and the newspapers are like that. I feel we got away from the point, whatever it was. The point was, you can print your paper, you know they can't touch you because you know more than them and it's obvious because they'd be the ones to puzzle about it. On our side of the fence there's no puzzling to it. We know what it is.

The police are people as well. All those nasty people aren't really nasty if they'd realise it. All those policemen can't be themselves and they've got to do that game and pretend to be a policeman and go all through that shit about what's in the book, they've got to make themselves into a little part of themselves which is a lie and an untruth. The moment they put a uniform on they're bullshitting themselves, just thinking that they're policemen, because they are not policemen. They think that they created a thing called policemen and so then they try and enforce" their creation on others and say "Now we've made a thing and it's called The Police and we want you all to believe in it and it's all for your own good and if you don't look up to it you'll get your ass kicked and you'll go in the craphouse."

You just keep changing the subject onto what you think we should be talking about and I'll just talk it back out of it again onto this...to people who look at the scene negatively, then it is, and they stay in their drab world. We've got to get it back again, after the war, and get it back to how it should be—everybody's happy and smiling and leaping about and doing what they all know is there that they should be doing. There's something happening. If everybody could just get into it, great, they'd all smile and all dress up. Yes—that'd be good. "The world is a stage." Well he was right, because we're Beatles, and it's a little scene and we're playing and we're pretending to be Beatles, like Harold Wilson's pretending to be Prime Minister and you're pretending to be the Interviewer on IT. They're all playing. The Queen's the Queen. The idea that you wake up and it happens that you're Queen, it's amazing but you could all be Queens if you imagined it...they'll have a war quickly if it gets too good, they'll just pick on the nearest person to save us from our doom. That's it, soon as you freak out and have a good time, it's dangerous, but they don't think of the danger of going into some other country in a tank with a machine-gun and shooting someone. That's all legal and above board, but you can't freak out—that's stupid.

* "Krishna Consciousness." A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami—Happening Records, N.Y.C.

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