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Author(s):

Ahmad Saad Ahmad Al-Dafrawi

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An Islamic Viewpoint on Doping in Sports: An Analytical Study

Ahmad Saad Ahmad AL-Dafrawi*

Department of Islamic Law,
Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL),
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia

Abstract

Islam recommends its followers to protect the body, to enjoy full health and also prohibits them from endangering their own soul (*an-Nafs*) which is within their body. This study attempts to present the perspective of Islamic *Shari'ah* regarding performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) used in sports. This is achieved by showing that using prohibited substances and methods constitutes fraud. Moreover, it also has a detrimental effect on the right to life and the right of bodily integrity. The problem states that some sports practitioners accept the idea of taking banned items and consider it to be inevitable in line with the sweeping trend of globalization. However, it is a fact that such behaviour contradicts Islamic ethics and rules which forbid cheating. This study employed descriptive, analytical, and inferential methods as these methods suit the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The originality and value of this study appears in its ethical presentation and treatment of the phenomenon which has been stripped of any moral determinant. The most important finding of this study is that cheating in sports, particularly doping in sports, is a serious problem that needs a radical solution. Furthermore, any respected athlete (male or female) who is taking PEDs should abstain from taking such drugs because it is considered as cheating that harms the body and endangers life. Accordingly, a person who takes prohibited and banned drugs contravenes both the Islamic *Shari'ah* and the secular law. Moreover, that person deserves punishment suggested by both of these codes of law.

Keywords: Abrahamic religions, doping, ethics, gene doping, globalization, Islam, sports

Introduction

Contrary to what might be assumed by some, Islamic law can handle critical problems and provide suitable solutions to them regardless of their nature and the surrounding environment. One of the existing problems that are affecting people and their careers is doping in sports. As Vlad and his colleagues rightly put it, doping turns into a fundamental and intricate problem inside the sports' zone, and therefore it needs a serious study, as experts struggle until now to comprehend how and why it occurs, and how to prevent it.¹

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ahmad Saad Ahmad AL-Dafrawi, Doctoral Candidate Department of Islamic Law, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia, at manfromnowhere290@gmail.com.

¹Robert Alexandru Vlad, Gabriel Hancu, Gabriel Cosmin Popescu, and Ioana Andreea Lungu, "Doping in Sports, a Never-Ending Story?" *Advanced Pharmaceutical Bulletin* 8, no. 4 (2018): 529-534.

It is likely that wishing to enhance physical abilities to gain preferable results in competitions has pushed players to try substitutional means to exercise harder.² Regardless of the reasons that lead to doping in sports, recreational drug use is not a part of medical therapy at all. Some theories explain the causes of drug consumption, such as the “disease model” and “moral model.” The central premise of the disease model is that ‘physical dependency’ is a biological situation and therefore users are victims who need help, not condemnation. The focal point of the “moral model” is that individuals become addicted on their own accord. It has been viewed as an unfairly prejudiced judgment.³ The use of physical steroids in sports by some athletes represents a blatant moral contradiction to the principle of honest athletic competition. It can be considered as fraudulent method that undermines the concept of “fair play” or, in other words, a fraudulent practice to obtain false sports victories.⁴ Certainly, the ethical rationale for the recent Code of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) expresses the real meaning of ‘spirit of sport’ and this is a normative hypothesis that supports what sport is meant to be.⁵

By the way, consuming performance-enhancing drugs in the sports field is not new. An extract from Ephedra named ‘Ma Huang’ was employed as an enhancer for human performance in China around 5000 years ago.⁶ Thereafter, in the year of 395 AD, the ancient games were frozen by the order of the Emperor Theodosius and the reason of that was the deceptive nature of consuming supplements.⁷ Additionally, in ancient pagan societies, despite the early Greeks and artists in general, along the history have had deeply and considerable aesthetical admiration for the completeness of man appearance. But the obsession about the physical perfectionism turned up to become an ethical imperative.⁸ Greek athletes who break the Olympic principles were expelled from the games

²Filomena Mazzeo, Francesca D’ Elia and Gaetano Raiola, “Drugs in Sport: Doping Development and Ethical Analysis,” *Sport Science* 11, no. 1 (2018): 106-112.

³Mansur Ali, “Perspectives on Drug Addiction in Islamic History and Theology,” *Religions* 5, no. 3 (2014): 912-928.

⁴Ahmad, Saad Ahmad, (in Arabic), *Criminal Responsibility of Taking Physical Steroids in Sports and its Effect in Jordanian and Iraqi Law: A Comparative Study*, 1st ed. (Amman: Dar Ammar Publishers, 2015), 50.

⁵Erika Kleiderman, Rachel Thompson, Pascal Borry, Audrey Boily, and Bartha Maria Knoppers, “Doping controls and the ‘Mature Minor’ Elite Athlete: towards Clarification?” *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 12, no. 1 (2020): 179-187.

⁶Dhruv Mahendru, Subodh Kumar, Ajay Prakash, and Bikash Medhi, “Drugs in Sport: The Curse of Doping and Role of Pharmacologist,” *Indian Journal of Pharmacology* 51, no. 01 (2019): 1-3.

⁷Ahmad Saad Ahmad AL-Dafrawi, Mohamad Asmadi Abdullah, Majdah Zawawi and Zainudin Ismail, “Performance-Enhancing Medicines in Sports: Legal Discussion,” *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 4, no. 17 (2019b): 48-60.

