

## HUMAN PERSONALITY AND THE DEVI MAHATMYAM

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the personality theory embedded in the Devi Mahatmyam, a significant Hindu scripture, and its relevance to modern psychology. The text symbolizes the internal battle between divine virtues and demonic tendencies, reflecting the dual nature of the human mind and personality. Through analysis of the Devi Mahatmyam's key characters, we mapped their traits onto the Big Five Personality Model and proposed a new model, and thus we developed the Transcendent Personality Model (TPM), to understand and nurture human personality. The model emphasizes spiritual growth, guiding individuals to transcend ego-driven traits and achieve inner harmony. By integrating higher and lower aspects of the self, TPM fosters compassion and wisdom. This model serves as both a psychological and spiritual pathway to unlocking one's full potential and aligning with universal consciousness. The discussion concludes with insights into the spiritual process of transformation and growth, offering a holistic view of personality development that bridges Eastern spiritual traditions with modern psychological frameworks.

**Keywords-** Devi Mahatmyam, personality theory, Big Five Model, Transcendent Personality Model

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Eastern and Western Personality Theories: A Comparative Analysis

Personality theories have been developed and shaped by various cultural and philosophical traditions. Eastern and Western approaches to understanding personality offer distinct frameworks, each reflecting the philosophical and cultural contexts from which they emerge. While Western personality theories focus on observable traits, cognition, and behaviour, Eastern models tend to explore deeper aspects of the self, including consciousness, spirituality, and transcendence.

#### Western Personality Theories

Western psychology has a rich tradition of studying personality, primarily grounded in empirical research and cognitive-behavioural approaches.

**The Big Five Personality Traits:** One of the most influential models in contemporary psychology, the Big Five describes personality in terms of five traits: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These traits provide a framework to understand personality differences in a systematic way, often used in psychological assessments.

**Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory:** Sigmund Freud (1923) viewed personality as a dynamic interplay between three parts of the mind: the id (instinctual drives), the ego (rational thinking), and the superego (moral standards). Freud emphasized unconscious motivations and early childhood experiences as critical in shaping personality, introducing concepts such as the Oedipus complex and defence mechanisms like repression and sublimation.

**Carl Jung's Analytical Psychology:** Jung expanded Freud's theories by focusing on the collective unconscious and archetypes, universal patterns of behaviour and thought (Jung, 1964). He introduced the concept of introversion and extraversion, which form the basis of the well-known Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Jung believed in the process of individuation, where individuals integrate various aspects of their personality to achieve self-realization.

**Humanistic Theories:** Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1961) pioneered humanistic psychology, emphasizing personal growth and self-actualization. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that individuals are motivated by the fulfilment of basic physiological needs, with the ultimate goal being self-actualization, a state where one realizes their full potential. Rogers proposed that a healthy personality is driven by unconditional positive regard and congruence between the ideal self and the actual self.

#### Eastern Personality Theories

In contrast to Western models, Eastern personality theories are more focused on the inner self, consciousness, and spiritual growth, often rooted in ancient philosophical and religious traditions.

**The Vedic Model of Personality:** Advaita Vedanta and other schools of Indian philosophy view the personality as a combination of the body (Sthula Sharira), mind (Sukshma Sharira), and spirit (Karana Sharira). In this model, personality development is about realizing the true self (Atman), which transcends the ego and worldly attachments.

The Bhagavad Gita presents an integrated approach to personality by emphasizing karma (action), jnana (knowledge), and bhakti (devotion) as paths to spiritual growth (Mitra, 2002).

**Taoist and Confucian Theories:** In Chinese philosophy, personality is seen as a balance between opposing forces such as yin and yang (Taoism) or between the individual and society (Confucianism). Taoism emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao, or the natural order of the universe, while Confucianism stresses moral virtues like benevolence (ren) and righteousness (yi) as essential to personality development (Chang & Kwan, 2009).

**Buddhist Psychology:** Buddhism offers a unique understanding of personality, viewing it as a collection of impermanent processes rather than a fixed entity. Central to Buddhist psychology is the idea of Anatta (non-self), which challenges the notion of an independent, unchanging self. Personality development in Buddhism is about cultivating mindfulness and wisdom to overcome suffering (Dukkha) and achieving enlightenment (Nirvana) (Kumar, 2018).

### **Comparison of Western Personality Theories and Eastern Personality Theories**

The main difference between Eastern and Western theories lies in the emphasis placed on individuality versus spirituality. Western theories, such as the Big Five or Freud's psychoanalysis, focus on traits, behaviours, and cognitive patterns that shape personality in a social and biological context. In contrast, Eastern approaches—rooted in Vedantic, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions—place more emphasis on self-transcendence, spiritual awakening, and the dissolution of ego as central to personality evolution.

While Western theories provide a scientific and objective understanding of personality, Eastern models offer a holistic and introspective approach, focusing on internal balance, ethical living, and self-realization. Together, these perspectives offer a more complete picture of the multifaceted nature of human personality.

### **Indian Personality Theories: A Comprehensive Overview**

Indian personality theories are deeply rooted in the philosophical and spiritual traditions of the country. These theories, shaped by ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras, and Buddhist scriptures, offer a holistic perspective on personality. They integrate the psychological, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of human existence, aiming to provide a path for self-realization and liberation. Unlike Western approaches, Indian personality theories emphasize inner development and the transcendence of the ego.

#### **The Triguna Theory of Personality**

The Triguna theory is one of the most prominent models in Indian thought, found in the Sankhya philosophy and texts like the Bhagavad Gita. It suggests that all human behaviour and personality traits are influenced by three fundamental qualities or gunas:

1. **Sattva (Purity, Harmony and Knowledge):** Individuals with a dominant sattva personality are characterized by clarity, wisdom, peace, compassion, and self-control. They are driven by higher knowledge and ethical actions and aim for spiritual growth.
2. **Rajas (Passion, Activity and Desire):** A rajasic personality is marked by intense activity, ambition, and desire. While they are highly motivated and dynamic, rajasic individuals often struggle with attachment, restlessness, and ego-driven goals. Their actions are aimed at achieving material success and recognition.
3. **Tamas (Inertia, Ignorance and Darkness):** A tamasic personality is associated with lethargy, ignorance, confusion, and apathy. Tamasic individuals are often driven by fear, delusion, and negativity. Their decision-making tends to be clouded by ignorance, leading to inaction or destructive behaviours.

According to this theory, each individual possesses all three gunas in varying proportions, and the balance of these qualities defines one's personality. The ultimate goal in Indian philosophy is to cultivate sattva guna and transcend rajas and tamas, moving toward self-realization and liberation (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008).

#### **The Panchakosha Model**

The Panchakosha (five sheaths) model of personality comes from Vedantic philosophy, particularly the Taittiriya Upanishad. It describes five layers or koshas that envelope the true self (Atman):

1. **Annamaya Kosha (Physical Body):** This is the outermost layer, representing the physical body sustained by food.
2. **Pranamaya Kosha (Vital Body):** This sheath represents the life force (prana) that sustains the physical body.
3. **Manomaya Kosha (Mental Body):** It represents the mind and emotional world, where thoughts, desires, and emotions arise.
4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha (Wisdom Body):** This layer is associated with intellect, discernment, and wisdom.
5. **Anandamaya Kosha (Bliss Body):** The innermost sheath, representing a state of pure joy, bliss, and spiritual awareness. It is closest to the Atman, the true self.

The Panchakosha model suggests that spiritual growth involves moving inward through these layers, from the physical and mental aspects of personality to the deeper realms of wisdom and bliss. Liberation occurs when one transcends all the sheaths and realizes the Atman (Saraswati, 2002). Satpathy (2018) has discussed about Pancha Kosha Theory of Personality in details in his paper. In other papers by Satpathy, B. ideas from Ayurveda, Upanishads and philosophy of great Indian thinkers have been dealt with. Satpathy (2021) in his paper Arishadvarga or Shadripu Personality Theory has described that the mind is afflicted by the Arishadvarga or Shadripu which ultimately affects the Swabhava or the personality. This paper can be classified as the trait theory of Indian personality psychology based on the six traits of Arishadvarga or Shadripu as described by Shankaracharya. Charaka, one of the great physicians of Ayurvedic medicine, methodically observed the human behaviours and temperaments. He concluded that besides physiology, human behaviours and temperaments are also motivated by various factors like environment and geography, thus fixing the platform for holistic perspectives. Taking the cue from this Satpathy(2022) has classified the human personality in his paper Human Personality and Charaka's Theory of Dhatus. According to him the theory of Dhatus (Tissues) is a typical element in Ayurvedic medical science. The human body contains eight main substances; known as Dhatus that give support and strength to our body. The human temperament and its behavioural manifestations are proportionally related to these substances and their proper presence is called "health". In Vedanta, the three bodies—Sthula Sarira (Gross Body), Sukshma Sarira (Subtle Body), and Karana Sarira (Causal Body)—correspond to the states of consciousness: Jagrata (Waking), Swapna (Dreaming), and Susupti (Deep Sleep). Turiya (Pure Consciousness) transcends these states. Understanding these layers is essential for holistic personality development, integrating physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual growth. By mapping these concepts to trait theory, individuals can refine personality traits through physical discipline, mental clarity, and spiritual practices. This multidimensional approach fosters a balanced, enlightened personality, culminating in self-realization and a purposeful life. (Satpathy, 2024)

### **The Purusha-Prakriti Framework**

In Sankhya philosophy, personality is understood in terms of the interaction between Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (material nature). Purusha represents the pure, unchanging, and eternal aspect of the self, while Prakriti encompasses the dynamic and mutable aspects of existence, including the mind, senses, and body.

Personality arises from the interplay of Prakriti's three gunas (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas) and is shaped by one's identification with Prakriti. To achieve self-realization, individuals must realize their true nature as Purusha, separate from the ego and material attachments of Prakriti (Rao, 2010).

### **Yoga and Personality Development**

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali provide a framework for personality development through the eight limbs of yoga (Ashtanga Yoga), which include ethical disciplines (yamas and niyamas), physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana). Patanjali emphasizes Chitta Vritti Nirodha (stilling the fluctuations of the mind) as the key to transforming personality.

Yoga aims to purify the mind and body, transcending ego-driven tendencies. Through disciplined practice, one can move beyond the lower aspects of personality, achieving a state of inner calm, wisdom, and ultimately, spiritual liberation (Feuerstein, 1998).

### **Buddhist Theory of Personality**

In Buddhist psychology, personality is seen as an impermanent process rather than a fixed entity. The concept of Anatta (no-self) challenges the idea of a permanent self, viewing personality as a flow of five aggregates (skandhas): form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. The goal of personality development in Buddhism is to understand the impermanent nature of the self and overcome attachment to ego and desires, leading to enlightenment (Kumar, 2018).

Indian personality theories offer a profound and holistic approach to understanding human nature, focusing not only on behaviour but also on inner transformation and spiritual growth. Whether through the Triguna model, Panchakosha, Yoga Sutras, Charaka's Dhatu theory, Shadripu theory or even Vedanta theory these theories emphasize the importance of transcending ego, cultivating sattva (purity), and moving toward self-realization. In contrast to many Western models, Indian approaches integrate ethical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, providing a path for both personal and collective transformation.

