

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

The Teacher and Liberation Should Be One and the Same

Three Articles by Andrew Cohen

Introduction

The role of spiritual authority is among the most controversial and misunderstood issues in spiritual life today. Yet it is one of the most vitally important, because understanding spiritual authority is inseparable from understanding the very nature and significance of enlightenment itself. Since the issue of spiritual authority is so challenging, and evokes such strong emotions, many people fail to go beyond their reflexive responses of "pro" or "con," hope or fear, cynicism or superstition when considering it. But the real meaning and implications of spiritual authority are much too subtle, significant and far-reaching to be understood in a superficial way.

In the following three articles Andrew Cohen places the issue of spiritual authority in its most revealing and challenging context: the evolutionary call to attain a fully human condition. His investigation clarifies the significance of spiritual authority and discipleship in a way that absolutely implicates both the seeker and the teacher.

In "A Crisis of Trust," excerpted from his book *An Unconditional Relationship to Life*, Andrew Cohen examines the roots of the prevailing cynicism about spiritual authority and even enlightenment itself. Cutting through common superstitious beliefs, he reveals the meaning of enlightenment in a way that is inspiring yet uncompromising, calling for clear examples who can show that the achievement of an undivided condition is indeed possible.

"Spiritual Slavery and Prostitution of the Soul" is a dialogue in which Andrew Cohen explores the disturbing enigma, so apparent in our time, of the coupling of great realization with a lack of ethical integrity, and the potentially devastating effect this can have upon the seeker.

Finally, "The Science of the Student/Teacher Relationship" investigates the significance of discipleship in a way that holds both the teacher and the student completely accountable for its results. Andrew Cohen explains what to look for in a potential teacher, and vividly describes the student/teacher relationship as a dynamic partnership based on rare independence and mutual interest in the truth for its own sake.

[**A Crisis of Trust**](#)

[**Spiritual Slavery and Prostitution of the Soul**](#)

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WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

A Crisis of Trust

by Andrew Cohen

The Path and the Goal Are One

The genuine pursuit of spiritual liberation is the pursuit of unity and simplicity. Unity is not only the fact of our ultimate nature, but indeed, if there is any significance in spiritual attainment, unity must finally become the very essence of the expression of the individual who claims to have achieved the goal of unity itself. It is my conviction in this, what I consider to be such an obvious point, that has forced me to stand alone in a time when something so obvious seems to be so misunderstood. The meaning and significance of enlightenment to me is, and I truly believe always has been, the final attainment of nonduality, *not only as inner vision but as that expression of singularity and undivided purity of intention that leaves no room for doubt, confusion or ambiguity.*

Simply because I have not wanted to compromise on this matter, I have gained a reputation of being controversial. Unwavering in my insistence that any individual who dares to show the way for others be willing to live up to the highest expression of human potential, I often find myself alone in what seems like a ridiculous predicament. Many misinterpret my motives in speaking about the failings of other teachers, concluding that my intention is simply to find fault. I have found it necessary to do so only because I feel it is essential at this time to try and demystify the aura and mystique of enlightenment. The utter simplicity of the meaning and significance of profound spiritual attainment in the modern world remains largely hidden behind myth and superstition. And therefore, it is only by scrutinizing those who have penetrated deeply into the spiritual dimension, that the common denominator that reveals the important differences and essential similarities of those individuals can be brought to light.

The entire process of spiritual evolution and transformation is, after all, only the search for and attainment of a fully human condition. This significant point, while obvious to some, is not so apparent to many. As a matter of fact, in my journeys throughout the world I am always struck by the degree of misinformation that abounds regarding this point. Far too many believe that those individuals who have transcended fear, delusion and ignorance have become no different than living gods. In fact, some of my students were told by a well-known rinpoche that their first mistake was thinking that the Buddha was human! It is precisely this kind of thinking that perpetuates the superstitious beliefs that make any simple yet profound understanding of enlightenment

difficult to attain.

Recognizing spiritual evolution and transformation as the struggle for a fully human condition makes it possible for anyone who is sincerely interested to come to an understanding of what real attainment is all about. As long as the meaning and significance of spiritual awakening is allowed to remain so shrouded in mystery, it will continue to seem beyond the reach of most to truly understand. There are many paths but the goal is one. This fact must be clarified in a simple and understandable way. Only then will many of us be able to grow up, and in doing so realize the profound independence that results from seeing clearly through eyes that have been freed from false and wrong views.

