



A BETTER WAY

Conclusion of *Return to the Heart of God*

by Robert Perry

CONTENTS

The Conclusion of	
<i>Return to the Heart of God</i>	
by Robert Perry	1
<hr/>	
Circle News	9
<i>Return to the Heart of God</i>	9
Articles on Gary Renard	10
Circle Mailbox	10

What are we to say about the thought system we have just surveyed? Having reached the end of our tour, I would like to offer some final reflections of a more personal nature.

Before I encountered the Course, I thought I knew the basic outlines of spiritual truth. In my mind, there was really nothing more to learn. The only task left was to apply what I had already learned. Then the

Course came into my life. Initially, it seemed to fit my preconceptions: "Okay, yes, our real nature is divine, and we are in this world to fully realize our true nature and reunite with God. Yep, sounds about right." Yet I also recognized unsettling ways in which the Course frustrated my preconceptions of spiritual truth. I would come across ideas that I hadn't read in any other teaching. I didn't quite know what to do with these, and this contributed to me keeping a wary distance between myself and the Course.

As time passed, and I began to form my own ideas about the Course, it began to frustrate my preconceptions of *it*. Each time I thought I had sized it up, I realized that I had boxed up only certain aspects of it, while new aspects kept presenting themselves to me in a process that seemed endless. Slowly, without me really noticing, the Course was gradually reshaping the convenient little house I had built for spiritual truth. It was knocking out walls, adding on rooms, digging out basements, building additional stories, painting on new colors. Construction and reconstruction were going on constantly, day and night. The Course was making me aware of vital issues in life that I had never paid any attention to. It was also sensitizing me to the importance of subjects like postmodernism, Freudian psychology, Eastern mysticism, literature, poetry, theology, and many others. I finally realized that this expansion of my view of the Course and of spiritual truth would never stop. I realized that, under the Course's influence, my view of reality itself would be ever growing, with new rooms always being added on.

Therefore, today, twenty-five years later, I stand before this thought system more humbled and more astonished than ever. I want to tell you what I find so amazing about it, yet I don't feel qualified. Anything I say would be partial, and would ultimately reveal that I don't really get it. This teaching is simply far bigger than my mind is (or at least seems to be). Yet at the same time, I feel compelled to share what I can, even if it's partial, even if it doesn't do justice to the Course's real depth and breadth. So, with that qualifier, allow me to share what I find so remarkable about the Course's teaching.

In doing so, I will speak both of the Course and of its author. It's no secret that its author claims to be Jesus, a claim that I have increasingly embraced over the years. Yet even if one is skeptical or even dismissive of this claim, it is hard to deny that the Course bears the mark of an extremely distinctive mind. It is absolutely not a stream of rehashed spiritual concepts. The ideas, the language, the imagery—indeed, everything about

Continued on page 3

PUBLISHED BY

Circle of Atonement

P.O. Box 4238

West Sedona, AZ 86340

Phone: (928) 282-0790

Fax: (928) 282-0523

Toll-free (orders only): (888) 357-7520

E-mail: info@circleofa.org

Website: www.circleofa.org

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

A Better Way is published bimonthly by e-mail. If you wish to subscribe, please visit our website.

CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT

is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to A Course in Miracles. It was founded in 1993. Its publishing division, Circle Publishing, was founded in 2003.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Perry

Nicola Perry

Greg Mackie

André Gendron

Rick Baker

FINANCIAL POLICY

The Circle is supported entirely by your purchases and charitable gifts, and we ask you to look within to see if you might be led to support our vision financially with a donation (any donations are tax deductible). We encourage you to give not in payment for goods or services received, but in support of our work and outreach.

“One rule should always be observed: No one should be turned away because he cannot pay” (P-3.III.6:1). If there are any of our materials or services that you want but cannot afford, please let us know, and give whatever you can.

MAILING LIST POLICY

The Circle will share its mailing list on request with other A Course in Miracles organizations, using our discretion and being sensitive to guidance. If you do not want your name shared in this way, please let us know and we will ensure it is not.

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT SAYS

A Course in Miracles is a spiritual path. Its purpose is to train us to work miracles—to accept and extend to others the shifts in perception that awaken us to God. It consists of three volumes, which signify the three aspects of its program:

◆ Text : Through studying the teaching, the Course’s thought system first enters our minds.

