

Cycle of Rebirth

(Compiled by Sri. Ulpiano Manlangit)

Part 2

The next phase of study is the constitution of man as Monad, Ego and Personality. The fragment of Divine life known as the Monad, manifests itself upon the plane of atma as the triple spirit. The spirit itself, remains upon its own plane, that of atma. The second that of intuition, or pure reason, as it is sometimes called puts itself down one stage, and expresses itself through the matter of the plane of buddhi. The third aspect that of intelligence, puts itself down two planes, and expresses itself through the matter of the higher mental or causal plane. The expression of the Monad, on the planes of atma, buddhi and causal, is the ego or individuality, for individual means that which is not divisible without loss of identity, subsisting as one and individuality is defined as separate and distinct existence. The ego expresses itself in the lower planes as a personality, which is also triple in its manifestation and is, moreover, an accurate reflection of the arrangement of the ego. But, like other reflections it reverses itself. Intelligence of the causal plane, reflects itself as thought in the lower mental plane. Pure reason, or buddhi, reflects itself in the astral body and, in some way much more difficult to comprehend the spirit or atma reflects itself on the physical plane.

(a) The Immortal, Divine Nature or the Individuality of Man -

PRINCIPLE	PRICE	ACTIVITY
ATMA	WILL (DIVINE WILL)	HIGHER ACTION
BUDDHI	INTUITION, PURE REASON (DIVINE LOVE)	HIGHER FEELINGS
CAUSAL	INTELLECT, HIGHER MENTAL(DIVINE WISDOM)	HIGHER THOUGHTS

Fig 3 – The Higher Nature of Man

(b) The mortal/perishable Nature or Personality of Man -

PRINCIPLE	PRICE	ACTIVITY
MENTAL	THOUGHT	LOWER THOUGHTS
ASTRAL	FEELINGS	LOWER FEELINGS
PHYSICAL	ACTIVITY	LOWER ACTION

Fig 4 – The Lower Nature of Man

The personality consists of the transitory vehicles through which the true man, the Thinker, expresses himself in the physical, astral and lower mental worlds, ie the physical, astral and lower mental bodies, and of all the activities connected with these vehicles. The individuality consists of the Thinker himself, the Self in the causal body. As a tree puts out leaves, to last through spring, summer and autumn, so does the individuality put out personalities to last through the life periods spent on the physical, astral and lower mental planes. Just as the leaves take in, assimilate and

pass on nutrient to the sap, which is eventually withdrawn into the parent trunk, and then fall and perish, so does the personality gather experience and pass it on to the parent individuality, eventually when its task is completed, falling and perishing. The ego incarnates in a personality for the sake of acquiring definiteness. The ego on his own plane is magnificent, but vague in his magnificence, except in the case of men far advanced on the road of evolution. The personality with its transient feelings, desires, passions and thoughts thus forms a quasi-independent entity. In man's cycle of death and rebirth one is concerned principally with the three lower planes, the physical which is fully perceived, the invisible emotional world usually referred to as the astral plane, and the mental plane where thoughts take shape. When the outer body is physical the invisible thoughts and feelings are given expression through physical activities. But if the consciousness is removed from the physical world, and the astral body becomes the outer vehicle, the thoughts and feelings are expressed through that body in the astral world. In a similar manner, when the outer vehicle is mental, the consciousness is experiencing life through that medium. The Monad thus radiates his life outward into the denser planes of matter in order to awaken his latent divine nature. This unfoldment requires, experience in the physical, astral and mental worlds, enduring their conditions and responding to them. The object of the ego is to unfold his latent powers and this he does by putting himself down into successive personalities. Men who do not understand this and they are, of course, at the present time the great majority of humanity – look upon the personality as the real self, and consequently live for it alone, regulating their lives for what appears to be its temporary advantage. Another thing to understand briefly and will be covered in detail later is the difference between the upper mental or causal level and the lower mental or thought level. In the lower mental or thought levels the vibrations of consciousness give rise to the images or pictures, every thought appearing as a living shape. Whereas the causal levels are concerned with the expression of abstract thoughts, ideas and principles; for this level pertains to pure reason. The lower mental body deals with particulars, what are known as concrete thoughts eg? - a particular book, house, triangle etc., whereas the causal body deals with principles, with abstract thoughts eg., the principal of triangularity common to all triangles. The mental body thus deals with form thoughts, the causal body with formless thoughts.

