

# SPORT – A CALL TO FREEDOM OR AGREEMENT TO SLAVERY?

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## SUMMARY

Contemporary sport offers man the eclectics of industrial neopaganism, hidden behind the splendor of Olympism. Man through sport, as in many other ways, can find a way out of himself in order to encompass and gather the world around him. A good, Christocentric movement allows us to transform the world for the better, proving ourselves both in soul and body to be blessed helpers of the Lord on the journey of our salvation. Even though it is just an auxiliary means, sport is never agnostic, considering that in it, in the beginning, the gifts bestowed to the soul and body are brought closer together and guided towards salvation from sin, decay and death. In such a sense, sport cannot be equated with industrial sport in which the very concept of sport is only a mask for sin (profit).

**Key words:** man, sport, idolatry, blessing, sin, freedom.

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## SPORT IN BIBLICAL TEXTS

In several places, the Bible uses terms which indicate that sport is not something unknown to man, and that it is a component part of his life, and that sport is not in and of itself a sin or an impediment to man's salvation. Based on the meaning it had in the Israel of the Old Testament and in the Church of today, it

cannot be equated with the contemporary views on games or competitions in the world and here locally, where it includes physical activities (exercise) of a pleasant, dynamic and especially agonistic character.<sup>1</sup> For a theanthropological view of man, the problem lies in the manner and goal behind the use of sport, that is, its use in the process of salvation or its abuse to the (eternal) damnation of man.

In Biblical texts it is easy to find numerous places where there is talk of the skills which characterize sport in a contemporary sense. Primarily, attention is paid to games (dance, for example The Book of Ezra 15, 28-29),<sup>2</sup> but there is also mention of other sports (running and swimming).<sup>3</sup> In the Talmud, on the other hand, there are numerous testimonies of the fact that the old Hebrews were interested in the relationship between religion and (skills) sport. In the New Testament texts we also come across sports terms which allow the discovered truth to be conveyed more easily to the readers.<sup>4</sup>

The use of everyday language in environments where sport is dominant inevitably led to the use of sports terms and examples in revealing the truth to people in that environment. However, this has at no point in time subsumed the truths offered (revealed) to man through epiphanies under the criteria of the language itself, and thus sport, and instead these truths which have been revealed to man by God were internally transformed and focused on the proper understanding and use. In the Bible we find that the examples which include sport and the terms related to it have multiple aims (multiple functions), since they are used to indicate: a) the fact that God is the Creator, and who loves man as his creation – without any conditions; b) the truth transferred from God to people in order to save them from sin, decay and death; c) that man in this relationship to God has been called to a synergy with God which will lead to the merciful

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<sup>1</sup> Violeta Šiljak, *Istorija sporta* (Beograd: Fakultet za menadžment u sportu Univerziteta "Braća Karić", 2007), 12. According to the second definition, sport is an institutionalized competitive activity since it is based on a standardized, predetermined set of rules, and includes physical exercise and the use of relatively complex physical skills in which participation is motivated by a combination of personal pleasure and rewards. – Dario Novak, "Kršćanstvo i sport", *Društvena istraživanja: časopis za opća društvena pitanja*, Vol. 18, No. 1-2 (2009): 289.

<sup>2</sup> Participating in dance is not surprising, considering that dance (games) in the Old Testament had a particular role to play (or a revelation to convey) in a cult – not so much as in other religions of the time, but enough to prove true the claim that "dancing has almost always had an important role to play" – Valerija Kovač, "Kategorija igre u teološkom govoru Huga Rahnera i Ivana Goluba", *Nova prisutnost: časopis za intelektualna i duhovna pitanja*, Vol. V, No. 2 (2007): 177.

<sup>3</sup> For more see Dario Novak, cited work, 294.

<sup>4</sup> See Δημητρά Κούκουρα, *Το μήνυμα του Ευαγγελίου, μετάδοση και πρόσληψη* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Π. Πουρναρά, 2009).

deification of man – and thus all of creation – in Christ as God and man; that all of creation is anthropocentric due to the fact that man is theanthropic (Christocentric).

