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GEORGIAN THEOLOGISTS ON THE INTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Among the religious functions social is one of the most important one. Religion actually influences the society, persons’ consolidations and individuals by means of belief, religious feelings and cult activities. Confessions, of course differ from each-other according to their aims and the means of implementation though each of them accomplish their specific social destination functions.

Emil Durkheim points out that religion depicts not only the society structure but it supports to make it stable, religion has a uniting function as it concentrates men’s attention and inspires them with hope.\(^1\)

In traditional minor cultures, Durkheim proves, all the sides of life are precisely described by the religion. On the one part religious habits create new ideas and thinking categories, on the other part make the already established valuables steady. Religion is not only consecutive feelings and activities but it actually defines the rule of thinking of a man in traditional cultures.\(^2\)

As Michel Mill points out in spite of in what way the religious dimension will be displayed in social life we must always remember that the decrease of the religion political role do not at all mean an eradication of religious personal belief or social functions. Religious belief does not recently define functioning rules of states though it plays a vast role not only in personal but also in social lives.

Very often theories of secularization meticulously define the place of religion in the present society and identify the weakening of traditional institution with the end of religion.\(^3\) But religious habits are still strong almost in every society. It is obvious that it is necessary to analyze the current opinions which come from the enlightenment and which consider the irrational nature of religion related to the scientific rationalism as if representing leading power of the current social life.

\(^1\) G. Masonis, Sociology, M. 2004 pp. 634-637.
\(^3\) ibid, p.22.
Motivation of social activity and their nature are based on religious and moral opinions. Individuals act, identify themselves with society groups and form political opinions according to their religious and philosophic beliefs and values. Moreover their moral and religious differences come forward just the very time when they crush against the values of other citizens.

Any democratic republic, even in secularization society must have strictly defined position towards religious ideology (world outline). A state has an obligation to settle down relations with the dominant religious institutes that has been forming social and moral and even political life for centuries. Religion used to determine various sides of life, among them were the family-wedding relationships.

“To enter the life and prolong men’s kinship a man and a woman choose each other, consider each-other’s devotion, begin to live together and are called wife and husband. That is why in the other way they are called the yoke. According to Christian rules a woman and a man who have chosen each other as eternal friends and wish to be wife and husband should have undergone performance of nuptials ceremony. Not to be wed religiously is against our religion. The first wife and husband – Adam and Eve were blessed by God: “God blessed them and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and Multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it” (born 1.28) In the New Testament Jesus the Christ Himself blessed the wife and husband’s union by attending the wedding party of Kana 4

Matrimony is established by God Himself: “ And the Lord God said it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help to meet for him; And the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man; This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man; Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and thy shall be one flesh: When God created the first man Adam, said God: it is not good to be alone. I will create an assistant, his befitting (appropriate) and created for him, from then on He created from his side and brought to him and said: here is really a . . . . . to become one flesh ( born 18,22,23,24,); But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female (Marc.10,6)
Anthony of Sourozh (Bloom) writes: wedding is a miracle on earth, in the universe where everyone and everything tries to seclude; wedding is the place where two people unite with mutual love. This is the place where cleavage finishes and united life begins. This is the main miracle of people relationship. In an instance two persons become one whole, two persons full of mutual love and accepting each other become more than simply a pair, two persons become one whole5.

4 Michel Mill, Religious Dimension in Intercultural Education. From the book “Religious Variaty and Intercultural Education” Tb., 2007, p.23
5 Nino Chikviladze – Orthodoxy, Family Values of Believers and Demographic Orients 2006 p.3
One Father of the church of old times said wedding, as a union in a isolated world, is such a mystery which exceeds (is more than) any natural relationship, any moral state and also corporal wedding is a mystery which resembles Eucharist.\textsuperscript{6}

In the Bible monogamy is declared as the only form of wedding, i. e. a husband has one wife and the wife has only one husband. This is clearly seen from the thing that God created only one wife for Adam. Mediator (the Apostle) Paul writes: each man should have his own wife. Each wife should have her own husband. (1 Carthage. 7.2).