To briefly recapitulate and summarise what has been discussed so far referring back to figures 3 and 4 – just like the physical body corresponds to the Physical plane, the emotions, feelings and desires in man correspond to the astral plane, the thoughts in man correspond to the mental plane, the divine nature in man corresponds to the still higher ie more subtle planes ie the intellect in man corresponds to the higher mental, causal plane, the intuition corresponds to the buddhic plane, the divine will of man corresponds to the atmic plane and then are still two higher planes namely the Anupadic which corresponds to the Monad or the individual spark of God and the Adi plane where God himself or light resides.

Just like one needs the physical body to live in during the course of one's life on earth so too one needs to live in one's emotional body during the course of one's life on the astral plane, one needs to live in one's mental body during the course of one's life on the mental plane, one needs to live in one's causal body during the course of one's life on the causal plane, one needs to live on one's buddhic and atmic bodies respectively during the course of one's life on the buddhic and atmic planes. The astral body is the seat of one's feelings and emotions, the mental body seat of concrete ideas, that is to say, ideas that relate to matter, the causal or higher mental body allows man access to

the comprehension of sublime truths to the mysteries of the universe, the buddhic body which like the astral body is the seat of emotions and feelings, but of a higher divine order, universal love, self-abnegation and sacrifice. Finally, there is the atmic body, seat of that immortal spark which is the omnipotence of God. The first three bodies – physical, astral and mental – are fairly equally developed in all human beings, but the stage of development reached by the three higher bodies varies enormously from one individual to another. Only a certain number of philosophers and spiritualists succeed in rising to the level of the Higher mental body and begin to live in the sublime realm of light. The brains of these few, achieve such a fine degree of perfection that new centres awake into activity within their being and enable them to grasp the reality at the core of things. This is the world of intuition. Intuition is a vision, an instantaneous apprehension, an immediate and total grasp of the real, veritable world which lies beyond the mental plane, for, even on the mental plane, error and, illusion are still possible.

