An important work on the religious aspects of business

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Abstract.
Religion has always exerted a significant influence on the morals, habits, and behavior of people worldwide, and it continues to do so today. This influence stems from various factors. Firstly, ancient moral norms are embedded in religious teachings. Secondly, it reinforces the behavioral rules of different social groups. Finally, religious precepts encompass numerous instructions and prohibitions of a cultural and household nature, serving as a foundation in the realm of human business relations. Religion is a cultural phenomenon—a moral, ethical, and worldview culture—that has enlightened generations. It is intricately connected to our daily existence through invisible threads. Almost every religious doctrine derives into not only the creation of the world, the meaning of individual existence, and the relationship between God and humans but also establishes its moral concept, outlining rules for human behavior and business relations. The religious origins of business have become a defining feature of 21st-century commerce. Presently, world religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and others affirm the realization of canonical religious rules in business. Simultaneously, a new dynamic has emerged: business success increasingly hinges on factors beyond anyone's control, with immediate success conditioned by dependence on the divine. Modern civilization has reevaluated values, shifting toward entirely new principles. This backdrop necessitates a fresh understanding of socio-economic events. Investigating the religious aspects of business underlines this evolving scenario. In the contemporary world, exploring the relationship between business and religion is not just desirable but imperative. Therefore, the religious aspects of business create an intriguing environment, prompting scholars to periodically revisit this highly sensitive and valuable subject. Considering this, the monographic research conducted by Mr. Zurab Zorbenadze, a distinguished representative of the Georgian Economic School, is commendable. It illustrates how individuals closely connected to the divine should conduct themselves in modern business.

Keywords:
Religion
religious denominations
canonical rules of religion
Judaism
Christianity
Orthodox Christianity
religious aspects of business

Main text of scientific paper / article: Thanks to the development of information technologies, individuals today are not restricted territorially in their actions. They are global citizens and potential business partners for followers of other religious denominations. Consequently, a crucial question arises: how well do we understand the moral and ethical aspects of individuals from our own and other religious denominations, and how do we incorporate them into our daily lives and business practices?

Primarily, the author explores the relationship between business as a human activity and religion as a belief system. Discussing the synergy effect in the background, the author establishes a position that highlights the most evident synergy between business and religion in the context of Judaism and Jewish business (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 13-14).

The author's reference to the sharp "contrasts" between Judaism and Georgian Orthodox Christianity regarding business is particularly noteworthy. Judaism is portrayed as the leader, while Orthodox Christianity is positioned as the "outsider." Despite their shared history of peaceful coexistence, consistent monotheism, common birthplace (Asia Minor), and holy books (Old Testament and New Testament), they exhibit distinct connections (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 21-23).

The author delves into a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between two indigenous world religions, Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, with business. This exploration involves an analysis of the moral-ethical algorithm of business, covering essential features such as the purpose of business and its accountability (Jorbenadze, 2023, p. 25), the identity of business and its moral-ethical face (Jorbenadze, 2023, p. 26), the concept of wealth (Jorbenadze, 2023, p. 29), justice (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 31-47), doing good and mercy (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 48-66), long-suffering and generosity (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 67-78). In this context, the author highlights the religious foundations of business, comprising specific moralities like tolerance, calmness, wisdom, etc. (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 83-96).

The author's scientific reasoning regarding the eternal and unchanging category of time holds value, emphasizing the
adage "time is money," or "as long as the candle is lit." According to the author, there is no past in time; it is only implied, and the present is a beam without length or width, slipping imperceptibly from the already lost past to the non-existent future. Building on this, the author underscores that harmony in human life aids in exiting the "efficiency curve." In this scenario, one should not squander the goodness given by the Lord—time—value other people's time, and fully grasp the rule, "as long as the candle is lit..." Only through this approach can one lead a virtuous and honest life "in this country" (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 97-115).

The author intriguingly discusses the commandment "Do not lie," a prominent aspect in the system of religious origins of business (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 116-134). Both in business and life, adhering to this rule involves overcoming lies and theft. Success achieved in this regard is seen as open to business, acquiring bright colors and becoming a moral activity. The author contends that modern business, while entirely "earthly," enters the religious space with its requirements, requiring both rational and irrational conduct in a sublime way, and realizing Satno's values in the business realm.

The author's scientific approach to the profound commandment "love your neighbor" (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 135-158) is noteworthy, emphasizing its presence in both obligation and responsibility. Compliance with this commandment in business holds special importance, serving as the driving force for further business progress. According to the author, modern business establishes a comprehensive system of responsibility and obligation, with the phenomenon of love for one's neighbor imparting a sense of desirability to this fact, imbuing the business process with elevated morality.

The monograph places particular emphasis on maintaining balance as an essential requirement of modern business (Jorbenadze, 2023, pp. 159-190). According to the author's argument, modern business requires a religiously polished reputation more than ever, achievable only through the ongoing process of maintaining balance.

Drawing conclusions from the analysis of the moral and
ethical algorithm of business, the author highlights key insights into the relationship of two indigenous world religions—Judaism and Orthodox Christianity—with business:

1. The religious "garment" of modern business stands out as one of its distinguishing features. This situation is most pronounced in Judaism, which actively sought ways to approach business, marshaled all available resources for realizing the spirit of business, and successfully integrated into the business landscape. However, the credit for this process is not solely and directly attributed to Judaism; the Jewish nation significantly invested "capital" in this endeavor.