⁸Mike McNamee, “Whose Prometheus? Transhumanism, Biotechnology and the Moral Topography of Sports Medicine,” in *The Ethics of Sports Medicine*, eds., Claudio M. Tamburrini, and Trobjörn Tännsjö (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 63-76.

permanently and had their names engraved on the stone columns lining the entrance of the Olympic amphitheater, besides their family names and the specific information of the crime.⁹ It is important to notice that a man did not stop trying to reach the level of immortality. But after realizing that his existence in this universe is impermanent. He changed his ultimate goal from reaching eternity to achieving perfection. On walking this long road, he innovated and applied assorted methods and lifestyles to win the highest rank, or even just to appear perfect.¹⁰ Nonetheless, all these do not justify the use of unethical or illegal methods such as doping in sports to win a competition or achieve a social position as the case may be.

2. Definitions of Terms

The researcher is not inclined to believe that the idea of this research is characterized by ambiguity, but at the same time there are specialized idiomatic expressions that should be clarified, and their meaning simplified.

a. **Al-Islam:** The meaning of al-Islam as stated in the Hadīth provided by Imam Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: “O Muḥammad! Inform me about Islam.” The Messenger of Allah (SAW) replied, “Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger (SAW), that you should perform Ṣalāt (ritual prayer), pay az-Zakāt, fast during Ramaḍan, and perform Ḥajj (Pilgrimage) to the House (AL-Ka‘bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it).” He said: “You have spoken the truth.”¹¹

b. **Doping:** Doping exemplifies the state of cheating in sport, which is unscrupulous, illicit and affecting health.¹²

c. **Gene doping:** From a simplistic point of view, ‘Gene doping’ can be described as the transmission of genetic matter in purpose to enhance sportive performance.¹³

⁹Richard I. G. Holt, Ioulietta Erotokritou-Mulligan and Peter H. Sönksen, “The History of Doping and Growth Hormone Abuse in Sport,” *Growth Hormone and IGF Research* 19, no. 4 (2009): 320-6.

¹⁰Ahmad Saad Ahmad Al-Dafrawi, (in Arabic), “Taking Physical Steroids in Sport Competitions: From an Ethical-Legal Perspective,” *Journal of Political Science and Law* 2, no. 9 (2018): 188-206.

¹¹40 Hadith Nawawi, “Hadith no. 2: Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW),” *www.Sunnah.com* (n. d.), Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40/2> (accessed 14 April, 2020).

¹²Luca Mallia, Lambros Lazuras, Vassilis Barkoukis, Ralf Brand, Franz Baumgarten, Haralambos Tsorbatzoudis, Arnaldo Zelli, and Fabio Lucidi, “Doping Use in Sport Teams: The Development and Validation of Measures of Team-based Efficacy Beliefs and Moral Disengagement from a Cross-national Perspective,” *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 25 (July 2016): 78-88.

¹³Vita Birzniece, “Doping in Sport: Effects, Harm and Misconceptions,” *Internal Medicine Journal* 45, no. 3 (2015): 239-248.

d. **Globalization:** From a cultural point of view, globalization is characterized as ‘a social style where the limitations of topography on social and developmental arrangements subside and in which individuals are progressively mindful that they are retreating.’¹⁴

3. Ethics and Religion in Sports Environment

Although Islam has laid down various rules to regulate human behavior and fundamental acts of worship (*Ibadah*), including physical activity, Islam was not the first religion to show interest in physical activity. In fact, Judaism and Christianity preceded Islam in this matter. As an illustration, “wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might.”¹⁵ Moreover, it is also said: “Let them praise his name in the dance.”¹⁶ The World Jewish Encyclopedia clearly states: ‘that the modern Jewish movement is working to encourage Jewish youth to train their bodies in order to achieve what it called a Muscle Jews.’¹⁷ This is the viewpoint of Judaism. What about the Christianity side? In Christianity, some manifestations of anti-sports commitment have emerged from some Christian religious leaders, especially in Protestant denomination, between the Puritans if we wanted to be more precise.¹⁸

The Vatican, on the other hand, recently issued a document consisting of five chapters. Chapter four of the document is centered on challenges in the light of the Bible, and thus talks about promoting human values in sports. The Vatican Chamber also stressed the need to condemn deviations in the world of sports, and athletes also must wonder if their actions are in the service of the human person and a just social order. This chapter highlights four challenges to sports today: firstly, disrespecting the body and dealing with it as a machine; secondly, using doping; thirdly, corruption; and finally, fans.¹⁹ For its part, Islam is a comprehensive religion that aims to strike a balance between the soul and the body and considers balancing to be the basis for goodness in all matters.²⁰ Islam considers the health

¹⁴Denis Tolkach, and Stephen Pratt, “Globalisation and Cultural Change in Pacific Island Countries: the Role of Tourism,” *Tourism Geographies* (2019): 1-26.

¹⁵Samuel 6: 14, The International Bible Society - Biblica, “2 Samuel 6 - New International Version (NIV),” *biblica.com*, (n. d.), <https://www.biblica.com/bible/niv/2-samuel/6/>. (accessed 9 April, 2020).

¹⁶King James Bible Online, “Psalms 149: 3,” *kingjamesbibleonline.org*, (n.d.), <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-149-3/>. (accessed 9 April, 2020).

