



Religious Happiness in William James's Thought: An Analysis of Religious Maturity

This article examines the concept of religious happiness in William James's thought by exploring the characteristics of religious maturity presented in his theory. It begins with Jung's critique of modern psychoanalytic and behaviorist psychology, which neglects the soul and positive human potentials, including the purpose and meaning of life, goodness, happiness, and religious morality. By analyzing James's concept of religious maturity, this study contributes to restoring psychology as a science concerned with the soul and the positive potentials that can lead humans toward happiness. This article employs a literature review and a psychology of religion approach to examine James's concept of religious happiness. According to James, religious happiness can be attained through four characteristics of religious maturity and their distinctive practical consequences: awareness of the existence and presence of God through asceticism; a connection with God that engenders self-surrender through strength of soul; self-surrender to God that produces freedom, happiness, and the disappearance of the ego through purity; and the transformation of emotions into love and harmony through charity. These characteristics collectively lead to religious happiness. For James, therefore, true religion is one that enables its adherents to attain religious happiness.

Keywords: Religious maturity, religious happiness, William James.

Artikel ini mengkaji konsep kebahagiaan keagamaan dalam pemikiran William James dengan mengeksplorasi karakteristik-karakteristik kematangan beragama yang dikemukakan dalam teorinya. Kajian ini diawali dengan kritik Jung terhadap psikologi modern, khususnya psikoanalisis dan behaviorisme, yang mengabaikan jiwa dan potensi-potensi positif manusia, termasuk tujuan dan makna hidup, kebaikan, kebahagiaan, dan moral keagamaan. Melalui analisis terhadap konsep kematangan beragama James, kajian ini ikut ambil bagian dalam mengembalikan psikologi sebagai ilmu yang berkaitan dengan jiwa dan potensi-potensi positif yang dapat mengantarkan manusia menuju kebahagiaan. Artikel ini menggunakan studi literatur dan pendekatan psikologi agama untuk mengkaji konsep kebahagiaan keagamaan James. Menurut James, kebahagiaan keagamaan dapat dicapai melalui empat karakteristik kematangan beragama beserta konsekuensi praktis khasnya, yaitu kesadaran akan keberadaan dan kehadiran Tuhan melalui asketisme; keterhubungan dengan Tuhan yang melahirkan kepasrahan diri melalui kekuatan jiwa; kepasrahan diri kepada Tuhan yang menghasilkan kebebasan, kebahagiaan, dan hilangnya ego melalui kemurnian; serta perubahan emosi menjadi cinta dan harmoni melalui kasih. Karakteristik-karakteristik tersebut secara bersama-sama mengantarkan pada kebahagiaan keagamaan. Oleh karena itu, bagi James, agama yang benar adalah agama yang memungkinkan para pemeluknya mencapai kebahagiaan keagamaan.

Kata kunci: Kematangan beragama, kebahagiaan keagamaan, William James.

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Introduction

In the study of happiness, modern psychology, particularly the schools of behaviorism and psychoanalysis, has faced criticism, notably from Carl Gustav Jung in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.¹ Jung argued that these approaches neglect the exploration of positive human potentials such as goodness, tranquility, and happiness, instead focusing primarily on negative human problems. He described these two schools as a psychology without the psyche or soul, one that fails to consider the purpose and meaning of life or the importance of religious and moral values.² Consequently, these psychological approaches are viewed as incapable of guiding humans toward happiness, despite the widespread belief that happiness is the fundamental goal of human life.³

Jung's primary criticism of psychoanalysis, described as "psychology without the soul", was mainly directed at its leading figure, Sigmund Freud, and his theories. Freud believed that human behavior and personality are shaped by all subjective experiences during childhood, particularly interactions with both parents. According to Freud, the motives behind human behavior are driven by the power of the Id (sexual libido), which resides in the subconscious. Consequently, humans are seen as lacking a positive capacity for self-development. For Freud, religious behavior represents an effort to maintain oneself or to suppress the emergence of negative impulses or motives. A person's kindness toward others is viewed merely as an attempt to protect oneself from one's own evil, rather than as an expression of virtue. In Freud's

psychoanalytic perspective, humans do not possess the freedom to choose goodness because all behavior is motivated by unconscious experiences, namely childhood and the subconscious dominated by the Id.⁴ In contrast, Jung's criticism of behaviorism was based on its view that humans lack freedom, and that human behavior is merely a product of environmental influences.⁵

Jung's second criticism of behaviorist psychology and psychoanalysis was that both approaches failed to consider the purpose and meaning of life, as well as religious and moral values, to be important. This constitutes a practical criticism. In his medical and psychotherapeutic practice, Jung observed that patients' recovery was significantly aided by their sense of purpose, meaning in life, and religious moral values. A positive correlation was found between patients' recovery and their belief in God, understanding of their origin, sense of duty, and beliefs about their ultimate destiny. Additionally, a constructive relationship was identified between the growth of mental health and qualities such as forgiveness, love, generosity, willingness, and surrender. Consequently, Jung proposed that psychotherapists should embrace and practice religion to better assist patients in their recovery. Without these religious beliefs and experiences, psychology would fail to address spiritual matters, meaning that a person deemed healthy by modern psychology might still be considered ill from a religious perspective. In Jung's practical experience, modern psychology only reaches the level of the soul; it does not engage with the spiritual level, including the meaning and

¹ Carl Gustav Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: Harvest Book, 1933).

² Carl Gustav Jung, *Psikologi Dan Agama*, trans. Afthonul Afif (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2017), 19–28; See also Mujiburrahman, 'Perjumpaan Psikologi Dan Tasawuf Menuju Integrasi Dinamis', *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 7, no. 2 (December 1, 2017): 261–282.

