

Without
a
Second

Karl Renz

**Edited in German by Dietmar Bittrich
as "*Das Buch Karl*"**

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How does this guy get away with it?

"No, thank you! Never again, Karl Renz!" This became clear to me after twenty minutes. At the time, Christian Salvesen and I had visited several satsang teachers for our book: "Die Erleuchteten kommen" (The enlightened ones are coming). At the very end someone recommended Karl Renz. We had to include him in our book. He did have his enlightenment experience. He had seen through something that we hadn't, and he had a faithful audience, in a number of cities.

But it seemed to me that this man was good for nothing. He talked too much. He wasn't still. He didn't spend time staring into your eyes. He didn't create a spiritual atmosphere. He sat there like the leader of a seminar, without flowers, without candles, without photos of any gurus, without the smallest sign of spirituality. I had participated in quite different satsangs: teachers with an aura; teachers who started by sitting with their eyes closed for a long time, until the stillness had spread through the entire room; teachers who looked deeply into your soul; 'saints' who bestowed each word like a precious jewel. They were surrounded by music, flowers, incense and the icons of great masters.

Nothing of all this with Karl Renz. No prayers. No atmosphere. Nothing meditative. Worse: it was even anti-meditative! I had meditated for 20 years, every morning, every evening. This Karl declared that my discipline was simply futile! Whizz and gone! And so it continued: every path an error; every effort futile; every search a hopeless case. That's how he talked.

The other visitors, (clearly some kind of subscription audience), had a lot of fun. I was glad when the talk was over. But then I was high: high on the road; all the way home; in my apartment; even the next day. It seemed as if I had received a small, illegal happiness pill, during this talk: an injection of carelessness, or a deeply effective means of relaxation. This was strange. Something must have happened beyond all the talking.

To check it out, I went again. And again. And since then, as far as possible, I don't miss any talk, if this man comes to town.

In my opinion, he still talks a bit too much: two hours, non stop, only interrupted by questions from the audience. And at the end of these two hours he looks frighteningly fresh and would love to continue, though the audience has had

enough. They are worn out because everything they'd thought and brought up has been blown into the wind. Every argument had been invalidated.

Karl Renz doesn't acknowledge anything: no spiritual realisation; no golden treasury of world wisdom. No knowledge discovered in deep realisation can survive. Nothing! At the end of a talk, nothing is left. Whatever an honest man has ever thought or believed in, is no longer valid: nothing at all. This can be depressing, but most of all, it is a relief.

Sometimes there are people who get into some kind of shock-induced stiffness. They quickly get up at the end, never to come back again. It also happens that someone in the middle of the talk leaves the room, furiously silent, or protesting loudly. But most people have fun and laugh: more and more, the longer the talk lasts. Occasionally there are laughing orgies, like in Kindergarten. In the beginning, this got on my nerves quite a bit. If I dared to come forward with an honest question and the others burst into laughter, I reacted with irritation. Even now some of these silly things disturb me, when I have the feeling, I missed the joke. But this is temporary, because the real joke in Karl Renz's talks is that the one who feels disturbed, disappears. The one who could react with irritation is no longer there. Of course, the audience is still sitting on the same seats at the end, but now they have become undisturbable. Whatever anybody thought he needed to defend has vanished. That which seems to make a person, (the so-called "identity"), flutters away during the talk. This means the entire web of beliefs, experiences, images of yourself. It seemed so complex, but now it simply dissolves. The ideas of how the world has to be, how I myself, how the others should be, disappear. Ideas of what should happen to bring me happiness becomes meaningless: even the idea that anything needs to happen at all. What in the end remains is often called 'presence': a cheerful clarity which needs nothing.

Sounds good. How is this guy doing it? He will maintain that he does nothing at all, and in a way, this is true. This teacher who has realised his "true nature", as the screen, not the movie, the sky and not the clouds passing by, who thus knows that he is stillness: this teacher doesn't do anything. He is simply there, without intention. However, his presence obviously has an effect. It absorbs the restlessness. As Paul Brunton said about Ramana Maharshi: "He is an emptiness into which the thoughts of the others can fall." Finished! Nothing else is necessary. But with Karl, of course, something else goes on as well. That's why he is invited to so many countries.

Each year, for his own joy, he spends part of the Northern winter in the South Indian city of Tiruvannamalai. There he spends hours each day in talking to an international bunch of beings, who range from those who have been searching for years, through successions of gurus, to those who are meeting such teachings for the first time. There, in his carefree, unique version of 'English', Karl gets into his stride, in a style that he probably first practised with the farmers in his parents' pub: turning the serious into comedy.

He plays, especially with words and their deeper meaning. He twists them, takes them apart, and juggles with them, discovers a secondary and tertiary meaning, and arrives at enlightening points, quite often to his own surprise.

In addition, he certainly has a Socrates in him, and that gives his art of juggling its magic background. Like the ancient Greek philosopher, he leads his questioning and bravely disputing audience to *aporia* (which is the friendly philosophical term for hopelessness).

Socrates, in his conversations, showed everyone who believed they knew something, that in truth they were ignorant. This is exactly what goes on with Karl. Nearly everyone who comes to his 'talks', in the beginning, still believes he knows something, or has enough understanding to have moved a few steps on the path to enlightenment. Such beliefs are shown no mercy. Jokingly and relentlessly all knowledge is crushed.

In the end both questioner and audience are stripped of their concepts. But there is no winner or loser here. All are one, and that is why the surrender that is the outcome of this exchange can be a relief to everyone, including the questioners. For in it they discover that it is the mind itself that creates the problems that it makes such an effort to solve, and that the truth, the essence, the Self, of everyone, is prior to the mind. The mind can continue to run in endless circles, but the Self remains untouched.

This Self is indivisible: listener and teacher are one. Karl says: "I only talk to myself." Thus he ambiguously names his discourses 'Self-talks ... soliloquy ... the Self speaks'. Of course, it is also the Self that listens, because any distinction can only be the product of thoughts.

This is the essence of the Indian 'Advaita' philosophy ('A' means 'not' and 'dvaita' means 'dual': thus 'advaita' means 'non-dual') which Karl represents. Separation is only an illusion, upheld by the mind. As soon as thoughts rest, the separation

disappears, along with desire and fear. Jean Paul Sartre said, "The others are Hell." Karl's version states: "As long as you believe that others exist, you live in Hell." Hell is perhaps exaggerated. Stress is already enough. But if there is anything that obliterates Hell and ends stress, it is dialogues like these, with a teacher who knows that Hell does not exist: that this separation is non-existent. The living presence of such a teacher may bring us great help, but his printed presence has its advantages too. You no longer have to endure the breaks and pauses which occur in every talk. Neither need you suffer the discomfort of hard chairs or a harder floor. You can interrupt this eloquent comedian, whenever you choose, and you don't have to pay the entrance fee, each time you come back to him!

Summer 2003, Dietmar Bittrich

The Merry-go-round

Welcome! Welcome to the fair! I can see, you're already sitting on the merry-go-round! It's great how you are driving! You have a sleek car, with an accelerator and a brake. But most of all, you have a steering wheel, which you can spin around, and that's just what you are doing; though strangely, as much as you steer it, or put your foot down on the throttle, or jam on the brakes, the car keeps travelling in the same direction.

This is how your 'I' (the so-called 'ego') works. It steers to the left, it steers to the right, and is never fully content with the result. It thinks, "I'll take a look at the others. How are they driving? How is that guy doing over there? That one is definitely shifting his weight more in the curve. I think I'll try that too." But nothing changes. The car keeps on going round and round.

Every now and then the merry-go-round stops. Short break. The Tibetans call this 'bardo'. Then you look for another vehicle. "Let's try the horse. I'll ride for a while. Maybe that's my destiny!" Very smart on your part! Or perhaps to be truly wise, you take the big chicken because all this driving has tired you out and left you full of humility.

During all this steering your ego ripens tremendously. And if by chance you were aiming in the same direction as the merry-go-round, then you can triumph: "Wow, I did that really well! Now, I think I've got it!" Now you've discovered how all this works. "I have complete control. Look here!" You are in harmony with the cosmos, in harmony with creation. An ego which is so coherent, steers in the same direction as the merry-go-round is moving. "Look, how I can steer! The entire merry-go-round moves because I am steering this way! Here, look at me!"

If you have mastered the art in this incomparable way, then you can even tell others how they should drive. "This is the way you have to do it, like me!"

Now you are a fully-awakened driver. "Follow him!" exclaim a few others enthusiastically. The best thing would be if you just take over the entire bus: "Get on board here, everyone, and sit behind me! I am one with the merry-go-round!" Then you are a guru.

If you want to be active more quietly, you can of course take on other important jobs such as driving the fire engine, or the ambulance. Or you may just follow the ambulance, to be on the safe side!

In all this it is important, that you keep the overview. That you press the gas pedal at the right moment and brake at the right moment, and most of all that you steer with great skill. That helps others. In this way you not only keep your vehicle perfectly on the path, but you also contribute to the successful ride of the entire merry-go-round! If only everyone would drive like this! You have everything under control.

Until one day, you accidentally let go of the steering wheel. Ooops! Now you are surprised. It also works on its own! This thing drives by itself! Exactly, the Self is driving. You don't have to strain yourself. You can lean back and enjoy your Self. It always drives directly to happiness.

Why are we here and what are you doing?

Question: What decides that you should sit there in front while I'm here at the back?

Karl: That which placed you there is that which placed me here.
But what it is, I don't know. It is not a doer. It has no direction.
It's the absence of will, manifesting as different aspects of itself: one here, one there.

Q: Then we could switch places, couldn't we?

K: Of course. That too would be part of the production.
Consciousness plays all the roles: world, space, time.
Every character sitting here is played by consciousness.
He who talks here is also the one who listens there.
It's all one consciousness. There is no separation.

Q: All the same consciousness?

K: Exactly the same. There is nothing separate.

Q: But consciousness plays the one in front as an enlightened being.

K: No, it plays a cup.
There is no enlightened one here or anywhere else.
A cup will never become enlightened. it's only a form.
It exists as an appearance. In the same way the 'I' is a form.
I am just like a cup and as helpless in attaining enlightenment
as anyone else sitting here. We are absolutely helpless.

Q: Then we are in for a funny evening. Does nothing get clarified here?

K: Nothing. So you don't need to make an effort.

There is nothing for you to take away and nothing to carry.

If you notice yourself making an effort, it means you want to take something away for yourself.

You want to clarify something, unnecessarily, like an overheating sewage plant that tries to purify what is already clean.

Q: Is it prohibited to expect some help for our daily life?

K: Not at all. And you know what can give you the greatest help?

To realise that there is no daily life. Only the eternal Now, which is what you are. Nothing comes and nothing goes.

Q: I can't do anything with this.

K: You don't have to. You can not by any means, because everything is done to you, through you and with you.

You are the source and that which springs from it.

This is what you are. So what is daily life?

Everything is the eternal Now of your absolute existence.

Q: Absolutely, totally nothing and Now. But aren't there small realisations which allow one to breathe?

K: That which gives itself room to breathe will be restricted again. What gets help becomes helpless again.

What can wake up, falls asleep again.

You would need to nurse it constantly . It is not real.

That which is real experiences no coming or going.

It is not subjected to time. You don't have to do anything for it.

Be that which you are, prior to what is or is not.

Be that which you cannot not be!

Q: I'll do that. A wonderfully helpful description!

K: It wasn't a description. And moreover you can't do anything.

Q: That's what I meant to say.

K: It's a pointer towards something that can't be described.

It describes itself in everything and nothing.

No matter where I'm pointing, I'm always pointing at myself:

always towards that which is.

Wherever I point, I can never miss myself.

There is no direction, where the Self won't be.

Q: Am I the Self too?

K: Yes. That's why you can now sit up front.

So, what's going on here?

Q: Something does happen here. Something communicates itself within and without words. Something is contagious and remains.

K: For a while the protective shield which is the filter of your ideas is absent.

There is only unknowing: a nakedness of any definition.

And this remains, realising itself. In it, no idea can hang around.

It vibrates within the words. It deletes all your ideas;

at least, until they return. And after some time it may happen that you recognise that ideas are just ideas.

Q: And is this recognition useful for something?

K: No, not if there remains someone who recognises.

Q: True. The one who recognises is me.

After all, it is me who wants something to be useful.

K: Nothing can be done about this.

The one who recognises only falls down the manhole when it has to happen.

This is called "grace".

The one who recognises tumbles with a tiny 'aha', that nothing ever happened to what really is.

Q: Nothing ever happened, but doesn't nakedness also mean, vulnerability?

K: Yes, there is no more protective shield.

Self-realisation means to be totally affected: defenceless!

You empathise with whatever appears in your perception.

You can no longer say no to anything.

You are entirely that which you perceive.

You are entirely that which exists in your perception.

There is no separation between perceiver and perceived.

Q: This sounds overwhelming.

K: Many who experience this and don't understand it end up in mental hospitals.

The filter called 'I' doesn't exist anymore.

All information from the outside world streams in unfiltered.

We discuss it here just in case it occurs, so that nobody goes crazy.

Q: Or, at least, so that we know why we go crazy.

K: I can only point out how stupid it is to ward it off.

Within the protective shield of the 'I'-thought there is the idea that something exists other than 'I': that there is someone to whom things could happen. But you are that which is without a second and everything that touches you, everything that you experience, is only yourself. This is self-realisation.

Q: And only our protective shield prevents it?

K: I can't remove it from you. If I could it would mean something was wrong with you. But there is nothing wrong with having a protective shield, as long as it exists. At some point it will drop; at death, at the latest. It could also drop right now. Then you would see how you cannot defend yourself.

Q: Sometimes I can see that.

K: For example: you cannot decide whether or not to fall in love. It simply comes. You are defenceless. The feeling of being completely in love and completely defenceless is your natural state.

Q: But that is a state which I clearly can experience.

K: And, if it's meant to be, you will no longer experience this relatively, but absolutely. This means there will be nobody who experiences this state. Nobody could bear it. This empathy, where everything streams into you, into your awareness and into your emotional world, is unbearable for an 'I'. But for the Self, it is completely natural.

Q: But that sounds strenuous.

K: When grace appears, this emptiness comes into being, in which the person can no longer exist. With this awareness, the Hell fire appears, in which the small 'I' cannot exist.

Q: Did you say "Hell fire"?

K: Call it grace or Hell fire. Nobody can prevent it and nobody can accelerate it. Grace is a mystery and works in a mystic sphere: unconditional, uncontrollable.

Q: But doesn't the presence at satsang bring it about?

K: Or not. Presence is not a condition. Satsang is not a condition. There is no condition. The possibility always exists.

Q: I only noticed, since I'm at satsang more frequently, that I have insomnia.

K: Others feel I'm a sleeping pill! But if it is intended to be, that through your experience of insomnia you realise who you are (which includes insomnia) then it will happen that way. That which you are is never awake and never asleep. Sleeping and waking appear as states within it. But that which you are doesn't know sleep.

'Wachheit' in German is 'awareness' in English: awareness which never sleeps and is always completely present, even in deep sleep: awareness: insomnia, if it's meant to be! If this is your path, wonderful!

Q: But I get a headache ...

K: Why should you fare better than me? Five years of migraine, insomnia, always diving into this cacophony of light and rarely unwinding! If the energy is released, this can happen.

Q: Sounds quite tempting.

K: Sleeplessness, electric lightning, the head an immensely booming bell,
thunderstorms of pain, circus show!
Consciousness is pure energy and awakens in every cell,
in the head, in the entire body. This is Hellfire.
The world of thoughts is blown apart. The body panics. Everything has to go.
Absolute intelligence awakens within you, so the energy cannot slumber. Because
of the phenomenon
of light, it has been called enlightenment.
Matter and antimatter fuse and become awareness.
There are nuclear reactions like sunspots.
You are a nuclear reactor!

Q: In the past I was against nuclear power.

K: And now perhaps you remain quiet, because you know the meaning of these
symptoms.

They are merely accompanying effects. Quietness and silence
are always there. The stillness is the source.

Q: Then I might as well simply remain still.

K: As you become more still, the phenomena grow more powerful.

Q: There is no escape.

K: Not from your own reactor.

Q: You said it has no protective shield?

K: If it comes to that, it no longer has an operator, either.

I'd like to become enlightened

Question: It may sound old-fashioned, but I want to become enlightened.

Karl: I can only wish you good luck.

Q: What do you mean? Is this desire nonsense?

K: Not nonsense, just a bit of mental trickery.

Q: I believe it is slightly more than that.

K: Enlightenment and unenlightenment are ideas.

Enlightenment is merely one more concept in that endless line of ideas about improving yourself, discovering yourself, or obtaining happiness.

Q: And what is wrong with that?

K: It is unnecessary, because there never has been any need for anyone to become enlightened.

Q: I doubt that.

K: Who wants to become enlightened?

Q: As I said, 'I'.

K: So the 'I' wants to radiate light.

Q: Of course. Is that prohibited?

K: When it comes to electrical safety regulations, certainly!

Q: What?

K: It is extremely doubtful whether an 'I' can stand such energy.

In this absolute energy of being, which becomes indescribable light, the 'I' burns out.

If you shoot ten thousand volts through a light bulb, it bursts, and anything that remains is vaporised .

Q: It has an orgasm.

K: Which, however, it doesn't notice.

Q: Does that mean that I am a weak bulb?

K: What do you mean by 'I'?

Q: My personality: me. That which sits in front of you.
That which I am.

K: That which you are doesn't need any enlightenment.
It has never been in the dark.

Q: Alright, let's forget about the term enlightenment.
Let's call it awakening.

K: It doesn't need awakening either.

Because that, which you are, has never been asleep.

It knows neither sleeping nor waking.

Waking and sleeping appear within it.

Moreover, there is no one awake or asleep.

There is no enlightened one or someone who needs enlightenment.

These are merely ideas which are meaningless.

They appear and disappear again in that which you are.

Q: But in order to see or grasp this, wouldn't I need to experience some kind of awakening?

K: Not you. Not the 'I'. At the moment you are what you are there is no more room for the light bulb. It is burnt out, vaporised, disappeared, as if it never existed. And this is the joke: indeed it never has existed. Because wherever that is which is, there is nothing else but that which is.

Q: The where ... the that ... the what! Well, where am I?

K: You are burnt out, vaporized, disappeared. Or at least, it seems so. In truth, though, you did not exist before and you won't exist afterwards.

Q: So the 'I' has to disappear?

K: How can something disappear which was never there?

Q: But I do exist. I'm sitting here. The question is: how much longer?

(A cell phone is ringing.)

K: Just answer it. Your electrician wants to know whether he can switch on the current.

Nobody gets enlightened

Q: Once someone is enlightened, can he ever lose that state?

K: Again and again.

Q: Isn't he in it once and for all?

K: No. As long as there is one who is called enlightened, that one will emerge again.

There has to be such an 'aha', that that which is Self, which is existence itself, remains forever realised.

No person is needed to realise this. Existence doesn't need some kind of phenomenon to realise what existence is.

Q: No, existence doesn't need it. But I do.

K: You don't need it. You can never exist as an enlightened one.

And you never existed as an unenlightened one either.

Drop this program of enlightenment, or awakening.

Q: Isn't it necessary to be touched by it, at least once?

K: Who or what could be touched? What change would be needed for it to happen?

Whatever touches you will disappear again. Every experience of touching is fleeting.

Q: But, as a teacher, can't you ...

K: I'm completely helpless. I am helplessness.

I cannot turn anyone into something they already are.

Q: Then help me to be what I am.

K: Whatever I could try to do would only consolidate your idea that you are not yet that.

Q: Can't you give it a go, anyway?

K: But no-one is there who could be improved.

Q: I gladly believe that nobody could improve you. But me ...

K: You cannot be improved, either.

My 'I' wants to disappear

Question: Why was I born?

Karl: Why not? Existence is in complete agreement with the fact that you are and the way you are. It is perfect.

No meaning is necessary.

The quest for meaning only arises with the idea of an 'I'.

Q: Alright, but I ask this question.

K: The 'I' is a concept. It desires relevance. It poses a question which wants to be satisfied and dissolved by an answer.

But then immediately the next question arises.

Actually it's always the same question: "Why am I?"

This is the hang up of the 'I'.

To justify its existence, it has to find a reason to be alive.

It tries desperately to prove that it exists, but cannot find the evidence.

That's why it always has a new question.

and that's why no answer will ever be enough.

Thus it doesn't matter whether the question is answered or not. There is only one answer to the question "Why?"

That is "Why not?"

Q: Doesn't the 'I' have any value at all?

K: Valuable or valueless, it proves its existence by seeing itself as worthless: "Poor little me, inadequate me!"

The main thing it desires is proof of its own existence.

If inferiority is useful as a proof, then it's gladly inferior, poor and pathetic. The 'I' knows all the tricks in the world to survive.