**a)** When in King Solomon tales it is described how the Wisdom of God (that is, the Son and Logos of God<sup>5</sup>) works, it is described as a joyous (liberating) game of Wisdom. It is, having created the universe, joyous along with the sons of man. The Wisdom of God itself, Logos and the Son of God, through Solomon who is inspired by God, testifies of itself the following: “Then I was with him, his master craftsman—I was his delight daily, continuously rejoicing in his presence, rejoicing in his inhabitable world and taking delight in mankind (Proverbs 8. 30-31). The Wisdom of God plays – not in the cosmos (with the existing matter in it and the like), and instead creates it out of the void (Genesis 1. 2), and creates it while rejoicing (being merry). That is the definition of sport: the free, unconditioned, joyful gathering and rest from any conditions or impositions, in which Wisdom, having created movement, uses its energy to create a new world.<sup>6</sup> This description and focus prove that a game (sport) is something through something is created for someone else, is given and joy and love are released, since the goal of Wisdom is not to have toys but to have partners in the game, brothers with whom to rejoice before God (the Father). The example of the game reveals the reason and goal of the existence of man, and it is also the goal of Wisdom to be God who lives with his people – Christ who is both God and man incarnate in the Wisdom of God – not with submissive slaves, but in joy with his willing and agreeing brothers.<sup>7</sup> Only through the synergy between the Wisdom which creates and man, its creation, can the creation become the cosmos (an ornament).

**b)** The basic difference between the attitudes of the Church towards sport and the views of the secular spirit of the time – but also towards sports from the

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<sup>5</sup>See Sveti Atanasije Veliki, *O očovečenju Boga Logosa* (Novi Sad: Beseda, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> “With its faith in the Holy Trinity and God as the Creator of everything that is both seen and unseen, the Church has actually prophesized the truth that was revealed by God: that the creation of the world is an act of will, the wisdom and power of god. What this means is that the world was not created by itself; it was not an accidental creation; nor that it has existed from the beginning of time....According to the teachings of the Sacred Revelation, everything that God created from the darkness, extracted from the void, makes up what we know as the world (κόσμος). In a narrower sense the world means the earth, and in the narrowest sense – human kind.” – Prepodobni Justin Čelijski, *Dogmatika tom.1* (Beograd: Zadužbina “Sveti Jovan Zlatousti” Ave Justina Čelijskog i manastir Čelije kod Valjeva, 2003), 237 and on.

<sup>7</sup> See the Gospel of John 20, 17, where the Lord Jesus Christ refers to the Apostles as to his brethren, and the same was meant to anyone who has received the Holy Spirit through the act of Holy Communion or baptism.

Far East (which originated from philosophical religions)<sup>8</sup>– is that the Church recognizes sin as a wound inflicted upon man's nature, which is absent from other religions (philosophies). Within them, man is self-sufficient, but also left to his own devices and his own fate. In the eyes of the Church man is not self-sufficient, cannot defeat sin on his own, or decay, or death, but he is also not left to his own devices since God (the Holy Trinity), his Creator is with him. The difference is that all the forces and powers which man can by means of sport achieve or realize do not liberate him from decay and death – at best they only recreate life, and that is once again the curse of a lasting death. In other words, these “superhuman truths” which can be “known” remain trapped in this world and are more of an illusion and deception than reality. God's mercy is not of this world and even though it is through it, and the will of the Lord, that everything exists, and as such it can attract us, and as His gift, unite us in Christ – since sin, decay and death do not have any power over Christ as both God and man and his Mercy (that is, the mercy of the Holy Trinity). The fall of man into sin is not a consequence of man's transgressions in sport during a game between him and God, and thus sin cannot be defeated by sport. Sport can be used for both good and evil; even though today through it man is guided more, through sponsors and the imposed imperative of success at any price, toward evil and not good.

