

## **“The Position of the Holy Quran and Its Created Religion Islam Against Dogmatism”**

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### **Abstract**

As a powerful institution, religion influences individual and collective thought and action through its norms, values, and beliefs. The Qur’an, as the primary source of Islam, plays a central role in shaping such principles. This study explores whether the doctrinal, practical, and ethical principles and values promoted by the Qur’an lead to a dogmatic attitude or provide grounds for dogmatism. It also examines the concept of ‘dogma’—originating from the intellectual context of Western philosophy—and analyses its lexical and terminological meanings, as well as the reasons for its association with religion, based on relevant historical and contemporary literature. It is widely acknowledged that the Qur’anic call to humanity is grounded in reason (‘aql). Therefore, associating this rational call with a dogmatic discourse or attitude is untenable. Acquiring knowledge (‘ilm or ma‘rifa) is among the most fundamental principles endorsed and encouraged by the Qur’an. The Qur’an repeatedly emphasises that God taught human beings how to write with the pen (al-qalam), the names (al-asmā’), and the Book (al-kitāb), aiming for a form of devotion grounded in reasoning and knowledge. The findings of this study indicate that although the term ‘dogma’ was initially used in epistemology to describe philosophers who defended the possibility of knowledge, it was later appropriated by Christian theologians to safeguard the Church’s doctrinal principles—thereby stripping it of its original philosophical context. In contrast, the Qur’an clarifies that dogmatism is characteristic not of belief (īmān) but of disbelief (kufr). The Qur’an does not hesitate to open even the foundational doctrine of divine unity (tawḥīd) to rational reflection and discussion. While the Qur’an does not contain anything contrary to reason, it does acknowledge the existence of realities that transcend human comprehension. Unlike Christianity’s theological tradition, which often embraces mystery, dogmatism, and agnosticism, the Qur’an commands understanding (fahm), contemplation (ta‘ammul), reflection (tafakkur), deliberation (tadabbur), remembrance (tadhakkur), and deep learning (tafaqquh). It firmly rejects fideistic tendencies that elevate belief over knowledge, such as Kant’s assertion that he “denied knowledge

to make room for faith,” or Tertullian’s famous dictum, “I believe because it is absurd.” In conclusion, a close and objective analysis of the Qur’an’s internal structure and content shows that its theological principles are not dogmatic.

**Key Words:** Kalām, Mankind, Qur’an, Faith, Dogmatism.

## 1.0 Introduction

The relationship between religion and the individual, society, being (*mawjūd*), existence, and science constitutes one of the most fundamental issues in contemporary philosophical thought and social sciences. Since ancient times, there has been widespread uncertainty regarding topics such as religion, dogma, dogmatism, dogmatic attitudes, and the relationship between the Qur’an and dogmatism, both globally and within the Muslim world, including Turkey. These uncertainties are evident in humanity’s intellectual history, philosophical endeavors, and thought. It can be said that this uncertainty across subjects stems from confusion over terminology and definitions among those who use and assign meanings to such philosophical terms based on subjective desires. The attitudes of people whose mental activities are confused—who misunderstand the true meanings of terminologies, their historical uses, structures, and conceptual positions—create a profound and disturbing chaos in social life. We also understand from humanity’s vast historical experience that if people who are in disagreement with each other do not make enough effort and endeavor to understand and correctly recognize the forms/patterns of thought that are in opposition to them, if they insist on their attitudes in a dogmatic manner, it usually results in calls for violence, meaning leads to the rise of terrorism and hot conflicts.

Indeed, the Quran expresses that deep hatred and hostility that lead to social polarization are fed mainly by a lack of knowledge and recognition, and by dogmatic attitudes and thoughts, saying: “Do not follow what you have no sure knowledge of...” (al-Isra 17/36). Again, referring to this issue, the Prophet Muhammad said: “A person is an enemy of what he does not know” (Ajluni, 1988). From this perspective, it is essential to understand the nature of terminologies and the valid reasons behind the intentions and motives that guide human behavior. People who discuss this subject, from the most competent intellectuals and scientists to ordinary individuals, at one level or another, use the established and widespread words and terminologies of their everyday language when talking about religion, dogma, dogmatism, dogmatic attitudes, and the relationship between the Qur’an and dogmatism. In our mental and intellectual lives, we also experience the much more intense and disastrous form of the upheavals that affect the fundamental dynamics of social and political life. Although all parties are responsible for developing a healthy dialogue, comparing