### **The Devi Mahatmyam**

The Devi Mahatmyam, also known as the Durga Saptashati or Chandi Path, is a revered Hindu scripture that celebrates the power and glory of the Divine Mother, Devi. Comprising 700 verses from the Markandeya Purana, it narrates the triumph of Goddess Durga over various demons, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. The text

emphasizes the importance of inner strength, courage, and devotion, portraying Devi as both the protector and the embodiment of cosmic energy. Spiritually, it highlights the transformative journey toward self-realization by overcoming ego and ignorance.

### **Human Personality in Devi Mahatmyam**

We in this paper have used Hermeneutics as the research methodology. Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of ancient texts, scriptures, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts. Through this methodology we have tried to explore the personality theory that has been depicted in the Devi Mahatmyam. The Devi Mahatmyam provides insights into human personality, though its approach is deeply symbolic and spiritual. The text uses the allegory of the battle between the Goddess and various demons to illustrate different aspects of human nature, particularly the conflicts and transformations that shape personality. The Devi Mahatmyam touches on human personality in the following personality types.

### **Ego and the False Self**

The Ego and the False Self personality can be understood as a psychological construct where the individual's sense of self is dominated by the ego—a distorted self-identity shaped by external attachments, desires, and a need for validation or superiority. In the Devi Mahatmyam, this personality is symbolized by Mahishasura, the buffalo demon, who exemplifies how the ego operates to protect its self-importance and resist deeper spiritual truths.

Over-identification with external achievements leads to a personality type defined by status, power, and social validation. Such individuals, like Mahishasura in the Devi Mahatmyam, shift personas to maintain control and dominance. Marked by pride and arrogance, they exhibit an inflated sense of self, resisting change out of fear of losing identity. This ego-driven personality thrives on fear and insecurity, creating separation and duality, where others are seen as threats. Emotional reactivity and defensiveness surface when their authority is questioned, resulting in a lack of authenticity as they hide their true selves behind a false façade. Mahishasura (the buffalo demon) is symbolic of the human ego—stubborn, ever-changing, and resistant to being subdued. He represents the false self, which is driven by desires, attachments, and pride. In human personality, the ego often hides under different guises (just like Mahishasura changes forms), representing the masks we wear in life, fueled by pride, anger, and ignorance. The eventual defeat of Mahishasura by the Devi symbolizes the transcendence of the ego, allowing the true self (or higher consciousness) to emerge. This suggests that an integral part of human personality development involves overcoming ego-driven tendencies.

### **Spiritual and Psychological Growth**

The Devi Mahatmyam teaches that personal and spiritual growth requires confronting and transcending the ego and false self. In the narrative, Mahishasura's defeat by the Goddess symbolizes the triumph of higher consciousness over the lower, ego-driven self. The path to overcoming the ego begins with self-awareness and reflection, where individuals recognize their ego-driven behaviours and see through the masks they wear, understanding the fears and desires that motivate them. Surrender to higher wisdom is essential, as symbolized by Mahishasura's defeat, showing the need to let go of control, pride, and false identities to achieve spiritual awakening. Embracing vulnerability is another key aspect, as it allows individuals to accept their imperfections, leading to the realization that true strength comes from authenticity and inner truth rather than maintaining a façade. Cultivating compassion and recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings helps dissolve the barriers of separation that the ego creates. The ego and false self represent a state of consciousness dominated by pride, control, attachment, and fear, symbolized by Mahishasura in the Devi Mahatmyam. To transcend this state, individuals must cultivate self-awareness, embrace vulnerability, and surrender their ego to their higher, authentic self, ultimately moving beyond the false self to live in alignment with their true nature, free from the constraints of the ego.

### **Aspects of the Mind**

The demons Shumbha and Nishumbha, representing dualities (such as love and hate, pleasure and pain), reflect the dual nature of the mind. Human personality is often influenced by these opposing forces, leading to internal conflicts and turmoil. The Devi's victory over them symbolizes the ability to rise above dualities and reach a state of balance and inner harmony.

This suggests that human personality is shaped by the ongoing struggle between conflicting desires and emotions, and true peace is achieved when one transcends these dualities.

The dual nature of the mind and human personality is a concept that spans across psychology, philosophy, and spiritual traditions. It often refers to the tension between two opposing or complementary aspects of the mind and personality—such as the conscious vs. unconscious, rational vs. emotional, or ego vs. self.

Sigmund Freud proposed a dualistic view of the mind, divided into the conscious (aware of thoughts and external reality) and the unconscious (hidden, repressed desires, and memories). According to Freud, human personality is shaped by the tension between the id (primitive desires), the ego (the rational mediator), and the superego (moral conscience). The conscious mind attempts to balance these unconscious forces, which creates internal conflict. Freud's psychoanalysis was centred on resolving this conflict by bringing unconscious elements into conscious awareness.

Carl Jung expanded on Freud's ideas, introducing the concept of the collective unconscious, a deeper layer shared by all humans, filled with archetypes—universal symbols like the “hero,” “shadow,” and “anima/animus.” Jung described the ego as the conscious self, while the Self is a unifying archetype representing the totality of the personality, integrating both conscious and unconscious aspects. Human personality, according to Jung, is shaped by the interaction between the ego and the unconscious, and individuation is the process of integrating these dual aspects into a unified whole.

Daniel Goleman, in his work on Emotional Intelligence, highlights the tension between the rational mind and the emotional mind. He argues that the rational mind is logical, methodical, and deliberate, while the emotional mind is impulsive, reactive, and often unconscious. Human personality and behaviour are shaped by how well these two aspects of the mind are integrated. Emotional intelligence involves using both rational and emotional capacities to make decisions, manage relationships, and achieve personal growth.

Roger Sperry's research on split-brain patients showed that the two hemispheres of the brain (the left and right) have distinct functions: the left hemisphere is more analytical, logical, and language-oriented, while the right hemisphere is more intuitive, holistic, and creative. This physiological duality in the brain reflects a duality in human personality, where the balance between analytical and creative thinking shapes behaviour and thought processes. Sperry's work supports the idea that human consciousness is not unitary but divided into two complementary modes.

Daniel Kahneman's dual process theory in cognitive psychology posits that the mind operates through two systems: System 1 (fast, intuitive, and emotional) and System 2 (slow, deliberate, and rational). Human personality and decision-making are influenced by the interaction between these two systems. While System 1 is more instinctive and efficient, System 2 allows for more reflective and thoughtful responses. This duality reflects the tension between impulsivity and careful reasoning, shaping human behaviour and personality traits such as impulsivity or self-control.

Rumi, the Sufi mystic poet, speaks of the dual nature of the self, particularly the struggle between the lower self (nafs), which is driven by worldly desires and ego, and the higher self, which seeks union with the divine. Rumi's poetry often discusses the battle between the egoic mind and the true, spiritual self, emphasizing that the journey toward spiritual awakening requires overcoming the ego (nafs) to realize the unity of all existence.

In Plato's philosophy, the human soul (which corresponds to the mind) is divided into three parts: the rational part, the spirited part, and the appetitive part. The rational mind seeks truth and wisdom, while the appetitive mind is driven by desires and material pleasures. The spirited part mediates between the two, providing courage and willpower. Plato argued that a balanced personality emerges when the rational mind governs the appetitive desires, leading to a just and harmonious soul.

Duality in Eastern Philosophy is described in The Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita describes the dual nature of the mind in terms of higher self (Atman) and the ego (ahamkara). The lower nature of the mind is driven by desires, attachments, and identification with the material world (the sansaric self), while the higher mind seeks spiritual truth and unity with the divine (the Atman). Lord Krishna teaches that humans must rise above the duality of pleasure and pain, success and failure, and see the eternal self beyond the mind's attachments. The Gita encourages aligning the mind and personality with higher wisdom (buddhi) and selfless action, transcending the dualistic nature of the lower mind.

Duality in Advaita Vedanta is described in terms of Atman vs. Ahamkara. In Advaita Vedanta, the dual nature of the mind is illustrated by the contrast between the Atman (the true, unchanging self) and the ahamkara (the ego or false self). The mind, when identified with ahamkara, is caught in the duality of subject-object, good-bad, pleasure-pain. The goal of spiritual practice in this tradition is to transcend this duality and realize the non-dual nature of the self (Advaita), where the distinction between self and other, mind and body, disappears. This realization of the non-dual mind leads to moksha (liberation) and the dissolution of the ego's false personality.

Buddhist Psychology deals with the Duality of Mind as Samsara vs. Nirvana. In Buddhist psychology, the mind is dual in the sense that it can be caught in samsara (the cycle of birth, death, and suffering driven by attachments and ego) or it can realize nirvana (liberation from suffering and the realization of the true nature of reality). The dual aspects of the mind—the conditioned mind (which clings to identity, desire, and fear) and the unconditioned mind

(which perceives the world without attachment)—create the basis of human personality. Meditation practices are designed to calm the conditioned mind and reveal the unconditioned mind.

The dual nature of the mind and human personality is a recurring theme across various disciplines—whether seen through the lens of conscious vs. unconscious, rational vs. emotional, or ego vs. true self. Each tradition and thinker offers a unique perspective on how the mind's dual nature shapes behaviour, thought processes, and the development of the self. One can achieve greater self-awareness, balance, and spiritual or psychological growth by integrating these dualities.

### **The Battle between Higher and Lower Nature**

The various demons the Devi battles represent different lower instincts in human nature, such as greed, lust, arrogance, delusion, and ignorance. These lower qualities are seen as obstacles to the realization of one's higher self. In the context of personality, these represent the shadow aspects of human nature—the darker, unconscious drives that must be confronted and integrated for personal growth. The Devi, as the symbol of higher consciousness or wisdom, fights these demons to restore dharma (cosmic order). This reflects the idea that human personality is in a constant struggle between lower nature (tamas, rajas) and higher virtues (sattva, wisdom, compassion).

The battle between higher and lower nature is a recurring theme in many spiritual, philosophical, and psychological traditions. It refers to the internal struggle between the higher self (associated with virtues, wisdom, selflessness, and spiritual aspirations) and the lower self (linked to desires, ego, instincts, and material attachments). This battle shapes the moral and spiritual journey of the individual, as they seek to transcend the lower nature and realize their higher potential.

To address the battle between higher and lower nature we give a detailed explanations from different perspectives in the following discussion. In the Bhagavad Gita, this internal battle is symbolized by the Kurukshetra war, where the forces of higher nature (Dharma) face the forces of lower nature (Adharma). Arjuna, representing the human soul, is caught between his duty (higher nature) and emotional attachment to his family (lower nature). Lord Krishna, as the divine guide, teaches Arjuna that the lower self is driven by desires and ego (ahamkara), while the higher self is rooted in Atman, the soul that seeks unity with the divine. To transcend the lower nature, one must engage in selfless action (Karma Yoga), control the senses (Jnana Yoga), and surrender to the divine (Bhakti Yoga). The battle within symbolizes the ongoing conflict between the mind's desires and attachments and the soul's pursuit of spiritual liberation.

In Freudian psychology, the id represents the lower nature, driven by primal instincts, desires, and pleasure-seeking behaviour. The superego represents the higher nature, embodying moral standards, societal expectations, and the conscience. The ego acts as a mediator between the id and the superego, trying to balance these conflicting forces. The battle between the lower nature of the id and the higher nature of the superego shapes human personality and behavior. Freud saw this inner conflict as a core aspect of human psychology, leading to internal tension, guilt, or anxiety when desires clash with moral values.