2. A qualitatively different and entirely unique attitude of Judaism towards business emanates from the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation discovered the phenomenon of self-preservation in business—it wholly subordinated the material side of life to the religious world and presented Judaism as the face of the entire nation. Conversely, religion itself provoked the process of transforming business into a matter of Jewish honor with full force. In particular, Judaism successfully managed to morally "reconstruct" business, becoming the moral-ethical boundary of business. The result was not delayed: Jewish business emerged and developed—a business grounded in the canonical rules of Judaism.

3. The canonical rules of Judaism spurred the development of the golden rules of Jewish business. These golden rules define business culture, embodying Jewish business culture. Against this backdrop, Jewish business stands out as one of the most successful types of world business. Thanks to Judaism, Jewish business represents a harmonious synthesis of the general and the special. Perhaps, owing to these circumstances, it is "idealistic" in the worldly sense and "materialistic" in the ideological sense.

4. The Jewish business "excluded" by Judaism "provokes" the Orthodox Christian—in a way, it compels him to approach business with an entirely different attitude and principles. If this condition is fulfilled, then, as they say, "inventing a new bicycle" will no longer be necessary: the form of existence of this business will change, while the content will remain unchanged. In this regard, it should be noted that the religious context of Jewish business is entirely
unique and cannot be copied. Additionally, religiously saturated so-called "Capturing" signs and using them purposefully in other realities are not about playing on "another board" with new rules—the key is to avoid confusing the principle of action with the rule of ascension. This highlights that the religious origins of business in Judaism and Orthodox Christianity are entirely equal and realizable.

5. The equal treatment of the two indigenous religions towards business is a valid assumption. The theoretical side of this opinion is more or less clear, but concerning its practical side, the "life" of the issue and the implementation algorithm are noteworthy. This fact is complicated by the reality that theory and practice never perfectly coincide. Adding a new layer of complexity is the attitude of both religions towards business, which is theoretically the same; however, in terms of the practical side of dealing with business, religious actions exhibit a lack of uniformity. From a practical perspective, Judaism significantly outperforms Orthodox Christianity, which lags behind in the practical side of business. Considering this fact, when examining the compatibility of both religions with business, it is effective to move according to the principle of parallelism. Through this principle, comparability between religions doesn't imply that one religion is superior to the other or that the other is consistently inferior. On the contrary, this approach acknowledges the diversity of the issue.

6. The equal attitude of both world religions—Judaism and Orthodox Christianity—towards business cannot bridge the gap between the achievements of Jews and Orthodox individuals in business. Distinguishing Jewish origin from non-Jewish origin won't be helpful. The crucial factor here is the level and degree of perception of the spiritual values of the art of business by Jews and Orthodox individuals. For a Jew, religion is his identity, history, tomorrow, hope, and victory. For an Orthodox believer, while religion served as a "sharpened sword" in the distant past of struggle and pride to achieve the unattainable, today, his mindset is falsified—friendship with the Lord is scarce and poor, his activity is servile and tempting, and his behavior is "saturated" with mercantilism.
7. In the realm of business, the Orthodox Christian confronts an intriguing dilemma: how should he orient himself to achieve success comparable to that of Jews in business? How can he manage his affairs in a way that enlightens the community and stands morally exalted before the Supreme Being? The answer is straightforward: all success ultimately lies with the friend of the Lord—those capable of overcoming challenges through the boundless power of the Lord's love. Thus, if an Orthodox Christian aspires to attain material well-being and moral fulfillment through business activities, he must grasp and fully implement the moral values inherent in Orthodox Christianity.

8. Understanding Judaism's approach to business poses a challenging task for the Orthodox Christian. Nevertheless, it is a task he can surmount to achieve the desired results, but under one condition: he must comprehend business systematically according to the teachings of Christ and act in accordance with the canonical rules of Orthodoxy. Such action demands the zeal and fully directed will of a committed Orthodox Christian. Both of these religions, by all accounts, represent codes of religious morality. Their entire relationship with business must be realized within super-religious rules. Within this framework, Orthodox Christianity fully comprehends and aligns with the golden rules of business. These golden rules are unquestionably essential in both dimensions of an Orthodox Christian's life—business, representing his material space, and religion, embodying his spiritual space. This parallel was evidently established by Judaism within its own context when it laid the religious foundations of business. Thus, for Orthodox Christianity, all of this is a close and applicable reality.

Another point worth noting is that the presented monograph is the second reworked edition, indicating that the author continues to work on the research topic, periodically refining and expanding it. This suggests that the author will likely persist in tackling this challenging and complex subject, broadening the scope of scientific research (including other religious denominations) and producing a more comprehensive monograph in Georgian.

At this stage, considering the monograph's intricate
nature, theoretical conclusions, and practical recommendations, it stands as a significant contribution to Georgian economic science. Simultaneously, we believe it should serve as a reference not only for those in the academic field but also for individuals engaged in developing and implementing economic policies in our country. It would be fitting to incorporate the monograph into the curriculum of various educational disciplines (such as the basics of business, entrepreneurship, and management) at higher educational institutions specializing in economics.

In conclusion, we are confident that this work will enjoy a long and successful future, eliciting sustained interest and consideration from readers.

References: