

SAMPLE PAGES

The Rhythm and Reason of Reality

*Prose and Poetry in
A Course In Miracles*

Compiled by
Steve “Michael” Russell
with a
Preface by Ray Comeau, Ph.D



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Prose and Poetry in A Course In Miracles
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SAMPLE PAGES

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	9	Reversing Effect and Cause	7 3
The Rhythm and Reason of Reality	1 1	The Agreement to Join	7 5
Facing Your Dilemma	1 1	The Greater Joining	7 7
PREFACE	1 3	The Alternate to Dreams of Fear	7 8
Introduction	1 7	The Secret Vows	7 9
Portals to Rhythmic Reality	2 1	The Ark of Safety	8 0
Iambic pentameter lead sentences from Chapters 13 thru 24	2 1		
		Chapter 29	
Chapter 25		THE AWAKENING	8 3
THE JUSTICE OF GOD	2 5	The Closing of the Gap	8 3
Introduction	2 5	God's Witnesses	8 6
The Link to Truth	2 5	Dream Roles	8 7
The Savior from the Dark	2 6	The Changeless Dwelling Place	8 8
Perception and Choice	2 8	Forgiveness and the End of Time	8 9
The Light You Bring	2 9	Seek Not Outside Yourself	9 0
The State of Sinlessness	3 0	The Anti-Christ	9 1
The Special Function	3 1	The Forgiving Dream	9 3
The Rock of Salvation	3 3		
Justice Returned to Love	3 5	Chapter 30	
The Justice of Heaven	3 8	THE NEW BEGINNING	9 5
		Introduction	9 5
Chapter 26		Rules for Decision	9 5
THE TRANSITION	4 0	Freedom of Will	9 7
The "Sacrifice" of Oneness	4 0	Beyond All Idols	9 8
Many Forms; One Correction	4 1	The Truth behind Illusions	10 0
The Borderland	4 2	The Only Purpose	10 1
Where Sin Has Left	4 3	The Justification for Forgiveness	10 3
The Little Hindrance	4 4	The New Interpretation	10 4
The Appointed Friend	4 7	Changeless Reality	10 6
The Laws of Healing	4 7		
The Immediacy of Salvation	5 0	Chapter 31	
For They Have Come	5 2	THE FINAL VISION	10 8
The End of Injustice	5 3	The Simplicity of Salvation	10 8
		Walking with Christ	11 0
Chapter 27		The Self-Accused	11 2
THE HEALING OF THE DREAM	5 5	The Real Alternative	11 3
The Picture of Crucifixion	5 5	Self-Concept versus Self	11 4
The Fear of Healing	5 7	Recognizing the Spirit	11 7
Beyond All Symbols	6 0	The Savior's Vision	11 8
The Quiet Answer	6 1	Choose Once Again	12 1
The Healing Example	6 2		
The Witnesses to Sin	6 4	LESSON 78	12 4
The Dreamer of the Dream	6 5	Let miracles replace all grievances.	12 4
		LESSON 91	12 6
Chapter 28		Miracles are seen in light	12 6
THE UNDOING OF FEAR	7 1	LESSON 92	12 8
The Present Memory	7 1	Miracles are seen in light, and light and strength are one	12 8

SAMPLE PAGES

LESSON 93.....	130	LESSON 121.....	167
Light and joy and peace abide in me.	130	Forgiveness is the key to happiness.	167
LESSON 94.....	132	LESSON 122.....	169
I am as God created me.	132	Forgiveness offers everything I want.....	169
LESSON 95.....	133	LESSON 123.....	171
I am one Self, united with my Creator.	133	I thank my Father for His gifts to me.	171
LESSON 96.....	135	LESSON 124.....	172
Salvation comes from my one Self.....	135	Let me remember I am one with God.....	172
LESSON 97.....	137	LESSON 125.....	174
I am spirit.....	137	In quiet I receive God's Word today.....	174
LESSON 98.....	138	LESSON 126.....	175
I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation..	138	All that I give is given to myself.....	175
LESSON 99.....	140	LESSON 127.....	177
Salvation is my only function here.	140	There is no love but God's.....	177
LESSON 100.....	142	LESSON 128.....	179
My part is essential to God's plan for salvation...	142	The world I see holds nothing that I want.	179
LESSON 101.....	144	LESSON 129.....	180
God's Will for me is perfect happiness.	144	Beyond this world there is a world I want.....	180
LESSON 102.....	145	LESSON 130.....	181
I share God's Will for happiness for me.....	145	It is impossible to see two worlds.	181
LESSON 103.....	146	LESSON 131.....	183
God, being Love, is also happiness.	146	No one can fail who seeks to reach the truth.	183
LESSON 104.....	147	LESSON 132.....	185
I seek but what belongs to me in truth.	147	I loose the world from all I thought it was.....	185
LESSON 105.....	148	LESSON 133.....	187
God's peace and joy are mine.	148	I will not value what is valueless.	187
LESSON 106.....	150	LESSON 134.....	189
Let me be still and listen to the truth.	150	Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.....	189
LESSON 107.....	152	LESSON 135.....	191
Truth will correct all errors in my mind.....	152	If I defend myself I am attacked.	191
LESSON 108.....	154	LESSON 136.....	194
To give and to receive are one in truth.	154	Sickness is a defense against the truth.	194
LESSON 109.....	156	LESSON 137.....	197
I rest in God.	156	When I am healed I am not healed alone.....	197
LESSON 110.....	158	LESSON 138.....	199
I am as God created me.	158	Heaven is the decision I must make.	199
		LESSON 139.....	201
REVIEW III.....	160	I will accept Atonement for myself.....	201
Introduction.....	160	LESSON 140.....	203
LESSON 111.....	162	Only salvation can be said to cure.	203
LESSON 112.....	162		
LESSON 113.....	163	REVIEW IV.....	205
LESSON 114.....	163	Introduction.....	205
LESSON 115.....	164	LESSON 141.....	207
LESSON 116.....	164	LESSON 142.....	207
LESSON 117.....	165	LESSON 143.....	207
LESSON 118.....	165	LESSON 144.....	207
LESSON 119.....	166	LESSON 145.....	207
LESSON 120.....	166	LESSON 146.....	207