³ Carol D. Ryff, 'Psychological Well-Being in Adult Life', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 4, no. 4 (August 1995): 100; Roni Ismail, 'Beragama Bahagia Untuk

Bina Damai: Kajian Atas Teori Kematangan Beragama William James', *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 7, no. 1 (May 15, 2024): 145–162.

⁴ Achmad Salim Sungkar, 'Kritik Islam Terhadap Psikoanalisis', in *Membangun Paradigma Psikologi Islami*, ed. Fuat Nashori (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 1994), 57–68.

⁵ Yapsir G. Wirawan, 'Keunggulan Dan Kelemahan Behaviorisme', in *Membangun Paradigma Psikologi Islami*, ed. Fuat Nashori (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 1994), 69–76.





purpose of life and the existential issues mentioned above.⁶

The psychoanalytic and behaviorist schools of psychology mentioned above were categorized by Seligman as pathogenic psychology because they focus excessively on mental illness, abnormalities, and human weaknesses. Neither school studies various positive aspects, human strengths, or virtues such as peace and happiness. According to Seligman, pathogenic psychology has never examined the side of human happiness, and there is no evidence that it explores strength, virtue, or happiness.⁷ Behaviorism and psychoanalysis are incapable of guiding humans toward the purpose and meaning of life, happiness, or religious moral values. In addressing negative human symptoms, these two approaches do not employ a positive perspective that explores human potential.

Psychology is now due for a transformation, as emphasized by Seligman and Rakhmat, into salutogenic psychology, which focuses on exploring the positive strengths within human beings to promote health and happiness.⁸ Salutogenic psychology is a science of the soul that examines human strengths and virtues,

moral values such as happiness, peak experiences, noetic conditions or spirituality, and religiosity, all aimed at guiding individuals toward well-being. This hopeful shift is reflected in salutogenic approaches such as humanistic psychology,⁹ positive psychology,¹⁰ transpersonal psychology, Sufi psychology, and the psychology of religion.¹¹ In the latter, humans are regarded as noble beings—spiritual or religious entities possessing inherent potential, virtue, religiosity, and belief in God. Within the psychology of religion, human religious experiences and feelings become the primary objects of study. Thus, the psychology of religion represents a form of “positive psychology” that restores the focus of psychological inquiry to the inner feelings and experiences associated with religion.¹²

The psychology of religion examines religious experiences through the lens of modern psychological theories and approaches.¹³ According to Zakiah Daradjat, this phenomenon is termed religious consciousness and experience;¹⁴ Clark refers to it as religious experience and behavior;¹⁵ Dister describes it as

⁶ Mujiburrahman, ‘Perjumpaan Psikologi Dan Tasawuf Menuju Integrasi Dinamis’, 265–266.

⁷ Martin E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Menciptakan Kebahagiaan Dengan Psikologi Positif*, trans. Eva Yulia Nukman (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 1 & 12.

⁸ Jalaluddin Rakhmat, ‘From Suffering to Savoring: Kata Pengantar’, in *Authentic Happiness: Menciptakan Kebahagiaan Dengan Psikologi Positif* (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), xxxiii–xxxv.

⁹ Malik Badri viewed the humanistic school as being in line with Islamic teachings and as a potential reference for the development of Islamic psychology. Malik B. Badri, *Dilema Psikolog Muslim*, trans. Siti Zainab Luxfiati (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1986), 22–24.

¹⁰ Positive psychology, which is rooted in humanistic psychology and studies meaning and happiness, was declared in 1998 by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Martin E. P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Positive Psychology: An Introduction.’, *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 5.

¹¹ Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *Memfaatkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Dalam Berpikir Integralistik Dan Holistik*

Untuk Memaknai Kehidupan, trans. Rahmani Astuti, Ahmad Nadjib Burhani, and Ahmad Baiquni (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), 3–4; Sukidi, *Rahasia Sukses Hidup Bahagia Kecerdasan Spiritual: Mengapa SQ Lebih Penting Daripada IQ Dan EQ* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), 4–20; Raymond F. Paloutzian, *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Boston: Silyn & Bacon, 1996), 139–160; Walter H. Clark, *The Psychology of Religion: An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior* (New York: McMillan, 1968), 261–289; Robert Frager, *Psikologi Sufi*, trans. Hasmiyah Rauf (Jakarta: Zaman, 2014).

¹² Jalaluddin, *Psikologi Agama: Memahami Perilaku Dengan Mengaplikasikan Prinsip-Prinsip Psikologi* (Depok: Rajawali Press, 2019), 3.

¹³ M. A. Subandi, *Psikologi Agama Dan Kesehatan Mental* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, n.d.), 1.

¹⁴ Zakiah Daradjat, *Ilmu Jiwa Agama*, 17th ed. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2015), 6.

¹⁵ Clark, *The Psychology of Religion: An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior*, 3–11.





an intentional relationship with God;¹⁶ and Crapps characterizes it as phenomenological religious problems and the role of religion in the human person.¹⁷ Despite these varying perspectives, all these psychologists agree that the material object of the psychology of religion is the religious human being, while its formal object is religious experience.¹⁸ The psychology of religion has contributed to shifting psychology from a pathogenic focus to a salutogenic one, emphasizing the study of the soul, religion, the purpose and meaning of life, morality, and happiness. This focus addresses Jung's dissatisfaction with behaviorist psychology and psychoanalysis, as the psychology of religion is deeply concerned with exploring the soul, the purpose and meaning of human life, religious values and morals, and human happiness.