**c)** Through creation man is moved (called) from a non-being to progress toward God, but at the same time all of creation will progress toward God through man as well. In that context man's first movement is that of knowledge of God, a call to God, through which Adam recognized the world around him and asked for a companion for himself, that is, a woman. This should not surprise us since knowledge of God is inseparable from knowledge of man. Trying to understand himself, Adam, in accordance with the gift bestowed upon him by the Lord, first discovered that he, Adam, is someone who is the focus of all creation and whom all of creation obeys, but it was not at the same time a revelation of his grounding and his invitation into existence. Adam was looking for something more, he was asking for a companion who would be like him – and thus he stepped away from the nature around him and moved toward his own sense which lies in the fact that the entire creation is anthropocentric because man is theocentric, and in that way both Adam and the world moved toward Christ who is both God and man. Therefore, all the gifts that Christ has bestowed upon man, and everything created in synergy with Him is actually theocentric, and that is once again movement.

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the connection between combat (sport) skills and the religious-philosophical teachings of the Far East and the efforts to connect them to contemporary man in the West (Christian man?) see Aleksandar Filipovic, *Borilačke veštine između Istoka i Zapada* (Beograd: Malagma, 2011).

One of the main differences between Adam and Eve in relation to the remaining seen creation is movement. Namely, Adam and Eve are not static, and instead are focused, mobile and moved toward God. In this movement of theirs, they gather creation which is focused on them, but is in and of itself immovable toward God if man (Adam and Eve) do not gather it together and so fulfil their movement toward God in whose image they were created. In other words, the world is anthropocentric but man is, so to speak, infinitely Christocentric, since Christ who is both God and man has bestowed upon him this bountiful gift, a calling, having said: *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* (Matthew 5, 48.).

The world itself testifies to man that everything exists because of him and for him. Left-right, up-down, back-forth and everything else is determined in relation to man, since he, man, was made in the image of God.<sup>9</sup> Everything takes part in man, is created through him and bears witness to the fact that at the same time that he is and is not of the world and for the world. Even though everything takes part in man, man is not encompassed by anything and is not limited, instead he fills everything, but none of it completes him or designs him. Man in his iconicity combines everything and submits it along with himself to the Creation as gifts, realizing, in accordance with the gifts bestowed by the Creator, his suitability. This is a step upward, but this 'up' is not contained within space-time, even though man completes it. Such a movement outward for man is his merciful response to God's descent toward him. The meeting with God who is descending and thus bringing man closer to him and drawing him into his creation is not measurable by the three-dimensional measurements which we recognize in everyday life, which at the same time establishes them. Simply put, only through the creation of man can the cosmos be and is (an ornament), since man makes it such by rendering it life and glory from the first and only Son of God and Son of Man (God and man at the same time) Jesus Christ, through the mercy of the Holy Spirit, as is the will of God the Father.

## MAN – THE ICON AND COMPANION OF WISDOM

Through movement man steps outside of himself in order to use what he has inside of him to encompass and make sense of the world around him, gathering it into himself, since only for man and through man do time and space

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<sup>9</sup>ΣταύροςΕ. Καλαντζάκης, *ΗθεολογίατηςΔημιουργίαςστηνΠαλαιάΔιαθήκη*(Θεσσαλονίκη;Γράφημα, 2016), 203/207.

exist.<sup>10</sup> Every movement is the emergence of bestowed life through which we build ourselves and the world, using it for good. Movement is the cooperation between the blessings we have been bestowed with and the soul and body, focusing us toward God, and there is no real movement without it. The soul, however much in its bestowed nature different from the body, always realizes its movement through actions performed on the body and through the body.<sup>11</sup> Each movement of the soul is reflected on the body which reacts to it and submits itself to it; however, in every spiritual movement the soul and body mutually cooperate and permeate each other through the mercy of God to the natural-hypostatic union which is required if man is to be deified, that is, for a union in God. As a result death is so unnatural and painful to man considering that it is created by sin which leads man to it through decay and a refocusing of movement contrary to God.