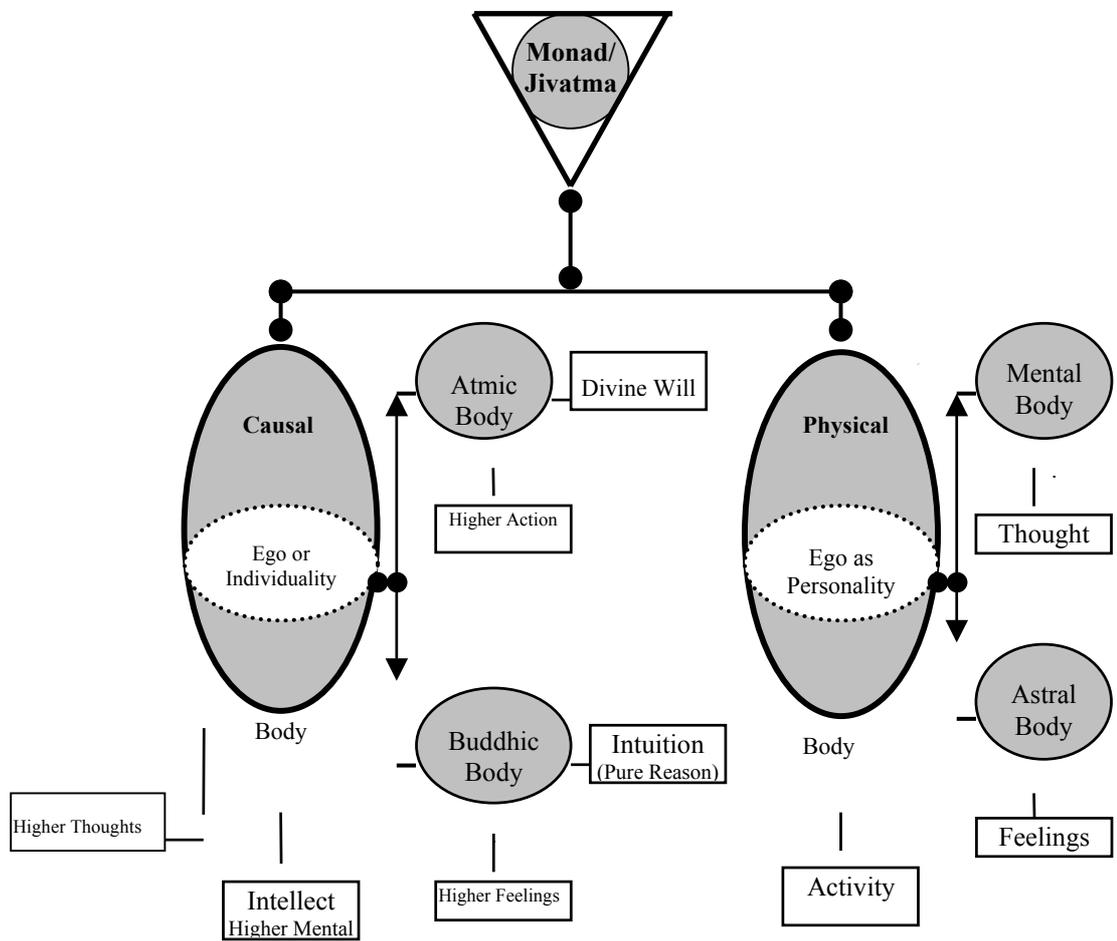


Figure 5 The Monad/ Jivatma, Causal and Physical Body

One must not form the idea that man is only that which functions as intellect in the causal body. In essence as described previously man is a Spark of the Divine Fire ie. Monad, and that Monad manifests as its three aspects Spirit in the world of atma, as

Intuition in the world of buddhi, and as Intelligence in the higher mental/causal world. It is these three aspects taken together which constitute the ego, which inhabits the causal body Figure 5. Thus man, as one knows, though in reality a Monad residing in the monadic world ie the plane of Anupadaka, shows himself as an ego in the higher mental world, manifesting the three aspects of himself which are designated as Spirit, Intuition and Intelligence. The development of the ego is thus the object of the whole process of descent into matter – the ego assumes veils of matter precisely because through them he is able to receive vibrations to which he can respond, so that his latent faculties may thereby be unfolded. All the activities that we call evil, whether selfish thoughts (mental) or selfish emotions (astral), invariably show themselves as vibrations of the coarser matter of those planes, whilst good and unselfish thought or emotions set in vibration on the higher types of matter. As finer matter is more easily moved than coarse, it follows that a given amount of force spent in good thought or feeling produces perhaps a hundred times as much result as the same amount of force sent out into coarser matter. If this were not so, it is obvious that the ordinary man could never make any progress at all whilst one is probably entitled to assume that 90% of the thought and feeling of the undeveloped man is self-centred, even if not actually selfish, yet, if 10% of it is spiritual and unselfish, the man must already be rising somewhat above the average. The effect of 10 percent of force directed to good ends enormously outweighs that of 90 percent devoted to selfish purposes so that on the whole such a man makes an appreciable advance from life to life. A man who has even 1 per cent of good makes a slight advance. A man whose account balances exactly, so that he neither advances nor retrogrades must live a distinctly evil life, whilst in order to go downwards in evil a person must be an unusually consistent villain.

When life terminates, and the physical body dies, consciousness recedes in stages towards its source centre. Following one's physical life the period of life in the astral world commences. One has of necessity to become dissociated from from one's recent involvement in physical matter. This purgation process takes place in the astral world where the nature of desiring and feeling that developed during the past earth life undergoes reconditioning and refining that permits at length, the further withdrawal of consciousness into the mental world. For some individuals, the time spent in the astral world is brief, for others it is more extended. This is so because disentanglement from all desires and feelings that were identified with physical matter is undertaken in the astral world. Naturally the person given to coarser sensual cravings and their gratification will require a longer time for disenthralment. Eventually this is accomplished, and the astral period terminates. Following it, is passage into the mental, or heaven world where the major period of time is spent by all people whose aspirations and pursuits have been less material. The discarnate soul now becomes completely freed of investiture in lower matter. The harvest of one's life experience is translated into spiritual capacity, into added faculties and growth of the individual, as a preparation for return to earth. Hence during this longest after – death period, which is the closing phase of the total cycle of an incarnation, the incarnated ego of man reaps the full benefit of his recent life time on earth, preparing in due season, for the return known as reincarnation. Having glanced in this way at the chart of the after – death course, we are ready now for a more detailed description of the various stages that will be experienced.

