

**UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JAVIER**  
**BACHILLERATO EN CIENCIAS**

**MONOGRAPH**  
**“HOW RELIGIOUS DOGMAS HAVE INFLUENCED IN SOCIETY TROUGHOUT**  
**HISTORY?”**

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**THIRD OF BACCALAUREATE - COURSE A**

**2019 – 2020**

## **Gratitude**

In this part I will give a space to thank my parents for supporting me at every moment of my life, teaching me and giving me the pillars of all the knowledge I have till this moment, that guided me through this project of my life and made the person who I am today. I also want to make a special mention to my grandfather Arturo Narvaez who gave me interest on religious dogmas and their origins.

## **Abstract**

This monograph is about how religious dogmas have influenced society throughout history. I have focused on three different aspects throughout my work. The first of these aspects gives us an introduction to the origin and establishment of the 4 religions of which I speak, being Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist. I delve into this very broad subject detailing the beginnings, essential elements, leaders, who they follow and how they have established themselves from day one, making reference to the earliest teachings that date from this religions, to have an idea of how they differ from each other, being marked by their journey through universal history. Then the second factor I talk about in my work is the structure and organization of these religions because there are many positions and roles within them, which each takes a different part in collaborating to enrich the growth of religions. It is seen how the command of these dogmas has passed into different hands through time and on what rules are based to preach in a correct way in the eyes of their God, revealing to us how the hierarchy is so important to maintain the order of an organization. Last but not least I speak of how these religions by the simple fact of believing in something different from others, through time have been persecuted numerous times, involving horrible scenarios full of violence to such an extent of being forced to be in a continuous fight and flight until today. I also include the current situation of each religion, detailing the problems in which they are found and how they are developing today, with a new society to face. Reaching the conclusion that religious dogmas have a long history path marked by good such as bad things, that have made them a very controversial topic.

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## Introduction

The present task is a monographic research work with the topic of *How Religious Dogmas have influenced in society troughout history*, whose purpose is to make known the various major religions that have emerged over time and investigate what characterizes and differentiates each of the others. In addition I seek to write the evolution that these have suffered since its inception due to the intolerance of human beings when it comes to confrontation with a person who bases his faith on something different.

The religious dogmas have been from the first days, fundamental bases for many civilizations, explaining the how and the origin of the universe. There are several deities in which human beings support their faith, which has created a conflict of ideologies, leading to a number of problems for the defense of practitioners towards their faith. The contribution of these religions to today's society is very important, although it should be stressed that the path has not been easy and still is not, ending in countless persecutions and conflicts with blood in between, so we can see how willing humanity is to defend its beliefs.

For the present study I have researched several books by authors who defend the different religions and assert that the religion to which they belong will help us lead a pure life, such as *The elementary forms of Religous Life*, *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism*, *Handbook of the history of religions*, *The Bible*, *The Quran*, *The Torah* and quotations from authors such as E. Durkheim, R. Bell, Diaz C, De Befourt, Kamali, Hawkins ans St. Croix.

The spatial context that takes the development of the detailed religions is very extensive since the followers of these are found all over the world but some countries that have great importance due to major events are Jerusalem, Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, India and China, becoming part of these religions legacy.

In this monograph I will talk about the origin and establishment of the Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Buddhist religion, the organization of each of these with the passing of the years and how this habit has changed, the persecutions that these have suffered to this day and the current situation in the world of these dogmas. (371 words)

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction of religious dogmas**

#### **1.1 Origin and establishment of Christian Religion**

Christianism represents the most followed religion around the world, Jesus, the son of god, who started prophesying the Old Testament, which is the first part of The Bible, composed by 46 books according to the Catholic Church. The first leaders of this religion where the apostles, who followed Jesus through all his life, united by a string of love and loyalty, with the main task of spreading his word and teachings. This dogma spread really fast, but many people disagree with this dogma. Therefore, everyone who followed it, began to be chased and killed all over Judea, Syria, Europe, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Transcaucasia, Egypt and Ethiopia. Finally, after years of being chased, this religion was accepted on the Roman Empire by the Milan edict in 313 and began to grow massively around the world, until it became the official Roman Empire religion in 380.