Among psychologists of religion who study happiness as a product of religious experience, William James stands out prominently. In his monumental work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James explores this theme extensively. Additionally, the journal *William James Studies*, published from Volume 1 in 2006 through Volume 19 in 2024, has featured numerous articles examining James's ideas on happiness.¹⁹ Pawelski elaborates on James's perspective from both philosophical and psychological viewpoints, particularly focusing on religious experiences such as conversion, religious maturity, and mysticism. According to James, these experiences consistently and

enduringly foster happiness.²⁰ Mack discusses James's insights in *The Principles of Psychology* regarding the relationship between happiness and habit, describing happiness as a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction. Good habits enhance effectiveness and efficiency, prevent repetition and errors, improve accuracy, and reduce fatigue. James argues that good habits genuinely produce happiness.²¹ Young explains James's view on the many diverse ways of attaining happiness, as reflected in the title *The Varieties*. Each person has a flexible, diverse, and distinctive path to happiness, often shaped by their own unhappiness, which motivates the search for fulfillment.²²

Komaruddin explains the concept of encountering God in James's view, which is reflected in the figure of the saintly or religiously mature individual as a peak experience. In this experience, the saintly or religiously mature person encounters "the divine" as a source of inspiration for a happy life.²³ Ismail elaborates on the correlation between the religiously mature person, according to James, and a happy, peace-loving religiosity. Based on an analysis of James's indicators of religious maturity, Ismail concludes that religiously mature individuals support a happy life and are incompatible with intolerance, hatred, and violence.²⁴ Maurenis explains William James's concept of mystical experience as a highly personal, transcendent experience that significantly aids in finding happiness.²⁵

¹⁶ Nico Syukur Dister, *Pengalaman Dan Motivasi Beragama: Pengantar Psikologi Agama* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1998), 13.

¹⁷ Robert W. Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi Dan Agama Sejak William James Hingga Gordon Allport*, trans. A. M. Harjana (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993), 22–34.

¹⁸ See Sekar Ayu Aryani, *Psikologi Agama: Integrasi Dalam Dua Tradisi, Islam Dan Kristen* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2018).

¹⁹ <https://www.jstor.org/journal/willjamestud>

²⁰ James O. Pawelski, 'William James and Well-Being: The Philosophy, Psychology and Culture of Human Flourishing', *William James Studies* 14, no. 1 (2018): 1–25.

²¹ Philip T.L. Mack, 'In Praise of Habit: Making A Case For A Relation Between Happiness and William

James's Conception of Habit', *William James Studies* 11 (2015): 96–101.

²² Richard S. Young, 'Happiness by Many Means: William James's Functional Conception of Happiness', *William James Studies* 18, no. 2 (2023).

²³ Komarudin, 'Pengalaman Bersua Tuhan: Perspektif William James Dan Al-Ghazali', *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 20, no. 2 (December 15, 2012): 469–498.

²⁴ Ismail, 'Beragama Bahagia Untuk Bina Damai: Kajian Atas Teori Kematangan Beragama William James', 145–162.

²⁵ Andreas Maurenis, 'Melangkah Ke Dalam Dunia Mistiknya William James', *Logos: Jurnal Filsafat-Teologi* 13, no. 2 (August 18, 2020): 56–73.





The writings above elaborate on James's views regarding factors that correlate positively with happiness, such as habit, personal or subjective factors, encounters with "the divine," the fruits of religious maturity, and transcendent experiences. However, none of these writings explicitly examine the concept of happiness from the perspective of William James's psychology of religion. What is new in this study is the exploration of religious happiness according to William James, through an analysis of the relevance of the indicators of his theory of religious maturity or mature religion. By analyzing James's criteria for religious maturity, the author posits that all of these factors correlate positively with religious happiness.²⁶ This article addresses the research questions of how religious happiness is viewed in modern psychology and why James's theory of religious maturity is relevant to understanding religious happiness.

The Study of Happiness Across Disciplines

The findings of this study reveal that many Although psychology predominantly studies happiness, it is not the only discipline to do so. Since the twentieth century, happiness has also become a subject of inquiry in social studies, politics, government, and economics.²⁷ Multidisciplinary happiness indices have increasingly influenced policymaking in many countries.²⁸ For example, since the 2000s, the British government has considered the growth of

its citizens' happiness.²⁹ Similarly, in Indonesia, the Indonesian Happiness Index (Indeks Kebahagiaan Indonesia, IKI) has been measured by Statistics Indonesia (BPS RI) every three years; in 2014, 2017, and 2021.³⁰

The study of happiness in economics was first conducted by Easterlin in 1975, leading to the formulation of the Easterlin Paradox,³¹ which posits that an increase in economic income does not necessarily result in greater happiness.³² This theory was further supported by economists Chen and Hsu, who found no positive correlation between increased income and increased happiness across eight European countries.³³ In sociology, as noted by sociologist Corey Keyes, happiness is not merely the absence of negative emotions; it also encompasses life satisfaction and enduring positive moods. Keyes identifies six qualities of life related to happiness: contributing to society, social integration, social interaction, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, environmental engagement, positive interpersonal relationships, autonomy, self-development, and a sense of purpose in life. From a neuroscience perspective, Richard Davidson discovered that electrical activity in the left prefrontal cortex increases when a person experiences happiness or a positive mood, creating a balance in activity between the left and right sides of the brain.³⁴ Nevertheless,

²⁶ In the psychology of religion, the theory of religious maturity was not only conceptualized by William James. There are also several theories of religious maturity, including Allport's academically oriented theory, Wieman's socially oriented theory, Fromm's humanistic theory, and W. H. Clark's integrative approach. Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: McMillan, 1950); Clark, *The Psychology of Religion: An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior*.

²⁷ Bao Khac Quoc Nguyen and Van Le, 'The Relationship between Global Wealth and Happiness: An Analytical Study of Returns and Volatility Spillovers', *Borsa Istanbul Review* 21 (August 2021): S80.

