

CARNAL APPETITES: AN EXPLORATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER* USING MASLOW'S NEED THEORY

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Abstract

The way culture molds human needs and adapts them to the requirements of social status are some of the concerns of the authors who are interested in delineating psychosocial bonding through fictitious characters and situations. In this paper, I ask what physiological needs are and how they control the behavior of the characters in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) written by Khaled Hosseini. This paper highlights the social conditions of Afghans, the way Hosseini describes through the fictional characters, and the kind of challenges they face in coming to grip with the needs spread over the ladder given by Abraham Maslow and the different avenues for their gratification that are open to those involved in this matrix. What it makes obvious is the fact that using Maslow's insights as our theoretical framework helps us understand the internal workings of the characters in the novel the way Hosseini masterfully captures them with a sensitivity to their physiological needs where if one rises above his limitation (Zaman), the other descends even further in pursuit of physiological needs (Taliban official).

Keywords: *Physiological needs, Culture, Maslow, The Kite Runner, Hosseini.*

Introduction and Background of the Study

The publication of *The Kite Runner* after the 9/11 attacks played a crucial role in its success. It was the time when America launched a war against terrorism and the people of the world were curious to know about Islam and the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. In the backdrop of such commotion this novel was not just considered a moving fictional narrative

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but a literary sensation that portrays the life-like situations of Afghan people. For readers around the world, it is not only an asset of literature, but it became a source to comprehend all about the Afghan socio-cultural milieu. In *The Kite Runner*, Sahid¹ (2013) focuses on the rich depiction of the Taliban government and the representation of the contrast between the Islamic Shari'ah-based Taliban government and the liberal government that ruled Afghanistan before the Taliban reign. Sadat (2017) draws our attention to Afghanistan's internal conflicts which are further aggravated by external violence. He admires Khaled Hosseini for opening the debate into "the most pressing social diseases plaguing Afghans: ethnic-religious relations, the dichotomy of the privileged and unprivileged, the double standard for men and women, and the hypocrisy of those hiding their sins under the cloak of religious righteousness" to start the excruciating healing process. Sadat proclaims that the wounds of the whip, whether social or physical, do not heal if they are unacknowledged or masked.

Being an Afghani writer, Hosseini has firsthand knowledge about the Afghan culture and life that he exposes in his novels through the depiction of the historical and political stages of Afghanistan reliably and candidly (Huang, 2008). He knits them through different phases in the lives of various characters in his novels. Through his work *The Kite Runner* he wants to display that there is violence everywhere after the Soviet invasion and Taliban rule and everyone has to plot his/her tactic for survival. Man/woman, rich/poor, strong/weak, and majority /minority all face different forms of violence at a particular time of the invasion in Afghanistan. About Hosseini's main concerns, Shouket Ahmad Tilwani (2013) writes: Hosseini brings attention to the plight of individuals trapped amidst the crossfire, overwhelmed by external forces beyond their control. Their lives are complex, shaped not only by the harsh external realities of war and oppression, but also by their internal emotions, such as jealousy and anger, which play a significant role. Hosseini's intention is to convey that the Afghan people are deprived of a truly human existence, constantly teetering on the brink of collapse, with the fight for survival having become a routine part of their lives. In such an antagonistic environment, their actions are solely driven by the imperative of staying alive (Stuhr, 2009). The characters of Hosseini are therefore available for better analysis in the light of the hierarchy of needs. It makes their actions transparent and easy to grasp once their motivational factors and other personality dynamics are clearly understood. Maslow holds that the most basic need that people have is the need for the survival of the species. In other words, it is their physiological requirements for food to eat, water to drink, and shelter that

form the basis (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Applying the lens of our analysis, we can see how the characters' needs are going through different stages of gratification. What it makes very obvious is the fact that Maslow's theory of needs gratification can help us understand the internal workings of the characters in the context of Afghan culture as depicted in *The Kite Runner* with a greater degree of accuracy.