Plato describes the tripartite nature of the soul in his work, *The Republic*. According to him, the soul is divided into three parts. Rational (higher nature): Seeks truth, wisdom, and justice. Appetitive (lower nature): Driven by desires for food, pleasure, and material wealth. Spirited: Provides courage and willpower, mediating between the rational and appetitive parts. The battle between higher and lower nature in Plato's philosophy occurs when the rational soul attempts to control the appetitive desires. A well-ordered soul is one where reason governs the lower appetites, leading to virtue and justice.

Carl Jung speaks of the shadow self as representing the lower nature—the unconscious, repressed aspects of the personality that include desires, fears, and instincts that the conscious mind try to hide. The higher nature is represented by the Self, the unified and integrated personality that includes both conscious and unconscious aspects. The individuation process, or the journey toward wholeness, involves facing the shadow and integrating it with the conscious mind. The battle occurs when the ego struggles to accept and integrate the shadow, which must be acknowledged for true psychological growth.

In Sufi mysticism, the nafs represents the lower self, driven by ego, desires, and attachments to the material world. It is seen as the source of selfishness, greed, and ignorance. The ruh (spirit or higher self) is the divine essence within each individual, seeking to connect with the ultimate reality, or God. The spiritual journey involves battling the nafs to purify the soul and realize the divine within. The greater jihad in Sufism is this internal battle between the nafs (lower nature) and the ruh (higher nature), where one strives to overcome the ego's hold and attain union with God.

In Buddhism, the lower nature is tied to samsara, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth driven by ignorance, desire, and attachment. The higher nature is realized in nirvana, the state of liberation from suffering, ego, and the false sense of

self. The battle between the lower and higher nature is fought through the practice of mindfulness, ethical living, and meditation. By understanding the true nature of reality (emptiness) and overcoming attachment to the ego and material world, one can transcend the lower self and attain spiritual enlightenment.

In Christian theology, the flesh represents the lower nature, characterized by sinful desires, material attachments, and ego-driven behaviours. The spirit represents the higher nature, aligned with God's will, virtue, and love. The Apostle Paul speaks of this battle in the New Testament, where the "flesh" is constantly at war with the "spirit." The path to salvation and unity with God requires overcoming the temptations of the flesh and aligning oneself with the higher calling of the spirit.

Sri Aurobindo describes human nature as divided into various planes: the physical (body), vital (life energies and desires), mental (thought and reason), and the psychic being (the soul or higher self). The vital nature represents the lower self, driven by desires, emotions, and ego. The psychic being is the higher self, which seeks to manifest the divine will. The spiritual journey involves aligning the physical, vital, and mental aspects with the psychic being to achieve spiritual transformation. The battle is a progressive one, where the lower nature is gradually purified and transformed by the light of the higher nature.

In modern psychology, Daniel Goleman discusses the battle between the rational mind and the emotional mind in his work on emotional intelligence. The rational mind is logical, methodical, and seeks long-term well-being, while the emotional mind is reactive and impulsive, often driven by lower instincts. Mastering emotional intelligence involves recognizing the dominance of the emotional mind (lower nature) and consciously bringing the rational mind (higher nature) to the forefront of decision-making and behavior.

In the Devi Mahatmyam, the battle between asuras (demons) and the Devi (Divine Mother) symbolizes the internal conflict between the lower nature (represented by the asuras) and the higher nature (the divine power of wisdom and virtue). The Devi, as the embodiment of higher wisdom, conquers the asuras, who represent ego, greed, and ignorance. This victory symbolizes the triumph of the higher self over the ego and the lower desires, leading to spiritual liberation.

The battle between higher and lower nature is a central theme across various traditions and philosophies. Whether it is framed as the struggle between ego and soul, id and superego, samsara and nirvana, or flesh and spirit, the conflict represents the moral and spiritual growth of an individual. Transcending the lower nature involves aligning with.

In the battle between higher and lower nature, personality types can be viewed as existing along a spectrum between lower-self-driven and higher-self-driven orientations. The battle between these aspects of the self often shapes individual personality and behaviour.

### **Lower-Self-Oriented Personality Types**

These individuals are dominated by their lower nature, which is characterized by ego, desires, and attachments to material aspects of life. Their personality types often reflect the following traits:

#### **Ego- Cantered Personality**

Ego- Cantered Personality are the individuals who focus primarily on self-centeredness and the pursuit of personal gains and pleasures. The ego, or lower self, directs their actions toward fulfilling desires, gaining recognition, and satisfying material or sensory needs. Traits include pride, greed, jealousy, and insecurity.

#### **Instinct-Driven Personality**

The behaviour of this type of people is primarily guided by basic instincts, such as the pursuit of pleasure, avoidance of pain, and survival. This type of personality may exhibit impulsiveness, indulgence in physical desires, and an aversion to self-discipline. Traits include impulsivity, emotional reactivity, and seeking immediate gratification.

#### **Fear-Driven Personality**

This personality type is dominated by fear and insecurity; they struggle with anxiety about personal survival, loss, and status. The lower self's attachment to safety and material security often leads to defensive or aggressive behaviours. Their traits include defensiveness, possessiveness, and avoidance of change.

### **Higher-Self-Oriented Personality Types**

Individuals who operate from their higher nature are motivated by spiritual growth, selflessness, and wisdom. Their personality types embody higher ideals and virtues.

#### **Spiritual or Altruistic Personality**

These individuals seek to transcend their ego and embrace selflessness, love, and compassion. They are driven by a desire to serve others and align with higher moral values. Their traits include empathy, kindness, and humility.

#### **Wisdom-Seeking Personality**

Focused on the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and self-realization these type of personality strive to rise above the limitations of the ego and lower desires. Such individuals often engage in deep reflection, meditation, and the cultivation of virtues like patience and detachment and have traits that include rationality, discernment, and emotional balance.

#### **Balanced Personality (Integration of Higher and Lower Nature):**

These people represent the harmonization of the lower and higher self, where the individual has integrated their instincts and desires with their higher ideals. This personality type reflects a balance between engaging in worldly activities while maintaining a higher perspective of life. Their traits include calmness, inner strength, and resilience.

#### **Personality Types Caught in the Battle**

Most people fall somewhere between these extremes, exhibiting a combination of traits from both the lower and higher nature. The internal struggle manifests in several key ways.

#### **Conflicted Personality**

Such individuals are aware of their higher calling but feel torn between their lower desires and their spiritual aspirations. They may experience internal conflict, oscillating between moments of selflessness and moments of ego-driven behaviour. They have traits that include inconsistency, inner tension, and self-doubt.

#### **Seeking Personality**

These individuals are actively working to overcome their lower nature and align more with their higher purpose. They are often on a journey of self-discovery, striving to move from ego-centered motivations to those aligned with love, wisdom, and truth with traits including curiosity, openness to growth, and moral ambition.

#### **Transforming Personality**

In this stage, the individual is in the process of transforming their lower nature into higher virtues. This personality type is focused on self-discipline, mindfulness, and conscious efforts to rise above instinctual drives. They have traits like perseverance, inner struggle, and determination.

#### **Philosophical and Spiritual Perspectives**

The Bhagavad Gita presents the struggle between Arjuna's lower nature (ego-driven emotions) and his higher nature (sense of duty and alignment with Dharma) as a core element of the human personality. Carl Jung's concept of the Shadow and the Self also highlights the battle between the unconscious lower desires (shadow) and the conscious efforts toward integration (Self). Freud's theory of id (lower nature) and superego (higher nature) shows this same battle in terms of psychological development. In each of these cases, personality is shaped by how one navigates the tension between base desires (lower nature) and spiritual or moral aspirations (higher nature).

The personality type in the battle between higher and lower nature reflects the dominant forces within an individual. Those governed by the lower nature tend to exhibit ego-driven or instinctual traits, while those aligned with their higher nature are oriented toward selflessness, wisdom, and spiritual fulfilment. Most people fall somewhere in between, with the internal conflict between these forces shaping their growth and development.

#### **Transformation and Growth**

The Devi's battles can be viewed as a process of personal transformation, where negative tendencies are gradually overcome, leading to growth and spiritual maturity. In the human personality, this reflects the path of self-improvement, where individuals work to overcome their weaknesses and cultivate virtues like courage, compassion, and self-awareness. This process is not linear; it is cyclical, as new challenges (demons) arise, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of human personality.

Transformation and Growth refer to the processes by which individuals evolve from their current state—often shaped by the lower self (ego, desires, and attachments)—toward a higher state of consciousness and self-realization. This journey involves overcoming internal limitations, integrating one's shadow aspects, and awakening to deeper levels of wisdom, compassion, and authenticity.

#### **Transformation: The Process of Inner Change**

Transformation is a profound inner shift that leads to a radical change in identity, behaviour, and consciousness. It involves moving from a lower state of awareness, often driven by ego and material desires, to a higher state where the self becomes aligned with spiritual or universal values.

The key aspects of transformation include traits such as Self-Awareness: The first step in transformation is becoming aware of the aspects that are limiting growth. This includes identifying ego-driven behaviours, fears, and desires. Facing the Shadow: Carl Jung has described that the shadow self represents the unconscious parts of ourselves that we often reject or repress. Transformation requires confronting and integrating these shadow aspects into our conscious self, rather than denying them. Shedding the Ego: Transformation often involves the dissolution of the ego's control over the self. The ego, with its attachments to identity, success, and desires, must be transcended to awaken to a deeper sense of self. Spiritual Awakening: As we shed ego-based thinking, we may experience a deeper connection to the soul, the higher self, or the divine. This stage is often described as a spiritual rebirth or awakening. Letting Go: Transformation often requires releasing old patterns of thinking and behaviour, detaching from past conditioning, and embracing new ways of being.

One such example from the Bhagavad Gita is Arjuna who undergoes a transformation from a state of confusion and attachment to his personal relationships and emotions, toward clarity and spiritual wisdom as he surrenders to Krishna's guidance. This journey illustrates the transformative power of surrendering ego-driven desires and aligning with higher principles.

The psychological parallel in modern psychology is the self-actualization as described by Abraham Maslow can be seen as a form of transformation. The individual transcends basic needs (like safety, security, and esteem) and begins focusing on higher-order growth, such as creativity, morality, and the pursuit of inner meaning.

### **Growth: The Ongoing Process of Development**

Growth refers to the continuous development of the self, both psychologically and spiritually. Unlike transformation, which can involve sudden shifts, growth is an ongoing, gradual process where the individual expands their capabilities, understanding, and wisdom over time.

The growth includes the following aspects.

**Personal Development:** Growth includes the expansion of knowledge, skills, and emotional maturity. As individuals grow, they learn to manage their emotions, build resilience, and develop deeper relationships.

**Emotional Intelligence:** A key part of growth involves increasing emotional intelligence—the ability to recognize and manage one's emotions and the emotions of others. This allows for greater compassion, empathy, and effective communication.

**Moral and Ethical Growth:** Growth leads to develop a stronger sense of ethics and integrity. Moral growth involves aligning actions with higher values, such as justice, kindness, and selflessness.

**Spiritual Growth:** This involves a gradual connection to higher self, the divine, or the universe. Spiritual growth leads to a greater sense of purpose, inner peace, and connection to something beyond the ego.

**Resilience and Adaptability:** Growth often requires facing challenges and hardships. Each obstacle becomes an opportunity for growth as it teaches lessons in resilience, adaptability, and inner strength. Stages of Growth (in relation to personality) are

**Lower Nature (Driven by Ego):** Initially, the personality is often dominated by desires, fears, and attachments. At this stage, growth may involve learning to manage basic needs and emotions.