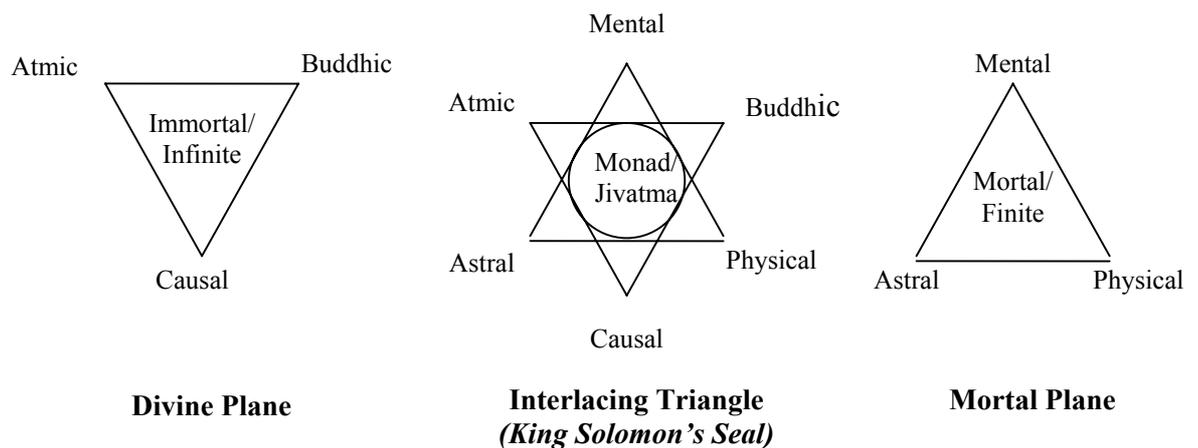


Fig 6 – The Union of the Divine/ Immortal and Mortal Plane

IMMORTAL/ INFINITE	RELATIONSHIP		MORTAL/ FINITE
ATMA	<i>Divine Will</i>	<i>Will</i>	PHYSICAL
BUDDHI	<i>Divine Love</i>	<i>Feeling</i>	ASTRAL
CAUSAL	<i>Divine Wisdom</i>	<i>Thought</i>	MENTAL

Fig 7 – The Union of the Divine/ Immortal and Mortal Plane

The Physical body which represents strength, will and power on the mortal or material level, is linked to the atmic body which represents divine power, strength and will.

The astral body, which represents our egotistical, personal feelings and desires, is linked to the buddhic body, which represents divine love.

The mental body which represents our ordinary, self-serving thoughts, is linked to the causal body which represents wisdom.

In our lower earthly life, therefore, we are a trinity, which thinks, feels and acts. But this trinity is only a very inferior reflection of that other heavenly trinity which is waiting for us to become one with it. One day this union or fusion will have to take place. This deep hidden meaning of the mystic symbol above Figure 6 & 7 which is known as King Solomon's Seal, but which existed long before King Solomon. Initiates often sum up a very profound spiritual or psychic reality of this symbol.

A human being, therefore, is made up of three bodies, which constitute his lower self and which are destined, one day to unite with the three bodies, which constitute his higher Self. Every experience in life, whether it be happy or unhappy, exists for this one purpose: to enable us to find and become one with our true Selves through contemplation and Self-inquiry Figure 8. When our lower self melts into our higher Self and forms one, then all Heaven and earth are united within us in fullness, abundance and joy.