Unlike the dialectics set out by Freud and Jung, Maslow's theory provides a greater, more illuminating, and explanatory power to present a dynamic relationship between subject, environment, and society upon which they depend for their psychological well-being and survival (Floyd, 2007). Using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs model as a theoretical framework this study examines the characters' basic needs at multiple levels to have a clear conception of the viability of the proposed application to make better sense of *The Kite Runner* and its internal psychological dynamics at play in the characters. This paper intends to describe what physiological needs are and how they control the behavior of the characters in the novel *The Kite Runner*. It also shows how culture is molding the needs of the characters and how they are adapting to the requirements of social status.

Analysis and Discussion

For Maslow, physiological drivesⁱⁱ are the most prepotent of all needs. He writes, "What this means specifically is that in a human being, who is extremely deprived of everything in life, the physiological needs would come first in the person's search for satisfaction" (Maslow 1970: 36-7). These needs are universal and are illustrative of all the required things each human intends to have to be able to survive in today's society. These physiological needs comprise basic needs such as nourishing food, water, shelter, decent clothes to wear, and sex (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). Maslow argues that physiological needs are the most lasting of all needs. In fact, "man is so constituted that he will sicken if his basic needs are not met, and he will then seek fulfillment in ways harmful to himself and others" (Paris 29). In the absence of any of these basic physiological needs, all other higher dimensions of life take a back seat. As Maslow puts it "a person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else" (Hodgetts 1986: 473). This describes perfectly well what is meant by the hierarchy of human needs and their organization into a hierarchy of relative prepotencyⁱⁱⁱ. According to Mondy, Holmes, and Flippo: "once these basic needs are satisfied to a reasonable degree, the individual then becomes aware of higher-level needs" (1940: 271). The worst thing that has been observed is that

depriving a human being of physiological needs can make a person become an animal (Flippo & Caverly, 1999; Maslow, 1958).

It becomes obvious that the urge to gratify basic needs like hunger for instance is a prime motivator for one's behavior before the onset of higher motives like self-actualization (Ivtzan, Gardner, Bernard, Sekhon, & Hart, 2013). It also becomes obvious that understanding the motives for particular actions reveals a hierarchy of needs that compels human beings to go along with certain attitudes in life. The unmet needs of the characters of *The Kite Runner* govern their actions. In *The Kite Runner*, extraordinary effects caused by physiological needs on human behavior have been shown even criminalities have happened because of hunger. The main example in the novel is the orphanage, which is located in the most devastated, war-torn areas of Kabul. In the novel, Zaman, the manager of the orphanage, tries to meet the basic needs of the children. Food is an important physical need that children do not get enough of during their stay in the orphanage. There are hundreds of children but not enough supplies of beds, mattresses, or blankets for them to brave the bitter cold of Kabul. Zaman breaks the sad news to Amir and Farid that a Taliban official has taken Sohrab from the orphanage. He informs them that this Taliban official comes regularly to the orphanage to buy children to satisfy his sexual needs. Zaman further explains his weak position that he can do nothing against the Taliban^{iv} because he will take ten if he does not allow him for one, "So I let him take one and leave the judging to Allah. I swallow my pride and take his goddamn filthy... dirty money. Then I go to the bazaar and buy food for the children" (Hosseini 220-21) because this was the only option to get money to feed the rest of the helpless children. Farid is unable to understand the forces of the basic unfulfilled needs that are at play here: Taliban officials' lust and Zaman's need to stay afloat and keep the orphans afloat as well. Farid is unable to understand the motivations that go into these different behaviors.