some environments, it is seen that the enlightened segments have extremely superficial, shallow and inadequate information about Islam, the idea of Islamic history, as well as Christianity, that is, the intellectual and political experience of the church and the dogmatic beliefs, creeds and attitudes that are the products of this. One of the other most obvious deficiencies observed in the enlightened segments is undoubtedly their attitude based on prejudices about the religion of Islam, Islamic history, and the Muslim world and culture. However, to understand the value and importance of something, it is necessary to have knowledge of it and, at the same time, to firmly understand and evaluate its history, culture, and religion. Because religion, as a powerful institution, shapes individual and social actions through the norms, values, and beliefs it holds. Political and administrative systems should not be considered outside human behavior and interaction, and the actors within these systems are affected by the institution of religion, which has essential functions, though to varying degrees (Davutoglu, 1992). Because of that, when we look at the history of humanity, we see that there has never been a society without religion on earth. There is no faithless society in today's world either. According to philosophers and sociologists, no society can be without religion (Toynbee-Ikeda, 1992). The Quran also clearly states that religion is a natural phenomenon for humans (See *er-Rûm* 30/30; *el-A'râf* 7/ 172). The term "True Religion" in the verses of the Qur'an that touch upon this issue should not be understood as the alienated, institutionalized, or dogmatized religion in the external world, but rather as the values inherent in human character, nature, or essence (*fitra*) due to their creation (Akdemir, 2000).

It is impossible to eliminate religion, since it is a natural phenomenon rooted in the nature, creation, and essence of humans. Religion, whose history is as ancient as humanity's, can be defined, in its most practical sense, as respect for the sacred (Tümer, 1994). In the most general sense, they are divine messages sent by the Almighty Allah to people (See *al-Baqara* 2/132; *Al-i Imran* 3/83; *an-Nur* 24/2; *an-Nasr* 110/2 cf. *al-Baqara* 2/256; *Al-i Imran* 3/19, 85; *al-A'raf*, 7/29; *at-Tawbah* 9/33, etc.). Because of this, a person who moves away from religion becomes alienated from himself, as he acts contrary to his *fitrat* (innate qualities), nature, and existence. In this sense, the Quran describes alienation as "a great oppression" (See *Luqman* 31/13). Because the primary purpose of the message conveyed by the Quran is to warn and protect individuals against all other false religions, ideologies, and ideas that put pressure on them, prevent them from realizing their humanity, and take away their freedom. In other words, it is to return man's dignity and give him the knowledge and awareness of being free. (Özden, 2011). According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the primary purpose of religion is expressed as follows: "It is not to explain the world, but to give meaning to the world by being inspired by concrete experiences, to enable people to

cope with their environment, to shoulder their own existence, and to live together with others” (The Encyclopedia Britannica/Ana Britannica, 1994). As can be understood from these expressions, although religion is a set of values that enables intellectuals and large masses of people to meet on a common ground in every society,(Tonybee-Ikeda, 1992), it is perceived by some enlightenment (positivist) intellectuals as a symbol of backwardness, reactionism, ignorance, violence, terrorism, darkness, bigotry, and dogmatism. In other words, the blame for all evil is often placed on religion. This is why terms like dogma, dogmatism, and dogmatic attitudes are commonly used in daily life in a pejorative sense—associated with bigotry—to discredit, humiliate, blame, shame, and condemn opponents. This is particularly true for those within the 'enlightenment' tradition of thought, which seeks to incriminate religion and religious people. Therefore, terms such as dogma, dogmatism, and dogmatic attitude should not be used casually in such a simplistic pejorative manner. These concepts, regardless of their usage, results, or reflections, ultimately have philosophical content (Dedeoğlu, 2017).

Dogma/dogmatism, as an attitude and mentality, is a phenomenon encountered in social relations, religion, philosophy, education, ethics, aesthetics, and values in our world, in ways related to them, at almost every stage of life. Dogmatism appears as a mentality, attitude, understanding, and behavioral style that accepts truth as absolute reality, existing on its own, regardless of age and social conditions. In this context, dogmatism means adopting a particular form of thought and accepting a systematic approach without criticism. In summary, worldwide, in social relations and in the world of values, confusion and conflict of concepts prevail and, in the concept of dogma and its derivatives, as in many concepts, a kind of concept integration is made by emptying or ignoring the philosophical content of them, or these concepts with such a philosophical background can be given a meaning according to the subjective initiative and desire of the user (Dedeoğlu, 2017) As stated above, there appears to be a high level of conceptual confusion regarding dogma, dogmatism, a dogmatic attitude, the relationship between the Quran and dogmatism, and related concepts. Discussions and conversations about the concepts in question are easily shifted from the logical ground to the ideological ground, and often, there are fights instead of discussions. For this reason, it is essential to equip our minds with knowledge and tools on the subject before tackling any problem, so that we can firmly establish the intellectual foundation for our present and future and produce meaningful, solid outcomes. The primary focus of our research is dogma, dogmatism, and dogmatic attitudes. The conceptual confusion arising from the use of these terms and their relation to religion leads to numerous misunderstandings, misinterpretations, misguided judgments, misexpressions, miscommunications, and even

