

Man, transpersonal psychology and the Devi Mahatmya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the Devi Mahatmya's insights about man and compare it with the conceptions of transpersonal psychology. The paper aims to develop a framework of holistic and integral human concept (Spiritual- Religious) as depicted in Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology. This article is a qualitative study and utilizes a hermeneutic approach to develop the concepts by gathering facts from the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology using deductive, inductive, reflective, descriptive, and comparative analysis. The paper concludes that transpersonal psychology and the Devi Mahatmya see the highest potential in human beings. The Devi Mahatmya emphasizes that the Divine Spirit resides in every creature so human being possess a variety of sublime potentials. Since the human being takes birth by the grace of God, he is blessed with a variety of spiritual potentials, and powers bestowed by the Almighty. In transpersonal psychology literature it is called the highest potential. Soul or the spirit unites the physical and consciousness state in man. Man as a psycho-physical-spiritual animal is unique, multi-dimensional, has both negative and positive predispositions, is a perfect being equipped with highest potential that are divine and has inborn divine nature. The Devi Mahatmya's insight into human nature is a holistic and integrative view. This view is different from modern psychology in conceptualizing human being only through the lens of experimentation, observation and back-resting only on reasoning. The paper advocates the theory that human beings have free will. They can be a sage or a demon. They can achieve the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Mother (Divine Spirit) is the cause of attaining spirituality (anthropo-theocentric) and argues against the view of transpersonal psychology that human beings are the "primacausa" i.e the main cause without any reason or other factors to attain transcendence and spirituality (anthropocentric). It is also in opposition to the believe of transpersonal psychology that denies the role of religion and the existence of God.

Keywords: *Man, Anthropho-Theocentric, Anthropocentric, Primacausa, Religious-Spiritual, The Devi Mahatmya, Transpersonal Psychology*

Psychologists have been discoursing about humans from the Vedic days and it was much of a topic of discussion in ancient Greece. Human as a body, a soul or a body-soul is a problem that even modern psychologists are unable to resolve. Psychology basically focuses on empirical studies so a stalemate exists in modern psychological studies

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about human and to the answers of questions like, “Who am I? How do I exist? And what is the purpose of my existence?”

Sigmund Freud envisaged human beings as biological creatures having full of bodily desires. In psychoanalysis the human is considered to be bad, wild, brutal, unethical and pleasure-seeking because the most dominant desires in the subconscious mind are aggressive drives and libido. Behaviorism in the early 1900s pioneered by Ivan Pavlov studies only the observable and measurable behavior and does not look at the mind. It denies the natural potential of humans. This theory predisposes that humans are devoid of a soul, free-will, and do not have freedom to establish their behavior. Behavioral theory preconceives the idea that, the only thing that determines human behavior is his environment. Unlike Behavioral psychology, Cognitive psychology believes in the existence of an internal mental state of men like belief, desire, and motivation.

Humanistic psychology led by Abraham Maslow considers humans as having higher abilities than animals and adopts a holistic approach to human existence through investigations of concepts such as meaning, values, freedom, tragedy, personal responsibility, human potential, spirituality, and self-actualization. Humanistic psychology views humans as unique, rational, responsible, and having awareness.

Transpersonal psychology incorporates a transpersonal-spiritual-religious point of view into other approaches such as psychodynamic, behaviorist, humanistic, cognitive, biological, evolutionary, and socio-cultural theories. However, "spirituality" is the central theme in transpersonal psychological studies. Lajoie and Shapiro have defined transpersonal psychology as the study of “humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness. Humans in transpersonal psychology are considered to be a part of the universe, the higher levels of consciousness, mystical experiences and spiritual experiences. Transpersonal psychology believes that humans possess great potentiality to acquire variety of extraordinary powers and consciousness apart from ordinary awareness.

