

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**LOVE HUNGER: CONTRASTING DYNAMICS OF LOVE AND  
BELONGINGNESS NEEDS IN THE KITE RUNNER**

**Mehnaz<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Syed Zahid Ali Shah<sup>2</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup>Lecturer in English, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad  
Pakistan.**

**<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor in English, Islamia College University (ICU) Peshawar, KPK,  
Pakistan.**

**Mehnaz, Dr. Syed Zahid Ali Shah, Love Hunger: Contrasting Dynamics Of Love  
And Belongingness Needs In The Kite Runner, PalArch's Journal Of Archaeology Of  
Egypt/Egyptology 17(1). ISSN 1567-214x.**

**Keywords: Love, Belongingness, The Kite Runner, Maslow, Amir.**

**Abstract:**

In The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini masterfully portrays the enduring nature of pain and longing as a crucial element in the complex interplay of human relationships. This paper aims to see how Khaled makes use of this complex interplay to develop a wonderful story to demonstrate the role of love and belongingness, as explained by Abraham Maslow in his theory of hierarchy of needs, in one's life. Maslow's construction of the love and belongingness need helps us frame these characters in all their psychological moods and gives us a handle on a thorough understanding of the characters' internal, psychological cavities that can only be filled with love and belongingness. It is found that a mix of love, esteem, and belongingness needs, that branch out from these needs, motivate much of the actions of the characters in TKR, and they carry a deep stamp of this need that shapes their lives in many a profound way.

**Introduction:**

“Love seeks no cause beyond itself and no limit; it is its own fruit; its own enjoyment; I love because I love; I love in order that I may love...”

(St Bernard quoted in Abraham Maslow in Motivation and Personality 198)

Need of love and belonging is a need that encourages a person to develop an effective and emotional relationship with another person in a family or a group in society. This means the emotional support of emotionally based relationships like friendship and a supportive and communicative family. In Maslow's study of the hierarchy of needs, love and belonging form the third phase of human's psychological evolution in society. Once one has progressed from basic, instinct-based physiological and safety needs, he rises further higher and strives to meet higher-level needs that are further above the pyramid of the hierarchy of needs. With the need for love and belongingness, Maslow holds, human actions can now be understood to be motivated by this need. They have given themselves a new center to rally round to achieve goals Maslow makes a distinction between two kinds of love: B-love which he calls "love for the Being of another person, unneeding love, unselfish love" and D-love which he describes as "deficiency-love, love need, selfish love"(380).

Maslow's concept is very helpful to understand the needs of people at any level to find what can be done to content them. His theory informs us that recognizing the need for providing chances for need-fulfillment may positively influence behavior and attitudes and deprived-needs may have negative motivational consequences. The application of Maslow's theory and insight to KhaledHusseini'sThe Kite Runner provides a greater, more illuminating, and explanatory power to understand the influential forces of various high and low needs on the individual self, and allows for the long sought after bridge between literature and the humanistic psychology. This study aims to understand the role of love and belongingness need which it plays in the novel by a detailed study of Amir's life trajectory and other characters. Amir's life is full of a number of dramatic events that work make him be who he is. Same is the case with other characters who go through a variety of needs, like love, security, belongingness,and finally, self-esteem as these needs direct the events of their lives and alter the course of their actions. The analysis shows how neglect and disregard for one's feelings can move a person to make erroneous choices for love and belonging, as well as demonstrates how an effective and loving relationship should be like.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

In order to understand the hidden motivations for actions and desires, Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs provides an excellent framework. Maslow considers love to be a central point in a learning curve on the path to self-discovery that forms the third phase of his theory of psychological human evolution. He believes the satisfaction of love needs enables the person to ascend to a further higher level of esteem needs and become more confident, self-reliant, and productive. Maslow states that "people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation...[which] involves both giving and receiving love, affection and the sense of belonging" (18:1939). He concurs with Carl Roger's definition of love as "that of being deeply understood and deeply accepted" (Goble 1970). Regarding this need, it must be borne in mind that love need is not a surrogate for sexual need. Both belong to completely different phases of life and are placed by Maslow at entirely different pyramidal levels.

Love, very much like belongingness, involves wanting to be part of a rewarding relationship. Somewhere that one can truly call home. When people want to express their love

for someone or something they love, as Maslow explains, they do not only want to love, but they want to belong to what they love and there will always be a motivation for that (Maslow 20:1939).