Care for the body, and not only for the soul in the Church is Biblically based on the truths sent down to us from St Paul the Apostle, who teaches the Corinthians with the following words: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own?* (1 Corinthians 6, 19) – in that temple where the soul pays homage to the Holy Spirit, but not as something that is contained (included) in the body, but as something which includes and permeates its own body.<sup>12</sup> The soul gathers

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the creation of man, read the Bible, Genesis 1-2. St John Damascene tells us of the Holy Spirit, the following: "God has, through seen and unseen nature, with his own hands built man in his own image and to his own liking, shaping his body from the earth, and by blowing breath into his body has bestowed upon him a solemn and mindful soul; and this man, as is well-known, we call the divine icon; since the expression "icon" reveals what is mindful and self-ruling, while the expression "to be a liking of" reveals the possibility of brining oneself closer to virtue. The body and soul were, again, built at the same time; and not first one and then the other, as Origen falsely claimed. ... [He] created him as some kind of other world (cosmos, ornament), something small in something large, as another angel, devout to God... complex,... [He] made him king of everything on earth, which is ruled by a higher King; the earthly and heavenly, temporary and everlasting, visible and imaginary, the dividing line between glory and nothingness, the very spirit and body; the soul as a blessing and the body to raise him upward;" – *Tačno izloženje Pravoslavne vere* (Beograd: Jasen, 2006), 207-208.

<sup>11</sup> For more see St John Damascene, *ibid*, 208. Also, St Gregory Palamas who explains that "the mindful and reasonable nature of the soul is built along with the earthly body, and has received its life spirit from God, ... thus it shows men of reason that the human spirit is a mindful eros, that is, something that brings life to the body; ... through it the soul naturally realizes its desired connection with its own body, so that it never wishes to leave it, and does not, unless forced to by some grave illness or external injury (to the body)." – Sveti Grigorije Palama, "Sto pedeset glava, prirodnih i bogoslovskih, etičkih i praktičnih, i onih koje očišćuju od Varlaamitske prelesti", u *Dela Svetog Grigorija Palame* 8 (Novi Sad: Beseda, 2015), 66. O veličanstvenosti i lepoti, pak, stvorenog čoveka vidi Sveti Grigorije Palama, "O ishodu Duha Svetoga, druga beseda", u *Dela Svetog Grigorija Palame* 1 (Novi Sad: Beseda, 2012), 102.

<sup>12</sup> St Gregory Palamas bears witness to it with the following words: "The soul, however, which inhabits the body with which it has been made, is present in the whole body, but not in a spatial sense, and not

and maintains the body bestowed upon it by God through the forces (energies) which through creation it obtained by giving life to the body and giving life (and not providing a function) for the energy contained within the body. By permeating the body, the soul also rules it, drawing both itself and the body toward the goal of man since the beginning, and that is knowledge of God and worship of the gifts bestowed by Christ.<sup>13</sup> However, due to the sin which we, through the trickery of demons, have been wounded by Adam, when the soul falls under the power of what is base (the dependent in relation to the soul, and contained within the body),<sup>14</sup> then the soul and the body become subservient to sin and decay and death.<sup>15</sup> This is how man does not lose his iconicity, but is infused not with the divine, but with the evil, the demonic.

## SPORT AS A CALL TO FREEDOM

Based on the aforementioned, we can conclude that sport as recreation is not sin, considering that recreation is rest from work<sup>16</sup> and time when man composes himself, and thus sport is never agnostic. Sport is not agnostic considering that it emerges as an auxiliary means – not as an aim – and one of the means for the gifts contained within the body to become acquainted with and

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by being encompassed by it, but by taking up and giving life to this body, as it possesses an image of God within it." – "Sto pedeset glava", u *Dela Svetog Grigorija Palame 8* (Novi Sad: Beseda, 2015), 87.

