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Ethical Considerations of Physical Education In an Islamic Valued System

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Abstract

Examined are ethical considerations of personal capability management in an Islamic Valued System by use of Toady theories based on verses and documented narrations about physical exercise and skills in Islam. Included also are case studies and research which support the relationship between one's attitude regarding a well-trained body and one's calm mentality. A historical view of approaches and comparative studies, along with documented narrations and statements of contemporary connoisseurs descriptive of mental and physical health, personal capabilities management, ethical considerations and practical abilities all lend support to the Islamic ideology of one's ethical duty to be physically fit.

Keywords: Personal capabilities management, Valued System, physical education, ethical considerations, rival-cognition, agility, Islam

Introduction

The need and relationship between humans, religion and ethics have long and deep roots. The relation between Valued Systems and human life is discussed by leading

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authors such as Jung (1875-1961), Freud (1907), James (1929) and Allport (1967) who all define the links between human life, psychological management and religion/ ethics. They focused on body and physical skills, care, body trustworthiness and human tasks regarding his/her body (Dumont, 2002, p. 102). Likewise, all religions, including Islam, the latest religion, emphasize the importance of body, physical care, ethical functions, individual's tasks against his/her body, personal life management social roles, and timing. In this article, we define these aspects, axes and points via an Islamic Value's Systems and ethical visions as well as a special approach to physical exercise in Islam. It should be mentioned that there are many categories about skills and personal capabilities such as being well-trained, ethics, spiritual preparedness and mental capabilities. We limit our discussion to two studies and four characteristics of personal capabilities management and seven traits of personal capabilities in a content-comparative study.

Problem Definition

Described earlier, ethical and physical skills management have a long history; studies of this nature can be divided into two main categories:

1. Studies that address religious and ethical effects on personal and social (physical, mental and psych) norms.

2. Studies performed in the field of methodology, beliefs and ethical/religious behaviors (Khodayari Fard *et al* 1999; p. 38).

In both approaches, the spiritual, mental and physical effects of religion on humans are pointed out. It is mentioned that one of the basic roles of humans is to consider the direct relationship between beliefs, behaviors and physical conditions of the body. Body is an important issue in religious main effects on individual traditions.

The research conducted by Ellis (1981) and Bergin (1983) is categorized in the first group. Ellis (1981) claimed that religious and ethical persons are faced with less emotional disorders than non-religious people. He emphasized that the most suitable ways to achieve physical and mental calmness are balanced ethical and religious approaches. Of course, he believed that religious extravagance is highly related with emotional disorders (Ellis, 1981). In response to Ellis's theory, Bergin performed a meta analysis study on the role of religion on mental disorders up to 1979. In his final conclusion, Bergin identified 30 items; hence, there were no significant effects in 23 items; in 5 items, positive effects were observed; and in 2 items, no negative relations between religion and harm signals were obtained. He announced that these findings do not support Ellis's hypothesis. Meanwhile, there are rare evidences regarding the positive role of religion and ethics in mental calmness and physical preparedness (Bergin, 1983, pp 170-184).

Research Related to Physical Exercise in a Valued System

Sabori believes that sports and physical exercise dates back to ancient Greece as indicators of agility and body power (Sabori, 2006, p. 13). In the first approaches, enforcement, treatment, nutrition and caring for the body are emphasized. In Holy Qoran, body health and power are considered as an advantage. In Taloot story, the Ommaiydes who were saved by God via Moses, became proud, breached the law, and finally were beaten by the Jaloot tribe who lived at Rome Sea beach between Palestine and Egypt. In the battle, 440 of their senior commanders were captured by the Jaloot tribe. The conditions continued for some years until God ordered his messenger to lead them. The messenger led them and transferred their demands to God. He was inspired to appoint Taloot as their king. The messenger said to them: "*God appointed Taloot as your leader"* (Baghareh, verse 247). The rich people opposed Taloot since he was a farmer and was not rich. They said: *"How can he lead us when we have more merit? He is not rich."* (Baghareh, 247). One of their objections was that they compared Taloot's assets and said that he had neither wealth, financial power, nor familial and social position. The messenger said: *"God appointed him and expanded his science and ethics"* (Baghareh, 247).