It's like a wobbly man. You can knock it over a thousand times, but it always comes up again. Even if it could remain lying down, it would at least exist. The illusion of an 'I', which again and again appears in a question, remains irrepressible!

Q: Life must be beautiful when this question is finished once and for all!

K: You mean existence needs to be unquestioning in order to be happier? Perhaps it is as happy asking questions as not asking.

"If this or that wasn't there ... if I had got rid of this or that ..."

all these are merely 'I'-ideas. Existence cannot be disturbed.

It doesn't need to get rid of anything.

But the 'I'-idea at some point experiences itself as disturbing and then attempts to eliminate all disturbances, including itself.

Q: Yes, that's how I feel.

K: The 'I' makes you believe that it has to disappear.

Q: Exactly!

K: Because if you believe this, it can continue to exist even longer, undisturbed.

Who is it that's spinning this yarn?

Question: I am here because I don't want to be reborn.

Karl: And precisely because of this wanting it will happen.

Q: What?

K: The desire to avoid something is always the command that makes it happen.

Q: Then tell me how to get rid of this desire ...

K: No, you can't get rid of anything.

Q: ... or how I can get out of this.

K: You can't get out. But you can devote yourself to not getting rid of anything, and not getting out! That's all.

This is self-realisation.

Self-realisation is realising that you can't escape what you are.

Lean back and enjoy it. There will be no one else who does.

Q: If I could enjoy life, I wouldn't be here.

K: You are here because you have no choice. You cannot do otherwise. You are the freedom that has no choice how it expresses itself. If it had a choice, it wouldn't be freedom.

Enjoy this choicelessness, this inevitability of your existence.

This is real enjoyment: to see that you can never change what you are.

Q: For me this is pretty much the opposite of enjoyment.

K: I can only tell you: that which you are enjoys every moment and the opposite of every moment. It enjoys itself completely.

And that which thinks that it's not enjoying itself is also part of the enjoyment.

Q: That doesn't get me anywhere, that I am part of some kind of enjoyment. I want to be the one who enjoys.

K: That which you really are enjoys the non-enjoyment too!

Q: That's like spinning a yarn.

K: You are right. It is spinning a yarn.

Q: Thank you.

K: But the one who spins it, the spider, is you. You are weaving this endless network of cosmic thoughts and forms.

The moment will come when you think: "What's the point of all this spinning? And who does the spinning, anyway?"

I think I'm spinning!

That's it!"

In the awakening of the 'I', your spinning began.

You are the source of this endless web of war and peace:

the entire web of creation.

You are the spinner of every thought and every form. But in the sudden realisation that it is you, the entire web is sucked back.

Once this is seen, there is neither world nor spinning.

Q: Do you expect me to follow you?

K: Not at all.

I'm not sitting here to help you understand something.

Q: But?

K: I'm sitting here so that he who thinks he could understand disappears into non-understanding.

Q: Before I disappear, I'd like to get a couple of solutions.

K: I don't dissolve anything. On the contrary, I create knots.

Q: Yes, I notice that.

K: I'm not here to dissolve knots. I create knots.

I tie so many knots in your brain that you may suddenly realise it's impossible to ever undo them.

So you can give up trying and simply be still.

Once you are completely still, who cares whether there ever were worlds, or rebirths, or webs, or knots and dissolvings?

Why do you talk so much?

Question: With all satsang teachers there are periods of silence.
You are talking constantly.

Karl: There is only silence here.

Q: Quite a talkative silence!

K: Silence which talks and listens.

Q: Silence which doesn't like to shut up.

K: To the silence it doesn't matter at all what comes out of it.

It doesn't have any intention. It doesn't differentiate between right and wrong.
Neither does that which listens.

Q: You mean to say that the content of what is said makes no difference?

K: The only thing I know is that here silence both talks and listens.

Q: That's all?

K: Nothing more.

Q: Does that mean that actually nothing happens here?

K: Yes. And still something always remains.

Q: And that ...

K: Is silence.

Don't trust any masters, dead or alive.

Question: You do have something that we don't have. At least I feel it. You also sit in front while we sit here.

What's your view on this? Are we stupid?

Karl: If I regarded myself as wise and enlightened, there would only be stupid, unenlightened beings in front of me.

This would be separation. It would be the old illusion that here is someone who knows something and there someone sits who doesn't know.

But I talk about knowledge which is absolute: absolute here, and equally absolute, there. It is nothing new for you.

That's why it is nothing you can attain.

There is nothing you can discover; nowhere you can arrive.

It is already completely present. I talk about that which was never concealed; which doesn't require attainment.

Any endeavour can only lead to relative knowledge.

Q: But isn't it said that every teacher has something to learn?

K: Yes, as long as there is a teacher, he has something to learn.

Q: So there! And you are a teacher!

K: Impossible, I can't teach you anything!

Q: But that's what I'm here for.

K: I can't teach you what you are. I can't give you anything.

Q: Well, in that case ...

K: However, I'm also unable to remove anything from you.
If anyone tells you he can give you something, remove anything
or give you enlightenment experiences, that person is a liar.

Q: Then Buddha is a liar.

K: Yes. Don't trust a dead master.

Q: Well, it's not that easy. Buddha has a teaching that life is suffering and all
suffering comes from desire.

To escape this, his way is the eightfold path.

K: In the Diamond Sutra, he said, "No Buddha has ever entered the world, and
there never will be one either."

He also said: "For forty years I preached and I never said a thing. Nobody said
anything.

Nobody talked and nobody listened."

Q: But the eightfold path does exist. There is this teaching and this dharma.

K: There are people who teach something and always try to repeat the same
words. These are the parrots who maintain the concepts.

They keep the misery alive. All teachings which state that there is a way out of
misery, keep it going.

They keep and keep until they are constipated.

Thus they maintain constipation.

Q: Let's take another example: Krishna taught Arjuna.

The entire Bhagavad Gita consists only of this teaching dialogue.

K: Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Socrates: these are all appearances.

They appear to be an exit for you. Each one of them appears to show you a picture
with a beautiful goal, or at least a hole in the wall where you may get through.

You only have to make the effort to jump high enough, then you can achieve it.

You have to squeeze tightly enough and then you can get through.

In the end, you only have to muster enough courage to take the final step into the abyss.

Q: And that's not true?

K: You just can't jump high enough. And nobody can take the last step: this step into the Abyss of existence, inside you.

Only the Self can take it, and the Self doesn't need to take this step, because it is the abyss!

The Self is the total abyss: the absolute nothingness.

Q: Do you mean to say that you can't help me?

K: Exactly.

Q: That's impossible.

K: In the relative, everything is possible; in reality: nothing.

Q: It doesn't matter. I still like to sit here.

K: I said, "Nobody sits here who says something and nobody sits over there who hears it."

The hearer and the speaker are one. There is no separation. Whether the speaking comes out of this body

or the hearing happens in that body, it doesn't matter.

That which speaks here and listens there, is one.

Q: I don't notice that at all. And yet I feel that this is supportive. It reminds me of something.

K: Perhaps of yourself.

Q: Yes, perhaps that's what it's about.

K: You are being thrown back onto yourself.
I don't give you anything. I throw everything back at you.
Give it to me, give it to you, give me to me.

Q: You to you?

K: We play hide and seek with ourselves.

Q: And that's what I meditated for all these years!

K: Exactly. Everything that did and didn't happen prepared you for this, so that this can happen in this way.
There is nothing wrong with this. It is always right.
It always happens at the right moment. Now.

Q: Therefore, don't trust dead masters.

K: Don't trust dead masters. There aren't even any living ones.

What can a teacher do?

Question: What is it that makes a teacher, a teacher and a disciple, a disciple?

Karl: There's someone who thinks he needs to learn something and someone else who thinks he's got something to teach.
A disciple believes he needs more knowledge to get closer to his goal. A teacher thinks he has something to teach the disciple.
In relative life, it's true. If you want to learn to drive a car, you need a driving instructor. One has the information and the other can learn.

Q: And that's not the case in the spiritual sphere?

The teacher sees that everything is one, while the disciple doesn't. So the teacher can help. In many traditions, this relationship has existed for thousands of years.

K: Yes, the guru-disciple relationship has a long history, and if it is supposed to be that way, it's the right thing.

However, that, which we talk about here, happens not because of, but in spite of, disciple and master relationships.

The Self simply becomes aware of itself.

The concept of master and disciple is irrelevant.

Q: In the tradition it is clearly stated that without a master it is as good as impossible! It only works through a master!

K: It only works through the Self.

The Self may reveal itself in the form of a master, but it could also be a book, or something else.

Q: The tradition states that the master has to be alive, which means in a body. Only in this living form can he help a disciple to unravel the entanglement of his mind.

K: A living master can help the disciple reach cosmic consciousness. To get from one into the other, there are many possibilities of guidance: for example, the 'neti neti' or 'you are not the body' .

These hint at what you are not. All questions like 'Who am I?' are intended to help the individual consciousness become cosmic.

Q: Do you want to deny that it can happen: this help?

K: Nothing ever happens through something else. It's always through the source. Therefore it's always spontaneous, always natural. It is never conditional. The master-disciple relationship is fiction. In truth only the source exists.

Everything emerges from it and everything returns to it.

Within this dream there are master-disciple meetings, but they don't affect anything. All effects come only from the source.

Q: But the source works through the master.
It works through him more than anyone else.

K: No, the source works in all, equally and uniquely.
It needs nothing special. Whatever happens, including the awakening to cosmic consciousness, happens for no reason, but simply because it happens.

Q: What about devotion?
It certainly plays an important role in the tradition!

K: What belongs to you that you can give up? To whom should it be given? You have the illusion of being a person who can own something, and that this ownership can be given up.

Who needs this to happen? To whom can it occur?

Getting from individual to cosmic consciousness is merely a change of states. You get from A to B, but who takes this step and who gains advantage from it? Is there anyone whose individual consciousness is disadvantaged?

If there were, it would mean that the Self could only be natural in cosmic consciousness, while in individual consciousness there'd be something wrong or provisional.

But both are the same consciousness.

Death also ends the individual consciousness. It is transformed into formlessness, but again becomes form at the first opportunity. Both are the same consciousness.

One in time, one in no-time, that's all.

The absolute is not conditioned by any state.

Q: How do you know this?

K: Nobody can know it. Whatever I say is a concept.

The only thing you cannot doubt is that 'I' am prior to all concepts. I only know that I am not a concept: I exist, as whatever. That's all I really know. I have to exist so that I can talk about a concept at all. To do so, I must exist prior to the concept. This is the only thing beyond any doubt, while every concept remains open to question.

Q: In that case, why are we sitting here?

K: It's about recognising that everything is a concept arising from your idea of an 'I'. It cannot touch what you are.

You can let everything appear and disappear again.

There is always something remaining which is beyond words and which exists before, after, and in between all concepts:

the primordial ground of existence, which cannot be learnt or realised. This is you. For this you don't need to do anything.

You don't have to make an effort. You don't have to drop anything. You don't have to let go. Any idea, any attempt to do, or not to do, something to achieve this, cannot make you into what you already are.

Q: I have visited many masters, for whom the master-disciple relationship was most important. Did I fall for a concept?

K: The concept disappears; everything disappears: every differentiation, every idea of value or quality.

What remains is the only thing which exists.

Only in this is it possible for that peace to appear, which exists in the absence of all concepts.

This includes the absence of any idea about master-disciple relationships.

Such an idea is as fictitious as the belief that you live.

The idea of a master can only appear where there is the idea of an 'I'.

If you truly had respect for your masters, you would simply let them disappear.

You would recognise your master as what you are.

At such a moment there are no more masters and no more disciples.

With such respect for what is, you would bring happiness to all the masters of this world.

There never was a master who said,
"Raise me to the heavens and build me a church.
They all said, "Forget me as soon as I'm gone.
If you want to honour me, forget me."
But nobody followed their words. Instead, they came up with entire religions.
Jesus never said, "Found a religion." He said, " Let the dead bury the dead."

Q: You want to run down the masters for me!

K: What you're really doing is avoiding the emptiness. For this there are many techniques. The master-disciple relationship is your attempt to fill the emptiness: to create an object, a goal for that which is the 'I'.

Q: Simply to find something important.

K: It is completely irrelevant. The 'I' is simply an idea:
the idea of separation. This idea needs an object and thus a goal.
Any goal is good enough, even the goal to abolish all goals!
This one too can fill the space of emptiness.
The 'I' is tricky. You can't escape it. It even hides behind the not hiding. The doer hides behind the non-doer.

Q: So what can I do?

K: That which you can't do.
What is always completely itself, under all circumstances?
What is it that never experiences any change in itself?
What is the most solid thing there is?
What is this primordial ground, which always has to be there
in order for a realiser and a realisation to exist at all?
What is this essence which is always still, which never moves,
within which information simply appears and disappears?

Tell me.

For you to become that which is permanent, which neither comes nor goes, what has to happen?

Do you have to do something? To realise something?

Or is it there, with or without any realisation?

Q: Probably.

If you meet another teacher who has seen this, don't you have anything to tell each other?

K: The same thing will happen as now, because I'm talking to him right now.

From your perspective it may seem that someone sits here who speaks and someone else sits there who listens. But it is one and the same Self.

In this moment, he experiences himself: as the experiencer, the experiencing and that which is experienced.

Any idea of separation is fiction.

And all other fictions come from the belief that this fiction is real.

The question of meaning or nonsense belongs to this too.

The source, existence, has no need for meaning.

Q: This is the burial of the teacher!

K: The more you recognise this as the only reality, the more will be buried.

Whatever you are not will be buried

More and more falls into the eternal grave of irrelevance.

More and more beliefs drop, until you realise that anything you believe, or feel you ought to believe, cannot be the Self.

Q: But the teacher helps me realise that!

K: You believe he has the carrot you have chased all your life,

and when you are mature he'll serve it you, and once

you have eaten you can relax, for then you will be enlightened.

All this is fiction. The awakening from individual to cosmic consciousness is fiction.

If you think, " Yes, this is now reality and I am all this," it is pure fiction.

Q: But if this awakening is connected to an existential shock?

K: Everything is part of the dream: the one who is shocked too.
That which you are is unchanged and untouched by all this.
It is what it always was.

Q: Do I have to experienced this before the shock will go ?

K: Then there is nobody there who could be shocked.

Q: And is that good?

K: Neither good nor bad, but simply as it always has been.
This is nothing new. And if someone asks you: "How's it going?"
you'll simply say: "As usual."
It is then that the teacher taps you on the shoulder and gives you an 'A'.

Emptiness teaches

Q: It's sometimes said that emptiness is the true teacher. Is it so?

K: The true teacher always sits between the chairs.
There it is most comfortable. Not here on this chair,
nor there on the next one either, but in the gap.
The true teacher sits between the moments: between two thoughts. The gap is
the awareness.

Q: In that case should I rather listen to that which is between your words?

K: If you are able to. It's hard for the mind. It doesn't like gaps.
In London stations, a speaker says, "Mind the gap."

Don't step into it! Your mind can't exist inside the gap.
Inside it, there is no mind.
Therefore it is said: "Attention, Mind, mind the gap!"
If you don't, you won't exist anymore. You cannot exist there!
Emptiness is the master who blows away the mind.
In emptiness the mind evaporates.
But you are in the gap. There you fit perfectly.
There are no prescribed dimensions.
You are the greatest and the smallest,
everything that is possible and impossible: all existence.
There is infinite space and no space at all.

Q: I once was on a drumming course where I always had to endure the interval, the gap. I could hardly stand it. My feet always wanted to skip over it.

K: Nobody can bear the gap. The emptiness is the master of 'I'.
It doesn't do anything. It's simply empty. That's all.
There is no 'I' and yet that which you are is completely present.
Even in emptiness this presence is totally there, just as it is here and now. It is never gone. It never comes or goes.
It is here, now and always, in the eternal Now.
In time there are only hints of that which has no time;
only hints of that which has no coming or going, no birth
and no death. The Self never appears, and never disappears.
But everything that appears disappears, because it was never there.

Q: At least it fills the gap! Perhaps that's why the gap is so heavy that one can hardly bear it.

K: The emptiness is so light that it is unbearable.
Therefore you fight and kick to fill it.

Q: What if I stopped all this kicking?

K: Forget it! I'll show you how wonderful it is inside the gap.
How light!

Only resistance is heavy.

It becomes heavy if you try to fill the emptiness.

Emptiness, itself, is completely light and it's here where you belong.

Q: Where I'm at home.

K: Where no home exists.

Q: Is that supposed to be fulfilment?

K: No. These are empty promises.

Q: Oh, you cannot be grasped!

You dodge every statement like a snake!

K: But the snake says, "Why don't you try it? Come!

Go there where you cannot exist. Come into the gap.

Bite the apple!"

Q: And then there is a worm inside.

K: Yes, and then off into the worm hole! Like in Star Trek.

You know it, don't you?

Enter the worm hole and you are already somewhere else.

The gap itself is the drive. It pulls you in totally.

Q: Please, no ...

(the bell rings)

K: You are in luck this time.

Q: Someone is still coming.

K: A stopgap.

The teacher is irrelevant

Question: Is it true that a teacher can bring a disciple into unity consciousness?

Karl: It is irrelevant.

Wherever you can go, you must leave again.

It may be that for a time the idea of duality departs and there is unity. But out of this oneness, duality always emerges again.

Q: But I do find it interesting that through practice, or through a teacher, one can have this experience.

K: Wherever effort, techniques, or teachers may bring you, you will emerge again.

Q: My spiritual teacher said, "You can already experience the unity that comes to everyone after death."

K: Perhaps he is telling you that what follows death has always been what you experienced in life. The unity always appears again in your awareness.

In death the body disintegrates and body consciousness is changed to unity consciousness. But it's still consciousness,

and whatever happens in consciousness, cannot make you into what you are.

Experiences of oneness, or greater awareness, are only experiences after all.

At best they can show you that you are that which experiences,

and that which experiences can never be experienced.

All experiences, including life and death, are fleeting.

They come and go. That which you are doesn't come and go.

You are the source. All the phenomena of life are just reflections.

Q: I believe I experienced this once.

K: It cannot be experienced. The eye cannot see itself. Perception cannot perceive itself.

Whatever can be perceived is not what perception is.

Q: But in your case it also changed, didn't it?

Wasn't there a sudden realisation?

K: That was simply an aha!

Q: Yes, you see.

K: This aha showed me that what is being perceived cannot be that which perceives. And that even the perceiver, is only part of the perceived. But prior to Little Karl is what really exists... and that cannot be experienced.

The unfathomable and incomprehensible, total 'I'-lessness and desirelessness is always there, no matter what happens.

This is what you are. Whatever appears in front of you is nothing but a reflection of your existence. That which you are

is the essence of all, which can never be experienced.

Q: Then what's the point? I mean, something that cannot be experienced cannot be enjoyed either.

K: It's a complete dropping away of any desire for phenomena.

Q: Yes, I notice the first signs of that too. The interest in superficial phenomena decreases. It's a kind of development, perhaps some form of precondition for the 'aha'.

K: There are no preconditions for it. It is unconditionality itself.

Q: No conditions?

K: It is unconditional.

Q: Then I don't need a teacher either.

K: Who doesn't need a teacher?

Q: What?

K: Who is it that doesn't need a teacher?

Q: Who? What?

K: You can't do anything! Within the dream a teacher and a disciple may appear. Perhaps the disciple thinks he's learned something, but the only thing that happens in this "relationship" is that they both drop away. Disciple and teacher disappear. What remains is life, which is reality itself: absolute existence.

Q: And what kind of a teacher is it that disappears?

K: It can be a personal teacher.

Q: But his only purpose is to disappear?

K: The entirety of life is the teacher.

Q: But that disappears too: into the 'aha'-experience?

K: Whatever does not exist disappears.

Q: Recently I told a teacher that my teacher is my entire life and he replied, "No, that's an escape. You need a personal teacher. You need me."

K: In the Vedas it is said, "As long as there is a teacher who thinks he has something to teach, he still has something to learn."

Q: Yes, I expressed similar thoughts and then this teacher became angry!

K: I can only tell you that I hope I am as irrelevant as always; as irrelevant as I can be.

Q: Does that mean useless?

K: Useless and irrelevant.

Q: Would that then be your essence, so to speak?

K: Yes, entirely irrelevant.

Q: Nutty!

Is there anything I can do ?

Question: A 17th century Zen master, Bankei, praises the undivided Buddha mind that is beyond all unity. What is that supposed to be?

Karl: That which existed prior to Buddha: "Para-Buddha".
That which is prior to everything, which knows
neither duality nor unity. It is neither one nor two:
neither this nor that. It has no definition.
It has all names or none. It can never comprehend itself.

Q: Perhaps that's why Bankei said, "It is meaningless to strive for it." He told his disciples, "Just stop it!"

K: The total resignation in accepting you will never be able
to comprehend yourself or know yourself is absolute silence.
When there is no more desire to know yourself, this means you know yourself.