#### **1.2 Origin and establishment of Jewish Religion**

Judaism is the dogma tradition and part of the culture of the Jewish people. It is known as the most ancient monotheistic religion. Its principles are based on the Torah, also called Pentateuch, composed by five books. Its birth took place back when Noah's Ark ran aground on Mount Ararat, and his sons, Sem, Cam and Jafet gave origin to the of the Near East, to the camitas of Africa and to the Jafetites of the rest of the world. Abraham is recognized as the father of this religion, and at the moment that he received the order from



Yahveh to settle down in Canaan, he started this journey that took this dogma and started making it one of the main religions around the world. When the Pharaoh of Egypt realized how strong Judaism was getting, he made everything he could to reduce them to slavery. This community over the years was dominated by several empires such as the Babylonians, Persians, until the conquest by the Greeks giving us the right to say that “The primitive civilizations are therefore privileged cases because they are at the same time simple cases”. (Durkheim, 1912). After years of oppression a new leader showed up, Moses, who was in charge of taking the People through the Red Sea chosen by god to the Promised Land, Canaan. After 40 years they finally managed to settle down in Israel and the land was divided among the twelve tribes: Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Reuben, Judah and Simeon giving a meaning as when E. Durkheim (The elementary forms of the religious life) said: “Each district of the town has a characteristic color that represents it” (p.10). to create something that makes every tribe special. Finally, in the early middle Ages the Kházaro kingdom adopted Judaism as its official religion giving it a big role at the back then society. It can look similar to Christianity but they also have aspects that make the difference between them that gives us the freedom to say “Since all religions are comparable, since they all constitute species of the same gender, there are necessarily essential elements that are common to them”. (Durkheim, 1912),

We can also mention Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiainen and Risto Uro (2007) on their book *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism* where they say: “At first sight,, it seems that the cognitive science of religion and biblical studies or the study of early Judaism and

early Christianity have very little in common. The cognitive science of religion is a new multidisciplinary field that emerged in the 1990s” (p.1).

### **1.3 Origin and establishment of Islamic Religion**

It is based on the Quran, a book written in the 600 of the Christian era, on writing hijazi, masq, ma'il and kufic. Crescent or crescent moon is considered as the symbol representing Islam, that in Unicode is known as “The Crescent and Star”. Their followers are called Muslims. In the beginning, without vowels, only with consonants, with the absolute pillar that the only God is Ala and Mahoma his last messenger. It all took place back at the VII century in the Arabian Peninsula, with the appearance of the prophet Mahoma, who died and a century later this movement started spreading from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Central Asia in the east. This empire dissolved with a civil war called The Fitna that also had a sequel years after. R. Bell (1925) said that when Islam arrived it found both in Syria and in Egypt a isolated Church, upset sentiments which made Christians more enthusiastic to triumph over fellow-Christians whom they respected as apostates, than to combine against a common enemy, and a lukewarmness on the portion of the local populace towards a government. Later then, rival dynasties would claim the leadership of the Muslim world and many Islamic states and empires offered only a symbolic obedience to the caliph, unable to unify the Islamic world for a long time. Even though, this dogma was not in its best situation they often had discovers on science, astronomy, math, medicine during a stage with the name of “The Golden Age of Islam”. Subsequently, in the XVIII and XIX centuries, the Islamic regions fell under the influence

of the powerful European empires. Today this religion keeps growing and having more followers devoted to it.

#### **1.4 Origin and establishment of Buddhism Religion**

Buddhism is a philosophical and spiritual doctrine non-theist. It contains a variety of traditions, religious beliefs and spiritual practices mainly attributable to Buddha Gautama. It had developed the teachings spread by its founder Siddhartha Gautama, around the 5th century BC. in the northeast of India. It became the most followed religion in the III B.C on India. The Pali Canon, is the most ancient collection of Buddhist texts written. The dharma chakra is known as their symbol that represent their religion, meaning “wheel of doctrine” or “wheel of law” By the 13th century it reached its almost complete demise from India, but spread successfully through most of the east of the Asian continent. This religion has helped on the diffusion of language and in the adoption of humanist and universalist values. From the XX has spread all around the world massively. After analyzing the work and seeing the differences between all of these 5 religions, we can take a quote from Diaz, C. (*Handbook of the history of religions*): “The first data that the science of religions brings is the presence of fundamental common features in all religions that allow the subsumption although it is analogical of all of them under the same category”. (p. 17). (1097 words)



