



SPORTSMANIA

From little children to great-grandmothers, hardly anybody has been untouched by the sportmania that has gripped the world. Those who are more deeply obsessed ride the roller coaster of emotions with the success and failure of “their” team. While at times they are elated, on other occasions they become truly depressed due to “their” team losing. Sport discussions, heated debates and even arguments abound everywhere — around the table, on street corners and even in the sacred house of Allah Ta’ala — the Masjid. Hence, as Muslims, as the slaves of our Creator and Nourisher, as the true followers and ardent lovers of our beloved Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), what is our approach to sport?

PERMISSIBLE

Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has himself encouraged certain forms of “sports.” The Ahadith mention the merits of archery and horse riding. However, the bottom line in all the forms of “sport” encouraged by Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is that they were in actual fact a training for the defence of Islam and the Muslims. Outwardly it may have seemed to be just a sport, but in reality it was never just play and amusement. These forms of “sport” in reality were actual skills and expertise required on the battle field. As for modern-day sports, these are an invention of later times which have no relationship to Islam. This is what we need to examine.

INFORMAL

With regard to modern-day sports there are two aspects to it. One is the occasional informal “kicking around” perhaps in one’s backyard. This is permissible provided that the intention is to “freshen up” one’s body and mind so that one may thereafter engage in one’s duties with greater vigour. Furthermore, the type of sport engaged in must not be something that is specific to any religious (*kaafir*) group in such a manner that engagement in that sport associates one with that creed (such as yoga). Also, no law of the Shariah must be violated — for instance as a result of the sport the salaah should not be missed nor must the *satr* (part of the body which is obligatory to

conceal) be exposed, etc. (For more details contact your local Ulama). (see *Fatawaa Mahmoodia* v.12 pg. 375)

The informal aspect is however not the focus of this article. Here we wish to deal with the formal involvement in sports, whether in the form of active participation, especially on a professional level, or merely as a spectator.

ALL OVER A BALL?

It is necessary that we first consider the reality of modern-day sports? If one examines most modern-day sports, the sum total of these sports is that a person can either skillfully hit a fast moving ball with a bat, or catch it, chase after it or bowl it (cricket), or he can deftly kick a ball between two posts after having dribbled around some people

(soccer), or strike a little rubber ball with much force against a wall (squash), or hit a little bigger ball with a racket with speed over a low net

(tennis), or hit an even bigger ball with bare hands over a higher net (volley ball), or hit a small ball with a long iron over far distances and finally into a hole in the ground (golf), or grab an oblong ball and dash wildly across a field to place the ball behind a line (rugby), or other similar “skills” in various other sporting codes. The question to ponder over is the following: Are these “skills” of such a nature that intelligent, thinking people should be driven into a frenzy by them??? Is it really worth the while wasting hours watching somebody kicking, hitting, running behind, or throwing a ball??? Indeed, it is the kind of “skill” that can boast of being among the most unproductive and least beneficial to mankind at large. It can also boast of having ensnared most people to some extent despite being the least beneficial to them.

MULTI MILLION

Undoubtedly sports today has become a multi million rand concern. Multi millions, rather billions, are taken from the hands of the public for

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SPORTMANIA (FROM PAGE ONE)

the “privilege” of watching somebody kicking, hitting or running behind a ball while a handful of people enjoy the massive “spoils,” operating behind the scenes.

SINISTER PLOT

Most modern-day sports are thus a glittering display of some of the most unproductive skills that could be hatched up. These skills have been cleverly manipulated by sinister forces to control the collective mind of the people of the world. By means of the propaganda tool of the media, which is largely in the hands of the propaganda masters, sports have been hyped up to such an extent that millions of people worldwide have become addicted to watching a bunch of people displaying their “skill” of kicking a ball around. Even in economic terms, millions of man hours are lost on working days due to people being distracted from productive work just to spectate some sport.

SPORTS CULTURE

Modern-day sports are also not restricted to kicking a ball around. It is a subtle tool to herd the masses towards adopting the culture of sports stars. A slight indication of this is discerned when one finds people forking out exorbitant sums of money for an ordinary garment with the autograph of some sports hero.

The useless skills of modern-day sports have thus been packaged in an attractive wrapping by the media hype. As a result even Muslims have been lured to indulge in this futility. Other articles in this issue examine other aspects of sports which every Muslim should seriously consider. May Allah Ta’ala

ISLAM AND SPORTS

A true Believer is primarily concerned about the commands of Allah Ta’ala and the Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). He regards the slightest violation as a serious sin. Sins are of two categories. One is the sin that is perpetrated in secrecy. While committing it in secrecy does not diminish its severity, worse than this is the sin that is committed openly and in public.