It is true of self-actualizing people that they have the ability to be loved and the power to love or we can say that they follow love and are followed by love. Menninger makes this interesting observation that “human beings really do want to love each other but just do not know how to go about it”. Maslow opines that in the case of healthy people, this statement cannot be applied as true. People do venture out from their comfort zones when their basic needs are gratified. In this venturing out they seek to find meaningful and rewarding relationships. They are perfectly capable of their demands from love through choices made free from all kinds of coercion and threats or inhibitions of any kind (Maslow 1970).

In the novel, Amir has a turbulent bond with his friend, father, uncle, and nephew. By examining their relationship in the light of the hierarchy of needs model, it is easy to recognize why Amir, Hassan, Baba, Sohrab, and Rahim Khan behave in the way they do, saying the things they say and the actions that they take. Maslow’s theory brings out their deeper desires and motivations for their actions and helps us get a grip on their personalities and psychological well-being. It also helps us peep into their motivations and personalities in greater detail and depth and understand their specific motivations for dealing with the most pressing issues in their lives.

### **Literature Review:**

In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini not only gives his readers an insight into the cultural, religious, social, and political makeup of Afghanistan but also highlights the atrocities and life under the Taliban regime. In a very condensed bird’s eye view, Hosseini sketches the evolution of Afghanistan through the ages. In the backdrop of gathering the life of Amir through his recollections, one can easily trace Kabul during the monarchy, during the first steps of the republic, through perpetual civil war and eventually the rise of the Taliban in the gap created by this prolonged civil war. These events have a significant impact on controlling thoughts and behavior and have greatly affected the lives of the characters involved.

We notice that to make the narrative more realistic and authentic, the novelist has connected certain real historical incidents with the life of its characters. In his novels, Hosseini expresses his concern about the miserable conditions of the marginalized people in general and women in particular who have not only been marginalized by society but by the men within their homes. Against the backdrop of such a fractured setting, the strong force of the bond of love and loyalty gives strength to the characters to make it clear that his stories are not traditional. They are “unlike the platonic sagas of romantic love between a man and a woman but are stories where characters seek and are saved by love and human connection” (2003 interview). The bond of love and loyalty catches the attention of Dr. Silima Nanda and Niloo Shokeen in Hosseini’s work who beautifully investigate the intricacies of human relationships in *TKR*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*. Nanda and Niloo eulogize the plot of these novels where the love of different characters is tried and tested amid hard situations and they are left to find their individual routes of reuniting with their dear ones at their own peril. She infers that “It is ultimately this longing for love that draws characters out of their isolation, gives them

strength to transcend their limitations, to struggle with their vulnerabilities and perform devastating acts of self-sacrifice” (10).

Mishra criticizes Baba’s class superiority and Amir’s emotional insecurity in her analysis of TKR. She proclaims that Amir’s emotional insecurity makes him crave his father’s love as his social and economic security is not enough for him. She opines that Amir finds himself stuck in the “labyrinth of construction” (75), and it becomes hard for him to go back over, take back his statement, and redeem himself.

However, the intention of this paper is to understand how Khaled Hosseini makes use of love, tensions, and struggles between characters to be able to demonstrate the role of love and belongingness, as explained by Abraham Maslow in his theory of hierarchy of needs. I argue that a mix of Love/Belongingness and esteem needs, that branch out from these needs, motivate much of the actions of the characters in TKR. Hosseini’s characters can be seen to carry a deep stamp of this need and this shapes their lives in many a profound way. Maslow’s construction of the love and belongingness need helps us frame these characters in all their psychological moods and, therefore, gives us a handle on a thorough understanding of their internal, psychological cavities that can only be filled with love and belongingness.

### **Results and Discussion:**

For human beings, joining people or society is a dominant goal because s/he will be lonely, isolated, and powerless if his/her family, partner, friend, and everything/everyone s/he loves leaves him/her. S/he will desire to be part of an affectionate relationship, for a place in the group, and will work with compassion to achieve this goal. This wish becomes so gripping that one forgets what it was like at an earlier stage in his life. This need can be met through satisfactory relationships which imply acceptance by the immediate social circle. This belonging and love need will at times encourage human beings to do everything in their power to love and belong in whatever way possible. The gratification of the need for love at an early age in one’s life guarantees mature transitions through different phases of life. We see that in the novel it is a love-hate relationship that causes tremendous problems in Amir’s life and disturbs his emotional wellbeing to a great extent. This also helps us see the void in Amir’s life which emerges as a psychological need to be filled and which envelopes Amir’s life and efforts. Maslow helps us visualize how gaps in personality are created by withholding certain basic needs and how they need to fill these gaps can lead to tensions and untold personality defects.