## **Chapter II**

### **Organization of religious dogmas**

#### **2.1 Structure of Christian Religion**

For Christians the pope is the successor of Jesus, having as designation to be the bishop of Rome. He represents the most significant identifier of catholic religion being the patriarch of Latin Church. He resides in Vatican City as tradition, which is an independent state within the city of Rome. The elections to choose this charge are based on the rules of the apostolic constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis* dealing with a lot of powers. That's why De Befourt (1843) says: "The church had better understood the distribution of powers since the early days of its political constitution in the empire, retaining its jurisdiction over souls, leaving discipline outside to royal power" (p.25). Then goes the Patriarchs who are the leaders of some autonomous particular churches. Below them are the cardinals, princes of the church choosed by the Pope, generally are bishops who lead departments of the Roman Curia. Some Bishops hold the title of archbishops gained from ruling metropolitan sees or those who head archdioceses that are not metropolitan sees. Bishops are always assisted by priests or deacons during ceremonies. Deacons are ministers of the church who co-work with the bishops alongside presbyters, focused on helping poor people who lack resources. Last but not least are the common people who form part of this community and support it.

## **2.2 Structure of Jewish Religion**

Jewish leadership hasn't been held by only one body since the destruction of The Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. This religion has divided on a lot of branches, and each one of them choose who will be the head of it and look for their wellness. At the beginning of this dogma, various leaderships were developed such as the heads of the first Hebrew tribes, the prophets like Moses, judges, kings as David and priests. On some individual synagogues, the head is generally the Rabbi. They are expected to be taught with the Talmud and the Shulkhan, codes that specify the Jewish law. They go through a complex training at a yeshiva which is an institution where they get formed. Jewish Communities call their leaders in many different ways such as hakham, teimanim, mori, being titles that reflect their leadership. Jewish grew a lot after the Renaissance and the Enlightenment adopting new lifestyles. The largest communities of Jewish people elect a leadership to represent their community and they often debate about the stances of their leaders depending on how their making things. Karaite Synagogues are run by a group of directors, giving the name of Hakham to their spiritual leader.

## **2.3 Structure of Islamic Religion**

Islamic religion leaders are usually people who have are part of a clerisy or the government and have developed an important role for their community or nation. In this religion priests work as exemplars, teachers, judges and leaders giving their people rules they must follow to practice in a correct way the dogma. Alim refers to scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence, meaning those who have studied the Islamic disciplines for some years as the hadith and



the muhadith. After Muhammad's death, Abu Bakr was named as Caliph for the first time, becoming the head of the Muslim community. Imam is the term used for founding scholars of the four Sunni madhabs. It is also commonly used to make reference to the official who leads the prayers at the mosques. The Grand Imam is a recognizable Sunni Islam title coming from Egypt with the task to lead the followers as the highest authority. They believe that every persons will be called by their Grand Imam at the Day of Judgment. On the Sunni Muslim community the highest authority held the name of Grand Mufti. Then Muezzins are all persons who makes the adhan or salat, different rites they accomplish at the mosque. Mujtahids are interpreters off the Quran and Hadith, both Islamic scriptures. It's is common to call kyai to the male elders preachers and nyai to women.

Islamic law, expound the indications and methods by which the rules of fiqh are deduced from their sources. These indications are found mainly in the Qur'an and Sunnah, which are the principal sources of the Shari'ah. The rules of fiqh are thus derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah in conformity with a body of principles and methods which are collectively known as usul al-fiqh. (Kamali, 1989, p.12)

#### **2.4 Structure of Buddhism Religion**

All participants of this religion have in common the use of distinctive robes as a symbol. The appearance of the robes may change depending to the region and sect they belong to. Their leadership structure is sometimes hard to define since some are ruled by hierarchy and others like a family business. Buddhist monasteries are the place where they settle, with the condition to surrender completely to this religion. These places are opened to public and

receive lay people for a period of time. These temples are the most abundant places with learnings about this religion.

The Buddhist monks are the highest positions in this religion hierarchy. Their task is to prepare children in every aspect of their religion and make sure they will follow this path.

The Buddhist nuns are the second rank in this dogma, acting as assistants of the monks.