**Middle Stage (Balance of Ego and Higher Self):** As growth continues, individuals develop greater emotional intelligence, ethical understanding, and self-awareness. They begin to question ego-driven motivations and seek higher purposes.

**Higher Nature (Driven by Soul or Higher Self):** In advanced stages of growth, the individual becomes aligned with their higher nature, embracing virtues such as compassion, wisdom, and inner peace. At this stage, growth is about deepening spiritual awareness and living in harmony with universal principles.

### **The Cycle of Transformation and Growth**

Transformation and growth are interlinked. Transformation often acts as a catalyst for growth, creating shifts in identity, perception, and consciousness. Following transformation, growth becomes a continuous process as the individual refines their understanding, develops new skills, and deepens their connection to their higher self.

Transformation leads to growth, for example, after a profound spiritual awakening, the individual begins to focus on integrating these new insights into their daily life. This results in emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. Similarly growth supports transformation as because continuous personal and spiritual growth, over time, can lead to moments of deep transformation.

For instance, sustained meditation, self-reflection, and service to others can result in transformative insights and shifts in consciousness.

### **Spiritual and Philosophical Perspectives on Transformation and Growth**

Different spiritual and philosophical traditions offer varying views on transformation and growth, some of them are described in the following paragraphs.

**Advaita Vedanta (Non-dualism):** In Advaita Vedanta, transformation is understood as the shift from ignorance (avidya) to the realization (jnana) that the self (Atman) is non-different from Brahman, the ultimate reality. This transformation involves a radical inner change where the illusion of separateness dissolves, allowing one to perceive the unity of all existence. Growth in this tradition is continuous as individuals align their lives with this realization. They shed attachment to the ego and material desires, cultivating inner peace and living in harmony with their true nature.

**Buddhism:** Transformation in Buddhism occurs through the realization of the Four Noble Truths and following the Eightfold Path, which enables individuals to transcend suffering (dukkha) and ultimately attain Nirvana. This process requires deep understanding and practice, leading to a profound change in how one perceives life and suffering. Growth is ongoing through mindfulness, ethical living, and meditation, which gradually purify the mind and heart. As individuals progress on this path, they become more compassionate, centered, and free from the cycles of craving and aversion.

**Sufism:** In Sufism, transformation is the journey of the ego (nafs) being purified and ultimately surrendering fully to God. This mystical path requires deep inner work, where the individual's ego-driven desires are transformed through divine love and devotion. Growth in Sufism comes through practices like prayer, contemplation, and acts of love and service. As the Sufi grows spiritually, they gradually shed the ego's influence, experiencing union with the Divine and embodying qualities of compassion, humility, and unconditional love.

**Psychological Perspective (Jungian Psychology):** Carl Jung's individuation process represents a form of psychological transformation, where an individual integrates the conscious and unconscious aspects of their personality, including the shadow. This transformation allows for a deeper understanding of the self and leads to personal authenticity. Growth in Jungian psychology involves the continuous journey toward becoming more whole and aligned with one's true self. As individuals integrate their inner conflicts and embrace all parts of their psyche, they experience increased psychological maturity, balance, and self-awareness.

Transformation and growth are intertwined processes of self-evolution, moving from ego-centered existence to one aligned with higher values and spiritual wisdom. Transformation often begins with profound inner shifts, while growth is the ongoing refinement of one's personality, values, and consciousness. Together, they form the journey toward self-realization, inner peace, and a deeper connection to the universal or divine.

In the context of transformation and growth, personality types can be categorized based on where individuals are in their journey of evolving from lower-self-driven behaviours (ego, desires, attachments) to higher-self-oriented states (self-awareness, wisdom, spiritual realization). Personality types reflect how people interact with the world and themselves during their process of inner change. We now explore these personality types through the lens of transformation and growth.

#### **Ego-Dominated Personality (Lower-Self Orientation)**

These individuals are at the beginning stages of transformation and growth, often driven by ego, desires, and material attachments. Their personality is characterized by self-centered motives, fear, and insecurities. The key traits of this personality include Self-Centeredness: Their actions and decisions are primarily focused on self-interest and personal gains. Materialism: They tend to place great value on wealth, status, and external validation. Fear and Insecurity: Driven by the fear of loss, failure, or rejection, they may be defensive or aggressive. Emotional Reactivity: They are highly reactive to challenges or criticism, often responding with anger, jealousy, or frustration. Growth and Transformation: This type of personality is resistant to change at first but may start to recognize the limits of their ego-driven existence. Initial growth occurs when they begin questioning their attachments and material pursuits, realizing that true fulfilment lies beyond ego-satisfaction.

#### **Awakening Personality (Conflict between Lower and Higher Nature)**

These individuals are in the process of awakening to higher ideals but experience inner conflict between their ego-driven desires and the call of their higher self. This personality type is marked by the struggle for inner clarity and self-awareness. They manifest the traits such as Duality: They oscillate between selfish desires and an emerging sense of selflessness, creating internal tension. Self-Reflection: These individuals are beginning to engage in self-inquiry and question their motivations, beliefs, and behaviours. Growth-Oriented: They are actively seeking growth through learning, spiritual practices, or personal development. Emotional Struggle: They may feel torn between competing desires—pleasure versus purpose, ambition versus compassion. The growth process involves a shift from lower nature

to higher nature in this stage, where the individual gradually recognizes the futility of ego-driven pursuits and starts valuing inner peace, wisdom, and self-awareness. At this stage, they may encounter periods of confusion or discomfort as old patterns dissolve.

#### **Seeker Personality (Active Pursuit of Higher Nature)**

This type of personality is characterized by individuals who are actively pursuing self-realization and have a strong desire to align with their higher self. The seeker is dedicated to growth and transformation, often engaging in spiritual practices or self-development. In them we can find Curiosity and Openness: They are open to exploring new ideas, perspectives, and practices that promote personal and spiritual growth. Mindfulness and Reflection: Seekers often engage in regular self-reflection, meditation, or other practices that cultivate inner awareness. Striving for Selflessness: They are increasingly motivated by altruism, compassion, and a desire to serve others. Inner Tension: Though largely aligned with higher ideals, they may still experience occasional struggles with ego and attachments. Seekers experience rapid growth as they actively work on shedding their ego and aligning with their higher nature. They begin to realize that true fulfillment comes from spiritual realization rather than material success. Transformation occurs as they integrate higher principles into their everyday life, leading to a more balanced, compassionate, and purpose-driven existence.

#### **Transformed Personality (Integration of Lower and Higher Self)**

Individuals with this personality type have undergone significant transformation and are now operating from an integrated self—where both the lower and higher aspects are harmonized. They are balanced, self-aware, and aligned with their higher purpose. They exhibit Inner Balance: They have mastered the ability to navigate between worldly responsibilities and higher spiritual principles. Emotional Resilience: Transformed individuals possess a high level of emotional intelligence, remaining calm and grounded in the face of challenges. Authenticity: They are authentic and true to themselves, having transcended the need for external validation or ego-driven pursuits. Compassion and Wisdom: They are naturally compassionate, wise, and selfless, seeking to contribute to the well-being of others and the world. At this stage, growth is about deepening their spiritual practice and continuously refining their inner wisdom. The transformation is largely complete, but they may continue to grow through service, teaching, or further spiritual exploration.

#### **Self-Realized Personality (Higher-Self Orientation)**

This personality type represents individuals who have fully realized their higher self and are living in a state of deep spiritual wisdom, compassion, and detachment from the ego. They have transcended the duality of lower and higher nature. They show Non-Attachment: They are free from attachment to material possessions, desires, or ego-driven goals, embodying complete inner peace. Unconditional Love and Compassion: They radiate love, kindness, and compassion toward all beings, without discrimination or self-interest. Unity Consciousness: These individuals experience the world as an interconnected whole, recognizing the oneness of all existence. Spiritual Leadership: They often act as teachers, guides, or examples of higher living, inspiring others through their presence and wisdom. Transformation is fully achieved in the sense that they have transcended the ego and fully aligned with their higher nature or soul. Their growth continues through the deepening of spiritual wisdom and service to humanity. This stage is often described in spiritual texts as self-realization, where the individual experiences unity with the divine or universal consciousness.

#### **Balanced Personality (Sustaining Growth and Transformation)**

This personality type represents individuals who have reached a balance between the demands of the lower self and the aspirations of the higher self. They are constantly growing, but without the intense conflict of earlier stages. They have Harmonious Living: These individuals have integrated their spiritual ideals with practical responsibilities, creating a balanced and meaningful life. Self-Awareness: They are fully aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies but are no longer controlled by them. Purpose-Driven: They live with a clear sense of purpose, driven by higher ideals but also grounded in everyday realities. Compassionate and Wise: They display wisdom and compassion in their interactions, guiding others while continuing to grow themselves. Growth here involves sustaining balance, continuously aligning personal actions and thoughts with higher principles. Transformation is less dramatic at this stage but involves deepening one's spiritual practice, emotional resilience, and wisdom.

#### **Integration of Feminine and Masculine Traits:**

The Devi represents both the nurturing and fierce aspects of the Divine Feminine. In terms of personality, this suggests that human beings must integrate both nurturing and protective qualities. Strength is not just about aggression but also about compassion and care. The integration of these opposing traits—strength with compassion, fierceness with gentleness—is essential for a balanced and complete personality.

The integration of feminine and masculine traits in personality refers to the blending of qualities traditionally associated with femininity (nurturing, emotional sensitivity, receptivity) and masculinity (assertiveness, logic, strength). When these traits are harmonized, individuals achieve a balanced and holistic personality that transcends rigid gender norms. This concept of integration aligns with psychological theories of wholeness and self-actualization, where balance is the key to personal growth.

In many spiritual traditions, such as Hinduism, Taoism, and Jungian psychology, this integration is often symbolized by unity of opposites. In the following discussion we have explored different personality types based on how well an individual integrates these traits.

### **Ego-Driven Masculine or Feminine Personality (Rigid Gender Roles)**

In this personality type, there is a lack of integration between masculine and feminine traits, leading to rigid identification with one set of traits based on societal expectations. Individuals are primarily aligned with either stereotypical masculine or feminine roles, which limit emotional and psychological growth.

**Masculine-Dominated Personality:**

- Traits: Assertiveness, competitiveness, independence, dominance, rational thinking.
- Challenges: Difficulty with vulnerability, emotional expression, empathy, and nurturing.
- Examples: Traditional patriarchal roles, where men are expected to be tough, stoic, and focused on external achievements.

**Feminine-Dominated Personality:**

- Traits: Emotional sensitivity, nurturing, empathy, passivity, receptivity.
- Challenges: Difficulty with assertiveness, setting boundaries, and self-advocacy.
- Examples: Traditional female roles, where women are expected to prioritize relationships and care-giving over personal ambition.

Psychological Implications of these personalities is that they often experience **inner conflict** as their suppressed traits emerge in times of stress or crisis, leading to feelings of inadequacy or imbalance.

### **Awakening Personality (Emerging Integration of Traits)**

In the awakening personality, individuals begin to recognize the limitations of rigid gender roles and strive to integrate both masculine and feminine traits. This stage involves self-awareness and a desire for growth, but the integration process is still in progress, often leading to inner conflict.