¹⁷Amin Anwar El-Khouly, (in Arabic), “Sports and Society/ الرياضة والمجتمع,” *The Knowledge World*, issue no. 216, (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literatures, 1996), 169.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁹Radiovaticana, (in Arabic), “الرؤية المسيحية للرياضة والشخص البشري محور وثيقة صادرة عن دائرة العلمانيين والعائلة والحياة,” *archivioradiovaticana.va*, (June 1st, 2018). http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2018/06/01/الرؤية_المسيحية_للرياضة_والشخص_البشري_محور_وثيقة_صادرة_عن_دائرة [ar-1375490](http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2018/06/01/الرؤية_المسيحية_للرياضة_والشخص_البشري_محور_وثيقة_صادرة_عن_دائرة/ar-1375490). (accessed 10 April, 2020).

²⁰Ahmad Saad Ahmad Al-Dafrawi, Mohamad Asmadi Abdullah, Majdah Zawawi and Zainudin Ismail, (in Arabic), “Taking Steroids in the Sports Field: (Islamic and Conventional Law

of man and the safety of the body to be worth observing. In contrast to this friendly approach taken by Islam toward the human body, some religions and philosophies that have fought the human body on the basis that this attitude is necessary for the purification and uplifting of the soul. This is the case Saitō Ōgomaku's ceremony²¹ in Japan.

The account given above shows that Islam comes with an intermediate curriculum that teaches its followers the balance between body and soul, the balance between intellect and heart, balancing between religion plus world, and the ideal. It also teaches them that the wellbeing (*āfiyah*), including the wellness of the body is one of the greatest blessings of God bestowed on man.²² Western scholars have recently concluded that doping behaviour (by some athletes) is inescapable. Millán Aguilar-Navarro and his fellows believe "that doping might vary greatly depending on the type of sport, sports level, and athletes' attitudes and beliefs."²³ While Islam as a religion has restored the individuals' behaviour in all matters towards the "Freedom of Gain" and "Choice," and this applies to Performance-Enhancing Elements. The noble Qur'ān in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* states: "On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns. (Pray) Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector; help us against those who stand against Faith".²⁴ However, religion could be seen as a crucial protective factor against doping.²⁵ Ethics can also play an important role in fighting doping in sports. Islamically speaking, ethics as an expression has the same meaning that '*Akhlaq*,' '*Adāb*' or 'Islamic virtues' have. The

Perspective)," *International Journal of Muslim World Studies* 17, no. 1 (2019a): 318-355. [file:///C:/Users/user/Dropbox/My%20PC%20\(DESKTOP-S768FPC\)/Downloads/171.pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Dropbox/My%20PC%20(DESKTOP-S768FPC)/Downloads/171.pdf)

²¹The Japanese maintain that, "when the demons descend, the flowering will begin," so (Saitō Ōgomaku) is a celebration that welcomes spring, while simultaneously cleans members' spirits. The peak of this custom is the fire-walking worship. After the petition tablets and large logs of kindling have set practically ablaze, they are not permitted to utilize water. So, they supplant it with salt. The individual who has crossed the fire consequently plays out a twofold purification movement. Please check: Carmen Sapunaru Tamas, "The Ritual Significance of Purification Practices in Japan," *Kwansei Gakuin University Humanities Review* 19, (2015): 1-19. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143638475.pdf>.

²²Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, (in Arabic), *Organ Transplantation from the Islamic Perspective* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2010), 13.

²³Millán Aguilar-Navarro, Juan Jose Salinero, Jesus Muñoz-Guerra, María del Mar Plata, and Juan Del Coso, "Sport-Specific Use of Doping Substances: Analysis of World Anti-Doping Agency Doping Control Tests between 2014 and 2017," *Substance Use and Misuse* 55, no. 8 (2020): 1361-1369.

²⁴Al-Baqarah 2:286; Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān: Text and Translation* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2007), 53.

²⁵Jelena Rodek, Damir Sekulic, and Emir Pasalic, "Can We Consider Religiousness as a Protective Factor Against Doping Behavior in Sport?" *Journal of Religion and Health* 48, no. 4, Article number: 445, (2009): 445-453.

Qur'ān and the practices of the messenger of Allah Moḥammad (SAW), all his sayings and actions, are the fundamental sources of Islamic manners.²⁶ It is well known that the human act is not related to anything as much as it is related to ethics, so the determination of being saner depends on being more moral. On this basis, morality is the root of all human characteristics.²⁷

The relationship between jurisprudence and ethics, as two independent fields, raises many questions and problems which are further complicated by the fact that jurisprudence and ethics deal with the human act in terms of its judgment and evaluation.²⁸ This study begins with the presentation of general ideas on the topic. Then it proceeds to simplify the concept and meaning of a competitive sport and its purpose, based on the Islamic ethical system. It is followed by an explanation and demonstration of the inconsistency of the actions of taking and giving physical steroids to the ethical system of Islam. Finally, this study examines the potential for resilience of Islamic moral orders in the post-third era of globalization.

4. The Study Aim

The ultimate goal of this study is to highlight the ethical foundations of Islamic law and argue that such ethics can be applied to curb consumption of Performance-Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) in sports and to prove that doping of the so-called PEDs, represents cheating and fraud in its clearest forms.