A Divided Condition

I never knew until I began to teach how profound is the deeply divided condition of most human beings. And I learned early on how extraordinarily difficult it seems to be for most human beings to express an undivided relationship to life. Indeed, it is the divided condition of the human personality that has for so long created the endless cycle of conflict that has been and continues to be the crux of the spiritual dilemma of the race. Interestingly enough, *it is only when a human being makes that critical decision to find the Truth Absolute, that the depth and complexity of compromise that had been the expression of a divided personality is revealed.* This discovery is often shocking, for few human beings are prepared to come to terms with the enormity of the gap that is exposed between the way one imagines oneself to be and the way one truly is.

A passionate response to the yearning for liberation reveals that a divided condition is entirely volitional. In this revelation, the individual discovers for themselves the path to wholeness. That path is the sudden or gradual unwillingness to compromise in matters of the heart and ultimately in one's relationship to what it means to be a fully human being.

It is for this reason that I feel it is so essential that those individuals, who have been fortunate enough to have fallen into the miracle of transcendent spiritual realization, be able to demonstrate an attainment that clearly and unambiguously expresses the evolutionary potential of the race. For as long as this demand is not made, and those who are showing the way for others are allowed to demonstrate the very same schizophrenic condition of contradictory impulses as everyone else, then the attainment of true simplicity and unequivocal victory over ignorance will remain a myth.

The magnitude of the implications inherent in this, what might not seem like such a crucial matter to some, is extraordinary. Without clear examples, the possibility of a collective evolutionary leap is unimaginable. That is why it is so destructive for the evolutionary potential of the race as a whole when those who have realized that transcendental spiritual perspective seem to be unwilling to go all the way.

That possibility can only be sufficiently demonstrated in a personality that is so firmly rooted in the absolute fact of unity that it will only by its nature express that condition unmistakably and unambiguously as itself.

The Need for Clear Examples

The modern spiritual world has been plagued by countless shocking revelations of that vital discrepancy between word and deed. This has created an air of cynicism and a crisis of trust. It should cause the independent thinker to question the ultimate validity of the attainment of those in whom these discrepancies have become painfully obvious. Yet I have been intrigued by the general lack of serious inquiry into this important question.

As long as significant contradiction exists in any individual who is proclaimed to have reached the yonder shore, it's possible that maybe they stopped somewhere short of the beach. I have been surprised at the acceptance and ambivalence in relationship to this matter in seekers and finders alike. This point is crucial and its significance demands some attention in a serious student of evolutionary potential. What makes this matter so confusing to so many is the fact that it is very difficult to ascertain the actual attainment of another as long as one is struggling within the initial stages of awakening oneself. It is because most of those who aspire to final liberation are precisely at that juncture in their own evolution that they usually feel insufficiently evolved to dare to assume such knowledge. This plus the air of cynicism so prevalent in the time we are living in has made it for many a sign of arrogance to question these matters in a passionate way. From early on in my teaching career, I was compelled to do so because I wanted to understand how and why the actual goal of spiritual seeking and practice was so vague, complex and confusing. I found out almost from the very beginning that this kind of questioning was not generally appreciated, and more often than not was scorned, if not outright condemned.

I have always encouraged others to ask themselves the same questions that I have asked myself, and have discovered that few seem to be deeply interested in asking the kinds of questions that challenge the very foundations of our spiritual beliefs. So often the need to cling onto experiences long gone, beliefs based on superstition and if nothing else only hope seems more important to far too many than the pursuit of the Truth unadorned. Many seekers choose to lazily accept that which cannot bear too much scrutiny for fear of ultimately having to scrutinize themselves far too closely. Endeavoring to rouse from slumber those insisting that a promise unfulfilled was other than that, I have tried to encourage honest inquiry.

Shortly before the demise of my relationship with my own teacher, I was attending one of his teachings with a small group of my students. When they asked him about the discrepancy between the word and deed of well-known spiritual teachers he became irritated, replying that questions such as these have nothing to do with liberation but only with religion. Indeed, in his own philosophy there is not necessarily any relationship between the realization of our true nature and the manifestation of the human personality of the one who has realized it.

In Boulder, Colorado I spoke to a gathering in which some disciples of the late Trungpa Rinpoche were present. When I simply stated what everyone already knew, that his abuse of alcohol had killed him and had led some of his followers to become members of Alcoholics Anonymous, many were offended. Who was I to judge?

