

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

There is an ongoing debate on the philosophical worldview of the understanding of human being. The western with its Maslow's Theory of Needs and the Islamic worldview of human being based on the divine revelation from the Holy Quran. Epistemologically both confronting views are no less different and as limited as the knowing of human being as subject of discussion is limited by the notion of life in this world and the concept of hereafter from Islamic point of view. This paper discusses the notion of the theory of needs by Maslow and the Islamic perspectives of human being as a subject and its role in life while. It attempts to make a comparative analysis on needs between Maslow's needs theory and Islamic theories. A great distinction between the two notions is the absence of the focus on spiritual aspect of human being while Maslow's focused merely on the physical aspect. Islam, on the other hand, views basic necessities of man from individual and collective or societal levels. Satisfying the needs in Islam is related to six fundamentals which are categorised at three levels: essential or primary (daruriyyat), which are absolute necessities, expedients (hajiyyaat) which meets no absolute necessity but it is merely a means, and embellishments (tahisiniyyat) which serve a good end. The spiritual aspect of human is demonstrated through the concept of Ibadah; the core element that influences actions, works as the integrating force, which unites and gives meaning and purpose to every other physical, emotional, intellectual and social endeavours. Ibadah, thus, can develop and drive one's potentials to further heights. This distinction makes the approach of coping and its strategies differ from the western concept of understanding of human being. As such, human's self actualization in Maslow's theory is limited to material and physical element in which in Islamic perspective is extended to spiritual element of man.

Keywords: Motivation, Coping Strategies, Islamic coping, self-actualization, Needs Theory, spiritual being

Introduction

Religion has been identified to critically affect the way in which people behave. It affects individual behavior, which, in turn, is reflected in and affected by the collective social and communal behavior. The way one looks into family, the children, parents, siblings and spouse or close relatives; interacts with the neighborhood, and surroundings and settings; relates with children's schools, workplace, etc all are determined by his worldview about life and its purpose. Religion plays an inevitable role in all these. For example, the Islamic religious rules and code of conduct provide a framework that shapes the moral and ethical

behaviour of Muslims in the conduct of all aspects their lives (Rusnah and Ab.Mumin, 2006). This is specifically so among the established Muslim communities anywhere in the world. That is, the Islamic beliefs, religious rules and code of conduct imply on the way Muslims establish their priorities, and cope with various situations in the life (Abu Raiya, 2008).

The Purpose of Man's Life

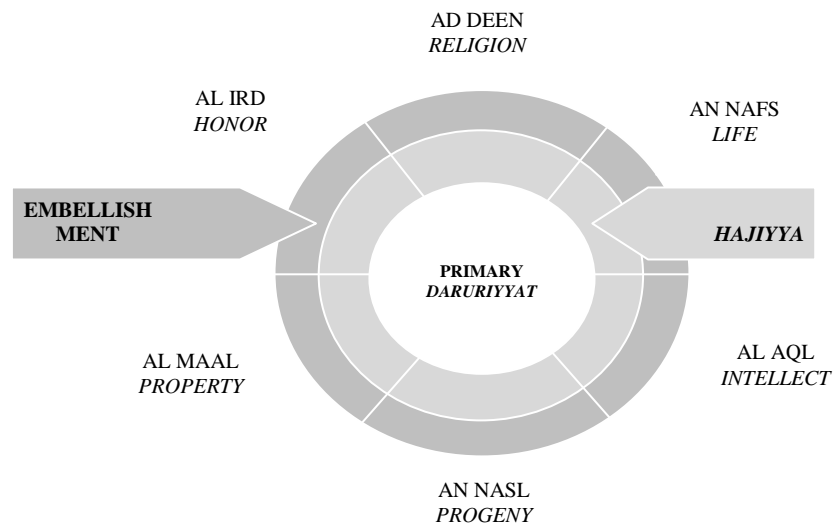
According to Al-Ghazali (1979), the purpose of man's life is to gain happiness in this world and in the hereafter. Happiness on the other hand means fulfilling the divinely ordained duty of man as *abd* and *khalifah*. By following the teaching of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and cultivating them in society, man attains this purpose, and consequently the happiness in both this world and the Hereafter is attained (Al-Badawi, 2002). As '*abd*' of Allah, man has to ensure constant relationship with Allah; and as vicegerent he has to ensure that justice is done to all the occupants of the earth and to the planet earth itself (Al-Attas, 1990). Man who does justice to himself, to society he belongs to, to other creatures of Allah, and to the environment he lives in is the man who serves Allah in totality. Therefore, the ultimate aim of living in this world is to actualize the following verse of the Qur'an: "*I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me*" (Al-Qur'an, Al-Zariyat: 56).