5. The Limitations

In fact, there are many limitations that have left their clear marks in this study. The first and most important of these determinants is the very small number of previous studies that dealt with the issue of cheating in sports using Performance-Enhancing Drugs specifically, in terms of incompatibility with religion, especially with 'Islamic Ethics.' Second, as a matter of commitment to the research topic and its academic methodology, researcher will not attempt to address any other subject that does not have a close relationship with the research topic, and this study does not spearhead or aspire to bring a number of other broad and comprehensive subjects closer together, and its procedures do not apply to any similar subject.

²⁶Puteri Nemie Jahn Kassim, Ariff Osman H. O., and Ramizah Wan Muhammad, "Educating Future Medical Professionals with the Fundamentals of Law and Ethics," *International Medical Journal Malaysia* 16, no. 2 (2017): 101-105. <https://journals.iium.edu.my/kom/index.php/imjm/article/view/334>

²⁷Nourreddine Bin Kaddour, (in Arabic), "Philosophical Independence and Renewal of Taha Abd al-Rahman," *Islāmīyat al Ma'rifah: Journal of Contemporary Islamic Thought* 24, no. 93 (2018): 119-143.

²⁸Mutaz Al-Khatib, (in Arabic), "From a Fiqhi Approach to an Ethical Approach: Contemporary *Ijtihād* and the Genome as a Case study," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 3, no. 1-2 (2019): 90-127.

6. Can Ethical Competition in Sports be Achieved?

This part will start with a review of the contemporary concept of sports by discussing the meaning of the term of 'Sports'. Can athletes compete in a moral and ethical manner? Answering this question is an important matter which cannot be ignored as morality and ethics should be at the center of human activities, especially mutual ones, such as sporting competition. In this regard, it could be said that ethical regimes, whether in the form of religious principles and rulings or secular rules and regulations, can sufficiently govern the behaviour of the fraudulent players who violate such principles and rules established therein. It is a fact that the sports community has yet to consider religious principles as a means to regulate sports activities. However, this has not been caused by the weakness of religion and its principles. Rather it is caused by the dominance of the idea of modernity and the pressure of globalization. As for the definition of sports, as a technical term, it can be said that "sports is commonly used to describe a physical activity that has a competitive element."²⁹ Such physical activities may be done by an elite athlete or by an enthusiast amateur player.³⁰ But the researcher argues here that the meaning of a sport includes both physical and spiritual activities. While according to the definition which gave above the common use for the expression of sports excludes spiritual activity from the scope of a sport.

Historically, there are pieces of evidence of the use of physical ability to deliver news of victory in battles (which is a heroic act that has clear moral connotations, taking into account the interest of the nation). For example, an Athenian runner has been sent from the city of Marathon to the city of Athens, around 25 miles (40 km) between apart and due to exhaustion, he died after declaration of Persian's army loss.³¹

Sports activities affect the behaviour of individuals. For example, sports plays a great role in morality enhancement of people to some degrees. Sports provides a single dimension in teaching the ethical values for persons. Additionally, it helps individuals

²⁹Margaret Whitehead, "Aims as an Issue in Physical Education," in *Issues in Physical Education*, eds., Susan Anne Capel and Susan Piotrowski (London/New York: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 7-21.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Adam Augustyn, Adam Zeidan, Alicja Zelazko, Alison Eldridge, Amy McKenna, Amy Tikkanen, Barbara A. Schreiber, Brian Duignan, Deepti Mahajan, Dutta Promeet, Emily Rodriguez, Erik Gregersen, Gaurav Shukla, Gita Liesangthem, Gloria Lotha, Grace Young, Henry Bolzon, J. E. Luebering, Jeff Wallenfeldt, Joan Hibler, John P. Rafferty, Kanchan Gupta, Kara Rogers, Kenny Chmielewski, Kokila Manchanda, Laura Chaveriat, Letricia Dixon, Meg Matthias, Melissa Petruzzello, Michael Ray, Michele Metych, Myles Hudson, Patricia Bauer, Piyush Bhatya, Sherman Hollar, Shiveta Singh, Shweta Gupta, Stephen Seddon, The Information Architects of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Veenu Setia, and World Data Editors. (eds.), "Battle of Marathon - Greek History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. (May 06, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Marathon>. (accessed 31 May, 2020).

understand the ethical principles.³² Yıldız confirms in a nutshell, “ethical and moral behaviors are learned in a social environment. A sports activity, in itself, is neither moral nor ethical.”³³ The author could be right in most of the above statements. However, his claim that “a sports activity, in itself, is neither moral nor ethical” is not clear because a sports activity is a human act and an act could arguably be described as a moral or an ethical or as an immoral or an unethical act.

If we take an example of what I mentioned above, some believe that boxing is a sport that teaches patience and discipline, and thus they see that it has moral benefits, while others argue that there is no single real benefit behind practicing the sport of boxing, on the contrary, it increases hostility and abolishes the method of human dialogue.

Sports is not just another human activity. In sports, we have the chance to confront the natural world and our own substance as entities of mind and body. The physical part of the athletic activity, which assures this magnificent confrontation, cannot be found in such clarity anywhere else. Unfortunately, up to now, we have failed to see and appreciate this fact. But doping malpractice can be the point from which we can start to re-organize the hierarchy of our priorities and values.³⁴

At present, sports become subject to fluctuations in supply and demand, and morality and fair play no longer had a place in it. Winning the competitions become the first and last thing, even at the expense of sport integrity.³⁵ The above discussion is on the sports activities in their general meaning.