²⁸ Margareta Hallberg, 'Happiness Studies: Co-Production of Social Science and Social Order', *Nordic Journal of Science and Technology Studies* 7, no. 1 (2019): 51.

²⁹ Ashley Frawley, "'Unhappy News': Process, Rhetoric, and Context in the Making of the Happiness Problem", *Sociological Research Online* 23, no. 1 (2018): 43–66.

³⁰ BPSRI, *Indeks Kebahagiaan 2021* (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik RI, 2022).

³¹ Gianluigi Coppola, 'The Easterlin Paradox: An Interpretation' (SSRN Electronic Journal, 2013).

³² Richard A. Easterlin and Kelsey J. O'Connor, 'The Easterlin Paradox', *GLO Discussion Paper Series*, no. 743 (2020).

³³ Wen-Yi Chen and Lin-Ying Hsu, 'Is Income Catch-up Related to Happiness Catch-up? Evidence from Eight European Countries', *Heliyon* 10, no. 5 (March 2024): e26544.

³⁴ 'The Science of Happiness', accessed January 12, 2024, www.blackdoginstitute.go.au.





psychology remains the dominant discipline in the study of happiness to this day.

In psychology, happiness encompasses various positive emotional responses, including cheerfulness, satisfaction, tranquility, optimism, and a sense of inner well-being.³⁵ The essence of happiness lies in positive feelings or affect,³⁶ reflecting a person's subjective experience.³⁷ Since no one feels happy or unhappy indefinitely,³⁸ happiness is understood as a subjective state in which a person's positive affect outweighs their negative affect.

Subjective happiness, as defined by Y-K Ng, is a pleasant or positive affective state that outweighs negative emotions.³⁹ Alhaji et al. describe happiness as a state of calmness, peace, and satisfaction with a condition perceived as subjectively good and right.⁴⁰ Nguyen and Le define happiness as encompassing inner conditions such as life satisfaction, psychological health, and mental well-being.⁴¹ Similarly, Abay et al. characterize happiness as comprising three inner states: positive feelings, minimal negative feelings, and life satisfaction.⁴² Shi et al.

emphasize happiness as life satisfaction, referring to it as subjective well-being.⁴³ In popular psychology, Gore describes happiness as a state "within oneself,"⁴⁴ suggesting that, to attain it, one must turn inward, as noted by Malkani and Chopra.⁴⁵ Ismail also asserts that the secret to happiness lies in this inner dimension.⁴⁶ Summers and Watson argue that happiness is not merely euphoria or pleasure but involves making the best of what one already possesses at every moment.⁴⁷ Canfield and Watkins define happiness as a life filled with purpose and meaning.⁴⁸ This latter definition highlights a meaningful life as the gateway to true happiness.⁴⁹

Frankl, a prominent figure in logotherapy, a branch of humanistic psychology,⁵⁰ explains that the meaning of life and the will to live a meaningful life constitute the highest purpose of

³⁵ 'The Science of Happiness'.

³⁶ Teuku Eddy, *Psikologi Kebahagiaan* (Yogyakarta: Progresif Books, 2007), 1–2.

³⁷ Roni Ismail, *The Secret of Happiness* (Yogyakarta: Leutika, 2012), 1–2.

³⁸ Unhappiness, according to Pieper and Pieper, can be eliminated by freeing the heart from painful moods, mastering oneself to achieve physical well-being, building close relationships, and having a particular occupation. Martha Heineman Pieper and William J. Pieper, *Menggapai Kebahagiaan*, trans. Yulita Tirtoseputro (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2006), 107–203.

³⁹ Yew-Kwang Ng, *Happiness—Concept, Measurement and Promotion* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022), 2.

⁴⁰ Mohammed Nasser Alhaji et al., 'Happiness among Dentists: A Multi-Scale, Multi-National Study from 21 Countries', *International Dental Journal* 70, no. 5 (October 2020): 329.

⁴¹ Nguyen and Le, 'The Relationship between Global Wealth and Happiness: An Analytical Study of Returns and Volatility Spillovers', S80.

⁴² Feridun Abay, S. Kutalmış Buyuk, and Recep Turken, 'Factors of Life Satisfaction and Happiness among Dentists: A Cross Sectional Study', *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences* 17, no. 5 (October 2022): 922.

⁴³ Hui Shi et al., 'Measurement of Happiness of Daily Activity-Travel Schedules', *Travel Behaviour and Society* 36 (July 2024): 1.

⁴⁴ Amanda Gore, *Be Happy!*, trans. Adelani Hartono (Jakarta: BIP, 2006), xv.

⁴⁵ Vikas Malkani and Deepak Chopra, *The Quantum Happiness: Meraih Kebahagiaan Dengan Psikologi Kesadaran*, trans. Ahmad Kahfi (Yogyakarta-Surabaya: Penerbit Baca, 2008), 21.

⁴⁶ Ismail, *The Secret of Happiness*, 11–13; Roni Ismail, *Inner Happiness Building: Rahasia Hidup Bahagia* (Yogyakarta: Cupid Media Grup, 2008), 11–18.

⁴⁷ Heather Summers and Anne Watson, *The Book of Happiness* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007), xiv–xv.

⁴⁸ Jack Canfield and D.D. Watkins, *Kunci Menuju Kebahagiaan Sejati*, trans. Susi Purwoko (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2008), 1–3.

⁴⁹ Hanna Djumhana Bastaman, *Integrasi Psikologi Dengan Islam: Menuju Psikologi Islami* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995), 196.

