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Recommended Citation

Jandaghi, G., Khanifar, H., Moghimi, S. M., & Memar, S. A. (2008). Ethical Considerations in Physical Education. *Online Journal of Health Ethics*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.18785/ojhe.0501.02>

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Ethical Considerations in Physical Education

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Abstract

The present article tries to examine those aspects of personal capability management in a valued system and ethical considerations as well as toady theories based on verses and documented narrations about physical exercise and skills in Islam. Since there are many evidences about a careful attitude regarding a well-trained body and calm mentality in valued system and there are many documented case studies in this field, while studying long background especially pre-history and before various religions especially Islam, approaches and comparative studies along with documented narrations and statements of contemporary connoisseurs are addressed of which one can point out mental and physical health, the personal capabilities management, ethical considerations and practical abilities such resistance, high morale, agility, stress-avoiding, situation cognition and rival cognition. Meanwhile, in defining the evidences of valued system, factual and historical cases in verses and narrations are provided.

Keywords: Personal Capabilities Management, Valued System, Physical Education, Ethical Considerations, Rival-Cognition, Agility

Introduction

The need and the relation between human and religion and ethics have a long and deep root. The age of religious comprehension in history is as same as human with documented evidences and is mentioned in various ethical, spiritual, mental, physical, social, cultural and individual aspects. The relation between valued system and human life is discussed by leading authors such as Jung (1875-1961), Freud (1907), James (1929) and Allport (1967) who have defined the links between human life psychological management and religion/ ethics. They have focused on body and physical skills, care, body trustworthiness and human tasks regarding his/her body (Dumont, 2002, p. 102). In the meantime, all religion and Islam as the latest religion have emphasized on the importance of body, physical care, ethical functions, individual's tasks against his/her body, personal life management and social roles, timing. In this article, we will define these aspects, axes and points via values system 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 in aspects such as physical being well-trained, ethics, spiritual preparedness and mental capabilities. We address two studies namely four characteristics of personal capabilities management and seven traits of personal capabilities in a content-comparative study.

Problem Definition

As mentioned in introduction, ethical and physical skills management has long history and it back pre-Islam arena especially to civilizations and religions in early centuries. However, in the approach of new world to research-orientation and psychological studies and since one hundred years ago that earliest studies about religious psychology were begun, these researches have been incrementally enriched. In recent decade, the issue is highly paid attention and many researches are performed. Overall, one can divide such researches into two main categories:

1. The studies that addressed religious and ethical effects on personal and social (physical, mental and psych) norms.
2. The studies that performed in the field of methodology, beliefs and ethical/religious behaviors.

In both approaches, the spiritual, mental and physical effects of religion on human 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 researches made by Ellis (1981) and Bergin (1983) are categorized in the first group. In his reports, Ellis 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 addressed the Meta analysis in all researches till 1979 that pointed to the role of religion. He tried to test the role of religion and its effect on mental disorders. In his final conclusion, Bergin achieved 30 effects: 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 Background

Some connoisseurs believe that sport and physical exercise rooted to ancient Greece as agility and body power (Saboori, 2006, p. 13). On the other hand, in the first approaches enforcement, treatment, nutrition and caring the body are emphasized. In Holy Koran, body health and power is considered as an advantage. In Taloot story and the Ommaiydes that were save by God via Moses but they got proud and breached the law and finally beat by Jaloot tribe who lived at Rome sea beach between Palestine and Egypt and 440 of their senior commanders were captured by Jaloot tribe. The conditions continued for some years until God ordered its messenger to lead them. The messenger leaded them and transferred their demands to God. He was inspired to appoint Taloot as their king. The messenger said 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 does he can lead us when we are more merit? He is not rich.”* (Baghareh, 247). One of their objections was that they compared Taloot’s assets and they said that he had neither wealth and financial power nor familial and social position. The messenger said: *“God appointed him and expanded his science and ethics”* (Baghare, 247).

As seen in these verses, two characteristics of scientific and ethical abilities namely “knowledge” and “physical power” are superior to two other traits namely financial power and race. They are preferred in valued system and those who have such characteristics are merit for management and social leadership.

In this case study in Judaism documented by Holy Koran, physical power is expressively considered as an advantage and is ranked equal with science and knowledge. The importance of

this comparison become clear when we understand that how science is valued in the valued system and physical perfect is accompanied it.

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 fight against Jaloot's equipped army. God ordered its messenger that factual fighter against Jaloot is someone that Moses' armor is in his size and is called David. He is Ish's son. Ish was a believing shepherd with ten¹ 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 (Tabatabaeei, p. 299). He was particularly skillful in 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, 1983, p. 256). In Holy Koran, David's belief and his physical power and fighting capability is being appreciated.