Instead of submitting himself to Allah alone and accomplishing all the duties and responsibilities (*amanah*) on him, if he succumbs to wrong priorities of his body than the spirit, he would not be able to maintain his status as '*abd*' as well as *khalifah*. Rather, he would not be able to manage the system. Therefore justice will not prevail in the society; corruption will not be minimized. In short, man's mission while inhabiting the Earth, is to facilitate for people's *Masalih* (interests), and prevent *Mafasid* (disinterests) by maintaining justice, mercy and magnanimity (Al-Sari, n.d.).

In order to maintain the status of '*abd*' and *khalifah*, thereby to be able to successfully manage the system, establish justice, mercy and magnanimity and facilitate for people's *Masalih* (interests), and prevent *Mafasid* (disinterests) all his spiritual, intellectual/psychic and physical/social basic needs should be fulfilled accordingly. In other words he has to fulfill the needs of his *ruh* (spirit), *aql* (intellect) and *jism* (physical). However, this understanding of relationship between man and God, or of man having the *ruh* (spirit) is not shared in Western psychology, whereby the spiritual dimension was often left out. This due to the fact that the Western psychologist define "the total personality of every individual as only having physical and psychological" ignoring the most essential aspect of man that is the spiritual dimension (Hassan Langgulung, 1999). The spiritual dimension in western psychology is always missing.

In Islam, as embodied in the rules and regulation of Shari'ah, these three basic components are further elaborated as six essential interests and values which are *din* (religion), *nafs* (life), *aql* (intellect), *nasl* (progeny), *mal* (property) and *ird* (honour). They need to be preserved and protected, because "their destruction and collapse will precipitate chaos and collapse of normal order in society" (Kamali, 2005, p. 5). The needs related these six fundamentals are categorised at three levels: essential or primary (*daruriyyat*), which are absolute necessities, expedients (*hajiyyaat*) which meets no absolute necessity but it is merely a means, and embellishments (*tahisiniyyat*) which serve a good end. All the three components therefore have corresponding essential, expedient and embellishing needs.

Figure 3.1
 Six Essential Needs and Their Levels



Furthermore, all these components variedly influence upon one's well-being, behaviours, the choice they make, and the way they respond to various challenges of life. Man's moral success and moral failure, therefore, is the result of various constituents of man, of physical and spiritual nature (Nasr, 1999). In other words, the purpose and priority of one's life on the earth and the obligation and commitments that he makes all depend on what he prefers most among these six.

Based on the above description, it is timely to criticize Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, relating it with the needs of man. As a Muslims, it is natural that in the case of sudden transition of losing the love ones, being tested by Allah with obstacles and challenges, they return to their ownelves for solace and console (Alias and Samsudin, 2005)

. This will make them retain and strengthen their links with the faith. Rather, they would rise their personal worries to their Lord and Creator. In fact, they will start to disbelieve in any insincere assistance and helps provided by any other party. Although, gradually they will change this stand as they start to realize their own spiritual, intellectual, psychic and physical potentials and how they should be involved in social activities for their and their children's benefits. It is here the existence and needs of the spirit, intellect and body will be acknowledged, and accordingly the will accommodate themselves.

