



## Islamic and Spirituality: Reevaluating Maslow's Hierarchy for Self-Actualization

Ulfatun Wahidatun Nisa<sup>a,1,\*</sup>; Amal Fathullah Zarkasyi<sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> University of Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>ulfatunnisa130@unida.gontor.ac.id; <sup>2</sup>amal.fathullah.amal@gmail.com

\*Corresponding Author

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: February 26, 2024</p> <p>Revised: March 14, 2024</p> <p>Accepted: April 24, 2024</p> <p>Published: June 21, 2024</p> <p>Keyword: Hierarchy of Needs, Self-Actualization, Maqashid Syariah</p>	<p>This article explores Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – Self Actualization, also study aims to examine the thoughts brought by Western figures related to the Hierarchy of Needs of Abraham Maslow from an Islamic perspective which the most idea comes from Al Ghazali's thoughts. The hierarchy of needs consists of five elements, there are: <i>First</i>, physiological needs are the most basic needs in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. <i>Second</i>, the need for security, <i>Third</i>, social needs occupy <i>Fourth</i>, the need for gratitude <i>Fifth</i>, self-actualization needs are the highest-ranked needs in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. Maslow describes self-actualization by providing emphasis on full-humanness, arising from the development of human biological nature, and in accordance with their birth destiny. In conclusion, the research suggests that Abraham Maslow's concept of self-actualization emphasizes the need for individuals to realize and utilize their potential, fulfil their needs, and understand their inherent limitations. Self-actualization is seen as the drive to use all one's abilities to achieve their full potential. However, while Maslow's hierarchy of needs progresses from lower to higher levels, it lacks integration with spiritual aspects, which is a crucial element in the Islamic perspective. Islam advocates for a balance between material and spiritual needs, and each level of Maslow's hierarchy should ideally be imbued with spirituality. Maslow's model does not account for the interaction between material and spiritual needs, nor does it incorporate an Islamic ontological perspective. This perspective highlights several distinctions from Maslow's theory, including a materialistic bias, the absence of spiritual dimensions, and a focus on worldly achievements over considerations of the hereafter. These differences suggest that Maslow's hierarchy may not fully align with the holistic approach to human needs advocated in Islamic teachings.</p>

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## Introduction

Self-actualization is synonymous with a person's desire to use all their abilities to achieve everything they can achieve and can achieve; self-actualization is also the highest need and achievement of a human being and is the peak of maturity and self-maturity (Maslow, 1999, p. 35) a person. This is characterized by how a person is able to perceive and use the various potentials that exist in him to achieve a goal in his life (Ryandi, 2016, pp. 139–153). In western thought, the term self-actualization focuses on a study known as transpersonal psychology. The western school of psychology formulates the meaning of self-actualization which they include in the discussion of *The Power of Self Actualization* (Adziima, 2022). To understand the meaning of self-actualization, humans are dominant in terms of free will and humans are called active beings (Bornstein, 2018, p. 69). Self-actualization in Islam departs from the concept of human nature as a *muwahhid* (who believes in Allah), considering that *Fitrah* is the potential of human beings (Yahya et al., 2018, p. 10). It is like the consensus of the Ulama based on the information from Abu Hurairah that the meaning of *fitrah* in the hadith *kullu maulūdin yūladu alā al-fitrah* (Maslow, 1993, p. 76).

*Fitrah* comes from the word *fa-tha-ra*, in *mashdar* form following the *wazan fi'lah*, which shows something that Allah has imbued to His creation in the form of recognition of Him, Abu Haitsam also said the instinct (*khilqah*) created by Allah to the fetus in his mother's stomach. In general, humans have the desire to present themselves as a better person. Human self-perception or inclination also proves that humans are not static beings (Rotter et al., 1972, p. 137). Moreover, humans always have the desire to utilize their existing potential, to develop and improve more developed (Maslow, 1970, p. 31). The tendency of actualization in human beings is the existence of needs and drives within each person (Pratama & Sumantri, 2022, p. 10). Finally, the human tendency towards self-actualization will lead to true consciousness (Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center & Friedman, 2002, p. 175) (Hendro Setiawan, 2014, p. 55).

In addition, human potential as a godly person can also be seen from the meaning of *fitrah* itself. The importance of self-actualization for human life, makes Maslow have a vision to achieve a synergistic society and psychologically healthy individuals, through his psychological teaching. Maslow's love for his life and his belief in the vast and positive potential of human beings, made Maslow devote his life to building a broad understanding of human nature. For Maslow, humans are not only a collection of disorders originating from the soul, but also a collection of abundant potential (Maslow, 2013, p. 67) (Hendro Setiawan, 2014, p. 182).