As seen in the above Islamic verses, two characteristics of scientific and ethical abilities, namely knowledge and physical power are superior to the two other traits, financial power and race. They are preferred in a Valued System and those who have such characteristics are considered meritorious for management and social leadership. In the above case study in Judaism as documented by The Holy Qoran, physical power is expressively considered as an advantage and is ranked equal with science and knowledge. The importance of this comparison is necessary in understanding how science is valued in the Valued System and is complemented by physical perfection.

In another case, David's braveness and fighting abilities are mentioned. When Taloot moved to fight against Jaloot, many fighters from Ommaiydes accompanied him. Finally, few soldiers with strong beliefs fought against Jaloot's equipped army. God informed His messenger that the actual fighter against Jaloot was someone called David, Ish's son, whose Moses' armor could fit. Ish was a believing shepherd with ten[2] sons of whom David was the smallest. When collecting his army, Taloot asked Ish and his sons to accompany him. He asked the sons to wear Moses' armor. Finally, David could wear the armor. David was a powerful and brave youngster (Tabatabaei, 1976, p. 299). He was particularly skillful in the sling throw. With the same method, he dismantled Jaloot's army and targeted Jaloot's forehead and killed him by throwing a big stone (Feiz Kashani, 1993, p. 256). In Holy Qoran, David's belief and his physical power and fighting capability are appreciated.

In Ghesas Surah of The Holy Qoran, Moses' physical power, his heart believing and ethical approaches are documented, which he applied in supporting oppression against brutal powers (Yusif, verse 14). He fought and destroyed cruel powers (Ghesas, verse 15). It is believed that his faith and resistance against brutal powers is what caused

2. Some believed that Ish had four or six sons

Moses to move to Medina and become familiar with Shoayb. Before that, he used his physical power to distribute the water of a well fairly although the shepherds did not obey their turns. They treaded on the rights of Shoayb's daughters and did not treat them ethically. They were sure that Moses could not bring out the can alone, so they went around and said that since you called us cruel, come and bring out the can alone. Moses, who had extraordinary physical power, rinsed for Shoayb's daughters alone, let their animals drink to satiety, and then prayed under a tree (Ghesas, verse 24).

It is noteworthy that the case of Moses demonstrates ethical behavior, physical power, and physical health in conjunction with faith as an advantage. Authors affirm that it is not desirous to be only physically powerful; such a man should be equality-oriented and profitable for others. Prophet Mohammad said: "*The best men are those who are the most profitable ones for people."*(Horolameli, 1963; P. 37)

Findings and New Theoretical Basics

Findings and researchers post 1980s indicate that religious and ethical beliefs are serving physical and mental health (Bahrami & Tashk, 2004). Incrementally, research evidences support this issue (Noori *et al*, 2002).

Baker and Gorsuch (1982) found a positive relationship between physical/psychological health and religion and ethics in seniors (Baker and Gorsuch, 1982, p. 119). In their research, Alvardo *et al* (1995) observed that during oldness, strong religious vision decreases stress and depression caused by death or physical problems (Alvardo *et al*, 1995, p. 202).

Research on patients suffering from cancer, conducted by Acklin *et al* (1983), Brown and Mooger (1983) observed that those patients with strong ethical and religious beliefs had a more positive vision toward their life and their bodies. Than other patients and they avoided isolationism (Acklin *et al*, 1983, pp. 322-323).

Francis and Stubs (1978) reported a meaningful relationship between religious/ethical tendency and satisfaction and physical health. In his research, Ellison observed that people with high religious tendency are more satisfied and show less negative mental-social outcomes in facing suffering events of life (Ellison, 1991, p. 118).

In recent decades, a wide approach toward research, aspects and psychological outcomes of religion and ethics on spirit, psyche and body was designed in Iran. For example, Bahrami and Tashk (2004) reviewed the relationship between Valued System and physical, spiritual and mental conditions and found a meaningful relation between attitude and positive tendency toward valued basics and physical exercise. Also, Bireshk *et al* (2001), Eslami (1997), Galehdar and Saki (2001), etc, demonstrated a positive relationship between religious traditions and stress reduction as well as increases in physical, spiritual and mental health (Bahrami & Tashk, 2004, p. 45). In his research, Bahrami and Tashk (2004), found a relation between ethical and religious orientation and

mental health as anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction and major depression (Bahrami & Tashk, 2004, p. 46).