We know that growing up is not an easy process as it is not just about the change in the physical state, but also an emotional one. In fact, growing up means building durable relationships with people around us. For Amir, it is his father’s formidable presence in his life that demands a durable relationship for emotional and psychological stability. He is also influenced by his attempts at relationship building with Hassan and Rahim Khan. It is through his experiences in this grid of interconnected relationships that he achieves his maturity and bearings on life. He is indebted to these relationships one way or the other. They have made him into what he is today.

The opening chapters of *The Kite Runner* give a detailed and thorough account of the relationship between Amir and his father. The first fifty pages of the book tell the story of Amir’s idyllic childhood, which is disturbed from time to time by the descriptions of his troubled

relationship with Baba, significant by the lack of Baba's love. Hosseini portrays Baba as a type of a traditional Pashtun, living in an Afghan society who requires his son to be brave or manly enough to stand up to, if he sees something unfair. Baba hopes that his son will be like him. He therefore doesn't like Amir being immersed in books that his mother had left behind. This aesthetic aptitude that Amir exhibits from his early childhood does not go down well with the "manly" and domineering character of his Baba who has other notions of being a Pashtun in Afghan society. He probably considers this to be unmanly quality in Amir and this distances himself from him leaving a big love and belongingness crater in Amir's life which he struggles to fill with lies and cheating. He even sacrifices his best friend at this alter which goes on to show how the need to be loved and belong to have the power to shape— or misshape— individuals. Maslow's theory brings out all these different motivations for Amir to attest to the fact that the need to be loved and belong to is a strong motivator for all our conscious and unconscious actions.

The neglect of fatherly love impacts much of Amir's behavior and gives rise to problems that encompass the whole story. It is evident that the terrible actions that happen in the story are ignited by Amir's quest for his father's approval because it is what Amir wants greatly. However, nothing he ever does can win his father over. In Amir's opinion, Baba wants a son who is more like him in interests and personality, but Amir is completely the reverse of his father's manly portrayal. This makes him feel the realization that he would never be able to live to his father's demands. He remembers when once Baba tried to instill his own love for football in him, but Amir "faked interest for as long as possible" (TKR 20). Soon his Baba senses his "lack of genuine interest and resigned himself to the bleak fact that his son was never going either play or watch soccer" (TKR 15). This fake interest makes his father neglect him further. In other words, we can say that the feeling of being rejected is a motivating state in Amir. He wants the attention of Baba so that he may enjoy the feeling of importance. He does not want to feel unwanted and wishes that he can have his dignity and be loved and respected by Baba. Maslow writes that "[u]sually when a conscious desire is analyzed we find that we can go behind it, so to speak, to other, more fundamental aims of the individual" (25:1954). Amir's need to be loved and to belong, to feel the affection and warmth of his father, compels him to seek ways to cater to this fundamental need. On one hand, Amir is in awe of his father and feels great to be his son. Baba receives a lot of attention from his people as a very esteemed person in society. The novel portrays these feelings of pride that Amir savours when he sees people give his father respect and love when he goes in public with his father. On the other, he thinks that Baba's standards are too high for him to achieve and this makes him hate his father. In Amir's own words, he says: "Most days, I worship Baba with an intensity approaching the religious. But right then, I wished I could open my veins and drain his cursed blood from my body" (TKR 32).

### **Amir and Hassan:**

If we analyze the relationship of Hassan and Amir, the first problematic point that stands out in their relationship is the fact both come from different social backgrounds. It has been instilled into Amir that the Hazaras are a lower ranking tribe as compared to the Pashtuns. Although, Baba and Ali were also close to each other and spent their childhood together, yet Amir feels that there is no bond there because "in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as his friend" (TKR 25). Similarly, the bond between Amir and Hassan is beset with problems. Amir confesses

that “I have never thought of Hassan and me as friends either” (TKR 25). Just like his father, Amir is reluctant to call Hassan his close friend:

Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no hands, or to build a fully functional homemade camera out of a cardboard box. Never mind that we spent entire winters flying kites, running kites. (...) Never mind any of those things. Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a., and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing (TKR 22).