The urgency of this research is to provide a textual and contextual explanation of Abraham Maslow's self-actualization problem from Al-Ghazali's perspective. This is triggered by the growing problems concerning modern man in his actualization, which currently loses its meaning and purpose and may not even achieve the fulfillment of true self-actualization because it is hindered by worldly orientation. Additionally, integrating education with local wisdom into this analysis is crucial, as it offers a holistic approach that aligns with cultural and ethical values. By embedding local wisdom into educational practices, we can cultivate a more meaningful and purposeful path to self-actualization that is rooted in community and spiritual values, thus addressing the shortcomings of a

purely worldly orientation (Marhani, 2018, p. 20).

On the basis of all considerations, this research becomes more interesting when the idea or problem of self-actualization is seen not only from the immaterial aspect, but also from the methods and procedures of achieving it. (Majid, 2002, p. 16) But what is very important is the urgency of modern secular Western society to be able to self-actualize in a good and balance.

### **Research Method**

This research employed a qualitative methodology, gathering data in the form of narratives and then systematically analyzing them to derive conclusions. In particular, this study employed a literature review approach, which involves an exploration of pertinent literature concerning the research subject. Additionally, it can be categorized as philosophical research, wherein abstraction techniques were applied to identify essential concepts. Furthermore, the research uncovered the structural connections among these concepts, offering a comprehensive insight into the philosophical framework of the research subject. The draw is; his study aims to examine the thoughts brought by Western figures related to Hierarchy of Needs Abraham Maslow in Islamic Perspective. This research divided into several parts; part one studies selected work from Abraham Maslow; part two is selected studies about Islamic scholar point of view to critique the part one. Next part is an elaboration thorough two part before in implication these concept in reevaluating Maslow's concept in hierarchy of needs.

### **Result and Discussion**

To know and understand the notion of self-actualization in the study of modern psychology, here researchers convey the notion of self-actualization. It is necessary to first understand the meaning of self-actualization psychologically, namely; self-actualization of the need to fulfill the purpose for which a person was born or created. Humans must become true human beings according to their nature. This need for knowledge is called self-actualization (Arroisi & Badi', 2022, p. 127). Self-actualization takes precedence as the highest need, essence or highest purpose of human life (Muazaroh & Subaidi, 2019, p. 30). The achievement of self-actualization leads man to the highest realm, and also the achievement of self-actualization is marked as the highest psychological achievement.

#### ***A Brief Description of Maslow's Model Hierarchy of Needs***

Abraham Maslow states that the problem of self-actualization according to him is about the definition of self-actualization, in his book "The Father Reaches of Human Nature", Maslow admits that it is quite difficult to define self-actualization (self-actualization) explicitly. In another book. *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Maslow describes self-actualization by providing emphasis on full-humanness, arising from the development of human biological nature, and in accordance with their birth destiny (Maslow, 1993, p. 61).

Regarding how self-actualization looks like, Maslow mentions 3 things; First, self-actualization means "being fully, clearly, as it is/objectively, fully focused, and fully accepting everything" ("It conforms to biological destiny rather than to historically

arbitrary, culturally local value models as the terms 'health' and 'illness' often do". Maslow, 1999, p. 3). This means that you can experience things as they are, fully focused on what the person is experiencing. Seeing reality as it is, without distortions, is a characteristic of a self-actualized person. Secondly, self-actualization also means "accepting life as a process of choice" (first, self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption Maslow, 1970, p. 44). Self-actualization is a continuous process of living by making every decision that leads to growth in life (Maslow, 2013, p. 90).

As a continuous process, it means that humans are always faced with the necessity to make decisions, such as decisions concerning honesty and lies. Self-actualization means making every decision a choice that grows into goodness. Third, self-actualization means -realizing what is in oneself. The self that is listening to impulses is self-centered (Maslow, 2013, p. 33). When educating his students, Maslow put a glass of wine in front of them and asked them what they enjoyed without showing the label. Maslow promoted a "humanistic" approach to studying humankind, rejecting the "value-free, value-neutral, value-rejecting" (Maslow, 1993, p. 4) hegemony in the science of his time (and ours). As an atheist, Maslow considered the scientific thinking of his day as undervaluing human experience by referring to the natural sciences for models without consideration for the complexity and scope of human experience.

Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" model appealed very widely as "it provides both a theory of human motives by classifying basic human needs in a hierarchy, and a theory of human motivation that relates these needs to general behaviour" (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976, p. 213). According to Westwood the model is based on three main principles (Westwood, 1992, p. 23).

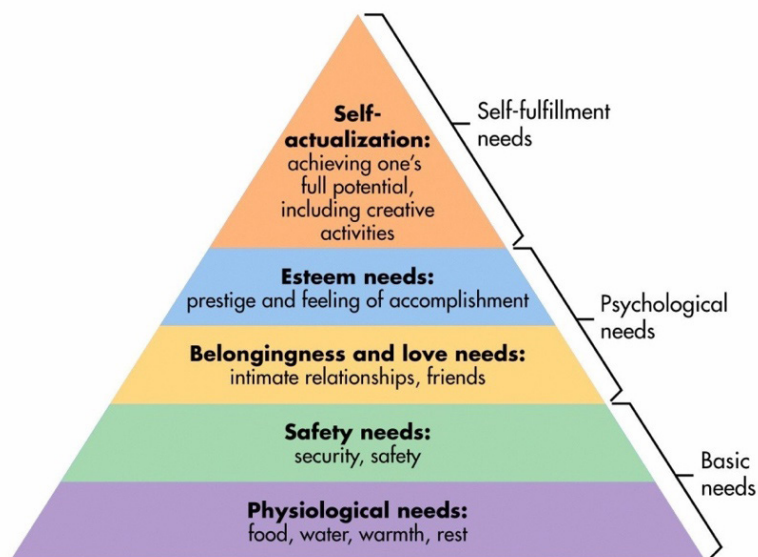


Image. 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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*First*, the Deficit Principle – if a need is not satisfied, it generates tension, motivating action towards satisfaction. This assumes a satisfied need does not motivate; also, unmet needs are assumed to predominate (Maslow, 1970, p. 239). *Second*, The Prepotency Principle – the needs must be met in their ascending order, and only after each lower stage needs are at least partially met, can the next higher stage needs be pursued (Maslow et al., 1982, p. 236).

The Progression Principle - physiological needs, such as food, shelter and warmth must be met before a person will look to needs further up the pyramid (Maslow et al., 1982, p. 236). Abraham Maslow developed a theory of human motivation whose the aim of which is to explain all types of human needs and to rank them according to the level of human priority in their fulfilment. Maslow distinguishes between D-needs or deficiency needs that arise from the need for food, sleep, security, etc., and B-needs or being needs such as the desire to fulfil one’s potential. We can only fulfil B-needs if D-needs have been fulfilled (Jarvis, 2000, p. 94).

Abraham Maslow has some problems in his research self-actualization, has some problems in actualizing himself through stages and processes to meet his life needs. These needs (Maslow, 1970, p. 72) Maslow’s view of life is secular humanism. This kind of view will produce products of thought that are also secular. Human needs vary, but there is a well-known theory that can explain the concept of human needs (Abdurrahman, 2020, p. 31). According to Abraham Maslow, human needs are hierarchical. It is called hierarchical because humans have their needs in stages (Arquisola & Walid Ahlisa, 2019, p. 54).

A person will continue to do their best to be able to fulfill the first level of needs. (Bari & Hidayat, 2022, p. 41) When the first level is fulfilled, then humans will try to fulfill their important needs at another level, which will explain the five hierarchies of needs from Abraham Maslow, there are: *First*, physiological needs are the most basic needs in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy. These needs are called primary needs such as eating, drinking, clothing and housing. Humans first respond to physiological needs, then move on to the next. In fact, physiological needs are the strongest and most urgent needs that must be met (Maslow, 1992, p. 65).

*Second*, the need for security is the second need in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy. These security needs include the need for a sense of security and protection from physical and emotional harm. This need is satisfied after physiological needs are met. The need for security is fulfilled to fulfill other needs in order to continue to function properly



(Maslow, 1993, p. 60). *Third*, social needs occupy the third position in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. These social needs include the need for affection, belonging, socializing, acceptance, and friendship. It is no wonder that humans are truly social creatures and need socialization to survive. Because to live life, humans always need the help of others (Maslow, 1970, p. 71).

*Fourth*, the need for gratitude is the fourth need in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. The need for self-esteem, also called the need for self-worth, is the right and responsibility to obtain and maintain the approval of others. People are recognized when they are able to meet social needs. If the person fulfilling this need is a status seeker, this need can be very ambitious (Maslow, 2013, p. 90).