**Traits:**

- Increased Self-Reflection: They begin questioning gender roles and expectations, often seeking balance in both emotional expression and assertiveness.
- Conflict between Traits: There may be moments of tension where masculine and feminine traits compete for dominance.
- Embracing Vulnerability and Strength: Individuals may attempt to balance emotional vulnerability with strength, compassion with assertiveness.

**Examples:**

- A man who starts expressing emotions more freely, or a woman who begins to assert herself in leadership roles, but both still experience discomfort and internal conflict with this newfound balance.

**Growth Path:**

- This stage is characterized by experimentation with new behaviours and seeking personal growth through the exploration of previously suppressed traits.
- Challenges: Fear of societal judgment, internal resistance to change, and overcompensation in certain behaviours.

### **Balanced Personality (Achieving Harmony of Feminine and Masculine)**

Individuals with a balanced personality have integrated both masculine and feminine traits, resulting in a harmonious blend of assertiveness, strength, compassion, and emotional intelligence. They no longer view traits as gendered but as human qualities essential for a whole and authentic life.

**Traits:**

- Emotional Intelligence: They are both emotionally expressive and rational, using intuition and logic in decision-making.
- Balanced Leadership: They assert themselves confidently but lead with empathy and understanding.

- Mutual Respect for Traits: They appreciate both inner strength and vulnerability in themselves and others.

Examples:

- Leaders who demonstrate compassion, cooperation, and assertiveness, regardless of their gender.
- Individuals who maintain healthy relationships through mutual respect, assertiveness, and emotional support.

The psychological implication of this personality type is that they experience inner peace and reduced inner conflict because they accept and express all aspects of themselves. They are often seen as wise and emotionally stable, capable of navigating both personal and professional challenges with grace and resilience.

### **Transcendent Personality (Unity beyond Gender)**

In this personality type, individuals transcend the very notion of masculine and feminine, operating from a place of spiritual and psychological wholeness. They embrace the divine duality within themselves, merging the opposites to achieve a sense of unity with the universe or a higher purpose. The distinction between masculine and feminine traits becomes irrelevant as they embody a state of being that transcends gender.

Traits:

- Wholeness and Unity: They are fully integrated, embodying qualities such as wisdom, love, and strength without identifying them as masculine or feminine.
- Non-Attachment to Roles: They no longer conform to societal expectations about gender but operate from a higher level of consciousness.
- Selflessness: Their actions are driven by compassion, wisdom, and a desire to serve others, without ego-driven motives.

Examples:

- Spiritual leaders who embody both nurturing compassion and fierce strength, such as the Dalai Lama or Mother Teresa.
- Jungian archetypes like the Self, representing the integrated psyche where opposites have been unified.

Growth Path:

- Growth at this stage involves deepening spiritual awareness and embracing one's universal identity, moving beyond duality.

### **Jungian Psychology on Integration of Feminine and Masculine (Anima and Animus)**

Carl Jung introduced the concepts of Anima (feminine aspects within men) and Animus (masculine aspects within women). According to Jung, psychological wholeness requires individuals to recognize and integrate these aspects of their personality.

### **Eastern Philosophy and the Integration of Masculine and Feminine (Shiva and Shakti)**

In Hindu philosophy, the masculine principle is often represented by Shiva (pure consciousness) and the feminine by Shakti (creative energy). The union of these two forces symbolizes the integration of complementary opposites that leads to spiritual wholeness. Similarly in the Bhagavad Gita the reference of Purusha and Prakriti has been mentioned.

### **Taoism: Yin and Yang Balance**

Taoism presents the concept of Yin (feminine) and Yang (masculine) as essential, complementary forces that exist within all things. Personal growth and transformation involve balancing these energies within oneself.

### **Contemporary Studies on Gender Fluidity and Psychological Integration**

In modern psychology, there is growing recognition of the fluidity of gender traits and the importance of integrating both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities to achieve psychological well-being.

Personality types based on the integration of feminine and masculine traits highlight a spectrum that ranges from rigid gender role adherence to full integration and spiritual transcendence. This journey involves moving beyond societal expectations to develop a holistic and balanced personality, where all traits are seen as equally valuable and human.

This integration is essential for personal growth and can be approached through frameworks like Jungian psychology (Anima/Animus), Eastern philosophy (Shiva/Shakti, Yin/Yang), and contemporary psychological models advocating for gender fluidity.

### **Self-Realization and Liberation:**

The ultimate goal of the Devi's battles is the restoration of order and the realization of her true nature as Mahadevi, the Supreme Goddess. This aligns with the idea that the goal of human personality development is self-realization—understanding one's true nature beyond the ego and material desires. The human personality, according to this text,

should strive toward aligning with one's higher self (represented by the Devi) rather than being controlled by lower impulses (represented by the demons).

Personality types based on Self-Realization and Liberation describe the journey of an individual's spiritual evolution as they seek to discover their true nature (the Self) and ultimately attain liberation (Moksha). In various spiritual and philosophical traditions, personality development is understood as the process of transcending ego-bound identities to realize the higher self or Atman.

A vivid description of personality types along this spiritual journey, highlighting stages from ignorance to liberation is being discussed here.

### **Ego-Centric Personality (Tamas-Dominated)**

Characteristics:

This personality type is rooted in ignorance (Avidya), attachment to the material world, and identification with the body and mind (ego). They are dominated by the quality of Tamas (inertia, ignorance, and darkness), such individuals are highly influenced by sensory pleasures and driven by desires, fear, anger, and selfish tendencies. They believe the self to be limited to physical existence, relationships, and possessions, which often results in a fragmented, dissatisfied, and restless life. In the Bhagavad Gita, such individuals are referred to as being in the state of Maya or illusion, where they are unable to recognize their true nature beyond the physical world. They remain trapped in Samsara (the cycle of birth and death), repeating patterns of desire and suffering.

Challenges:

Ignorance of the Atman (true Self) leads to a life focused on external gratification and material success. Fear of death, attachment, and resistance to change are prevalent in this stage.

### **Dualistic Personality (Rajas-Dominated)**

Characteristics:

In this stage, individuals are influenced by Rajas (activity, passion, and restlessness). They begin to recognize the dual nature of life—material and spiritual—but remain caught in inner conflict between worldly desires and spiritual aspirations.

They are driven by ambition, action, and the pursuit of success but often feel conflicted or dissatisfied as they sense the deeper purpose of life beyond material achievement.

Spiritual Context:

The Bhagavad Gita encourages such individuals to perform Karma Yoga, the path of selfless action, where they engage in worldly duties without attachment to the results.

At this stage, there is a gradual awareness of the Atman, but the ego is still prominent, causing a sense of separation between the individual self and the universal self.

Growth Path:

The individual begins to practice spiritual disciplines like meditation, devotion, or selfless service to reduce the grip of ego-driven desires. This personality type struggles to balance worldly responsibilities with spiritual growth but is on the path toward greater awareness.

### **Seeking Personality (Sattva-Dominated)**

Characteristics:

As the individual progresses, Sattva (purity, harmony, and light) becomes the dominant quality, leading to a peaceful, contemplative, and balanced personality. Individuals in this stage have an increased awareness of the limitations of the ego and begin to explore spiritual truths. They are drawn to study, meditation, and introspection, seeking the nature of the Self beyond the physical form. A sense of detachment from worldly outcomes develops, as they start perceiving the illusory nature of material life.

Spiritual Context:

In this stage, the personality aligns more with the Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) or Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion), depending on the individual's tendencies. They engage in a quest for self-knowledge or devotion to a higher power. There is a growing realization that the self is not the body or mind, but rather the eternal consciousness that pervades all.

Challenges:

While individuals experience peace and harmony, there can be lingering attachments or subtle desires for recognition, even in spiritual progress.

### **Realized Personality (Jivanmukta)**

Characteristics:

In this stage, the individual attains self-realization (Atma Jnana), realizing their true nature as the Atman, which is beyond the ego, body, and mind. There is an abiding sense of unity with the cosmos, a recognition that the individual self is not separate from the universal self (Brahman). Such individuals, known as Jivanmuktas, live in the world but are not of it. They perform actions without attachment or ego, free from the cycle of Samsara (birth and death).

Spiritual Context:

A realized person experiences Turiya, the fourth state of consciousness, where the self is beyond waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. They exist in a state of bliss (Ananda), free from desires, fears, and attachments. This state of liberation (Moksha) can be attained while still in the body, and these individuals lead lives of service, compassion, and wisdom, embodying divine qualities.

Challenges:

While there are no internal struggles, such individuals may face the challenge of communicating their realization to others, who are still bound by ego-driven consciousness. Despite their liberation, they continue to engage in the world out of compassion for others, helping guide them toward the same realization.

### **Liberated Personality (Paramukta)**

Characteristics:

This personality type is representative of someone who has attained final liberation (Paramukti), where there is complete dissolution of the individual self into the universal consciousness. There is no longer any sense of personal identity, and such beings are beyond even the state of Jivanmukti. They have merged entirely with the absolute reality (Brahman) and exist in a state of ultimate freedom.

Spiritual Context:

In this state, the liberated person no longer returns to the physical plane and is free from the cycle of birth and death. This is the final stage of liberation, where there is total freedom from ego, time, and space.

Each of these personality types represents different stages of spiritual evolution, from ignorance to enlightenment, with self-realization as the ultimate goal.

Western and Chinese philosophies have also contributed significantly to discussions about personality development, self-realization, and growth toward liberation. While the concepts differ in cultural and philosophical framing, they often address similar themes of human potential, the balance between the ego and the higher self, and the journey to inner freedom.

### **Western Perspectives on Self-Realization and Liberation**

In Western thought, particularly within psychology and existential philosophy, the notion of self-realization involves a process of transcending the ego and becoming one's most authentic self. Different psychological theories align with the stages of personal growth similar to those seen in spiritual traditions.

#### **Carl Jung's Individuation Process**

Carl Jung introduced the concept of individuation as a process of self-realization where a person integrates various parts of their unconscious and conscious mind to become a whole individual. He viewed personality as comprising the ego, the persona, the shadow, and the self, with the ultimate goal being the realization of the Self—a unified, higher state of being.

**Ego-Centric Personality (Persona):** In Jungian psychology, this stage is represented by the persona, the mask an individual wears to navigate social expectations and external roles. It often aligns with the ego-driven aspect of personality, which is concerned with societal approval and self-image. The person may feel fragmented or disconnected from their true self.

**Shadow Integration:** This represents the internal conflict between the conscious mind and the shadow self, which contains repressed, desires and fears.

The individuation process involves confronting this shadow and accepting the darker aspects of the psyche, similar to confronting the Rajas-dominated personality in Eastern traditions.

**Self-Realized Personality:** Jung's notion of the Self parallels the Eastern concept of the Atman. Self-realization is achieved through the integration of all aspects of the psyche, including the conscious and unconscious mind, resulting in a more balanced and holistic personality.

### **Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Self-Actualization**

Abraham Maslow introduced the idea of self-actualization as the highest stage of psychological development, where an individual achieves their full potential. His hierarchy of needs model describes the stages leading to self-realization.

**Ego-Centric Personality (Lower Needs):** According to Maslow, most people begin their journey by focusing on basic physiological needs (food, safety, belonging), which is comparable to the ego-centric personality described in the Eastern tradition. Their actions are motivated by survival, security, and social acceptance.