<sup>13</sup> Nemesius, the bishop of Emesa, explains: "Moses was justified in saying that man was not created last just because everything was prepared for him and because it was first necessary to prepare what was meant to be used by him, and then to create him who would use it, but because even after the creation of spiritual beings, and then the seen world, it was necessary to create some sort of connection between them, in order for everything (that exists) to become one, connected with itself and not alienated from itself (μή ἀλλότριον αὐτό ἑαυτοῦ). Which is why this living being emerged (literally, this animal), man, who connects both these natures. All this, in brief, bears witness to the wisdom of the Creator." – "O čovekovoj prirodi", u *Gospode ko je čovek?* (Beograd: Obraz Svetački, 2003), 103-104.

<sup>14</sup> See St Gregory Palamas, *ibid*, 87.

<sup>15</sup> See, Nemesius, *ibid*, 104. However, we should clarify the relationship between the soul and body at the moment of the death of the body. About this, St Gregory Palamas had the following to say: "The soul of every man is at the same time the life of the body, that which instills it with life, and possesses an energy which is visible in something else, that is, in what it brings to life; however, it does not only possess life as energy, but also as an essence, since it lives in and of itself. Namely, it could be seen to have a reasonable and rational life, which is clearly different from the life of the body and everything related to it. And that is why, even when the body decomposes, it [the soul] is not decomposed along with it, it even remains immortal, since it cannot be seen in anything else, and possesses as its essence the life within it." – "Sto pedeset glava", u *Dela Svetog Grigorija Palame 8* (Novi Sad: Beseda, 2015), 60.

<sup>16</sup> On that Aristotle has the following to say: "The game should primarily be applied as an intermission from work, since man that works requires rest, and games exist only for the purpose of rest." – Aristotel, *Politika* (Beograd: BIGZ, 1975), 221.

focused on the good (toward salvation from sin, decay and death). It is clear that understood in this way, even moderate sport cannot ever be equated with industrial sport in which the concept of sport is merely a mask for profit, and that is sin. Everything that becomes a goal for man in and of itself, without focus on salvation and without synergy with God becomes lethal for man. The rule of St Paul the Apostle applies here: *I have the right to do anything, you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be brought under the power of any.* (1 Corinthians 6, 12). In Church sport is not, nor can it be, an alternative for success – sport has never been accepted in Church as a component part of the askesis and thus the means for discerning the goal of life. Physical (sports) exercise are not and cannot be a replacement for prayer, fasting and repentance – the life governed by the sacraments of the Church – and thus cannot be a means of achieving repentance and calm (through blessed prayer) as a precursor and initial attempt at worshipping man in accordance with the gifts he was bestowed by Christ who is both God and man.

What we should mention here is that we can with full right present an openly negative attitude toward games (sport) in our contemporary understanding of sport, which becomes current in the Israel of the Old Testament only at the time of the Hellenism and its conflict with it.<sup>17</sup> In the Maccabean Books we can read the following: *So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.* (1 Maccabees 1, 14-15). The Christians in Corinth faced these same temptations (idolatry) of whom the Apostle Paul says *Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised.* (1 Corinthians 7,18). Unfortunately, the same temptations which during the time of the Maccabean the spirit (of the gods) Olympianism placed before man we also find in our time in the form of neo-Olympism.

Also, the same holy father even more clearly indicates the real law which governs the Olympic Games. According to him, it is a demonic law which is quite contrary to Christ who is both God and man. What testifies to this are also the words of St John Chrysostom: “Since, to encourage by means of evil is one of the

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<sup>17</sup> “Along with the language, the Hellenic civilization came to the land; Greek settlers brought with them their own way of life, to which they clung fast. Greek buildings were erected, theatres and thermae were built in the cities, sport was included in the school curriculums. ... [in Jerusalem] a high school was built, in which many of the young men took part in sport naked; and even the priests took part in it. As Jews, they were ashamed of having been circumcised, which the Greeks mocked, and so many tried to undergo an operation to remove the circumcision (1 Maccabees 1, 15) – a procedure which was frequent among the Jews even during the time of St Paul the Apostle (1 Corinthians 7, 18).” - Eduard Loze, *Svet Novog Zaveta* (Beograd: Pravoslavlje, 1986), 13, 15.