Not only the ethnic difference but one more important thing that determines their relationship might be Amir's jealousy. Feelings of jealousy well up in him whenever he is overtaken by Hassan's bravery. When Amir writes his first story and shares it with Hassan, Hassan's questions perplex him and leave him speechless: “What does he know, the illiterate Hazara” (TKR 34)? This leads to Amir's denigrating attitude towards Hassan. Books are Amir's forte and the only area where Hassan cannot compete with him. But even here, Hassan shows his moral superiority. When Amir plays a trick on him and instead of usual reading from the book, he makes up his own story, “Hassan is impressed and appreciates it as —The best story, you've read me in a long time” (TKR 26). The psychological reasons for this attitude are visible to us only when once Maslow helps us see the inner dynamics of his mind and the unsurpassable need for love and affection that his father has been constantly denying him. This stops Amir from developing the required characteristics and personality traits that could possibly endear him to his father, who harbors his own notions of what it means to be a “man” in Afghan society. The hostility of the predominantly Pashtun Taliban against this Hazara/Shia minority is partly explained by this essential requirement for being a man in Afghan society with so much ethnic diversity. The unconscious fear that their status could be challenged and the society restructured to suit the hitherto subjugated ethnicities can only be allured by a constant flux of people like Baba and Assef who would not shy away from using violence to keep the race alive and perched on the citadel.

Hassan, who runs the kite for Amir, when faced with the danger of Assef, makes an important decision: should he let go of the kite or should he battle it out with Assef and his thugs because Amir badly needs this blue kite? But he then makes the choice and gives up his own respect to put Amir above himself. Hassan does not show resistance and keeps the kite intact so that Amir can win the tournament. He has accepted his humiliation, as a sacrificial lamb, so that Amir can keep his head before his father. But on the other hand, Amir is so eager to win Baba's favor that he chooses to stand by and tries to rationalize Hassan's suffering by a thought that: “Nothing was free in this world. Be Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The answer floated in my conscious mind before I could thwart it: He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?” (TKR 77). This kind of reasoning can be called defensive because it is a protection of one's self-esteem, of love and respect for oneself. Amir is unable to feel moments of weaknesses in himself because he does not want to feel despised and loathsome. This would make him appear weak and vulnerable which would not go well with his father. Amir protects himself and his self-image by employing conscious defenses to thwart unpleasant or dangerous truths. It is apparent that Amir is not only afraid of Assef and his goons, who are bigger in size than him, but he is also attempting to rationalize the situation to himself that

Hassan deserves to get that kind of treatment. After all, Amir reasons, Hassan is a mere Hazara, which stipulates that Assef, who is a Pashtun, may do whatever he wants to a Hazara. Amir is trying to wriggle out of the pit he has dug for himself in his naked pursuit of an unfulfilled need by trying to rationalize his cowardice. But this does not take away the guilt altogether but is buried somewhere deep in his unconscious from which it would take ages for him to recover and only after standing up to the demons that this suppression has given rise to over the course of these long years. Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs stands vindicated the moment Amir breaks into laughter in the heat of his beating from Assef who cannot understand the true meaning of this laughter. Amir has finally reached the level of self-actualization in the midst of a bloodbath which strangely symbolizes a new birth marked by blood as well. What has been keeping him from self-actualization i.e. the shame and guilt of betraying a friend for fear of physical beating, has now been countered.

The reader notices a sudden change in Amir's behavior after that incident which is almost palpable. He faces the next step on the ladder of Maslow's hierarchy of needs but cannot possibly perch himself on the ladder for the simple reason that the love and belongingness need is founded upon cheat and deception. He feels caught between a rock and deep blue sea and remains so for a very long time. Although he does it for seeking the love and attention of his Baba, yet he cannot enjoy it nor its attendant fruits. It remains superficial and shallow, which makes every praise a momentary event that is gone in the blink of an eye. and he feels caught in another graver conflict. This scenario is best described by Funder (2007):

If one thinks they are valuable only based on certain things to be true then they will distort reality to believe them, even if they are not true and in this lose freedom and ability to act and think, while a person who has experienced unconditional positive regard is free from existential anxiety because that person is confident of his value and as a result makes good choices, experiences rich emotions, and is reflective, spontaneous, and flexible, etc.

