

Table 16.2 View of Spirituality of the Major World Religious Traditions

View of Spirituality	
Western Religious Traditions	
Judaism	Obedience to God's laws and worshiping Him leads to character development (acquisition of qualities such as goodness, humility, and holiness). Humans can communicate with God through prayer and worship. God responds to people reaching out to Him.
Christianity	Accepting Jesus Christ as Savior will lead one to good works, a moral life, and devotion and worship. This will allow one to receive the influence of the Holy Spirit and partake of other fruits of the spirit (e.g., love). Through prayer and the influence of the Holy Spirit, human beings can communicate with God and receive God's help, influence, and grace.
Islam	Obeying God's law as revealed in the Qur'an and "giving up" worldly things allows people to grow spiritually. The path of spiritual growth involves overcoming vices such as arrogance, greed, and dishonesty. This leads to higher levels of religious experience and union with God. Humans can communicate with God through prayer, meditation, and repetition of set phrases or the name of God.
Zoroastrianism	Choosing good over evil, prayer, and meditation will help people on the pathway to spiritual growth. Human beings can communicate with God through prayer.
Sikhism	Through dependence on God, human beings can overcome their ego and pride and achieve spiritual liberation and growth and a mystical union with God. Spiritual growth leads one to the qualities of love, faith, mercy, and humility. Humans can communicate with and worship God, particularly through prayer and singing.
Eastern Religious Traditions	
Hinduism	Spirituality is achieved through good works, knowledge, and worship and devotion (one of the three paths to salvation). Ultimately, spiritual growth leads to a realization of the oneness of all things (Brahman-Atman) and to a release from the rounds of rebirth. People can communicate with the deities and receive assistance from them.
Buddhism	In Theravada Buddhism spiritual enlightenment and eventual nirvana come from renouncing the world, believing in the Four Noble Truths, and following the Eightfold Middle Path. In Mahayana Buddhism loving service, faith, and compassion (not celibacy or asceticism) are seen as the keys to spiritual growth and enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhists may worship helping beings.
Jainism	Spiritual enlightenment is viewed as pure omniscient consciousness or infinite knowledge. Release from karma-matter and spiritual enlightenment is gained through overcoming attachment to worldly things (asceticism), faith in the Jain saints, right knowledge, right conduct (e.g., <i>ahimsa</i> or nonviolence), and meditation.
Shinto	Spirituality is perhaps best thought of as feelings of appreciation and closeness to nature and enjoyment of life. Human beings can worship the <i>kamis</i> (deities) in order to "secure their continued favor" (Palmer & Keller, 1989, p. 87)
Confucianism	There are no teachings about spiritual communication with deity or about transcendent spiritual enlightenment. Confucius did describe what he believed are the characteristics of a "superior man" or "true gentleman." These qualities included "li (the code of moral, social conduct), jen (virtue, compassion, love), yi (righteousness), and te (virtue)" (Nigosian, 1994, p. 200).
Taoism	Living in harmony with the Tao is the pathway to inner harmony and peace. An important principle of the Tao is <i>wu-wei</i> , that is, the principle of nonaction. <i>T'ao-wei</i> is "a call to passive action ... One should not resist, confront, or defy. One should not lay down ... rules, or requirements ... Only sincere humility, minimal desires, and pure spontaneity can enable one to find the Way" (Palmer & Keller, 1989, p. 70).

(Source: Richards, P. S. (2012). Honoring religious diversity and universal spirituality in psychotherapy. In L. Miller (Ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Psychology of Spirituality* (pp. 237-254). New York, NY: Oxford University Press).