devil's laws, which is why all the victories achieved at the Olympic games are such, dedicated to the devil. A different, quite opposite order is found in Christ: it is determined that it is not the one who wins, but the one who is defeated that should be rewarded. Such is the teaching of Christ, whose postulates are quite opposite to it, which is surprising not only in victory, but in the manner of the victory; what is in some other sphere considered to be a defeat, here represents a victory. That is the power of God, that is the stand of Heaven, that is the image of the angels."<sup>18</sup>

## SPORT AND NEO-OLYMPIANISM

However, in neo-Olympianism it is precisely the gnostic component that has been hidden and rendered less visible, but not abolished, by the agonistic imperative (success at any cost), through which the (old) gnosis of Olympus is being taught and promoted – which for the Church is pure demonism and idolatry. The modern Olympic Games, just like the old games in old Hellas, do not only begin with an address to the gods on Olympus:

"Let there be a sacred silence. Let the heavens be still, the earth, the sea and the wind. Let the mountains not echo, nor the cries of the birds, as we will be accompanied by Phoebus, who is the bearer of fire. Apollo, god of light, send us your rays and light the sacred torches for the hospitable city of Socii. And you, Zeus, bestow peace to all the nations on earth and crown the victors of your competition with wreaths!"<sup>19</sup> – but also end by thanking them (Zeus and Apollo).<sup>20</sup>

By imposing neo-Olympianism as the source of the identity of the Greeks, a kind of counter-initiation of the Greeks as an Orthodox people has taken place. This is not an accident, considering that the Greeks are viewed by many ordinary people as being representative of the Orthodox peoples. However, neo-Olympianism has not emerged from among the Greeks, and even less so has accidentally been offered to them as the foundation of their identity. M. Malešević is quite right in stating the following: "Their new, Hellenic identity, the idealized image of a culture with a classic past, which has been forged in the West over the

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<sup>18</sup> Sveti Jovan Zlatousti, "Беседа XXII, Благословляйте гонящих вы, благословите, а не клените (Rome. 12, 14)", *Orthodox Library* [http://www.orthlib.ru/John\\_Chrysostom/riml22.html](http://www.orthlib.ru/John_Chrysostom/riml22.html) (Retrieved 10.05.2018)

<sup>19</sup>"<sup>13</sup> πράγματα που δεν γνωρίζετε για την Ολυμπιακή φλόγα", *Euronews* <http://gr.euronews.com/2016/04/20/13-pragmata-pou-den-gnwrizete-gia-tin-olympiaki-floga> (Retrieved 24.05.2018)

<sup>20</sup>David C. Young, *A Brief History of the Olympic Games* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 70.

past few centuries, modern Greeks began to accept only with the creation of their nation state. Internalizing this “external view”, the concept of Hellenism was manufactured in the West, the Greeks have fully accepted the idea that they are exclusive owners to the right to the legacy of the ancients, and thus – the special, privileged status that it brings. They have become, to be more precise, the descendants of ancient Greeks in their own eyes, and not only in the eyes of the “great western other”. In that sense, the Olympic Games in Athens can also be seen as the historic meeting between these two aspects (of the external) Greek identity – the Hellenic and neo-Hellenic.<sup>21</sup>