◆ Workbook for Students: Through doing the practice, the Course’s thought system penetrates more and more deeply into our minds.

◆ Manual for Teachers: Through extending our healed perception to others, the Course’s thought system receives its final reinforcement and becomes the only thing in our minds.

The Course’s message is that the source of our suffering is not the world’s mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it is a realm of pure, changeless, unified spirit. This realization allows us to forgive the world’s apparent mistreatment of us by recognizing that it did not actually occur. And as we see this forgiveness come forth from us—see that we are capable of something genuinely loving and egoless—we gradually realize that we never defiled ourselves. Thus we awaken to the untouched innocence of our true nature.

REGULAR CLASSES ♦ SEDONA, AZ

Daily Morning Workbook Class

With Greg Mackie and Robert Perry

Weekdays, 8:30 - 9:30 am

Weekly Evening Class

With Robert Perry and Greg Mackie

Study of the Text of

A Course in Miracles

Tuesdays, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Call our office for details

REGULAR CLASSES ♦ PORTLAND, OR

Weekly Morning Class

With Allen Watson

In-depth study of the Text of

A Course in Miracles

Tuesdays, 10:30am - 12:30 pm

Contact Allen Watson

allen@circleofa.com - (503) 916-9411

Unity Church of Beaverton Class

With Steven Holland

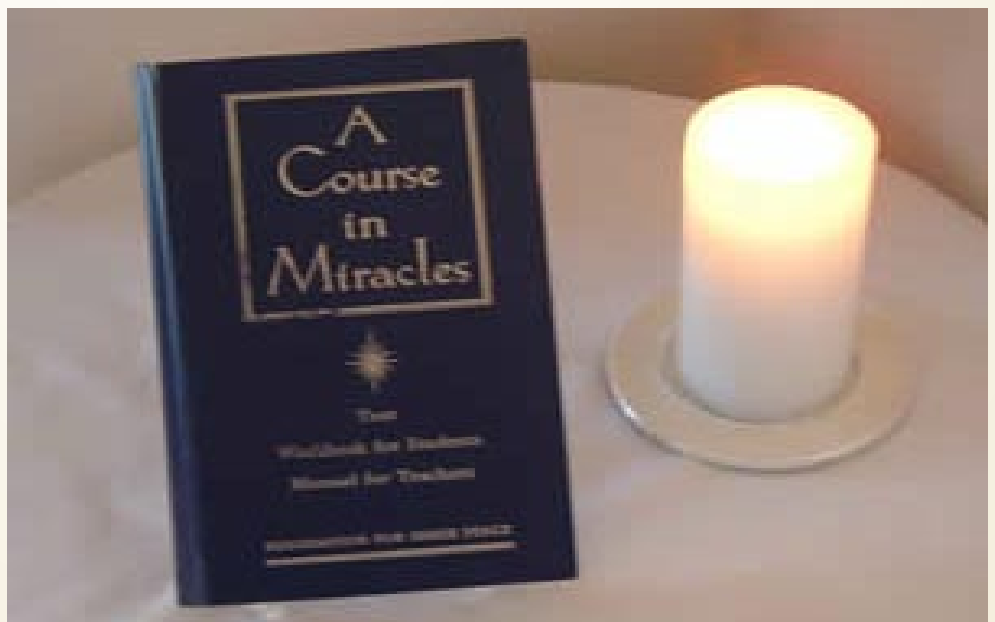
In-depth study of the Text of

A Course in Miracles

Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 12:00 pm

Contact Unity Church of Beaverton

(503) 646-3364



it—shine with a creativity and originality that reveal this to be the work of a single towering mind. For the purposes of this conclusion, I will simply call him “the author.”

On a strictly intellectual level, the Course’s author demonstrates a mastery that I find breathtaking. Students often believe that the Course repeats a few simple ideas over and over, yet *nothing* could be further from the truth. There are in reality thousands of ideas in its system. It covers a phenomenally broad range of topics. This includes countless topics in human psychology and relationships, in spirituality and religion, and in philosophy and theology. Indeed, each word of any significance in the Course acquires its own family of Course-specific meanings as it recurs through these pages. Each reference to a word like “loss,” for example, will frame that word in certain very specific ways (for instance, “Yet all loss comes only from your own misunderstanding”¹). When you add up all the different references, a broad, multifaceted, yet unified perspective on that word will emerge. So far as I can tell, this is true of every word in the Course beyond minor words like “the” and “and.”