Physical and Mental Health

The relation between ethical and physical skills and sports (mental and physical health) is obvious for most people. If physical exercise is directed toward social health and happiness, it should be matched with mental and physical health. Physical exercise without healthy rules is to breach the aims. In an Islamic and Valued System, sanitation is paid attention to more than any other school. As the Prophet said, Islam is based on health and sanitation: only clean and ethical people will enter the paradise (Reyshahri 1989 ;p.99).

This narration, considered by leading connoisseurs, expressively points to individual physical health and ethics that have a direct relation with mental health. that is nowadays considered by leading connoisseurs. Happiness and well being also have the same meaning. In personal skills and personal management, this question is arisen: "What is happiness and well being really?" For a long time, answering this question was considered in studies pertaining to the relationship between body, psyche, calmness and treatment. In the 20th century, psychology focuses on negative emotions such as depression and anxiety and believes that they are the consequences of lack of spiritual, physical and ethical health. It also claims a positive relation between depression and physical fitness (Mathews, 2002, p. 8). Some believe that the lack of physical and psychological health decrease personal capabilities management and the individual is faced with a vital confusion in which happiness is missing. Since 1980s, other aspects are emphasized in defining health and the capability of managing the people. These studies, however, are limited to negative aspects. WHO emphasizes positive aspects of health and says that a healthy individual is someone with certain physical, mental, and social and faith conditions (Baum *et al,* 2001, p. 119).

In Islam, the important characteristic of a person with mental and physical health is his/her similarity with the behavior of prophets. In this line, Imam Reza declared: *"Cleanness and sanitation are prophets' traits"* (Majlesi, 1403; Volume: 78; p. 335).

Another important mental and social trait in personal sanitation is well being and satisfaction. Well-being is defined as "*a positive feeling and general satisfaction of life which includes us and others in family, society, job, interaction, belongingness, etc"* (Myers and Dinner, 1995, p. 10).

Researchers demonstrate that personal, mental and ethical health feelings include affective and cognitive factors (Michalos, 1991, p. 41) and those people with high well being feeling move toward reinforcing their physical and social skills. They experience positive emotions and have positive assessment of their surrounding events. People with low well being feeling and personal and physical health, assess life situations and events negatively and tend more toward static conditions and negative emotions such as anxiety, depression and anger (Myers & Dinner, 1995, p 12).

It is noteworthy that the experiences of desired and positive emotions have a reverse relationship with undesired and negative emotions. In other words, the more a person allocates time to his/her personal, physical and spiritual health, the less he/she allocates time to negative emotions as well as the factors which interrupt personal and ethical health. Although no one should commit a mistake, positive and negative emotions are not as the ends of a polar that the lack of one end guarantees the existence of other end. This opportunity provides the chance of emerging the other end, otherwise, positive satisfaction is not emerged by the lack of negative emotion and the lack of negative emotions do not necessarily yield to positive emotions. Abandoning positive emotions need other conditions and possibilities one of which that is emphasized in Islam is sanity and personal health, to provide desirable conditions and avoid distress. We can read in Holy Koran: *"The result and fruit of failure is to miss an appropriate chance of acquisition."* (Barazesh, 1989, p. 1128)

The Characteristics of Ethical and Personal Capabilities Management

In various research, people with individual management and health skills, namely happy people are defined as follows:

High Self Esteem and Self-Respect

They are individuals with high self-esteem and self-respect and consider high values for life opportunities. They like themselves and hate laziness. Imam Ali says: "One can see that people with effective physical traits and skills hate laziness, since laziness causes them to miss the chances and to increase grieves" (Barazesh, 1989, p. 982).

In another narration, Imam Ali says: "When you felt hidden disgust, chronic fatigue and impatience and couldn't find an equitable reason for it and found that your body is not matched with your spirit, know that you have lost a chance since *missing the chance lead to hidden sadness that its result is physical laziness*" (Barazesh, 1989, p. 185). We must be aware of laziness factors in order to jump this body plateau because it will destroy the body. Today, one can see that many people with physical sufferings are also faced with mental disorders, one of its signals is to miss appropriate times and golden opportunities.