⁵⁰ Hanna Djumhana Bastaman, *Logoterapi: Psikologi Untuk Menemukan Makna Hidup Dan Meraih Hidup Bermakna* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007), 17; Rohmah Akhirul Mukharom and Jarman Arroisi, 'Makna Hidup Perspektif Victor Frankl: Kajian Dimensi Spiritual Dalam Logoterapi', *TAJID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20, no. 1 (July 6, 2021): 97.





human existence: attaining happiness.⁵¹ According to Frankl, the meaning of life is the driving force behind every human action, and when this meaning is fulfilled, it leads to the achievement of happiness.⁵² In logotherapy, happiness is defined as the fulfillment of the desire to live a meaningful life.⁵³ In contrast, positive psychology, another branch of humanistic psychology that studies positive human potentials,⁵⁴ defines happiness as a subjective experience characterized by well-being and inner sufficiency, derived from satisfaction with the past, optimism about the future, and contentment in the present.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Maslow views happiness as a state achieved when the highest subjective basic human need, self-actualization, is fulfilled.⁵⁶ Self-actualization motivates individuals to explore intrinsic satisfaction, inner life, and the meaning of life dedicated to the greater good of humanity,⁵⁷ a concept known as self-transcendence.⁵⁸ In psychology, happiness is considered the primary goal of human life.⁵⁹ No one desires to live an unhappy life; everyone continually seeks ways to attain, maintain, and increase happiness.⁶⁰ Once happiness is attained,

it is not merely a means to achieve something else but an end in itself.

Although happiness is widely regarded as the primary goal of human life, each person has a unique understanding of and approach to attaining it. Many individuals define and experience happiness through non-material pursuits such as reading, spending time with family, social involvement, spiritual or religious activities, and the rituals they practice. Conversely, others associate happiness with material aspects, including spending money, partying, and possessing abundant wealth.⁶¹ These two perspectives highlight a distinction between happiness and pleasure.⁶² In psychology, the first perspective is referred to as eudaimonic happiness, while the second is known as hedonic happiness.⁶³

Hedonic happiness posits that happiness is derived from the pleasures and enjoyments of the mind and body. According to this perspective, happiness is achieved through pleasures subjectively experienced by individuals, followed by feelings of enjoyment. However, philosophers, religious leaders, and advocates of virtue have criticized the hedonic

⁵¹ Victor E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1969), 4–8.

⁵² Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 88.

⁵³ Victor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York: Bantams Books, 1984), 12.

⁵⁴ Christopher Peterson, *Mengupayakan Hidup Baik: 100 Refleksi Tentang Psikologi Positif* (Jakarta: PT. Indeks, 2014), 3–5.

⁵⁵ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness Menciptakan Kebahagiaan Dengan Psikol. Positif*, xiii–xvii; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 'Positive Psychology: An Introduction.', 5.

⁵⁶ Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 99.

⁵⁷ Frank G. Goble, *Mazhab Ketiga: Psikologi Humanistik Abraham Maslow*, trans. A. Supratinya (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1997), 57.

⁵⁸ Michael W. Passer and Ronald E. Smith, *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behavior* (Boston:

McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2008), 366; Helen Graham, *Psikologi Humanistik*, trans. Achmad Chusairi and Ilham Nur Alfian (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), 111.

⁵⁹ Ng, *Happiness—Concept, Measurement and Promotion*; Neneng Munajah, 'Kebahagiaan Dalam Perspektif Filsafat', *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (August 6, 2018): 2.

⁶⁰ Summers and Watson, *The Book of Happiness*, xiii.

⁶¹ Regarding the material and non-material aspects of happiness, we draw on Ng, *Happiness—Concept, Measurement and Promotion*; See also Theo Riyanto, *Jadikan Dirimu Bahagia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 7.

⁶² Ismail, *Inner Happiness Building: Rahasia Hidup Bahagia*, 5–7; Roni Ismail, *Menjadi Bahagia Dalam 60 Menit Melalui Syukur* (Yogyakarta: Leutika, 2010), 20–24.

⁶³ Nguyen Hoang Tien et al., 'Subjective Well-Being in Tourism Research', *Psychology and Education Journal* 58, no. 2 (2001): Dalam teori kebahagiaan subjektif, dibedakan lima teori dasar kebahagiaan, yaitu: hedonik, keinginan, kebahagiaan autentik, eudaimonik, dan, objective list theory.





view and proposed an alternative concept known as eudaimonic happiness.⁶⁴ Eudaimonic happiness is rooted in Aristotle's philosophical idea of the highest human good, which he elaborates on in the final chapter of his work, *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to Aristotle, happiness as the highest state of all good things can be attained through what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*.⁶⁵ The term *eudaimonia* reflects the longstanding philosophical inquiry into the nature of happiness, a subject that has been explored from Aristotle's time through to William James and continues to be discussed by philosophers, social leaders, political figures, and religious authorities today.⁶⁶

Eudaimonia, regarded as the highest human good according to Ryff, is not merely a feeling of comfort, satisfaction, or happiness, but a psychological state aligned with moral values; what Aristotle termed the highest good.⁶⁷ Eudaimonic happiness rejects pleasure and enjoyment as the primary criteria of hedonic happiness, which, according to Aristotle, lead humans to compete in indulging their desires. From the eudaimonic perspective, happiness is not viewed in isolation but rather as something that grows and is intrinsically connected with virtue. Eudaimonic happiness integrates subjective affective experiences with morality, such that amorality is seen as capable of undermining the happiness of oneself and others. Aristotle's ethical framework, which

provides guidelines for a good life, forms the foundation of this concept of eudaimonic happiness.⁶⁸

Eudaimonists in the twenty-first century generally emerge from humanistic and transpersonal psychology, as well as the psychology of religion. One major theme in both transpersonal psychology and the psychology of religion is spirituality, or spiritual intelligence (SQ). According to Khalil Khavari, SQ is a strength that facilitates attaining a meaningful life and happiness.⁶⁹ Zohar and Marshall describe SQ as the highest form of intelligence, enabling individuals to view life through the lens of meaning and value,⁷⁰ thereby perceiving life as highly meaningful or valuable, even when others regard it as a failure.⁷¹ SQ is considered a key factor in successfully achieving a happy life.⁷² The fields of transpersonal psychology, humanistic psychology, and the psychology of religion have revitalized psychology by returning its focus to the study of the soul and adopting a positive view of humans as possessing inherent potentials for happiness, such as the capacities for abstraction, analysis and synthesis, imagination and creation, peak experiences, spirituality, and religious experience.