This, in fact, is part of why the Course’s teaching is so hard to learn. Virtually every word is given special meaning. This special meaning may merely be a deepening and nuancing of the word’s conventional meaning, or it may be a fundamental correction of the conventional meaning, making this essentially a new word. Either way, the reader encounters a sentence in which word after word is part of a specialized vocabulary. If only one word meant something new, you could readily clarify its meaning by looking to the surrounding words. But if the surrounding words carry new meanings as well, what do you do then? All you can do is lift yourself up bit by bit. As you understand one word in the Course’s vocabulary a little better, that sheds light on every word it comes into contact with. In this way, you slowly climb the ladder into greater and greater understanding of the teaching.

Whenever I do a study of a particular word or a certain topic, I am struck by the brilliance and cogency of what the Course has to say on that subject. Maybe you can’t prove the Course’s perspective on that topic, but it does make surprising sense. It seems to accord with both experience and logic, and it contributes to practical change. Frequently, what the Course has to say on these topics is startlingly original. For instance, for two thousand years Christianity has called the crucifixion the Atonement, yet in complete contrast, the Course calls the *resurrection* the Atonement. Embedded in this single change of terminology is a whole new vision of Atonement and of our relationship with God. Atonement has to do with reconciling with God. In the traditional version, our break with God was frighteningly real, and so, in order to reconcile with Him, someone has to pay for that break—in blood. In the Course’s new vision, however, our break with God was only apparent, and so we reconcile with God by simply waking up to His never-changing Love for us. Given this view, it is only natural for the Course to say that Jesus opened the way for our reconciliation with God not by dying, but by awakening to unlimited life—by resurrecting. You can’t prove this new interpretation, of course, yet you also cannot easily put it out of mind.

Another apparently original contribution is the Course’s teaching on the subject of free choice. The Course claims that free choice isn’t free in the true sense of the word. Yes, it says, we are genuinely free to choose between alternatives. Yet freedom, as the Course points out, means doing what you want. And if part of you wants one alternative and the other part of you wants the other alternative, then no matter which one you choose, you don’t *entirely* get to do what you want. The Course therefore concludes that free choice is not real freedom. I’ve never heard anything like this before, yet it is completely logical, and it fits my experience. Even once I have chosen one of the alternatives, there is still a sense of imprisonment since the part of me that wanted the other alternative doesn’t get to do what it wants. And how can a sense of imprisonment be called freedom?

These are just two out of countless examples. With seemingly every topic the Course touches, it says things that appear to be strikingly original, and yet these same things seem logical and reasonable and inspire transformation. The result is that each topic stands on its own as a minor masterpiece. Each one could one day be recognized as an important contribution to humanity’s thought. Yet that is only half the story. The other half is that, somehow, each topic fits seamlessly with all the other topics. What the Course has to say about freedom, for instance, fits perfectly with what it has to say about Atonement and loss and everything

else. Thus, if you truly and completely understand its teaching about freedom, you simultaneously understand everything in its system. You could say, then, that each topic implicitly contains the whole teaching, with all of its thousands of parts.

This means that, in the end, the teaching is remarkably unitary. The more you understand it, the more you see how each idea leads to every other idea; the more you see them all weaving together into a pristine simplicity. This simplicity, however, is not simple minded. Rather, it is the simplicity of thousands of threads drawing into one.

This blending of seemingly disparate themes is one of the Course's great strengths. It has a way of taking ideas that have historically been seen as poles apart and weaving them together. In its teaching, uniting your self with God and realizing you *have* no self—two things that have traditionally been seen as different alternatives—are the same thing. Performing a useful function in this world contributes to detaching from the world and realizing its illusory nature. Healing the body comes from realizing there is no body to heal. Fulfilling your one responsibility to work out your own salvation is only done by helping others. Accessing God's grace is achieved through diligent self-effort. Awakening to nondual reality beyond this world is done by joining with other people *in* the world. Surrendering to what is and entering the limitless present is done by setting clear goals and pursuing them in a determined, organized fashion. Again and again the Course takes concepts that the human mind has tended to see as separate and weaves them together so seamlessly that they begin to look inseparable. After a while you become unable to think of one without thinking of the other.