Accept that you can never escape, and never comprehend your Self, because you are that which is: endless, unborn, immortal.

For this, nothing within time is necessary.

In order to be this, no effort is necessary.

Any effort to be this is futile.

Q: Bankei says, "A much shorter way than effort to become Buddha, is simply to be Buddha."

K: Well, then quit this Bankei.

Q: But Buddha worked hard for many years.

Only then did he come to his realisation.

Would he have reached enlightenment without this effort, or did he only see it this way afterwards?

K: What do you think? Where did the effort come from?

Q: From his decision not to change his life.

K: And where did this decision come from?

Q: From his desire to end suffering.

K: And where did this desire come from?

Q: Do you want to continue forever questioning me like this?

K: Wittgenstein asks the question,

"If there was a free will, who could have it?"

Q: Well, a Buddha, for example.

K: Which Buddha has ever made an effort to become a Buddha?

Q: The one who suffers makes an effort to become a Buddha.
One who enjoys himself is probably happy to be reborn many times.

K: You mean that as long as the Self enjoys duality, it chooses to remain in this relative state, and only frees itself when this condition becomes uncomfortable.
As if the Self could ever be disturbed by itself!

Q: I'm talking about a normal human being, not an abstract Self.

K: You talk about consciousness which seems to be in a state which is experienced as pleasant or unpleasant.

Q: No, I talk about a human being who makes an effort.
I just can't believe that every effort is irrelevant.
All the mystics have gone a long way. Even the highly esteemed Ramana Maharshi, fought for years to discover the nature of the "I am".

K: As far as I know he realised it on a single afternoon. That's how it's described on a wall in the ashram in Tiruvannamalai.
A foreboding of death came over him. He lay down on the floor.
He gave himself to this death experience, and he realised.

Q: Maybe, but that was only the beginning of a long path.

K: It was the beginning and the end.
Since then, he said, nothing happened anymore.

Q: Except that he retreated into a cave for years, so he could meditate without disturbance.

K: From that moment on, he said, he knew that that, which he was, the Self, was never disturbed by anything, nor could it be disturbed.
This was the basic experience of everything.

Q: It may have been the basic experience;
nevertheless some kind of refining was still necessary.

K: You mean, like a seminar at the university.
First you prepare, then you experience it and then you refine it, so that it has a
lasting effect.

Q: Yes, that is not as far off the point as it sounds. With this one experience,
Ramana realised that he was not the body. But
at that moment he still had not experienced what he truly was.

K: You are right.

Q: Exactly. Therefore he then ...

K: He didn't experience it, because it cannot be experienced!

Q: Why not?

K: For an experience at least two things are necessary:
one who experiences and something that is experienced.

Q: So what?

K: The other is not an experience anymore. It is simply existence as such, which is
completely present here and now.

Nothing special is needed for this, neither preparation nor refining. It's nothing
special. It's simply realised.

As Meister Eckhart put it: it is the primordial ground:
pure awareness of existence.

Q: But it is something special. Because a noticeable feature of these masters is the
intensity of their charisma; their infinite kindness and undisturbed stillness.
Whoever meditated with Ramana, attained *samadhi* (cosmic consciousness).

K: Cosmic consciousness is nothing special.

It's an experience. But I'm talking about the Self.

The stillness you mention has nothing to do with whether one can sit still or be still externally and internally.

This stillness is unassailable. It cannot be touched by anything. This stillness knows no thoughts. It is not an experience.

It is the Self.

Q: People who came to Ramana or other mystics did experience this stillness. They tasted it and wanted this taste forever.

Therefore, they sat down and meditated. I simply don't believe that it doesn't matter whether one makes an effort or not.

You portray it as if nothing one can do will help or hinder it. Some time or another it will just happen.

K: No, it doesn't just happen. This stillness, this basic awareness, is not conditioned by anything.

It cannot be influenced by anything that happens in time.

Whether, when, and how it happens is entirely independent of all happenings in the temporal realm.

Therefore, all action, every endeavour, every understanding, or non-understanding, is pointless. It has no effect on this one small 'aha' that is awareness of the absolute.

Q: It's apparently very significant for the personal life.

K: You hope for an advantage, but there is none.

You hope to escape from yourself, but that's impossible.

You want to find a way out, but none exists.

That which is here doesn't need a way out and will never find one; because that, which is here, is now and eternal. Infinite! You can't walk towards it and you can't walk away from it.

Q: But it's not until there's been some work, or preparation, that you are ready for this experience, or 'non-experience', as you call it. Just to be able to accept what

you're saying at all, effort is needed. The ability to accept just isn't there without some effort first. Isn't that right?

K: The acceptance doesn't come from that which you believe to be, but from the same source as the non-acceptance.

Whether you can accept or not is not in your hands, though you may have the feeling that it was acquired through your efforts.

Q: Exactly.

K: But I know with absolute certainty that you didn't acquire it through any work. Acceptance is a spontaneous occurrence.

Q: That may be, but perhaps you can help this spontaneity to happen.

K: No effort helps. There is no preparation and no final polishing required.

Q: But, with Paul Lowe, I experienced that deep sharing was very helpful.

K: That sounds good.

Q: That is the deep exchange of feelings.

K: This sheep sharing?

Q: No, deep sharing.

K: Sheep sharing, or do you mean sheep shearing?

Q: No, no, deep sharing. Deep sharing means to share the depth.

K: To share the depth? To split it with a knife?
So that there are two depths?

Q: No, not to part, to participate: to participate in each other's feelings; to share all feelings; even those which hurt.

K: One shears them short.

Q: One is open and honest, and doesn't deal with them in a rush.

K: Instead one deals with them slowly, with a dull knife, so it hurts. Pulling your hair out slowly! Is this deep sharing?

Do I view it correctly?

Q: No, not at all.

K: Sheep shearing is normally done with a sharp knife to make it go faster.

Q: So then there is indeed a meaningful preparation: the sharpening of the knife!

K: In the end all hairs are gone. You are naked. There is nothing left.

Q: Thanks to a good preparation.

K: You have defeated me.

Are there any other questions that I can't answer?

What can I do myself?

Question: Ramana says that there is no such thing as karma and no rebirth. Yet still, in the awareness of the ego these do exist.

Karl: As long as there is the concept of 'I', everything is there: ideas of dirt and the need for purification; desires to improve the quality of life.

Within this framework of concepts, you can talk about everything.

But all these concepts only appear when the 'I' appears: when the 'I' is accepted as real.

Q: So there is no preparation whatsoever?

K: For what: a heavenly state, a paradise, a magnificent goal?

It is not until the idea is there that we have lost something or need to reach a goal, that Hell is created for us.

It is then that the belief is created that we have the free will to choose to strive and make effort. This comes from the 'I'-idea. It is only through the 'I'-thought that this seeming separation is produced. This belief that we are separated is Hell. Together with the 'I'-thought, Hell immediately appears.

This is diabolical. Dia means two.

Dia-bolo, the Devil, is the one who creates two-ness.

Q: There is a devil?

K: Exactly. The 'I' is the Devil.

But the 'I' doesn't exist. It's only an idea.

How then can I abolish this devil, which doesn't exist?

What can I do about it? What can an idea do about an idea, a concept about a concept, an illusion about an illusion?

Q: Not much, apparently.

K: Do I have to do something about it at all?

Q: Perhaps a little practice would help?

K: I simply have to be what I am.

Q: I was afraid of that.

K: Namely to be prior to time, to Devil, to God, and to every idea of existence. And this I am anyhow. This I can not do.

This is prior to all doing, prior to any experience. This is stillness, and this stillness is prior to time, to movement and non-movement.: indefinable.

Q; Okay, if nobody exists anymore, then nobody needs to do anything. But here somebody exists!

K: You are sitting here in order to meet yourself:
to have that experience.

Q: That's what I mean, and in order to have another experience, I meditate.

K: Meditations, efforts and actions are all wonderful.

Ramana says, "Every step which has ever been taken has led to me, and was right."

Q: Good, then I'm not entirely off, here?

K: There are only right steps: only right effort. The Self knows a hundred percent what the Self needs in order find itself. At every moment it knows that one hundred percent, and it always takes the right step towards itself.

Q: I do believe it. But why am I sitting here now?

K: Because the Self has placed you there.

You can't do anything wrong

Question: Sometimes I feel, now, at any moment, there will be the breakthrough, that will finally be it!

Karl: "I was never as close to me as yesterday evening."

Q: Like that, yes.

K: And then you desire to keep this absorption, or closeness, as long as possible. This desire to keep it destroys it again. Then, all that remains is the desire.

Q: Yes, then I'm disappointed.

K: Disappointed, disillusioned! Disillusionment should be the end of illusion. That's what you are actually looking for: the absolute disillusionment which makes you absolutely give up your search. But as long as you are sitting here, you are still deceived.

Q: I'm sitting here to speed things up a little.

K: Whoever thinks it's easier to find himself here, than it would be elsewhere, is deceived.

Q: Then I don't need to come here! I might as well do whatever I like.

K: You can never do what you like.

Q: My experience is different.

K: Because you are being played. You are helplessness and powerlessness. There is no other being that you could rule over. There is no existence which could have

power over another existence. God's omnipotence is complete impotence.
Omnipotence means simply to be what you are.

Q: Then I can sit at home and not do anything at all.

K: Well and good! But come back sometime and tell me how it was, and most of all, whether you succeeded.

Q: To tell the truth, I tried it already and it's difficult.

K: Everybody tries it. Nobody has ever succeeded.

Q: Is there nothing one can do?

K: One can only not do anything.

You don't do anything: everything happens on its own!

Q: Then I can't do anything wrong either.

K: Everything you do is exactly right. You can't do anything wrong, because you never did or could do anything at all.

This is freedom, freedom from a doer,
from a person who never did or could, do anything!

Q: Who then makes war?

K: You! Who else?

Q: What?

K: You are responsible.

Q: But didn't you just say ...

K: War and peace exist because you do. You are the source of both. You are responsible for all that exists.

Q: Responsible for everything?

K: Because you are all that exists.

Q: Who are you talking to now then ?

K: I'm talking to myself.

Q: Thank God.

K: As always. I only talk to that which understands:
never to that which doesn't. Isn't that self-evident?

Q: No.

K: Whatever exists is the Self: whether it speaks, listens, or simply stays silent.

Q: Is it just myself then, that I'm hearing at this moment?

K: You can only listen to yourself.
Only the Self speaks, and only the Self can listen.

Q: And what is the point of all this?

K: Self-realisation.

What can I decide?

Question: Can I decide to be aware?

Karl: It's not a decision. It's simply an awakening, just like that which happens each morning in your bed.

You cannot decide whether you wake or not.

In the moment of awakening, it's decided, spontaneously, naturally, without thought. You know it well: first ... deep sleep, then ... bang, into awareness!

This is exactly how the entirety of existence comes about.

Before it there is neither the idea, nor the desire, to wake.

It simply happens, and from this awakening comes the big bang. It's nobody's decision. Nothing has ever been decided.

Q: Doesn't the 'I' decide where and when to direct its attention?

K: This too is not decided. If anything, it is grace.

If awareness becomes aware of itself it's not because of an 'I' which decides to pay a bit more attention. You can sit there for a thousand years deciding for awareness and nothing will happen. Perhaps you've done this already.

Q: I hope so.

K: Or maybe it's ahead of you. In either case it's not in your hands. Nothing depends on you, on this 'I', which thinks it's decisive. Every idea is spontaneous. Every apparent decision comes out of nothing, out of the blue: out of the blue into the great beyond.

It has no direction. There's nothing that has a direction.

Q: This sounds hopeless.

K: It's neither hopeless nor does it create hope. Either state would mean that one could exist, who needs, or could have hope.

There is only a hopeless one and a hopeful one as long as you believe in this idea.
Only then do these questions come up.

The root is the idea that you exist as an 'I'. You need to get to the stillness, in which all these ideas have disappeared.

Q: Yes, that's what I want. I've made my decision.

K: Did you ever contribute anything to anything?

Q: I think I did.

K: Simply see that it always happened on its own.

It operated on its own and didn't need your decision.

The fear, that without your decision it would cease to happen, is just an idea.

Q: What about the fear that if I make the wrong decision, I will cease to exist?

K: That's the fear of death. It comes when you see that your free will does not exist and you cannot control anything.

Then the 'I' defends itself, because it thinks it has something to lose: not just its power to decide, but its very life.

Of course this fear will be there. The desire for a rôle in life struggles to survive.

The ball keeps rolling, afraid to stop.

It rolls without control, but it's still afraid.

After all, it mightn't be a ball, any more, if the rolling ended.

Q: Am I still there when the rolling ends?

K: When the rôle is played to the end, the 'I' ends.

The 'I' is put together from a personal history of doing things. The idea that this history could end, awakens fear.

Q: So what happens when history stops?

K: It continues just as before, but without your idea of doing something:

without any notion of desire, will, control, freedom,
or the possibility of making decisions: without any thought of a personal history.

Q: It continues without the person, me?

K: Yes, just like now. Is there a history now?

Look at what is really happening. Just see. Does anything actually change as a result of your decision? Do you make a decision at all? Can you ever grab a desire and change it?

Has there ever been anything you could control?

Q: I want to lift my hand. There, you see, I lift my hand.

K: A nerve is stimulated, the hand rises, and immediately the 'I' comes rushing in and claims: "I have decided this!"

Look carefully at your thoughts: the 'I' always comes afterwards. Every action occurs on its own; every idea appears on its own; every thought. But then there is a super-idea called 'I' which reinterprets every event as part of its own history. That's all. Nothing more. A thought by the name of 'I' leaps in a moment later, claiming the action as its own and commenting:
"MY will, MY mistake, MY body, MY life, MY death."

Q: Perhaps I begin to understand.

K: YOU understand? Then watch YOUR understanding!
See when it occurs: this "YOUR"!

Q: Do you mean that my decision is not my decision
and my desire is not my desire?

K: Simply be aware. See where the desire comes from.
Can you desire to desire? Or does desire emerge from itself,
as energy unfolding, like a flower that blooms, without reason
or meaning? Desire comes and goes by itself.

Q: At least, when it's fulfilled, it goes.

K: Not through fulfilment. The primordial desire, that lies behind all others, is the desire for self-realisation. And this desire will never be fulfilled.

Q: So should I forget about this desire too?

K: There is no hope that you ever can know your-Self. The desire for self-realisation only appears, after all other desires have come and gone, without giving you anything. It is then, the desire for self-realisation arises, because only then can you accept the idea that your happiness and peace depend on finding the Self.

Q: Is that wrong?

K: There is simply nothing to find: nothing to realise. The desire for self-realisation appears, and has to disappear, in giving up all searching. When searching ceases, this desire ends.

Q: So, I only have to stop searching?

K: Sure, if that's all. But you cannot decide to do it, or not. And what is so beautiful is that you do not have to decide. The searching (i.e. the desiring), cannot disappear through a desire. The last desire can only disappear if desirelessness becomes aware of itself. It seems that you desire and want and decide: that you control your own progress and work like Hell , but then: 'pfft' or bang! Through some kind of accident, all this is gone.

Q: And then, am I no more?

K: Yes. It's almost a pity, because you had built up such an interesting relationship with yourself.

Welcome to the ocean of light

Question: What is possible or achievable for a human being?

Karl: For a human being nothing is possible. A human being is just an idea. And for an idea, nothing is possible. But for that which you really are - existence itself - there is no limitation.

Q: That's very well and good for existence, but I am a little human being.

K: As long as you define yourself as a human being, and live within the limitations created by this definition, nothing is possible.

Allow yourself to be the "I am", prior to any limits.

Abandon individual consciousness and be cosmic consciousness: pure unity.

And then, prior to even this consciousness, be the pure 'I'.

Even this 'I' vanishes into existence, where there is no idea of any 'I'. This happens at the latest, in death.

Any idea of being a human being is dead.

There is only existence.

Q: Well, then, I can be happy.

K: Be happy now. Existence doesn't lose its perfection, whether it unfolds as 'I', 'I am', or 'I am a human being'.

In all aspects of this trinity, perfection is still there .

Existence is perfect even as a human being. But to limit yourself to this last link of the chain is a crazy idea. You have forgotten that you are the whole.

As if you have to go back! You have always been the totality of this existence! It is you! You never were the idea: 'I', or 'I am', or 'I am a human being'. That has never been you. It is not you.

It is ideas, nothing more.

Q: For thousands of years human beings have been searching for the ultimate realisation and didn't find it.

K: This bunch of ideas is not made for that. They form a tool through which existence has the experience of a human being. However, that which eternally experiences itself is always existence. If it experiences itself as a human being, it is merely a variation of itself: a reflection.

As pure existence it cannot experience itself. There is no experience, so it needs an experiencer: an 'I': you.

Q: Then I'm nothing but a means by which the great existence has fun.

K: You have this fun your-Self! After all, you, yourself, are the perfect Self-experience in the unfolding of existence.

You are nothing less. There is only the unfolding of perfection. Every idea of imperfection is nothing but an idea.

Q: But obviously I cling to the idea. Or I don't know any better.

K: The 'not knowing' is also a perfect unfolding of knowledge: an unfolding of what you are. It seems as if there is one who knows and one who doesn't know. But both are appearances. Knowledge, as such, doesn't know one who knows or doesn't know. This only comes with the idea of time; with the idea of separation. At that moment you experience separate existence.

Q: Well, then, where is unity?

K: Here. That, which seems to be separation, is merely a story which you are telling yourself. You experience what you believe. What is here?

'Here' is a light-ocean of vibrations. But from the experiences of your past, you put together a picture. From the experiences of chair, room, humanity, you put together space. As a baby you had the experience of light and vibrations in space, not the experience of chair and Mama. This came later.

This moment of space and time exists through your conditioning by your history, your parents and your environment. They tell you: "That's how it is here, my dear." But it's simply a belief.

For you it appears real because you repeat it to yourself daily .

Q: So, I create it from the past, and when it is gone, there is only this moment, now.

K: Then you no longer define: this is a floor; this, a ceiling; this, a chair; this, death.

Q: But nevertheless, there are these differences ...

K: They are not there! Not now. Experience requires time.

Q: But you also see this chair here, don't you?

K: There is seeing.

Q: You see different human beings, don't you?

K: I see differences, but not different human beings.

Q: Wow! You see differences!

K: What's wrong with that! I see differences and realise that differences only exist in time. They are governed by the idea of separation. They are dependent on existence. And existence is the only thing, essential for this here and now. Everything else is fiction! You are existence, which in each Now, in this eternal Now, looks within itself and thus experiences itself. This is your truth: your self-realisation. This, essence of all, realises itself in all. All forms are fleeting shadows within it.

Q: Yes, I can feel that. Just now I try to ...

K: I know: you want to make it into an experience.

Q: ... to feel this moment completely. Isn't it possible?

K: Who is now asking? A question exists in time.

The eternal Now has no question. So, who asks the question: existence, or some kind of object in time and space?

Q: Let's put it this way: the question simply came.

K: Good answer. There is nothing in the way to your enlightenment.

Does progress exist?

Question: I saw on TV how children were killed by napalm.

In the past I couldn't have watched it, but this time I remained surprisingly calm.

Karl: You mean to say that you have made progress?

Q: Well ...

K: That you have gained something you did not have before?

Q: I simply wasn't so entangled.

K: A witness consciousness may have emerged, which is no longer involved in a series of events.

Q: Yes, exactly. And I think if something terrible happens to me and I stay calm in spite of it ...

K: Then you are saved?

Q: Well, at least I don't suffer though I do remain outside, so to speak.

K: Who remains where? What is the difference whether you remain here or there? Whether you are 'in-volved' or 'out-side'?
Who gains something from not being involved? What are you?

Q: I am the one who is sitting here.

K: And what advantage is there in your existence?
It's an absolute disadvantage. As long as you exist as a person who wants to gain an advantage from anything,
such personal advantage is an absolute disadvantage.

Q: I'm concerned with freedom from suffering.

K: That which is freedom doesn't need freedom.
The only cause of suffering is the idea that you exist, and that somehow it might help to avoid suffering if you acted one way rather than another. This idea alone creates suffering.

Q: Is it suffering if one wants to be happy?

K: Of course! Even those who are happy have to fight for their happiness. After all, there is always the chance of misfortune. This alone makes happiness unhappy. As long as there is one who is happy, there must also be one who is unhappy, within the same person. As long as there is one who is free of suffering, there is also one who suffers.
Nobody can escape this cycle.

The only possibility is the so-called divine accident: the realisation that there never was one who existed in time; that there is no time; that what you are is prior to any idea of time and space: prior to any idea whatever.

Q: And is there nothing I can do for this?

K: You don't have to do anything!

Whatever is done in time and space, for or against it, cannot touch you. Whatever is done in time and space cannot make you into what you are.

It is very simple. That which you are simply realises that it cannot be anything which it can realise.

Within you, within your awareness, space, time and the world appear. But you yourself are never part of it.