PRINCIPLE	SYMBOL	PRICE	ACTIVITY
Mortal Plane: Physical, Astral & Mental	△ Triangle pointing upwards	Binding to the cycle of Births & Deaths	Know & find the Self; <i>detachment from the chains of: desire, thought & kriya (activity).</i>
Immortal Plane: Atmic, Buddhic & Causal	▽ Triangle pointing downwards	Truth, Immortality, Eternity, Liberation	Identification, Meditation <i>“This is not I”; “The Self is all”</i>
Fusion of Mortal & Immortal Plane	⬡ Interlacing Triangle	Union (Yoga), Enlightenment, Cosmic Consciousness	Contemplation, Self Inquiry, <i>Awareness of the Self</i>

Figure 8 Synoptic Table

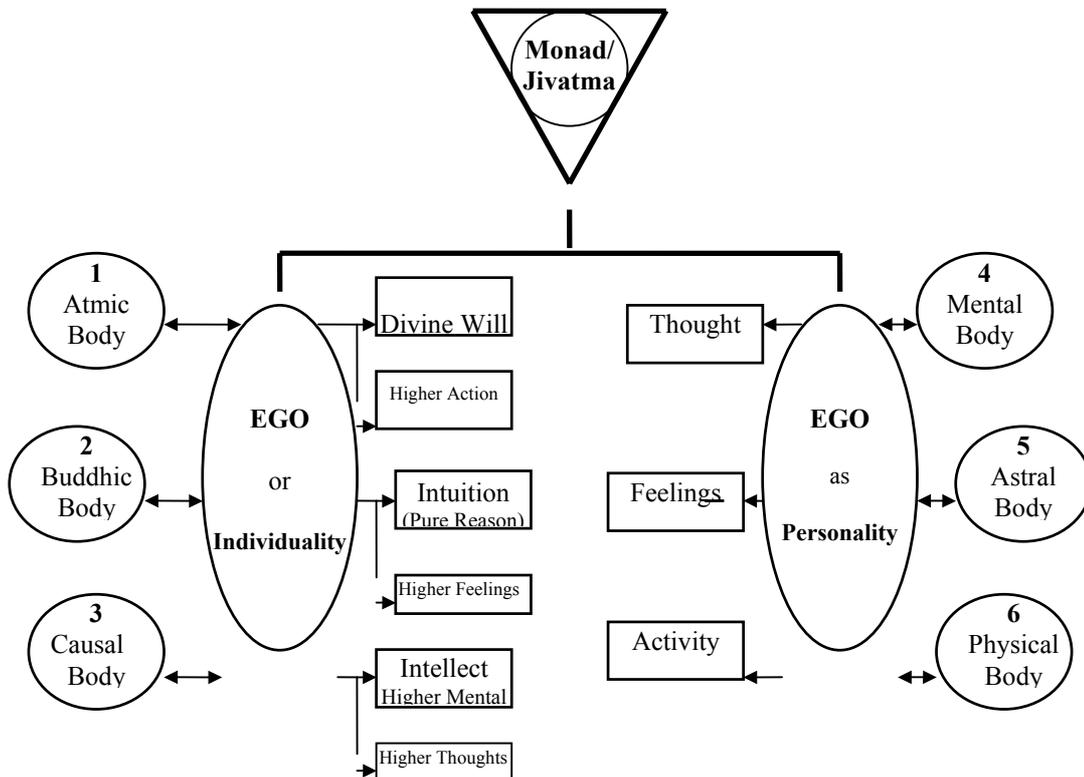


Fig 9- The Six bodies of Man (The two trinities of man: the mortal and immortal)

The Jivatma, Monad or the Spirit

The Jivatma, the Monad or spirit in Man is the Real Self (Figure 9) of each of us, is the Real Self of all, the drop from the ocean of the Absolute- the ray of the sun of the Absolute- the particle of the sacred flame. This Spirit, being the Absolute, of course

knows the Absolute and its mysteries and secrets. When we finally enter into a consciousness of that we shall then know all, for we shall be One with the Absolute - at Union with God. *This is one of the highest teachings of the Spiritual Philosophy.*

The teaching is that this tiny bit of the Absolute - which is apparently separated, but is not really separated, from the One - is the highest principle within each soul. Even the lowest form of soul contains it. It is always there, and we may perceive its light to a greater and still greater degree as we unfold and our consciousness moves up a degree toward it. The Spirit is ever there - changeless. But the consciousness of the Ego is constantly moving upward toward the Spirit, and will in time merge in it. This is the end of Spiritual evolution, and all the effort of the soul is toward this goal. Life is the effort of the soul to free itself from its confining sheaths - a desire to avail itself of its inheritance.