SAMPLE PAGES

LESSON 147.....	207	LESSON 173.....	246
LESSON 148.....	207	LESSON 174.....	246
LESSON 149.....	207	LESSON 175.....	246
LESSON 150.....	207	LESSON 176.....	246
		LESSON 177.....	246
LESSON 151.....	208	LESSON 178.....	246
All things are echoes of the Voice for God.	208	LESSON 179.....	246
LESSON 152.....	210	LESSON 180.....	246
The power of decision is my own.	210		
LESSON 153.....	212	Introduction to Lessons 181 to 220.....	247
In my defenselessness my safety lies.	212	LESSON 181.....	248
LESSON 154.....	215	I trust my brothers, who are one with me.....	248
I am among the ministers of God.	215	LESSON 182.....	250
LESSON 155.....	217	I will be still an instant and go home.....	250
I will step back and let Him lead the way.	217	LESSON 183.....	252
LESSON 156.....	219	I call upon God's Name and on my own.....	252
I walk with God in perfect holiness.....	219	LESSON 184.....	254
LESSON 157.....	220	The Name of God is my inheritance.	254
Into His Presence would I enter now.	220	LESSON 185.....	256
LESSON 158.....	221	I want the peace of God.	256
Today I learn to give as I receive.	221	LESSON 186.....	258
LESSON 159.....	223	Salvation of the world depends on me.....	258
I give the miracles I have received.	223	LESSON 187.....	260
LESSON 160.....	225	I bless the world because I bless myself.....	260
I am at home. Fear is the stranger here.....	225	LESSON 188.....	262
LESSON 161.....	227	The peace of God is shining in me now.....	262
Give me your blessing, holy Son of God.	227	LESSON 189.....	264
LESSON 162.....	229	I feel the Love of God within me now.....	264
I am as God created me.	229	LESSON 190.....	266
LESSON 163.....	230	I choose the joy of God instead of pain.	266
There is no death. The Son of God is free.....	230	LESSON 191.....	268
LESSON 164.....	232	I am the holy Son of God Himself.	268
Now are we one with Him Who is our Source.....	232	LESSON 192.....	270
LESSON 165.....	234	I have a function God would have me fill.....	270
Let not my mind deny the Thought of God.....	234	LESSON 193.....	272
LESSON 166.....	235	All things are lessons God would have me learn.	272
I am entrusted with the gifts of God.	235	LESSON 194.....	274
LESSON 167.....	237	I place the future in the Hands of God.	274
There is one life, and that I share with God.....	237	LESSON 195.....	276
LESSON 168.....	239	Love is the way I walk in gratitude.....	276
Your grace is given me. I claim it now.....	239	LESSON 196.....	278
LESSON 169.....	240	It can be but myself I crucify.....	278
By grace I live. By grace I am released.	240	LESSON 197.....	280
LESSON 170.....	242	It can be but my gratitude I earn.....	280
There is no cruelty in God and none in me.	242	LESSON 198.....	281
		Only my condemnation injures me.	281
REVIEW V.....	244	LESSON 199.....	283
Introduction.....	244	I am not a body. I am free.	283
LESSON 171.....	246	LESSON 200.....	284
LESSON 172.....	246	There is no peace except the peace of God.....	284