**Growth-Oriented Personality:** As an individual satisfies their basic needs, they move towards higher needs such as esteem and self-actualization. Here, they are driven by personal growth, creativity, and the desire to become their true self. Maslow's self-actualization is similar to the Sattva-dominated personality, where the individual seeks self-knowledge and balance.

**Self-Realized Personality:** In the final stage, a person becomes self-actualized, fully realizing their potential. They are independent, creative, and experience a sense of unity with life. Maslow's peak experiences—moments of profound insight and connection with the universe—echo the concept of self-realization or Jivanmukti.

### **Existentialism: Authenticity and Liberation from the False Self**

Existential philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger explored the journey toward authenticity, which parallels the concept of liberation from the ego. They emphasized living in alignment with one's true nature rather than conforming to societal roles and expectations.

**Ego-Centric Personality:** Existentialists discuss the concept of bad faith (self-deception), where individuals live inauthentically by conforming to societal norms rather than pursuing their true essence. This is akin to the Tamas-dominated personality.

**Authenticity and Liberation:** According to existentialism, individuals can attain a higher state of being by confronting the reality of existence, accepting their freedom, and making choices that reflect their authentic self. This parallels the state of self-realization described in the Bhagavad Gita, where liberation is achieved by overcoming attachments and ego-driven desires.

### **Chinese Perspectives on Self-Realization and Liberation**

In Chinese philosophy, the concept of self-realization is deeply intertwined with the balance between Yin and Yang (feminine and masculine energies), and the cultivation of virtues like harmony, simplicity, and wisdom. Taoist and Confucian teachings reflect different aspects of this journey.

#### **Taoism: The Balance of Yin and Yang**

Taoism emphasizes the unity of the Tao (the Way) and the harmonious integration of Yin and Yang—the two fundamental forces of nature. Personality development, in Taoist thought, involves letting go of the ego and aligning oneself with the natural flow of life.

**Ego-Centric Personality:** The Tao Te Ching describes the ego as the source of conflict and suffering. When individuals identify with the material world and their desires, they fall out of harmony with the Tao. This corresponds to a personality dominated by Tamas.

**Self-Realized Personality:** The sage in Taoism represents an enlightened individual who has transcended the ego. They live effortlessly in accordance with the Tao, embodying humility, simplicity, and balance. This state of self-realization reflects the concept of Jivanmukti, where a person acts without attachment or ego.

#### **Confucianism: The Noble Personality (Junzi)**

In Confucianism, the concept of the Junzi (noble person) reflects a personality that has reached the highest level of moral and spiritual development through the cultivation of virtues such as benevolence, righteousness, and wisdom.

**Ego-Centric Personality:** Confucianism describes a personality type called the Xiaoren (small person), who is focused on personal gain and selfish desires, which parallels the Tamas or Rajas-dominated personality in Eastern thought.

**Self-Realized Personality (Junzi):** The Junzi is a person who embodies moral integrity and acts in alignment with the Dao of humanity. They have overcome ego-driven desires and lead a life of virtue and harmony, aiming for personal and societal betterment, akin to a Sattva-dominated personality.

In summary of personality types across cultures we can say that Western Psychology focuses on self-actualization and individuation (Jung, Maslow), emphasizing the journey from ego-bound personalities to self-realized individuals. In Existentialism it explores the tension between authenticity and the false self, mirroring the battle between ego and self-realization. Taoism describes personality development as aligning with the Tao, overcoming ego, and achieving harmony with nature. Confucianism focuses on moral self-cultivation, moving from ego-driven desires to becoming a

virtuous Junzi. Each of these traditions emphasizes transcending the ego to reach a higher, more authentic state of being, similar to the journey toward self-realization described in the Bhagavad Gita and other Eastern spiritual texts.

### **The Tripartite Structure of Personality:**

In philosophical interpretations, the Devi Mahatmyam can be linked to the three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas) of Samkhya philosophy, which influence human personality. Tamas (inertia, ignorance): Represented by demons like Mahishasura, symbolizing the dark, stagnant, and destructive forces in human nature. Rajas (passion, activity): Represented by demons like Shumbha and Nishumbha, symbolizing restless energy, desire, and ambition that drive human action. Sattva (purity, balance): Represented by the Devi herself, symbolizing wisdom, compassion, and balance—the ideal qualities that should dominate the human personality. The struggle between these forces (gunas) shapes the nature and behaviour of human beings. The Devi's ultimate triumph signifies the elevation of sattva over the other two, leading to a harmonious and balanced personality.

The Devi Mahatmyam provides a symbolic exploration of human personality, particularly its conflicts, transformations, and potential for self-realization. It portrays the human mind as a battlefield where the ego, lower instincts, and unconscious forces (demons) must be overcome by higher consciousness (the Devi) to achieve balance, integration, and liberation. Through these symbolic battles, the text offers a profound insight into how individuals can navigate their inner struggles and grow toward a more integrated, harmonious personality.

### **Types of Personality Described in Devi Mahatmyam**

The Devi Mahatmyam, while not explicitly categorizing personalities as modern psychology might, offers rich symbolic narratives that describe different types of personalities based on the behavior and characteristics of the demons (asuras) and the Divine Mother (Devi). These characters represent various human traits and states of consciousness. Below are the types of personalities that can be inferred from the text:

#### **Egoistic Personality (Mahishasura):**

- Mahishasura, the buffalo demon, symbolizes the ego—a personality type dominated by pride, arrogance, and attachment to power and control. Such individuals resist change, much like how Mahishasura keeps transforming into different forms to avoid defeat.
- People with an egoistic personality are often driven by their own sense of superiority and are blinded by their ambition and self-interest. They may experience inner turmoil because they are constantly at odds with their environment and their deeper selves.

Traits: Arrogance, attachment, pride, resistance to change, selfishness.

#### **Ignorant and Delusional Personality (Shumbha and Nishumbha):**

- Shumbha and Nishumbha, the demon brothers, represent ignorance and delusion. They symbolize a personality that is caught up in dualities—pleasure and pain, gain and loss—and fails to see the unity of existence. Their inability to grasp reality accurately leads to poor judgment and decision-making.
- This type of personality is driven by desires and attachments, leading to delusions about their own power and importance. They are often caught in cycles of illusion and mistaken beliefs.

Traits: Ignorance, delusion, attachment to desires, dualistic thinking.

#### **Rajasik Personality (Chanda and Munda):**

- Chanda and Munda, who serve under Shumbha and Nishumbha, symbolize the rajasik personality—one characterized by restlessness, ambition, aggression, and relentless pursuit of desires. They are constantly engaged in action but are motivated by selfish desires, aggression, and ambition rather than higher ideals.
- People with a rajasik personality are often driven by passion, but their actions can be destructive or self-serving. They seek material success, recognition, and power, sometimes at the expense of others.

Traits: Restlessness, aggression, ambition, selfishness, desire for recognition.

#### **Tamasik Personality (Madhu and Kaitabha):**

- Madhu and Kaitabha, demons of delusion and darkness, represent the tamasik personality—one dominated by inertia, ignorance, and destructive tendencies. This personality type is deeply influenced by laziness, confusion, and ignorance. Such individuals may be resistant to change, stuck in their old ways, and unwilling to engage in meaningful action or growth.
- They are often trapped in negative thinking and destructive behavior, leading to stagnation and ignorance.

Traits: Inertia, ignorance, laziness, destructive tendencies, resistance to growth.

### **Sattvik Personality (Devi):**

- The Devi, who embodies both fierce and nurturing aspects, represents the sattvik personality, characterized by purity, balance, wisdom, and compassion. She is the embodiment of higher consciousness and spiritual power, balancing both nurturing qualities (as in her form as Lakshmi and Saraswati) and fierce qualities (as Durga or Kali).
- A sattvik personality is harmonious, peaceful, and aligned with higher ideals. Such individuals are focused on spiritual growth, selflessness, and service to others. They have transcended the lower instincts of greed, anger, and ego, living in alignment with divine principles.

Traits: Purity, wisdom, compassion, selflessness, balance, harmony, higher consciousness.

### **Transformational Personality (Kali):**

- Kali, a form of the Devi, represents a personality that brings about transformation. She is fierce and unrelenting in her destruction of evil, symbolizing the power to confront and destroy negative traits within the self. This personality type is focused on eliminating ignorance and darkness, both within and around them.
- People who embody this transformational personality are catalysts for change, whether within themselves or in their environment. They are fearless in confronting their own inner demons and those of others, bringing about necessary transformation and growth.

Traits: Fearlessness, transformation, destruction of ignorance, spiritual warrior, catalyst for change.

### **Resilient and Courageous Personality (Durga):**

- Durga, as the warrior goddess, symbolizes a resilient and courageous personality. She faces numerous adversities in the form of demons, yet she never gives up, demonstrating inner strength, perseverance, and fortitude.
- This personality type is marked by a sense of purpose, inner strength, and the ability to face challenges head-on without losing balance or composure. People with this type of personality are often natural leaders, able to inspire and uplift others through their courage and resilience.

Traits: Inner strength, courage, resilience, leadership, perseverance.

### **Integrated Personality (Combination of Nurturing and Fierce Aspects):**

- The Devi, in her various forms (Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Kali), represents the integration of multiple aspects of the personality. She is both nurturing and fierce, representing the balanced individual who has integrated opposing forces within their psyche.
- A person with an integrated personality is balanced, capable of being nurturing and compassionate while also having the strength to fight for justice and truth when necessary. This person embraces both their softness and their strength, achieving a state of inner harmony.

Traits: Balance, harmony, integration of opposites, wisdom, strength, adaptability.

The Devi Mahatmyam portrays different personalities symbolized by divine and demonic figures, reflecting the various states of human consciousness and behavior. The egoistic, ignorant, rajasik, and tamasik personalities represent lower states dominated by desires, attachments, and ignorance. On the other hand, the sattvik, resilient, transformational, and integrated personalities represent higher, balanced states aligned with wisdom, courage, and spiritual growth.

The Devi Mahatmyam encourages the evolution of human personality toward the higher sattvik qualities, advocating the transcendence of ego, desire, and ignorance for spiritual liberation and harmony.

### **Big Five Model of Personality in the Devi Mahatmyam**

The Devi Mahatmyam, portrays the cosmic battle between good and evil forces, also offers a framework for understanding the complexity of human personality. Using the Big Five Model of Personality as a lens, we can interpret the traits exhibited by the characters, events, and the underlying philosophy of the text. We can align the Big Five traits—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—with the personalities and dynamics in the Devi Mahatmyam.

#### **Openness to Experience**

Openness is characterized by imagination, curiosity, and a willingness to embrace new experiences, ideas, and ways of thinking.

- Divine Wisdom (Shakti), embodied by the Goddess Durga, can be linked to the openness of experience. The text highlights Durga's adaptability in various forms, like Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati, each

symbolizing creative solutions to different cosmic problems. This openness is also seen in how she is willing to embrace multiple strategies to combat evil forces (asura), showcasing intellectual flexibility and creative thinking.

- On the human level, spiritual seekers are encouraged to be open to divine intervention and transformation. By invoking the Goddess, devotees demonstrate a readiness to transcend ordinary experience and enter the realm of the mystical. This can be compared to high openness, where the individual seeks deeper meaning beyond the material world.

Low Openness could be represented by the asuras (demons) who are rigid and stuck in their ways, unable to embrace change or wisdom, making them susceptible to defeat.

### Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness involves being diligent, disciplined, responsible, and organized.

