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Dogma

Dogma, in its broadest sense, is any belief held definitively and without the possibility of reform. It may be in the form of an official system of principles or doctrines of a religion, such as Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism,^[1] or Islam, the positions of a philosopher or philosophical school, such as Stoicism, and political belief systems such as fascism, socialism, progressivism, liberalism, and conservatism.^{[2][3]}

In the pejorative sense, dogma refers to enforced decisions, such as those of aggressive political interests or authorities.^{[4][5]} More generally, it is applied to some strong belief that its adherents are not willing to discuss rationally. This attitude is named as a dogmatic one, or dogmatism, and is often used to refer to matters related to religion, though this pejorative sense strays far from the formal sense in which it is applied to religious belief. The pejorative sense is not limited to theistic attitudes alone and is often used with respect to political or philosophical dogmas.

Etymology

The word *dogma* was adopted in the 17th century from Latin: *dogma*, lit. 'philosophical tenet or principle', derived from the Ancient Greek: δόγμα, romanized: *dogma*, lit. 'opinion, belief, judgement' from the Ancient Greek: δοκεῖ, romanized: *dokeî*, lit. 'it seems that...'. The plural is based on the Latin: *dogmata*, though *dogmas* may be more commonly used in English.

In philosophy

Pyrrhonism

In Pyrrhonism, "dogma" refers to assent to a proposition about a non-evident matter.^[6] The main principle of Pyrrhonism is expressed by the word *acatalepsia*, which connotes the ability to withhold assent from doctrines regarding the truth of things in their own nature; against every statement its contradiction may be advanced with equal justification. Consequently, Pyrrhonists withhold assent with regard to non-evident propositions, i.e., dogmas.^[7] Pyrrhonists argue that dogmatists, such as the Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics, have failed to demonstrate that their doctrines regarding non-evident matters are true.

In religion

Christianity

In Christianity, a *dogma* is a belief communicated by divine revelation and defined by the Church,^[8] The organization's formal religious positions may be taught to new members or simply communicated to those who choose to become members. It is rare for agreement with an organization's formal positions to be a requirement for attendance, though membership may be required for some church activities.^[8]

In the narrower sense of the church's official interpretation of divine revelation,^[9] theologians distinguish between defined and non-defined dogmas, the former being those set out by authoritative bodies such as the Roman Curia for the Catholic Church, the latter being those which are universally held but have not been officially defined, the nature of Christ as universal redeemer being an example.^[10] The term originated in late Greek philosophy legal usage, in which it meant a decree or command, and came to be used in the same sense in early Christian theology.^[11] Protestants to differing degrees are less formal about doctrine, and often rely on denomination-specific beliefs, but seldom refer to these beliefs as dogmata. The first unofficial institution of dogma in the Christian church was by Saint Irenaeus in his *Demonstration of Apostolic Teaching*, which provides a 'manual of essentials' constituting the 'body of truth'.

Catholicism and Eastern Christianity

For Catholicism and Eastern Christianity, the dogmata are contained in the Nicene Creed and the canon laws of two, three, seven, or twenty ecumenical councils (depending on whether one is Church of the East, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, or Roman Catholic). These tenets are summarized by John of Damascus in his *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, which is the third book of his main work, titled *The Fount of Knowledge*. In this book he takes a dual approach in explaining each article of the faith: one, directed at Christians, where he uses quotes from the Bible and, occasionally, from works of other Church Fathers, and the second, directed both at members of non-Christian religions and at atheists, for whom he employs Aristotelian logic and dialectics.

The decisions of fourteen later councils that Catholics hold as dogmatic and a small number of decrees promulgated by popes exercising papal infallibility (for examples, see Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Mary) are considered as being a part of the Catholic Church's sacred body of doctrine.

Judaism

In the Jewish commentary tradition, *dogma* is a principle by which the Rabbanim can try the proofs of faith about the existence of God and truth;^[12] *dogma* is what is necessarily true for rational thinking.^[13] In Jewish Kabbalah, a *dogma* is an *archetype* of the Pardes or *Torah Nistar*, the secrets of Bible. In the relation between "logical thinking" and "rational Kabbalah" the "Partzuf" is the means to identify "dogma".

Buddhism

View or position (Sanskrit: दृष्टि, romanized: *dr̥ṣṭi*; Pali: *diṭṭhi*) is a central idea in Buddhism that

corresponds with the Western notion of dogma.^[14] In Buddhist thought, a view is not a simple, abstract collection of propositions, but a charged interpretation of experience which intensely shapes and affects thought, sensation, and action.^[15] Having the proper mental attitude toward views is therefore considered an integral part of the Buddhist path, as sometimes correct views need to be put into practice and incorrect views abandoned, while at other times all views are seen as obstacles to enlightenment.^[16]

Islam

Taqlid (Arabic: تَقْلِيد, romanized: *taqlīd*) is a term in Islam that refers to conforming to the teachings of a particular person. Classical usage of the term differs between Sunni Islam and Shia Islam. In Sunni Islam, taqlid refers to the unjustified conformity to the teachings of a person without inquiring or thinking about said teachings, rather than the justified conformity of a layperson to the teaching of *mujtahid* (a person who is qualified for independent reasoning). In Shia Islam, taqlid refers to the general conformity of non-*mujtahid* to the teaching of *mujtahid*, without a negative connotation. The discrepancy corresponds to differing views on Shia views on the Imamate and Sunni imams. Taqlid can be seen as a form of dogma, as no particular scholar can always be correct, so their rulings should not be taken uncritically.^[17]

See also

- Axiom – Statement that is taken to be true
- Central dogma of molecular biology – Explanation of the flow of genetic information within a biological system
- Doctrine#Religious usage – Codification of beliefs
- Dogmatic theology – Official theology of a church
- Escalation of commitment – A human behavior pattern in which the participant takes on increasingly greater risk
- Faith – Confidence or trust, often characterized as without evidence
- Pseudoskepticism – Position that appears to be skeptic but is actually dogmatic
- Standard social science model – Alleged model of social science thought

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9. Stanglin 2009, p. 240.
10. O'Collins 1983, pp. 162–163.
11. McKim 2001, p. 350.
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14. Fuller 2005, p. 1.
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16. Fuller 2005, pp. 1–2.
17. "Imitation (taqleed), following the evidence (daleel) – and was Ibn Hazm a Hanbali?" (<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/23280/imitation-taqleed-following-the-evidence-daleel-and-was-ibn-hazm-a-hanbali>). *islamqa.org*. "No one has the right to follow an imam blindly and never accept anything but his words. Rather what he must do is accept that which is in accordance with the truth, whether it is from his imam or anyone else."

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External links

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