William James's Conceptualization of Religion

William James was a seminal figure in the psychology of religion,⁷³ emerging from an

⁶⁴ Ng, *Happiness—Concept, Measurement and Promotion*, 4–6; Hallberg, 'Happiness Studies: Co-Production of Social Science and Social Order', 49–50; Eddy, *Psikologi Kebahagiaan*, 16–18.

⁶⁵ Nel Nodding, *Happiness and Education* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10.

⁶⁶ Muskinul Fuad, 'Psikologi Kebahagiaan Manusia', *Komunika: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 9, no. 1 (2015): 112–113.

⁶⁷ Carol D. Ryff, 'Psychological Well-Being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia', *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 83, no. 1 (2014): 1–3; Ryff, 'Psychological Well-Being in Adult Life', 99–100.

⁶⁸ Ng, *Happiness—Concept, Measurement and Promotion*, 4–6.

⁶⁹ Khalil A Khavari, *Spiritual Intelligence: A Practical Guide to Personal Happiness*, trans. Agung Prihantoro (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2006), 15–16.

⁷⁰ Zohar and Marshall, *Memfaatkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Dalam Berpikir Integralistik Dan Holistik Untuk Memaknai Kehidupan*, 16–20.

⁷¹ Roni Ismail, *Psikologi Sukses: Mengintegrasikan Potensi Intelektual, Emosional Dan Spiritual* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Samudra Biru, 2022), 167–201.

⁷² Sukidi, *Rahasia Sukses Hidup Bahagia Kecerdasan Spiritual: Mengapa SQ Lebih Penting Daripada IQ Dan EQ*, 103–112.

⁷³ William James's status as a leading figure in the psychology of religion is based on his monumental work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, whereas his status as a pioneer of modern psychology in the United States is based





academically oriented family with a profound interest in religion and spirituality. His grandfather, an Irish immigrant, successfully founded a business in the United States, which provided the family with financial security. James's father significantly influenced his upbringing by fostering a critical stance toward rigid and authoritarian forms of religiosity, as well as skepticism regarding the institutional role of religion. In the field of psychology, James studied under Wilhelm Wundt in Germany and contributed substantially to the development of the psychology of religion, both as a practitioner and as a historical figure. This is demonstrated by his influential publications, including *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897), *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), *Pragmatism* (1907), *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), and *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912). Notably, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* established James as a foundational figure in the psychology of religion.⁷⁴ He passed away in 1910.⁷⁵

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James posits that happiness constitutes the ultimate objective of all human beings. Both James and the Dalai Lama assert that if individuals were queried regarding the primary aim of their lives, the predominant response would be the pursuit of happiness.⁷⁶ James contends that religion provides the most fundamental pathway to happiness, as he defines a true religion as one capable of rendering its adherents happy. His analysis of religion is grounded in a functional perspective

informed by pragmatic philosophy. Consequently, James's definition of religion emphasizes the role of belief in promoting happiness rather than the mere acceptance of the existence of God or religious doctrines.⁷⁷

James defines religion in terms of personal faith as: "The feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."⁷⁸

In the preceding discussion on religion, James identifies two fundamental elements of its nature: the individual or personal dimension and the concept of "the divine." He further elaborates on both aspects from functional and pragmatic perspectives.

Regarding the "personal" essence of religion, it is characterized by emotions such as solemnity, freedom, surrender, liberty, gratitude, self-acceptance, and satisfaction, each of which contributes to a sense of happiness. William James conceptualizes religion as a means through which individuals can achieve these feelings of happiness. Concerning the second essence, "the divine," James identifies three distinct meanings or qualities. First, self-executing laws, exemplified by the principle that those who practice virtue will be honored, whereas evildoers will be humbled by their own actions. Second, the presence of God within an individual possessing an honest heart, which engenders feelings of peace and happiness. Third, the values of truth, love, justice, and simplicity, which serve as keys to happiness. These qualities of "the divine" cultivate personal religious feelings that provoke solemn and

on his work *The Principles of Psychology*. David M Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1997), 27; Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Psikologi Agama: Sebuah Pengantar* (Bandung: Mizan, 2021), 189; Ujam Jaenudin, *Psikologi Transpersonal* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2012), 85–86.

⁷⁴ Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, 27; Jaenudin, *Psikologi Transpersonal*, 85–86.

⁷⁵ The Macat Team, *An Analysis of William James's The Principles of Psychology* (London: Macat International Ltd., 2011), 9–10.

⁷⁶ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2002), 79; Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, *The Art of Happiness: Seni Hidup Bahagia*, trans. Alex Tri Kantjono Widodo (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2001), 3–9.

⁷⁷ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 151, 497.