The world is a stage

The interplay between souls, nature, God and time is what constitutes the cycle of world history. We shall call it the World Drama. God is the Director, the souls are the actors and nature is the stage. The movement of the Drama is called Time. The interplay between the four, produces all the emotional and physical changes of this world. The Drama is the story of human souls, their rise and fall, victory and defeat, happiness and suffering, knowledge and ignorance, liberation and bondage. It is the story of the play of good and evil forces, and the different stages through which the souls pass in seven different planes. It is the story how the souls mistakenly identify themselves with the perishable bodies and how it leads to a decline in all levels of human activity. This decline then reaches its extreme when God comes to remind the souls of their true identities and bring them back to their former spiritual heights. Decline or fall, the operation of the law of Karma, the emergence of vices, the growth of worship, the advent of pure souls from the soul world as founder of religions, the role of different religions in the world, the growth of fanaticism and confusion, war and disease, and finally the liberation of souls from their self-created bondages; these are the salient features of the Drama.

Just as in an ordinary man-made drama, an actor, wearing a dress suitable for the role, acts out his part at a predetermined time, even so in this World Drama, the soul-actors perform their roles, each at his proper time - on "cue", The role to be played lies dormant in the soul in the form of impressions, and according to the time-period which matches the qualities inherent in the soul, it makes its appearance on this stage. Those impressions become thoughts, which are then translated into word and actions. The total role of every individual exists in latent form within the soul, while the soul is in the soul world. When the soul appears in the physical world, the latent role begins to manifest. The soul begins to act and though rebirth becomes eventually trapped in the results of those actions. It forgets its own origin, enters into bondage to various objects, ideologies and relationships and starts to search for a way out of them.

The World Drama is but the collective play of all the individual parts of the soul - actors. The soul waits in the soul world, "backstage" until the situation appears by which it can enter the Drama and plays its role. Once each soul is here, it must remain until all souls have come down. At that time there is a major transformation of the Drama Stage and all souls must return home to the soul world leaving some here to

give birth to the first ones of the next cycle. Eventually, they too return home. The Drama begins and ends at the same point. The only possible way that this can occur is the cycle of births and deaths.

The true foundation of the theory of re-birth is the evolution of the soul, or rather its efflorescence out of the veil of Matter and its gradual self-finding. The very aim of evolution is the continual growth towards a divine knowledge, strength, love and purity. These things alone are real virtue and this virtue is its own reward. The one true reward of the works of love is to grow ever in capacity and delight of love up to the ecstasy of the spirit's all seizing embrace and universal passion; the one reward of the works of right Knowledge is to grow perpetually into the infinite Light; the one reward of the works of right Power is to harbour more and more of the Force Divine and of the works of purity to be freed more and more egoism into that immaculate wideness where all things are transformed and reconciled into the divine equality.

Worship is only Self-Enquiry

The only way to overcome obstructions to meditation is to forbid the mind to dwell on them and introvert it into the Self and there witness unconcernedly all that happens; Do not even for a moment lose sight of the Self. Fixing the mind on the Self or the 'I' abiding in the Heart is the perfection of yoga, meditation, wisdom, devotion, and worship. Since the Supreme Being abides as the Self, constant surrender of the mind by absorption in the Self is said to comprise all form of worship. Knowledge of the Self, which knows all is the knowledge in perfection.

Distracted as we are by various thoughts, if we would continually contemplate the Self, who is Itself, God, this single thought would in due course replace all distraction and would itself ultimately vanish; the pure Consciousness that alone finally remains is God. This is Liberation. Never to be heedless to one's own all-perfect, pure Self is the acme of yoga, wisdom and all other forms of spiritual practice. Even the mind wanders restlessly, involved in external matters, so is forgetful of its own Self, one should remain alert and remember: "That the body is not I. Who am I?" Enquire in this way, by turning the mind backward to its primal state. The enquiry 'Who am I?' is the only method of putting an end to all misery and ushering in supreme Beatitude. Whatever may be said and however phrased, this is the whole truth in a nutshell.