The pearl necklace of your personal history

Question: I suddenly find myself free of a tension, which had refused to leave me although I'd tried many ways to be rid of it. Now, although I've done nothing, it's gone. Why is this:

because I've let go, or because I'd strived so hard before?

Karl: Whatever can be let go of or held on to:

whatever can be done and not be done: has led to this.

Every step towards this one point is the right step, but where your feet would fall has never been your decision.

Each step is the result of an infinite interrelation. All things are conditionally related to one another. Every moment is a pearl in an infinite heap, where each one is dependent on the others.

Q: Or a necklace of pearls.

K: The necklace would be a personal history. But is the past essential for the future? Or is it just an interrelation in which everything exists simultaneously, never coming, never going?

A necklace is an individual string of pearls. Some pearls have been selected and tied together, one after the other, as personal moments. Somebody hangs it around their neck and says: "My necklace ... my story ... my past ... my future ... my life!"

Such a necklace it heavy to wear, very heavy!

Even for the 'I' it is unbearable.

That's why the 'I' constantly tinkers with it, to make it more beautiful and delicate; to shine more brilliantly or even perhaps more discreetly, so it appears less obvious!

Q: Until the 'I' finally drops the necklace.

K: For the 'I' it's impossible to drop it. It cannot let go.

The necklace is there because the 'I' is there.

And the 'I' is only there because of the necklace.

They are inseparable prerequisites for each other.

Q: Then there is only one possibility:

they must both disappear simultaneously.

K: The only possibility is to realise that they never existed: neither 'I' nor the necklace.

Q: You mean, there is no personal history: no sequence of moments?

K: That which you are is without sequence and without condition. It is not divisible into moments. It is not part of anything.

It is always prior to everything.

Q: Not even a heap of pearls?

K: It's prior to the heap of pearls, and laughs when you trip on it.

Good company

Question: Can my personal development be helped by meetings with spiritual people?

Karl: That which develops cannot be what you are.

There can be experiences, both of personal development, and of the development of humankind, as part of evolution.

These exist, as part of the play of thoughts.

Can this drama make any difference when it comes to realising who you are?

Q: Probably not.

K: Through such dramas you can realise what you are not.

That's what they're good for: the absolute realisation that you cannot be what you realise. This might give you some enjoyment.

Q: But I feel that I have developed. Ten years ago I didn't have this connection to existence. At least, that's my experience.

K: You can never have a connection to existence.

In existence, there is no connection, because there is no separation.

Q: I mean, in those days I had no contact with this.

K: Contact to existence doesn't exist. For that you'd need two. But there is no 'my' existence and 'your' existence.

You could say that you observe a development from a more individual consciousness to a more cosmic consciousness.

Q: That's what I mean.

K: Then it is called "satori ... awakening ... enlightenment".

Q: There you are. That's what I mean.

And don't these moments of awakening occur at certain specific points of one's development?

K: They come on their own and they go on their own.

Whatever wakes up can go to sleep again.

Every 'I' which disappears can reappear.

There is no lack of opportunity for the ego to return.

Therefore no advantage is gained.

Q: Ramesh Balsekar says, 'You walk up the stairs ... and then the last step occurs.'

He says quite clearly that there is a process.

K: Yes, there is a process. The legal process against you!

Q: But you went through some development too, didn't you?

K: They initiated proceedings against Little Karl as well.

He sat, in the dock, as the accused, and had to prove his existence. He failed. Little Karl's inability to prove his existence has done away with him.

Q: How does one come before such a court?

K: It depends on the judge.

Q: And who is the judge?

K: The Self: that which doesn't let anything pass except itself. The 'I' has to prove that it exists, but it does not.

Because of this, it may go a little crazy in its desperate desire for proof.

The trial scene where this occurs is called 'The Last Judgment'.

It is the 'Last' judgment because at this moment time ceases to exist. There is only beginning.

This is the last day, the youngest day, where only the source exists and only the source can exist. Whatever is not the source is cancelled.

This is 'the last judgment' of the Bible. In this courtroom, no evidence is accepted that can exist in time.

Q: And you went through this process?

K: Proceedings were initiated against Little Karl and he was executed.

Q: Does this mean that relinquishing the 'I' is painful?

K: The sentence is executed with a blunt sword, or by slow hanging.

Q: Is it unpleasant in every case?

K: There are no rules. You are being hanged, but you don't know how long it will last until you are bled out: until every desire and every intention is gone. It's a hang up. You are being hung up.

Q: One hangs from a rope and nobody cuts it?

K: At some point the cut occurs. This is salvation. Suddenly the one who is hanging there, is gone. And it was you, on whom everything was hanging: on whom everything depended.

You don't need to change anything

Question: I have the feeling that I'm slowly beginning to wake up, more or less.

Karl: Impossible! In this eternal now there is only the experience of pure self. There is absolutely no sense of 'more or less'. There is no 'closer' to it, or more advanced, or less advanced, or whatever. Nobody's enlightened or unenlightened. Any idea of awakening has disappeared.

There are no sleeping ones and no awakened ones, anymore: no more this entire hocus-pocus of trying to go somewhere, or have special experiences, or any other such nonsense.

Where I am, nobody can be.

There is no-one awakened and no-one sleeping, because that which exists never slept and therefore never can wake.

Every personal awakening is a joke: a fart in the wind.

A person can never wake up. The Self is always awake.

Q: You say it is nonsense if someone says he is now realised or enlightened.

K: The only thing one can say is that there is no personal story anymore. This history which seemed so real before, is gone.

But a person can never say: "I am now enlightened."

Whatever happens in time cannot make you into what you already are. The Self becoming aware of 'it-Self' does not depend on the person.

It occurs spontaneously, not because of some event in time.

Q: Is there still a person then?

K: Yes, for example, Ramana said: "As awareness, I am absolute awareness; as consciousness, I am absolute consciousness, and as man, I am absolute man."
Jesus said the same thing.

When relativity is present the Self is not lost.

That which lives the human being is this same ever-present existence.

Q: And am I an aspect of that?

K: An aspect is fleeting. Check whether you are something fleeting or something that is. An aspect is just an angle on something: only a passing reflection of what you are.

You are the absolute, manifesting itself as a human being, as moon, as sun, as all the universe. You are reality itself.

Whether you realise yourself as a human being, a stone, or a tree, you are the truth, the reality.

Q: Then I don't need to strive for enlightenment.

K: To "strive for enlightenment" means that something which is an object thinks it could do something for that which is absolute existence. It thinks that it needs to change something so that the absolute state may come into being. In this way that which is perfect can become a bit more perfect!

But when Ramana says, "Be what you are," it simply means: "Be this absolute existence: be that which you cannot not be," and let the details follow their own destinies.

Q: But apparently it's possible to work towards this 'be what you are' moment.

K: Yes. Nisargadatta said, "There were times in which I existed and thereby populated the world. Those were times in which I and human beings still existed. But since this one here exists no more, no population exists either. Since then the world is empty."

Thus it seems there were times in which he lived in the illusion that he existed as a separate being among other separate beings. He believed it, and though it may have been a dream, it seemed to be real.

After all, when an idea is perceived, it seems true.

It's only when it's found to be false that the illusion bursts.

In this moment of clarity there never was a before or after.

For this, which you are, there is no time.

Q: How does this help my daily life?

K: By simply seeing there never was anyone who could change anything. Through seeing the perfection in the ordinariness of yourself, it becomes clear that the ordinariness is no more ordinary than the eternal NOW without coming and going. Only look inside yourself. This is the vision of God.
In Meister Eckhart's words: "The eye of God which looks into the eye of God."

Q: Well, Meister Eckhart, I haven't had this realisation.

K: You never had anything and never will have anything.
But in the moment of this realisation you see that this is how it always has been. Then there is no more before and after.
And this is effortless. Nothing needs to be done and nothing needs to change. Nothing has to go and nothing has to come. It doesn't even need to be understood.

Q: Then I'm relieved.

K: Me too!

There is nothing to surrender

Question: Is it necessary to build up a certain quality of 'I'?

Karl: You can blow it up, and people certainly do.
But it's rather rare that it bursts.

Q: I don't mean that.

K: The Ego is a hot air balloon, and every thought expands it.

Q: What I mean to ask is whether you need to be particularly strong or healthy to bear the awakening?

K: No. The ego cannot be healthy. There may be a psychological health: an ego which is able to adapt to various situations or to live in harmony with its environment. This is debatable, but for this discussion, it has no significance. No ego can be healthy or strong enough to bear 'I'-lessness.

Q: But can't the ego recognise the reasons for obstruction?

K: The ego has never realised anything.
It is part of what is realised. It never understood anything.
Only the whole, the Self, understands.
There is no 'I' which could ever understand anything.

Q: But, for example: can't I understand the reasons for suffering? I can analyse it, or let it be and see that I am not the suffering.

K: Whatever you do with it is fumbling about.
Your fumbling is the attempt to control.
Whether you want to endure suffering without being touched, or enter completely into it, every technique is supposed to result in you controlling it. And it doesn't just apply to suffering, you want to control the whole of existence!
You want existence to touch you only as far as you allow it.
And, to top it off, this god is then supposed to wake up inside you, who controls the state of the world.

Q: It is my experience that the acceptance of suffering is like devotion, or praying.

K: As long as you think you have an advantage from acceptance, devotion or praying, the controller, 'I', stays alive,
and as long as he lives, everything is suffering.
This is the pain of separation: the pain that is the longing for what you are:
Absolute: free from a second.

But every idea that you need to control something in order to be free, allows the small, separate 'I' to remain.

Even if you surrender, this "surrender" is itself an attempt to control. You expect this "surrender" to make everything more beautiful for you.

But what we're talking about is surrendering the surrender. Realise that there is nothing to surrender, because there is nothing that you own.

Q: Can't I, for example, control whether my eating is healthy?

K: The idea that you control something always comes after the event. Whatever happens, happens on its own. Afterwards you believe that you did it. But it didn't happen through you.

The idea simply appears that you acted and that you have the power to control. It belongs to the idea of "my", that there could be something belonging to you: an action, a mind, a body.

You feel you are the owner, and an owner wants to control what he owns. But nothing belongs to him. He owns nothing.

He doesn't even exist.

Q: If I believe this, it's absurd. I wonder what is happening here.

K: Everything only becomes more confused and chaotic.

Q: As far as I'm concerned, I can only say that something surrenders.

K: One can say that something removes itself from the objects. This is Jesus' idea of deliverance. He is the redeemer who removes you from worldly objects and leads you to objectlessness. That which you are, frees itself from everything that can be realised and known and becomes a mystery.

Mystery means complete unknowing, without any second which could be known. But this can never be reached, nor lost, nor surrendered.

It simply happens

Question: A few years ago I suddenly knew that there is nothing to do. It was there, crystal clear. But only for a few days.

Then this clarity was gone.

Now occasionally I plan not to do anything.

But that way I'm already doing something again.

So what is it, this so-called "doing in non-doing"?

Karl: Who does something?

Q: That's what I'm asking you.

K: Who does everything?

Q: They used to say, God.

K: Did anything ever happen at all?

Q: I do have that impression. Yes.

K: Is something happening now?

Q: I would say so.

K: And is someone necessary who experiences this as an event?

Q: If you ask me in this way, probably not. Intellectually I also know that there is no doer. But what use is that to me?

K: Knowledge doesn't bring a solution.

Relative knowledge, which is all an 'I' can have, will never free that 'I' from separation, because there will always be the need for somebody to own the knowledge.

As long as there is someone who knows, there is separation.

It may be the highest knowledge of the most subtle experience, but it still won't bring deliverance.

As long as there is still one who knows, separation will remain. Where there is absolute knowledge there's no-one left to own it.

Q: But each of us wants cosmic consciousness.

K: Whether one speaks of individual, or cosmic, consciousness, there is always some 'thing' desiring this absolute bliss of pure existence. The individual consciousness strives to transform itself in order to reach cosmic consciousness. But cosmic consciousness can easily slip back to individual consciousness.

What I'm talking about is prior to consciousness: an awareness in which nobody can exist, to be aware of herself, or himself; where awareness is everything. Awareness is prior to consciousness: prior to relative knowledge.

Q: When can I experience this? When does it happen?

K: It's a totally spontaneous non-event, which never happens.

Q: It comes on its own?

K: With or without effort.

It is in spite of, not because of effort or no effort.

Q: When? Sometime or other according to its own discretion?

K: It has nothing to do with what exists in time.

It's the simple realisation that 'you' must be prior to time:

the realisation that time awakens within 'you' and not you within time. It is like a magnetic field that flips: suddenly time is within you and you are no longer within time.

Time is only a reflection of what you are. There is no more doing. There is a simple 'aha': the realisation that you have always been what you are, and always will be. Whatever exists in time, is nothing but a fleeting shadow

Q: Is there no more doing, only realisation?

K: There is also no more realisation.

In this moment the one who realises, the realising and what is realised are all one. There is no separation.

Q: Is one then simply the witness of everything, as much in waking as in dreaming and sleep?

K: A witness still makes distinctions.

I talk about that, which never made any distinction, for whom no differences exist. Whatever it may be is what it is. In whatever state, it always remains what it is. It's neither this nor that. It's not witness consciousness. It's not an observer.

It is not an individual person.

All three states appear within that which it is.

The witness state is still about an event: something that happens or doesn't. What I talk about can never happen and cannot be defined. For this nothing needs to be done.

Indeed, there is nothing that could be done.

Q: That's really mean. We can neither wait, nor hope, nor do anything else.

K: On the contrary, you can do everything.

Q: Frankly speaking, we are sitting here so that it can happen, and as soon as possible.

K: Your sitting here will neither help it nor prevent it.

There is no causality. It doesn't happen for any reason.

If it's supposed to happen, it will. You can do or not do whatever you like. No action of yours can obstruct it, or hasten it.

Q: But it will happen, won't it?

K: Here is your official guarantee. Its happening is unavoidable.

Q: Still in this life?

K: In which life is unimportant. No life exists in this .

Q: What?

K: It knows no life. The Self is aware of itself and is pure self-awareness. For this, no time is needed.

This is its nature. This truth has never been hidden.

It's nothing new. There is no awakening.

Q: There is no awakening?

K: Whatever can wake up is within consciousness.

The individual consciousness can wake to cosmic consciousness and fall asleep again. But the Self is never asleep, never awake. It knows neither sleeping nor waking. It always is what it is.

It knows no states.

Q: But what about you? Do you still experience different states?

K: I don't talk about what I am.

I will never be able to define myself, nor realise myself.

I will never know what I am.

But I know, one hundred percent, that I am.

And whatever comes and goes, in whatever state,

- as appearance or information - exists, because I am.

It's not that I am because something appears.

I am the primordial ground which is there for anything at all to happen.

Q: Do you mean that you feel as if you were the source of everything?

K: I'm not the source. The source is also nothing but a state.

Q: Or is there some kind of creator god?

K: I am prior to the creator. I am prior to God.

That which I am in essence is prior to everything.

When Jesus says, "I and the father are one, but I am not the father", what he means is that God in his role as creator, Jesus as a human being, and the indefinable holy spirit are one, in essence, although different in form.

Therefore, the creator god is still different from the essence.

In the Hindu system, Brahma, too, is not the same as essence. The Indians call it "Parabrahma": that which exists "para" (prior to) God. It is never seen as something that could be defined.

And yet, one can talk about it forever. One will never grasp it. There is no definition. One cannot make it into an object.

It is incomprehensible: unfathomable.

Q: Are there still times when you identify with a thought or a feeling?

K: Whether identified, or not identified, makes no difference to me. Both appear as fleeting sensations. The identified consciousness and the cosmic consciousness are still aspects of me. I am prior to both, prior to whatever could be described: that which is prior to everything, identifiable or not, is sometimes called 'the noumenon'. It is.

Q: Is this state more natural than the one we are in?

K: All states are natural states. None are more natural and clear, or less natural and more foggy.

This little 'aha' is the essence, which is prior to all origins, prior to birth, and which will exist throughout all time. It was never foggy and never will be.

It is never touched by what exists in time.

Q: Maybe the essence isn't, but I am! Or isn't there a body here and a world out there?

K: Body and world appear, together with the 'I'-thought.

From the pure consciousness, 'I am', the totality of manifestation rises like a huge tree. Everything appears out of 'I am'.

But prior to 'I am' there is this 'I-I', which is always there.

It remains untouched by ideas like "I am this or that," or "I am here, while the world is out there." Nothing can cloud it.

Q: But why am I caught in this fixation on 'I' and the world?

K: It's unimportant. This fixation can do nothing to what you are. It's no worse than Cosmic Consciousness. There's no difference in quality. Personal consciousness, which identifies with the body, is no worse than Cosmic Consciousness.

What you really are does not differentiate between personal and cosmic points of view.

Q: I would prefer the cosmic point of view.

K: Every thought, that there is something else but you, is separation. But all the so-called 'non-duality' of Advaita informs you that only this one Self exists, and nothing but the Self.

Q: Maybe so, but I don't experience it.

K: Every experience is self-experience.

The Self only knows itself.

Even personal experience is pure Self-experience.

There is only the Self. It's the foundation. The Self is what is. Even if it shows itself as the world, whatever appears is the Self: never disturbed by anything: always the Self without a second.

Love and partnership

Question: Right now, I'm in love. I love someone, not being or the Self, but another person. Is this allowed?

Karl: No, it's strictly prohibited.

Q: I mean, does this qualify as love? Is it real love?

K: There are countless books and sayings about this thing called 'love' . You will find more definitions than there are people in the world.

Q: But you don't have one.

K: I only know that where there is a concept about it, love is absent.

Q: What?

K: It can only exist where there is no concept of 'love'.

As long as it is limited by a concept it's imprisoned. You want to define love, and the word "define" literally means: to limit.

Your desire to describe love this or that way, turns it into your love: a love you have at your disposal; a love which has an owner. Love is thus limited and imprisoned and certainly not the infinite love that everyone longs for.

Q: But isn't there a love which is not imprisoned?

K: There is. It is there where there is nobody who could own love. This love is freedom and only this is love. Love is the absence of a person who defines true love as one kind or another. Love is the absence of one who discriminates.

Q: Well, I guess this has nothing to do with my being in love.

K: There is no such thing as your love. Love knows no owner. Where 'my' and 'your' stop, there is love.

Q: Then love cannot be an emotion.

K: Love is all emotions because it is the source and essence of everything.

Q: Do you also approve of personal love: that spontaneous love which is directed at a particular human being?

K: When you recognise yourself completely in others, and when there is no more separation between you and them, there is love.

Q: So there can be, after all.

K: Then love is synonymous with self-realisation.

You realise that what you are is also what the other being is. Where there is no more "you and others", there is only love.

Everyone desires this love. It is the true meaning of relationship.

Q: Yes, and love may also come within relationships.

K: Comes and goes again. This taste of love is temporary.

It's fatal! Love in this form is fleeting and it hurts.

Even as such love arrives you know it's going to leave again, because it is subject to time.

Q: Always?

K: Without exception. Whatever comes in time, goes in time.

But the source of relative love, Love itself, is always there.

Q: But suppose a relationship which you call "relative love" is built on Love ...

K: ... then we can work on it to make it last forever, or at least until death! We only need to give it total commitment!

Yes, work and dedication!

But is there someone who needs this relative love?

Who is it that needs this emotion, this care and security, in order to exist or to be happy?

Q: Well, that one does exist and he's sitting here.

K: When love comes face to face with need, it's need that wins.

Q: But if it isn't like that in a particular relationship?

K: Then there is no relationship. There relationship ends.

Q: Do you mean that if I'm love I can't relate to someone else?

K: Exactly, because there is no more two: no more you and someone else. With this Love, relationship ends.

There is only compassion; though no-one exists to have this compassion.

Q: Sounds lonely.

K: Love is loneliness. There is no second anymore. You are that. One without a second. At this moment everything which is in time has to die, including you as a separate person who cannot exist in this loneliness.

Q: It sounds terrible.

K: For a person nothing is more terrifying. Any person would commit suicide, just to avoid it!

Q: But isn't there an emotion called love?

K: One may call it that, but it is not love.

Whatever can be named is not It.

There can be a nice sensation which comes and goes, like the taste of a good meal or the feeling of harmony. The taste passes. This is fleeting love which will never make you content.

Q: That's why we want eternal love.

K: Eternal, so that we're totally safe!

Q: So that this feeling never stops.

K: Love exists when the idea drops that someone wants or needs something. That which you are is itself already eternity and therefore has no need of any feeling, or idea of the "eternal".

Love is not a feeling.

Q: Is this the kind of confession of love that your girlfriend hears from you?

K: If you'd ask her she would say she never heard one.

It is not relationship-heaven for her.

And yet all our interactions are testimonies of love.

Q: Does this reflect the saying: "No matter what I do, I am love"?

K: For me love is one name among many.

If you want to use this term, then that, which I am, is that which is love. I am not love. I am that which is love.