Your Time Rule

One of the rules of time management governing personal activities and management is punctuality. According to this rule, 80% of failures are not the result of plan, budget, designing, implementation or possibilities. Rather, it because of non-appropriate selected time, namely understanding correct time (Moghimi, 2006, p. 2).

More interestingly, punctual people with ethical and personal management and good sensation in one of the self-esteem tests, completely support phrases such as "I enjoy being with myself" and "I have good ideas" (Mayers, 1993, p. 204). Such people

pay high attention to ethics, value and believing basics and behave reasonably (Janoff and Bulman, 2001, p. 158).

Control of Self

People with ethical and personal capabilities management feel more control sensation. They neither behave quickly to be seen nor with delay to miss all chances. In this line, Imam Ali says to work in a weighed and controlled manner (Barazesh, 1989, p. 128). They have high care, self-esteem and planning in their physical activities. They think about their capabilities rather than then weaknesses (Larson, 2003, p. 42). They highly fight against stresses by using their well-trained body and try to achieve the best skills (Dumont, 2002, p. 116).

As a factor of creative mental function of such people, initiative is shown in their behaviors and physical actions. Imam Ali says: "Anyone who keeps his/her experiences is secured against mistakes" (Barazesh, 1989, p. 630).

Ethical and health people have high flexibility in terms of the ability to generate ideas that show the movement of the person from a thinking level to another level or changes in work, duty, action or movement (Guilford, 1967, p. 201). Some psychologists believe that the ability to generating ideas about work or duty shapes a fluid factor and provide the possibility to develop the details to a generated basic idea (Torrance, 1988, p 112).

Optimism

People with ethical and personal capabilities management are always optimistic and happy. A direct relation between physical happiness and spiritual calmness is demonstrated in research (Daniel Chuck & Dohrty, 1969, p. 88). Such a relationship is also confirmed in believing and valued fundamentals. In their study, Dember and Brook (1989) and Seligman (1991) observed that optimistic persons support "when I face a new job, I expect my success" completely. These individuals are more successful, healthier, and happier than pessimistic persons. They have a beautiful vision toward others and never try to find the shortcomings (Larson, 2003, p. 12). In Islam, people are prohibited from scorning, insulting, taunting and blaming (Hajar, verses 12 & 13). Not only are happy people in the highest level of mental and physical health, but they have a good vision toward the others. Islam prohibited blaming vision toward the others. The Prophet says: *"Never look for a long time at disabled people since they will become sad"* (Majlesi, 1403, Volume. 78, p. 122). It points to the fact that in a Valued System, a person with mental, physical and spiritual health has also healthy and positive feelings. This belief brings us closed to the *Joy Windows Concept*.

Extravert and Powerful Communicators

Those people with ethical and personal capabilities management are generally extravert and are powerful in their communication and cooperation with others. They are

even happy in their loneliness (Noori *et al*, 2002, p. 6). They enjoy their lives with themselves and others in urban or suburb areas and working at individual or group jobs (Diener *et al*, 1992, p. 40).

Ethical persons think positively; hence, defects, faults and limitations do not prevent them from achieving supreme aims, physical enhancement and mental enrichment. They manifest the same behavior with others.

Case study

According to a narration, Safieh, the daughter Hay Ebne Akhtab, who was originally Jewish, became a Muslim and married a Prophet after The Kheibar war. She came to The Prophet crying and said that the others blame me and say that I am a Jewish and have some defects. The Prophet said: "Why don't you say that my father is Haroon and my uncle is Moses and now I'm a prophet's wife?" That way, they can see the goodness and think positively and not see the defects and shortcomings (Kolini, 1967, p. 256).

Ethical and personal capabilities in practice

In this section, addressed are recommendations and individual techniques to promote physical capabilities in a Valued System

1. Resistance and Generosity

One of the secrets of victory and overcoming the obstacles, difficulties and limitations even in matches and fighting is resistance. Today, it is demonstrated in psychology that resistance and power feeling bring more hidden physical, mental and spiritual powers. In some new psychological theories, resistance is defined as a social skill combined that has an effect on surrounding people (Chittenden, 1994, p. 87).