In short, the needs of a Muslim will be unique, that it cannot be justified from the perspective of conventional theories and framework. The section below, therefore, further explains the needs of Muslims relating them comparing and contrasting them with Maslow (1957)'s theory on Hierarchy of Needs. While doing this, Bronfenbrenner (1984)'s ecology system will be also explored further. This will justify how the needs are changed into challenges when the former are not fulfilled. Since the spirituality in specific or religiosity

in general determine the flavours of these needs, the way they are fulfilled, or they are turn into challenges if the necessary criteria for their accomplishment are critically unavailable, and lastly how various coping strategies are planned and executed, while doing the comparison, the following section would also explore into Islam’s influence on the Muslims as well.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs from an Islamic perspective

As indicated before, in the mid-twentieth century Maslow (1954; 1970) has developed a theory on hierarchy of human needs relating it to the individual human behavior and motivation. His theory has been one of the most important contributions to the modern view of human nature (Bouzenita and Boulanouar, 2016) and he is considered one of the most influential psychologists (Frager and Fadiman, 1987, p. xxxiv). According to Frager and Fadiman (1987), “Maslow has done more to change our view of human nature and human possibilities than has any other American psychologist of the past fifty years. His influence, both direct and indirect, continues to grow, especially in the field of health, education, and management theory, and in the personal and social lives of millions of Americans” (Frager and Fadiman, p. xxxiv as cited in Al-Sari, n.d., p. ??). The five categories of needs which he identifies as motivating human behaviour are explained briefly in the following table 3.1.

Table 3.2
 Maslow’s hierarchy of five needs

Category of Needs	Examples
Physiological	The need for air, water, vitality, food, good health,sex,
Safety	The need for security, order, and freedom from fear or threat, social well being, access to health services, obtaining adequate material, protection of law
Belongingness and love	The need for love, affection, feelings of belonging and human contact, family relation, partnership, work group, seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation
Self Esteem	The need for self-respect, mastery skills, achievement, empowered, confident, convivial and respect and recognition from others
Self-actualization	The need to grow, to feel fulfilled, to realize one’s potential, seeking knowledge, realization of creativity.

(Reid, 2008; Yumol, 2009)

Although there exists in the conventional literature some empirical support for certain need categories, there is very little of that evidence for the overall collection of categories (Wahba and Bridwell, 1987), empirical studies showed limited support for certain needs. According to Reid (2008), there are conflicting results which support and refute

Maslow's original categories of needs so there is no consensus regarding the relative accuracy of Maslow's categories in the absence of rigorous scientific investigation. Therefore, Reid (2008) calls for further identifying new and emerging areas of human needs which can be compared to Maslow's categories is necessary. She for example, highlights the failure of Maslow's (1970) theory of motivation with specific reference to the hierarchy of human needs to accommodate the role of culture.

According to Maslow, physiological needs are the most basic, then other needs follow in order. However, from Islamic point of view, the needs identified by Maslow, such as physical, security, love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization, therefore, should be extended beyond to include spiritual aspects. According to Maslow (1954), physiological survival is considered to be the most basic motivator of human behavior. As the basic needs are met, higher needs emerge as primary motivators of behavior. This is the most salient need dominates the organism and motivates behavior. Gratification of needs is as important as deprivation in Maslow's model, because gratification is the means through which higher needs develop prepotency. Only unsatisfied needs influence behavior, although the same need may cause different individual to different individual.

Generally, as perceived in Islam, Muslims do not work, or not motivated to fulfil the individual or physiological needs as they are the end by itself. But they are motivated to do so to enable their bodies to fulfil some supreme purpose of serving for the cause, and pleasure of Allah. That is fulfilling the physiological needs is a means to accomplishing higher goals (Badri, 2000;1979). This concept of Maslow matches with the Islamic concept of human needs and development. However, if the element of spirit were to be considered by him, it would be more appropriate. Although, man has animalistic instincts and needs man is supreme not just because he has reason but most importantly because the ruh inhere in him (Al-Attas, 1979; Bakar, 2006).

The spiritual aspects, as mentioned earlier thus imply upon the entire above category of needs. That is the hierarchy prescribed by Maslow would not suit the way Muslims consider ruh as an essential component of human body. Rather, they consider ruh (spirit) has having indivisible impact on all the intellectual (aql), emotional/physical/social (nafs), family (nasl), wealth and property (mal) and personality/self actualization (ird) needs. The needs of body for example for food, shelter and security are not considered as independent. Rather, these and many other needs of the body need to be fulfilled so that psychically and even spiritually man becomes sound and healthy. A balanced and healthy life style fulfilling all these needs is much necessary, that eventually they develop themselves as the healthy and accountable servant of Allah. It is true, that the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) had taken care of all these aspects that he did not fast day and night, rather he broke fasts, married and lived a normal life interacting with the people, but he also pray day and night, thus, maintaining his relationship with his Creator.