That is whatever it is: the eternal mystery of existence.

Q: Then it is everybody.

K: Of course.

Q: But do you also experience something like the need for love?

K: It's called being a person. I know this experience.

Q: But it doesn't affect you because you are rooted in existence?

K: That which I am, in essence, was never rooted or uprooted.
It knows none of these definitions.
It is that which never cared about anything.

Q: So, the essence, love, never cares about anything?

K: It is completely care-less. The caring takes care.

Q: I never would have thought that of love.

K: That's why you have grief.

Is one better off without relationships?

Question: Jesus supposedly said: "Love others as yourself."
Is this possible?

Karl: Nothing else is possible. It doesn't work otherwise.
Love is when you recognise yourself in everything.
Then there is no more duality, and no more need to make effort to love someone you don't like, because love is a self-evident reality. It is the recognition of yourself in others.
It doesn't come by thinking, 'The essence of this person here in the subway must actually be the same as mine and therefore: "Hello over there!"'

It is realised spontaneously. This is what you are.

That's why love and self-realisation are one and the same.

On the entry to the temple in Delphi, where it is written "know yourself", it could equally read: "love yourself", but perhaps that would have had an undesirable effect on the priests!

Q: The way is also better expressed by "know yourself".

It's the way to get access to it.

K: There is no access. There simply is no way out.

You cannot become what you are.

There is no devotion and no becoming.

The idea that you are separate from yourself is as crazy as the idea that you are separate from others.

You are not separate from yourself, but if you believe you are, then in your thoughts you build a "relationship" with yourself: a relationship you can work on beautifully, since it certainly is in need of improvement!

As if there were a second self! Firstly, you and secondly, yourself! This separation doesn't exist.

But if you believe in relationships, and that you relate to someone, then you believe in the idea of separation.

Q: So, is it better to have no relationships at all?

K: It's better when there's nobody who could have a relationship.

Q: Well, I have one. But I can't really call it love.

It's difficult for me to say to a woman: "I love you."

Is this an inability to love, or is it the feeling that these three words contain a relationship which limits true love?

K: It's more the fear of committing yourself to something which might make you suffer.

Q: So it's lovelessness, after all!

K: It is the fear that it could turn into lovelessness.
This is why you don't want to commit to anything.
If you give yourself completely, you will lose yourself in the other.

Q: So should I dare to jump and say, "I love you"?

K: It can't happen through words, though words can express it.
If they are there, they are there.
Surrendering yourself happens when it happens.
Devotion (Bhakti), or realisation happen when they happen.
They cannot be created.

Q: Even when I'm carried away, I never say, "I love you".

K: You are afraid that you will be taken at your word.
For we Germans these words are harder to say than for other nationalities.
The British and Americans tell everyone, "I love you", and it's just words. If a
German speaks them, he has to stand by his word.
In German, "I love you" is something sacred, something holy; and 'holy' means it
can only be spoken in wholeness.
Only if it is really whole, intact!
Thus there are noble and spiritual reasons to have scruples.

Q: This is what I meant to say.

K: But if you find this intimate confession really difficult,
behind it is the fear of losing yourself.

Q: This is a clear answer.

K: Ultimately this fear of losing oneself is the reason why people build defensive
walls. It's an attempt at self-protection.
But I can only lose something if I first believe that it's mine:
MY life, MY body, MY world, MY personal concept of love!

This idea that I own something , whether it be MY knowledge, MY body, or MY life; the very idea demands security and protection. Possession creates controls and locked doors.

"I love you" opens them all up.

Q: And in front of this, I tremble.

K: Yes, perhaps nothing will remain of you: nothing of this identity that you believe is yours.

Q: But once these words are spoken it can be amazingly relaxing.

K: It is relaxing when you don't have to maintain anything anymore: no identity, no stories, no future.

If you simply are that which is, then there is no more tension. Then there is no more "two" and no relationship.

Q: No more tension?

K: Nothing tense, nothing pulling and pinching anymore.

Q: No friction, no sparking ... and no sex either!

That would be a problem for me.

K: You have this problem already. Right now, you are creating it for yourself. This is your omnipotence.

When you consider this 'I' to be real, at that very moment it is.

If you think this problem and this body exist, then they do.

Q: I simply have to stick to my subject: how real is sex?

K: As real as you want it to be.

Q: Thank God.

K: Every sexual act is masturbation, with the aim of reaching the orgiastic feeling of 'I'-lessness.

Q: At least a relationship is good for this!

K: Whatever you do is masturbation, until the cosmic orgasm occurs which is called enlightenment. Then you explode. Everything aims at this cosmic Big Bang, which never has a beginning, in which nothing exists anymore.

Q: Exactly! That's good! That's how I'll explain it to my girlfriend.

K: You could also try saying, "I love you."

Searching and Longing

Question: I am full of longing, though I don't know what for.

Karl: Longing appears when you think you have lost something: for example, the liveliness of your childhood. Or you may want to move somewhere else: to another environment, for example. Longing appears when you imagine conditions, which might make you feel better: a harmonious relationship, a good job, financial security, a happy family, or sound health.

Longing arises when you'd like to have a situation which you don't presently have, or at least you think you don't.

Then you search for something which seems missing or lost.

Q: Yes, happiness, for example. Isn't that the basic search?

This search seems to be programmed deep inside our cells.

K: Whatever is in time longs for timelessness.

Whatever is separate wants to return to unity: back to the source. The idea of duality always contains the longing for unity.

Q: My longing is not an idea. It's a deep feeling!

K: It arises from an illusion: from the illusion of incompleteness; from the idea of an 'I'. Immediately the 'I'-idea arises, there comes the longing for 'I'-lessness; for desirelessness.

Thus there promptly appears the longing to be free of all longing. What is separated must be joined. Two must become one.

Q: Of course! Free from desires, free from time! To live thus, completely content in the moment, must be happiness!

Is it wrong to search for this? You act as if it's a mistake!

What's going on?

K: I come from a farm. If someone asked, "What's going on here?" there was always one answer: "Whatever's not held back is going on." It doesn't explain anything but it's a logical answer.

The question is not what's going on or what's held back, but, "Is there anything at all that could be held back?"

Q: That's what you talked about on your farm?

K: For this, we squandered our European Community subsidy . We asked ourselves whether there is any one thing that could be held back by another separate thing. Could there really be two: one holding back another? Could one thing really unite with another? Could one thing split into two?

Q: Sounds like ecological farming! What result did you arrive at?

K: To be connected and to be separate are both illusions. Because there is nothing that could be removed from something else. Because there never was anything that was connected with something else.

Q: So that's called agricultural economy?

K: That's called self-realisation.

Q: I would say that's called self-repression.

K: As long as there is the idea of being connected or separate, there is the longing to change the situation; the longing to find a way to unity: back to the source, to the Self.

This longing makes you a so-called seeker: an addict, addicted to your-self, self-ish! Every seeker is self-addicted.

Q: Alright, but what I want to know is a way to either cure this addiction or to satisfy it.

K: This longing has neither to be fulfilled nor removed.

Q: No, it has to be, so that I can live in peace.

K: You are that which is prior to any kind of peace or conflict. You are prior to every sensation, perception or concept.

All this appears and disappears within you.

Longing and seeking are part of these appearances too.

You don't need the fulfilment of any kind of seeking in order to be what you are.

For this, nothing has to come and nothing has to go. You yourself are the fulfilment.

Q: I don't have that impression.

K: You are complete, with and without longing.

With or without seeking, what you are is absolute, and eternally complete in itself.

For this nothing has to be changed.

Nothing has to happen. Nothing needs to be avoided, in order to be what you are.

Nothing has to come and nothing has to go.

Q: Yes, but I would like to have this realisation myself, or, at least, to rediscover it.

K: The desire to rediscover it comes from the crazy idea that you have lost it: that there could ever have been a moment in which you were not there. The entire falseness of seeking is based on this mistake. There is nothing to gain or find again. It is here.

This perfect existence is the basis for every appearance, every question and every answer. One doesn't have to do anything for this.

Q: Except be here.

K: Only be here, in this absolute stillness, realising there never was anything that had any kind of need: that what you are was never disturbed by anything that comes and goes, nor by any question or any answer. Nothing could touch it. Nothing could hide or reveal it.

What you are is absolutely pure and clear, always.

Q: Wow!

K: Nothing is held back. Nothing is going on.

Q: Like on your farm.

K: Like on a farm with its agricultural subsidies.

Happiness in Partnership

Question: It is sometimes maintained that there are no relationships. Is this your experience?

Karl: For that which you are there are no relationships.

In the dreamlike world there are all kinds of relationships.

But the essential point is that there is no-one who has them.

There are relationships between objects, and as long as you believe that this kind of 'objectivity' is your reality, you are in a relationship. Ultimately relationships don't exist.

Q: Doesn't the girlfriend of a satsang teacher live in a relationship?

K: The idea that there is another with whom you could have a relationship comes from the idea that you exist as a separate being. If that drops away, the idea of a relationship continues to exist as an idea, but no longer has any reality.

Q: In the old days one would have said "love". Is that also just a concept?

K: If possible, it is only as Self-love since there is only the Self. Love would be the love of the Self for itself, if there were two Selves. So Self-love too is a concept which comes out of duality:

a concept which dances around a concept and will drop away.

Q: Is there no love at all? Robert Adams said, "Everything is empty, and yet there is a lot of love."

K: What this means is the absence of someone who accepts or doesn't accept. In emptiness, there is a feeling of complete acceptance, which is comparable to love. If there is nothing left to accept, the one who has a need to accept has also disappeared.

Thus there is an absolute acceptance which could be called love.

But who needs this relationship? If it's defined as love, there must be something else that is not love.

Immediately, an opposite is created.

The essence of love doesn't need love in order to exist.

Q: If the one who accepts drops away, does the one who wants to be accepted disappear at the same time?

K: Both disappear simultaneously. If you are what you are, all longing drops. There is no more desire for acceptance and harmony. There is peace, because you are absent. Peace exists only when someone who needs peace is no longer there. As long as you exist as someone who craves peace, you are at war. You wage war for the sake of peace.

Q: You said, the longing drops ...

K: That which you are is there, with or without longing, and doesn't need the longing to drop away. A variety of longing may possibly be there still, but nobody is there who has the longing.

Q: What is longing without someone to have the longing?

K: A vibration of energy which is called "longing" but doesn't mean anything anymore.

Q: But can't the longing serve a purpose in persuading us to strive towards the truth?

K: This is its origin. The moment you have the 'I'-idea inside you, you long for that which you are, prior to the 'I'-idea. Longing is the seed that urges you to find your way back to what you are. Only when you are what you are, the longing ends. Whatever is done out of the belief in existence and consciousness is still the search for what was prior to consciousness. All science and religion arise from this longing.

Q: Alright, so longing drives me on. But when do I find what I'm looking for?

K: Never. The longing for yourself will never find its fulfilment. You will never find yourself. The search for yourself which is based on longing will never bring you to the goal. It is not intended to, because there is no finder. There is nobody who could ever have found anything. The longing simply stops, not because something is found, but rather because the longing gets lost.

Q: What is helpful in this?

K: Nothing at all. The one who is longing at some point simply dissolves, on its own. It came on its own and all alone it'll go. You can search and meditate for a thousand years and nothing will happen. Someone else just starts and boom, there it is! There are no rules.

Q: And no justice.

K: If it were possible to get there by meditating, freedom could be controlled, which means it would not be truly free.

The real freedom, which is the origin of your nature, can neither be controlled nor attained by you. Through meditation you may achieve a certain harmony, but it remains temporary and vulnerable. As soon your tolerance reaches its limit your harmony collapses.

Q: And if harmony increases?

K: Whatever can be brought into harmony will at some time return to disharmony. This is not about the feeling of temporary happiness that can be attained through effort. It is not about the happiness of a person who buys a new Mercedes and then is happy for a few hours or days until he finds the first scratch. It is not about the happiness that you dream will come from a beautiful house which ideally suits you. The neighbours are all ready, waiting to ensure that contentment will not be found.

And if you've any doubts about this, death is waiting to knock on your door.

Q: But there are happy partnerships.

K: In a partnership you feel free for a while. Then it becomes a relationship and starts to pull and pinch.

Partnership can make you content within a harmonious environment, but this contentment is unstable and temporary.

It is not the real aim of your longing, which concerns your true nature, beyond all relationships.

This is effortless, and blissful happiness itself.

All paths lead to love

Question: Does passion disappear when one is enlightened?

Karl: When one is enlightened it can be guaranteed that one will become endarkened again. And in this process, love is especially dangerous: "Gosh, I had just become truly comfortable and established in my enlightenment when this incredibly hunky postman walked up my drive!" Or, "You should see this amazing woman that just moved in next door!"

Q: Seriously, shouldn't the awakening also be an awakening from personal passions?

K: Whatever it should be is not what it is. But when one gets rid of love, passion also goes.

Q: When one gets rid of love?

K: Yes, the end of love is the end of suffering and passion.

Q: You mean the end of personal love?

K: The end of duality is where love can exist: where there is no self which loves or doesn't love anything. This is the end of suffering because it is the end of the sufferer. As long as there is an 'I' which loves itself or something else, there is suffering and passion, and the love for yourself is the beginning of this suffering.

Q: But one should love oneself!

K: That's the beginning of everything. To love yourself means: there is a Self which looks at itself as an object for love.

This, in itself, is already duality. The love of the Self for itself is the root of all suffering.

Q: One of your predecessors once said, "Love your neighbour as yourself!"

K: Who is that supposed to be?

Q: It is said that when you love yourself you can build a bridge to others which dissolves duality.

K: As long as there is one who loves something else, who thus has first to recognise in order to love, it is a love directed towards objects. And as long as there is another, there is duality. If effort is needed in order to love a second, it remains a concept; it remains suffering.

Q: What do you mean by effort? In India one simply says "namaste" : "I love myself in you!"

K: If you want to recognise yourself in another in order to love him as yourself, the effort of recognising is necessary.

Q: Can't love be completely effortless?

K: I can't remember.

Q: Love which arises spontaneously: love which manifests in the mirror of another: love which is there, simply and immediately.

K: When you are that which is love, effort no longer exists.

There is nobody left who loves or doesn't love.

There is only freedom: the freedom of love,
and freedom from the idea of love.

In a sense: loveless love. The love gets rid of you.

But as long as there is an idea of love, and as long as there is someone who thinks he should love himself in others, or the other in him, or that love should be a bridge and dissolve duality, or that it needs to be spontaneous: there is suffering.

Love with an idea of love is full of suffering.

This is the love which creates suffering.

Q: When love merges the lover with the beloved there is happiness.

K: As soon as you take the first step outside the paradise of 'I'-lessness, a longing arises to find the way back. You'll do anything to find your way back and to merge. And every step is right. As long as there are steps there are only right steps. You can do whatever you want. All paths lead to love.

Q: So that's why people love. How wonderful!

K: Love doesn't need to love. It doesn't need an object.

It doesn't need you or your ideas. But in some moments you simply forget them. You even forget love. Then you are what love is. This is prior to duality. It is self forgetfulness.

But you cannot do this. Every desire to forget yourself would be the memory of yourself. It can only happen spontaneously. And then there is no more time; no more separateness. Then you are what love is, no matter what happens: even if nothing happens. And perhaps nothing does happen. Love doesn't need to love in order to be love.

Pain and laughing gas

Question: Obviously there is suffering. In truth it may be a dream or illusion but for the one who is suffering it is not.

Karl: Suffering is not experienced as suffering by the Self. In self-realisation, it is no less blissful than joy. Suffering and joy are not separate.

Q: It doesn't get me anywhere if it's explained this way, intellectually.

K: The intellect is meant to separate. It separates between joy and suffering: between good and bad experiences. But that which created the intellect, the essence of the intellect, no longer distinguishes suffering from joy.

Q: Well, I'd like to see that person who has severe pain and smiles blissfully at it.

K: There is no experiencer! This is the basic point. The one who experiences, the experiencing, and that which is experienced appear together. They are one. As long as you identify with the one who experiences, you are separate from the experiencing and the experience.

Q: Then, is there a right way to avoid making that identification?

K: Every drug experience is intended to do this.

You take morphine so that awareness can remove itself from identification with the body. In that removal from identification the pain stops. When I was five years old I got laughing gas at a dentist. Immediately I was outside the body and watched how the dentist pulled my teeth. Total fascination: no more pain, and consciousness free in space!

Q: But when the effect subsides ...

K: Then the pain immediately is there again. There is no escape.

Q: That's what I mean. Pain cannot be denied.

K: If there is one who could have pain, then pain is generated.

Q: So, when there is a body, pain arises?

K: No, pain arises with the idea that I have pain.

Q: Okay, and you don't have this idea? If I stab a knife into your arm ...

K: Then there is the sensation of pain. At that moment there is pain.

Q: Good that you admit it.

K: At that moment there is a complete experience of pain. Shortly afterwards the experience is gone. There is nobody left who collects something like this in time as an experience, who conserves the 'my-pain-experience' of five minutes ago, or the experience of a year ago. It may still be there as a memory, but there is nobody left to say, "That was my pain."

Q: Now you said it.

K: Not me. The speaking speaks on its own. The speaking speaks, but there is no 'my' speaking. There is no 'I-have-said'.

Q: And how are you now?

K: As always. Even if you ask me in death: 'as always'.
That which I am is always there. That's why I can only say,
"I am as always."

Q: With the slight improvement that you are no longer dependent on laughing gas.

K: Oh, I made a lot of effort to get to laughing gas. My mother warned me against sweets: "... then you'll have to go to the dentist!" And I was ecstatic. Yes! I was the only one in my class who loved to go to the dentist.

One person has the experience that there he enters Hell, the other finds that exactly in the same place is where he escapes it. It's like the case of one whose pain becomes so strong that he can't stand it anymore. So he leaves the pain.

Q: He becomes unconscious.

K: And 'unconscious' means that consciousness separates itself from the body. You are still consciousness but you are simply no longer inside the body. You can no longer be defined. When you come to that point where you can't stand it anymore, consciousness removes itself spontaneously.

Q: Unconscious : done!

K: "Done" is not the right word. It's the same in the search. When it becomes unbearable, consciousness removes itself, not because someone has 'done' something to make it happen: it is simply unbearable. Then the individual consciousness disconnects itself and dissolves into cosmic consciousness, because this Hell of separateness is unbearable.

Q: And is this then a disconnecting in the sense of healing?

K: No, it's not such an advantage. That which can be disconnected can also connect again. Whatever can go into unity can also return to duality. You come from the idea of duality into this unity, this cosmic consciousness, into this nothingness. You are the centre of the universe, the consciousness which penetrates itself.

I went through all this, and saw that I had gained nothing.

That which I was in essence was still exactly the same as before. Whether 'I' am as 'I'-consciousness or as cosmic consciousness, I am neither of these.

Consciousness is dependent on time. It is only the reflection of my existence, and every pain and each experience are part of consciousness. The fundamental cure is to be prior to consciousness: prior to time.

My Body, My Pain

Question: While I sit here, somewhere in the world people are being murdered. What do you have to say about that? It's not okay, is it?

Karl: For whom is it not okay?

Q: For me, and I can guarantee it's not for the people who are being murdered.

K: You guarantee that?

Q: No, that's simply a principle of life! After all, we are here to live and not to be murdered!

K: It is life itself which kills you. Whether in the form of another person, or a tree next to the road, or a function within the body, it is always life which kills life. But the only thing that dies is an idea. The essence remains. That which you are remains.

Only that which is unreal disappears. Consciousness remains: consciousness, who plays the tree, or another person, the culprit and the victim, and whatever appears.

Q: Anyway, I prefer to die a natural death.

K: You are not afraid of death but you simply don't want to be there when death comes. There is no natural death, because nothing dies. That which is your essence is the only thing alive, and that is immortal. It was never born and has no form which could die. However, that which you call life was never alive.

Q: And doesn't live even now! Do I sit here as a corpse?

K: That we should investigate. Let's investigate where the idea comes from that this is your body. When did this idea grow that there is one who says: "This is my body".

A baby can't say it, and does not feel it, either. It doesn't think about it. But it begins in about the third year. The parents incessantly repeat: "You are Little Karl, yes, yes, my Little Karl, that's who you are!"

Until then, Little Karl didn't even know it existed. When it could speak it first said: "Little Karl wants to drink ... Little Karl has broken this ... Little Karl is good," in the third person. The identification of an 'I' with the body hadn't become a reality yet. But eventually it said: "This is me ... this is my hand, my foot," and it began to feel responsible for itself.

Q: If the identification with the body is a mistake which was drummed into me, can I free myself from it?

K: The question is: who has to free himself from it?

Q: Of course, me. Someone else can't.

K: And who is this 'me'?

Q: The one who feels the body. If someone does something to me, it hurts. It hurts me.

K: Then you have a phenomenon of pain.

Q: If you want to call it that. I simply have pain, and I don't like it.