The modern psychological view of humans is different from the Indian view of humans. The Indian philosophy views man as the best among all creatures created by God. Man takes birth after taking birth in eighty four lakhs Yonis (Types of species) and is created perfectly both physically and mentally. Men have the ability to realize the ultimate consciousness and make themselves free from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In other words, man has the potentiality to liberate himself and to merge with God. Humans are creatures having the discriminating power, awareness of interests, talents, traits, and attitudes as well as abilities and skills, know what will and are being done, understand life history, and have hope in the future but other creatures are directed by Nature and do not have the free-will.

There exists a basic difference in defining human being in the Indian and modern psychology. The difference lies in the nature of human creation and the basic potential and philosophical orientation of humans. Modern Psychology’s worldview is human centric (anthropocentric) but in the Indian worldview man is given the freedom to elevate his place by relating himself to God, so Indian concept is both man and God centric (anthropo-theocentric).

The Advaita Vedanta views and places humans as individual souls *Jivatman* and accepts no duality. According to this school of thought there exist no limited individual

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souls (*Jivatman*) and no separate unlimited cosmic soul (*Brahman*). Across space and time all souls and their existence are one and the same, that unchanging *Atman* or soul is the same as the *Atman* prevailing in everyone else and is identical with the *Brahman*, the unlimited cosmic soul. The position of humans in the Vedanta is described as the same as *Brahman*. There is no difference between the *Atman* (soul) and the *Brahman*. Vedanta views man as the perfect creature created by God. Adi Sankara said, "Man is same with Brahman or the Eternal Soul," created with perfection because human cannot be just an aggregation of material elements, man is "concentration of spiritual energy". Material constituents of man are governed by psychic force called "spirit". True nature of men is *Atman* and *Atman* is *Brahman* itself. Man has both divinity and animal instincts. Man is perfect because he can elevate his concentration of spiritual energy "spirit" but other animals cannot do so.

Psychology as a scientific discipline has a number of weaknesses. Psychological experiments are a result of experimental data and mental interpretation and have inherent limitations of human observation and biasness. Psychology is unable to explain what, who, and how humans are. In modern psychology there is a crisis and bottleneck in interpreting humans. The duality of "man and soul" cannot be explained properly with modern psychological tools. Due to these shortcomings and weaknesses of the theories in psychology, a critical review is necessary through comparison and assessment of the ancient literature available on men. Therefore, this research work is conducted to investigate the transpersonal psychology about humans and to develop a framework of holistic and integral human concepts (Spiritual Religious) as depicted in *Devi Mahatmya*, one of the most important Hindu scriptures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive qualitative research and not intended to test the hypotheses. This paper utilizes a hermeneutic approach to develop the concepts by gathering facts from the *Devi Mahatmya*, a Hindu scripture.

Hermeneutics approach is referred to the theory and practice of interpretation, and the understanding of the interpretations that can be justified. It describes methodologies for interpreting texts, concepts and objects. It is a method of understanding. It makes the incomprehensible both comprehensible and communicable. Hermeneutics is being used in all eras for interpreting incomprehensible ideas across the disciplines in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and even the Natural Sciences.

The hermeneutic approach of research can be applied to understand a text that is either understandable from the text or unclear and hidden due to the course of time and influence of ideology and beliefs. Hermeneutics is an art of understanding and interpreting a text. Three things, namely language, thought and history are very important in hermeneutics research.

This research uses qualitative data which are stated as words or sentences (verses) in the *Devi Mahatmya*. The primary data of this study have been taken from the *Devi Mahatmya* and the secondary sources of this article are works and other materials in the form of books, articles, magazines that are written by different authors on the *Devi Mahatmya* and Sakta philosophy.

The research approaches used here are (1) Deductive to assess and analyze the formulation of relevant concepts (2) Inductive to formulate a deeper framework of thinking about human

concepts in the perspective of the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology, (3) Reflective to obtain an accurate and targeted analysis, (4) Descriptive analysis, used to outline the discussion with the author's paradigm in accordance with the data obtained, and (5) Comparison, used to find similarities and differences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Transpersonal Psychology in Devi Mahatmya

Transpersonal psychology uses psychological methods and theories to investigate the spiritual aspects of human life. Transpersonal psychology attempts to understand spiritual experiences and tries to provide a deeper and richer understanding of individuals so that the individuals can achieve their greatest potential.