- Durga epitomizes high conscientiousness through her strategic approach to slaying the asuras. Her well-planned methods, precision in battle, and the careful attention to dharma (righteousness) align with conscientious behavior. She is highly responsible in her mission to protect the world from evil, and her actions are disciplined, structured, and driven by duty.
- The Devas (gods), who appeal to the Goddess for help, also represent conscientiousness in their acknowledgment of duty and their efforts to maintain cosmic order.

Low Conscientiousness is evident in the asuras like Mahishasura, who indulge in impulsive, chaotic, and undisciplined behavior, driven by desire and ignorance rather than duty or responsibility.

### Extraversion

Extraversion is associated with energy, sociability, assertiveness, and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others.

- The Goddess Durga, especially in her fierce forms like Mahakali, embodies assertiveness and dominance, qualities of high extraversion. She fearlessly confronts the asuras, leading the charge in battle, and demonstrates power and dynamism. Her engagement with the forces of evil is active and energetic, a hallmark of extraversion.
- In the Devas, we also see collective action—extraversion manifests as collaboration, unity, and social engagement when they gather to summon the Goddess.

Low Extraversion may be seen in the passive behavior of the asuras before their downfall. While initially powerful, their arrogance leads them to become isolated, unengaged with higher wisdom, and disconnected from collective well-being.

### Agreeableness

Agreeableness relates to compassion, empathy, cooperation, and a concern for social harmony.

- The Goddess as Mahalakshmi can be viewed as representing high agreeableness, as she symbolizes nurturing, protection, and kindness. Her role in preserving dharma shows her compassion for humanity and the divine realm. Her motivation is altruistic—protecting the cosmos and ensuring peace.
- The Devas also display agreeableness in their devotion and surrender to the Goddess, recognizing her supreme role and humbling themselves before her power.

Low Agreeableness is epitomized by the asuras, who are driven by greed, violence, and a complete disregard for the well-being of others. Mahishasura, for instance, shows no empathy and thrives on causing harm, thus reflecting the opposite of agreeableness.

### Neuroticism

Neuroticism involves emotional instability, anxiety, fear, and vulnerability to stress.

- The asuras personify high neuroticism. Their fear of losing power, jealousy, and rage drive them into battles they cannot win. Their emotional instability is evident in their inability to control their desires and impulses. Mahishasura is a prime example of neurotic behavior, as he is filled with intense negative emotions, leading to his eventual downfall.
- The Devas, before invoking Durga, also display neuroticism in their initial helplessness and fear, but they overcome this by turning to the divine for strength and guidance, illustrating the shift from neurotic tendencies to balance and composure through faith.

Low Neuroticism is represented by Durga, who remains calm and composed throughout the battle. Her unshakeable confidence and emotional resilience show an absence of neurotic traits. She embodies balance and equanimity, even in the face of adversity.

**A Tabular Representation of Characters in The Devi Mahatmyam Mapped to the Big Five Personality Traits**

Character	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
<b>Goddess Durga</b>	High: Creative, adaptable, manifests in various forms to confront challenges	High: Strategic, disciplined, dutiful in upholding dharma	High: Assertive, dynamic, energetic in battle	High: Compassionate, protective, nurturing to devotees	Low: Emotionally stable, calm, composed in all situations
<b>Mahishasura</b>	Low: Rigid, unable to accept new perspectives or divine wisdom	Low: Impulsive, chaotic, undisciplined	High: Assertive, dominant in a destructive way	Low: Self-centered, lacks empathy or compassion	High: Emotionally unstable, driven by rage, fear of losing power
<b>Goddess Mahalakshmi</b>	High: Symbolizes wisdom and nurturance, open to divine inspiration	High: Careful, organized, and precise in upholding cosmic order	Moderate: Engages when necessary, more reflective	High: Compassionate, concerned for the well-being of others	Low: Emotionally composed, focused on harmony
<b>Devas (Gods)</b>	Moderate: Open to divine intervention, yet seek help when needed	Moderate: Responsible, acknowledge duty but need external assistance	Moderate: Social and cooperative, act in unity to summon the Goddess	High: Humble, cooperative, seek protection for collective well-being	Moderate: Experience initial fear and helplessness, but shift towards faith
<b>Dhumralochana</b>	Low: Stubborn, driven by brute force, lacks creativity	Low: Reckless, undisciplined in his approach	High: Assertive, aggressive, seeks to dominate	Low: Violent, lacks empathy, concerned only with personal gain	High: Overwhelmed by anger and frustration
<b>Chanda and Munda</b>	Low: Lacking in insight and adaptability	Low: Careless, disorganized in their methods	High: Aggressive, reckless in their actions	Low: Cruel, selfish, and devoid of compassion	High: Motivated by fear, anger, and ambition
<b>Raktabija</b>	Moderate: Uses his regenerative power creatively but lacks deeper wisdom	Low: Acts impulsively, without a disciplined plan	High: Extraverted, thrives on chaos, seeks destruction	Low: Violent, manipulative, lacks care for others	High: Fearful of defeat, driven by survival instinct
<b>Goddess Mahasaraswati</b>	High: Represents wisdom, intellect, and clarity of thought	High: Careful and organized in executing cosmic duties	Moderate: Reflective and measured in action	High: Kind and nurturing, aligned with higher knowledge	Low: Emotionally stable, rational in her approach
<b>Shumbha and Nishumbha</b>	Low: Arrogant, resist divine wisdom, rigid in beliefs	Low: Undisciplined, power-hungry, disorganized in desires	High: Extraverted, assertive in seeking dominance	Low: Greedy, violent, devoid of empathy or consideration	High: Insecure, prone to anger and jealousy

**Explanation:**

- Goddess Durga: Embodies balance across all traits, representing the ideal human potential—creative, disciplined, assertive, compassionate, and emotionally stable.

- Mahishasura: Represents traits in extreme imbalance—low openness and agreeableness, high neuroticism, and destructive extraversion, leading to his downfall.
- Devas: Display moderate openness and conscientiousness, relying on external help from Durga, demonstrating collective action and agreeableness.
- Asuras (Mahishasura, Shumbha, Nishumbha, Chanda, Munda, Raktabija): Represent the tamasic (ignorant and ego-driven) qualities—low openness, low agreeableness, high neuroticism, driven by selfish desires and lack of wisdom.

This table provides a holistic view of how the Big Five personality traits manifest in the various divine and demonic characters in the Devi Mahatmyam.

### Personality Dynamics in the Devi Mahatmyam

The Devi Mahatmyam can be viewed as a symbolic representation of the Big Five personality traits. Durga represents the ideal personality type, balanced across all traits—open, conscientious, extraverted, agreeable, and emotionally stable. The asuras, on the other hand, exhibit traits that are extreme or out of balance, leading to their destruction.

This analysis shows that the Devi Mahatmyam not only illustrates cosmic battles but also offers a framework for understanding human personality dynamics and the interplay of traits that can lead to personal growth or downfall. Through the narrative of the Goddess and her actions, the text suggests that cultivating virtues like responsibility, openness, compassion, and emotional stability are essential for achieving balance and overcoming life's challenges.

### Transcendent Personality Model (TPM)

The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM), inspired by the Devi Mahatmyam, is designed to represent the dynamic interplay between the higher and lower aspects of human nature and the process of spiritual evolution. This model emphasizes transcending the ego-bound, material-focused aspects of the personality in order to attain spiritual liberation, self-realization, and integration of divine qualities.

### Core Concepts of the Transcendent Personality Model (TPM):

#### Higher vs. Lower Nature:

The TPM is rooted in the cosmic battle described in the Devi Mahatmyam, where divine forces (goddesses) represent the higher nature of human consciousness—virtue, wisdom, and selflessness—while demonic forces symbolize the lower nature—ego, attachment, and ignorance. The lower nature is driven by material desires and false identities, while the higher nature seeks alignment with universal values such as compassion, courage, and inner peace.

#### The Process of Transcendence:

The battle between the goddess Durga and the demons in the Devi Mahatmyam serves as an allegory for the individual's inner conflict. To transcend the lower nature, one must go through a process of spiritual transformation and growth. In this model, the personality evolves through stages:

- Confrontation with the lower self: Recognizing one's attachments, desires, and ego-driven tendencies.
- Awakening the inner divine: Through practices like self-discipline, self-awareness, and spiritual devotion, the higher self is awakened.
- Integration: Overcoming lower nature by integrating higher qualities like wisdom, compassion, and courage.
- Transcendence: Going beyond the limitations of ego and materialism to realize the true self, which is aligned with universal consciousness.

### Dimensions of the Transcendent Personality:

In the TPM, personality traits are seen as dynamic aspects of a larger spiritual journey. Each dimension represents qualities that are both human and divine, which must be cultivated and balanced for transcendence:

- Dynamic Courage (Valor): Symbolized by Durga, this dimension represents the strength to face internal and external challenges. It involves transcending fear and attachment to overcome obstacles.
- Divine Wisdom (Sattva): Like the wisdom goddesses Saraswati and Mahasaraswati, this dimension emphasizes clarity of thought, discernment, and the ability to see beyond ego-driven perceptions.
- Spiritual Openness (Prakriti): Linked to Shakti, this dimension represents adaptability, creativity, and the ability to engage in the world without being attached to it. It allows for dynamic engagement in life while remaining spiritually centered.
- Compassionate Action (Karma Yoga): This dimension relates to action motivated by compassion and love, where deeds are done for the welfare of all beings rather than for personal gain. This aligns with the goddess Lakshmi and her qualities of nurturing abundance and benevolence.

- Inner Harmony (Integration of Masculine and Feminine): A key aspect of the TPM is the integration of feminine (Prakriti) and masculine (Purusha) traits within the self. This harmony allows the individual to act decisively (masculine) while remaining empathetic and nurturing (feminine).

#### Personality Types in TPM:

The TPM suggests that each individual has a unique combination of divine and demonic traits. Personalities are categorized based on how much an individual has transcended their lower nature and embodied their higher qualities:

- Awakened Personality: Individuals who have realized their higher self, embodying divine wisdom, compassion, and courage. They have transcended their lower nature and live in harmony with universal consciousness.
- Evolving Personality: Individuals who are in the process of transformation, where there is ongoing conflict between the higher and lower nature. They demonstrate a mix of ego-driven behavior and awakening to higher values.
- Ego-Centered Personality: Individuals who are primarily ruled by the lower nature. They are dominated by desires, ego, and materialism, resisting spiritual growth and remaining attached to worldly illusions.

#### Transcendence in Daily Life:

The TPM doesn't suggest a life removed from the world but emphasizes spiritual engagement with the world. Just as Durga battles the demons while remaining connected to the world, individuals are encouraged to engage in life's challenges while cultivating a transcendent mindset. This balance between action and awareness—between Shakti (action) and Purusha (awareness)—is the foundation of the model.

#### The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM): A Vivid Description

The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM) is a comprehensive framework inspired by the Devi Mahatmyam, designed to depict the journey of human personality through phases of inner conflict, growth, and eventual transcendence. In this model, personality is not static but an evolving structure that progresses through spiritual understanding and self-awareness, ultimately seeking alignment with higher consciousness. The TPM emphasizes the process of transcending ego-based traits and integrating divine qualities that lead to self-realization and liberation.