SAMPLE PAGES

REVIEW VI.....	286	LESSON 232.....	298
Introduction.....	286	Be in my mind, my Father, through the day.....	298
LESSON 201.....	287	LESSON 233.....	298
LESSON 202.....	287	I give my life to God to guide today.....	298
LESSON 203.....	287	LESSON 234.....	298
LESSON 204.....	287	Father, today I am Your Son again.	298
LESSON 205.....	287	LESSON 235.....	299
LESSON 206.....	287	God in His mercy wills that I be saved.	299
LESSON 207.....	288	LESSON 236.....	299
LESSON 208.....	288	I rule my mind, which I alone must rule.	299
LESSON 209.....	288	LESSON 237.....	299
LESSON 210.....	288	Now would I be as God created me.	299
LESSON 211.....	288	LESSON 238.....	299
LESSON 212.....	288	On my decision all salvation rests.	299
LESSON 213.....	289	LESSON 239.....	300
LESSON 214.....	289	The glory of my Father is my own.	300
LESSON 215.....	289	LESSON 240.....	300
LESSON 216.....	289	Fear is not justified in any form.....	300
LESSON 217.....	289		
LESSON 218.....	289	What is the World?.....	301
LESSON 219.....	290	LESSON 241.....	302
LESSON 220.....	290	This holy instant is salvation come.....	302
		LESSON 242.....	302
PART II.....	291	This day is God's. It is my gift to Him.....	302
Introduction.....	291	LESSON 243.....	302
		Today I will judge nothing that occurs.	302
What is Forgiveness?.....	293	LESSON 244.....	302
LESSON 221.....	294	I am in danger nowhere in the world.....	302
Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still.....	294	LESSON 245.....	303
LESSON 222.....	294	Your peace is with me, Father. I am safe.....	303
God is with me. I live and move in Him.	294	LESSON 246.....	303
LESSON 223.....	294	To love my Father is to love His Son.	303
God is my life. I have no life but His.	294	LESSON 247.....	303
LESSON 224.....	294	Without forgiveness I will still be blind.....	303
God is my Father, and He loves His Son.....	294	LESSON 248.....	303
LESSON 225.....	295	Whatever suffers is not part of me.	303
God is my Father, and His Son loves Him.....	295	LESSON 249.....	304
LESSON 226.....	295	Forgiveness ends all suffering and loss.	304
My home awaits me. I will hasten there.	295	LESSON 250.....	304
LESSON 227.....	295	Let me not see myself as limited.	304
This is my holy instant of release.....	295		
LESSON 228.....	295	What is Sin?.....	305
God has condemned me not. No more do I.	295	LESSON 251.....	306
LESSON 229.....	296	I am in need of nothing but the truth.	306
Love, Which created me, is what I am.....	296	LESSON 252.....	306
LESSON 230.....	296	The Son of God is my Identity.....	306
Now will I seek and find the peace of God.	296	LESSON 253.....	306
		My Self is ruler of the universe.....	306
What is Salvation?.....	297	LESSON 254.....	306
LESSON 231.....	298	Let every voice but God's be still in me.	306
Father, I will but to remember You.....	298		

SAMPLE PAGES

LESSON 255.....	307	LESSON 278.....	315
This day I choose to spend in perfect peace.	307	If I am bound, my Father is not free.	315
LESSON 256.....	307	LESSON 279.....	316
God is the only goal I have today.	307	Creation's freedom promises my own.....	316
LESSON 257.....	307	LESSON 280.....	316
Let me remember what my purpose is.	307	What limits can I lay upon God's Son?.....	316
LESSON 258.....	307		
Let me remember that my goal is God.	307	What is the Holy Spirit?.....	317
LESSON 259.....	308	LESSON 281.....	318
Let me remember that there is no sin.	308	I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts.	318
LESSON 260.....	308	LESSON 282.....	318
Let me remember God created me.	308	I will not be afraid of love today.	318
		LESSON 283.....	318
What is the Body?	309	My true Identity abides in You.	318
LESSON 261.....	310	LESSON 284.....	318
God is my refuge and security.	310	I can elect to change all thoughts that hurt.	318
LESSON 262.....	310	LESSON 285.....	319
Let me perceive no differences today.....	310	My holiness shines bright and clear today.	319
LESSON 263.....	310	LESSON 286.....	319
My holy vision sees all things as pure.	310	The hush of Heaven holds my heart today.....	319
LESSON 264.....	310	LESSON 287.....	319
I am surrounded by the Love of God.	310	You are my goal, my Father. Only You.	319
LESSON 265.....	311	LESSON 288.....	319
Creation's gentleness is all I see.....	311	Let me forget my brother's past today.....	319
LESSON 266.....	311	LESSON 289.....	320
My holy Self abides in you, God's Son.	311	The past is over. It can touch me not.	320
LESSON 267.....	311	LESSON 290.....	320
My heart is beating in the peace of God.....	311	My present happiness is all I see.	320
LESSON 268.....	311		
Let all things be exactly as they are.	311	What is the Real World?	321
LESSON 269.....	312	LESSON 291.....	322
My sight goes forth to look upon Christ's face.....	312	This is a day of stillness and of peace.	322
LESSON 270.....	312	LESSON 292.....	322
I will not use the body's eyes today.....	312	A happy outcome to all things is sure.	322
		LESSON 293.....	322
What is the Christ?	313	All fear is past and only love is here.	322
LESSON 271.....	314	LESSON 294.....	322
Christ's is the vision I will use today.....	314	My body is a wholly neutral thing.	322
LESSON 272.....	314	LESSON 295.....	323
How can illusions satisfy God's Son?	314	The Holy Spirit looks through me today.....	323
LESSON 273.....	314	LESSON 296.....	323
The stillness of the peace of God is mine.	314	The Holy Spirit speaks through me today.....	323
LESSON 274.....	314	LESSON 297.....	323
Today belongs to Love. Let me not fear.	314	Forgiveness is the only gift I give.	323
LESSON 275.....	315	LESSON 298.....	323
God's healing Voice protects all things today.....	315	I love You, Father, and I love Your Son.	323
LESSON 276.....	315	LESSON 299.....	324
The Word of God is given me to speak.	315	Eternal holiness abides in me.....	324
LESSON 277.....	315	LESSON 300.....	324
Let me not bind Your Son with laws I made.....	315	Only an instant does this world endure.....	324