The base of wife and husband’s relationship is love. Christianity is a religion that preaches love. Moral function among the religious functions is the main one, because a man, his life, behavior, relationship stands in the center of the universe religious system of every religion; moreover of Christianity. Moral demands are perceived by the believers as the most essential spiritual value. God stated moral rules of relationship between men; we must consciously follow them to partake of kindness and happiness, and the Heaven at the end. Moral purification and perfection of men, their behavior, steady maintenance of the rules and demands that are sermonized by Christian religion is the guarantee of eternal paradise. Conformably to the godly wisdom a moral man should be sanctified. “Calm, gentle, obedient, gracious full of kindness, impartial and principle” (Ephesians.3.17)

In the Agreement\textsuperscript{7} between the Georgian state and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephaly Orthodox Church it is marked that the State recognizes religious wedding ceremony to the rule stated by the law. In Juridical relationship State Registration wedding data are used. Religious marriage ceremony (wedding party) is one of ecclesiastical mysteries. The state marriage registration existing today is based on religious performance of nuptials ceremony. According to Constitutional Agreement our State recognized the religious performance of nuptials ceremony considering one term: in juridical relationships only the state registration data should be used. Thus the State kept the existing rule, i.e. state registration of marriage but at the same time it recognized religious performance of nuptials ceremony (by church). This recognition supposedly shows that the wife and husband having been wedded by religious ceremony but not registered in the state organs are differentiated by the state from an occasional pair, if we can say so, and thus is justified morally. Personally this mainly applies to affiliation as well as other relationships.

Generally according the model of Greece this relationship is very well regulated. Namely it applies that citizens of Greece have right to be wedded in the Church or be registered in the state

\textsuperscript{6} Anthony of Sourozh (Bloom) Secrecy of Love, Talks on Christianity; Tb, 2000 p.p 8-9

\textsuperscript{7} Constitutional Agreement between the Georgian State and the Georgian Autocephalous Orthodox Church Tb., 2005
organ; but in case they have been wedded in the Church it is not necessary to be additionally registered in a state organ and the ceremony served in the church has a juridical force.

Christian wedding with its authentic essence is not only formal corporal unity of a wife and husband but wholeness of their inner souls, mutual help and perfection aspiration; concerning the aim of marriage ceremony Sacrosanct Fathers single out two main points why the wedding has been served: the first point is the Godly Law of prolongation of generations of men and the other to eliminate lust which is confirmed by the Holy Writ: ”Nevertheless to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband” . . . . “That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (Corint. 7.2.)

Nuptial relationship is not a simple unity of a man and a woman just to subside into passion (sexual inclination/attraction) but to turn two creatures into one whole – which is an unbreakable ( inviolable, union for the whole life. Matrimony is the main base of sacred existence of men stated, blessed and confirmed by God. it is such a sacred act that during the wedding ceremony served by a celebrant the mercy of holy spirit comes over the bride and bridegroom. With this point in mind we think the directions by St John Chrysostom (John of "the Goldenmouth") very important. He understood deeply man’s heart; he was not only satisfied by pointing out the faults in the married couple relationship but studied and brought to light the subconscious, deeply covered layers of their lives in their souls. It is true that fourteen centuries detach us from St John Chrysostom but if we look through the modern society mode of life it will not be difficult to notice that even nowadays as it was in the period of St John Chrysostom, people often wed having in mind vice reasons and fully drowned in insatiable lust they desecrate saintliness of matrimony, or do not observe the laws they are to comply with by all means.

Discussing the importance of the marriage St John Chrysostom considers natural demands of a man as well as the law established by God and widely halts at the role of the church. He brings St Paul’s words about conjugality as a proof:”This is great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Efes. 5,32) and explains it this way: that natural inclination towards matrimony as towards a law is authorized (legitimized) by God Himself and that is why the matrimony is not only a corporal unity but according to St Paul’s words is named as a mystic union of Christ and church.

