

## KRISHNAMURTI: ON WHAT IS A RELIGIOUS MAN

Laura Huxley recalls her meeting with Krishnamurti  
at the home of yoga master, Vanda Scaravelli.

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At the Signora S.'s we had a delicious luncheon— the regime was completely vegetarian. Anyone can successfully prepare the good classic American dinner in fifteen minutes— salad, steak, frozen peas, and ice cream; it is nutritious, unimaginative, and satisfying. But a completely vegetarian dinner is very often a failure— understandably so— for to achieve variety and nutrition without meat, fish, eggs, and milk products requires imagination and knowledge, patience, and above all a really Epicurean perception of Nature's gifts.

At Signora S.'s the food was natural, alive, and varied. Aldous and I praised it and were told that the order and combination of the courses had been made according to the famous Dr. Bircher-Benner of a nearby clinic in Zurich. From recipes for food, we went on to speak of my "Recipes for Living and Loving." I had been very active in psychotherapy that year and had almost finished my book. Aldous spoke about the origin of the word "recipes"— it is the imperative of the Latin word *recipere*, to receive— and told our hosts how my recipes had succeeded with some people for whom the orthodox methods had failed. Krishnamurti asked a few questions and listened intently. We spoke about vitamins and imagination, solitary confinement, LSD, alcoholism, and the congress on extrasensory perception that Aldous had recently attended in the South of France.

After lunch Signora S. tactfully suggested that I might want to speak alone with Krishnamurti. She and Aldous went into the living room. A large French window opened onto the terrace, where Krishnamurti and I were left alone. The French window was closed, but, as I realized later, Aldous could see us silhouetted against the sweeping view of the Alps. An hour or two later, when we left our hosts, Aldous could not wait to ask, "What in the world happened between you and Krishnaji? You two were gesticulating with such animation and excitement— it almost looked as though you were having a fight. What happened?"

The silent pantomime Aldous had seen through the French window must have been descriptive of our conversation— an extraordinary conversation against an extraordinary panorama. Krishnamurti and I had stood, walked, and sat on the terrace of the Swiss chalet, enveloped by high peaked mountains and pine woods of all gradations of green, light exhilarating green, and the deeper green of the vast mountain pastures. Brightness again, in luminous sky and in shining flowers, in sensuous undulating valleys, in Krishnamurti. Brightness everywhere.

The first thing I asked Krishnamurti, continuing our table conversation about

psychotherapy, was how he dealt with the problem of alcoholism. He said nonchalantly that it had happened quite often that people, after one or two interviews with him, stopped drinking. When I asked how this came about, he said he did not know. He dismissed the subject and asked me whether LSD, mescaline, and the psychedelic substances in general were really of any benefit or just gave a temporary illusion. I told him of the medical research done in Canada in the field of alcoholism — of unexpected and successful results reported by Canadian doctors with a number of hopeless alcoholics who stopped drinking after only one or two administrations of LSD, and without further therapy. Krishnamurti seemed surprised.

He was silent for a few moments. There was something that he was going to say; also I had the feeling that his inner intensity was too powerful for the medium of words. I had no idea what was coming, but I knew something was about to happen. Silently he was holding my eyes with his dark burning look. Then with an extremely tense voice, he exploded, "You know, I think that those people who go about helping other people .. ." He stopped— then, with an even more piercing gaze, he spat out the next words like bullets of contempt: "those people ... they are a curse!"

After the conversation at the table I had no doubt that "those people" included me. The accusation and the fire with which he flung it at me were for an instant paralyzing. Then, almost without thinking, I asked, "What about you? What do you think you are doing? You go about helping other people."

As though he had never thought of himself as belonging to that cursed category, Krishnamurti was taken aback for a moment, totally surprised and perplexed. Then, with disarming simplicity and directness, he said, "But I don't do it on purpose!"

It was the most extraordinary of statements. Aldous was enormously impressed by it, and also very touched and amused. Of course he understood it. But I must have looked bewildered, for Krishnamurti, in a softer, calmer way, said, "It just happens, do you see?" Alas, I did not see very well. Krishnamurti continued, "I am not a healer, or a psychologist, or therapist, or any of those things." The words "healer," "psychologist," "therapist" burst from him like projectiles ejected by compressed power. "I am only a religious man. Alcoholics or neurotics or addicts— it doesn't matter what the trouble is— they get better quite often— but that is not important; that is not the point— it is only a consequence."

"What is wrong with such a consequence?" I asked. "I only give people techniques or recipes or tools to help them to do what they need to do— what is wrong in using the transformation of energy to change those miserable feelings into constructive behavior?" That had been what we had discussed at lunch. I knew that Krishnamurti was violently opposed to dogmas, rites, gurus, and Ascended Masters— to all the gadgetry of those organized powers whose aim is to impress the masses with keeping the godhead and its graces as their supreme and private monopoly. But I had no idea that he also objected to psycho-physical exercises, such as my recipes.

Unaware of this fact, I had innocently exposed myself and my work. Now I realized that he had restrained himself during lunch, tactfully waiting until we were alone. He did not restrain himself now; vehemently, with unspeakable intensity, he spoke.

"No! No! Techniques— transformation— no— rubbish! One must destroy— destroy... everything!" Fleeting a thought crossed my mind: how easily such a man can be misunderstood, misinterpreted! I wanted to understand— I knew that he wanted me to understand, but how to ask— that was the question. "But what do you do?" I repeated.

And he repeated: "Nothing— I am only a religious man."

It had the sound of a final statement, a baffling one to me. Six words, I thought, but hundreds of different meanings, according to each person's conditioning. Perhaps he was simply restating what Christ had said:

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

But I was not thinking about Christ— I wanted to know what Krishnamurti meant by "a religious man."

"What is a religious man?"

Krishnamurti changed his tone and rhythm. He spoke now calmly, with incisiveness. "I will tell you what a religious man is. First of all, a religious man is a man who is alone— not lonely, you understand, but alone— with no theories or dogmas, no opinion, no background. He is alone and loves it— free of conditioning and alone— and enjoying it. Second, a religious man must be both man and woman— I don't mean sexually— but he must know the dual nature of everything; a religious man must feel and be both masculine and feminine. Third," and now his manner intensified again, "to be a religious man, one must destroy everything— destroy the past, destroy one's convictions, interpretations, deceptions— destroy all self-hypnosis— destroy until there is no center; you understand, no center." He stopped.

No center?

After a silence Krishnamurti said quietly, "Then you are a religious person. Then stillness comes. Completely still."

Still were the immense mountains around us.

Infinitely still.

[Laura Archera Huxley](#)

[This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley](#)

Celestial Arts, Millbrae, California, 1968, p. 83