Several years after the death of the legendary Bhagwan Rajneesh, I continue to find that most of his devotees are still unable to even begin to contemplate the possibility that their guru might have had something to do with the treacherous escapades of some of his closest disciples.

During a radio interview in Amsterdam by a woman who was a devotee of the late Swami Muktananda, I mentioned the widely known fact that he had gone to bed with the young daughters of his own disciples whom he had asked to be celibate. She was outraged.

In so many cases, discipleship unknowingly becomes a form of spiritual slavery. Too many are unwilling to question the perfection of the attainment of their teacher for fear of threatening the perceived link with the absolute that the teacher represents.

The spiritual crisis of the human race is a crisis of trust. For awakened perception to become stable and permanent, the individual must find a way to trust that is above and beyond the usual perimeters of human experience. It is the inability and unwillingness to trust that makes the goal of utter simplicity and perfect union seem so distant. Indeed, trust is the very foundation of spiritual transformation.

The integrity and inherent perfection of life is demonstrated in that individual who has deeply realized and is able to manifest unity and simplicity. That is why the significance of some individuals actually being able to demonstrate that attainment as self unambiguously is so great. The explosive and deeply liberating power of trust can only manifest itself in that spiritual arena where no taint of ambiguity about the living reality of that possibility exists. As long as any doubt, gross or subtle, continues to exist, it will be almost impossible for the individual to trust in the possibility of realizing their own potential as a fully human being.

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Spiritual Slavery and Prostitution of the Soul

by **Andrew Cohen**

Question: *I'm very confused about this matter of ethical conduct and its relationship to the enlightened understanding that you speak so much about. Why is it that so many gurus seem to be prey to the very same weaknesses as ordinary people? I would have thought that an ego that had died would not be able to act in the same selfish way as people who did not claim to be enlightened.*

Andrew Cohen: Maybe in the cases that you are speaking about, the ego didn't die. Maybe in these cases, there is a fully intact ego coexisting with a profound realization. Most people don't realize that ego and profound realization can coexist. It is for that reason that so many people have gotten into trouble.

Q: *But I don't understand how, even after the failings of the guru have become obvious, people will still allow themselves to be taken advantage of. They often will continue to be followers in the face of unethical behavior, and in some cases even gross abuse.*

A: Often when a person meets a teacher in whom the Absolute is manifesting to a powerful degree, their heart will open up unexpectedly. They may experience unusual insight and understanding just through mere association with this kind of extraordinary individual. After this kind of experience it is easy to understand how one may get very attached to that individual. The bond that is formed through experiences like these runs very deep. Slowly without even realizing it, in order to protect the love and beauty of that precious event, the person starts to be willing to overlook things. The minute that begins, they become corrupt themselves.

Q: *Is that when they start to rationalize?*

A: Yes, then they become corrupt, in the same way the guru is. When you try to talk to the disciples of these gurus about simple virtues, they often are unable to make any sense. Also, they will frequently say things like, "Ethical conduct and enlightenment have nothing to do with each other," in an attempt to justify the confusing behavior of their guru. The minute anybody allows themselves to tolerate corruption they become a part of it. These people desperately don't want to see the depth of the corruption that they themselves are immersed in. The security of their spiritual well-being depends on the fact that no matter what, the actions of the guru are never questioned. Because their

hearts are so invested in the guru, they will make almost any rationalization or justification for the guru's actions. They will do almost anything in order to protect that love that the guru has revealed to them. This is spiritual slavery and prostitution of the soul. In weak-minded people the seal of enlightenment becomes a license for abuse.

Q: *How is it then with the matter of trust? Does one ultimately only surrender to one's own knowing of the truth?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Then not to the guru?*

A: Ultimately the guru and your knowing of truth should be one and the same. There shouldn't be any difference. If there is, there's something wrong. That means there is either something wrong in your idea of what the truth is and your experience of what the truth is or there's some defect in the guru. Ideally they should be perfectly synonymous.

Q: *But shouldn't surrender be to truth alone?*

A: But in a sense that's all people surrender to anyway. They surrender to their own experience. If you go to a teacher and you have a powerful experience, it's that experience that you surrender to. What usually happens next though, is that you get involved with the personality of the teacher. Powerful experience makes you hungry for more. That's why people get more involved. They want to get to know who this guru is. They fall in love and then want to be more intimate. Then they get involved with the personality of the teacher. At that point it's no longer just a spiritual experience; they begin to get involved with a human personality. That's when the trouble starts. If there's any trouble that could start, that's when it's going to begin.