A resistant person with social skills is able to communicate socially. Smiling, laughing, liberality, kindness and team communications are among the successful factors that influence the person and others (Keller & Carlson, 1974, pp. 912-919).
The Holy Qoran reads: " If *twenty of you are resistant, patient and stable, they can overcome 200 individuals and if your 100, you can overcome 1000 individuals."*

Resisting and stability principle means to relieve hidden energies which its effects are ten fold.

2. Ethical and Transcendental Moral

One of the important factors in managing ethical and personal capabilities along with resistance and stability is the morale factor. Morale has a fundamental role in victory or failure of a champ and is considered as an important characteristics of personal or team skills. The experience shows that if a powerful individual or group lack suitable morale, their low self-reliance will cause fear and a preventive factor in their fights. However, a man with high morale and self-reliance can remove big obstacles and overcome strong rivals.

According to Gresham and Elliot (1989), important individual and team skills are related to elements of morale such as cooperation, accountability, empathy, self-reliance and trenchant (all ethical) in various conditions (Gresham and Elliot, 1989, pp. 120-124). Appearance, cloth quality, look procedure and variety of spirit and body skills are related to morale. In Islamic narrations, to describe "power", it reads in Enfal, verse 60, that one of the implications of this phrase is to cover white hairs with black color. In this way, an old fighter will feel young and it will reinforce his morale and weak his rival's morale. Hence, The Prophet ordered his followers to cover their white hairs and beards in wars.

Case study

Imam Ali paid attention to this issue in his words and physical guard. He was the expert of heroic and epical wars, and used this knowledge to challenge his rivals' morale. However, he regarded ethical basics. For example, in an epic verse that destroyed rival's morale and reminded his military personality and physical power, he said: "I'm the man that my mother called him lion. I'm a brave man and the lion. I have strong arms. In wars, I'm like a lion. I'm a brave commander" (Zamani, 1989 ; P.1).

3. Agility (movement and skill) along with ethical principles

Although some psychologists believe that some people are intrinsically lazy and others are genetically agile, one of the most important activities to reinforce the body is agility. Today, management phrases such as agile management, agile organization, agile marketing, agile human, etc. are used. Agility with any personal background is acquisitive and is a kind of skill learning and exercise. It is based on speed, skill, non delay and rapid reaction. Physical flexibility is highly important since different pressures and strong shocks of rival are less effective on an agile person. In a case study, it is demonstrated that playing sports, especially in childhood, affects future agility and even decreases aggressive behaviors (Soloman & Pagle, 1997, p. 163).

While teaching throwing the javelins to his soldiers, Imam Ali said: *"Look around the javelins! Go up and down when you are throwing javelins against the enemy and keep away yourselves when the enemy throws against you because this method is effective for throwing the javelin"* (Barazesh, 1989).

4. Stress avoidance and keeping away tumult (anti professional ethics indicators)

Treating the body and coordinating it with spirit are necessary for fighters in a tumult war scene. Tumult is a sign of anxiety and worry which lead to failure. Researchers indicate that fighting sports with defined actions and centralization are far from tumult and they have a deep effect on relaxation and decreasing the anger (Nosan Chuck, 1981, p. 444). A study shows indicators regarding the effects of high centralization and self-esteem in decreasing stress, increasing relaxation and definition (Trulson, 1992, p. 131).
In this line, Imam Ali says: *"Turn off the voices (no tumult) because that calmness keeps away fear and stress (timid men are making tumult in wars and brave men say nothing and do their job)"* (Barazesh, 1989).

5. Farsightedness in fighting and regarding ethical aspects

One of the skills of a fighter is providence, namely the definition, interpretation and inference of the rival's actions with analysis power. This is highly appreciated in a Valued System. Interestingly, some individual skills and some fighting sports that are accompanied with providence have many positive outcomes. A research study was done by Edelman regarding the effects of Aikido (a kind of fighting sport with centralization and certain actions). He observed that it decreases the quarrelsomeness of high school students who suffered from severe affective disorders and after 12 weeks, remarkable reduction was observed in their disordering behaviors including reducing unreasoning physical attacks, reducing criminal behaviors and increasing behavioral dynamics (Edelman, 1994, p. 187).

Imam Ali says: *"Look to see the end of enemy's army"* (it means that you are not secure until all rivals are beaten, be careful about their final initiative and look for yourself) (Barazesh, 1989).