Transpersonal psychology has nothing to do with religion. It embraces a wide variety of ideas to investigate the mind and behavior of the individuals. It is concerned with the whole human experience. Transpersonal psychology generally deals with some key factors like spirituality, higher potential, transcendence and other states of consciousness. Transpersonal psychology deals with the psycho-spiritual development of the human beings. It tries to translate spiritual principles into scientifically grounded theories by investigating the existential crisis of the human beings (deepest wounds and needs) and their transcendent capacities of the consciousness. It does not limit itself to one school of psychological thought and encompasses in it a broad range of ideas, disciplines, and theories like philosophy, literature, health theories, art, social theory, cognition science, and different spiritual traditions.

Transpersonal psychology is different from parapsychology. The study of transpersonal psychology is centered on the spiritual side of human nature while parapsychology includes paranormal studies like psychic phenomena including precognition, clairvoyance, near-death experiences, and psychokinesis.

"Spirituality" as conceived by transpersonal psychology is similar to the Devi Mahatmya view that human beings are both body and soul with consciousness i.e. human is both neotic (spiritual) and somatic (body). The following verse from Devi Mahatmya praises the Devi to be present in all creatures as the consciousness or the Spirit.

“Yaa Devii Sarva-Bhutessu Cetanety-Abhidhiyate
Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namoh Namah

To that Devi Who in All Beings is Reflected as Consciousness, Salutations to Her, Salutations to Her, Salutations to Her, Salutations again and again.” (Ramachander, P. R)
<https://www.celextel.org/>

Transpersonal psychology recognizes that there exists a conscious or spiritual dimension of human but Devi Mahatmya goes a step forward and describes that the same Devi pervades the whole universe as the Cosmic Consciousness, meaning that the human is a part of the Cosmic Consciousness. The transpersonal psychology thinks the spiritual dimension of man is an inner quality but the Devi Mahatmya considers the presence of spiritual dimension to be a Divine affair, so according to the Devi Mahatmya, humans become a divine image and same as the Divine Spirit. Devi Mahatmya believes that the human spirit is not the source of human existence rather it is the Divine Spirit that exists as the human body and the soul.

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“Citi-Ruupenna Yaa Krtsnam-Etat-Vyaapya Sthitaa Jagat
Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namoh Namah

(Salutations to Her) Who in the Form of Consciousness Pervades This Universe and Abides in It, Salutations to Her, Salutations to Her, Salutations to Her, Salutations again and again.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

Even though transpersonal psychology has alluded to spirituality, it has not linked the human spirit with the “Divine Spirit” that plays a vital role in human existence. Beyond the normal functioning of the body and mind, soul is considered to be the Divine existence in humans by Devi Mahatmya.

Another thing that is not being taken care by the study of transpersonal psychology is about nature of the human being. According to the Devi Mahatmya “The Mother” is the source of all creation since SHE is the “Cosmic Consciousness” or the Divine Spirit. The following verse praises the Goddess to be soul of the universe and the goddess of this entire universe.

“Visweswari thwam paripasi viswam,
Viswathmika dharayaseethi viswam,
Viswesa vandhya bhavathi bhavanthi,
Viwasraya ye thwayi bhakthi namra.

“Hey Goddess, you are the goddess to this entire universe, because of that you protect the universe. You are the soul of the universe and so you upkeep it. You are venerable to the greatest lords of this world and so all those whom, who worship you with humility, become the people on whom the universe depends.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>
Since “The Mother” is the source of human existence, therefore the Individual Spirit always longs for the Divine Spirit. Therefore, it appears that the purpose of human life is from, by and for the absolute truth that is the highest truth “The Mother”. The human conscience always desires for goodness, holiness, and truth because the creation of human is from absolute truth. This absolute truth is the origin and purpose of everything. This is inseparable from the nature or basic quality of a human being and therefore human spirit always wants to return to the absolute truth. Human beings have the urge to realize his true nature and have a natural readiness to know God, but when the sublime potential is not managed properly, human beings fall into destructive darkness.

Transpersonal psychology talks about the highest potential of human being i.e. the ultimate experience. Spiritual experience is the ultimate experience. Every religious person wants to have this experience. This experience comes under self- actualization, one of the highest order needs. This need can be described as a need to love and be loved by God. In transpersonal psychology religious experience is not the result of carrying out religious rituals. But in the Devi Mahatmya Devi says,

“Devyuvacha:-

Ebhi sthavai scha maam nithyam sthoshyathe ya samahitha,
Tasyaham sakala badhaam nasayishyamasamsyam.

The goddess told: -

Whoever with concentrated minds prays daily with this prayer, I would definitely remove all his problems.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

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This verse indicates that to achieve peak experience, worship of the divine is necessary because religious experience is a Divine experience and the awareness of the Divine, even though what is "Divine" is a matter of discussion. Sometimes God is seen as a personal figure such as Mother. God is said to be transcendental and ineffable, is empty even though He exists.

Self-transcendence is a key concept in the study of transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology integrates the concepts of human consciousness from psycho-analysis, behaviorism, and humanism; and has added one more factor, called transcendence. Transcendence is the state in which human being experience both the personal consciousness and the universal consciousness. Transcendence is the highest experience in the spiritual life. The person in transcendence transcends the boundaries of the physical world and realizes the God who is metaphysical so it cannot be conceived with the normal five human senses. Self-transcendence in the Devi Mahatmya is described in a different way and differs in the concept of transpersonal psychology. Form the discussion made so far we can bring out some important deduction as follows:

First, human nature is spiritual. Transpersonal experiences come through spiritual practices support and uphold the psychological and philosophical makeup of human beings. Devi Mahatmya teaches people to worship and serve the Divine Spirit i.e. The Mother.

“Vidhya thadiva kriyathe bhagawad vishnu mayaya,
Thaya thawamesha vaisyascha thadai vayai vivekina,
Mohyanthe mohithaschaiva mohameshyanthi chapare,
Thamupaihi maharaja, saranam parameshwareem.
Aradhitha saive nrunaam bhoga swargapavargadha.

Knowledge or intelligence is created by the power of Vishnu Maya and she herself creates illusions to hide the truth from wise people such as you and Vaisya. Some others will attain only illusion. So, king, surrender before this great goddess. Once she is worshipped that Goddess will give material pleasures, heaven and salvation.” (Ramachander, P. R)
<https://www.celextel.org/>

Second, Humans generally have a desire in spirituality. Transpersonal vision through spiritual practices leads to spiritual unity. In the Devi Mahatmya, it is told that people who whole heartedly serve the Mother live peacefully. A devotee of the Mother is always inclined towards the God and for all the efforts he depends on the grace of the Mother thus he realizes peace of mind and acceptance of the Mother.

Third, the spiritual seeking person finds meaning in life through spiritual practices and useful deeds. Transpersonal psychology finds need of finding deeper meanings of life. Finding deeper meaning of life helps to overcome problems. The Mother says to the Devatas that SHE will grant them boons that will be beneficial for the whole universe.

“Devyuvacha:-

Varadaham suragana, varama yanmasechadha,
Tham vrunudhwam jagatham upakarakam.

The goddess told: -

Hey devas who have assembled here, I am the giver of boons. I would give you any boon that you desire which would be helpful to this universe.” (Ramachander, P. R)
<https://www.celextel.org/>

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In the self-transcendence state the person remains in deep impression with the Divine Spirit and remains unaware of his senses that make him concerned, trembling, crying, and such behaviors. In the transcendence state he feels as if he is in contact with the Divine Spirit.