Through this power to synthesize, the Course honors and incorporates so much of what has gone before, while at the same time managing to break new ground. Here is a vision, then, which moves with the currents of humanity's perennial spiritual wisdom, yet which also strikes off in bold, original directions of its own. I believe that both sides of this equation are essential to appreciating what the Course is. I treasure the ways in which the Course echoes the insights of humanity's sages and mystics, as well as psychologists, philosophers, and even contemporary experts in positive thinking and motivation. There is something truly universal about it. Yet I also cherish its uniqueness. There is simply nothing else like it. Many of its core themes are insights that cannot be found anywhere else; or if they can, they are well hidden.

The Course's author takes this intellectual mastery and pours all of it into a single goal: moving us from our current condition into the realization of true reality. It seems as if every fiber of his being is focused on this single task. In order to accomplish this task, he brings to the table a variety of qualities that, again, may not initially seem to go together. He brings together the highest and the lowest, the darkest and the brightest, the celestial and the terrestrial, the most pessimistic and the most optimistic.

Real change has to begin with an accurate, in-depth awareness of our current condition, and in this the author of the Course excels. I get the feeling that he knows us very well, unbelievably well. He sees, unvarnished, the way we live our lives. He sees our quest for worldly things, for status, even for dominance. He sees our transitory relationships. Yet what is far more unnerving is that he sees what goes on in the privacy of our minds. He sees our goals change "ten times an hour."² He sees the names we secretly call ourselves, such as "callous" and "emotionally shallow."³ He sees us inwardly treating our image of ourselves as a devotee would treat a god.⁴ He sees us accusing ourselves of having ulterior motives even when our motives are genuinely loving.⁵ He sees the quiet disappointment we experience when we reach the goals we thought would make us deliriously happy. He sees the slow despair that creeps into our veins as we gradually figure out that our hopes and dreams are never going to be fulfilled. The Course is full of passages that lay bare a private inner life that each of us thought was unique to himself or herself alone and therefore safely secret.

Yet his understanding of our minds and lives doesn't stop with what we are aware of. He dives down beneath the conscious mind into a vast unconscious, full of fear and darkness and, indeed, madness. I find it frankly disturbing to think that just below my consciousness lies the nightmarish region described by the Course. The caverns of this underground realm are dominated by the sinister presence of the ego, an ego which the Course describes in decidedly satanic terms. The essence of the ego is hostility and grandiosity. It wants to raise itself up while putting everyone else—others, God, even ourselves—at its feet. What makes

this all the more disturbing is that these unconscious motivations do not stay in the unconscious. They rise to the surface in disguised form, in the form of the seemingly innocent motivations that drive everyday life.

I have often said that I know of no darker vision of human nature than that of *A Course in Miracles*. This may seem like a negative, yet here too the Course earns my respect. For there *is* something deeply wrong with the world, and it takes inner strength to place the responsibility, as Shakespeare said, not in our stars, but in ourselves. It is so popular to place the source of suffering somewhere outside of us: in our upbringing, in our genes, or in evil people out there. Yet the Course has the integrity to eschew the popular thing and say the responsible thing. And if we *are* responsible for the madness of the world, then surely that means that beneath our respectable veneers, madness lurks within us.

Although I know of no darker vision of human nature, I also know of no brighter, more affirming vision of ultimate reality, and this includes *our* reality. Even while the Course depicts our conventional thoughts and motives in satanic terms, it depicts our true nature in angelic terms. It says that we are as pure and holy as God Himself, and that this purity remains untainted by all of the nasty things we have ever thought or done. This is why the author of the Course, in a private aside to his scribes, likened us to demons, reminding them that demons are really just fallen angels. But then he added that the real truth is that angels cannot *really* fall—and neither can we.⁶

In the same way, while he depicts this world as “a slaughter house,”⁷ where all things live only to die, he depicts ultimate reality as a paradise beyond imagination. It is a realm that is pure perfection, free of the pain and limitation of time and space. It is a realm that contains, in limitless measure, the love, unity, and sense of purpose that we all long for. What is most inspiring for me is the Course’s vision of God. This is a God Who is so purely loving, so free of human foibles, as to defy comprehension. If we respond to this vision of God with disbelief, it is not because He seems too human to be God, but because He seems too good to be true.