According to Maslow's theory, the reasons for certain human actions can be found in understanding their needs gratification ladder because this furnishes clues to the behavior and personality under study. That is why, if a basic physiological need remains thwarted, then all the energies of behavior and personality are focused on the drive to satisfy the thwarted need. In this oneness of purpose, all other needs take a backseat and do not form any motivations for action (Maslow 1954). Similarly, the director explains the scant resources he has to offer the children at the orphanage and the hardships that they have to endure. Stating it differently, Zaman

was motivated by the basic physiological need to survive, and all the pangs of morality paled into insignificance in the sheer weight of this basic human need. He explains the impossible situation he is in and that he has given so much to these children that he is left destitute and desperate. He receives no money and hasn't been paid in over six months. He sold every personal possession to be able to support the orphanage. Zaman tells them further that, out of sheer desperation when a Taliban official brings money and sometimes asks to take a child, he turns over the child. The hungry human being does not have any moralizing tendencies except for the need to have his hunger satisfied; all other needs are not considered important. These kids are the ones who are missing everything in life and are faced with an extremely bleak survival situation. It is, therefore, most likely for them that survival becomes their major motivation over and above all other higher-order motivations. According to Maslow (1954, 314), when all needs remain unfulfilled, the primary focus of the organism becomes its physiological needs. Other needs may fade away or take a backseat.

Zaman is neither an agent of Satan nor follows the Taliban. He is just motivated by the more fundamental concerns of food and the security of the orphans. Only after fulfilling the basic physiological needs of the orphans can Zaman focus on meeting higher-level needs. Farid and Amir, or anyone in their position, would not be able to make sense of Zaman's actions because the challenges he has been facing were not experienced by either of them. They cannot see the motivation for the survival of the species that underpin Zaman's actions. He knows what it means to ride out the wave of Taliban as well as keep the orphans alive. It would be naive to expect them to have higher-level needs when their very survival is at stake.

As Amir and Farid continue to rummage through the ruins of Kabul for Sohrab, the devastation of Kabul comes into full view. Amir's depiction of America becomes a foil to the desolation of Kabul. He tells Farid about his life there, his house, and his lovely wife as well as about his pursuits in life there, and his in-laws who loved him dearly. Amir enjoys the life of comfort in America which he shares with Farid by impressing him with the facilities he enjoys there. He adds to his knowledge about America that in "America you could step into a grocery store and buy any of fifteen or twenty different types of cereal. The lamb was always fresh and the milk cold, the fruit plentiful and the water clear. Every home had a TV, and every TV had a remote, and you could get a satellite dish if you wanted. Receive over five hundred channels" (Hosseini 2003, 227-8). While listening to Amir's stories of comfortable life Farid shares incidents from

his life when his family members were stuck without food and had to eat locusts to survive. He tells him about that fateful day when the land mine took the lives of his two daughters and about the day when the Russian gunship helicopter killed his father. This episode of contrasts further highlights the theory of the hierarchy of needs because survival is the motive again in the life of Farid as it is in Zaman's but for entirely different reasons. In the context of Zaman, it is the need to protect children against starvation and hunger as well as sexual pervers which drive Zaman's survival instincts. But in the case of Farid, it seems to be an entirely different set of needs that drive him. Amir's case is no different either. Since his stomach is full, he is out looking for a missing piece of the puzzle in his life i.e. Sohrab which squarely puts him in the utopian/ ideal need of self-actualization. Hence, Maslow's insights highlight the hidden aspects of the motivational strands that do not get reflected in the story.

Amir realizes the problems that Afghans are faced with their lives when he overhears Wahid and his wife arguing over the scarcity of food that has been threatened by an unannounced guest. This aspect is also something that puts Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs under a certain strain. This episode lays bare the fact that the diversity of human beings and the ethos that drive them cannot entirely be summarized in the straitjacket of theoretical assumptions. On his visit to Farid's household, Amir realizes, albeit very late, that they have given him their food because of their traditions of hospitality. He also shockingly realizes that this means that Wahid, his wife, and their children have nothing to eat. This episode is an example of the proverbial hospitality of Afghanistan that shows how norms and traditions can override the hierarchy of needs which depicts human beings as cold and calculated and driven by physiological needs and blind to higher ethical ideals as advocated by cultural values. Since the parents gave Amir their food, the children have gone without any dinner. Amir realizes that the boys are not staring at his watch, they were staring at his food. It shows that the extremely hungry boys were not interested in anything else except food. They thought about food, and they wanted only food. Therefore, their desire for other things becomes second in importance, a piece of bread has become more important to them than anything else. Maslow's theory makes it abundantly clear that in the face of hunger no other interests exist but food, for the hungry man becomes extremely dangerous and will fully be controlled by this need and it will form the only central plan in his very existence. Food becomes his sole motivation. He is not drawn to nor driven by any other need but food which