*Fifth*, self-actualization needs are the highest ranked needs in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy. These needs include the need to develop one's potential, the need to increase independence, and the need to become a better person. These needs are rarely met by anyone in general. Some people only focus on having their physical, security, social life, and self-esteem needs met. The ultimate goal is to achieve inner satisfaction and strengthen self-confidence (Maslow, 1992, p. 49).

### ***Comparative and Critics Analysis***

Islam as a way of life, brought to life through its *Sharī'ah*, acknowledges the different human needs and instincts, the instinct for survival and procreation, just like the instinct of worship. It does not negate or neglect any of these instincts and needs. It teaches the human being to channel them, through the observance of the Islamic rules, towards his own worldly and other-worldly benefits and that of society. The Islamic way of life does not ask for or even condone the suppression of any of these instincts at the expense of the other.

Capitalism plays on this innate disposition by making people believe they will reach happiness owning/acquiring material possessions and pleasures, thereby eternalizing the circle of demand and supply, with the result that people are finally thrown into an abyss of never-ending unhappiness – which can then unsuccessfully be treated with the other “alternatives” the market has to offer. Thus, the circle of commodification is perpetuated.

The spiritual aspect in human life is not reserved for those who have their basic needs saturated. Islamic experience is, rather, reminiscent of actualizing the link towards one's Creator prior to and whilst saturating these needs by evaluating any action within the five values of the Islamic legal rule. This is achieved by reflecting on the permissibility of, for instance, the food one is about to eat, the way to buy a car, etc. In addition, a Muslim is supposed to invoke the name of Allah (by reciting the *basmalah*) whenever starting any action. They thereby actualize the (spiritual) link towards the Creator in any moment of their lives. Additionally, any situation involving a lack of saturation of the named “basic needs” leads to a deeper reflection, invoking the Creator's name, supplication (*du'ā'*, *ṣalāt al-ṣājah*, etc.). These situations are spiritually and intellectually reflected as situations of personal growth and tests of perseverance; passing them leads to happiness. The highly spiritualized experience of fasting in the month of Ramadan, performed by Muslims worldwide every year, actualises the self just because the very

basic need of food is not met from dawn to dusk.

Most fundamental Islamic concepts such as that of *'ibādah* (worshipping Allah), *rizq* (the provisions provided for by Allah), *tawakkul* (relying on Allah), and the belief in *qadā'* and *qadar* (fate and predestination) are all expressive of the fact that spiritual concepts permeate the entire life, actions and decision making process of the individual and community. Self-actualization is therefore most prevalent at any level of human existence.

In summary, the Islamic idea of self-transcendence permeates the entire human life in any of its aspects, by continuously establishing the link towards the Creator. The capitalist system promotes the (empirically false) idea that happiness lies in the sheer accumulation of wealth and physical pleasures of all sorts. As it is human nature never to be satisfied with these acquisitions, the human being will never be able to reach happiness, thereby remaining in a perpetuated cycle of consumption, in spiritual, mental, and finally physical imbalance on the individual, societal, and international levels. The percentage of depression, mental illnesses, violence and despair in the highly developed industrialized parts of the world, and those parts of the world adopting the same system is a clear indicator to the destructivity of this system, its underlying ideas, and its application.

Contrary to this, according to Al Ghazali, Islamic approach sees happiness in obtaining the Creator's approval and reward in the Hereafter. Happiness can therefore be reached under any material situation. Although Islamic concepts recognize the basic human needs and consider meeting them a necessity, the spiritual actualization of the human being is prevalent under any situation. The discussion on motivation has become the forerunner of spirituality and religiosity discourse. Spirituality and spiritual needs aim at achieving self-development and the highest potential of an individual. Satisfied spiritual and religious needs inspire and nurture people to not only perform the best version of themselves but also to do what is required. Unfortunately, traditional management literature focuses only on bodily matters, while does little thing on the spiritual side (Ghazzālī & Field, 1991, p. 88).

*First*, the concept of needs in Maslow's is not the same as in Islam. Islam divides human needs into mental, physiological, and spiritual . Although Maslow had revised the hierarchy, it does not comprehend the Islamic perspective. Human needs are not arranged like in Maslow's idea. In accordance with the concept of freedom of choice (*ikhtiyar*) in Islam, responsibilities upon choices are carried along. The choices are followed by efforts, then reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and ends by the perfect contentment with God's will or decree (*ridha*).