In the Muslim world, and specifically in Malaysia as Abd Rahim and his colleagues mentioned, the Arabic term for sports is *al-Riyāḍah* which refers to doing beneficial activities especially the physical one in free time.³⁶ According to them, sports means: “the use of physical strength to preserve good physical health and fitness in spreading Islamic teachings.”³⁷ An important question that may come to mind here is whether or not participation in sports is allowed in Islam? To answer this, one can say that all things are originally licit/الإباحة في الأشياء (i.e., until there is a rule prohibiting them). This is a remarkable *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* rule, assuming that whole things are lawful unless

³²Özer Yıldız, “The Views of Elite Bodybuilding Athletes Concerning Doping Training, Their Level of Knowledge about Doping, and Values Education in Sport,” *World Journal of Education* 9, no. 1 (2019): 56-63.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Konstantinos Dedousis, “Doping as a Manifestation of a Narcissistic Civilization,” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* (2019): 1-15.

³⁵Ario Federici, and Flavio Cocco, “Young People and Sports Ethics: An Investment from School to Society,” *Formazione and Insegnamento* 17, no. 1 (2019): 89-100.

³⁶Baidruel Hairiel Abd Rahim, Nurazzura Mohamad Diah, Haizuran Mohd Jani, and Abdul Sham Ahmad, “Islam and Sport: From Human Experiences to Revelation,” *Intellectual Discourse* 27, no. 2, (2019): 413-430.

³⁷Ibid.

forbidden by specific *Sharī'ah* rulings. However, we shall not forget that enforcing this *Sharī'ah* rule will be relevant only when it comes to things, not deeds, like drink and eat plus getting an advantage by proper things. Assuming that most useful things are originally allowed means that they are approved by the legislator, the Almighty Allah.³⁸ It must be clearly seen that Islam does not prevent the fun in any legitimate game (games), as games are important for individuals and groups, even if they are done just for entertainment, amusement, or laughter.³⁹ Nowadays, regular exercises can help players develop their body performance and also get the highest results whilst considering their physical qualifications and capacity.⁴⁰ All these are good and beneficial. Unfortunately, some go beyond these and engage in immoral and illegal activities such as obtaining big advantages faster, and with little efforts by using illegitimate substances and/or misusing recognized medications, with the purpose of boosting their performance.⁴¹

Islamic ethics may well be an effective method of curbing these improper activities including doping in sports. Practically speaking, the term doping has been defined as: The athlete's reliance on banned substances and methods to enhance training and competition outcomes.⁴²

Previously, the perception of doping prohibited banned substances in sports was seen as an unethical act, and its rejection was related to the morality aspect only.⁴³ Not only that, but it has become obvious that the taking these illegal substances by players may cause death.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, doping techniques have become more sophisticated and harder to reveal. Not only that, but also other doping ways and styles have emerged, including the more neoteric gene doping.⁴⁵ Which encouraged Santamaría and Mazzeo to reveal some part of its moral complexities associated with its procedure by saying: “the main ethical issues related to genetic doping are also found in their detection that involves tissue

³⁸Imran A. K. Nyazee, *Islamic Jurisprudence* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2003), 237.

³⁹Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, *Jurisprudence of Amusement and Recreation* (Cairo: Wahbah Publisher, 2006), 49.

⁴⁰G. Savino, L. Valenti, R. D'Alisera, M. Pinelli, Y. Persi, T. Trenti, and WDPP, Working Group Doping Prevention Project, “Dietary Supplements, Drugs and Doping in the Sport Society,” *Annali di Igiene, Medicina Preventiva e di Comunità* 31, no. 6 (2019): 548-555.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Yuka Murofushi, Yujiro Kawata, Akari Kamimura, Masataka Hirosawa and Nobuto Shibata, “Impact of Anti-doping Education and Doping Control Experience on Anti-doping Knowledge in Japanese University Athletes: a Cross-Sectional Study,” *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy* 13, no. 1, Article no. 44, (2018).

⁴³Al-Dafrawi, et al, “Performance-Enhancing Medicines in Sports: Legal Discussion,” op. cit., 49.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Rebeca Araujo Cantelmo, Alessandra Pereira Da Silva, Celso Teixeira Mendes-Junior and Daniel Junqueira Dorta, “Gene Doping: Present and Future,” *European Journal of Sport Science* (2019): 1-9.

sampling. It will be unlikely that athletes can be forced to give consent to this procedure given the invasive nature of the biopsies to necessary to submit.”⁴⁶ Needless to say, that fairness is the most essential and considerable norm of sports.⁴⁷ Based on this, one could say that employing doping in sports devastates the ethics of sports.⁴⁸ For the sake of sports, ethical practices and fair competition should be encouraged. At the same time, doping should be discouraged because it opens the door to an unjust benefit.⁴⁹ An overview of the relevant literature shows that doping is seen as an illegal conduct, unsafe for health, action on the fundamental of a mindful and thoughtful option which drive to the final target.⁵⁰ All these disadvantages lead William J. Morgan to argue “that the doping epidemic in elite sports today is mainly a moral problem.”⁵¹

7. An Islamic Perspective on Doping in Sports

As mentioned in the introductory section, doping in sports refers to the practice of using illegal substances by athletes in a fraudulent manner. Using these illegal substances and hiding such usage amount to cheating and hypocrisy because cheaters and hypocrites commit the same act. To fully understand the Islamic attitude on doping in sports, one requires to shed light on the concept of cheating. What is cheating in sports?

