1. Discuss Maslow’s concept of self-actualization in terms of the fulfillment of needs.

Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory (1943, 1954) posits that human beings are driven by a series of needs, arranged in a hierarchical order. According to Maslow, these needs can be divided into two categories: lower-order needs (basic survival needs) and higher-order needs (personal growth and self-actualization). The hierarchy is often represented as a pyramid, with the most fundamental needs at the base, and the more complex psychological and self-fulfillment needs at the top. At the top of the pyramid lies self-actualization—the realization of one’s fullest potential. Maslow defines self-actualization as the desire to become the best version of oneself, to explore personal growth, creativity, and meaningful pursuits that reflect one’s true nature. Maslow acknowledged that the progression through the hierarchy is not strictly rigid, but the general principle remains that fulfilling foundational needs supports the pursuit of more complex, self-actualizing goals.

1. Describe the self from a systemic perspective.

The self, viewed through a systemic lens, posits that the self is not an isolated or static entity, but rather a dynamic and interconnected living system comprising body, soul and spirit, system that exists in constant relationship with a larger whole both influencing and being influenced by the systems it participates in. Thus, this view emphasizes the importance of interconnectedness, balance, and reciprocal relationships in the formation and evolution of the self.

1. Describe how self-esteem may be blocked and what may develop high self-esteem.

According to Balloo, P. (2024). Self concept [PowerPoint slides]. Omega Advanced School for Interdisciplinary Studies., self-esteem is *“The valuing of oneself based on self-evaluation.”* Thus, if the ideal self, which is the self a person aspires to be, is incongruent with one’s reality, then this leads to an unhealthy evaluation of self and ultimately low self-esteem. However, if the evaluation is based on what God says and utilize a more realistic measuring scale, then one’s self esteem can be strengthened.

1. Discuss your understanding of the self? How does it relate to religion?

For me, the concept of the self cannot be fully understood apart from the knowledge of God and His revelation of who I am. While we can never fully comprehend God in His entirety, He has graciously given us sufficient understanding to know Him. As 2 Peter 1:3-4 affirms, *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire”* (ESV).

I understand the self as a living system, created and shaped by God as part of His greater design. The self, made in God's image, can influence the broader system, but it can never surpass or diminish God's ultimate creative power. The self is both a reflection of God’s design and a participant in His divine purpose.

References

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