Transcendental awareness can also be obtained by transcendental meditation. When someone seriously practices meditation, the object of thought or stimulation is directed towards the Divine Spirit. In meditation transcendent state comes through remembering the God, feeling the existence of God and through the perception of closeness to the God. Anyone can succeed to have this transcendence state if meditation is done with full appreciation and solely aimed at God, no longer affected by the natural surroundings and thus the consciousness switches from physical to metaphysical. Transcendental awareness brings in a state of silence and feeling of ecstasy.

Based on a critical study of transpersonal psychology in the perspective of the Devi Mahatmya above, a correlation of human conceptions in the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology can be as follows:

Transpersonal psychology states that individuals who value spirituality have succeeded in the process of becoming a dynamic reality and continues to be so. In view of the Devi Mahatmya, individuals who worship Mother Durga can have a mental balance and can integrate their personal lives with their social lives. At this point transpersonal psychology has a meeting point with the Devi Mahatmya.

“Saa vidhya parama mukther hethu bhootha sanathani,
Samsara bandha hethuscha saiva sarveshwreshwari.

She is the greatest knowledge, which is the cause of salvation, and she also is the ignorance that leads to attachment with the mundane world. Also, she is the goddess of all gods.”
(Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology are interconnected and both talk about ideal human characters or perfect humans. Devi Mahatmya calls it by using the term Gyani, while in transpersonal psychology it is named as "perfect man" but they mean the same.

The views of the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology meet with the point that human being possesses qualities and potentiality for realizing self-actualization, divine love, responsibility for the self and the society, freedom from fear and can acquire spiritual powers to demonstrate a complete personality.

Transpersonal psychology shows that there is an extraordinary dimension beyond human consciousness which is called the highest potential while Devi Mahatmya terms its Siddhi. Human beings have a physical existence as well as a psycho-spiritual existence. Both the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology acknowledge the presence of Psycho-Spiritual dimension in humans. Both the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology explains the answer to the questions who, what and how humans are on the basis of Spirituality.

In terms of the scope of the study of the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology similarities lies in examining humans in the three dimensions namely somatic (physical), psychological, and spiritual.

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Based on these similarities, it can be said that the Devi Mahatmya and transpersonal psychology are complementary to each other. Examining transpersonal psychology as a scientific discipline which is basically non-religious and secular in the light of the Devi Mahatmya will eliminate the dichotomy of the modern psychological thinking. When we compare both the transpersonal psychology and the Devi Mahatmya, transpersonal psychology might consider accepting only the results from observations and empirical research but the Devi Mahatmya is a spiritual revelation, so we may encounter some differences in understanding about human existence and the role of Spirituality in human personality.

Differences in Conception between the Devi Mahatmya and Transpersonal Psychology about Human Nature.

No	The Devi Mahatmya	Transpersonal Psychology
1	Humans are born with Spirit and the Mother resides in all creatures.	Human beings have extraordinary potential in themselves.
2	The "Spirit" in human being is the same as the "Divine Spirit". Spirit is abstract and divine	Does not believe in existence of Spirit. Spirituality is interpreted as the core of humanity and a source of meaning in life, the potential of various abilities, and noble human qualities that are extraordinary in nature. Spirituality is the human aspiration to live a meaningful life and the source of humanity.
3	Human beings have free will. They can be a sage or a demon. They can achieve the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Mother is the cause of attaining spirituality. (<i>anthropo- theocentric</i>)	Human beings are the " <i>primacausa</i> " (the main cause without any reason or other factors to attain transcendence and spirituality) (<i>anthropocentric</i>)
4	Verses of the Devi Mahatmya can explain the nature and identity of human beings by proper analysis.	Human being can be understood only through experiments and observations.