This extraordinarily affirming vision of reality answers a profound need in us. We need to be assured that in the final analysis all is very, very well. In my younger days I often felt oppressed by the meaninglessness of it all. Beyond any unpleasant events in my personal life, there was the constant sickening hum of a reality without meaning. Whatever our overall view of reality is, it provides the backdrop for how we interpret all of our experiences in life. We therefore possess a deep need for an ultimately affirming view, and this is what the Course has given me. Now, all the little indignities of this world are so much easier to take, because I interpret them against the backdrop of the Course’s sublime affirmation of what truly is.

Having sketched this unimaginably lofty vision of reality, the Course then calls on us to scale these dizzying heights. Its vision of reality quite naturally determines its goals. The author of the Course never ceases calling us to a perfection that lies beyond every trace of human ego. He asks us to habitually forgive even the most extreme attacks. He instructs us to comply with outrageous demands in order to show our dear brother a higher way of being.⁸ In the end, he calls us to love each and every person—even strangers and attackers—with the same total, unconditional love.⁹ In these ways, he reminds one very much of the historical Jesus and his radical injunctions to love your enemy and freely give your attacker twice as much as he is trying to take. One gets the persistent feeling that the author of the Course is asking us to be more than human, which makes sense since he claims we were never really human in the first place.

You have to admire the boldness of an author who calls his readers to nothing less than perfection. A lofty goal always carries the danger of appearing unrealistic, and yet experts in goal setting have long known that larger-than-life goals have the greatest power to dislodge us from our couches and spur us on to great things. Thus, even though the Course’s author runs the risk of having us give up in despair, I suspect that in setting his sights so high, he knows exactly what he’s doing.

Yet a lofty goal *will* lead to giving up unless it is coupled with hope and encouragement, and the author of the Course provides ample amounts of both. He constantly tells us that we *will* get there, that we are making progress, that we are no longer wholly insane, that we don’t have all that far to go, that the end is guaranteed by God. In one place, after saying that we are developmentally disabled when it comes to learning how to love, he tells us that our *potential* for learning is “limitless.”¹⁰ He then promises us, “You will become an

excellent learner and an excellent teacher.”¹¹ In the face of learning the kind of love he is talking about, I need that sort of encouragement. Every student does.

Lofty goals will also fail unless we are given practical tools that yield real results in the short term. The Course is renowned for this. However lofty its teachings are, it hooks those teachings up to practical methods that genuinely work. These methods are doable; they are truly within our reach. I’m thinking in particular of the Workbook, which provides explicit instructions for its daily practices. These practices start out very light—a couple of minutes a day—counting on the fact that as we see their benefits, we will be willing to give more time and effort. Yet even at their heaviest, they ask for only several minutes an hour—time that most of us waste anyway. I myself am continually amazed at the effectiveness of the Course’s practices. I am not by nature a disciplined person, and yet the benefits of the Course’s discipline have proved so valuable for me that, all these years down the line, I am more committed to its daily practice than ever.

One final element contributes to the accessibility of the Course’s lofty goal, and this is the author’s determination to meet us where we are. He has made major concessions to a broad range of earthly needs. For example, he affirms our need to have a role in the world that we alone can fill, even though this threatens to bolster our ego’s addiction to being special. All he asks is that we leave the selection of this role to the Holy Spirit. He supports our need to be in relationship with others, even though relationships are such a hotbed of ego. He just asks us to give them to the Holy Spirit and says that if we do, we can enjoy relationships that are more enduring, harmonious, and truly united. He acknowledges our need to make decisions, “whether they be illusions or not.”¹² He just says that we’ll make better decisions if we ask for the Holy Spirit’s guidance. He even acknowledges our need for money and material things, despite his warnings that as ends in themselves, they are killers of spiritual progress. He says that the Holy Spirit will literally take care of our material needs, if we give ourselves single-mindedly to the life and function that He has laid out for us.