has now become the sole purpose because his very survival as an organism depends on it (Maslow 37).

In the novel, one can find several examples of how “interests are determined by the frustration and gratification of needs” (see Maier 284). One can certainly go on elaborating on the possibilities and necessities that could potentially involve a whole host of other values to make the succinct point that behaviors and motivations are determined by forces deeply ingrained in our bodies. In these situations, our conceptions of the centrality of culture and man's relationship with it must take a turn in the direction of synergy, as Ruth Benedict (40, 291, 312) calls it. In this respect, “culture becomes basic need-gratifying rather than need-inhibiting” (314, 315). It also comes to light that culture is fashioned not only for human needs but is created by them.

It has been observed that in many cultures it is necessary to follow certain standards set by society and the standards of the gratification of organismic needs in societies are very high. If we look at Afghanistan, we find that the Pashtun domination of Afghanistan has taken its toll on other, less powerful tribes and has relegated them to the margins. As a consequence of Pashtun domination of the Afghan society, which was also spurred on by different competing sects of Islam, the Hazaras were relegated to the mountainous area that later became known as Hazarajat, a place of the Hazaras. Historically, the relationship between the Pashtun, the majority Sunni, and the Hazara, the majority Shia, is affected by a severe conflict^v. Pashtun perpetuated the ‘ethnic cleansing of the Hazara’ (see Hosseini 2003: 68, 261). This conflict also created the difference in social status between these tribes which resulted in the master/slave binary wherein Sunni Pashtun are considered superior to the Shia Hazara and will, therefore, always be dependent on their master for the fulfillment of their basic needs. This is evident in the relationship between Amir's and Hassan's families. Shahira considers the nature of Afghani tradition and culture responsible for the split between the people of the two groups at the economic, social, and religious levels. She communicates that the deeply embedded ethnic conflict in the Afghan society seemingly instills in Amir's mind a sense of superiority being Pashtun, and a sense of ‘otherness of the Hazaras.

Michel Foucault (1977) writes that “[t]he individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces” (*Power* 74), an assertion which can potentially link the ideas of the body and intimacy to identity and

power in *The Kite Runner*. The social construction of identity is evident in the Hazaras who are constructed as the complete antithesis of the Pashtun and are depicted as socially identical to the wretched of the earth. Moreover, Pashtuns are described as rich and literate, and can go to school. What Hosseini describes in the story is like a mirror reflecting the truth about the situation which has been a norm in Afghan society for a very long time. Thus, culture plays a crucial role in identity formation and needs gratification.