Although the physiological needs are considered basic, as found in Maslow, according to Hassan Langgulung (1988), the basic motivation behind human activity is "*Ibadah*". Through *Ibadah* one becomes motivated to realize his connection and link with his Creator and once this inmate relationship is realized, it will be reflected in his actions in the life. *Ibadah* arouses and directs the behavior of an individual towards achieving the goal. It is the core element that influences actions. Rather, it also works as the integrating force, which unites and gives meaning and purpose to every other physical, emotional, intellectual

and social endeavours (Hassan Langgulung, 2001). *Ibadah*, thus, can develop and drive one's potentials to further heights. Therefore, from Islamic perspective, self actualization is achieved not only through the material or even psychical means, but very much through spiritual means as well. Spiritual needs therefore is related to how much deeply one is conscious and faithful that he is first and foremost an 'abd' of Allah and how this awareness is personalized in his actions, attitudes and behavior (Kazi, 1992, p.13). This understanding has to be the basic underlying foundation to understanding and analyzing challenges and needs faced by the individuals, and how they cope with them.

Although, the nature and characteristics of body is mostly carnal and earthly, certainly, man's bodily needs also should be fulfilled, because in a deprived body neither the spirit nor intellect will flourish. Both spirit and intellect reside in the human body. However, they are different in ranks, nature and functions. Hence, they have different needs. Therefore, their maintenance as well the fulfillment of their needs should be done proportionately in balanced and in orderly manner, and no one should be neglected (Bouzenita and Boulanouar, 2016).

Islam does not assume the satisfaction of one aspect as a prerequisite to commence to another aspect (Al-Sari, n.d.). However, the fulfilment of needs at the essential stage is indispensable to the survival and spiritual well being of individuals as well as to keep the normal order in society (Kamali, 2005). Rather, as portrayed in the Islamic Shari'ah they are designed to protect the benefits of the individual and that of the community, as well as to facilitate improvement and perfection of their conditions. For example, to ensure the well-being of the family, adultery and delinquency are enshrined as punishable offences. Various other family laws of the *Shari'ah* are guidelines to make the family a safe refuge for all of its members. Rather, work and trading activity are encouraged in order to enable the individual to earn a living.

Rather as per Maslow's order, the physiological needs should be fulfilled before moving to the next. Al-Sari (n.d.) criticizes him on this point saying that, naturally the individual look to each of these needs to be at least partially satisfied, whereas focusing particularly on one specific need will happen only after this. Rather than starting with the category of needs, first with the physical needs, which are most basic, then to security, then to belongingness, etc in order, therefore, the individual would desire to satisfy minimum of them at first.

This is very obvious in the case of Muslims. It contrast to Maslow's conclusion that the lower need has to be fulfilled (not necessarily fully) to allow the motivation for the next higher need to be affective, but because of the sudden happening in their lives, with immediate effect they will turn to themselves. As mentioned by Paragament, (1999; 2007) and Corsini (2009), beliefs of a person dictate upon the choices people make. In the face of emotionally or physically unstable challenges, their culture and surroundings, which are essentially Islamic affect their cognitive restructuring of the situation. This is supported by Bronfenbrenner's suggested theory of the influence of a person's environment on the inner strength. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory similarly with Maslow have contributed a great deal to Modern psychology.