This difference in conceptions about human beings is quite natural because the scope of psychology is only limited to empirical-experimental studies, and relies on logical ability. Psychology does not accept the Devi Mahatmya or other religious scriptures as an absolute source of knowledge to understand the truth. This difference does not contradict each other; on the contrary the scriptural insight about human nature can complement the study of transpersonal psychology to address the psychological problems experienced by the modern man.

CONCLUSION

Discussion on Human beings as psycho-physical being is a matter of hot debate and no conclusion can be drawn immediately. In this paper it has been tried to have a discussion on the holistic and integral understanding of what, who, and how humans are. The Devi Mahatmya is a spiritual revelation and can be of worth as a source of guidance to understand human life and can be used normatively as a source in formulating and developing theories. Transpersonal psychology and the Devi Mahatmya see the highest potential in human

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beings. The Devi Mahatmya emphasizes that the Divine Spirit resides in every creature so human being possess a variety of sublime potentials. Since the human being takes birth by the grace of God, he is blessed with a variety of spiritual potentials, and powers bestowed by the Almighty. In transpersonal psychology literature it is called the highest potential. Spirituality is self-awareness in relation to God. This human relationship with God can be achieved through different modes like practicing religious rituals, worshiping such as prayer, fasting, meditation almsgiving, pilgrimage and so on. Humans are different from other animals in the sense that they have the ability to realize the spirituality but other animals live only to take care of their bodily needs like fear, food, sleep, and sex (Bhaya, Ahara, Nidra, Maithuna). Humans are creatures who are aware of their interests, talents, traits, abilities and skills, and they know what they are presently doing and plan for the future. In the Devi Mahatmya the sage says

“Gnanancha than manushyanam yathesham mruga pakshinaam,
Manushyanancha yathesham thulyamanyam thadho bhayo.

Whatever wisdom an animal or bird has, that wisdom man also has. Similarly whatever special knowledge man has for his needs, the bird and animal also have that just sufficient to their needs. Except this special knowledge other knowledge (about food, sleep and making love) is same for man, animals and birds.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>
The sage again says

“Thadapi mamathaavarthe mohagarthe nipaathitha,
Mahamaya prabhavena samsara sthidhikarrina.

In spite of that due to the power of the great enchantress, man is pushed in to the whirlpool of attachment and the pit of affection and observes the rules of human life.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

The sage says man has huge potentiality within him but due to the “Maya” or attachment to the worldly affairs he leads a common life. He says that the Devi can dispel this Maya because SHE creates the Maya and by her grace the man can attain salvation.

“Saa vidhya parama mukther hethu bhootha sanathani,
Samsara bandha hethuscha saiva sarveshwreshwari.

She is the greatest knowledge, which is the cause of salvation, and she also is the ignorance that leads to attachment with the mundane world. Also, she is the goddess of all gods.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

Humans are individual, moral, social and religious beings. All problems in life cannot be solved by human being by themselves. They need the help of the inner (spiritual) human voice and search for supernatural powers that guide him in adversity. Man prays and this certainly shows that humans from the beginning of his birth have brought the potential of the God.

We cannot understand man by following any standalone theory like psycho-analysis, behavioristic, humanistic or transpersonal. Man can be understood in a holistic manner since he is a bio- socio-psychic-spiritual-religious creature. It will be wrong if we do not recognize the limitations of biological (physiological) aspects, role of the environment

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(socio-cultural), superiority of potential (transpersonal) and impact of spiritual aspects in human life. Man has both a physical dimension as well as a spiritual dimension. He is created from earth, water, air, space and fire (Pancha Mahabhuta) but also the God resides in him. Humans have good potential but can also exhibit bad potential. He has a free-will.

In the Devi Mahatmya man is given an equal rank as any other animals in terms of wisdom they possess to sustain their life in this world. In the Devi Mahatmya the sage says,

“Gnanino manuja sathyam kinnathe nahi kevalam,
Yatho hi gnanina sarve pasu pakshi mrugadhaya.