We see that Amir, the protagonist in *The Kite Runner* as well as the narrator of the story, has a privileged upbringing and grows up with a sense of entitlement to his affluent father (David 2009). His needs are not like the needs harbored by Hassan who must work hard to keep ends meet in culture and society which is heavily loaded against him. Another reason for Amir's belief of greater self-importance comes from being classified as a Pashtun, higher ethnic culture and social class. Therefore, we see in the novel that Amir, being a privileged Pashtun, and Hassan, from one of the despised minorities Hazaras, are separated by different social statuses and are together yet miles apart and live under very different social experiences. The Hazara ethnic group is shown dependent on the Pashtuns for their basic needs (David 2009). This perpetual cycle of oppression would come to an end with the realization of higher motivations, desires, and needs that only certain consciousness can build. Hassan, the son, helps Ali, the father, around doing small things: "handwashing dirty clothes and hanging them to dry in the yard, sweeping the floors, buying fresh *naan* from the bazaar, marinating meat for dinner, watering the lawn" (Hosseini 21). It becomes obvious on closer inspection that Amir's character is evolving towards the social ladder's higher rungs, whereas Hassan's social evolution is static (Kai-fu, 2019). Hassan's trajectory remains constant till his very last as loyal, forgiving, and accommodating whereas Amir undergoes tremendous transformations. Even though Amir's rich Baba takes Hassan and Ali be part of his family, the fact about their respective social positions remains unchanged (Du, 2017). Using the lens provided by Maslow, one can discern the dynamics of mastery and slavery at play in the Amir household. Ali and his son's needs are shelter over their heads and food to keep the most pressing individual needs at bay and gratified. Whereas Amir and his father, especially his father, are looking to gain further gratification for their increasing needs by focusing on higher aesthetics. But what it highlights is the loyalty of a dependent family to a selfish, self-centered family who does not care about providing the means for independence to the most loyal of their *friends*.

Hassan learns early, through the prevailing social structure in Afghanistan, that it has fallen to him to render the wishes of the rich and socially superior ones. He can feel the social and material divide between the two yet remains happy with whatever Amir has. Envy, jealousy, and greed do not form parts of his personality. He is steadfast in his friendship. Hassan stands as a symbol of sacrifice and patience which heightens the tragic element in the novel because a good boy is shown to be suffering (O'Brien, 2018). That fateful winter day when Amir wins the famous Kabul Kite Festival, he is sexually molested by Assef, later becoming a Taliban official and his friend. Amir is spellbound by fear of getting hurt and remains to cower behind a wall as they molest his friend. This becomes a source of tremendous pain for him later on when the episode returns to haunt him. This constant fight with himself was the result of his not coming to grips with the fact of not being brave enough. This guilty conscience makes him plot the ouster of Hassan and Ali from his house. As a result of this sinister plot, Hassan and Ali relocate to a far-flung part of Afghanistan. It was his weaknesses that made him unworthy of Hassan's friendship that verged on devotion. It is, thus, very clear that their respective social classes as well as Amir's weaknesses have added to the difficulties in their friendship. The inbuilt racism within the very structure of Afghan society comes into full view (Hosseini & Zohdi, 2016). What is significant in this narration is the role culture plays in one's need for gratification and how it affects an individual and his sense of self. Having seen that all social classes are mere constructions, one can see the superior kindness of Hassan and his father Ali which would put them at a higher rung of the social ladder had there been one which could weigh humbleness and loyalty, sincerity and sense of duty above the material possessions that are considered as the differentiation in matters of social classes.

Culture is significantly important in understanding the psychological motives and the role it plays in the personality development of an individual. This teaches us many things about understanding the different needs of these individuals. Amir's immigration to America transforms his view of how human society is supposed to work on the principles of equality. With the ability to judge his society in juxtaposition to how American society functions, he is compelled to rethink his views about Hazaras. The principle of tribal affiliation is non-existent in a society founded on the principles of equality of human beings. Afghanistan is divided along ethnic lines. One ethnic tribe is socially superior to other tribes like Hazarajat, for instance, in social standing in Afghan society

(Sadat and Zohdi 2016). And never the twain shall meet because social mobility and the skills required for social mobility are withheld from the lowest castes. Amir gets a cultural shock^{vi} in America where, apparently there are no social classes/tribes who could be seen in a dependent/independent relationship as has been witnessed by Amir in Afghanistan. America is different in the sense that no one is denied his right to earn a decent life which is unlike what he has experienced in Afghanistan. Besides these social frictions, he also finds American society a lot more different than Afghan society. What changes between America and Afghanistan is a whole set of priorities because the culture has changed. This fits in nicely with the argument in this paper that one of the formative influences on an individual's needs and self-actualization processes is the culture which plays such a decisive role/ this is what we see in the migration of Amir to America.