SAMPLE PAGES

What is the Second Coming?.....	325	LESSON 324.....	334
LESSON 301.....	326	I merely follow, for I would not lead.....	334
And God Himself shall wipe away all tears.....	326	LESSON 325.....	335
LESSON 302.....	326	All things I think I see reflect ideas.	335
Where darkness was I look upon the light.....	326	LESSON 326.....	335
LESSON 303.....	326	I am forever an Effect of God.	335
The holy Christ is born in me today.....	326	LESSON 327.....	335
LESSON 304.....	326	I need but call and You will answer me.	335
Let not my world obscure the sight of Christ.....	326	LESSON 328.....	335
LESSON 305.....	327	I choose the second place to gain the first.	335
There is a peace that Christ bestows on us.....	327	LESSON 329.....	336
LESSON 306.....	327	I have already chosen what You will.....	336
The gift of Christ is all I seek today.	327	LESSON 330.....	336
LESSON 307.....	327	I will not hurt myself again today.....	336
Conflicting wishes cannot be my will.	327	What is the Ego?.....	337
LESSON 308.....	327	LESSON 331.....	338
This instant is the only time there is.	327	There is no conflict, for my will is Yours.....	338
LESSON 309.....	328	LESSON 332.....	338
I will not fear to look within today.....	328	Fear binds the world. Forgiveness sets it free.	338
LESSON 310.....	328	LESSON 333.....	338
In fearlessness and love I spend today.	328	Forgiveness ends the dream of conflict here.	338
What is the Last Judgment?	329	LESSON 334.....	338
LESSON 311.....	330	Today I claim the gifts forgiveness gives.	338
I judge all things as I would have them be.	330	LESSON 335.....	339
LESSON 312.....	330	I choose to see my brother's sinlessness.....	339
I see all things as I would have them be.....	330	LESSON 336.....	339
LESSON 313.....	330	Forgiveness lets me know that minds are joined.	339
Now let a new perception come to me.	330	LESSON 337.....	339
LESSON 314.....	330	My sinlessness protects me from all harm.....	339
I seek a future different from the past.....	330	LESSON 338.....	339
LESSON 315.....	331	I am affected only by my thoughts.	339
All gifts my brothers give belong to me.....	331	LESSON 339.....	340
LESSON 316.....	331	I will receive whatever I request.....	340
All gifts I give my brothers are my own.....	331	LESSON 340.....	340
LESSON 317.....	331	I can be free of suffering today.	340
I follow in the way appointed me.....	331	What is a Miracle?	341
LESSON 318.....	331	LESSON 341.....	342
In me salvation's means and end are one.	331	I can attack but my own sinlessness,And it is only	
LESSON 319.....	332	that which keeps me safe.	342
I came for the salvation of the world.....	332	LESSON 342.....	342
LESSON 320.....	332	I let forgiveness rest upon all things,For thus	
My Father gives all power unto me.....	332	forgiveness will be given me.....	342
What is Creation?.....	333	LESSON 343.....	342
LESSON 321.....	334	I am not asked to make a sacrificeTo find the mercy	
Father, my freedom is in You alone.	334	and the peace of God.....	342
LESSON 322.....	334	LESSON 344.....	342
I can give up but what was never real.	334	Today I learn the law of love; that whatI give my	
LESSON 323.....	334	brother is my gift to me.....	342
I gladly make the "sacrifice" of fear.....	334		

SAMPLE PAGES

LESSON 345.....	343	LESSON 357.....	347
I offer only miracles today,For I would have them be returned to me.	343	Truth answers every call we make to God,Responding first with miracles, and thenReturning unto us to be itself.....	347
LESSON 346.....	343	LESSON 358.....	347
Today the Peace of God envelops me, And I forget all things except His Love.	343	No call to God can be unheard nor leftUnanswered. And of this I can be sure;His answer is the one I really want.	347
LESSON 347.....	343	LESSON 359.....	348
Anger must come from judgment. Judgment isThe weapon I would use against myself,To keep the miracle away from me.	343	God's answer is some form of peace. All painIs healed; all misery replaced with joy. All prison doors are opened. And all sinIs understood as merely a mistake.	348
LESSON 348.....	343	LESSON 360.....	348
I have no cause for anger or for fear,For You surround me. And in every needThat I perceive, Your grace suffices me.	343	Peace be to me, the holy Son of God.Peace to my brother, who is one with me.Let all the world be blessed with peace through us.	348
LESSON 349.....	344	FINAL LESSONS	349
Today I let Christ's vision look uponAll things for me and judge them not, but giveEach one a miracle of love instead.	344	Introduction	349
LESSON 350.....	344	LESSONS 361 to 365.....	350
Miracles mirror God's eternal Love.To offer them is to remember Him,And through His memory to save the world.	344	EPILOGUE	351
What am I?	345	MANUAL FOR TEACHERS.....	352
LESSON 351.....	346	HOW IS CORRECTION MADE?.....	352
My sinless brother is my guide to peace.My sinful brother is my guide to pain.And which I choose to see I will behold.	346	AS FOR THE REST.....	353
LESSON 352.....	346	CLARIFICATION OF TERMS.....	354
Judgment and love are opposites. From oneCome all the sorrows of the world. But fromThe other comes the peace of God Himself.	346	THE EGO –THE MIRACLE	354
LESSON 353.....	346	FORGIVENESS – THE FACE OF CHRIST	355
My eyes, my tongue, my hands, my feet todayHave but one purpose; to be given ChristTo use to bless the world with miracles.	346	TRUE PERCEPTION – KNOWLEDGE.....	355
LESSON 354.....	346	JESUS – CHRIST	356
We stand together, Christ and I, in peaceAnd certainty of purpose. And in HimIs His Creator, as He is in me.	346	EPILOGUE.....	358
LESSON 355.....	347		
There is no end to all the peace and joy,And all the miracles that I will give,When I accept God's Word. Why not today?.....	347		
LESSON 356.....	347		
Sickness is but another name for sin.Healing is but another name for God.The miracle is thus a call to Him.	347		