The Course, in other words, contains this strange combination of a world-transcending goal with a real honoring of the breadth of our earthly experience. This makes it fully possible to live a life in society, go to work, brave the freeways, raise a family, pay the bills, while making every minute an expression of divine guidance and a pursuit of a transcendent goal.

These elements that I have sketched come together to produce a single quality of utmost significance: *maximal power to induce change*. Every single element makes a vital contribution to this quality. By convincing us that he knows us, the author of the Course makes us feel that his teachings fit us, that they are for us. By painting our unconscious in such dark terms, he persuades us that what needs to change is inside of us, not outside, and that the need for change is immense and urgent. By painting true reality in such bright terms, he gives us a rational basis for embracing a whole new outlook, an outlook that is immeasurably bright. We choose this outlook not as an act of wishful thinking, but as an acknowledgment of what is real. By setting a lofty goal for us, he spurs us to reach for heights that otherwise wouldn’t occur to us. By giving us hope and encouragement, and providing us with practical methods, he makes the notion of steady progress toward these heights seem realistic, something that is actually within our reach. Finally, by allowing us the elements of a normal life (only purified by the Holy Spirit), he makes it clear that this is not a path of sacrifice, nor one of lonely retreat from the human community. At this point, what is left to object to? All in all, it’s as if the author has combined a single-minded dedication to our transformation with a deep awareness of what inspires transformation, and put that dedication and awareness into every corner of his system.

Yes, he is trying to change us. It may be for the sake of revealing our changeless Identity, yet it still means what we normally call change, and this arouses in us an instinctive wariness and suspicion. We immediately begin looking for reasons to not do what he asks. Perhaps our first question is “Who am I changing *for*?” We are so used to being asked to change for God’s sake or Jesus’ sake or the church’s sake or society’s sake or our family’s sake. Something in us resists this kind of change, for it feels like a subtle betrayal of ourselves. Yet even though this author claims to be Jesus, he makes it continually clear that it’s not about him. Rather, it’s all about *our* liberation from our self-made prisons, a liberation that can’t help but benefit everyone else. He makes it so constantly clear that we do the Course out of a kind of enlightened self-interest that our defenses slowly tire of being raised and eventually relax.

He is trying to change something that seems so deep-seated in us, so fundamental, that we want to dismiss what he says. Yet he has this knack for saying things that we immediately recognize as plausible, logical, even practical, despite the fact that they have never been said before and challenge every idea we live by. For example, the quest to be special dominates human life. Who doesn't want to be singled out for special honor and favor, either loudly by the masses or quietly by a cherished few? Yet the author of the Course makes this sage observation: "To 'single out' is to 'make alone,' and thus make lonely."¹³ The instant you read this line you see the logic of it, and because of this, you cannot entirely defend yourself against it. To some extent, it just goes in, whether you like it or not. Once you've read it, you can never completely go back to the place you were before you read it. And yet, to really embrace this line means relinquishing every desire to outdo, to be better than, to be on top, to be specially loved, to be *singled out*. You can refuse to go all the way with such a line, but you cannot entirely dismiss it.

This appears to be the case even when his ideas fly in the face of all spiritual truth as we know it. One example is his teaching that this world was not created by God. He teaches that it was dreamt by us out of our insanity, as constant, three-dimensional proof of the "reality" of separation, and as a delivery device for the punishment we unconsciously think we deserve. When you first encounter this teaching, you probably think, "Surely he can't mean this. Spiritual teachings seem to be unanimous in acknowledging that the world is the expression of God." But once the idea gets in your head, it slowly works away at you. You start to think, "You know, I've always said this is a crazy world. And yes, it has had the effect of convincing me that separation—from others, from God—is real. And, now that I think about it, it does seem to be constantly punishing me." You increasingly realize how incongruous it is to think of God creating such a place. You slowly concede that this account of the world, though initially bizarre and uninspiring, more accurately fits your experience of living in this world.