When a sin is committed openly and those not involved shirk in their duty of *amr bil ma’roof* and *nahy anil munkar* (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil), the perpetrators of that evil as well as those who maintained silence despite their ability to correct the evil are engulfed in the wrath of Allah Ta’ala. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “Verily Allah Ta’ala will not punish all the people due to the actions of a specific group until a sin is committed in their midst. Thereafter, despite their ability to repel the evil they do nothing about it. In such a situation Allah Ta’ala will punish the open sinners as well as the general masses who maintain silence” (*Mishkaat*). In the light of the above Hadith let us consider the following aspects with regard to sports:

ATTIRE

Most sports are played in attire that does not conform to Shar’i requirements. The sporting attire is such that most of the time the thighs of the players are exposed. The *satr* (part of the body compulsory to conceal) for men is from the navel to the knee. Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is reported to have said: “Do not look at the thighs of a living or dead man” (*Mishkaat*). In the case of sports, this sin of exposing the *satr* is perpetrated in public. The spectators must be endowed with some super human abilities if they can manage to look at the player only from his waist upwards and not look at his exposed *satr*. While some commit this open sin together with thousands of others on the sports field, many people collectively commit this evil of looking at the *satr* of others, together with wives and daughters, by huddling around the T.V. Thus *zina* of the eyes is committed collectively and nobody even bats an eyelid. The situation becomes much more worse when people watch tennis. Often the players are shameless women attired in skimpy outfits. Shameless Muslims sit with their families and watch these women prancing around the court. By the time the match is over, they are spiritually drained and empty due to the *zina* of the eyes.

IMPEDIMENT

Another serious calamity of sports is the extent to which it becomes an impediment in the way of the obligatory ibadah. Even those who are normally regular with their salaah often miss it because they were too “enchanted” and “spellbound” by somebody kicking a piece of leather. Either the salaah is completely missed or the congregational salaah in the Musjid is deliberately omitted. People have missed taraweeh salaah in the sacred month of Ramadhaan and, Allah forbid, even fasts were missed due to sports. Recitation of the Qur’an or *zikr* cannot even be given a second thought if a match is on.

There are many other objectionable aspects in sports. The above two are serious enough to make any true Muslim give up his involvement in formal sports. Other evils discussed in this issue make the matter even more severe. However, to understand the inherent evil in modern day sports, one will have to consider it with the light of Imaan that Allah Ta’ala has blessed us with. If we consider it as the *kuffaar* do, then there is nothing else to say except

SPORTS IDOLS

From a purely materialistic point of view, there are many people who have greatly benefitted mankind in general. For instance, computers have made it tremendously easy to accomplish many tasks that previously required great effort and much time. However, ask the millions of computer users worldwide and perhaps a few will know who invented the computer. Similarly, hardly anyone knows who invented the microwave oven or the cellular phone. The same can be said for a hundred other items which people benefit from daily.

LEGEND

Yet when it comes to the utterly useless skills of sport, the one that can keep whacking a fast moving ball with a bat becomes a hero for millions the world over. Somebody who can dribble through a bunch of people and kick a ball between two posts becomes a legend. Young and old admire him, adore him and many even idolise him. This is easily discernible from many aspects in the admirers life.

AUTOGRAPH

Even Muslim youth will be seen wearing garments autographed by some sports star, or wearing the scarf with their team colours, with great pride. Children who will sometimes be seen carelessly handling the Qur'an-e-Kareem as if it was an ordinary book, will be seen attaching great value to a book or a bat which was personally autographed by their favourite player. Albums of *kaafir* teams will be treasured as prize possessions. Walls of rooms will be found pasted with photographs of teams and players. Ask many young boys (and many old men) to name the players of their team and they will rattle off twelve names as if they were reciting *sura fatiha*. They will even give you a bit of the history of each player. Dare anyone criticise their team or their star and they will defend their idol as if their own honour was sullied.

CONQUERED

Yet, ask these very Muslims, who know the details of entire teams at their finger tips, some aspects about the history of the greatest personality of all mankind, Sayyidina Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Many will not know anything beyond a few simple facts they learnt in primary madrasah. Ask a few sports questions and see how the answers are immediately given. Ask the same people about how many sons did Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) have and what were their names? Ask them in which year did Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) conquer Makkatul Mukarramah? One will be surprised as to how many are ignorant of the answers to these questions, yet they know in which year a certain bunch of disbelievers conquered the world's soccer teams in the world cup. Indeed, it is a time to hang our heads in utter shame if we know more about *kaafir* sports stars than we know about Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

When the situation has deteriorated to this level, we have to definitely stop in our tracks and totally abandon this evil that has invaded our lives. Stop. Take courage. Put a full stop

INSULTING ISLAM

One's honour has no price. People would spend all they have to protect their honour and the honour of their families. The one who attempts to taint their honour will be repulsed in every possible manner. Alas, it is only the forlorn Deen of Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) that receives negligible help when it is insulted. Sports in particular seems to be at the forefront of insulting Islam.