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SAMPLE PAGES

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THE RHYTHM AND REASON OF REALITY

A Course In Miracles is a direct communication from God through Jesus Christ indicating the apparent conditional situation between God and man, which is one of false separation, and the manner in which that apparent schism is and was repaired. Its sole purpose is to bring enlightenment through the transformation of your mind.

Facing Your Dilemma

Let's look at *A Course In Miracles* as an effect of supra-consciousness; that is, with Jesus Christ as its true Causation. The acceptance or admission that *A Course In Miracles* originated from an absolutely unearthly Source, while it appears simple, is the single most difficult barrier to enlightenment that the immature consciousness faces. No matter how overwhelmingly predominant the evidence, both in method of origination and in content, that this is indeed so, the assertion is finally, inevitably, an act of faith. You must remember that human conceptual consciousness is explicitly formulated in a self-perpetuating structure of thought that denies singularity. Nothing could be more devastating to the dualistic mind construct, that is, limited perceptual reality, than the realization that *A Course In Miracles* is indeed not of this world, but actually Truth speaking to falsity. In other words, God-man speaking to man!

*"This course has come from him because his words
have reached you in a language you can love
and understand."* (Manual For Teachers)

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PREFACE

I have so much gratitude for Steve “Michael” Russell. With his musician’s ear, he heard the underlying rhythm running through the prose paragraphs of Jesus’ unworldly masterpiece, A Course in Miracles, and with his poetic sensibilities he saw the blank verse emerging from the prose of the Course.

As you can see in his Introduction, he saw the blank verse emerge from the prose, sporadically along the way in the early chapters of the Text, and in Chapters 26-31, the prose paragraphs morph entirely into poetic stanzas, and the same morphing occurs in the Workbook, Lessons 98-365.

While sitting at his computer in the early 90’s, reading the Course on his computer screen, he heard the rhythm in the lines, recognized the iambic pattern in the syllables of slack STRESS, slack STRESS, and realized the pattern of five sets of iambs per line. This is iambic pentameter, a poetic convention that appeared in the time of Shakespeare. To illustrate, I selected the first paragraph of Lesson 132, I loose the world from all I thought it was.

What KEEPS the WORLD in CHAINS but YOUR be LIEFS? And WHAT can SAVE the WORLD ex CEPT your SELF? be LIEF is POW er FUL in DEED. The THOUGHTS

And Russell counted, or more accurately, felt the rhythm, and after five sets of iambs, he hit the Enter Key, and the rest of the prose paragraph fell away.

What KEEPS the WORLD in CHAINS but YOUR be LIEFS?

And then again:

And WHAT can SAVE the WORLD ex CEPT your SELF?

And:

be LIEF is POW er FUL in DEED. The THOUGHTS

you HOLD are MIGHT y, AND il LU sions ARE

as STRONG in THEIR ef FECTS as IS the TRUTH.

a MAD man THINKS the WORLD he SEES is REAL,

and DOES not DOUBT it. NOR can HE be SWAYED

by QUES tion ING his THOUGHTS’ ef FECTS.

it IS but WHEN their SOURCE is RAISED to QUES tion THAT

the HOPES of FREE dom COMES to HIM at LAST.

And now a poetic stanza emerges from the prose paragraph, marching stately across the page.

To shift the metaphor from hearing to seeing, what he saw emerging from the prose paragraphs is like sitting in a movie theatre, watching the action on the screen, and then putting on your 3D glasses, and suddenly, you are viewing a panorama that was there all the time, only you could not perceive it without your glasses.

SAMPLE PAGES

The only reason I am writing this Preface is to take it one step further by demonstrating exactly how Jesus postures our voice by using a variety of poetic rhythms and techniques. Within the context of the basic iambic cadence, Jesus varies His rhythm to posture our voices to say the words exactly as He intended, while reading His words, either silently, or aloud. One way He realizes His intention is to employ the rhythmic metrics that have been used in English poetry for over four centuries.

You are already familiar with the iamb, slack STRESS: chris TINE

Here are four others:

1. Trochee, STRESS slack: RAY mond
2. Spondee, STRESS STRESS: CHRIS TINE (spoken by an irate mother)
3. Dactyl, STRESS slack slack: JON a than
4. Anapest, slack slack STRESS: ger trude STEIN

Here are illustrations of each, Lesson 340, I can be free of suffering today.