Bearing in mind the aforementioned, the conclusion that “in the context of a seriously understood Christianity a devaluation of the games has occurred, which was defined either in the context of pagan entertainment (Tertullian) or as an escape from boredom (Pascal)”<sup>22</sup> – does not apply to the attitude of the Church to sport, and has instead always been and is a negative attitude to games (competitions) founded on the polytheistic religious motifs and goals. And yet again, not for a moment has it been stated that sport is in and of itself a sin, instead that through the abuse of sport man is brought closer to other gods, and not to Jahveh (Christ as both God and man). We have the same kind of attitude in the New Testament where care for the body, and therefore physical exercise in and of itself is nothing negative if we use it wisely, while each cult of the body is a sin, as is each type of sport which sets as its goal man, or the self-sufficient means for the realization of a goal and the fulness of life. What type of abuse this is has been illustrated in the following words of St John Chrysostom “having left us, the ran to watch the horse race and fell into such a fervor that they filled the entire city with inappropriate murmur and cries which forced one to laugh, or to be more precise, to cry.”<sup>23</sup>

## SPORT – THE TROJAN HORSE OF DECEIT

Far from any entertainment and rest (sport) has been transformed into a Trojan horse of the new (old) deceit that we can achieve peace within and around

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<sup>21</sup> Miroslava Malešević, “Put olimpijskog plamena: Peking kao čuvar kulta antičke prošlosti evropskih nacija (I)”, *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU* LVII (1):22. [http://www.etno-institut.co.rs/files/gei/57\\_1/malesevic.pdf](http://www.etno-institut.co.rs/files/gei/57_1/malesevic.pdf) (Retrieved 27.05.2018)

<sup>22</sup> Valerija Kovač, “Kategorija igre u teološkom govoru Huga Rahnera i Ivana Goluba”, *Nova prisutnost: časopis za intelektualna i duhovna pitanja*, Vol. V, No. 2 (2007): 178.

<sup>23</sup> Sveti Jovan Zlatousti, “Slovo protiv zrelišta”, Svetosavlje <https://svetosavlje.org/slovo-protiv-zrelista/> (Retrieved 10.05.2018)

ourselves apart from God and without God. Perfection in training, and in the way of life, conditioned by "sport", is something that is offered as a path to peace and the meaning of life. Sport is used as a bridge, as a means of communication with man through whom certain religious ideas and guidelines are transferred. Communication through sport is very important for the bearers of Olympianism and a lot of attention is paid to it, as in any other religion. Yes, Olympianism is the manifestation of the religious and not the athletic. In the manifestation of Olympianism we have everything that characterizes the language of religion<sup>24</sup>. In Olympianism sport was only used to cover what were assumed religious goals. In that way the submission to sport is represented as the perfect freedom which (at first sight) starts from the body, in order to end in a negation of everything that is man (that is, the body and soul equally).

The final range of the ruling ideal in contemporary, industrial sport is the tragedy of suicide, since no matter how much he tries, man cannot "progress" as much as the nameless ideal requires of him. To consciously, at any price, strive for (Olympic, professional and industrial) "sport" goals is the means for the nullification of man and his dissolution for corporate sponsorship profit.<sup>25</sup> Transforming man into a zombie, through the imperative of success (measured in profit and glory)<sup>26</sup>, through sport has far-reaching consequences for the ethos of orthodox nations. Contemporary sport is full of new religious symbols which are changing the direction and means (individually and at the level of the entire nation) of man's legacy, and thus the goal which is recognizable and achievable in this legacy. Essentially, sport is used as leverage to initiate anti-tradition in relation to what has been given to us by our forefathers.

## CONCLUSION

The question of sport for the Church is certainly not one of the final (self-sufficient and self-determining) questions on whose solutions depends the reason for and goal of the Church, or the body of God and man. However, sport is contained in the corpus of clerical theanthropology, since it originates from man and such has an influence on the design of the world and man on the journey to salvation – that is, deification in Christ as both God and man. Thus, sport is subservient to man and man designs it (uses it), but sport can in no way and must

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<sup>24</sup> See Hubert Knoblauch, *Sociologija religije* (Zagreb: Demetra 2004), 251.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the wise of men of old Hellas did not agree with such a use of sport, see Miloš N. Đurić, *Istorija Helenske etike* (Beograd: BIGZ, 1976), 122.

