

## Transcendence, Spirituality and Well-Being: A Cognitive-Theological Perspective

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**Abstract :** This paper aims at discussing transcendence, spirituality, and well-being in light of the psychology of religion and spirituality. The main purpose of this paper is i) to demonstrate the importance of cognitive psychological process (thoughts, faith, and beliefs) and the doctrine of creation ('creatio ex nihilo') in transcendence, spirituality, and well-being; ii) to discuss the relationships among transcendence, spirituality, and well-being. Psychological studies of spiritual and religious phenomena have been advanced in the decade, mainly to understand how faith, spiritual and religious rituals influence or contribute to well-being. Psychologists of religion and spirituality have put forward methods, tools, and approaches necessary for promoting well-being. For instance, Kenneth I. Pargament, an American psychologist of religion and spirituality, developed spiritually integrated psychotherapy for clinical practice in dealing with the spiritual and religious issues affecting well-being. However, not much progress has been made in understanding the ability of transcendence and how such ability influences spirituality and religion as well as well-being. A possible reason could be that well-being has only been understood in a spiritual and religious context. It appears that transcendence, the core element of spirituality and religion, has not been explored adequately for well-being. In other words, the approaches that have been used so far for spirituality, religion, and well-being lack an integrated approach combining theology and psychology. The author of this paper proposes that cognitive-theological understanding involving faith and belief about the creation and the creator, the transcendent God is likely to offer a comprehensive understanding of transcendence as well as spirituality, religion, and their relationships with well-being. The importance of transcendence and the integration of psychology and theology can advance our knowledge of transcendence, spirituality, and well-being. It is inevitable that the creation is contingent and that the ultimate origin, source of the contingent physical reality, is a non-contingent being, the divine creator. As such, it is not unreasonable for many individuals to believe that the source of existence of non-contingent being, although undiscoverable in physical reality but transcendentally exists. 'Creatio ex nihilo' is the most fundamental doctrine in the Abrahamic faiths, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and is widely accepted scriptural and philosophical background about the creation, creator, the divine that God created the universe out of nothing. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate theology, i.e., 'creatio ex nihilo' doctrine and psychology for a comprehensive understanding of transcendence, spirituality and their relationships with well-being.

**Keywords :** transcendence, spirituality, well-being, 'creatio ex nihilo' doctrine

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