FA ther, I thank You for today, and for 1

the freedom I am certain it will bring.

THIS DAY is holy, for today YOUR SON 3

will be redeemed. His suffering is done.

For he will hear Your Voice directing him 5

to find CHRIST'S VIS ion through forgiveness, and

be free forever from all suffering.

THANKS for to/ DAY, my/ FA ther/ i was BORN

into this world but to achieve this day,

and what it holds in joy and freedom for 10

Your holy Son and for the world he made,

which is released along with him today.

Be glad today! Be glad! There is no room

for anything but joy and thanks today.

our FA/ ther HAS/ redeemed His Son this day.

Not one of us but will be saved today.

Not one who will remain in fear, and none

the father will not gather to Himself,

awake in Heaven in the Heart of Love.

Please notice that in your reading of this Lesson, your voice maintained a primarily iambic rhythm, only the underlined syllables indicate where your voice varied from the basic cadence, and in each variation, Jesus is posturing your voice to read those words with particular emphasis.

SAMPLE PAGES

In line 1, Jesus use the trochee, FA ther, emphasizing that God, the Father, is standing out from the other four sets of iambs.

In line 3, two spondees are used to emphasize THIS DAY and YOUR SON.

In line 6, the spondee /CHRIST VIS/ is used, making clear the result of forgiving the sights seen through the body's eyes that cause all our suffering.

In line 8, Jesus breaks away completely from the iambic pattern, using a dactyl, THANKS for to, and an anapest, i was BORN, framing two trochees, DAY my, and FA ther, indicating our gratitude for being born as His Son.

“OK. Enough of that,” you may be saying to yourself.

“You just used three sets of iambs,” I say.

“STOP IT!”

“Now, that's a . . .OK, I'll stop.”

Here is one more thing, very briefly. Jesus also utilizes the basic poetic techniques of sound to posture our voices, demonstrating how the sounds resonate in our ears, blending sound and sense. There are primarily three techniques:

1. Alliteration: the repetition of initial sounds.

The hush of heaven holds my heart today. (Lesson title, 286)

2. Consonance: the repetition of consonant sounds.

Here are the last two sentences of the same Lesson:

Today we will not doubt the end which God

Himself has promised us. We trust in Him,

and in ourself, who still is one with Him.

3. Assonance: the repetition of vowel sounds.

My heart is beating in the peace of God. (Lesson title, 267)

Here are the last two sentences of the same Lesson:

Father, my heart is beating in the peace

the Heart of Love created. It is there

and only there that I can be at home.

Finally, in His unworldly masterpiece Jesus is always posturing our voice by a perfect blend of sound and sense, rhythm and reason, whether we are reading His prose paragraphs, or His poetic stanzas. His singular intent is to lull us into a state of mind profoundly receptive to the Word of God.

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SAMPLE PAGES

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INTRODUCTION

Those of you who have discovered the unearthly masterpiece, *A Course In Miracles*, will no doubt be aware of, and grateful for, its divine message of the remembrance of God and reality through love and forgiveness, that are only made possible in the realization that this world is a dream of your own making. You may remember reading, amongst the literature concerning the scribing of the *Course*, references to the use of the poetic form called *iambic pentameter*. Most of you won't know exactly what this means, some notwithstanding your own claims to the contrary. Of those who do know what the term means, most will not be able to easily discern the poetic form within the prosaic layout of the *Course*.

The purpose of this volume is to present the poetry of the *Course* in a totally accessible manner. You need know nothing about poetic forms and meters to begin enjoying it immediately. You may, however, wish to read this introduction, since the search to ascertain the extent of the poetic form within the *Course* has revealed another astounding dimension in its structural integrity.

Iambic pentameter is usually described as “lines consisting of five *iamb*s”, which in turn are described as “metric feet of two syllables each, the second syllable being the stronger”. Such a description is useful to few. Put simply, a line of iambic pentameter sounds like this:

Da-dum da-dum da-dum da-dum da-dum.

This form is also called “blank verse”, a more general term denoting even rhythm without rhyming. Because the *Course* is presented entirely as prose, the extent to which this form is used is a surprising and exciting discovery.

The Text of *A Course In Miracles* can be seen as three distinct parts, two of twelve chapters each, and the last of seven chapters, each differentiated from the other by the use of meter. Within this structure, a gradual transition is made from prose to blank verse. Normal spoken English and prose is arhythmic, having sometimes one, sometimes two syllables between accents. The first twelve chapters of the *Course* are written in such prose, and the portrait of the human condition given is prosaic indeed. The very last sentence of Chapter 12 is the first glimpse of what, metrically speaking, is to come: “Your *Father could not cease to love His Son.*”

The second part begins with the first seven sections of Chapter 13 becoming increasingly iambic ~ one syllable between accents ~ until in section seven, “The Attainment of the Real World,” each paragraph contains on average only three or four irregularities. This is the metric characteristic of the second twelve chapters. Frequently, paragraphs begin with emphatic statements of light reality, given in iambic pentameter. “There is a light that this world cannot give;” is the first such occurrence. “You do not really want the world you see;” “We cannot sing redemption’s hymn alone;” “Your faith in nothing is deceiving you.” These glorious statements are each elucidated conceptually in the paragraphs that follow from them, but each also offers an opportunity to enter into real communication. For instance, you could read “*You do not really want the world you see,*” and then read on to

SAMPLE PAGES

see what this means, or you could simply say: “Oh wow! That’s actually true!” and spring immediately into Heaven. You are being prepared for a new mode of data transmission.