not design man and to under any circumstances become the goal and measure of man. The only measure of man is the Only Begotten Son (Logos, Wisdom) of God, who has out of non-beings turned us into his icons and who when the time was right, epitomized the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary - Christ who is both God and man (Epistle to the Galatians 4, 4-7). In other words, the measure of sport in the Church is Christ who is both God and man, and thus sport in the Church (as an auxiliary means) has a note of Gnosticism in it since through it we can also become acquainted with and properly prepare ourselves and our bodies for a proper life in Christ. In this way we avoid traps, so to speak, of somatolatriy but also of transforming man into a nameless machine for profit for sponsors and all the other masters of Mammon's skills.

Unfortunately, the cult of the body (somatolatriy) is through the eclectic use, and abuse, of old non-Christian religious-philosophical representations and ideas imposed on man of our time as the path along which it is possible to achieve new mythological aims of man's existence - success at any cost. The best, but not the only illustration of this demonic eclecticism in sport are the Olympic Games themselves, where sponsors compete amongst themselves through displaced representatives of many nations. The participants of the OG do not notice that their participation in the games is only a confirmation of their rejection of everything which they have been bestowed by their forefathers. This is precisely the trap which contemporary abuse of sport is covering up. The trap lies in the fact that through sport man learns to worship and to submit to the cosmic (spontaneous?) order, and he does not exit the cosmos nor can he oppose it (that is, he cannot be released from it) or step outside the established framework. Through sport man is transformed (immersed) into the elements of the world, while it is his responsibility to transform, revive the world, and not to submit himself to it. Through Olympianism, tournaments, sports clubs and the like, the cultural patterns according to which man governs his life change. This leads to the separation of man from what has previously been, and his acceptance of a new way of life. However, what has been inherited is in opposition to the newly imposed and this leads to disorientation (and not to progress!), of man and to breaks which are not in the service of progress, but instead more in the service of conscious or unconscious flight from one hopeless situation to an even more hopeless one.

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## СПОРТ - ПРИЗИВ НА СЛОБОДУ ИЛИ ПРИСТАНАК НА РОПСТВО?

### САЖЕТАК

Савремени спорт нуди човеку еклектику индустријског неопаганизма, прикривеног иза сјаја олимпијизма. Човек путем спорта, као и на многе друге начине, излази из себе да би у себи обухватио и сабрао свет око себе. Добрим, христоцентричним покретом преображавамо свет на добро, показујући се душом и телом облагодатеним сарадницима Богу на путу нашег спасења. Иако помоћно средство, спорт никада није агностичан, будући да се и њиме, у почетку, дарови садржани у души и телу упознају и усмеравају ка спасењу од греха, пропадљивости и смрти. У таквом значењу, спорт не може бити изједначен са индустријским спортом у коме је и сам појам спорта само маска за грех (профит).

**Кључне речи:** човек, спорт, идолатрија, благодат, грех, слобода.

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## СПОРТ – ЭТО ПРИЗЫВ К СВОБОДЕ ИЛИ СОГЛАСИЕ НА РАБСТВО?

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### АННОТАЦИЯ

Современный спорт предлагает человеку эклектику индустриального неопаганизма, скрытую за великолепием олимпизма. Человек через спорт, как и во многих других отношениях, может найти выход из себя, чтобы охватить и собрать мир вокруг себя. Доброе, Христоцентрическое движение позволяет нам преобразовать мир к лучшему, доказывая, что и душой, и телом мы являемся благословенными помощниками Господа на пути нашего спасения. Несмотря на то, что спорт является лишь вспомогательным средством, он никогда не является агностиком, учитывая, что в нем вначале потенциалы, дарованные душе и телу, сближаются и направляются к спасению от греха, тления и смерти. В этом смысле спорт нельзя приравнивать к индустриальному спорту, в котором само понятие спорта является лишь маской греха (прибыли).

**Ключевые слова:** человек, спорт, идолопоклонство, благословение, грех, свобода.

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