⁷⁸ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 31.





serious responses, thereby generating happiness.⁷⁹ For James, this essence of religion as "the divine" consistently evokes religious happiness.⁸⁰ Through his pragmatic approach, James regarded religion as fundamentally important in the attainment of happiness.⁸¹ Consequently, he posited that a true religion is one that effectively guides individuals toward the realization of religious happiness as the highest form of happiness.⁸²

Happiness in William James's Theory of Religious Maturity

Religious happiness, within the field of the psychology of religion, constitutes a specific form of an individual's religious experience. Glock and Stark describe this as the influence of the experiential and consequential dimensions of religiosity.⁸³ Individual happiness in this context is understood to have significant social and religious implications. Fromm posits that genuine religiosity fosters love.⁸⁴ Allport identifies tolerance as a defining characteristic of a religiously mature individual.⁸⁵ Ismail highlights the applicability of James's concept of religious maturity to peacebuilding efforts.⁸⁶ Furthermore, James emphasized that authentic religion is that which leads individuals to the highest form of happiness, namely religious happiness.⁸⁷

The religious happiness idealized by William James can be realized in the figure of the religiously mature individual, exemplifying mature religiosity. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, particularly in Lectures XI and XIII,

James delineates the religiously mature person under the concept of "Saintliness." Religious maturity constitutes a universal form of holiness present across diverse religions and is readily identifiable, as evidenced in James's analysis of figures such as Saints or Sufis, who exhibit four defining characteristics. *First*, there is a feeling of being in a broader life, sensible of the existence of an Ideal Power. *Second*, there is a sense of the friendly continuity of the Ideal Power with our own life and a willing self-surrender to its control. *Third*, there is a sense of an immense elation and freedom as the outlines of the selfhood melt down. *Fourth*, there is a shifting of the emotional center toward loving and harmonious affection. These four attributes of mature religiosity contribute to eudaimonic religious happiness, as each engenders specific practical outcomes pertinent to achieving such happiness: asceticism corresponds to the first characteristic; strength of soul to the second; purity to the third; and charity to the fourth.⁸⁸ The significance of these characteristics in relation to religious happiness will be further examined below.

The first characteristic is a feeling of a life that transcends mere material existence, accompanied by an awareness of the presence of God. This characteristic of mature religiosity involves a personal experience of God, who may otherwise be conceived as impersonal. Spiritually mature and devout individuals frequently report a profound experience of God's presence, which fosters feelings of tranquility, peace, and happiness. These affective states,

⁷⁹ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–94.

⁸⁰ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–102.

⁸¹ Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi Dan Agama Sejak William James Hingga Gordon Allport*, 146–159.

⁸² James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–94; William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1922); Multin K. Munitz, *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy* (New York: McMillan, 1952), 1–70.

⁸³ Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment* (University of California Press, 1968), 125–140.

⁸⁴ Cited from Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi Dan Agama Sejak William James Hingga Gordon Allport*, 84–85.

⁸⁵ Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation*, 67–69.

⁸⁶ Ismail, 'Beragama Bahagia Untuk Bina Damai: Kajian Atas Teori Kematangan Beragama William James'.

⁸⁷ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–94.

⁸⁸ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 273–274.





arising from the perceived divine presence, are practically manifested through asceticism. Asceticism is defined by an attitude of surrender to God, encompassing self-sacrifice and the renunciation of material and worldly concerns. Religiously mature individuals who practice asceticism focus on cultivating positive internal states, maintaining a continual attitude of satisfaction and gratitude toward God.⁸⁹ This sustained satisfaction and gratitude for divine blessings are indicative of religious happiness.

Religious happiness encompasses two psychological conditions related to well-being. The first condition involves the recognition that worldly life is not merely a limited existence, nor is it solely devoted to the pursuit of physical and material pleasures, as posited by hedonistic perspectives. Individuals who experience religious happiness perceive life as profound, expansive, and meaningful. They live guided by purpose, values, and adherence to divine morality. Within the frameworks of logotherapy⁹⁰ and spiritual intelligence,⁹¹ perceiving life as highly valuable and meaningful is considered an indicator of happiness. The second condition concerns a comprehensive response to the power of the divine, which awakens religious sentiments within the human soul and generates the highest form of happiness.⁹²

The second characteristic is a sense of being connected with God that engenders self-surrender to Him. According to James, the

relationship between religiously mature individuals and God is characterized by friendliness rather than conflict, which fosters an attitude of self-surrender to God and His moral law. This surrender, as a consequence of the connection with God, imbues life with meaning and happiness.⁹³ This experience of happiness subsequently produces a distinctive practical outcome manifested as strength of soul. James suggests that this strength of soul, derived from the connection with God, significantly contributes to happiness by diminishing individualistic motives. This robust psychological state alleviates feelings of fear and anxiety, replacing them with a sense of happiness.⁹⁴

The third characteristic is self-surrender to God, which engenders feelings of happiness, freedom, and the dissolution of the ego. Individuals who are religiously mature experience profound happiness, expansive freedom, and the attenuation of the ego through an attitude of surrender to God.⁹⁵ This profound happiness arises from the recognition of the divine as the source of justice, love, and inner contentment.⁹⁶ Concurrently, the experience of expansive freedom reflects a positive affective state associated with psychological well-being, including mental health, tranquility, peace, satisfaction with favorable and just conditions, and a minimal presence of negative affect, all of which contribute to subjective happiness.⁹⁷ The dissolution of the ego represents a state in which

⁸⁹ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 272–273.

⁹⁰ Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*, 4–8; Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, 8; Bastaman, *Logoterapi: Psikologi Untuk Menemukan Makna Hidup Dan Meraih Hidup Bermakna*, 17; Mukharom and Arroisi, 'Makna Hidup Perspektif Victor Frankl: Kajian Dimensi Spiritual Dalam Logoterapi', 97.