Deeper into the second part, increasingly strong “insertions” of iambic pentameter occur; longer passages that persist further into the paragraphs. For instance, in Chapter 21:

*Thus they define their life and where they live,
adjusting to it as they think they must,
afraid to lose the little that they have.
And so it is with all who see the body
as all they have and all their brothers have.
They try to reach each other, and they fail,
and fail again.*

Coincident with the approach of total iambic pentameter, Jesus makes this statement (in Chapter 22): “*This is a crucial period in this course*, for here the separation of you and the ego must be made complete.” And this:

*This course will be believed entirely
or not at all.
For it is wholly true or wholly false,
and cannot be but partially believed.*

Chapter 25 is the beginning of the final part. In Chapters 25 and 26 the final transition is made into perfect iambic pentameter, making feasible the presentation as poetry in the same manner as the works of Shakespeare are presented, with two columns of the short blank verse lines to a page. Encoded into the ongoing presentation of conceptual ideas is the true communication the *Course* aims to teach. Each line is a perfectly whole package of information. It is at this last part that this volume takes up the Text.

Some parts of these two chapters are still not regular enough to allow breakdown into lines, and so are presented as prose. Also, the regular iambic pentameter in these two chapters, and early in Chapter 27, often contains lines that have one extra syllable, or short lines of only four or six syllables. These discrepancies are used to emphasize ideas in the same manner that the single lines of iambic pentameter were used in the second part, only rather than lifting you into communication, they drop you out momentarily, the aim being to teach you to recognize the difference.

In the remaining chapters of the Text, the iambic pentameter is perfect. Jesus never abbreviates words to achieve this, but does make use of words with an adaptable syllable count: *Heaven* as one or two syllables, *idea* as two or three. Maintenance of the meter accounts for what frequently seemed to be unusual syntax - but which now makes perfect sense, read as poetry.

A transition from prose to poetry also occurs in the Workbook, but it is much simpler, and quicker. The first ninety lessons are plain prose, with the exception of Lesson 78, which is totally poetic. The transition occurs entirely within seven lessons. Lesson 91 is prose. The following lessons have increasing percentages of verse, but the distinction is kept very

SAMPLE PAGES

clear. Any paragraph will either be entirely prose, or entirely poetry, and within the poetry there are very few uneven or short lines. Lesson 98 is pure poetry, and it is astonishing to discover that *everything* in the *Workbook* from Lesson 98 on is in iambic pentameter ~ the introductions to Reviews, the “instructions on themes of special relevance,” such as *What is Forgiveness?*, the prayers and the Epilogue.

The Manual for Teachers and Clarification of Terms are post-production add-ons to *A Course In Miracles*, and refer to Jesus in the third person, indicating different authorship, actually a collaboration. They contain very few but very beautiful poetic passages, and these are also included here, as is a collection of iambic pentameter “zingers” from within the second part of the text.

Attempts to read the poetic form directly from the original prose layout often result in diminished comprehension. Conversely, the presentation as blank verse guarantees placing correct emphasis for understanding (though not understanding itself), and the elegance and eloquence of Jesus’ poetry, and the regular rhythmic lope, offer an expanded experience of the *Course* to the musical mind. The final and most exciting discovery of all is that whole communication occurs without the need to understand concepts at all.

The magnitude and beauty of the *Course*, simply as a work of literature and without regard to its miraculous content, adequately belie any notion of its human authorship. The divinity of the ideas expressed is beyond question. Certainly the poetic and prosaic forms contained in *A Course In Miracles* are there because that was necessary for the healing of God’s Son, since this is the Holy Spirit’s only purpose.

~ Michael Russell

SAMPLE PAGES

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PORTALS TO RHYTHMIC REALITY

Iambic pentameter lead sentences from Chapters 13 thru 24

Your Father could not cease to love His Son.
(Ch12.VIII)

There is a light that this world cannot give.
(Ch13.VI)

Awaking unto Christ is following
the laws of love of your free will, and out
of quiet recognition of the truth
in them.
(Ch13.VI)

You do not really want the world you see...
(Ch13.VII)

Christ is still there, although you know Him not.
(Ch13.VII)

We cannot sing redemption's hymn alone.
(Ch13.VII)

Determine, then, to be not as you were.
(Ch13.X)

Now it is given you to heal and teach...
(Ch13.X)

Release from guilt as you would be released.
(Ch13.X)

Your faith in nothing is deceiving you.
(Ch14.II)

The Holy Spirit asks of you but this...
(Ch14.VII)

There is no substitute for truth. And truth
will make this plain to you as you are brought
into the place where you must meet with truth.
(Ch14.VIII)

You have one test, as sure as God, by which
to recognize if what you learned is true.
(Ch14.XI)

You cannot be your guide to miracles,
for it is you who made them necessary.
(Ch14.XI)

Can you imagine what it means to have
no cares, no worries, no anxieties,
but merely to be perfectly calm
and quiet all the time?
(Ch15.I)