misinterpretations. We believe this confusion stems from two main factors: The first is the arbitrary use of these concepts without determining their actual literal (root) meanings or considering the meanings and uses they have acquired over time. The second is the application of these concepts—originating, developing, and shaping in the ancient Greek and Western cultural context—without equivalents in Muslim religion, philosophy, and culture, in a subjective, shallow, simplistic, and pejorative manner according to the user’s desires, while ignoring the Qur’an, Muslim thought, culture, and practices, thus emptying them of their philosophical content. Based on this idea, we believe it would be more appropriate to continue our study by determining the literal and terminological meanings of the concepts in question, as it depends on the correct understanding and evaluation of these meanings, their historical development, the contextual relationship between religion and dogma, whether the Qur’an has a dogmatic quality, and so on.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Existing scholarship related to this research has predominantly examined dogmatism and dogmatic thinking from philosophical perspectives. Mehmet Aydın’s study, “Philosophy of Religion (Dogmatism, Philosophical Analysis of the Relationship between Belief and Reason),” comprehensively evaluates dogmatism from both conceptual and faith-reason relational dimensions. Şaban Ali Düzgün’s work “Guide to Religious Interpretation: Being, Knowledge, Value (The Construction of Meaning and the Rejection of Dogmatic Readings)” examines dogmatism through the lenses of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Süleyman Uludağ’s “The Structure of Islamic Thought” addresses dogmatism within the context of historical conflicts and intellectual tensions. İbrahim Hakkı Aydın’s “Islam in the Context of Dogmatism and Modernity” seeks to answer fundamental questions: “Is Islam structurally a dogmatic religion? Can it harmonise with the contemporary world and universal values?” İlhami Güler’s “Static Religion, Dynamic Sharia” primarily evaluates dogmatism from cultural perspectives. Roger Garaudy’s “The Promises of Islam” argues that Islam is not based on a dogmatic system, emphasising praxis and action instead. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi’s “Islamization of Knowledge” examines dogmatism from an epistemological standpoint, analysing the construction of knowledge within Islamic intellectual frameworks. Mehmet Münir Dedeoğlu’s study, “Dogmatism as a Mental Attitude and Form of Thinking and Dogmatic Disposition,” evaluates dogmatism from both sociological and individual psychological perspectives.

### 3. Material and Methods

The fundamental characteristic distinguishing this research from previous studies lies in its Qur'an-centred comparative analysis of dogmatic conceptions and attitudes within Western Christian culture. By placing the Qur'an at the centre of analysis, this study systematically elucidates the Qur'anic position on dogmatism, thereby establishing a clear theological and epistemological framework. This methodological approach constitutes the most distinctive feature differentiating this investigation from existing scholarship. By integrating classical sources and contemporary scholarship within a Qur'an-centred analytical framework, this research aims to make a significant contribution to Islamic intellectual discourse on the relationship between revelation, reason, and dogmatic thinking.

#### 4.1 Literal and Terminological Meanings of the Concept of Dogma

Etymologically, the concept of dogma derives from the Greek word "dogmata," meaning "idea" or "thought." The root meaning of this originally Greek word is found in English dictionaries as: decision, idea, truth (Webster's, 1964), definitive principle, having an idea, having an opinion (Walter, 1963), principle (Oxford English Dictionary, 1960), doctrine, source, teaching, sect (Baalbaki, 1993), belief, creed; religious belief, rule, definitive word (English-Turkish Redhouse, 1985).

In Turkish dictionaries, dogma and its derivatives are given the following meanings: Dogma: The basis of a doctrine or ideology adopted without testing its accuracy, arguments, beliefs, or sources.

Dogmatism: It is the understanding that adopts the proposed doctrines and principles as right without criticizing them and derives propositions from the assumptions it adopts with a strict method.