The Gates of Heaven

A man dies & reaches the gates of Heaven. St.Peter welcomes him & says; just sign on the dotted line of the book of life, young David, & you may enter the gates Heaven. DAVID said before I sign, I'd like to ask a big favour of you. Well, I really want to see what HELL looks like. I've been so curious ever since I was little. Would that be possible? St. PETER: scratching his head, says, "Young David, are you sure you really want to see HELL? All you have to do is sign on the dotted line right here in my BOOK & you may enter the Gates of Heaven! DAVID: begging, Oh, but please St. PETER can't I just see what HELL is like before I enter Heaven? Please St PETER, PLEASE! St. PETER answered Very well David. I'll give you 2 days in HELL. DAVID was so happy and said Oh thanks very much St PETER.

So young DAVID soon found himself at the Gates of HELL. He opened the giant RED-HOT doors as He blinked a few times. He was shocked! Beautiful women & men who were laughing & cheering for him instantly greeted him. He was led to a room that was just like PARADISE! There was a huge party happening & he seemed to be the guest of honour! Lots of people dancing, singing, drinking, eating luscious foods & they all seemed to love him. There were maids & bottlers serving everyone, whatever their hearts desired. All this in the comforts of a spacious, glorious room full of gold, diamonds, & wealth far beyond his wildest dreams. David felt like a KING!

Two days in HELL ended too quickly for David's liking. David went back to St PETER and said St. PETER, I'm back. Well young DAVID, are you now ready to sign on the dotted line in this book, so you can enter the gates of HEAVEN? DAVID replied no St PETER. Please, wait. I...I ... would like to spend just a little longer in HELL please! Two days wasn't long enough to experience the place.

St PETER: Look at David, are you sure you really want to do that? DAVID replied Yes, St PETER, I'm sure. Well, personally I wouldn't recommend it. But if you so desire OK. You may go to hell again. This time, I will give you 2 weeks in HELL. DAVID was so happy and said, Oh Thank you! Thank you St PETER!

So David went back to HELL for a second time. Excitedly, David opened the giant RED-HOT doors. Once again, beautiful women greeted him & men all dressed in gold, dripping with jewellery, all happy to see him return to their PARADISE. For 2 weeks, David laughed, danced, sang & partied with these gorgeous people who quickly became his friends. David enjoyed doing absolutely everything his heart desired with these people. David felt like everybody loved him there & that when the 2 weeks were up, David didn't want to leave HELL. David talks to himself. Why should he go to HEAVEN when he's already found his paradise in HELL?

David went back to St PETER for the last time. St PETER: greeted him again, So young DAVID I see that you have come back. Are you now ready to sign your name on the dotted line so you can enter the gates of HEAVEN at last? DAVID replied, St PETER, I'm sorry, but I have chosen to stay in HELL. HELL, is fantastic. HELL, is paradise! People love me there & I love the people there. St PETER: said, are you absolutely certain this time? This is your final chance to enter the gates of HEAVEN! Think carefully! DAVID: replied, I've made up my mind. I want to go to HELL. St PETER: answered, *VERY WELL THEN. IT IS OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL.* St Peter tore up the page in his BOOK of life that held David's name in it. As he tore it apart, there was a low rumbling. Then thunder & lightning struck!

Suddenly David found himself in complete darkness. David grew scared. He turned around & to his relief he was facing the GATES OF HELL. He opened the giant RED-HOT DOORS & stepped inside. Once inside the doors slammed shut! Instantly, the incredible heat of the room overcame him. Where was everybody? The usual crowd didn't greet him at the door. He walked in further & was shocked immediately by what he saw! There were people fighting, crying, and moaning sorrowfully. Human heads with monster bodies were ripping each other apart! David grew terribly hot & scared & angry! Where was the paradise he had for 2 weeks & 2 days at? David demanded he be brought to see the BOSS of HELL. DAVID: said, I demand to know where that wonderful room is, full of beautiful people laughing, singing, dancing, and

eating luscious food. The room I called PARADISE? The DEVIL answered: “Oh that room? That was the “*VISITORS’ ROOM ONLY!*”