In Ghesas Surah of Holy Koran, Moses' physical power, heart believing and ethical approach are documented and he applied them in supporting oppressed against brutal powers (Yusif, verse 14). He fought and destroyed cruel powers (Ghesas, verse 15). It means to believe the aim and faith and resisting against brutal powers that caused Moses moved to Medina and got familiar with Shoayb. Before that, he used his physical power to distribute the water of a well fairly because that the shepherds did not obey their turns. They treaded on the rights of Shoayb's daughters and did not treat them ethically who brought out the can altogether because that it was heavy. They were sure that Moses could not bring out the can alone, so they went around and said that since you called us as cruel, come and bring out the can alone. Moses who had

1. Some believed that Ish had four or six sons

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 that this case shows ethical behavior, physical power, physical health along with faith as an advantage. Of course, it is not desirous to be only 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."*

Findings and New Theoretical Basics

Findings and researches post 1980s indicate that religious and ethical beliefs are serving physical and mental health ((Ehsan Bahrami, 2001). 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, Alvarado *et al* (1995) observed that during oldness, strong religious vision decrease stress and depression caused by death or physical problems (Alvarado and other, 1995, p. 202).

In a research about patients suffered from cancer, Acklin (1983), Brown and Mooger (1983) observed that those patients with ethical and religious beliefs had a positive vision toward their life and their bodies have been more powerful than other patients and they had avoided isolationism (Acklin & other, 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 with 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 is designed in Iran. For example, Bahrami Mashoof (1994) 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, have proved a positive relationship between religious traditions and stress reduction as well increasing in physical, spiritual and mental health (Bahrami, Tashk, 2004, p. 45).

In his research, Bahrami (2004) found a relation between ethical and religious orientation and mental health as anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and major depression (Bahrami, Tashk, 2004, p. 46).

Physical and Mental Health

The relation between ethical and physical skills and sport with (mental and physical health) is obvious for all 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 Islam and valued system, sanitation is paid attention more than any other school. As the Prophet said, Islam is based on health and sanitation and only clean and ethical people will enter the paradise.

This narration expressively points to individual and physical health and ethics that have direct relation with mental health and 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 are happiness and well being really?” For a long time, answering this

question is considered in studies about the relation between body, psyche, calmness and treatment and there are various attitudes in this regard. In 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 fatness (Mathews, 2002, p. 8). Some believe that the lack of physical and psychological health decrease personal capabilities management and the individual faces with a vital confusion which is so-called happiness missing. Since 1980s, other aspects are emphasized in defining health and the capability of managing the people and they are no more limited to negative aspects. WHO emphasizes on positive aspects of health and says that a healthy individual is someone with certain physical, mental, and social and faith conditions (Baum & other, 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”* (Mayers and Dinner, 1995, p. 10). Researches show 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. Those 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 (Mayers & 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, more a person allocate time to his/her personal, physical and spiritual health, less he/she allocate time to negative emotions as well as the factors 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 emphasized in Islam is sanity and personal health to provide desirable conditions and avoiding 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 researches, those people with individual management and health skills namely happy people are define as follow:

First trait: They are individuals with 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 cause 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 that it will destroy the body. Today, one can see that many people with physical sufferings are also face with mental disorders, one of it signals is to miss appropriate times and golden opportunities.

Your Time Rule

One of the nice 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 understands 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 highly attention to ethics, value and believing basics and behave reasonably (Janoff and Bulman, 2001, p. 158).

Second trait: Those people with ethical and personal capabilities management, feel more control sensation and behave weighed namely they neither behave quickly to be seen raw nor with delay to miss all chances. In this line, Imam Ali says to work in a weighed and controlled manner (Barazesh, 2007, p. 1070). They have a 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. So they are appeared as experimentalists and their continuous experiences cause their distinguished and excellence. Imam Ali says: “Anyone who keeps his/her experiences is secured against mistakes” (Barazesh, 1989, p. 630).

Ethical and health people have high flexibility namely the ability of generating 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 of generating ideas about work or duty shapes a fluid factor and finally provide the possibility to develop the details to a generated basic idea (Khatena & Torrance, 1988, p 112).