KALIMA KICKED

Not long ago, Nike Incorporated apologised in the face of severe protest for putting the name of Allah on sports shoes. First they put the name of Allah on a shoe so that it will be trampled and soiled. Then they conveniently found the *kalima* on the Saudi flag and printed it on footballs. The footballs were manufactured by A.G. Enterprises of India and were on sale in London. First the name of Allah was being trampled. Now the *kalima* is being kicked around — all in the name of sport. It is naive to think that these occurrences are mere coincidences. Even before the shoe affair, Nike had once erected a billboard which depicted a basketball player. The picture was headlined with the words "They called him Allah." Again, all in the name of sport. Yet Muslims still feel proud to be associated with Nike and its products. They still find some "enjoyment" in the futile sports that is used as a ready tool to insult Islam.

WORLD CUP

The participation of Muslims in the world cup has led to further desecration of the *Kalima*. As a result of Saudi Arabia's participation, their flag has been regularly appearing in our local newspapers as well as newspapers all over the world. The flag depicts the *kalima* of Islam. Millions of these newspapers will be in the hands of non-Muslims. One can barely imagine the extent to which the *Kalima* will be dishonoured. It will be thrown around, trampled upon, become the wrapping for things unimaginable and a host of other such aspects. But, alas, participation in the world cup must go on inspite of the desecration of the *Kalima*! Thus in the name of the world cup the *Kalima* is dishonoured, but Muslims are still glued to the world cup. Do we care for the honour of the *Kalima* and for the honour of Islam???

FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of Faqihul Ummah Hazrath Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is a reply to a letter seeking guidance.

ENEMIES?

SUMMARY OF LETTER:

ÈÇÓää ÊÚÇái

Respected Mufti Saheb

ÇáÓáÇä ÚáiBä æÑíäÉ Çáää æÈÑBÇÊä

I am constantly harassed by some enemies who are bent on inflicting difficulties upon me. As a result I am greatly disturbed. My life has become a misery and I am extremely despondent. My family is also disturbed and troubled by the conditions. I cannot fathom what to do. I am being harassed absolutely without reason. Kindly advise me as to what I should do.

SUMMARY OF REPLY:

ÈÇÓää ÊÚÇái

Respected Brother

ÇáÓáÇä ÚáiBä æÑíäÉ Çáää æÈÑBÇÊä

I have received your letter and was greatly saddened by your plight. Remain engaged in your own work. Do not bother about what plots and schemes are being hatched against you. Treat every person with respect and with good character. As a result those who are bent on harming you will themselves refrain from their evil ways. Allah Ta'ala declares: "The consequence of evil plots will fall on the perpetrators." If on the one hand your enemies are waiting for the opportune moment to harm you, on the other hand Allah Ta'ala is there to protect you. Sheikh Sa'di (R.A.) says: "Who is it that can dare to oppress if You (Allah Ta'ala) grant assistance, who can dare to arrest if You release." May Allah Ta'ala assist you in your predicament and grant you peace. (*Malfoozaat - vol.1, pg.271*)

SPORTS AND VICE

Drinking, lewd behaviour and other vices are closely linked to modern-day sports, especially professional sports. Drunken fans are an extremely common sight. According to a newspaper report, on the night before the world cup started, fans in France packed every place "that sold alcohol" (Daily News - 10/06/98). What else can really be expected from the kuffaar hordes? However, many Muslims, by constant association with the drinking mobs at sporting venues have fallen into this vice. Players from Muslim countries have also disgraced themselves and embarrassed Muslims in general with their totally un-Islamic conduct. Yet Muslims cheer the very people who have let Islam down.

Again, it is sporting events which streakers (people who dash around stark naked in public) choose to insult even basic human values. If at just one event one's child is exposed to such animal behaviour, the ill-effects will last a lifetime. Can a true Muslim ever risk such a situation?

Depraved sexual tendencies also seem to find a special home in sporting circles. More than fifty gay and lesbian tennis clubs in the U.S. have been listed in a posting to the internet. Many sports stars have themselves declared their sexual depravity. Youth who idolise these stars are at risk of following in their footsteps all the way.

When sports has degenerated to these despicable levels, the only honourable thing to do . . . is to have nothing to do with it.

TAKING STOCK

Dear sincere Muslim, Dear follower and true lover of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam):

While the sportmania has gripped the world, sit back briefly and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I also overwhelmed by all the media hype about a bunch of people kicking a ball around? (*If yes, it means the propaganda machine has found another victim.*)

2. Have I ever missed any salaah, or missed performing it with *Jama'ah* in the Musjid, due to sports? (*If yes, then sports is your terrible enemy since it is taking you on the path of Allah Ta'ala's wrath!*)

3. Do I know more about *kaafir* sports stars than what I know about Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)? (*If yes, ... no words can describe something so ghastly. Stop! For Allah's sake stop ... Stop and make amends, before your heart stops and it is too late.*)

4. Since most people have been caught up in this insane frenzy, will I also blindly follow the hordes irrespective of what effect it has on my Imaan? Or do I have the courage of my convictions to say "Enough is enough!?" (*Answer that with the Imaan in your heart!*)

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