When the personality of the guru and the love and beauty that the guru revealed begin to conflict with each other, that means something is wrong.

As I said before, people are weak, weak-minded, and if someone is truly enlightened, they will have a very powerful mind and be very charismatic. People are easily overwhelmed by that. Because their heart has been awakened, because they have been deeply touched by something, they often don't care about anything else. And in order to protect that experience, they will often tolerate just about anything. This is dangerous. This is a corrupt condition that a great deal of the spiritual world is in these days. If the guru is corrupt and you're intimately involved with the guru, you can't help but be corrupt yourself. It's unavoidable. By association it's an automatic result. It's a very delicate business.

Q: *So how does one discern? To what degree do I question my own perception and trust?*

A: Just go by the basics. There are some very basic, ethical laws that anybody who's not insane knows. They are not esoteric.

Q: *So where do you draw the line?*

A: The line is drawn where suffering is caused to other people due to selfish actions that stem from ignorance. That's where you draw the line.

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WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

The Science of the Student/Teacher Relationship

by **Andrew Cohen**

I always encourage people as much as possible to look into the whole world of superstitious beliefs in relationship to spiritual authority figures. If someone wants to be free, it is of the utmost importance to dare to look closely at the kind of position that one takes in relationship to individuals who have assumed roles of authority in spiritual matters.

It is dangerously easy in the relationship with spiritual authority figures to allow oneself to assume all kinds of things that may not actually be true. The only way an individual can enter into a relationship with a spiritual teacher, and not get lost in the arena of superstitious beliefs about the teacher or about oneself, is by embarking upon a very sincere investigation. What kind of an investigation? One must dare to question every aspect of the human condition as oneself. One must dare to look very deeply into the nature of the human condition in relationship to the highest possibility of perfect liberation. Only then will one be able to truly recognize the depth or level of attainment of the spiritual teacher.

Meeting the True Teacher: The Promise of No Limitation

In the presence of that rare individual who has attained extraordinary spiritual enlightenment, a tangible sense of expansion of Self can be felt. When an individual is living life with that much intensity, freedom and love, one recognizes a liberated personality. By their example and in their reflection one can discover, maybe for the very first time, what it would be like to be free.

In such a meeting, unanticipated experiences involving rare insight and/or exhilarating feelings may occur. An event such as this can shake the very foundation of one's belief system. The effect of this meeting can be so powerful that the individual may suddenly find themselves entering into what seems like the most profound relationship that one human being could ever have with another.

What makes the idea of entering into a relationship with the spiritual teacher so enticing and profound? It is the promise of no limitation.

Few people make full use of the potential inherent in that unique and unusual relationship based solely on the promise of no limitation. Why is this? Because a true teacher always remains true to the fact of no limitation. The true teacher never wavers from the demand that those who claim interest in liberation above all else be willing to meet him or her fully and completely in the living fact of no limitation. Ultimately challenged, the student comes face to face with the true measure of their own desire for liberation. This challenge creates a tension. That tension is the expression and manifestation of the gap between the teacher's living example and the student's actual condition. That tension dissipates and finally disappears altogether only when the student endeavors to fearlessly and courageously meet the teacher absolutely, completely and without reservation.

In the true teacher's reflection, all should be revealed. Therefore the teacher's living example only becomes superfluous when and if the student equals or surpasses the teacher's attainment. Until that point, the teacher's living, breathing example is of the utmost importance, for it is in the teacher's example that the teaching clearly comes alive and therefore can be seen and recognized. Without the teacher's living, breathing manifestation of the teaching, the ultimate goal of spiritual experience and practice remains lost in vague, superstitious and even dangerously confused notions.

In most cases, a teaching—even a perfect teaching—in and of itself will not create enough tension to thrust the individual into the radical transformation that is necessary for meaningful and permanent change to occur. It is the dynamic of the relationship with a living teacher that creates the kind of tension in which real transformation can occur.

In the relationship with the living teacher, the individual is afforded the opportunity of a clear reflection—of actually perceiving themselves clearly and without distortion. Association and relationship with an individual who is the living expression of no limitation will make apparent those limiting ideas, beliefs and tendencies that the student compulsively and usually unconsciously imposes upon themselves and on reality as a whole. Therefore, it is through that association that the student will be able to see very clearly and accurately how and where they are limiting their own potential of realizing and ultimately manifesting no limitation.