⁹¹ Khavari, *Spiritual Intelligence: A Practical Guide to Personal Happiness*, 15–16; Zohar and Marshall, *Memfaatkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Dalam Berpikir Integralistik Dan Holistik Untuk Memaknai Kehidupan*, 16–20; Ismail, *Psikologi Sukses: Mengintegrasikan Potensi Intelektual, Emosional Dan Spiritual*, 167–201; Sukidi, *Rahasia Sukses*

Hidup Bahagia Kecerdasan Spiritual: Mengapa SQ Lebih Penting Daripada IQ Dan EQ, 103–112.

⁹² James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–94, 97–98.

⁹³ Gore, *Be Happy!*, xv; Malkani and Chopra, *The Quantum Happiness: Meraih Kebahagiaan Dengan Psikologi Kesadaran*, 21.

⁹⁴ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 273.

⁹⁵ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 273.

⁹⁶ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 93–94, 97–98.

⁹⁷ See again Alhajj et al., 'Happiness among Dentists: A Multi-Scale, Multi-National Study from 21





subjective fulfillment is achieved, encompassing intrinsic satisfaction and a sense of life's meaning derived from altruistic actions.⁹⁸

Religious happiness, as described in this context, results from the practical manifestation of the third characteristic of religious maturity, known as purity. Purity constitutes a spiritual capacity attained by purging oneself of all malevolent elements and base desires, thereby enhancing spiritual coherence and safeguarding it from material and worldly defilements that impede experiences of freedom, tranquility, peace, happiness, and the dissolution of the ego.⁹⁹

The fourth characteristic is the transformation of emotions into love and harmony toward others. Religiously mature individuals exhibit a psychological state that embraces only non-egotistical attitudes and behaviors. This fourth criterion of religious maturity builds upon the preceding three criteria. Specifically, the experience of God's presence engenders a continual sense of connection with Him. This sense of connection leads to self-surrender, defined as the complete yielding of oneself to God. Such total surrender results in happiness, freedom, and the dissolution of the ego. Ultimately, these processes transform emotions into love and harmony toward others. Religious love and harmony inherently promote happiness, such that religiously mature individuals have no enemies and perceive those around them as sources of joy.¹⁰⁰

Religious happiness is characterized by a psychological state marked by love and harmony, which results from a distinctive practical outcome he terms charity. James's findings suggest that religiously mature individuals are capable of transforming the focus

of their emotions by extending universal love toward all beings. They actively eliminate motives that contradict this charity, as such motives impede an attitude of love toward others. Furthermore, James observes that religiously mature individuals who achieve religious happiness not only regard all people as brothers and sisters but also love those who are hostile toward them.¹⁰¹ Thus, a life characterized by love, harmony, and the absence of enemies among religiously mature individuals serves as an indicator of a peaceful and happy existence.

Religious happiness, as the outcome of James's four characteristics of religious maturity, aligns with the concept of eudaimonic happiness. In James's theory, eudaimonic happiness is explicated through these characteristics and their corresponding practical consequences. Thus, religious happiness can be understood as a form of eudaimonic well-being, encompassing positive subjective affective experiences, core moral values, and the valuation of the divine. This form of happiness serves to deter individuals from engaging in immoral behaviors that could diminish or negate their own happiness as well as that of others. Drawing on William James's theory of religious maturity, religious happiness functions as a guiding principle for a meaningful life by enabling individuals to perceive worldly existence as purposeful rather than futile. This perspective fosters a continual awareness of God's presence, which engenders a sense of connection and leads to the surrender of one's life entirely to the divine. Such surrender cultivates feelings of happiness, freedom, and the dissolution of the ego. These internal states facilitate the transformation of emotions into love and harmony. This form of happiness aligns with

Countries', 329; Nguyen and Le, 'The Relationship between Global Wealth and Happiness: An Analytical Study of Returns and Volatility Spillovers'.

⁹⁸ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 273.

⁹⁹ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 274.

¹⁰⁰ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 273.

¹⁰¹ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, 274.





what Aristotle termed moral happiness and what James identified as religious happiness.

Conclusion

The study of happiness has reemerged as a significant focus within contemporary humanistic psychology and its subfields, including transpersonal psychology and, notably, the psychology of religion, where it is conceptualized as religious happiness. Within logotherapy, happiness is understood as a state achieved through the fulfillment of a meaningful life. In contrast, positive psychology defines happiness as a composite of satisfaction with the past, optimism regarding the future, and contentment in the present. Maslow conceptualizes happiness as the realization of the highest-order needs, specifically self-actualization and self-transcendence. From the perspective of transpersonal psychology, happiness is attained by optimizing spiritual intelligence through living in accordance with values and meaning. In the psychology of religion, happiness is regarded as the outcome of an individual's religious experience, characterized by a profound and wholehearted encounter with what is perceived as "the Divine."

According to James's research in **The Varieties**, religious happiness can be achieved through several interrelated experiences. These include a sense of God's presence in life, which manifests practically as asceticism; a feeling of connection with God that leads to self-surrender and is characterized by strength of soul; a state of self-surrender that engenders happiness, freedom, and the dissolution of the ego, with purity as its practical outcome; and the transformation of emotions into love and harmony, resulting in charity as its distinctive practical consequence. Each of these experiences contributes to the attainment of religious happiness.

James's concept of religious happiness, understood as the outcome of mature religiosity, represents a form of eudaimonic happiness that integrates subjective affective experiences, core

moral values, and the values associated with the divine. This form of religious happiness serves to deter individuals from pursuing immoral means of achieving happiness, which could ultimately undermine both their own well-being and that of others. This conception of happiness functions as a normative framework for living a good and fulfilling life, which Aristotle referred to as moral happiness and which James identified as religious happiness, regarded as the highest form of happiness.

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