After the wrong choices made by Amir, Hassan and he set out on different trajectories in life. To protect Hassan from further shame and humiliation and to be able to keep the last shreds of self-respect intact, Ali decides to leave which makes Baba extremely sad. He even pleads with Ali and Hassan to stay. Then Amir watches his father do something which he has never seen done before: "He cried. It scared me a little, seeing a grown man sob. Fathers weren't supposed to cry. Please, Baba was saying, but Ali had already turned to the door, Hassan trailing him. I'll never forget the way Baba said that the pain in his plea, the fear" (TKR 93). At that moment, Baba's strong emotions are understandable concerning his and Ali's long-lasting friendship. However, when we learn that Hassan is also his illegitimate son, more meaning is added to this scene.

### **Ali and Hassan:**

Although Hassan isn't Ali's biological son, which Ali knows well, the fact never interferes with his passion for Hassan; he still sees him as his real son. We can easily tell that Ali is always ready to use his incapable body to protect Hassan, to make him feel loved and safe. Though they belong to the lower social class and their lives are hard, neither the fact lessens the passion between Ali and Hassan nor they lack in love. This contrasts sharply with the naive notion that wealth and opulence are primary markers for love and belongingness because the

ethnic and religious minority which is living as second-rate citizens in Afghan society have more love and belongingness, affection, and relatedness than the main characters of the social scene do not have.

In terms of blood ties, Ali and Hassan have no relationship, but the way they treat each other and the affection they hold for each other make nobody doubt their relationship. They are like each other in many aspects, such as their honesty and loyalty to their masters.

Not only as a father but as a friend and a son, Hassan proves himself unparalleled. He writes a letter of friendship for Amir as an adult, and Rahim Khan describes his kindness in welcoming his long eloped mother back into his life: "He took Sanaubar's hand in both of his and told her she could cry if she wanted to but she needn't, she was home now, he said, home with her family. He touched the scars on her face and ran his hands through her hair" (TKR 210). Irrespective of the fact that both were mistreated, both Ali and Hassan, demonstrate unflinching loyalty, civility, and compassion for Baba and Amir. Maslow states that "the search for love and respect necessarily involves other people. Moreover, it involves satisfaction for these other people. People who have enough basic satisfaction to look for love and respect (rather than just food and safety) tend to develop such qualities as loyalty, friendliness, and civic consciousness, and to become better parents, husbands, teachers, public servants, etc" (1970:100). This description not only fits the father and son duo of Ali and Hassan but brings out the personalities of both Ali and Hassan in many more fundamental ways. It shows them perched on a higher rung on Maslow's hierarchy of needs despite the fact of their social status in a highly polarised and class-conscious society. What is really interesting about this understanding of Ali and Hassan is that the Maslowian perspective affords them a much higher rung on the human consciousness ladder than almost all of those people who consider themselves superior to them on the social ladder. This is indeed one of the findings of this study that helps us reflect on the shallow nature of our social classes and their eventual construction.

### **Hassan and her mother:**

The most glaring example of Maslow's love and belongingness need criterion is exhibited by Hassan when he accepts his bruised and mutilated mother back into the fold and both share quality time together in Amir's abandoned house. What it indicates is the fulfillment of a deep-set desire within Hassan for the love of his mother. This completes his otherwise incomplete life. It also indicates that Hassan has been given so much love by his father that it literally loses out of him like a stream. It is also a site of reflection on the need for a mother to hold her long-abandoned son together. This desire clearly indicates that she is feeling incomplete and the need for love and belonging is strong in her therefore she comes back to her loved ones. These desires are so compelling that they cannot be made sense of without an application of the perspective afforded by Maslow's theory. He helps us understand the psychological motivations for these circling back to the center of ones belonging and love because without these bonds one feels incomplete and unfulfilled. Hassan's acceptance of a mother stigmatized by the society around him is only understood when we are able to see this need reflected in Maslow's theory which holds that love and belongingness, affection, relatedness are some of the prime motivations in life. It is a strange coincidence that this rung of the ladder is socially the highest they can reach in a highly polarised and class-conscious society like Afghanistan's; and, therefore, their unfortunate demise culminates this chequered journey them at the highest rung possible for them.