Dogmatic: It is a way of thinking that derives its beliefs from religious teachings, disregarding empirical evidence (T.D.K. Dictionary, 1983).

Dogmatism: (Greek noun.) A way of thinking based on dogma, the view of confirming without criticism and evidence, dogmatism, textualism, textuality, and persuasion (Dogan, 1996).

The terminologies in discussion are defined in the philosophical dictionaries as follows:

Dogma (German: dogma, Fr: dogme, Eng: dogma, Ottoman Turkish: Nassiyye, Turkish: katılaştırılmış, inak) Dictionary meaning: the doctrine taught as truth in a philosophical system or school or in a society (Bolay, 1996).

Dogmatism: “It is, as a negative adjective used by schools of thought to describe their opponents, the attitude that manifests itself as not being in favor of discussing the thesis put forward or vehemently opposing any criticism by fiercely defending a claim even though it is not logically defensible and defending the accuracy of a doctrine with a deep bias without being subjected to research, examination, and questioning” (Demir-Acar, 1993).

Dogma: The belief of the Christian church, as a definitive interpretation, involves accepting a doctrine put forward by the church to preserve the vitality of the religion, even if it is not true or justified by reason. This belief is official and demands acceptance. Roman Catholics derived dogma from the revelation in the holy books, tradition, and books legitimized by the church (Boldwin, 1960). In daily life, dogmatism expresses the belief that absolutizes a religious, scientific, or ideological thought put forward by any sacred or secular authority, adopts it without criticism, and considers it proper without the need to reconsider it through the filter of reason. (Aegleton, 1996). Therefore, dogmatism can be present in every aspect of life, including psychology, cosmology, aesthetics, and philosophy of art (Tunalı, 1959).

As an attitude, dogmatism is the belief that certain principles, theses, theories, thoughts, and ideologies are unconditionally accurate and universal law, always valid, and that one's views are definitively and unquestionably correct; one adheres to them and believes it is right to act accordingly (Cevizci, 1999). In a religious sense, doctrines that claim to establish a framework based on what God has revealed and are supported by an authority are called dogma. In this sense, sects and the teachings of the philosophers of the scholastic period are in the state of dogma. In addition, any propositions that claim absoluteness and propositions that belong to a person due to the belief in his infallibility are also called dogma. Such propositions can be found not only in religions, but also in science, ideologies, and various philosophical schools. Dogmas are truths that cannot be touched, criticized, or questioned; they are unconditional, like sacred entities (Eren, 1975; Kant, 2002; Taslaman, 2007; Giddens, 2012; Roty, 2002).

On the other hand, dogmatism in social life is, in the most general sense, a movement of thought that expresses fixation on a particular doctrine with excessive emphasis (Kant, 2002). Therefore, the term dogma is conceptually defined in the most general sense as principles or propositions that express a belief, opinion, thought, or explanation that is presented, imposed, or represented by any religious or scientific authority that is believed to be unshakable and unquestionable, and that is supposed to contain correct information. These “truths” have now become normative and have moved away from most of their original justifications (Rothacker, 1990). On the other hand, the concept of dogma can be applied to ideas that lack factual content and empirical support

(Cevizci,1999). In parallel with these definitions, we can say that it is highly possible to be dogmatic in the field of science. For example, we can present Leibniz's scientifically grounded ideas of causality and determinism as absolute and unshakable principles (Ülken,1972). In short, just as it is possible to develop a dogmatic attitude in the name of God, religion, belief, or tradition and ideology, it is also possible to do the same thing in the name of science, since it is a form of human thought. Because historical examples show that science is not always an objective, prejudice-free activity, and is not always open to self-criticism, as some people think (Taslaman, 2007). For example, as is well known, Comte proposed the establishment of a "religion of humanity" (temples of reason) that would abandon faith and dogma in favor of a scientific basis (Giddens, 2012). Here, we need to express the subtleties that are sometimes confused with each other. The first of these is that dogmatism does not only mean having a scholastic attitude, religiosity, or conservatism. On the contrary, we should state that there are many other varieties besides these. (Ülken, 2008). Dogmatism means an opinion that accepts and defends an idea as it is, without a precise examination by reason, in other words, without passing it through the filter of criticism. (Küçük, 1974). In the epistemological sense, dogmatism is the extreme form of rationalism. This doctrine arises from fundamental issues in the theory of knowledge, such as the possibility of knowledge, its value, and its suitability to existence (Pessoa, 2013). A person with this mentality has a psychological structure that views it as perfectly natural to unquestioningly adhere to a body of knowledge they accept as absolute truth and to believe they have the right to impose it on others. In this form, dogmatism has taken place in social life and historical process as a norm-form synthesis. Therefore, individuals with dogmatic beliefs have the conviction that they possess "savior truths" beneath their dogmatic impositions, and it is their mission, ideal, and purpose to convey and circulate these truths to everyone. Dogmatism in philosophy is the name of the epistemological doctrine that accepts the possibility of knowledge. Dogmatists in this approach did not feel the need to explain why or how knowledge is possible (Arslan, 2008).