It is truth that men are wise but they are not the only wise ones. Even cow, birds and wild animals are also wise. (The sage tries to tell that wisdom is always mixed with wrong knowledge or ignorance. This is true in all cases including man)” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

According to the Devi Mahatmya, man should dispel the ignorance (Maya) and then only he can be superior to other animals or else all animals are same. So, the position of the man as an intelligent creature depends on the free will of man and this according to the Devi Mahatmya can only come through the grace of the Mother. Human excellence and perfection is depended on two factors i.e. individual effort and the grace of the God. Man's position is repeatedly elevated and debased, given a high rank and at the same time they are valued no more than devils and animals. This is because man has the ability to be of equal rank with Devatas and if he does not utilize his potential, he is no better than animals.

This contradictory picture about human beings shows that man as a psycho-physical-spiritual animal is unique, multi-dimensional, has both negative and positive predispositions, is a perfect being equipped with highest potential that are divine and has inborn divine nature. The Devi Mahatmya's insight into human nature is a holistic and integrative view. This view is different from modern psychology in conceptualizing human being only through the lens of experimentation, observation and back-resting only on reasoning.

The study on transpersonal psychology is relevant today because thus far neither science nor philosophy has proved or disproved the existence of soul and spirit, and the nature of consciousness remains a mystery. Therefore, we cannot ignore the relevance of spiritual scriptures contributing to this branch of knowledge.

To understand the ultimate nature of reality, there are three major schools of thought and all psychological and scientific models of mind fall in one of these three namely:

1. *Theism* is the belief in the existence of God.
2. *Atheism* is the belief in the nonexistence of God and believes that matter is the only reality
3. *Agnosticism* is the belief that the question of whether or not God or soul exists cannot be answered.

This article is based on theistic school of thought and the words soul and spirit is used in a theistic sense. Philosophical questions about the nature of reality cannot be divorced from psychotherapy and psychiatry therefore there exists a need to study transpersonal psychology in the light of religious scriptures. This does not mean that theists are right and

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atheists or agnostics are wrong. This is the reason why this research study has been conducted.

Transpersonal psychology is the third school of modern psychology that integrates the spiritual and transcendent facets of the human experience. This branch of psychology studies the human development beyond conventional, personal or individual levels and different other aspects like spiritual self-development, self beyond the ego, peak experiences, mystical experiences, systemic trance, spiritual crises, spiritual evolution, religious conversion, altered states of consciousness, spiritual practices, and other inspiring and other strange experiences of human being. Transpersonal psychology perceives the human spirit as a link between mind, body and Absolute consciousness. Transpersonal psychology recognizes the theory that all human beings are basically spiritual beings and are experiencing this mortal world not the vice versa. Man is antro-po-spiritual centric because man can be described as a multidimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual-religious creature. He has extraordinary potentials to experience spirituality and can connect himself to higher consciousness through transcendental practices. Man has both the characteristics of a common animal and a superior spiritually evolved animal but what he will be is decided by him only because he possesses free-will.

To conclude our discussion, we can cite some of the verses from the Devi Mahatmya that proves that the Divine Spirit resides in everything and that takes the different name and form.

“Sarva swaroope sarveshe, sarva shakthi samanvithe,
Bhayebhya sthrahino devi, durga devi namosthutte.

Oh, goddess who takes all forms, who is the goddess of everything and who is having all types of strengths, please save us from fears, Our salutations to you, Goddess Durga.”
(Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

“Ya devi sarva bhootheshu shakthi roopena samssthitha,
Namasthasyair namasthasyair namasthasyair namo nama.

Salutations, salutations and salutations to that goddess who lives in all beings as power of inner strength.” (Ramachander, P. R) <https://www.celextel.org/>

Sage Vyasa has expounded in Bhagavati Stotram
“Jaya Devi SamastaShariira-Dhare”

Victory to You O Devi, who takes the form of All the Bodies i.e remaining as the underlying Pure Consciousness in every creature.

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Conflict of Interest

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