**BaBa:**

But it is not until Baba and Amir relocate as exiled refugees to America that their bond grows stronger and they start a new life there. As their native country becomes a distant past, they learn to adapt to the new realities in the new environment. Baba is proud of his son's achievements and Amir takes every care of his father. In the US, Amir and Baba turn a new leaf in their life which is not marred by a history of struggle for both of them. Without Hassan's presence, Baba seems to have left some burden behind in Afghanistan. He lives hard but with a freer soul. On the other hand, Amir usually sinks into the horrible memories and painful repentance. He tries to forget all about Hassan but the more anxiously he wants to forget it, the longer his painful memories linger on. After so many years, he is still unable to forgive himself for what he had done to Hassan.

Later in the story, when Baba is no longer alive that Amir comes to know about his true relationship with Hassan and Baba's betrayal, he tries to put things right and understands or rationalizes Baba's actions of the past. He realizes the dilemmas Baba would have faced in treating both his kids so differently. He understands the reasons behind Baba's actions: when he was harsh with Amir and thus show his love for Hassan indirectly; or by tagging Hassan along whenever he took Amir out; or paying for Hassan's lip surgery. The bond that Amir develops with Baba in the USA enables him to come to terms with how his father felt then. He forgives his father and exonerates him from his sin, and for what he did to both Hassan and himself. In fact, after the revelation of truth, he admits that he is "the entitled half, the society-approved, legitimate half, the unwitting embodiment of Baba's guilt," whereas Hassan is the "half who had inherited what had been pure and noble in Baba. The half that, maybe, in the most secret recesses of his heart, Baba had thought of as his true son" (TKR 359). Baba's sad death if reflected from the viewpoint of Maslow's hierarchy of needs becomes even sadder. It ends with an unfulfilled desire or need for love and affection for a son that he could not make his own despite his opulence and power. He dies an immigrant in a foreign country which molds him in more than one way but to which he could never belong.

Amir comes to know that his act of wrongdoing to Hassan is almost the same as Baba's act to Ali, Hassan's father. Both have harmed people they thought closest to themselves. It becomes even more obvious when he thinks about Hassan as his brother which heightens Amir's guilty feeling. Hassan was just a friend or a mere servant for him but Rahim Khan's disclosure changes all this. He is unable to reconcile with the idea of Hassan being his half-brother. The fact feels like a heavy stone on his chest. He has been cheating, looking down upon, and framing his own brother. He realizes that it has fallen to him to redeem his father. Earlier, he basked in his father's glories now it is up to him to share in his guilt as well. Before. Maslow describes the person

Who sees the truth and keeps his mouth shut, the coward who gives up his manliness, all these people perceive in a deep way that they have done wrong to themselves and despise themselves for it. Out of this self-punishment may come the only neurosis, but there may equally well come renewed courage, righteous indignation, increased self-respect, because of thereafter doing the right thing; in a word, growth and improvement can come through pain and conflict. (Maslow 1968: 7)

The knowledge, the realization of a way out as a kind of atonement for both himself and his Baba, strengthens Amir's resolve, as Maslow notes it might do, as he musters up his courage to face everything, to face his past, to understand the deep love of his brother, Hassan, which no one has ever given him and will not give him anymore. He makes his mind to go back to Afghanistan on the trip of his redemption for ending the cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets between Hassan and himself. He also decides to take care of Hassan's son, Sohrab, for keeping a little part of Hassan with him, for returning Hassan's love to himself in the past, and continuing the love of Hassan through Sohrab. In the beginning, Amir's love for Sohrab seems to build on the regret for Hassan but soon it is overtaken by the realization that he is the only connection that he has with his past as well as the only family member who would take his and his father's name forward because Amir and his wife cannot conceive. They have already been asked to adopt a kid as the only solution to their problem. But in Sohrab, Amir sees the continuation of his bloodline. This is ironic because it is Sohrab who is now going to take the family line forward despite the fact that his father was lost to history and circumstances. Sohrab is another kind of need for Amir now as well. He sees in his eyes the return to that fateful Kite Tournament day in Kabul which had robbed him of every shred of self-respect in life. It does return with a hint of a smile on the heavily traumatized Sohrab's face when it is Amir runs Kite for Hassan's son to be able to atone for his sins and crimes committed against a loyal friend. It allows him to climb up the hierarchy of needs toward a more fulfilling experience of self-esteem and subsequently to self-actualization. Maslow's theory helps us make sense of all these pitfalls in the life of Amir whose life appears differently to his social group but which comes out in its true color as driven by different needs when subjected to Maslow's incisive psychological insights into human nature, personality and the many motivations that keep them afloat in a sea of trouble.