In the case of Muslims, their belief that God never gives individuals more than what they can bear motivates them to further strengthen their attachment with God through religious rituals such as prayer, 'dhikr' and attendance at religious services. That is, it is true

that different cultures may provide two completely different ways of satisfying particular desire. The western setting which negates the influence of religion as well as spiritual aspect of man on his psycho social behavior, therefore, do not concur with the Islamic teachings. Islam's concerns of man are reflected in the six essential interests and necessities, i.e., the 'protection' and 'promotion' of the six of faith (din), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), progeny (nasl), property (mal) and honour ('ird) which cover all aspects of the human existence (spiritual, corporeal and rational) and their needs being fulfilled parallelly. Only when these essential interests and necessities are fulfilled in a balanced way, man becomes an active and positive person to himself and to others (M.Raba, 2006). From the Islamic understanding, satisfaction of the needs in these categories ultimately is the mean that enables us to fulfill the final purpose of his life (Haque, 1998).

Therefore, all the endeavours, be it at the individual or collective levels, if are related to accomplishing the purpose of life and are done to seek the pleasure of Allah is also considered as acts of worship (Jamil Farooqi, 2006). The verses below indicate that one should balance between all these needs in order to satisfy each need:

Children of Adam, dress well every time you pray. Eat and drink, but avoid excess. He does not love intemperate. Say: Who has forbidden you to wear the nice clothes or eat the god things which Allah has bestowed upon His servants? Say; These are for the faithful in the life of this world, (though shared by others); but they shall be theirs alone on the Day of Judgement (Al-Qur'an, Al-Aaraf: 23).

That is, needs of a Muslim have dimensions beyond what was explained by Maslow. Even Islam influences the hierarchy of needs and priority one makes. Another point that Maslow highlighted is that, the prepotency of a need depends on the individual's current situation and recent experiences. This is very true about Muslim. Individuals will be motivated to fulfill whichever need which is pre-potent, or most powerful, at a given time. However, the factor that they are living in the surrounding Muslim culture will make them turn to spiritual and religious lessons.

With regards to the above, another difference between Maslow's theory and that of Islam is that Maslow views the subject of basic needs from the individual's point of view only. Islam, on the other hand, views basic necessities from individual and collective or societal levels. That is, according to Kamali (2005), satisfying above six needs "are, by definition, essential to normal order in society as well as to the survival and spiritual well being of individuals, so much so that their destruction and collapse will precipitate chaos and collapse of normal order in society" (p. 5). Maslow also agrees about the role of society in providing the sense of belongingness and social bonding. This bonding helps gratify some of the social needs, which is inclusive of development of friendships, partnerships, and group affiliations. Seeking meaning and connection with other human beings represents the core of social needs, and a variety of types of relationships are needed to fully satisfy the love needs. In Islam, development of social relationship is conceived as essential that the individual fulfil his role as khalifah. Islam also urges to develop positive relations with the people and show respect to others (Kasule, 2009).

Even in the case of society, the needs of Muslims in collectivity, ideally are motivated primarily by the purpose of human life on the earth. That is, whether something really fall under the category of need or not is analysed according to the conceived concept

of hierarchy between the needs of spiritual, intellectual and civilizational well being of the community. In other words, the healthy existence of the Islamic community and society than individual favours. In general, the same applies to all other categories of needs as well including security or social needs because both society and individual are held responsible to fulfil these needs. The criteria for prioritizing or relegating of one need upon another, according to Islamic principles, are related to the well being of the whole community that satiating the needs of individual. To Maslow, it is necessary to consider human needs and motivations for behavior in terms of the complete picture, replete with nuance and interrelationships between different needs, desires, and behaviours. To him “one could not ask a white rat about his purposes” (Maslow, 1943a, p. 89). An important activity is considered to interact in dynamic relationships with other elements of relevance in the person’s ecological environment (Maslow (1943a). Such inter-relationship is much accounted for the realization of the self- actualization.

Self-actualization was a static state in which all human problems and needs are transcended. To Maslow, adults who starve for love and care, or are deprived of basic needs or with a traumatic attachment history may not engage in the same process of moving up the hierarchy of needs. That is to him, they will never achieve the static state of self actualization. But in Islam, although they are faced with multifarious ongoing stressors, their attachment with their creator would act as the prime motivator. A culturally aware psychology recognizes that spirituality is a basic dimension of the human condition. But in Maslow’s view this dimension is mission (Ried, 2009). To her, as proved by Bronfrenbrenner (1984) culture and society could be molded to influence human beings to avoid what Maslow described as social illness, violence, malice, and stupidity.