As an answer to this, some describe cheating in sports as the act of changing terms of the competition to side one party at the expenses of the other. As a consequence, the precept of equality of chance differences of skill and strategy is breached.⁵² In addition to the material element, cheating in sports also consists of a moral element as it “implies an intention to beat the system even though the penalty, if the offender is found out, may still be acceptable.”⁵³

⁴⁶Stefania Santamaria and Filomena Mazzeo, “Ethical Issues and Doping in Olympic and Paralympic Games,” *Medicina Sportiva: Journal of Romanian Sports Medicine Society* X, no. 4 (2014): 2411-2417.

⁴⁷Evrin Celebi, Cemal Gundogdu, and Sakir Tufekci, “Determination of Attitudes and Opinions of Triathlon Athletes Regarding Doping as a Moral Issue,” *Studies on Ethno-Medicine* 12, no. 2, (2018): 58-66.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰P. Fallace, P. Aiese, E. Bianco, I Bolognini, M. P. Costa, R. Esposito, Francesca Gallè, Giorgio Liguori, R. Pandolfi, C. Pasquarella, G. Savino, Federica Valeriani and Vincenzo Romano Spica and WDPP, Working Group Doping Prevention Project. “Peer Education Strategies for Promoting Prevention of Doping in Different Populations,” *Annali di Igiene: Medicina Preventiva e di Comunità* 31, no. 6 (2019): 556-575.

⁵¹William J. Morgan, “A Glimpse into the Morally Ambiguous Future of Elite Sport: The Lance Armstrong story,” in *Ethics and Governance in Sport: The Future of Sport Imagined*, (eds.), Yves Vanden Auweele, Elaine Cook and Jim Parry, 1st ed, (London: Routledge, 2016), 158-166.

⁵²Simon Gardiner, Mark James, John O’Leary, Roger Welch, I. Blackshaw, S. Boyes and A. Caiger, *Sports Law*, 2nd ed (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited, 2001), 85.

⁵³Ibid.

Currently, several trainers and even observers consider cheating as a sensible and even preferable part of contemporary sports culture; a socially desired aberration that adds a layer of joyousness and gravity to sports activities.⁵⁴ It is worthy to note that those who engage in doping are not similar because whilst some players may consume Performance-Enhancing Drugs deliberately to achieve an undeserved advantage, others may do so accidentally due to non-understanding of the anti-doping regulations or due to an unplanned use of a prohibited materials, which often accompanies the consumption of sports nutritional supplements.⁵⁵ In sports, taking and giving prohibited items and methods are considered a deception. But not even one athlete will do such a behaviour accidentally. While inadvertent rule-violation still recognizes as ethically blameworthy, a deliberate rule-breaking is cheating. Over and above, not only should an athlete act intentionally to cheat, but his intention must also be seeking an advantage.⁵⁶

The supreme value of Islam is established on the principle of obedience to the Creator in everything. Allah made his religion based on the absolute Right and Justice. Islam is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion. The phrase of religion means submission of a self, and in the religious terminology, it also means the same (submission or ‘*Taslīm*’ by the Arabic language).⁵⁷ Right and wrong are based on Allah’s commands, which adherents of Islam take them and put their confidence in it unconditionally. As everyone is sure that Allah *Sūbhānah Wa Ta-Āla* ‘Glory to Him, the Exalted’ through His knowledge, He is controlling everything, including what is preferable for humanity.⁵⁸ In other words, Islam is “the call once again to total surrender or submission (Islam) to Allah and the implementation of His will as revealed in its entirety one final time to Muhammad, the last, or ‘Seal,’ of the prophets.”⁵⁹ The Islamic religion encourages its followers to reach the level of full submission (*Taslīm*/ التّسليم) which is referred to as *Imān*. After, Muslims could reach the

⁵⁴Anthony Maher, Paul Quinlan, and Joshua Davis, “Cheating in Sport: Contra-Normative or Desirable Deviance?” (Chapter 39, pp. 255-264), in *The Sports Monograph: Critical Perspectives on Socio-Cultural Sport, Coaching and Physical Education*, (ed.), Clive Palmer (Preston, Lancashire: SSTO Publications, 2014), 255-264.

⁵⁵Philip Hurst, Christopher Ring, and Maria Kavussanu, “An Evaluation of UK Athletics’ Clean Sport Programme in Preventing Doping in Junior Elite Athletes,” *Performance Enhancement and Health* 7, no. 3-4 (2020): 1-6.

⁵⁶Ken Kirkwood, “What Do You Mean I wasn’t Cheating? Testing the Concept of Cheating through a Case of Failed Doping,” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2014): 57-64.

⁵⁷Haifaa Jawad, Yousra al-Sinani, and Tansin Benn, “Islam, Women and Sport,” in *Muslim Women and Sport*, (eds.), Tansin Benn, Gertrud Pfister and Haifaa Jawad (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 25-40.

⁵⁸Al-Hasan al-Aidaros, Faridahwati Mohd. Shamsudin and Kamil Md. Idris, “Ethics and Ethical Theories from an Islamic Perspective,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, Vol. 4 (Dec. 2013): 1-13.