Women can take this charge. They are known for spending almost all of their lives studying and meditating. Then comes the lay people, who have a strong relationship with the monks since they provide them food, clothing, medicines, etc. From this they get to learn as most as possible from this religion being taught by the monks. They spend almost all their time in the household activities. Last but not least are the Buddhist Pilgrims which task is to travel around specific religious sites such as Buddha's birthplace or monasteries to gain knowledge and spread it. Like at the Kandy which has long been considered the center of Buddhism in Sri Lanka within the center of the two most critical places, on the one hand stands the Sanctuary of the Tooth and on the other hand the incredible ascetic center of Siyam Nikaya (Hawkins, 1999). (1027 words)

## **Chapter III**

### **Persecution and current situation of religious dogmas**

#### **3.1 Persecution and current situation of Christian Religion**

Many Christians have been persecuted to this day, both by people of other religions and some belonging to the same Christian religion with different beliefs. The consequences of these persecutions ranged from arrests to execution, called martyrdom. The first persecution of the followers of this religion dates back to the time of the New Testament when Jesus was persecuted by the Jewish chiefs of that time. Then after his death, disciples were gradually caught and imprisoned until they were released by an angel according to the bible. The reason for this persecution was that the Jews believed that there was an obvious heresy that represented the Christian doctrine from a point of view of the traditional Jewish doctrine, since, the idea of a God-Man clashed head-on with his marked monotheism. The evidence is shocking, demonstrating that today's Western Christian religion is crumbling, losing authority and commitment on the part of its followers. Many studies show how in Europe and North America, from 1990 to 2010, about 25 million people, somehow lost their religion, evidencing how every day are fewer who profess it. According to the Christian Church, one of the greatest problems of today's society is intolerance, being carried away by the first appearance they have about another person, as well as selfishness, since everyday people have greater needs and the only thing they seek is their own good first of all, without thinking of the common good and what might others need. That's why



Ste. Croix (2006) says: "The salient characteristic of Christianity was intolerance, and this intolerance is the central feature in his account of the Christian persecutions" (p.4).

### **3.2 Persecution and current situation of Jewish Religion**

The persecution of the Jews has been a constant problem for this religion since its appearance, forcing its followers to numerous changes of shelters. It all begins when Judea was taken over by the Seleucid Empire, enforcing the process of Hellenization by law. The Jewish sacrifices, the feasts celebrated by them and the circumcision were prohibited, depriving them of several sacraments that identified them. As a sign of superiority, this empire began the construction of altars to Greek gods, along with the sacrifice of animals forbidden to Jews. The last retaliation of this empire was the complete prohibition of the possession of Jewish scriptures. The persecution of this religion had its maximum expression within the policies of Nazi Germany, which had as a priority the eradication of the Jews, which led to the murder of 6,000,000 Jews from 1941 to 1945. In 1942 the Nazis decided to implement the Final Solution, the genocide of the Jews of Europe with the creation of extermination camps with the sole purpose of exterminating this race and those who opposed Hitler. During this process many prisoners committed suicide when they knew what was coming, tormented by the atrocities of these camps. Some managed to escape from Auschwitz thanks to the Polish subsoil inside the camp and the help of some locals.

It was such a horrible historical act that we can feel goosebumps caused by these letters: "A gloom surrounded me as I walked through the barracks, along the rail

tracks, and down toward the crematoriums. In the distance, I heard the faint sound of church bells. Those brought here must have heard the bells hour after hour and wondered where God was, and whether the ringing signaled salvation or death”  
(Mayer, 2007, p.1)

Currently the largest Jewish group is in the United States with about 5.2 million followers. In America several countries have numerous communities of this religion such as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Chile, and smaller in Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela. Europe is not left behind, having a community in France that has approximately 500,000 Jews.

### **3.3 Persecution and current situation of Islamic Religion**

During the beginnings of the Islamic religion, Muslims were constantly abused and persecuted by pagan Meccanoes, characterized as polytheists. Then during the first crusade many Muslims were persecuted and killed for the struggle of the holy lands on which they were settled, destroying many of their churches and places of worship in retaliation. Then came the Mongol invasions in which Genghis Khan and the later Yuan emperors of China, who referred to Muslims as slaves, imposed laws prohibiting Islamic practices such as halal butchery, forcing them to sacrifice sheep in secret. The oppression was so severe that Muslims were forced to join the Hanen Chinese to overthrow the Mongols. Later in the modern age, as a product of the Armenian and Greek genocides, many Muslims were brutally murdered by Russians and Armenians in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. During the Holocaust, the Nazis also determined this religion as inferior by cruelly



killing those they found. Today Islam is a topic that is talked about every day thanks to the political events of Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Afghanistan, Philippines, Algeria, among others. Most of the time we hear that they refer to Islam with violence, war and terrorism. This is due to events such as the one that occurred in New York on September 11, 2001 and others in London, Madrid, Charm al Shaikh, Bali, Amman, Karashi, Casablanca, and Algiers. That's why people nowadays are afraid and affirm that Whereas terrorism even within the frame of suicide attacks is not an Islamic phenomenon by definition, it cannot be overlooked that the lion's share of terrorist acts and the foremost destroying of them in later a long time have been executed in the name of Islam (Bar, 2008).