No Refuge for the Ego

Instead of striving to fulfill the promise of no limitation, which is the discovery and attainment of no security for the ego, most individuals actually endeavor to find security for the ego in the relationship with the spiritual teacher. In this way, they allow a relationship of dependence to develop only because they are not actually seeking for genuine liberation, but instead use the relationship with the spiritual teacher only to take refuge from the very challenging ordeal of mundane existence.

There is no doubt that taking refuge in the knowledge and power of an extraordinary human being has great benefits. But as great as those benefits may be, their effect will ultimately always express limitation. Indeed, the relationship with the spiritual teacher becomes literally evolutionary only when the individual has come to the point when they are finally ready to take full responsibility for their own life. And in that responsibility, the individual must strive to meet the teacher absolutely-in perfect independence.

But because most seekers' belief and conviction in the actual possibility of genuine liberation for themselves tends to be very weak, the extraordinary and profound surrender and renunciation necessary to truly face and ultimately destroy all false notions of self, which alone will result in true independence, is lacking. In fact, what often imitates that extraordinary and profound surrender and renunciation necessary to truly destroy all false notions of self, which alone will result in true independence, is instead *only the desire for validation of the personality*.

The relationship with the true teacher should offer no security for the ego whatsoever and should instead result in the discovery and attainment of perfect aloneness, perfect independence and the perfect and ultimate fulfillment of one's individuality.

Perfect Independence Allows True Partnership

At the beginning stages of association and relationship with a spiritual teacher, it is reasonable for the individual to seek for affirmation of self, and in that affirmation, healing at a deep emotional level. That experience-absolute validation of self-is the unanticipated and mysterious event that occurs in a real meeting with a true teacher. But that event, instead of becoming an end unto itself, should serve as the foundation for the individual's pursuit and ultimate attainment of final liberation.

Ideally, the healing that occurs in the meeting with the true teacher serves as a catalyst for the simultaneous ending of the past and the beginning of a truly unimaginable future. That future is the intense pursuit of the dissolution of all false and deluded notions about the nature of reality, relative and absolute, and in that dissolution, the rebirth of a human personality that has been liberated from the consequences of being painfully lost in false and deluded notions about the nature of reality, relative and absolute.

For this dissolution to occur, an enormous amount of responsibility must be taken by the student for their own evolution. That means that the individual who wants to be free must come to that point in their own evolution where they would be willing to give everything for the highest attainment. What is that attainment? That attainment is the living, breathing manifestation of perfect liberation as oneself. It is only at that point-when the student is finally willing to take full responsibility for their own evolution in the biggest possible way-that the literally evolutionary potential inherent in the relationship with the spiritual teacher can begin to manifest itself. The literally

evolutionary potential inherent in the relationship with the spiritual teacher is the realization and manifestation of a dynamic partnership based on the *mutual* pursuit of, and intense interest in, the Real.

As long as distinct differences in depth of interest remain between teacher and student in the pursuit of, and intense interest in, the Real, the recognition of that relationship as a dynamic partnership will not occur. Only when the relationship with the spiritual teacher is based on the *mutual* pursuit of, and intense interest in, the Real can that rare and dynamic partnership begin to reveal itself and actually occur.

Only the individual who has come to that point where they are willing to take full responsibility for their own evolution will be ready to embrace all the implications of what it means to be a truly independent human being. The individual who has not yet come to that point where they are willing to take full responsibility for their own evolution will not be able to move beyond a relationship of dependence with the spiritual teacher, and therefore, will not be prepared to enter into a dynamic partnership with the spiritual teacher based on the *mutual* pursuit of, and intense interest in, the Real.

Recognizing the True Teacher: What Is the Seeker Actually Looking for?

What is the seeker actually looking for?

Does the individual who is looking for a spiritual teacher want to be free? Is the individual who is looking for a spiritual teacher aspiring to attain perfect liberation in this very birth? Or is the individual who is looking for a spiritual teacher seeking for something other than perfect liberation in this very birth?