⁵⁹John L. Esposito, “Muhammad: Prophet of God,” in *About Muhammad: The Other Western Perspective on the Prophet of Islam*, (ed.), Abdelwahab El-Affendi (Surrey: Legacy Publishing Ltd, 2013), 51-65.

level of *Benefaction (Ihsān)*⁶⁰ The *Qur'ān* reads, “Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”⁶¹

According to the *al-Furūq/ Differences*, a well-known book of *Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah* scholar Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (born in: 626 AH/1228 CE; died in: 684 AH/1285 CE), the word ‘cheat’ linguistically means: *الخديعة ضد النصيح. وحقيقته إظهار المرء خلاف ما أضمره لغيره، مع تزيين المفسدة له* / A hoax which is against advice. Its reality is that a person shows to others the opposite of what he disguises behind their backs while insisting to decorate that corrupt

⁶⁰“On the authority of Umar (RA) who said: While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah (SAW) there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (SAW) rested his knees against the knees of the Prophet (SAW) and placed his palms over his thighs, and said: “O Muḥammad SAW! Inform me about Islam.” The Messenger of Allah (SAW) replied: “Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad is His Messenger (SAW), that you should perform Ṣalāt (ritual prayer), pay az-Zakāt, fast during Ramaḍan, and perform Ḥajj (Pilgrimage) to the House (Al-Ka‘bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it).” He said, “You have spoken the truth.” We were astonished at his thus questioning him (SAW) and then telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, “Inform me about Iman (faith).” He (the Prophet) answered, “It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate (Qadar), both in its good and in its evil aspects.” He said, “You have spoken the truth.” Then he (the man) said, “Inform me about Ihsan.” He (the Prophet, SAW) answered, “It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him, yet He sees you.” He said, “Inform me about the Hour.” He (the Prophet, SAW) said, “About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.” So he said, “Well, inform me about its signs.” He said, “They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings.” Thereupon the man went off. I waited a while, and then he (the Prophet, SAW) said, “O Umar, do you know who that questioner was?” I replied, “Allah and His Messenger know better.” He said, “That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion.” [Muslim] (Sunnah.com, n.d.). Please see: 40 Hadith Nawawī, “Hadith no. 2: Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW),” www.Sunnah.com (n. d.), Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/nawawi40/2> (accessed 14 April, 2020).

“As stated in the meaning of benefaction (Ihsān) is one of the most significant concepts of Islam that the individual is perfected by Islam is a desirous person to be the best in every field of life. On the contrary to the modern individuality, it is not based on egoistic conception, regardless of the other and allowable personality to do everything even if it is wrong”. (Yılmaz, 2014, p. 410). Please see: Yılmaz, Mustafa Selim. “The Comprehension of the Concept of Fath (Conquest) in the Light of Fath Al-Makkah,” *Journal of Social Science Research* 4, no. 1 (2014): 408-412.

⁶¹al-Naḥl, 60:90, Holy Qur’ān meanings translations - Sahih International, “Swratū an-Naḥl, verse no: 90,” King Saud University, quran.ksu.edu.sa, (n. d.), 277. Retrieved from <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/translations/english/277.html?a=1991> (accessed 14 April, 2020).

behaviour intentionally.”⁶² However, is it imaginable for the semantic meaning of doping in sports to unite with the idiomatic meaning of ‘cheating’ that conflicts with the ethics of Islam? In other words, do the acts of cheating expand so actions of doping Performance-Enhancing Drugs would enter within their meaning? To answer this, it can be mentioned that one of very famous ‘Fatwa’ regarding to practicing sports says that sports activities [Rivalries], for example, can encourage disruptive practices like doping.⁶³ Moreover, doping of prohibited substances which are deprived by Islamic Law may do not find its legitimate basis in the Haram Component in case these classes of Performance-Enhancing Drugs were safe by the testimony of specialized doctors and pharmacists. Yet, it is ethically not accepted because it represents fraud and cheat.⁶⁴ Muslims who do sports should behave respectfully and in a way that pleases Allah *Sūbhānah Wa Ta-Āla* ‘Glory to Him, the Exalted.’ That means showboating, deception and a pointless harshness are unacceptable. Modesty and humility must be a characteristic of The Muslims in sports and other activities.⁶⁵ Thus, we find that the recognition of the illegality of ‘Cheating’ as a moral standard for the rules of justice imposes itself and transforms its subjectivity - its provisions and effects - into a legal obligation to which all are bound, even if it was not stipulated in the text of the legislation explicitly.⁶⁶

Now we have come to the last and most important question in this study: What is the Islamic ruling regarding cheating by doping? “The Qur’ān is reticent regarding drug use.”⁶⁷ In the same vein, though Islam does not recognize doping itself (doping is relatively a new technology), the basic principles of Islam do not accept negative behavior such as the doping one.⁶⁸ However, employing all types of Anabolic agents and Performance-Enhancing Drugs in sports, even if they have no harmful impact on an athlete’s life nor body integrity, represents nothing but ‘cheating’, and it will, for certain, be included in the (*Harām*) category for sure.

⁶²Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-abbās Aḥmad bin Idrīs bīn abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣanhājī al-Qarāfi, *al-Furūq/Differences*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2001), 1664.

⁶³Alberto Testa, “Engaging in Sport: The Islamic Framework,” in *Sport in Islam and in Muslim Communities*, (eds.), Alberto Testa and Mahfoud Amara (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 13-30.