### **3.4 Persecution and current situation of Buddhism Religion**

A large number of Buddhists have been victims of persecution, arrests, physical abuses, torture and executions all without justification, just because they are loyal to their faith. The first persecution occurred in India in the 2nd century B.C. by King Pushyamitra Shunga. After the death of King Ashoka, his son, Jalauka proceeded with the destruction of many Buddhist monasteries. The historical area of what is now Xinjiang consisted of the various areas of the Tarim basin and Dzungaria, and was originally populated by Iranian Saka peoples and Indo-European Tocharians who practiced the Buddhist religion. The area was subjected to Turkification and Islamification by invading Turkish Muslims. Today, this religion has between 300 and 600 million followers with China and Japan as the countries with the most followers. This religion has a good welcome in countries like United States,

England, Australia, France and Germany, being secular countries in which this religion is recognized. (1093 words)

## Conclusions

At the end of this monographic work it is concluded that:

- Today many people are determined to get to the point of giving their lives in order to ratify their beliefs, no matter what others say letting themselves be carried away by the teachings of their teachers. Devotion is a very strong value in today's world, every day religious dogmas grow more and more and even some new ones arise, with the different ideologies driven by the freedom of expression that we have today, unlike the old times, forcing each individual to respect the way of thinking of others, otherwise he would be exposed to legal reprisals.
- The intolerance of human beings over the years has grown surprisingly and religion is one of the factors that causes more problems today due to their different ideologies and the continuous fight of who is right based on what they have been taught and the different rites that each dogma has as a sacrament. Millions of people die day by day by this erroneous concept of superiority that some religions possess over others, trying in this way to eliminate the others so that there is less risk of its own disappearance, imposing itself as the strongest and apt to which it is convenient to join.
- Several religions at first sight look very different, but after analyzing them carefully have much in common that all worship one or more superior deity, which is taken as an example to follow to reach a pure life. All have historical characters who have prophesied the word of their religion with the sole purpose of making it grow to this day. Many of these are based on books written by the first representatives of these

religious dogmas, which take the role of the law created by their deity that must be fulfilled to be a real follower. In addition, these religious dogmas have sacred sites, which carry a great history behind them as well as rites that help to be part of these communities. And finally they are all an act of blind faith, never having had proof of what the texts express, testing the credibility of people.

- Hierarchy in religious dogmas is essential to their daily functioning and growth as each role plays a different role. Religious authorities have been characterized to this day as worthy of horrendous crimes and scenarios, abusing the power that was given to them. However, many of these nefarious problems are hidden and do not reach the eyes of society, uncovering what may make people apart their life from religions and learn about a new side of these dogmas never truly exposed before.
- To conclude, each of these religious dogmas has been a great effort until today, both for its creation and to achieve its transcendence through time and that many people continue to join them. It is up to each of us to choose which one we want to join if we want to but always remembering the tolerance we must have towards other ideologies. (505 words)



## Recomendations

At the end of this work it is recommended:

- Regardless of the way a group of people think, they must always respect the opinion of others no matter on what they base their principles. An individual should never abuse another because he belongs to another religion, because it can never be determined if at any time the roles are reversed.
- It is really important to know the past and present history of a religion, taking into account each factor that influences it and the sacrifice that it can take to be part of one before entering, since most of ugly details about them are hidden to the public to make them look attractive as the only show the good side about it.
- Read and investigate as a mean of personal enrichment the origins and roots of the religion to which one belongs, in order to better understand what it entails to bear this identity and not only belong to it by decision of our parents, but by free will, sealing a commitment to yourself and the religious dogma.
- It is recommended that when reading this work is read objectively without being in favor of any of these religions to determine which is the one that most calls our attention and its motives.



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