K: Well, consciousness receives information of pain, and it reacts to it. Nothing's wrong with that. Without the idea that it is 'your' reaction and that it is 'your' pain, it is simply a play of energies.

Q: It doesn't feel like play. I certainly have the idea it is my pain!

K: And the only thing that can free you from this dilemma is to realise that what you are is prior to this idea of a body.

Q: Alright, I want to get out of this dilemma. How can I realise this for myself?

K: By seeing that you are that which realises and not anything which can be realised. Whatever you can realise is an object.

You can't be that. Neither can you be the one who jumps out of bed in the morning or wakes up as the 'I'-idea inside a body, because he too is an object of perception; he too is something that you can realise. However, you are always that which realises, never something that can be realised.

Q: Yes, yes, but it is precisely that which I don't realise!

K: This realisation, this perception which you are, simply exists. And in this perception, someone appears who asks the question; but he himself is merely an object. He cannot realise that which you are. He doesn't have to. The perception which you are has always been there. The perception, within which all this appears, is your reality: perception which is pure and clear in itself. It is this which one calls the eye of God.

Q: Sounds good, but I don't get it. Are you saying whatever I see as alive is really not alive?

K: It appears in perception. It is thus dependent on there being one who perceives. Thus it does not have separate existence.

It is merely an appearance.

Q: Is it therefore less real?

K: Perception is real. Awareness is real. That which appears in it, is just an appearance. Nice weather, bad weather, beloved and enemy, victim and culprit, euphoria and loneliness, bankruptcy and lottery prizes, shaking hands and shaking in terror, peace and war.

Q: In bad weather I get wet, to take the most harmless example.

K: As long as you think that you are a being which was born and is attached to a body, an individual being in this world, separate from others, who can affect you, you are at war with this world; even at war with yourself. You'll always have fear that something could happen to you, and because of this fear you want to gain security and advantages. You're prepared to harm somebody else; if necessary, to murder someone. You act out of fear: out of the fear that there is a second, hostile environment.

Q: How then can I realise that I am not this individual being, stuck in a body?

K: By turning the awareness towards awareness: not towards the phenomena which wander, ghostlike, in front of your outer and inner eyes; not towards that which appears in your awareness, but towards awareness itself.

Q: Okay. Then I won't listen to you any longer because you too are merely an appearance in my awareness.

K: You don't listen to me anyway. If you listen at all it is to yourself.

Q: And I also give the ten Euro entrance fee to myself!

K: Correct! And it gets even clearer if you give fifty Euro!
Try it out. Improve yourself slowly until enlightenment.

Q: Doesn't enlightenment happen when I empty myself completely?

K: Please don't empty yourself completely, here and now! Seriously: you are not the body which gives or takes, and not the intellect which regrets this or attaches hopes to that.

You become aware of these things, but awareness was already present before anything appeared in it. And whether you call this awareness, wakefulness, or attentiveness, it is what you are. Before a body awakes in the morning and an 'I' makes itself felt and notices: "I am this," or, "I have to do that," prior to this

moment, awareness is already there. And the famous question: "Who am I?" aims exactly at that which precedes everything else: which is prior to any object of awareness, prior to the 'I'.

In this way awareness becomes directed towards this unfathomable mystery of being. This you are, and in this expanse, no natural or artificial death can affect it.

Q: You said: in the morning, prior to the awakening of the body or prior to the 'I' making itself felt ...

I've heard that between awakening and the 'I'-awareness there's a gap where truth is present in complete purity.

K: Only in one gap?

Q: No, the truth, of course, is always there, but this is probably the time when there's the best chance of seeing it.

K: But not by you. If at all then by your alarm clock.

"This is the pure truth!" it thinks as it sees you sleeping. "This is enlightenment!" shortly before you wake up.

But then it must ring ... a twitching goes through your body and, bang, enlightenment is gone! Instead, you are there.

Q: Every day the same disappointment?

K: But only for your alarm clock and for your wife. That which you are remains untouched.

Compassion and Irritation

Question: For an enlightened one you talk quite a bit.

Karl: Do I talk too much for you?

Q: At the very least, it's confusing. Your words seem totally relaxed, but you shoot them out like a machine-gun. I find this really irritating.

K: Nice that it irritates you. When the 'I' is being irritated there's good reason to celebrate. The more confused the 'I' becomes, the more it leaves that which is really you.

Thus you free yourself from attachment, and this is intended.

Q: Well, thank you very much.

K: I don't talk to any person but to that which is: to existence: to the Self.

Q: You don't talk to me as a person?

K: No, and that irritates the person, absolutely. Thus the 'I'-idea may be pushed into total rebellion: a complete "Grrrrr!"

Q: You want to see me as a beast.

K: The nakedness itself wants you to get naked!

Q: You don't want it?

K: The desirelessness itself desires it. And when it wants ...

Q: ... then the 'I'-thought is compelled to go.

K: ... then there is no escape. But this cannot be willed.

It happens. It exists. Simple. No intention.

And this indeed is exactly what causes the irritation!

This is the simultaneity of relaxing and talking.

This is the machine-gun which wants nothing. This irritates. Normally there is someone who wants something from you: who wants you to learn something or get somewhere, who wants you to wake up. Thus your life passes by.

"Something is wrong with you. You must do something!"

But here you won't hear these words, because you are already that which you are.

There is nothing I need to do about it.

Q: So, the irritation is intended.

K: There may be an intention but nobody who has it.

Q: Aha, but there is an intention: that perhaps something should be changed after all!

K: No.

Q: You see the world, but nothing that needs changing; so you can relax. But is there no compassion?

K: There is only compassion.

Q: Oh really!

K: There is compassion.

Q: With what consequence?

K: Without consequence.

Q: Then it's pointless.

K: Compassion is without intention. Compassion is simply compassion.

Q: But doesn't this compassion create the desire to reduce suffering?

K: No, there is no suffering in compassion.

Q: Why then do enlightened beings come into this world?

For example, the bodhisattvas, with their deep desire to liberate all beings from suffering. They don't perceive the world as something separate and yet they desire to bring it liberation.

K: In order to want to liberate something you have to see it as imprisoned. However, that which sees imprisonment must be imprisoned itself. The bodhisattva idea is also a concept.

Q: For the one who suffers, a bodhisattva is very real and has critical significance.

K: The Buddha said, in the Diamond Sutra, "There never was a Buddha who entered the world nor will there ever be one to enter it. I preached for forty years and didn't say a word to anybody".

Everything was as it was, perfect in its irrelevance.

This is freedom: the fact that nothing was (or is) significant. Whether the comedy develops this way or that way, whether a Bodhisattva appears or not ...

Q: ... in my view, that makes a difference!

K: ... makes no difference to that which you are: none whatsoever.

Q: A bodhisattva opens my heart.

K: Good, but whether he does it with or without an anaesthetic makes no difference to that which you are.

Only with you is there war

Question: Would you say something about war?

Karl: War comes from wanting to get something. This is the beginning of private wars, and big wars are also started this way. You want to gain something and to own it, believing this would make you happier.

Q: Let's say I want to get inner peace.

K: You want to catch up with yourself. This is war.

You are always after yourself: always at war;
always a bit behind, or ahead of yourself.

It starts from the first thought: the 'I'-thought, which separates, and through this separation, a warrior is born with the idea that he must control his environment. War is declared.

Q: Are you claiming that everyone who thinks 'I' is a warrior?

K: Every 'I'-thought is a warlike thought. With the idea that you exist and that an existence belongs to you, which you call "my life", there is something you need to defend. Thus war is born. Where there is "my existence" there is also "your existence".

By the age of three, at the latest, war has been declared.

Q: I've heard there are societies of Native Americans in which there is no 'I'-thought but a community with an impersonal 'I', a group 'I'. Within the group there is no 'mine' or 'yours' and no possession.

K: And yet outside the group there are 'the others'.

In the Western individualistic society the small 'I' is always on its own. There is the family but within the family there's already war: who gets more love, more attention. It always starts with the idea that there is someone who needs

something: an 'I' which identifies with a body; consciousness which sees itself as separate from the whole and needs something like a feeling of unity and safety. It fights for getting something: possessions, food or attention.

Q: Then an animal is also at war, without any idea of 'I'.

K: That's simply programmed in, along with hunger, hunting, eating. There is no thinking directed to the future or past. A hamster may be hoarding food but doesn't worry about survival. Though, of course, we don't know what he talks about with his wife, each evening, in the nest.

Q: So, is it possible to create peace, with or without weapons?

K: There never will be peace in this world. As long as there is an idea of separation, as long as you exist, there will be no peace. Just the idea of 'you' means that something else exists with which there can be no peace. A harmonious situation can at any time turn into something that is war. Every peaceful person can turn into a beast if his or her tolerance limit is crossed. The peaceful human doesn't exist. There are only different tolerance limits, depending on the fineness of the filters, which control the level of aggression.

Q: And the strength of the desires to kill.

K: I grew up on a farm. When slaughtering pigs, I had to hold on to their curly tails so that the sausages would be straight. Slaughtering! The mood was phenomenal. It was charged to the extreme with energy. It was like a glowing. One could see it: light ascending, out of the material body, into space.

Q: Can killing therefore have something to do with intoxication?

K: Yes. In an extreme situation, the ego isn't there any longer.

If you kill the other, you no longer exist. At that moment consciousness is detached from the physical.

Thus a benefit you're supposed to get from alcohol and drugs is also the direct experience of 'I'-lessness. It doesn't have to be connected to killing. There are

many such extreme situations. Bungee-jumpers experience it; extreme climbers, runners, a car-racer too. He can only be fast enough to win if he, as an 'I', disappears. An extreme situation is like a meditation technique: a means to dissolve the 'I'.

All the strivings of human beings are in search of this dissolution.

Q: And if the 'I' dissolves?

K: Then there is no more separation: only unity. You don't exist anymore, and in this absence of you, there is freedom.

You long for this freedom.

However, the moment you desire to have it, it is gone.

As long as someone is there to have this desire, it is blocked.

Q: Free from myself! This means free of any idea of 'I'.

K: Free of the idea that you were born and thus are mortal.

You have simply disappeared. Consciousness without 'I' is entirely impersonal. This feeling of unity is orgiastic.

Q: Do thoughts occur in it?

K: Whether there are thoughts or not, nobody thinks.

The essential point is that there isn't a thinker anymore.

Perception is free and not bound to a personal perceiver.

Q: Is an extreme situation necessary in order to realise this?

K: If there is no tomorrow and no yesterday, the eternal Now opens up. This happens in extreme situations. Often, during an accident, or a war, where there's a constant threat of death, consciousness becomes detached from the body, and only observes.

There is a hint of this in the book "Fateless" ("Sorstalanság") which gained Imre Kertész the Nobel Prize. He describes moments in a concentration camp where

there was happiness, peace in confrontation with death and freedom through the absence of a hopeful 'I'.

"If there is fate, freedom is impossible," he says, "and if there is freedom, there is no fate."

Q: So, in an extreme situation, you suddenly get rid of your fate and are free. Is this the awakening we are talking about?

K: No, whatever can wake up (perhaps, in the face of death), will go to sleep again. Of course It now wants to be awake all the time. But this very desire for wakefulness sends it to sleep again. Once you have the orgasm you want it again and again because it doesn't last. It's something artificial, brought about by an extreme situation, a drug or an action. Thus it is not natural. You want to have it again so you have to start another war.

Q: An orgasm is not natural?

K: It is produced. A situation which is produced by something else is not free, but dependent.

But your natural state is not dependent on some kind of action. Activity only exists as long as there seems to be an 'I' that needs to dissolve. The goal is 'I'-lessness. But that which you are doesn't need a goal. It doesn't have any necessity to reach where it already is. Each 'I' which goes into the 'I'-lessness must again come out of it.

Whatever goes, comes again and whatever comes, goes. Whatever is released will again be imprisoned.

Whatever wakes up goes to sleep again.

Q: But isn't the seed sown, with the experience of awakening? And if it happens in war, doesn't the experiencer become a pacifist and cease to fight?

K: Perhaps he does something else. The longing for the state of 'I'-lessness remains. The pacifist too wants to reach 'I'-lessness, which he seeks by trying to fulfil a desire for peace and harmony. Soldiers and pacifists have in common the

longing for this blissful state in which there is no more 'I', no separation, no boundary. It is their common goal of war.

Q: But there are culprits and victims, aren't there?

K: As long as you are there, they will be there too.

Let's begin with the root. If you didn't exist as a person, wars would cease. There'd be no more victims and no six billion other people: only consciousness, which is what you are.

It is consciousness which manifests as war, as culprits and victims. But because you exist as the principal witness, all these concepts of war and peace exist, and all those further concepts which support or oppose them.

Q: Is it all my fault?

K: With the 'I'-idea, the warrior is born. It is only through you, that war exists.

I don't see one who suffers

Question: No matter how you express it, I still experience suffering.

Karl: Suffering is the experience of separate existence. But is there someone who suffers because of it? Was there ever one? Or is this also just the experience that there is an experiencer who suffers from an experience? Did that which you are ever suffer? Did the perception which you are ever suffer from this fictitious suffering person, whose suffering is a further fiction?

Q: Why fictitious?

K: Is there a sufferer?

Q: Of course! Even if the way I sit here, with my body and my personality is just a phenomenon, there are millions of human beings who are imprisoned in a similar picture of themselves, and I am part of it.

K: As long as you make this claim, your existence will seem to be real.

Q: Exactly! And I have the desire to ease suffering, for me and all others.

K: As long as this is your reality and as long as these desires appear, they are exactly as they should be, and whoever says that something is wrong, or an illusion, is himself an illusion.

Q: Does the enlightened mind have no more desire to ease suffering?

K: It doesn't see sufferers any longer. Since it has disappeared as a sufferer, other sufferers have disappeared as well. If you cease to exist, the other six billion also cease existence. There is only the Self and its manifestation. No second person exists: only the one being, the Absolute, being itself.

Q: Then one can't have compassion for illusions?

K: One can. Illusory compassion!

Q: I mean, if an enlightened one recognises that people, in their illusions, suffer brutality, or at least believe they do, doesn't he have the desire to help?

K: I have no idea.

Q: Where is the compassion in what you say?

K: Compassion is the source of all of this.

Q: But it does have to manifest itself!

K: It does manifest itself: as war and peace, for example.

Q: As war?

K: Or as body, mind, and every variation of consciousness.

Q: Compassion manifests itself as war? As suffering?

K: It doesn't differentiate between good and bad.

Q: I suppose that suffering could have a point, but I want to know how to release people from this state.

K: You can only release people from suffering by showing them what they are in reality ...

Q: If they still have the strength and desire to listen.

K: ... not by taking away suffering. The ultimate medicine for all suffering is to point out that there is no sufferer.

Q: I'm sure that someone who is covered with diseases and lies in the dirt with nothing to eat, would really be grateful for this hint!

K: Perhaps that person experiences right now that love for existence is an illusion. Many people come to their essence in extreme situations: totally bereft of love, surrounded by pressure and tyranny. In extremity all this dissolves. Deliverance is the dissolution of the perception of what perception perceives.

Q: There are surely enough of those who die in extreme suffering without this realisation.

K: How do you know?

Q: Perhaps I'm only afraid of it.

K: Now?

Q: It always comes to the same.

K: Is there a sufferer now?

Q: Yes, I'm sure. If not here, then outside.

K: If necessary, in the next life.

Q: Or me, here. I do exist.

K: Yes, the 'I am' is already the beginning of suffering.

If the 'I am' is your reality, something else always comes out of it: a concept of how reality has to be. Then you are an idea which manifests in more ideas. As long as this is what you are, there is sorrow.

In truth you are freedom. You are not the 'I'-thought with its longing for something. You are not the reflection of that which is suffering. You are the source. You are complete freedom.

Q: And is that true for all others as well?

K: Which others?

Meditation

Question: What is meditation good for?

Karl: For nothing. Meditation is what you are. You are the meditator, meditating on himself by recognising himself at every moment. Existence meditates on itself. This is what you are: meditation.

Q: I'm talking about something that I do. I sit down and meditate for twenty minutes.

K: That isn't meditation. That's an idea of improvement: the attempt to control something; the endeavour to move through meditating into harmony and thus attain self-realisation. It is the attempt to bring something into harmony which already is in complete harmony. The idea that I have to harmonise something, is an idea of separation. It's the idea of standing outside and knowing better. At the bottom of this is an 'I' which wants to be a surrogate god who can improve creation. A starry-eyed idealist passes judgment on the world, with this verdict: "bad ... could be better ... has to be improved ... in fact, by me." Every human being is such a starry-eyed idealist, such a small god, who knows better how existence ought to be. In this sense, meditation is the repertoire of ideas for improving the world. As long as the 'I'-idea rules, there are all kinds of ideas of religion, right path, practice, technique, meditation.

Q: Meditation is simply something valuable to me.

K: Every meditator thinks that he can do something special for himself that would be spiritual and special and worth much more than drinking coffee, but this 'meditating', or 'medi-tactic', is a technique to control something.

This is nothing special. By spreading butter on a slice of bread you control the butter so that it is spread evenly across the bread. It's the same function. You harmonise the bread by spreading the butter evenly across it.

Good, do it, and don't worry about anything else, because harmony is present in every moment. Existence harmonises itself all the time, even when, for once, you don't look at it or help with it. It adapts itself in infinite variations, which even include spreading the butter, or meditating.

Q: I think this technique is useful!

K: It is fruitless; unstable in itself. You nurse and nurse but nothing gets well. You can't make something healthier which already is absolutely healthy. Existence never lacked anything.

Q: And if I think something in my life is worth improving?

K: I only offer to help you see. Do you define yourself as a little wretch: 'I'? Or are you that which you are?

It's obvious that the One makes you content, while the other (little wretch) brings suffering, because you takes yourself seriously, and this seriousness gets heavier and heavier.

Look at it. Are you that which is infinite lightness and harmony, or the little wretch who believes it has to endure the world?

Q: Do I have a choice?

K: No, but seize it!

Preparation for Awakening

Question: Sometimes I let thoughts pass by like a crowd of people. This is meditation. I arrive at a wonderfully relaxed state. Is this a preparation for awakening?

Karl: All that exists is preparation for your Self. As soon as you come into this world you long for your Self. As long as the idea of life is your reality, you long for something beyond it; something that is not conditioned by space and time: for a life which is freedom. This longing is there as soon as you open your eyes. Longing for bliss has guided your every step.

And each step is a preparation for the last step which leads into nothing: the abyss: the mystery.

Q: But aren't there some steps which lead more directly towards it?

K: Are there some steps and paths more special than others? No. Every step is a special step towards yourself: every breath, until the last; until the 'I' doesn't breathe anymore, but is being breathed. There are steps but not special ones. Simply trust what you are because the longing will lead you, one way or the other. The Self knows how to find itself better than any teacher or anything else. There is no way to avoid it. You cannot miss yourself!

Q: But isn't part of it, that I read certain books, or come to you?

K: Do not think that any one is more valuable than another.

Q: But the fact that I come here and that I read these books happens because of the desire to find myself again, or to find the Self again.

K: The Self, in the aberration, which is its small 'I', searches for that which it is, in its totality. But it can't do anything, because it never lost it-Self! You can only find

something that was lost or undiscovered and you can only remember something you've forgotten.

But you didn't lose anything and therefore nothing will be found. You didn't forget anything and that's why there's nothing to be remembered. Each attempt, within relative knowledge, to get to absolute knowledge is nothing but a nice try.

Whatever you do is wonderful, but doesn't lead to anything.

And yet, each step taken by the Self leads you inevitably to the Self! At some time it will wake and see that it-Self has never been lost. That's all. There is no finding, but simply a realisation that the one who seeks will never find, because it is itself the object of the search.

Is it permitted to practise relaxation?

Question: The stillness I experience in meditation is good for me. Are you going to tell me that there's something wrong with this?

Karl: Every step is right. Each one leads you to yourself. You cannot miss yourself. No matter where you go it's only yourself you will meet. You can meditate as much as you want, turn your back on your teacher, move into an ashram, then leave it, follow the teaching of an avatar, or break every rule that is laid down.

You can play God or the Devil. Whatever you do is neither helpful nor unhelpful. It is all wonderful.

Q: Well, I will continue to meditate.

K: I would never say, stop it. Yes, continue! Whatever the body-mind-organism does is made exactly for it, for the sake of this experience. In order for this experience to be possible, what happens has to happen.

It is always absolutely right, even when it is wrong. If for twenty years you have done this and missed that, it was always exactly the right thing.

Q: Of course, I do it because it helps me become quieter.

K: That which you are cannot become quieter than it is, and that which seems to become quiet is just an idea. A thought imagines a movement towards quietness, but it doesn't matter. Be aware of that which is untouched by anything. It is totally powerless. It never has any kind of intention and doesn't need any change. Whatever needs change is a thought, an idea, a phantom.

Q: You mean meditation doesn't change anything?