As revealed in the Quran (9:105), "Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do." Naturally, humans are stimulated to distinguish the good from the bad by accepting the outcome, which is resulted in the carried-along responsibility. The more one does good deeds, the more one is capable of obtaining rewards. So is the punishment for bad actions. The next question would be 'what drives them?'. It is what we called *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (God-consciousness)

Maslow's interdependency lies in the progression principles – remember the concept of satisfying lower-level need prior to higher-level – while Islam encourages Muslims to balance the material and spiritual aspects, and each level of Maslow's hierarchy is supposed to be imbued by spirituality. There is no elaboration of material and spiritual interaction in the hierarchical model. That condition will remain unchanged even if spiritual needs are placed at the top or the bottom, noting his findings that a satisfied need is not a motivator of behaviour.

*Second*, there is no reflection of human expectation towards the hereafter in Maslow's concept. Regardless of Maslow's background, Western countries separate the world from the hereafter while Islam encourages a material-spiritual balance as well as a world-hereafter as stated in the Quran (28:77), "But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet] do not forget your share of the world." It implies a focus on the hereafter without ignoring the share of this life.

The Islamic ontological perspective is not incorporated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In addition to the alleged ethnocentrism, non-universality and invalidity, the following mindsets distinguish Maslow's theory from an Islamic point of view: (a) materialistic-based, (b) the absence of spiritual aspect and different interconnectedness between material and spiritual needs, and world-orientation, disregarding the hereafter.

Here Islam can elaborate:

According to *Maqasid al-Syari'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law), human needs are grouped into three descending categories of significance: *dharuriyyat* (essential), *hajiyyat* (complementary), *tahsiniyyat* (embellishment). *Dharuriyyat* is the must-exist necessities that if not fulfilled will result in an imperfect human life as well as threaten the safety of humanity both in this world and the hereafter. This is inherent in the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. *Hajiyyat* is the complementary needs to remove hardships that are contained in the process of satisfying the necessities. *Tahsiniyyat* refers to things that embellish people's lives by adding quality to the necessities.

For Al-Ghazali, the outer element is the lowest part, the bottom. Al-Ghazali also saw Sufism as a last resort that can be taken to overcome problems related to natural and rational aspects. (Al Ghazali, n.d.-a, p. 170) The soul as a vehicle in humans is only a means of traveling to the afterlife, so Al-Ghazali invites humans to fulfill the needs of life just the needs that can reach the real goal of the afterlife. Those who have realized themselves must be perfect in their thoughts and good in their beliefs. You can deepen your religious knowledge, cure doubters, and keep your faith away from things that could lead to disobedience. (Al Ghazali, n.d.-b) Then he should increase his deeds worship to the essence of taqwa and purification of the soul from the filth of the world and always remembering Allah.

From the above statement, researchers can understand that the actualization according to Al-Ghazali is in the form of a fadillah attitude which is to behave more in religious teachings and does not want to get involved in worldly matters, including the need to live physically and mentally healthy, both of which have a big influence on the psychic personality of a person in living a life full of fadillah which will always be faced with various kinds of world problems, with healthy physical and spiritual humans can overcome everything, because with a healthy body and soul humans can



do everything.

Therefore, maintaining the health of these two requires regular and careful attention. It takes care of everything that should be left out as prohibitions, using a hierarchy of needs that fully supports aspects of the regulation mechanism. Do it according to the stages you need to go through in order to have a positive impact on your survival. All of this requires a process from easy to difficult stages, and not many people are optimistic about doing so.

Al-Ghazali argues that people who have achieved self-actualization are people who always obey the rules of religion and fulfill obligations both in relationships with God and with fellow creatures of God. According to Al- Ghazali, self-actualization can be achieved through *riyadhlah al-nafs*, *tathahhur* (purification of the soul), *tahaqquq* (crystallization), *takhalluq* (exemplification of the nature of God), and *uzlah* (seclusion).

### Conclusion

From the above research, it can be concluded that Abraham Maslow's self-actualization problem needs to realize and utilize one's own potential and also fulfill one's own needs and understand the limits and shortcomings that exist in humans. That self-actualization is also a person's need to be able to be what he or she is. Self-actualization is synonymous with a person's desire to use all of their abilities to achieve whatever they are capable of doing. a person's need to be able to be what he or she is. Self-actualization is synonymous with a person's desire to use all of their abilities to achieve whatever they are capable of doing.

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