Third trait: Those people with ethical and personal capabilities management are always optimistic and happy. A direct relation between physical happiness and spiritual calmness is studied and emphasized (Daniel Chuck & Dohrty, 1969, p. 88). Such relation 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. Even they have a beautiful vision toward the others and never try to find the shortcomings (Larson, 2003, p. 12). In Islam, people are prohibited scorn, insult, taunting and blaming (Hajar, verses 12 & 13). Not only happy people are in the highest level of mental and physical health but also they have a good vision toward the others. Islam prohibited blaming vision toward the others. 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 valued system, a person with mental, physical and spiritual health has also healthy and positive feelings. It makes us to be closed to joy windows concept.

Fourth trait: Those people with ethical and personal capabilities management are generally extravert and are powerful in their communication and cooperation with other. 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 & other, 1992, p. 40).

Ethical persons are thinking positively and defects, faults and limitations do not prevent them to achieve supreme aims, physical enhancement and mental enrichment. They have the same behavior about the others.

Case Study

According to a narration, Safieh as the daughter Hay Ebne Akhtab who was originally Judaism and got Muslim and married with Prophet after Kheibar war, came to Prophet while crying and said that the others blame me and say that I am a Judaism and have some defects. Prophet said: “Why didn’t say that my father is Haroon and my uncle is Moses and now I’m prophet’s wife?” That is why they can see the goodness and do not think positively and just see the defects and shortcomings (Kolini, 1388, p. 259).

Ethical and Personal Capabilities in Practice

In this section, we have addressed some scientific recommendations and individual techniques to promote physical capabilities in valued system emphasized many times in this system.

1. Resistance and generosity

One of the secrets on victory and overcoming the obstacles, difficulties and limitations even in matches and generous fighting is their resistance. Today, it is proved 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 trenchant, faith and constancy that affect on surrounded people (Chittenden, 1994, p. 87).

Besides, ethical behaviors are defined for resistant people including appreciation, happiness, feeling expression and thanking others. On this basis, a resistant person with social skills is able to communicate socially. Smiling, laughing, liberality, kindness and team communications are among the success factors that influence over the person and others (Keller & Carlson, 1974, pp. 912-919).

In Holy Koran 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 morale factor. Morale has a fundamental role in victory or failure of a champ and is considered as 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 more and self-reliance can remove big obstacles and overcome strong rivals.

Based on Gresham and Elliot about important individual and team skills, morale has elements like 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 with 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, Prophet ordered his followers to cover their white hairs and beards in wars.

Case Study

Imam Ali paid attention this issue in his words and physical guard. He was the expert of heroic and epical wars, read epic poems (speaking skills) 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).

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, in 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 and agile person. In a case study by Soloman *et al*, it is proved that sport especially in childhood affects on future agility and even on decreasing 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. Researches 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 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 rival's actions with analysis power. This is highly appreciated in valued system. Interestingly, some individual skills and some fighting sports that are accompanied with providence have many positive outcomes. A research was done by Edelman regarding the effects of Aikido (a kind of

fighting sport with centralization and certain actions). He observed it decreases the quarrelsome 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 with many stimuli, there is a mechanism in 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, 1997, p. 54). The mechanism emphasizes on special aspects or indicators in order that the individual could decide which stimuli should be regarded and which ones should be neglected (McGile, 2001, p. 114). Hence, fighter should be situation cognitive and ethical to use or abandon it in appropriate time.

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 need opportunity cognition without ethical consideration and situation cognition"* (Barazes, 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 and regarding ethical issues. So, success secrets in fighting are agility, smartness and ethical humility that differed 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 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 high importance to body as well as cognition and understanding.

Conclusion

As mentioned in this article, physical exercise and various aspects of ethical and personal skills are historical issues backed to ancient civilizations B.A. Its various aspects are highly paid attention. In golden age of religions, this issue had a central importance and almost in all religions, physical well-trained, using correct skills, ethics and physical, personal, motional and ethical skills are highly emphasized and documented that we mentioned some of them. Studies and experiments indicate that in valued system, body is looked via its direct relation with mind and spirit and their mutual effects on each other. Recent studies especially at the end of past millennium and early third millennium show the importance of such relations that the discussions were explained in details. It is necessary to consider 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, most part of human life spent in educational systems and many lessons learned during schools or universities 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 used them along with contemporary classic teachings to enforce and promote the necessity of growing physical skills.
3. The emphasis of 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 emphasis of ethical and valued system on body exercise and the relation between physical health and mind and spirit. This issue and re-considering the details of such commands, culturally and ethically, could influence over the social health and decreasing the diseases, physical problems and personal skills.
5. 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 approach to human health. Such emphasis is not a maxim. Rather, it is a belief that should be implemented practically since healthy bodies always shape healthy society, dynamic thinking and supreme vision.

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