K: A thought can change a thousand times. The phantom which can develop within consciousness may be as great as an avatar or a god with an elephant head, but it is still alone, and because it suffers from loneliness, it searches and longs for something, and has the feeling that it needs to do something.

Q: Even without an elephant head we can do something to relax, can't we?

K: Relaxation is not better than tension. Whatever can become tense is not what you are. Neither is that which can relax. That which you are is relaxed eternally, and this has nothing to do with relative tension and relaxation.

Q: From your enlightened point of view this may be so. But from my standpoint, there are a few differences between tension and relaxation.

K: This is simply an aspect of perception. Who is the experiencer? How can he be changed or influenced by what he experiences?

You think that I see from my point of view and you from yours. But both are one and the same. Who sees here and who sees there? What's the difference? The Self which sees from an apparently enlightened viewpoint, sees just as well from eyes that are seemingly unenlightened.

Both are what you are. What difference is there between us?

Q: I suspect that you speak from the truth and I don't.

K: Nothing I have said so far is the truth.

The truth cannot be recognised, cannot be known or told.

And the truth doesn't need someone to recognise the truth.

Q: What a pity! But nevertheless I still continue to meditate.

K: You can't do anything else, because you are meditation.

From disruption to catastrophe

Question: It is clear to me that truth cannot be realised by the 'I'. But in meditation the 'I' disappears and becomes the truth.

Karl: No. A human being is only an object of experience!

How could an object become that which is the essence?

The human being cannot become what it already is.

An icicle melts. It is water. It always was water. It doesn't become water but the water takes on a different form.

Existence is similar. Water remains water even when it changes form. As an icicle you don't become the essence.

An icicle can't achieve anything. But that which you are can achieve everything and can take on any form. It already is everything! The fallacy lies in the idea of separation.

Pure consciousness takes on infinite forms and always remains consciousness. But no form can ever become that consciousness which it consists of. It will always be just a mirage.

Realise that you are this "I am": this pure consciousness.

Then be even prior to this "I am": the pure 'I'.
And then – even without 'I' – just perfection.
But perhaps one step at a time: let's start with this "I am"!

Q: You go ahead, we'll follow.

K: You can remain seated!

It is possible, in relativity, to be that which is prior to the one who realises, to be the realising and to be that which is realised. It is possible to recognise that which comes and goes as fleeting; to see that this is not what you are: "neti, neti!" – neither this, nor that. What appears disappears.

You are that within which everything appears and disappears. This is meditation. For this no effort is needed. This is simple, effortless. It is never an effort when you are what you are. I point out that anything for which you need to make an effort cannot be what you are.

Anything which requires something special cannot be it.

That which you are is completely there without any effort.

Q: But I work and have to make an effort if I want to get something done.

K: That which you are never made an effort and never will. Everything happens on its own. Whatever makes an effort is not you. It is part of the appearance. That which you are has never done or not done anything. Everything always did itself on its own. It is all self made, and when you realise that everything is self made and comes and goes on its own, who then can make an effort? Who then has anything to do?

Q: I don't, apparently.

K: The Self can only liberate itself. Nothing ruled by time can make the Self into what it already is. The Self can only awaken in itself, and that which simply exists by being itself cannot be called an awakening. No action, nor meditation, can bring about that which only the Self can do. Whatever is in time cannot, through the power of will, do anything in order to reach something. And yet, every step, happening in time, is always a step towards yourself.

But no body has ever taken it. Never did any body move a step forward. If responsibility lies anywhere, it is with the Self, who did it all by doing nothing. It always walks towards itself, and it can never miss.

Thus, everything the Self does leads to itself, and there is nothing special. In other words, this "meditating", which is supposed to bring us to the Self, has no more relevance than stuffing sandwiches or watching TV which is thought to lead us away from the Self. Everything you do is precisely calculated to bring you to your Self.

There are no specialists as far as the Self is concerned. In this respect, I also know no more than anyone else. I only know that I am; that there is existence. Everything else is speculation.

I know no more than you.

Q: I am bewildered.

K: Accept it, as a small disruptive event. There are many small disruptions before the catastrophe happens. Then the Self realises itself, and the 'I' simply never existed. This is a catastrophe for the 'I'. In self-realisation, it is annihilated. It is nuclear fusion. All parts revert to that which is their essence. The parts cease to exist. In the fire of this awareness everything relative disappears. In this self-awareness no relative idea can survive. Everything relative burns and every idea of separation or non-separation disappears.

Q: I think I'd like to wait a little longer.

K: Yes, but that's also not up to you.

Am I the emptiness?

Question: In meditation, I get into a state of complete emptiness and I know that this is what I am!

Karl: Is it what you want to be?

Q: It's what I am, isn't it?

K: You'd like to feel at home; if not in your family, this town, that country, or this world, at least, in the emptiness. There you'd have at least some kind of home.

Call it 'Emptiness'.

"Ah, the emptiness! There, I am at home!"

But no matter what you define yourself, in the moment of definition, you separate yourself from something else. Thus when you say: "I am emptiness," there is something else behind this big bush of emptiness and nothingness.

Something is lurking there, and it always will be, so long as you define yourself as something.

Q: I thought I had to come to a place where I'm always this emptiness, because this is what I am.

K: You thought you had to become what you are!

What you try to become cannot be what you are.

If you think: "This harmony feels so wonderful. To be one with everything must be what I am," or, "this emptiness in which nothing can touch me must be my true state," then you are longing for a state. But that which you are is always there. It is not a state; neither is it an experience, nor a feeling.

You don't need to long for this; nor do you have to become it. That which you are is not dependent on your proper behaviour or correct conduct. It is not dependent on any condition: not on becoming and changing, not on some event in time, not on life, not on death.

Q: It sounds like infinity. I cannot imagine it.

K: You cannot imagine what you are. Exactly!
Because you are infinite, you cannot imagine yourself.
Neither can anyone else. Nobody can imagine you.

The concept which dissolves all other concepts

Question: Here in me, this 'I'-idea is no longer so strong.
But without this idea one can't live!

Karl: Does that which you are need a thought to live: to exist?

Q: That which I am ...

K: Who needs the 'I'-idea? If anyone, only the 'I'-idea itself.

Q: Then we'll let it drop away.

K: You don't need to drop anything. Nothing needs to go: nothing needs to come.
After all it is not called Self-murder but Self-realisation.
But what is Self-realisation?

Q: Also an idea: just a concept.

K: If we want to talk we need to use concepts: a concept which – as Ramana said
– “dissolves all other concepts.” What concept is this?

Q: You tell us. I don't want to think anymore.

K: The thought doesn't want to think anymore, because, as long as it doesn't want to think anymore, it can stay.

Q: Please explain what Ramana means.

K: It is the technique of staying in the question "Who am I?"
To remain in the impossibility of an answer: in the mystery of the eternal question mark; in the complete not knowing what you are and whether you are; in this openness. The openness annuls the 'I'-idea and its history. The doer or owner disappears in the openness of this unanswerable question. Like a fire, it burns the personal history. Nothing remains. Nothing survives in this not knowing what you are.

Q: I can never have the answer! The question mark is eternal! This sounds like suffering!

K: Suffering comes into being because you think, "If I find the answer suffering will end. I can only tell you, there will never be an answer and therefore suffering will never end. The question is whether there is a sufferer here and now.
Or, does a sufferer only exist because he has the hope that suffering may stop in the future?"

Q: Yes, perhaps that's the case.

K: As long as there is someone raising his hopes, thinking that he could become blissfully happy, through answering the question "Who am I?", that someone will suffer from the fact that this question will never be answered.

Q: It sounds terrible.

K: We sit here so that I can tell you again and again that there will never be an answer to this question. You will never know that which you are. It isn't an object of knowledge. Whether you accept this or not, it's the way it is!

Q: But isn't this hopeless?

K: Hopelessness is your nature. In hopelessness there is no more 'I'.
Resignation is liberation. You resign by realising that the idea you could reach yourself is just an idea.
What you really are can never reach itself, because however far it stretches, it will never be able to grasp something that was never lost. This something is always here, fully and completely. The question "Who am I?" merely points to this mystery: a signpost that tells you to be completely what you are.

Q: And why don't I sense this?

K: Because there is no self that you could sense.
It is neither an object, nor a feeling, nor a thought.
Therefore you will never sense yourself. There is no contact with yourself. You are unknowable, ungraspable, untouchable.
You can never be touched by something else.
You are absolute within yourself: never born: never mortal.

Q: Will I never know what I am?

K: We talk about freedom. But you want an answer which is not free. You want to cling to an answer. So at last you can know that you exist, and can take care of it from then on ... with fear as a constant companion. Because that's exactly what will happen when you have had a deep insight, or an enlightening experience, or an experience of God: for the remainder of your existence you will have to take care you never lose it. What an effort!

Q: This does not remove my basic problem.

K: So what?

Q: So then: is it wrong to desire to know yourself?

K: No, it's only conceited. You want to know God.

What could be more conceited? This is self-importance.
For then you can sigh: "Life is so serious, so difficult!"

The Virus: "Who am I?"

Question: Ramana recommended to ask oneself the question, "who am I?" Does it lead anywhere?

Karl: The question is like root canal surgery. Once it gets to work, it will remove the root. It starts by asking: "Am I that which I think? Am I the image I have of myself?"

This actually means, "Am I the ideas regarding myself? Am I really that which appears in the morning as the 'I'-idea, or am I prior to it? Where does this idea appear from? Within what does it appear? To whom does it actually appear? Who sees it? Isn't that which I am prior to any kind of thoughts and fleeting phenomena? Can that which I am be touched by anything at all?"

Q: This is just heady stuff.

K: Yes, it begins in the head. The Self searches for itself with the intellect, with the emotions, with all possible faculties. It begins in the head, then it spreads like a virus, always arising from this infection: "Who am I?"

This question is meditation itself. It is only directed towards itself, and thus the meditator is questioned. Awareness directs itself towards itself: not towards an object, a mantra, the breath, or a picture.

It directs itself directly to that which is questioning. What is now aware of itself? What is here?

In the total concentration on this question all personal history is slowly but surely annihilated, because in this question no person can exist anymore.

This is the stick which stirs up the fire of awareness and at some point burns itself up. It is this question which brings the 'I' to consume itself in the flames.

But whether this happens and when, nobody can decide, prevent or accelerate. It happens on its own.

Even the question arises on its own. The posing of this question and the fact that it has now become essential both arise spontaneously in a moment. Then all other questions disappear. Only this one single question remains, which is totally directed towards itself. It's not something you decide, but at some point in your life this question is there. It poses itself unavoidably and becomes your only focus.

Thus self concentration begins .

Ego-centeredness, which normally aims at the world to find its relationship with everything, now turns inward towards itself and leaves the world outside. Attention no longer focuses on that which is fleeting. All objects vanish in this total awareness of itself. This inferno is known as "the inner fire of awareness", and in it only awareness remains.

Q: Does this mean that the world becomes insignificant?

K: Awareness is the source. The rest is fleeting. In the question "Who am I?" attention is aimed at the questioner.

What aims? What is attention? Awareness aims at awareness; wakefulness aims at wakefulness. But, whatever happens in this wakefulness is recognised as nothing more than fleeting shadows on a screen. You see that awareness has always been what it is even when you were a Baby, and nothing has changed since. It is the most intimate experience. It is the only thing you know. It is without condition. Everything else is conditioned.

Without awareness and that which is aware, (which can never be known), there would be nothing to be aware of. As awareness, you must always be there first. It is only afterwards, that situations and circumstances occur.

Awareness is equally complete in deep sleep: even when there's nothing to be aware of, and you realise that in this awareness your birth happened as well. In this awareness, your body came, and it will go again. Awareness was prior to this and will be there afterwards.

You realise that awareness is unborn and every idea of birth and death appears within it. Awareness itself was never born and will never die. You are the eternally unborn, the immortal, the source itself.

Q: Are we all the same awareness?

K: Awareness is not selective. It is an absolute space, in which everything happens. Awareness, from one standpoint, happens in space: it is visual, conditioned, relative.

From another, it is holistic awareness, the absolute stage on which everything happens and is seen from all possible angles. However, as formless awareness, it is even prior to this panorama. It is God's eye, pure, without time, without space. And in this, in this eternity, there is, amongst others, also this moment: one pearl glittering amidst the infinite pearls of consciousness.

Q: So, there is uniqueness!

K: Each moment is unique. No moment exists twice, just as there are no two identical snowflakes. Existence expresses itself uniquely. That which expresses itself here, as Karl, expresses itself there, as that which you are. The expression is infinitely diverse. But that which expresses itself is always that which is.

Q: And is awareness too, always different?

K: Awareness doesn't know one or two: separate or not separate. Awareness here is not different from awareness there. It is always God who looks into himself; who observes himself in the infinite varieties of his unfolding, from an infinite range of points of view. It always is self-realisation. The word "Self" is merely a pointer. Here within selflessness there is no more Self left which could know a Self. There is a complete absence of any idea of being or not being.

Q: And all this results from my asking the harmless question: "Who am I?"

K: No, all this disappears. And especially you disappear.

The Dark Night of the Soul

Question: Is it necessary that prior to the so-called 'awakening' one goes through a 'dark night of the soul'?

Karl: Or can one have it easier too?

Q: Well, if it doesn't have to be ...

K: At first you define yourself as an 'I' with qualities and stories which you call your identity. Outside, a world seems to exist independent of you. Within this world you begin your search. You search for objects which can offer you fulfilment and circumstances which can bring happiness.

You expend much effort to keep searching and searching until ... you don't search any more ... because at some time the search stops ... not because you have searched so cleverly: it simply stops.

There's the realisation that its pointless to search amongst objects. You see there is nothing to find. Then there is an emptiness within you and within the world, which you may experience as depression. In this state, where nothing can help you, you turn around and see that which is prior to this world.

Q: And that's the breakthrough?

K: You have nothing to do with it. We talk about consciousness. In the beginning, consciousness is searching for itself in objectivity, in the world. Then it realises: "World and objects cannot satisfy that which I am. They are not real. They are only apparent." Thence, consciousness becomes still, and, in this stillness, it becomes aware of itself. This is pure awareness. There is no second any more: no more interest in the world.

Q: But, unfortunately, I still do have interest in the world.

K: This is not a cause for regret. The complete resignation from all objectivity, from every search, cannot be made. This condition, when only awareness remains, because consciousness has withdrawn from the world and turns towards itself, is not something that you can create or prevent. It happens on its own.

Q: Underneath, I do realise there's nothing to get out there.
In meditation I always notice that nothing is really needed.

K: If you gave up everything it wouldn't help you. There is no guarantee that through your meditation, or search, anything will happen. Whatever you do won't get you any advantage.

It will help you if you realise completely that no advantage can be gained, either through doing or not doing.

Q: For once, this is a valuable tip!

K: Nice that I could provide you with this small advantage.

Fear and the absence of meaning

Question: My experience with satsang is sometimes mystical, or divine. But then, when I'm alone, I notice that I haven't taken anything with me and that I'm afraid it may be meaningless.

Karl: How is the experience?

Q: It's a physical energy. During satsang I get tipsy. It's divine intoxication. The rest is simply fear. It's as if I am an addict.

K: This is selfishness: addiction to yourself. Every addiction is selfishness, with or without drugs. The Self is the goal. The longing for the Self is the root. As long as you are not completely what you are; as long as you still have an idea of separation: this addiction will be there.

During talks or satsangs there are moments when it stops disturbing you, because, temporarily, there is no more separation. You experience unity. There is a phase of getting accustomed, a kind of initiation in being together. Here, your awareness subtly begins to shift. You start to enter that which is indescribable, where nobody can ever go. The talks keep the door open. Here is only openness.

The Buddhists call it the Buddha field. For a certain time there is the possibility to be 'I'-less. 'I'-lessness is divine. 'I'-lessness is bliss. This creates addiction. But how can you get there if every desire to get there works against it? How can you become desireless? How can any kind of step lead to the spaceless and timeless?

Q: You should tell me!

K: There is complete helplessness, for me as much as you. I can't bring you any hope. It will happen the way it has to, until it is completed: until perception is wholly disengaged from the perceived. It is a process in which perception, which is connected to the perceived, becomes disconnected. When this will happen, only perception knows by not knowing.

There isn't any knowledge which could be conveyed. There are no steps. It is simply a sinking into itself.

Q: Until then, for me, it is a sinking into horror.

K: Here, it's possible to sense acceptance: acceptance of the Now. Here you may sink into this without horror, struggle, or resistance. There is simply a dissolving. The controller falls quiet for a while and sinks into the unthinkable.

Do I have to go through Hell?

Question: What is the significance of Jesus' descent into Hell prior to his resurrection?

Karl: For whom?

Q: In general.

K: Simply ask yourself what it means to you. The only thing relevant is what you are: not the state of others, or society or the entirety of humanity. Be completely selfish. Accept nothing but what you are. What is crucial is not the opinion of others but the here and now that is happening in you. It doesn't matter how many people accept you or share your opinions. Their numbers are irrelevant. It must be independent of outer agreement.

You are all that matters.

Q: In concrete terms then: in order to wake up, do I have to go through Hell?

K: There is nothing you have to do, but you do everything.

Q: I want to walk a gentle path. I don't want to experience Hell.

K: God's will always happens. If you are, what you are, everything happens because it comes out of you.

But when you consider yourself an 'I', nothing of what you want will ever happen. Whatever you in your essence want is what's happening, never what you as an 'I' want.

Q: If my essence plans differently from me, does it mean I can forget what I want?

K: It is said that the devil created free will in order to dominate you; because free will is the idea that you exist as something separate. This is a diabolical idea. Only

when you exist as something separate is there free will, conscience, responsibility. Only then, does all this Hellish magic exist.

Q: How do I get out of this?

K: You can't withdraw. The entire essence of the great Hindu epic called Mahabharata, is acceptance of Hell: complete acceptance of suffering. In this acceptance, every idea of Hell and Heaven disappears.

But as long as there is someone who wants to get from Hell to Heaven, who wants to escape altogether, or turn some situation into a better one, the 'I' remains real. And as long as the 'I' is real, with its ideas of deliverance, and its will-power, everything is Hell.

Q: But there is deliverance, isn't there?

K: As long as you desire release, you remain imprisoned. The desire to escape is the desire to avoid yourself, and that is impossible. Even if you kill yourself a hundred times you are still there. You can't escape what you are. Nobody can. I can only show you the complete hopelessness of this attempt.

If you realise completely that you can't escape, that you can't even escape from the attempt to escape, that there cannot be a way out as no one is in. Then there is peace.

Q: Damn it!

K: It's only a play, and you are consciousness which plays every role: from the star to the second spearman.

Q: Well, then I can't complain.

K: You can do that too!

Consciousness is a bitch

Question: In the past I longed for awakening. Now I'm feeling like having a break but it doesn't seem possible.

Karl: If nothing else can make you content, but that which you are, then an unconditioned will awakes. Not your will. It is not a personal will. It is a completely impersonal dynamic which cannot be derived from your personal history, with a logic that you cannot grasp. You don't know what's going on anymore. A greater power takes over. It is like an animal that gets the better of you. Consciousness is a bitch. What happens to you cannot be calculated and predicted. It follows no condition.

Q: This sounds mysterious.

K: You are the mystery. When that awakens which seems to have been asleep, one can speak of grace. It becomes aware of itself and no longer allows anything else. Nothing else can bring satisfaction. The focus is only on it-Self. Everything else becomes stale, grey, meaningless. What am I still doing here? This is depression: horror!

Q: Will depression come, inevitably?

K: What I mean by 'depression' is that a vacuum appears: an emptiness. This is inevitable. Depression is when the emptiness appears in a person. If nothing – no form, no human, no thought – can make you happy anymore, life becomes completely meaningless. Yes, this has to happen.

Q: And the feelings connected with it?

K: Feelings are vibrations and thoughts. Call them "melancholy ... sorrow ... depression". According to the dictionary, these are their names. But they are

merely vibrations. Feelings are energetic vibrations in the body. Energy turned into form.

They don't need to concern you.

Q: I imagined the awakening to be more pleasant.

K: When grace comes, most people try to run away. It's not how they expected it: such merciless mercy; so relentless; overwhelming! Nothing will be given you. All will be taken.

Q: And life has no more meaning?

K: The lack of all meaning brings with it a freedom from all ideas.

Every hope, and meaning you give to the world, creates it and makes it real. As soon as it 'exists' you become dependent on this creation and want to squeeze a little happiness from it.

Now your creation springs back like a rubber band, stretched for a long time, and now at last released.

Creation is gone: no more ideas; no meaning; only freedom.

Q: I'm sorry but this is rather frightening to me.

K: When U. G. Krishnamurti came to Ramana, he asked, "Can't you give me what I am?"

Ramana said, "Immediately, but can you take it?"

It is indeed always there. There is no moment in which it is absent. But can you bear this easiness, this unbearable lightness of being?