6. Situation Cognition and ethical principles

Subtle cognition is among effective individual and team skills in fighting that completes many mentioned factors especially providence (fifth factor). Situation cognition plays the role of decision-making. It means that with correct foresightedness, the man will find a supreme morale in

managing his/her body and mind as well as necessary agility to behave and find the correct situation via avoiding disturbance. Today, it is believed that to overcome hard tasks and to face many stimuli, there is a mechanism in the human nervous system that focuses on stimuli,; namely, situation cognition (Moosavi, 2002, p. 53). This process is to emphasize or focus on situation cognition (Anshel *et al*, 1997, p. 54). The mechanism emphasizes special aspects or indicators in order that the individual can decide which stimuli should be regarded and which ones should be neglected (Miguel ;2001 ;p.114). Hence, fighters should employ situation cognition and ethics in deciding appropriate actions in conflicts.

Case Study in Valued System

Imam Ali, in describing his brave and skillful commander, Malek Ashtar, says: *"He is not the person who delays when it is necessary to hurry and is not someone who appears in a job to need opportunity cognition without ethical consideration and situation cognition"* Barazesh, 1989).

7. Rival Cognition and Regarding Ethical Principles

One of the most important factors in personal capabilities management especially in Valued System, is rival cognition regarding ethical issues. So, success secrets in fighting are agility, smartness and ethical humility that differ from ruse and trick. Imam Ali says: *"I know my competitor completely but I won't behave like him as a trick man and I was the most deceitful man if tricky was not reproached"* (Barazesh, 1989). However, applying rival's mistakes, abilities, weaknesses, strengths, skills and hidden/revealed aspects of skills and actions is a kind of discovering in order to overcome him via opportunities and situation cognition (sixth factor).

Case Study

Imam Ali who was always the winner in war scenes was asked: "How do you beat your rivals?"

Imam answered: *"I never faced someone unless he helped me to beat him via his words and action"* (Naseri, 2001, p. 320). He always regarded ethics.

Cognition rule in achieving the skills and right overcoming is an important link between body and mind. Undoubtedly, there is a strong and close relation between body and mind (especially cognition rule) (conditions and situation). Hence, Islam considers a high importance to body as well as to cognition and understanding.

Conclusions

As mentioned in this article, physical exercise and various aspects of ethical and personal skills as historical issues date back to ancient civilizations B.A. It's various aspects are paid considerable attention. In the golden age of religions, this issue had a central importance and almost in all religions, being physically well-trained, using correct skills, inclusive of personal, motional and ethical skills were highly emphasized and documented. Several are mentioned in this text. Studies and experiments indicate that in a Valued System, the body is viewed by its direct relation with mind, spirit and their mutual effects on each other. Recent studies, especially at the end of the past millennium and early third millennium show the importance of such relations that the discussions were explained in detail. It is necessary to consider the following points in order to assimilate and enforce physical skills management:

1. Enforcing the aspects of physical, personal and ethical capabilities have direct effects on our mind and body. Like society, our body needs careful management and professional ethics in various growth steps and life stages.

2. Today, the greater part of human life is spent in educational systems where lessons learned have a long sustainability, even during old age. Therefore, we can institutionalize many necessary skills in individuals by regarding practical commands of ethical and Valued Systems and using them along with contemporary classic teachings to enforce the ethical duty of promoting growing physical skills.

3. The emphasis of the ethical and Valued System on the importance of mind, body, affections and feelings and their influences over a happy and non-stressful life should be transformed to a skillful and teaching charter for learners.

4. Perhaps, many connoisseurs and experts are not aware of the relationship and emphasis of ethics in a Valued System and its influence on body exercise. Nor may they be aware of the relation between physical health and mind and spirit. Reconsideration of the details of such commands, culturally and ethically, may exert some influence over the social health and decrease the diseases, physical problems and personal skills.

Summary

The rich declarations, case studies, and some significant narration in ethical and Valued System about physical skills and physical management indicate a special attention of religious and ethical approaches to human health. Such emphasis is not a maxim. Rather, authors believe that it is a belief that should be implemented practically since healthy bodies always shape a healthy society, dynamic thinking, and a supreme vision.

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