⁶⁴Ahmad Saad Ahmad al-Dafrawi, Mohamad Asmadi Abdullah, Majdah Zawawi, and Zainudin Ismail, “Consuming Prohibited Substances in Sport Activities: A Legal and Shari’ah Perspective,” *International Journal of Fiqh and Usūl al-Fiqh Studies* 2, no. Spcl, (2018): 23-37.

⁶⁵Ummah Sports, “Sports in Islam - Is it acceptable for Muslims to Play Sports?” *www.Ummah Sports.net* (n. d.), Retrieved from <https://ummahsports.net/sports-in-islam/> (accessed 15 April, 2020).

⁶⁶Haldir Asad Aḥmad, *The Theory of ‘Cheating’ in the Contract/ Nazariyyet al-Ghīsh Fī al-aqd*, 1st ed, (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub al-ilmīyyah, 2011), 45.

⁶⁷Mansur Ali, “Perspectives on Drug Addiction in Islamic History and Theology,” op. cit., 914.

⁶⁸Jelena Rodek, Damir Sekulic, and Emir Pasalic, “Can We Consider Religiousness as a Protective Factor Against Doping Behavior in Sport?,” op. cit., 51.

The above answer is strongly built according to Glorious *Qur'ān* texts and authentic hadiths. As Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “He who takes up arms against us is none of us; and he who cheats us is none of us.”⁶⁹

The indicative meaning of Islam is that it is a religion that demands honesty in everything whereas cheating is a kind of *Nifāq*. In simple terms, *Nifāq* is the opposite of, *Imān*, and the opposite of *al-Dīn*. The *Qur'ān* states: “O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or do not betray your trusts while you know [the consequence].”⁷⁰ The indicative meaning of this is that ‘cheating’, by doping in sports, represents the *Khīyānah* (betrayal). Let us say that an athlete has been selected to represent his country at the Olympics due to his performance, but is implicated in doping cases. With his immoral behavior, he is not only betraying his country's trust in him, but he is also betraying his covenant with God and with his religion. Finally, the *Qur'ān* says: “And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”⁷¹

8. Recommendations to Enhance Athletes

At the end of the study, it is important to provide some suggestions and recommendations that could benefit genuine athletes and keep them away from doping. These recommendations are summarized in the following words:

1. Do not comply, if any athlete wants to dope. Doping in sports means 'cheating' and crime.
2. Do think morally and positively.
3. Try to cross your limits in your training programme, but keep it logical. Do not kill yourself.
4. You should eat in a healthy way to reach your training goals.
5. Allow your body to recover very fast by sleeping enough hours.
6. You may not win the first places in sports races, but, perhaps, you will have won your respect for yourself and your country for sure.

9. Conclusions

⁶⁹Riyād al-Ṣalīhīn, “Book 17: The Book of the Prohibited Actions - Hadith no: (A: 1579/E: 69),” (n. d.), www.Sunnah.com. Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/17> (accessed 15 April, 2020).

⁷⁰al-Anfāl 8:27, Holy Qur'ān meanings translations - Sahih International, “Sūrah al-Anfāl, verse no: 27,” King Saud University, *quran.ksu.edu.sa*, (n. d.), 180. Retrieved from <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/translations/english/180.html?a=1187> (accessed 15 April, 2020).

⁷¹al-Shams 91:7-10, Holy Qur'ān meanings translations - Sahih International, “Sūrah al-Shams, verses no: 7-10,” King Saud University, *quran.ksu.edu.sa*, (n. d.), 595. Retrieved from <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/translations/english/595.html?a=6050> (accessed 15 April, 2020).

The outcome of the current study shows that cheating in sports, particularly doping, is a human practice with historical roots. Some religions regard physical activities, such as recreation and leisure, as unethical behaviour, whereas the principle in Islam stipulates that there should be neither excess nor negligence. In other words, Islam came with an intermediate curriculum and encouraged its followers to move and exercise, provided that such activities do not affect the balance of life and the act of worship and duties. Nowadays, many academic researchers consider an athlete who is taking Performance-Enhancing Drugs in Sports as a sick person in need of treatment. They do not, however, support their claim on the basis of proper arguments or evidence.

It is an undeniable fact that “doping and cheating threaten the essence of sport and the embodiment of the Olympic ethos and spirit.”⁷² Cheating in sports and doping in sports, in particular, represents a serious problem that needs radical solutions. A true athlete who takes Performance-Enhancing Drugs is advised to desist from it because it resembles cheating under both the Islamic *Shari‘ah*, and the secular law and the person who cheats deserves punishments posed by the two.⁷³ Finally, “doping is thus at least partly a rational choice, logical consequence of the tenets of modern sports and, more generally, modernity.”⁷⁴

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⁷²Yannis P. Pitsiladis, et.al, “The Olympia Declaration,” *Current Sports Medicine Reports* 18, no. 12 (December, 2019): 448-451.

⁷³AL-Dafrawi, et al, “Consuming Prohibited Substances in Sport Activities: A Legal and Shari‘ah Perspective,” op. cit., 35.

⁷⁴Bengt Kayser, “From Zero-tolerance toward Risk Reduction of Doping: Learning from the Failure of the War on Drugs?,” in *Ethics and Governance in Sport: The Future of Sport Imagined*, (eds.), Yves Vanden Auweele, Elaine Cook and Jim Parry, 1st ed, (London: Routledge, 2016), 167-174. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315679501>.

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