Indeed, I am constantly struck by how sober, clear-eyed, and logical the author of the Course is. I've encountered so many spiritual teachings that try to make me feel good by romanticizing the ugly realities of life. "It's all perfect." "You were doing your best." "It was meant to be." "There are no mistakes." It sometimes strikes me as so much denial. There are times when spirituality seems like a salesman whose hypnotic words can make us feel inspired about any worthless piece of junk. That is why I find the Course so refreshing. Its author looks at things without romanticizing them. He delights in plain observations and ordinary black-and-white distinctions, the kind that most spiritual seekers try to unravel with spiritual cleverness. For instance, he pokes fun at those who try to glorify the cycles of nature, pointing out that the downstroke of all these cycles is death.¹⁴ In personal guidance to his scribes, he praised Freud's pessimistic view of the ego and criticized later theorists for trying to endow the ego with more positive, even spiritual attributes. He said, "Freud was more clear-sighted about this, because he knew a *bad* thing when he perceived it."¹⁵

We do not exactly expect to hear a teacher of spirituality praise Sigmund Freud for his pessimism. Yet this praise captures so much of *this* teacher's whole tenor of mind. His next comment is equally revealing: "But he failed to recognize that a bad thing cannot exist." Here we see where he is ultimately heading. With his sober, logical mind, he wants to lift us into a new vision of reality. He wants to show us a wondrous reality that is more real than the ugliness we see with our eyes. He doesn't want a spirituality that shakes free of the oppressive restraints of rationality. The problem, from his standpoint, is not rationality but *irrationality*, which he claims every one of us is mired in. He wants a spirituality in which we become fully rational; in which, rather than romantically endowing bad things with spiritual attributes, we at last reach the quiet, clear-sighted recognition that a bad thing simply cannot exist.

The net effect is that the more you read his words, the harder it becomes to write him off. You desperately want to, for there is a tug o' war going on, in which you either write him off or he pulls your mind all the way over to his side. So at first you think, "It's just hyperbole," "It's very pretty, but not very practical," or "This really applies to spiritual prodigies, not to me." But the longer you read him, the more reasonable he sounds, as if he is explaining to you in the plainest possible language how you personally can become sane and happy. Slowly, inexorably, it begins to dawn on you, "Oh my God, he really means it. He is actually for real."

This is the power of the Course’s teaching—to cause us to seriously consider the unthinkable, to take our minds to radically new places. It does this like nothing I have seen. Despite the Course’s popularity in certain circles, I live every day with the feeling that the world has no idea what a treasure has landed on its shores. I can only hope that this treasure will one day be discovered.

• • •

1. T-8.VII.5:1.

2. W-pI.186.10:4.

3. T-11.V.9:1.

4. P-2.In.3:6.

5. T-9.VII.4:5-6.

6. The actual passage, which comes from the Urtext, the original typescript of the Course, reads this way: “After all, Lucifer fell, but he was still an angel. He is thus the symbol for man. Atonement is the knowledge that the belief that angels can fall is false.”

7. M-13.4:4.

8. T-12.III.4:1.

9. T-13.X.11:1.

10. T-12.V.9:1.

11. T-12.V.8:6.

12. S-1.I.2:4.

13. T-13.III.12:1.

14. M-27.1.

15. This quote (along with the quote in the next paragraph) is from the Urtext, the original typescript of the Course.



E-mail your comments to the author at: robert@circleofa.org

Robert Perry. *He is the author or co-author of twenty books and booklets, including Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with ‘A Course in Miracles’.*

Return to the Heart of God

The PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY of
A COURSE in MIRACLES



*"Robert Perry beautifully illuminates the principles of A Course in Miracles.
I highly recommend it." — Marianne Williamson*

ROBERT PERRY

An in-depth exploration of the profound teachings of A Course in Miracles, and a book that continues the journey begun in Path of Light.

Dear Friend of the Circle,

Here at the Circle of Atonement we're getting ready for an important event—the publication, in December, of my new book *Return to the Heart of God*.

To quote one reader, "*Return to the Heart of God* is a phenomenal source of wisdom." And to quote another, it's nothing less than "a profound meditation" on *A Course in Miracles*.

We hope you'll be as excited by the launch of *Return to the Heart of God* as we are. And if so, we hope you'll take this chance to order your copy — or copies — at a special pre-launch saving on the regular price. Order today, and we'll guarantee delivery in time for Christmas. That's a month before you'll find it available in stores!