Amir and his father immigrate to America after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and settle in Fremont, California, as part of a compact Afghan immigrant community. What these immigrants feel first is the physiological need to return to their zone of safety and comfort (Ghafoor et al 2020). When the novel opens, the reader does not see the actions of Amir or Baba to be driven by kind of scarcity of food and shelter but this need becomes apparent as the setting moves to America. This physiological need was also experienced in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion when affluent families were made to run for their lives. This need reaches epic proportions during the Taliban regime. Existence becomes a struggle, a dire need to survive. The behavior and responses of the individual are almost always dictated by needs and expectations. Baba knows that money makes the mare go and that it is difficult to gratify needs without money, especially on foreign shores. He tries to search for a job; fortunately, he never neglects he is an Afghan. His job at a gas station enables him to finance Amir through his studies. They supplement their income to fulfill their physical needs and social life through garage sales and stalls at Sunday flea markets, in the Afghan community section, where Afghans gather for gossip, tea, and a lot of nostalgia. A very strong sense of Maslowian theory of the hierarchy of needs is felt here. This displacement mirrors the displacement that their domestic servants like Ali and Hassan had felt. What keeps the poor father and son united is a very strong basic instinct for survival. It is this same sense of survival, the basic physiological needs, which now keeps Amir and his Baba occupied in the land which no longer mirrors their social class. This reversion in fortunes highlights the abiding potentiality of Maslow's theory that when put in a

situation, man would be driven by certain basic needs that would neatly streamline other needs in a proper relationship with it. This is exactly what we see in the change of fortunes that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has put this wealthy Afghan family in. They begin with the beginning and as has been aptly nailed by Maslow, they are driven by the first of our instincts: survival. That is why shelter and food are the first on their list as it is on the list of Zaman, Ali, and Hassan.

There is another contrast in attitudes that Hosseini brings to the fore in his description of the different kinds of immigrants, with different social standings, who have seen their fortunes reversed (Hunt 2009). Amir's father and his father-in-law, General Taheri, are finding it difficult to let go of their glorious, affluent, and powerful lives back in Kabul and are therefore unable to adjust to the new realities in America. The reason for mentioning him is that he serves as a good contrast to Amir's father in his approach to welfare and, therefore, they both present two different and typical kinds of immigrant behavior for their survival in the foreign land. While Baba stops taking food stamps and prefers to have a job to meet his needs, although a menial one, General Taheri considers taking a job and serving America as a waste of his abilities which will be needed in Afghanistan when it is finally free: "Needs are determined by the report of a person experiencing them, and, on the assumption that all behavior satisfies some conscious or unconscious needs, by inference from an individual's behavior" (Clare & Ketelaar, 1997). Amir's father gave his work his full time to be able to support his son, whereas General Taheri, driven by pride, was happy to collect welfare checks from the state to support his family. What is evident in these different approaches to a new social reality in America is the power of culture to mold an individual as well as the inability of some men to adapt to changing social fortunes. This can also be taken as a contrast in the types of mentalities: one is shaped by education whereas the other one is not. Education has brought a certain level of pride to Gen Taheri's sense of his self but Amir's Baba is not held back by any such inhibitions and starts to work his way through the social hierarchy from the lowest level.

Although Baba mourns the loss of his past life, Amir finds the transition positive and grows out of his previous life and superior inhibitions in Kabul. He does become a successful writer and can rise in society receptive to social mobility. He is able to afford whatever he wishes even in America. Moreover, his income as a novelist is bigger than any other Afghani who works in the market; therefore, it is not a major problem for

him to fulfill his physical needs. His success makes him independent and free to choose his lifestyle according to the needs and motivations of his personality. In other words, Amir is now fully capable of embarking upon even further drills in the course of his ascent on the hierarchical structure of needs.