It is important to understand that how one will recognize a true teacher is determined by what it is that the individual is actually looking for. Generally speaking, most people do not go to spiritual teachers out of the genuine desire to attain spiritual liberation in this birth. Instead, many go in search of "blessings" and affirmations. Many seek the presence of a spiritual authority figure to help them to feel better, to find some relief from the burden of the mundane. The individual who is seeking affirmation of who they already are will be looking for the kind of spiritual authority figure who poses no threat to the status quo.

On the other hand, the individual who is seeking for genuine spiritual liberation realizes the awesome magnitude of the challenge they are taking on. That individual will be looking for very different qualities in a spiritual mentor than would the individual who is seeking mainly for affirmation of who they already are.

What Are Some Signs of Attainment in a True Teacher?

The spiritual teacher must be a natural expression of a true teaching of liberation-without effort or any sign of pretense. It is not that difficult with some attainment, a little effort and a lot of pretense to give a convincing presentation. Be aware that a less-than-perfect attainment can actually empower the ego. Indeed, there have been many powerful and charismatic spiritual teachers who have been very knowledgeable about spiritual matters but who have turned out to be extremely untrustworthy as human beings.

Integrity is the single most important virtue that the spiritual mentor must be able to demonstrate, for it is integrity in the spiritual mentor alone that creates that most delicate foundation upon which perfect trust can be realized. It is the realization and discovery of perfect trust that can destroy any and all boundaries between self and other.

Rare vulnerability is the natural condition and expression of an individual who is deeply in touch with themselves and directly in touch with life itself. Nothing exists between the individual who has awakened and the actuality of life. The individual who is deeply in touch with themselves and directly in touch with all of life is refreshingly vulnerable, unusually natural and shockingly real.

Lack of self-consciousness should be the expression of the individual who has realized the nondual because the extraordinary impact that the profound realization of singularity has on the personality is unification. Self-consciousness is the expression of a personality built upon a dualistic foundation. The individual who has not realized the singular or nondual as Self to a significant enough degree will still as a personality express a divided condition as self-consciousness. The personality of that individual who has realized singularity as Self manifests a fundamentally undivided, unselfconscious condition expressed as unity and simplicity.

Spontaneity is the expression of a personality that has been liberated from the chains of fear and self-consciousness. The individual who has realized an undivided, unselfconscious condition has the natural ability to be who they are, as they are, in the most natural and unpremeditated fashion.

Trusting the TrueTeacher:

The Door to Liberation

When an individual chooses to become seriously involved with a spiritual teacher a process of osmosis begins to occur within that individual at a very deep psychological and emotional level. This osmosis takes place both consciously and unconsciously, and its effect is much greater than most people tend to be aware of. It's a dangerous business. Most people have no idea how delicate it truly is.

When an individual becomes seriously involved with a spiritual teacher, every

aspect of the teacher's personality-gross and subtle, conscious and unconscious-is absorbed at the deepest levels of being. It is not only the teaching that is studied and absorbed, but indeed it is also the very condition that the teacher as human being is in at the deepest psychological and emotional level that the student consciously and unconsciously begins to emulate. Therefore it is not only the depth and breadth of the teacher's teaching that is important, but it is the ultimate condition or attainment of the teacher as human being that has the most significant influence on the student.

The individual who seriously seeks for a teacher, master or guru wants to find a mentor who they feel is truly worthy of being teacher, master or guru. There is always the desire in the seeker to ultimately find a spiritual mentor who they perceive as being perfect, or if not literally perfect, then as close to perfect as is humanly possible. Why is that necessary for the seeker? Because it is necessary for the seeker to have enough confidence in the integrity of the attainment of the mentor to allow themselves the profound and rare liberty of utterly letting go at the deepest levels of their being. It will only be possible for a seeker to achieve that degree of liberty-which is the rare and euphoric discovery of trust-if they are convinced of the integrity of the attainment of the mentor as human being.

The euphoric discovery of trust in the mentor enables a radical shift in consciousness to occur. The effect of that shift in consciousness is that the student now feels that they have a center, a very strong center, the foundation of which is the discovery of a deep trust. In what? In the validity of the perfection or near perfection of the attainment of the mentor. That trust enables the student the luxury of being able to trust, maybe for the first time, in life itself. It is in the attainment of absolute trust in the mentor that the student finds the extraordinary freedom inherent in the discovery of trust in life itself.

Ideally, the trust found in the relationship with the spiritual mentor serves as the bridge from isolation and separation to the discovery and attainment of conscious recognition of perfect interrelatedness. It is in this way that the relationship with the teacher can serve as a door to liberation.

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