Think you that you can judge the Self of God?
(Ch15.V)

The Holy Spirit cannot teach through fear.
And how can He communicate with you,
while you believe that to communicate
is to make yourself alone?
(Ch15.VII)

We who are one cannot give separately.
(Ch15.X)

Fear not to recognize the whole idea
of sacrifice as solely of your making.
(Ch15.XI)

This is a course in how to know yourself.
(Ch16.III)

Your bridge is builded stronger than you think...
(Ch16.III)

Across the bridge it is so different(Ch16.VI)
As God ascends into His rightful place
and you to yours, you will experience
again the meaning of relationship
and know it to be true. Let us ascend
in peace together to the Father,
by giving Him ascendance in our minds.
(Ch17.IV)

To substitute is to accept instead.
(Ch18.I)

Let not the dream take hold to close your eyes.
(Ch18.II)

What could God give but knowledge of Himself?
(Ch18.VI)

What would you see without the fear of death?
(Ch19.IV)

SAMPLE PAGES

The holy do not interfere with truth.
(Ch20.III)

The blind become accustomed to their world
by their adjustments to it.

They think they know their way about in it.
(Ch21.I)

Thus they define their life and where they live,
adjusting to it as they think they must,
afraid to lose the little that they have.

And so it is with all who see the body
as all they have and all their brothers have.
They try to reach each other, and they fail,
and fail again.

(Ch21.I)

I am responsible for what I see.
I choose the feelings I experience,
and I decide upon the goal I would achieve.
And everything that seems to happen to me
I ask for , and receive as I have asked.

(Ch21.II)

Begrudge not then this little offering.
(Ch21.II)

Faith and belief and vision are the means
by which the goal of holiness is reached.

(Ch21.III)

Where would the answer be but in the Source?
(Ch21.V)

You *are* your brother's savior. He is yours.
Reason speaks happily indeed of this.

This gracious plan was given love by Love.
And what Love plans is like Itself in this:

Being united, It would have you learn
what you must be. And being one with It,
it must be given you

to give what It has given, and gives still.

Spend but an instant in the glad acceptance
of what is given you to give your brother,
and learn with him

what has been given both of you.

To give is no more blessed than to receive.

But neither is it less.

(Ch21.VI)

The Son of God is always blessed as one.
(Ch21.VI)

Take pity on yourself, so long enslaved.
(Ch22.IN)

This is a crucial period in this course,
for here the separation of you and the ego must
be made complete.

(Ch22.II)

This course will be believed entirely
or not at all. For it is wholly true
or wholly false,
and cannot be but partially believed.

(Ch22.II)

The ego's whole continuance depends
on its belief you cannot learn this course.

(Ch22.III)

These eyes, made not to see, will never see.
(Ch22.III)

If you were one with God and recognized
this oneness, you would know His power is yours.
But you will not remember this while you
believe attack of any kind means anything.

(Ch22.VI)

Nothing around you but is part of you.
(Ch23.IN)

Be certain that it is impossible
God and the ego, or yourself and it,
will ever meet.

You seem to meet,

and make your strange alliances on grounds
that have no meaning.

For your beliefs converge upon the body,
the ego's chosen home, which you believe
is yours.

(Ch23.I)

What *you* remember *is* a part of you.

For you must be as God created you.

Truth does not fight against illusions,
nor do illusions fight against the truth.

Illusions battle only with themselves.

Being fragmented, they fragment. But truth

SAMPLE PAGES

is indivisible, and far beyond
their little reach. You will remember what
you know when you have learned you cannot be
in conflict. One illusion about yourself
can battle with another, yet the war
of two illusions is a state
where nothing happens. There is
no victor and there is no victory.
And truth stands radiant, apart from conflict,
untouched and quiet in the peace of God.
(Ch23.I)

The “laws” of chaos can be brought to light,
though never understood. Chaotic laws
are hardly meaningful, and therefore out
of reason’s sphere. Yet they appear to be
an obstacle to reason and to truth.
(Ch23.II)

How can some forms of murder not mean death?
Can an attack in any form be love?
What form of condemnation is a blessing?
Who makes his savior powerless
and finds salvation?
(Ch23.II)

Where God created life, there life must be.
(Ch23.II)

To learn this course requires willingness
to question every value that you hold.
Not one can be kept hidden and obscure
but it will jeopardize your learning.
No belief is neutral.
(Ch24.IN)

You have come far along the way of truth;
too far to falter now. Just one step more,
and every vestige of the fear of God
will melt away in love.
(Ch24.II)

Here is your savior *from* your specialness.
He is in need of your acceptance of
himself as part of you, as you for his.
(Ch24.II)

Forgiveness is the end of specialness.
(Ch24.III)

Without foundation nothing is secure.
(Ch24.III)

Forgive the great Creator of the universe,
the Source of life, of love and holiness,
the perfect Father of a perfect Son,
for your illusions of your specialness.
(Ch24.III)

The slaves of specialness will yet be free.
Such is the Will of God and of His Son.
(Ch24.III)

Rejoice you have no eyes with which to see;
no ears to listen, and no hands to hold
nor feet to guide. Be glad that only Christ
can lend you His, while you have need of them.
(Ch24.V)

The Father keeps what He created safe.
(Ch24.VII)