Wedding of Christians with its solemn essence is not only a formal union of a wife and husband but inner wholeness of their souls, mutual assistance and striving for perfection. The wellbeing of the whole mankind depends on it. The universe consists of cities; cities consist of families, a family of a wife and a husband. When there are brawls in the family the cities crash and the whole world is wrapped in unrest and disturbances. So matrimony is the source of big disaster as well as big happiness of families and societies.
When analyzing the essence of matrimony one of the most difficult problems shows up explaining how it is possible to perform the nuptials of people belonging to different confessions. A priest-missioner Father D. Alexandrov studied possibilities of mixed marriages. Based on a lot of eclectic laws, unchanging studies of universal Orthodox Church and explanations given by St. Fathers the author fixes that mixed marriages are illegal and that Christian honesty cannot agree with it.

Without a due regret and joining to orthodoxy – denotes Father D. Alexandrov how can an orthodox priest perform the nuptials, pray for and ask God to bless the man pronounced an anathema on, considered heretic and a mutineer? Is it possible? Can this be tolerated by the honesty of an orthodox shepherd? Moreover than that such marriages are also prohibited by the eclectic laws”

To prove his idea Father D. Alexandrov gives the laws: 14th of 4th World’s Meeting, 72nd of the Sixth World’s Meeting, and Laodic’s-10 and 31; and 10th of Carthage as well as explanations of Aristin, Balsamone and Zonara. He brings sacred fathers St. Cyprian the Carthage, blessed Theodoretus, Tertullian and others as witnesses.

By means of sacred fathers and a lot of Meetings the universal church unanimously confirms that the orthodox married to an erratic is nonsense. “Because it is said what has a wolf common with a sheep when they do not think alike and according to their style of living they are enemies to each other? And the sacred fathers not only order such wedding to be eliminated but even they declare anathema on those who will dare to officiate at such nuptials”

In 1976 in Marcel a working mixed group was formed which began to study religious subjects of a marriage based on confessors’ experiences. After three years work the group considered it right to form concrete considerations that mainly concerned only the services at performing ceremonies at mixed marriages between the orthodox and Catholics

In the confessors’ concrete considerations they pointed out: the difficulties connected with (arising in) the performance of such nuptials is deeply felt by the orthodox side. Being a church of a minor parish the Orthodox Church often has to officiate at mixed nuptial ceremony in France. Because of little connections between the clerics of these two churches there often arise service problems: there are no contacts between the orthodox and catholic priests, the ceremony of the ritual is not understood by the families having no knowledge of the laws of churches, nonexistence of the stated general rules. Besides all these the theological ceremony of marriage mystery are not identical in two churches.

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8 Journals and Protocols of Meetings Preceding a Local Council of the Church, 321

9 Kormchaia, Full Translation C.275-276

10 Researches published in the French Orthodox Journal “Contacts” 1980 T, xxxii
During the cooperation for three years many problems connected with the mystery of marriage have been cleared up but the present document considers only religious ceremony of mixed marriages.

The seven priests being in the group are the spiritual confessors uppermost who well understand their responsibilities in the spheres of eclectic mysteries, theology mystery services, canonical laws, liturgy, family advises and ecumenism. They want to offer their hierarchies the results of their studies, as an eclectic marriage service which has been served in the atmosphere of mutual brotherly understanding for the benefits of families and the hope for future communion. The working group clerical representatives declare that the base of their study was on the one part their imperative wish to stay devoted to theology and canonical laws of their churches and on the other part to be courageous in all other possible cases. Many subjects have been cleared out in the period of their studies: namely, mutual essential consents, differences and impossibility of Eucharistic mutual sharing.

