

2020.04.005. KONSTANTIN SIMONOV. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS FOR MODERN SPORTS // *Materials of the International scientific and practical conference "Innovative Processes in the National Economy and Socio-Humanitarian Sphere", January 31, 2018, edited by E. Tkacheva. Belgorod, 2018. P. 157–160.*

Keywords: religion, religious influence, Islam and physical culture, sport, ritual.

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The author examines the connection of religious doctrines of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism with physical culture and sports. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the usefulness and necessity of the physical training are not denied by any one of them. The desire to win the competition, to become the best, to improve ourselves does not contradict any religious postulates. The power of sports as well as the power of religion is to teach us respect for certain rules of order and responsibility, and thus creates an internal harmony that combines the beauty of body and spirit.

These days, watching various competitions, we are increasingly witnessing athletes turning to God, sincerely praying for victory, according to their religious beliefs to support their mental state. A solemn, sometimes even ritual, appeal to God before responsible starts has become almost a tradition and part of the competition scenario.

It should be emphasized that both the current and the past successes of Muslim athletes are not accidental. Firstly, physical training in no way contradicts the canons of Islam (even the Taliban, known for their commitment to traditional Islam, supported the development of sports such as wrestling, horse racing and cricket during their stay in Afghanistan in 1996–2001). Secondly, the Muslim prayer ceremony (namaz) contains elements of traditional

gymnastics. And thirdly – the availability of huge financial opportunities. Numerous sheikhs and rulers of the rich countries of the Arab region invest enormous sums in the development of sports in their (and not only in their own) countries.

Islam teaches that the faithful believers should take care of their body and strive to use its capabilities in a proper way. There are numerous examples of how Prophet Mohammed recommended to his devotees shoot at targets, practice horse racing and swimming to maintain their physical condition. The fact that a truly believing person has to be physically strong was not subject to and is not subject to any doubt from the point of view of adherents of Islamic teaching. Nowadays the welfare principles remain as important in a life of a Muslim, as it was many centuries ago.

The policy of the religious authorities is as follows: we have to do everything in our power to maintain an active physical condition. Nowadays every Muslim should devote time to this at least once a week. However, attending gyms and fitness-centers are strictly prohibited because the created environment is not suitable for a faithful Muslim. Physical training at home becomes the best solution (husband and wife can do exercises together). Physical training outside can be appropriate too, but all the religious requirements must be observed. Football, basketball, volleyball and bodybuilding are the perfect option in this regard. There are even special samples of modern sportswear for Muslims, men and women.

Speaking of Christianity, the author calls the Olympic Games the most important sporting event. However, it should be noted that the Christian attitude to sports was initially ambiguous. The Roman emperor Theodosius converted to Christianity in 391 AD and banned the Olympic Games that existed for 1170 years at that time. Pierre de Coubertin revived the Games many years later.

Worth mentioning is the Protestants especially. All churches in Western Europe and the United States have their own sports clubs and amateur teams in all sports.

The Reformation and the bourgeois revolutions were able to change the principles of life in the minds of Catholics and their attitude to sport. Thus, football and boxing appeared in England, bodybuilding in Germany, and in the Netherlands and Switzerland began the developing of winter sports.

The article also analyzes the concepts of Judaism. There was no talk of sport during the formation of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Sports movement became a means of national cohesion much later. The first sports clubs were created at the beginning of the 20th century. However, sport reached the Holy Land a bit later, because the representatives of local religious circles attached importance only to spiritual development. The task to strengthen the physical training of soldiers for military service appeared only with establishment of the state of Israel. Other religious organizations which paid attention not only to spiritual development, but also to physical development arose at the same time.

There are no equal to Buddhism among the religious denominations that have influenced the development of sports. This is where a huge number of martial art was created, such as karate, judo, taekwondo and many others. For the adherents of Buddhism, it was not just a sport, but a philosophy.

Analyzing the concepts of Hinduism and attitude to physical education, the author concludes that it is the adherents of Hinduism developed the technique of healing the human body – yoga, and gave the world chessboard. In the Hindu doctrine, there is an idea that the stronger the body, the better it perceives divine energy.

In conclusion, no religion denies the need for sports for people. The power of sport, as well as the power of religion, is that it teaches you to follow certain rules, forms a harmony in a person that combines the beauty of the body and spirit.

Author of the abstract – Kristina Yunitskaya