In peace,

Robert Perry,
Founder, Circle of Atonement

- * **Order now for Christmas delivery**
- * **Special pre-launch offer -- save up to 30%**

“Robert Perry beautifully illuminates the principles of A Course in Miracles. If you wish to understand its teachings more fully, this is a book for you. I highly recommend it.”

—Marianne Williamson, author of *A Return to Love*

“Return to the Heart of God is a phenomenal source of wisdom. Robert Perry has done a masterful job of presenting the true essence, the heart and soul, of A Course in Miracles in a way that offers hope and healing. This book is a service to the planet. Whether you are a student of the Course or someone who has never read it, if wisdom is what you seek, you are guaranteed to find it in Return to the Heart of God.”

—Iyanla Vanzant founder of *Inner Visions Institute for*

Spiritual Development, author of *Living Through the Meantime: Learning to Break the Patterns of the Past and Begin the Healing Process*

[Read more testimonials.](#)

Articles on Gary Renard

Some of you have written and asked if the Circle has a position on Gary Renard’s books. After long consideration, we have finally voiced our position. The September/October issue of Jon Mundy’s *Miracles* magazine contained articles by Robert Perry, Greg Mackie, and Jon himself all expressing the belief that Gary Renard’s ascended masters are fictional.

[You can read these articles on our website at www.circleofa.org.](http://www.circleofa.org)

[Opening a Dialogue with Gary Renard by Jon Mundy](#)

[Entities Should Not Be Multiplied Beyond Necessity by Greg Mackie](#)

[Why Don't the Masters Have an Original Thought? by Robert Perry](#)

[You can also read the feedback we've received regarding these articles.](#)

Circle Mailbox

Responses to Robert Perry’s “Open Mind Meditation: The Practice of the Final Step”

(*A Better Way* #57):

Dear Robert,

Absolutely magnificent. I’ve been doing the Course for fifteen years (I’ll be 80 next year) and have used many of the prayers you have brought together in this Open Mind Meditation. I would venture to say that you have allowed this to be done by the Holy Spirit through you.

Gratefully yours and peace, Steve Weglarz

•••

Thought your article [“Open Mind Meditation”] was fabulous. And I love the quote from the Urtext, “Meditation is a collaborative venture with God.”

Phil Brisk

I came to the Course about three years ago after practicing Zen Buddhism for about twenty-five years. I always wondered why there was not a greater emphasis on meditation, having experienced its effects.

What you call “Open Mind Meditation” sounds very similar to Shikintaza, which is the highest form of meditation. It means, literally, “just sitting.” I have had teachers explain it in similar terms to yours, such as “sit intensely listening,” or the traditional analogy of being like a cat watching a mouse hole: alert, anticipating, but relaxed. I have also heard the term “drop body and mind” which describes the condition very well also.

I am very happy that you have made this technique available and will try to modify my traditional Zen meditation (which I have continued to practice) using your suggestions.

I have had many experiences with meditation, but like all experiences, they fade. I was drawn to the Course because of its similarity with Zen. Or more accurately, the Holy Spirit presented me this wonderful gift.

Bob Broadfoot

•••

I have just finished reading “Open Mind Meditation” in the September *A Better Way*. I am moved and impressed!

Pat Pollock

ACIM Retreat
Featuring Robert Perry
March 23-27, 2007 in St. Louis
I Need Do Nothing?

[Read more on our website.](#)

BECOME A “FRIEND OF THE CIRCLE”

The Circle depends on your support to continue offering our programs, services, and outreach for new and experienced students of the Course. We invite you to become a member or “Friend of the Circle” with an annual donation as low as \$50 (income sensitive donation: \$35). Your membership includes:

- Access to Friends page on our new website, which includes discussion forums on various Course-related subjects
- Free CD of Robert Perry’s *Meditations for Resting in God* (\$12.95 value)
- 20% discount on books and audio programs
- 20% discount on educational events

Donations can be made using a check or credit card. To become a Friend of the Circle, call us at 928-282-0790 or visit our new website at www.circleofa.org and follow the link labeled “Become a Friend” on the left-hand navigational bar. The Circle of Atonement is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.