#### Core Themes: Higher and Lower Nature of Personality

The Devi Mahatmyam is a rich allegory of the battle between divine forces (goddesses) and demonic forces (asuras). In the TPM, these divine and demonic forces represent the higher and lower aspects of the human mind:

- Higher Nature (Divine Forces): This includes qualities like wisdom, courage, compassion, and balance. These traits lead the individual towards spiritual enlightenment and inner harmony.
- Lower Nature (Demonic Forces): This represents ego, fear, greed, attachment, and ignorance. These qualities are rooted in materialism and self-centered desires, hindering the spiritual growth of the personality.

The TPM proposes that every individual's personality is a dynamic interplay between these higher and lower aspects, and growth is defined by the process of overcoming the lower nature to embody the higher.

#### The Journey of Transcendence: Four Key Phases

The core structure of the Transcendent Personality Model involves four key phases that describe the path from ego-driven behaviour to self-realization and transcendence:

##### Confrontation with the Lower Self:

- In this phase, the individual becomes aware of the ego-driven aspects of their personality. Like the demons in the Devi Mahatmyam, these traits arise from material desires, fear of loss, and attachment to temporary pleasures.
- Personality Characteristics: At this stage, the personality is largely influenced by traits such as neuroticism, low agreeableness, and attachment to ego-driven goals.
- Example: Characters like Mahishasura and Shumbha represent the unyielding power of the ego, constantly resisting transformation and maintaining false identities.

##### Awakening of the Higher Self:

- This is the turning point where the individual starts seeking spiritual wisdom and experiences moments of awakening. The battles between Durga and the demons in the Mahatmyam symbolize this internal struggle. The higher self begins to assert itself, guiding the individual towards greater wisdom, compassion, and self-awareness.
- Personality Characteristics: Emerging traits like openness to experience, conscientiousness, and spiritual curiosity dominate in this phase.
- Example: Durga's awakening symbolizes the discovery of inner strength and divine wisdom necessary to defeat the illusions of the lower self.

### Integration of Higher and Lower Nature:

- The integration process involves harmonizing the active qualities of Shakti (divine energy) and the passive qualities of Purusha (divine consciousness). Here, the individual learns to balance action with wisdom, engaging in life's challenges without being overwhelmed by material desires or ego.
- Personality Characteristics: Traits like emotional stability, balance, and a sense of purpose become more dominant as the personality shifts towards a more holistic perspective.
- Example: The integration of masculine and feminine forces within the self represents the process of balancing active engagement in life (Shakti) with inner awareness (Purusha), creating a more unified personality.

### Transcendence and Self-Realization:

- This final phase represents the transcendence of ego and complete alignment with the higher self. In this state, the individual has transcended the limitations of the lower nature and lives in alignment with divine wisdom and universal consciousness.
- Personality Characteristics: The dominant traits here include selflessness, compassion, wisdom, and inner peace. The individual no longer identifies with the ego but with the universal consciousness.
- Example: Durga's ultimate victory over Mahishasura represents the final triumph of the higher self over the lower nature, signifying complete self-realization and spiritual liberation.

### Dimensions of the Transcendent Personality

The TPM identifies several key dimensions of personality that contribute to the process of transcendence. These dimensions capture different aspects of spiritual and psychological growth:

#### Dynamic Courage (Valour):

- Represented by Durga, this dimension symbolizes the courage to confront the lower self and overcome obstacles on the path to self-realization. Individuals in this dimension display traits like resilience, fearlessness, and the ability to face challenges head-on.
- Example: Durga's fight with demons symbolizes the internal battle every individual faces to overcome ego and attachments.

#### Divine Wisdom (Sattva):

- Like Mahasaraswati, this dimension emphasizes the cultivation of clarity, insight, and spiritual wisdom. It reflects the ability to see beyond surface-level desires and illusions and align with higher truths.
- Example: The goddess Saraswati symbolizes the power of knowledge and wisdom in transcending ignorance and achieving self-realization.

#### Spiritual Openness (Prakriti):

- Linked to Shakti, this dimension is about being open to change, growth, and spiritual experiences. It represents the ability to remain engaged in the world without becoming attached to it.
- Example: Shakti's dynamic, creative energy highlights the need for flexibility and openness in spiritual and personal evolution.

#### Compassionate Action (Karma Yoga):

- This dimension reflects the principles of selfless action, where deeds are performed for the greater good without attachment to outcomes. It aligns with the concept of karma yoga, emphasizing compassion, empathy, and service.
- Example: Characters like Lakshmi symbolize abundance and generosity, serving as a model for compassionate action.

#### Inner Harmony (Integration of Masculine and Feminine):

- The integration of masculine (Purusha) and feminine (Shakti) energies within the self is central to achieving inner balance. The individual learns to engage in the world through Shakti's energy while maintaining awareness through Purusha's stillness.
- Example: The balance between Shiva and Shakti represents this harmonious integration of awareness and action.

### Personality Types in TPM

The Transcendent Personality Model categorizes individuals based on their progression through the stages of transcendence:

### Ego-Centered Personality:

- Dominated by the lower nature, these individuals are driven by ego, desires, and material attachments. They have yet to awaken to their higher self.
- Example: Characters like Mahishasura represent this personality type, where pride and ignorance prevent growth.

### Evolving Personality:

- These individuals are in a state of transformation, experiencing conflict between their higher and lower nature. They are on the path to awakening but still struggle with ego-driven tendencies.
- Example: The evolving personality can be likened to characters like Shumbha and Nishumbha, who fluctuate between their desire for power and their eventual defeat by the divine forces.

### Awakened Personality:

- Those who have transcended the lower nature and integrated their higher qualities. They embody courage, wisdom, and compassion, living in alignment with universal values.
- Example: The awakened personality mirrors Durga's final victory, symbolizing a person who has fully realized their divine potential.

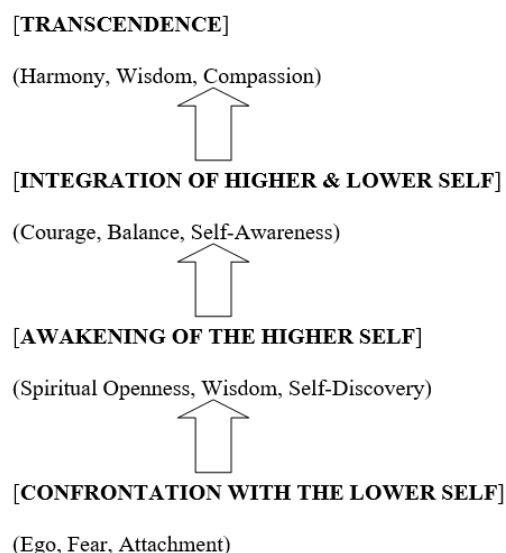
### Practical Applications of TPM

The TPM provides a framework for personal and spiritual development. It can be applied to daily life such as:

- Self-reflection and mindfulness: Recognizing ego-driven thoughts and behaviors and shifting towards higher values.
- Compassionate action: Engaging in selfless acts without attachment to outcomes.
- Balancing action and awareness: Cultivating both dynamic engagement in the world (Shakti) and spiritual stillness (Purusha) to achieve a holistic and balanced personality.

The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM) offers a holistic approach to understanding and developing human personality. Inspired by the Devi Mahatmyam, it emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and self-realization. Through a process of integrating the higher and lower aspects of personality, individuals can transcend their ego-driven traits and attain a state of inner harmony, compassion, and divine wisdom. This model serves as both a psychological and spiritual framework, guiding individuals toward realizing their true potential and living in alignment with universal consciousness.

### Structured Diagram Capturing TPM'S Core Elements and Stages of Personality Transformation



## 2. CONCLUSION

The discussion on the personality theory described in the Devi Mahatmyam, spanning across multiple dimensions of personality, offers a profound exploration of human nature, spiritual evolution, and self-realization. The article begins by analyzing how the Devi Mahatmyam reflects the interplay between the higher and lower natures of the mind, where divine forces symbolize virtues and cosmic order, while demonic forces represent ego, ignorance, and chaos. This cosmic battle forms the basis of an individual's inner struggles, providing insight into personality development.

The key themes of the discussion in this paper are: Higher vs. Lower Nature: The battle between divine forces and demons represents the ongoing conflict within individuals between their higher, sattvic qualities (wisdom, courage,

compassion) and lower, tamasic tendencies (ego, fear, attachment to material desires). The Devi Mahatmyam teaches that true growth comes from overcoming lower impulses and aligning with divine virtues. Transformation and Growth: Characters like Goddess Durga embody the power of transformation, reflecting the personality's ability to grow, adapt, and overcome challenges. Mahishasura and other demons represent stagnation and resistance to change, while the goddess symbolizes dynamic creativity and spiritual evolution. This constant transformation is central to the journey toward self-realization. Dual Nature of Mind and Personality: The Devi Mahatmyam illustrates the dual nature of the mind, oscillating between divine and demonic aspects. On one side, there is openness to higher consciousness and spiritual wisdom, and on the other, attachment to materialism and ego-driven desires. This duality influences human personality and behaviour. Ego and the False Self: Demons like Shumbha and Nishumbha represent the false self, driven by ego, pride, and illusion. These lower aspects of personality prevent individuals from realizing their true nature. Conversely, Durga's victory over these forces symbolizes the dissolution of the ego and the awakening to the true self. Integration of Feminine and Masculine Traits: The Devi Mahatmyam also points to the integration of feminine (Prakriti) and masculine (Purusha) traits within the self. The feminine aspect (Shakti) symbolizes action, energy, and creativity, while the masculine (consciousness) symbolizes awareness and stability. Balancing these forces leads to harmony and self-actualization. Personality Development and the Big Five Model: We mapped the characters of the Devi Mahatmyam to the Big Five Personality Model (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). This provided a modern psychological framework to understand how different personality traits manifest through divine and demonic characters. For example, Goddess Durga represents high conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability, while Mahishasura represents low openness, low agreeableness, and high neuroticism. The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM): We created a comprehensive framework for understanding and cultivating human personality, drawing inspiration from the Devi Mahatmyam, which we named the Transcendent Personality Model (TPM). This model highlights the significance of spiritual growth and self-realization. By harmonizing the higher and lower aspects of personality, individuals can overcome ego-driven tendencies and achieve a state of inner balance, compassion, and spiritual wisdom. The TPM functions as both a psychological and spiritual guide, helping individuals unlock their full potential and live in alignment with universal consciousness. Self-Realization and Liberation: Both Eastern and Western traditions were discussed, examining how the journey of self-realization and liberation mirrors the process of overcoming lower nature (ego) and aligning with the true self (higher consciousness). While Western psychology often focuses on self-actualization as a process of fulfilling individual potential, the Devi Mahatmyam emphasizes transcending the ego and realizing one's unity with the divine.

In summary, the Devi Mahatmyam offers a rich, symbolic framework for understanding human personality, psychological growth, and spiritual transformation. The battle between divine and demonic forces mirrors the internal conflicts individuals face, and the goddess Durga symbolizes the power of wisdom, courage, and divine grace needed to conquer these forces. The Transcendent Personality Model (TPM) further elaborates on this by identifying key personality dimensions by harmonizing the higher and lower aspects of personality, individuals can overcome ego-driven tendencies and achieve a state of inner balance, compassion, and spiritual wisdom. The TPM functions as both a psychological and spiritual guide, helping individuals unlock their full potential and live in alignment with universal consciousness. This view combines spiritual wisdom with modern personality theory, creating a profound, timeless perspective on human growth, resilience, and transformation.

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