Can you accept that it's not up to you to decide what is acceptable and what isn't? Are you ready to be free of all difference: to no longer differentiate between pleasant and unpleasant?

Can you accept what is unacceptable: the eternal sorrow of duality, as an aspect of your realisation? Can you bear eternity? Have you gone as far as you can never reach?

Can you, who are unending duality, also stand everlasting loneliness.

Q: Let's wait and see!

K: Can you bear loneliness? Isn't everything you do, avoidance of loneliness, because you have the idea that you cannot survive totally alone and need a second in order to exist? Or is it that nobody exists anymore in this loneliness, not even yourself?

Who can bear this? Can you bear the thought of thoughtlessness, or does it terrify you?

Q: It does.

K: But you have no alternative except to accept everything.

You do it too.

Acceptance is already what you are, including the acceptance of non-acceptance.

You are the essence of acceptance and non-acceptance and thus absolute acceptance.

Awakening is often described as a change from identified consciousness to non-identified consciousness, but in both cases there is still someone there to identify with these states.

Thus there is still one who identifies, even with non-identified consciousness.

But you ... are the emptiness of emptiness. You are the fullness of fullness. You stay what you are, whatever the circumstances. You are neither form, nor formless. You are prior to all these ideas. That which is formless consciousness is also not what you are.

You are that which consciousness is, but you are not consciousness.

Q: I give up.

K: Who could give up?

Resignation and Divine Accident

Question: I turn in circles. Every time I think that I've finally got it, it disappears again.

Karl: Wonderful! That's the beauty of it: that nobody can have it, or grasp it. Whatever you can have or grasp is an object and thus transitory. But that which you cannot be grasped. And giving up the idea you could ever find meaning, there is suddenly perfection; but only in this complete resignation.

You signed the subscription form for the attempt to find yourself, and in your resignation this subscription gets cancelled.

As you step back from the idea that you will ever be able to find yourself, you find you are in the heavenly state of unknowing: in perfection, free of any desire to know yourself.

Q: Is it giving up completely?

K: You simply spit out that bite from the apple which is the idea you had previously swallowed. The meaning of the apple from the tree of knowledge is that it signifies the desire to know yourself. By biting it, you separate yourself from yourself, seemingly. You step out of yourself so that you can know yourself. In this stepping out you separate yourself from yourself. Then you suffer from the idea of separation, until, in the moment of resignation you step back into yourself.

Q: And is this supposed to be paradise?

K: Paradise is what you are. Namely that which is "para" this: prior to what seemingly is. You are no longer appearance. You are what is real. You step out of the apparent knowing, where whatever you can know only seemingly exists, and return to that which does not just 'seem' to be. It is in this that everything occurs. And, without knowing it, this is what it is: complete.

Q: But I can't achieve this! Do I just stumble into it at some point?

K: Yes. In India it is called "The Divine Accident": the moment when the idea of you disappears. "Divine", because this accident happens spontaneously. You can't influence it. If you could everyone would urgently need to learn how to create an accident. But, in fact, every teacher tries to help you avoid them: "Careful, there's a tree there. Please go round it. No, no, not directly towards it!" Then ... crash, bang, collision with infinity! This is The Divine Accident: the bursting of the ego!

Q: But it costs something.

K: It costs you everything. For most people, that price is too much. They are not prepared to pay the price.

It costs yourself. It costs the idea that you are, that you exist.

It costs your entire existence.

Q: Then I shouldn't be after recognition anymore?

K: There shouldn't be anybody who is after recognition.

Q: One could spit at me or humiliate me ...

K: What? There is nobody left. Who cares?

Q: I see. But how does it feel then, not to exist anymore?

K: Forget about how and why and what for.

Forget about time. Only in time do you exist.

When there is no more time, you don't exist.

Q: I can't imagine that.

K: Because you want to imagine it, time exists.

Q: When I hear that it costs you everything and nothing of you remains, the price is really too high.

K: Of course! You will never be ready to pay the price. That's why that grace is necessary, which takes you as the first prize. The Self wins the lottery and takes you as the prize.

Then you are gone. You are a lottery ticket. At some time you will be drawn, and then you will have got rid of yourself.

Q: But if I ...

K: No. No chance. The Self always wins.

There never was a happy one

Question: Sometimes I have the impression that there is only unhappiness in the world.

Karl: Who is it that has this impression?

Q: I do. It makes me depressed.

K: Be what you are. Then you'll feel fine, always. In the absence of an 'I' there is nobody left who could feel bad.

One who is happy always has the drive to become unhappy. Relative happiness always drives you again to unhappiness.

The relative happiness of this world is synonymous with unhappiness. There is only unhappiness in this world!

You are right.

Q: That is hardly consoling.

K: That's why Jesus didn't say, "I bring peace and love into the world." Instead he said the opposite: "I show you that the world cannot make you happy. There is no peace in this world. There is only unhappiness. No-one has ever been happy in this world.

Q: Stop it!

K: He was always asked why, as the son of God, he couldn't rule and bring eternal happiness: paradise on earth. why he didn't have the omnipotence of God.

His answer was, "Let the dead bury the dead."

The world is dead. Who cares what it looks like? Let the dead be busy with the dead. The world is nothing but a phenomenon, an idea of you, not more alive than a dream or a nightmare, which seems real only so long as no-one pinches your toe.

"Oh, it wasn't real at all: this terrible persecutor or this infinite chasm, into which I just fell, screaming!"

No, it wasn't real and it isn't real. Real is what you are, and its happiness is not dependent on a dream.

Q: But I am, after all, a child of this time and cannot deny ...

K: No, you are not a child of this time. Time is a child of yours! You are the source of time. Every morning when you open your eyes you create this world. The body wakes up, not you. The wakefulness which you are is already there. It never slept. Be this wakefulness. It is anyway what you are. You are that which is prior to 'I' and the world, but you believe in your intellect. You are fascinated by this world which it projects and immediately want to improve it. You are already unhappy. So, it can only get better.

Q: How and when?

K: You have an appointment with yourself which you can't miss.
When?

When you don't create time anymore.

How?

By stopping.

Happiness doesn't lie in your projection of the world but, much more simply, in that which you are. Call it Christ nature or Buddha nature. It is that which you are. You yourself are the unborn, immortal. Your nature is bliss.

The painful idea of life

Question: When I began to meditate, we were told of immortal avatars, in the Himalayas ...

Karl: One also calls them yetis.

Q: No, no! Aren't there yogis who attained immortality?

K: What would be gained by that, and who would gain it?

What is called death is just another experience within the infinity of experiences. When and how it comes doesn't matter.

That which experiences is always existence, and this remains untouched by any "death experience".

Q: Nice for existence! But I think more of myself.

K: You have no existence as a separate being. It's only an idea.

Q: Actually, I kind of like the idea.

K: The experiences of death, birth, and everything in between, are self-experiences, within a personal history. However, every personal history is perceived only by existence, and in this history, there is no separate being to experience or perceive anything. Only awareness perceives at every moment. That which speaks here also listens over there. Neither is separate.

Q: Then my great grandfather and I are not separate either. But something tells me that he is dead and I am alive.

K: At this moment, is there the thought of life?

Q: If you want to express it that way.

K: Where is this thought of life when you sleep very deeply?

Q: Of course it is not there, then.

K: That is death: the absence of the idea of life. That is death. Finished! Both life and death are ideas. The idea of life can only exist where there is also the idea of death.

Q: According to this idea, is there anything left of me?

K: It remains what you are, which is equally there in deep sleep, when such ideas are absent. That which now appears to you so real, is in truth unstable and fleeting. However, that which you truly are cannot come and go. It is there in all states. Deep sleep is a state of emptiness in which nobody perceives anymore. Yet, that which you are is as present then as now.

Q: Could it just as well be possible that I died and that I merely believe ...

K: Yes, that could be. I can only tell you: to live in the 'I'-idea is truly death. It is death through suicide, which literally means 'self-killing'. In the 'I'-thought, in the idea of separation, that, which you are, is dead.

By believing in this thought you leave the perfection of being, which is your natural state, and enter into something unnatural: separation.

Q: And yet this 'I'-idea is dear and precious to me.

K: Precious, because it is ignorance of your true nature, and this hurts. The pain can stop with the realisation that you are nothing which can be separate from anything else. With this realisation there is nobody left who has pain, and nobody who has any experiences, including pain. You are prior to the one who experiences. But as long as you turn yourself into a reflection, you experience suffering.

Q: Do I understand you correctly: as long as I believe that I exist, it will hurt?

K: As long as you experience yourself as separate from pain and want to avoid it. The avoidance itself is pain. Be that which is pain: that which is existence. Then it is not pain: it's a vibration within you, an experience of what you are. You are the essence of pain.

You are the existence within which the sensation of pain appears. Be this and see what happens.

Is there anyone who has this pain? At this moment, no-one owns it and there's no longer a need to turn it into your story.

Q: Perhaps I'm attached to pain because it gives me the feeling that it's me who lives.

K: Then you don't live. Death truly occurs at the moment when you think you live. As long as you think you're in this world, you're in a state of death.

Q: Then why are there six billion people who think that they and the world exist?

K: It's the other way round: as long as you think that you exist, there are six billion people.

Q: What is all this for?

K: The Self created a scientific experiment for itself called 'consciousness in search of itself' and this put you into a test tube.

Q: Now we'll see some fun.

K: Yes, because just now it's looking for a Bunsen burner!

How does one die properly?

Question: Does it matter whether one dies consciously, or in delusion?

Karl: No.

Q: But almost all religions teach that how one dies is important.

K: Oh, you know about it?

Q: Not me. Many enlightened ones say that the time of death is relevant.

K: Do you want to question God or existence?

Q: Excuse me?

K: Do you want to say that consciousness is stupid and doesn't know what it's doing?

Q: I don't really believe in the stupidity of God ...

K: Does God know what he does?

Q: I certainly think so.

K: But you think we have to take care whether a being dies this way or that way. Or is it possible that God knows better?

Q: God may know, but still it is important that we do something.

K: That we improve the world?

Q: Whatever. Indifference cannot be the answer.

K: Doesn't one who improves the world place himself outside the whole, as a separate god?

Q: There certainly is a difference between someone with grand ideas of improving the world and a person who just wants to lend a hand, isn't there?

K: Perhaps not a big one. If you want to help someone else, you want to change what is. I don't say it's wrong. But as long as there is someone who thinks an improvement is necessary, and as long as it is real for him, he is suffering. Pity for someone else comes from self-pity.

Q: I talk about compassion.

K: Nobody can have compassion. In compassion, you don't exist anymore.

Q: But the others are still there.

K: In compassion, the others don't exist either.

Q: Wow, compassion can manifest in this body! And then perhaps it wants to do something.

K: Compassion is your essence. Compassion doesn't differentiate between good and bad experiences. It doesn't sympathise with pain-free or pain-full experiences.

In compassion, pain too is an experience and self-realisation. Its only quality is perception; so that the Self realises itself. This is always here in everything. There is only compassion: compassion of the Self for the phenomenal.

Q: Stop it! Stop this bombardment of logical connections. I can only tell you: the way you communicate this is too much for me.

K: I don't want to communicate anything. It is meant to be too much.

Q: Well, you've succeeded, with this deluge of intellectual concepts.

K: You have a concept of compassion: the idea of personal pity. I oppose this with the principle of the Self.

Q: Yes, yes, but it isn't about us beating each other intellectually! It's also about getting touched. Don't you want to touch us?

K: No, I don't want to touch anybody.

Q: If I'm not touched, it passes me by.

K: It's supposed to pass you by, because then something else listens. Here, consciousness is talking and there, consciousness is listening. I'm not interested in that which thinks: the 'I'-idea, which can't keep up with these words. I don't even see it. I don't speak to any person here.

Q: Well then, have fun.

K: The only thing that can happen is the acceptance that you have a concept and I have a concept. Acceptance brings forth everything. Compassion, which accepts the entire cosmic existence, creates the words that consciousness is speaking here and hearing there. It is a flow of energy. It doesn't matter what we are talking about. Neither does it matter whether we come to a result or have a realisation.

Q: For me what happens in space without words is important. And I feel that you fill the entire space with words.

K: Sounds good.

Q: You talk fast and use certain terms and connect ideas with them. But first of all, I need to get a feeling of what these mean. My intellect has to keep up. Doesn't what happens here have any importance? It matters to me.

K: Who's now saying what's important?

Q: I am!

K: Who's 'I'?

Q: For heaven's sake, I simply want to know how one dies and whether one can do anything!

K: You are dying right now, so take a look at yourself.

Q: I only see dissolution.

K: And can you do something?

Q: I don't know, anymore.

K: Good.

Q: Yes, very good.

K: That's why I'm called Karl-Schlag (a pun on German "Kahlschlag" meaning demolition).

Does an enlightened being continue a normal life?

Question: Can anyone describe what enlightenment is?

Karl: We can only talk about what is accessible to thinking and language. But where the Absolute is concerned one can only give the hint that it is beyond all definition. "The Tao one can name is not the Tao".

The only possible way is to become aware of one's absolute nature, and in this awareness there is no more doubt.

Q: Is this your feeling of being alive?

K: This is the feeling of that aliveness which is absolute, not relative.

Q: So, right now, do you have the feeling of absolute aliveness?

K: Nobody can own it.

Q: What a pity.

K: It is your nature. Nothing needs to be done for it. It is what you are completely, here and now. At this moment, your attention is directed towards something fleeting. Because you have the feeling that it's real, the fleeting becomes reality for you.

If you'd direct your attention towards that which exists always, the absolute would be your reality. It would be the only living thing. There is no other life!

If you direct your attention towards that which is permanent, you recognise, in the world, that which you are which is no longer a part of the world. You recognise what you are while still in the body, but you no longer are the body.

Q: Must be a strange feeling.

K: About two thousand years ago, someone said, "My kingdom is not of this world." This does not mean that the kingdom is up in the sky, and if you do the right thing you'll get there some time. It means that my kingdom has nothing to do with any kind of imagination: nothing to do with what you believe you see. The absolute is my nature, and the personal situation in which I appear to be, as a part of this world, does not matter at all.

Q: No matter what happens.

K: No matter whether I'm hanging on a cross or going out with Mary Magdalen. These are just circumstances: appearances. They have nothing to do with what I am. Jesus even says, "I am that which is God, but I am not God." This means, he is the essence of God. He is that which is knowledge without having to know anything. This is absolute knowledge: to be that which is knowledge without anyone being there who knows, or needs to know, anything. There is nobody who cares whether he is alive or not. This absence of any idea whether you exist or not is pointing towards your essence.

Q: I'm getting dizzy. Does this feeling of being alive mean that whatever happens to us, it is all the same?

K: There is nothing left that could happen to anything. In the fleetingness of a shadow world there is a consciousness which behaves actively and reactively. But you are not part of the shadows but always prior to them: always prior to the phenomena.

In reality nothing moves. There is only pure stillness.

Q: But here we are moving and talking. At least there seems to still be an 'I' which participates, or acts as if it does!

K: The 'I' continues as before. There is no difference.

Q: But is what happens all the same to it?

K: For Little Karl, it is not irrelevant. Little Karl has intentions and wants this or that. The only possibility for him is complete acceptance, whether or not he gets what he wants. Whether or not he dies in the next moment, it makes no difference. It's just like every night, when Little Karl goes to bed and disappears: "In case I don't see you again, it was nice having met you!" and every morning around eight: "Oh God, it's you again!"

Q: And if something nastier happens?

K: It can only happen to what you are. If something kills you, it is only you who kills yourself, and thus nothing can be killed. If the body dies, it is killed by that consciousness which plays this body. The appearance of the body may be gone, but that which you are – the immortal existence – hasn't lost a thing.

Immortality

Question: Is death the end?

Karl: Yes. It is the end of body, mind and soul; most of all, the end of all you ever thought you owned. You thought this and that belonged to you: if not material possessions, then at least one or other of 'your' character traits; or the soul, or at least a bit of it. But none of them remain. The owner dies: the owner of car, house and garden, of children and family, of body and feeling, of mind and soul. The owner of experiences, the owner of a history, dies. Finished. Over. Then comes something like a zero point and there, there is freedom. In this freedom you look into that which is. Then whatever comes, comes, and whatever way it arrives is fine.

This is the final understanding that nothing belongs to you. This is freedom.

Q: And does this freedom come only with death? Or can it exist earlier?

K: At every moment you should die or at least be in the face of death, in the face of mortality. Whatever you meet is mortal. Whatever you own or experience is mortal. Whatever you want to hold on to is fleeting. Whatever you gain you will lose.

Even the idea of yourself will be lost to you: even this idea of 'I'. In the face of mortality, the idea of ownership disappears: 'my body ... my life ... my karma ... my history' – over. In the face of mortality every 'my' disappears. The owner disappears.

And yet you are still completely what you are.

You are still completely there: as whatever.

Q: As what indeed? What of me is still completely there?

K: That which is prior to the owner. That which you are.

You are prior to the idea of ownership and mortality.

That which you are is not touched by what is fleeting.

It is not touched by the idea that you have owned anything, or that there is something you could lose.

These are merely ideas. In truth you are always free.

In truth you are always in the eternal Now, where no personal history exists. Thus, there is nobody who was born, or who could die.

At the very latest, death will bring you this realisation.

That's why it is liberating.

Q: I have always experienced it like that when someone died: something becomes light.

K: Everything loses its heaviness. There is nothing left which needs to be carried.

There is nobody anymore who could carry anything. Therefore, let die what can die, and see what you are.

When your gravestone is already looming in front of you, what is still completely present? When your name is already buried, when the form, the body, when all ideas are buried: what exists then? What exists now?

Is it possible that you already live in the cemetery and just think you are alive? Could it be that all you see is dead already?

Whatever you experience dies at the same moment it is born? Whatever comes and goes is dead. The only thing which is alive is you.

Q: That doesn't help me. My father is about to die. Soon we will clear out the apartment. His books, his letters, his dreams, will all be thrown into a container.

K: All ideas connected to life are blown away in the face of emptiness.

Q: Yes, emptiness remains. But that's not a consolation!

K: Emptiness means the absence of an 'I'. Yet something is completely there in this emptiness. This is you and your father is also this: complete, even in emptiness. Emptiness means the absence of everything except what you are. You exist: indescribable, indefinable, ungraspable; yet completely there, in this emptiness, and completely untouched by it! Death is just a circumstance. It cannot touch, cannot influence, cannot change that which you are, which is also your father.

Q: I have been present when people died, and it wasn't always a joyful transition. Often a tremendous fear was present.

K: That's completely natural. That which believes it will die, is afraid. Behind it is the survival instinct. There's nothing wrong with this. However in the moment of death, when nothing fights anymore, there is only clarity. There is no more struggle, no more fear. There is simply an absence of forms and ideas. Everything is simple and clear.

Until this moment, there is every possibility for struggle, fear and resistance. But when the final, the ultimate, is here, there is nobody left who could fight. There is simply emptiness, alone. Then this awareness, which is here now, but seems to be concealed, is emptied of desires, ideas, concepts. It is empty. And in this emptiness is complete existence: completely clear; completely pure.

Q: Existence remains, but I am dead.

K: What is alive, anyway? Can life be that which is mortal, which is subjugated to death? Whatever can die is already dead beforehand. It never lived and thus cannot die. There is nothing in the moment of death which could die. That which you are is pure existence. It is, here and now, the only thing which is, and in the moment of death, it is still the only thing which is.

Q: Yes, existence! But unfortunately that's not what I am!

K: Even if you say, "It is not me," it doesn't matter. It does not make you less. You remain completely that which you are. You are that which needs no proof. The 'I' is always lacking evidence. It tries by all means to continue the search for meaning. Without the desire for meaning it would be finished. But finally it will be finished indeed! Death makes it irrelevant. In death all questions of why, how, what for, have suddenly disappeared. In face of this emptiness and timelessness, all questions are superfluous: the 'I' is superfluous.

Q: Yes, exactly! That's what I'm afraid of.

K: Death is the greatest advisor in your life because it confronts you with your mortality: at least with the mortality of body, mind and soul. It means the end of all you believed to be. In the face of death you have to question this belief: this concept of what exists. I advise you to question it now.

Q: That's what I am doing.

K: If death cannot touch you, who dies and what was born?
And if death cannot touch you, were you ever born?

Q: Up to now, I always assumed I was.

K: The ideas of birth and death are fleeting thoughts in the world of your experiences. You are that which is eternally untouchable, which never came and never will go.

Karl Renz was born in 1953, the son of a farmer in Weserbergland, Lower Saxony, Germany. He studied farming before moving on to Art. Since 1980 he has lived as a musician and painter, in Berlin . At the end of the 1970's his first death experience gave him the realisation of immortality. In the last few years, he has turned up to hold discussions and answer questions in many countries, and guarantees to talk and talk and talk wherever his body is invited.

You may find his schedule and other information at: www.karlrenz.com and his art at: www.karlrenz.de