In complete contradistinction to Amir's relationship with his Baba, Hassan and Sohrab are the epitome of the bonding together of a father and his son. It also reflects the love that is native to Hazaras and it is probably this weakness that is taken advantage of by their ferocious ethnic others. As well as providing a foil to Amir's relationship with his father, the love between Ali and Hassan and later in between Hassan and his son tell of the need for an empathetic father which saves so much trouble for the son at a later stage in his life. For getting the love and attention of his father, Amir commits the most heinous of crimes against his friend and himself. He has everything but love. Ali, Hassan, and Sohrab; on the other hand, have nothing but love. One feels a sense of laid-backness in their attitude which comes from an abundance of love whereas, in total contrast, Amir exhibits signs of extreme uneasiness throughout his growing up stage which indicates that a basic Maslowian need is withheld from him i.e. love. Hassan is killed by the Taliban, and toward the concluding part of the narrative, we see Amir trying his best to become a father to Sohrab. The relationship between Sohrab and Hassan is emblematic of a positive bonding between the two at an earlier stage of their lives.

### **Conclusion:**

Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs clearly plays an important part in bringing out all aspects of the characters in the novel TKR. He theorizes that people who have their basic physiological needs taken care of would aspire to reach the further higher rungs of the hierarchical ladder like the need for love and belongingness. The characters and how they evolve

over the course of different events attest to the fundamental accuracy of Maslow's theoretical formulation that once certain needs are satisfied, a man yearns for moving forward on the continuum towards further possibilities for fuller self-actualization. Maslow helps us perceive and notice these psychological underpinnings of the characters that would otherwise remain hidden. He brings out their unstated motivations and helps us make sense of their personalities. One of the most interesting findings of the study of this particular rung of the theory of human motivation is the understanding that social status is not a marker of love and belongingness need and that it has much more to do with an enabling familial environment which allows the construction of stable personalities. The example of Ali and Hassan stands out in this regard. Socially disadvantaged and living a subordinate life, the father-son duo of Ali and Hassan are way ahead on the hierarchy of needs when it is defined as a need for love and belongingness. Their self-contented, warm and loving relationship stands in sharp contrast to the rest of their socially superior classes. That is why they are able to give love and affection even when they face adversarial situations. It does not make them flinch. Maslow helps us make sense of their attitudes and the reasons and motivations that make them so comfortable in their sphere. In marked contrast, all other characters who are depicted as the social superiors of Ali and Hassan like Baba, Amir, Gen Tahiri, Rahim Khan, and Assef are finding it difficult to climb up the ladder to a more fulfilling life. They all can be seen to be struggling with ghosts from their past except this father and son duo. It is, therefore, Maslow's theory, which helps us make this distinction, that can be credited with bringing out this aspect of the characters in the novel.

#### References:

- Funder, D.C. (2007) *The personality puzzle*. (4th Edition). New York: Norton.
- Goble, F. G. (1970). *The third force: The psychology of Abraham Maslow*. New York: Grossman.
- Hosseini, K. (2003). *The kite runner*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Maslow, A. (1939). "Dominance-feeling, personality and social behavior in women," *J. social Psychol*, 10, 3-39.
- , (1954) *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.
- , (1965). "Self-actualization and beyond." In J. E T. Bugental (Ed.1967), *Challenges of humanistic psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- , (1968). *Toward a psychology of being* (2nd edition), Jnm; I Van Nostrand Reinhold . New York
- , (1970). *Religions, values, and peak experiences*. New York: Penguin. (Original work published 1964)
- , (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature*. New York: Viking Press.
- Mishra, A. (2011). "The "eternal loop" of guilt and the attempt to atone in McEwan's *Atonement* and Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*." *The Oswald Review: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research and Criticism in the Discipline of English*, 13(1).

Silima, N.&Niloo, S. (2014). "Bond of love in the novels of KhaledHosseini" IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science, 19(3), 10-13.