The sexual need of the main character is fulfilled when he marries the daughter of General Tahiri. Amir does not face any problem fulfilling his physiological needs even during his journey to Kabul. Maslow continues to shed light on how the basic needs of a person once fulfilled give rise to other higher needs. It is commonly believed that human beings may live by bread alone in the face of scarcity of bread but it is difficult to say what he would do in the face of this desire being gratified. There comes into view other higher needs that dominate the behavior. A gratified want ceases to be a motivating factor. It is the mere unfulfilled desires/wants/needs that compel one to journey (Maslow 1954, 38). Their completion gives way to other needs and thus the cycle spins continuously. This is called “a hierarchy of relative prepotency”. In other words, one fulfilled desire gives way to many other unfulfilled ones.

Conclusion

It becomes obvious from this discussion that Maslow’s theory of the hierarchical nature of human needs is well placed to illuminate many of the hidden dimensions of the characters of *The Kite Runner*. It helps us peep into the motivations and personalities of the characters in greater detail and depth and understand their specific motivations for dealing with the most pressing issues in their lives. It helps us how the different motivating factors make them human or fall below them. The characters of Zaman, and the Taliban official, for instance, illustrate this even further. One rises above his limitations, the other descends even further in pursuit of physiological needs. Maslow’s theory (1954) helps us see the different motivating factors that drive them. It has therefore been accurate in depicting the true nature of man, in all its ugly or beautiful facets, to us. His theory removes the layers of deception that people have spread over themselves so that can take a remarkably fine understanding of their true standing on the ladder of self-actualization.

Similarly, the theory brings to life its most forceful arguments that until and unless a certain need remains unfulfilled one does not move on to the higher rungs of the ladder. In other words, they remain at the baser level of

humanity. Maslow has masterfully captured all these aspects of human nature for us and *The Kite Runner* opens up to further meanings when it is looked at from the perspective afforded to us by him as the novel portrays different aspects of man's life as a social being and the needs and motivations that compel one to dive deep into the unthinkable. Hosseini's characters are, therefore, very close to life and one identifies with some of their otherwise illogical steps. The details with which he has developed his characters make them an ideal candidate for the study as they all have infallible tell-tale signs that one can associate with humans of flesh and blood.

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ⁱ Sahidul islam explores the relationship between various aspects of Islam and literature.

ⁱⁱ One must have some kind of ideal to be able to grow. In the absence of any drive in one's life, many mental and physical diseases find their way to a human being. It makes the life move forward. Wants and need are qualitatively different: want could be conditioned by ones social surroundings but basic needs are human and would remain unchanged.

ⁱⁱⁱ One other reason for the reversal of the hierarchy may be the under evaluation of an already gratified need. It postulates that after a need is gratified, it longer holds attraction for a while but once it is lost, it may come haunting back forcing the individual to rethink and re-evaluate his hierarchy of needs. In other words, a compromise is made on principles at times to satisfy a certain need lost to being under evaluated.

^{iv} The Taliban phenomenon that came to prominence in the wake of a prolonged Civil War in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal from the country. Literally meaning Students in Persian, Taliban were accorded popular support because Afghan were weary of a protracted war. Under the leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar, Taliban gained control of Afghanistan and enforced a very strict, Wahabi interpretation of Islam. They made executions a public spectacle which was used by the media as an image of Islam. 9/11 came as a test case for Taliban when they refused to handover Osama Bin Laden to the US who accused him to be the mastermind behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Driven by a higher ideal of self-actualisation, they accepted the consequences of an American invasion on Afghanistan. The basic need to survive was sacrificed at the alter of a bigger need.

^v The history of the Pashtun and the Hazara infighting comes first. It was in the 1970s, the historical setting for Amir and Hassan's childhood, that tensions were heating up among Pashtuns and Hazara. Historically, Pashtun have always been in majority in Afghanistan. On the eve of Soviet invasion, Pashtuns were forty five percent of the total population.

^{vi} (see <https://medium.com/global-perspectives/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-a79957726164>)