In frustration of not satiating the basic needs, they will be preoccupied in endeavours to fulfill them. The average person’s true potential, desires, and motivations, therefore, tend to be inhibited and limited within the endeavours to fulfill them in their day-to-day lives. These, then might prevent the person from activities of self-actualization. That is according to Maslow, satisfied people are rare and may be difficult to identify. However in Islam, satisfactions are easy to be achieved, especially if the person believes that it is what Allah has decided for him, and He might have some better plans for him. However, such a belief should not be seen by the person as an excuse for not working hard to attain his and his family’s needs. Such endeavour, as mentioned earlier, is also seen as part of ibadah, especially if they follow the guidance of Him.

According to Maslow, safety seeking ceases to be the dominant behavioral motivator as safety needs is chronically satisfied. In Islam safety are mostly related not only in this world but also the life of hereafter. To him, the safety needs are psychological rather than physiological and take the form of home and family. But in Islam, it is simultaneously spiritual, psychological and physiological at once. However, it should be maintained in once relationship with others.

Islam urge for individual to respect other. Only thorough healthy relationship with others, and individual can achieve the self-respect. Here again the spiritual elements make a big difference. Involvement in religious activities and functions conducted around religious institutions such as mosques and in conjunction with religious celebration, etc. contribute tremendously towards this. The firmly-based self esteem therefore is grounded not only in the real capacity, achievements, but also getting respect from others. Both self-esteem and

the safety are inevitably communal than individual. Rather, the community, on the other hand is composed of small units of family. Both society and family influence and discipline the individual. To Iqbal, “the individual and the community are a mirror to each other, they are necessary to each other”. “It is only through the community that one individual can associate with other individuals and such association is necessary for the growth of his individuality (Mahdi, 2006).

The society gives meaning to the life of individuals. To Iqbal, “it is impossible to think of an individual who tears himself completely apart from his society, because he can work for his ideals and realize them only by making an impact on the community. Various regulation which control all these three units of individual, family and society, the last include the government as well as all governmental and non-governmental bodies, are portrayed in various code of Islam and they facilitate for the improvement and perfection of the conditions of human life on earth. For example, theft, adultery and wine-drinking are punishable offences as they pose a threat to the protection of private property, the well-being of the family, and the integrity of human intellect respectively. As another example, the Islamic family laws seek to make the family a safe refuge for all of its members. Rather, there are elaborate rules on economic transaction, which in turn encourage work and trading activity in order to enable the individual to earn a living, and promote elaborate measures to ensure the smooth flow of commercial transactions in the market-place and a healthy work environment (Kamali, 2005).

Conclusion

To conclude the discussion above, Maslow’s dismissal of cultural relativity, especially means the rejection of what are inherent in the Islamic heritage, tradition and culture which are rooted in the iman (faith) and spirituality. As discussed earlier, from the Islamic view point the spiritual elements is core to the human destiny and purpose. Maslow’s categories can be considers only as general. Islam assumes that a minimum of all the six necessities (religion, life, property, reason, posterity and honour) is absolutely necessary in the lowest level. If that minimum is not achieved, the life of the individual or the community may not continue or may continue but with great disorder and disintegration. With regard to Muslims, pacifying their souls and making them calm would be the first priority in which the religious teaching plays a great part. This is related to the needs of the ruh (spirit). The care and concerns of the immediate family members, at psychic and physical levels, on the other hand, would assist their ailing bodies to recover and step back to the life. Gradually, meeting their security needs will come into focus. This will make them to further to secure jobs that they can survive on their own and protect their family members.

Beliefs influence the way individuals both view and relate to God and how religion in general is used to cope with difficult life circumstances. Therefore, coping strategies of the Muslims should be approached from an integrated and holistic perspective based on the understanding that human is created not from mere physical entity but also spiritual and psychological and intellectual entity and corresponding six categories of needs. Therefore, the Islamic coping mechanism should be planned in a way that all these dimension of man can be better served. In fact the sudden transitions in life don’t change the nature of these needs. Rather, Muslims adopt various Islamically-sound mechanisms and means related all the components to alleviate their problems be it physical or psychological.

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