At last the members of the group mark: after three years of study of the problems connected with the mixed nuptials services between the orthodox and catholic families they consider their duty to declare together: we have clearly seen the essential unity of the marriage eclectic mystery in our churches. In spite of our diverse opinions which are the result of our complex histories and our sins the mystery of marriage as well as the baptism administration remains the sign of our common views. The mixed families of our churches should remain the specific objects of our concern as their love blessed by God represents the premise icon of future united church of Jesus Christ.

St. John Chrysostom considers it inadmissible for a believer to marry an unbeliever “Do not marry an erratic: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not ---- unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son, for they will turn away thy son from following me that they may serve other gods” (Deut. 7,3,4) “And Ezra the priest stood up and said unto them ye have transgressed, and have taken strange. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers; And do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of land and from the strange wives (Ezra 10,10-11)

Marriage union is not only a corporal unity but the wife and husband’s inner spiritual unity which is necessary for mutual help, moral perfection that is why the family union through the wedding ceremony and thus blessed by God will be the best form for the relationship of people and it is necessary to strive for it in case every man will consider moral aim of marriage and strive for it ”Hear this husbands and learn wives” –says St John Chrysostom and points out that Abraham and Sarah’s saint life – we must all follow (imitate) them.

11 the Researches is mainly based on II meeting Decree about Ecumenism of Vatican (Unitatis reintegration) and an important text which was received in 1971 named: joint exhortation of mixed families; Recommendations of The French Catholic Episcopal Committees and French Orthodox Episcopal Committees
Importance of marriage is not understood correctly in the time of St John Chrysostom and now as well. In the IV century there existed heretics of Manichaeism and others that disapproved marriage. For such thinkers was “The book about Marriage” written by St John Chrysostom. Here St John Chrysostom explains that virginity cannot be liked by God if it is proclaimed against marriage, as in this case virginity is not protected by free but under duress. Marriage disapproval is not respected by Christianity but is inspired by Satan who at the same time is an enemy to spiritual sanctity. He names two main reasons for which the law of marriage was established: marriage serves to multiply the mankind and is the basic condition to eliminate lust. St John Chrysostom considers marriage as a unity of two hearts and it is based on purity and mutual trust in order to precisely describe Christ’s attitude towards church.

That is why he tried with all his might the remedies to prove that self-interesting i.e. “well-advised” choice made by a woman is an insult for the marriage purity and humiliating her dignity and harmful with its results.

Catholicos the Patriarch of all Georgia Ilia II says: awe towards God, modesty, wisdom, morality—the features that create an inevitable base for the existence of a good family, that is why great attention should be paid to who a person is choosing for the companion of his/her life; and also pre-conditions determining this unity should be envisaged. If marriage is dictated by only by corporal passion or self-interest then this union will actually predestined to an inevitable rupture from the very beginning as such unity is based on terrestrial, fleeting values.

The mystery of performing nuptials is leaded by the following: 1) free will of the persons going to be married what they express before church; 2) be blessed by parents. Unfortunately very often a man considers takes passion (lust) for love which is fleeting soon and later and disappears and he finds himself in front of reality without love. Paul the Apostle says: love do not raise its head, it rejoices over everything, and will tolerate everything”. The base of all this is spiritual unity, If there is spiritual unity among people they can overcome any existing problems as heavy as they can be.

It is pity that modern families loose this deep meaning gradually. And the marks of dilapidation are perturbing. A woman began to find a place out of family; judgment with cool mind, technical progress, utility destroyed her womanly soft and delicate nature and made it rude. Her wish to give birth and bring up her became weaker children. Leaving the family a woman has lost inner peace, simplicity, respect, inner depth, unrevealed feelings; a trace of mystery is diminishing from the face of the modern woman.

Thus only woman can save the family: mother teaches her child the first prayer, reads the first verse. Mother lives with the life of her child, breezes with it, with her body feels its spiritual and corporal pains. When the child is in need mother becomes clairvoyant, her prayers make miracles. Saint Fathers say that Mother’s prayer can bring out her child’s soul from hell! . . .

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