Table 16.3 Examples of Social Scientists' Conceptions of Spirituality

Source	Definition/Description
ASERVIC (1996, paragraphs 3-4)	<p>"Spirit may be defined as the animating life force, represented by such images as breath, wind, vigor, and courage. Spirituality is the drawing out and infusion of spirit in one's life. It is experienced as an active and passive process. Spirituality is also defined as a capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. This spiritual tendency moves the individual toward knowledge, love, meaning, peace, hope, transcendence, connectedness, compassion, wellness, and wholeness. Spirituality includes one's capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a value system. Spirituality encompasses a variety of phenomena, including experiences, beliefs, and practices. Spirituality is approached from a variety of perspectives, including psychospiritual, religious, and transpersonal. While spirituality is usually expressed through culture, it both precedes and transcends culture."</p>
Burke and Miranti (2001, p. 602)	<p>"Spirituality refers to a way of being in the world that acknowledges the existence of, and the desire to be in relationship with, a transcendent dimension or higher power. This spiritual tendency is believed to move the individual toward knowledge, hope, love, transcendence, connectedness, and compassion."</p>
Elkins et al. (1988, p. 10)	<p>"Spirituality which comes from the Latin spiritus, meaning 'breath of life' is a way of being and experiencing that comes through awareness of a transcendental dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate."</p>
Elkins (1998, pp. 32-33)	<p>"Spirituality is universal. It is available to every human being ... It is a human phenomenon. This does not mean that it has no divine component, but it does mean that spirituality is an inborn, natural potential of the human being ... The common core of spirituality is found at the inner phenomenological level. Spirituality manifests in countless outer forms ... underneath these outward forms, there is a common longing for the sacred, a universal desire to touch and celebrate the mystery of life. It is in the depths of the soul that one discovers the essential and universal dimensions of spirituality ... Spirituality has to do with our capacity to respond to the numinous. The essential character of spirituality is mystical ... There is a certain mysterious energy associated with spirituality. Every culture has recognized a life force that moves through all creation. The soul comes alive when it is nurtured by this sacred energy, and one's existence becomes infused with passion, power, and depth ... The aim of spirituality is compassion."</p>
Finnegan (2008, p. 12-13)	<p>"Spirituality is the place where we meet primordial reality and wrestle with the forces of primordial experience that date back to the very origins of our human lives. It is a space for self-knowledge and self-transcendence and the processes they set in train. It is the space where we encounter the forces of shadow and repression and interpret or misinterpret them, contain them safely as we respond to the upward call of the divine and the awe-inspiring wonder of God, or give way to the darker powers of disorder and destruction. Spirituality is a space where lovers meet and in the meeting God is found. It is holy ground and sacred space, a place where pilgrims meet as journeys pause, a space where rituals flourish and worship prospers. It is a space for prayer, meditation and the wise contemplative gaze. It is the meeting place of harmony, community, integrity, generosity, love, faith and hope, motivation and intentionality, and the turning of the mind away from sole concern with the self... Spirituality is a journey, a quest, a path, a way. It is a journey of discovery, a quest for meaning, a path to a fuller life, a way of love and embraced destiny; dancing with the Holy One, new songs of devotion and awe rising from the depths of soul."</p>

(continued)

Table 16.3 (continued)

Source	Definition/Description
Helminiak (1996, p. 32)	Spirituality is (1) "the human spiritual nature as such: the spiritual component in the human being; that which makes humans spiritual;" (2) "concern for transcendence: the sense that something in life goes beyond the here and now and the commitment to that something;" (3) "a lived reality: (a) in the general sense: all those aspects of human living that help enhance and unfold the human spiritual capacity, (b) in the social or cultural sense: particular ways of advancing spiritual growth as advocated by different traditions or school, e.g., Hindu spirituality, Methodist spirituality, (c) in the individual sense: the beliefs and practices that a particular person follows in order to nourish his or her spiritual sensitivities and growth."
James (1902, pp. 31–32)	Spirituality [James used the term "personal religion"] is "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."
Kelly (1995, pp. 4–5)	Spirituality is "grounded in a dimension of reality beyond the boundaries of the strictly empirically perceived, material world . . . is a deep sense of belonging, of wholeness, of connectedness, and of openness to the infinite."
Martin and Carlson (1988, p. 59)	"Spirituality is a process by which individuals recognize the importance of orienting their lives to something nonmaterial that is beyond or larger than themselves . . . so that there is an acknowledgment of and at least some dependence upon a higher power, or Spirit."
Maugans (1996, p. 11)	"Spirituality can be defined as a belief system focusing on intangible elements that impart vitality and meaning to life's events."
Miller and Thoresen (2003, p. 27)	Spirituality includes "the notion of being concerned with life's most animating and vital principle or quality, often described as giving life or energy to the material human elements of the person." Spirituality "includes a broad focus on the immaterial features of life, regarded as not commonly perceptible by the physical senses (e.g., sight, hearing) that are used to understand the material world."
Pargament (2007, p. 32–33)	Spirituality is "a search for the sacred." "At the heart of the sacred lies God, divine being, or a transcendent reality."
Piedmont et al. (2007, p. 55)	"Spirituality represents our efforts to create meaning and purpose for our lives. This need for meaning is seen as an intrinsic universal human capacity."
Richards and Bergin (2005, p. 22)	Spirituality is "a state of being attuned with God or the Divine Intelligence that governs or harmonizes the universe." It involves a "search for and harmony with God and the sacred." Characterized by "thoughts and feelings of enlightenment, vision, harmony with truth, transcendence, and oneness with God."
Sperry and Shafranske (2005, p. 17)	"For many people spirituality is anchored in a quest for a direct, unmediated experience of the transcendent realities in which they once more confidently believed."
Vaughan (1996, p. 336)	"Spirituality presupposes certain qualities of mind, including compassion, gratitude, awareness of a transcendent dimension, and an appreciation for life which brings meaning and purpose to existence."
Wuthnow (1998, p. vii)	"At its core, spirituality consists of all the beliefs and activities by which individuals attempt to relate their lives to God or to a divine being or some other conception of a transcendent reality."
Zinnbauer, Pargament, and Scott (1999, p. 909)	"Spirituality is the search for the sacred" and "has to do with the paths people take in their efforts to find, conserve, and transform the sacred in their lives."