On the opposite side of this thought, there are sophist philosophers who do not accept the possibility of knowledge and oppose the truth of things and the existence of specific knowledge. These philosophers sparked a revolution in Greek thought. According to Protagoras, the most important representative of this group, since man's cognitive abilities, that is, his emotions, experiments, and mind, are absolutely insufficient to obtain the truth and accurate information, we only have thoughts (doxa). An opinion has the same value as another opinion. Protagoras put forward his thesis with the famous phrase, "Man is the measure of everything." (Güriz, 1992). Then, every person is the measure of truth, and there are as many truths and opinions as there are

people. The extent of the skepticism of another sophist philosopher, Gorgias, can be deduced from the following three consecutive propositions attributed to him: “1. There is nothing. 2. Even if there were, we would not know. 3. Even if we knew, we could not convey it to others.” (Arslan, 1994). Based on such skeptical thoughts, the idea that there is no truth or reality outside of humans began to spread in Greek thought. Since this movement of skepticism, the basic concept we are trying to express has affected Greek thought life. Also, it spread to the sciences and morality. Philosophers such as Socrates and Plato opposed this movement and argued that there was a basis for science, claiming that there were principles and foundations on which people agreed. Because science is objective, it relies on objects rather than humans. In other words, “those who adopt the idea that the human mind can have objective knowledge of existence itself and the first causes of existence, as a requirement of the principles accepted before any critical thought” (Yüksel, 1991) are called dogmatists because they oppose the movement of skepticism. From now on, the word dogma became a part of philosophy, then science and religion (theology). (Atay, 1995). After the etymological and terminological analysis of the dogma term, we would like to discuss the meanings it gained later in the historical development.

#### **4.1 Meanings of the Concept of Dogma Later Acquired in the Historical Process**

1. Understanding it as a doctrine put forward as accurate within a philosophical school (Akarsu, 1979) becomes a basis and principle, as the meanings of the concept of dogma are linked to science and discoverability. Here, the reason and result of its first introduction are explained. It is taught because of its objectivity; if it were subjective, it would only be found in the one who hears it. This means unquestioningly accepting something, adopting it without understanding or discussing it. Later, by taking advantage of the fact that dogma is a principle, an idea, a fixed doctrine, Christianity used this concept to express the unchangeable, unquestionable tenets of faith in its own religious beliefs. In this context, the method used by Scholastic Philosophy is formulated as “I believe so that I may understand.” (Gökberg, 1990). Therefore, it is necessary to accept that the path that sacrifices reason to faith leads to fideism and to dogmatism. According to Kant, it means an idea or belief that cannot be criticized. This explanation of Kant is compatible with the principles of Christianity. However, it is difficult to find this meaning in the root and dictionary meanings of the word (Atay, 1995).

2. It continues to be used by being vulgarized to mean an idea and belief that is adopted without testing its accuracy (Akarsu, 1979), accepted as it is said, without showing evidence, without informing its source and reason (Baalbakı, 1985).

3. In Christianity, the principles of belief set by the highest church authority that everyone must accept are called dogma. (Runes,1961).

4. It is used primarily in the sense of church belief. (Ferm,1959).

5. A belief that does not have sufficient evidence, is determined arbitrarily, and is accepted on the condition that its origin is never questioned and no rational explanation is provided, is called dogmatism (Webster, 1964). It is seen that dogma and similar concepts, whose historical development, change, and journey we have summarized in dictionaries, were initially used to express a scientific principle and the basis of a philosophical idea, and that this was based on evidence and discussion. Later, Christianity separated this concept from its original context and applied it to the infallibility, indisputability, and unquestionability of its religious beliefs. Thus, it was aimed to prevent rational objections to Christian beliefs. Therefore, according to most Christian theologians, belief need not be rational. Therefore, faith does not need to be based on reason and knowledge. For example, based on this idea, G. Marcel argues that trying to prove God rationally is unnecessary and that God is not an equation, and that attempting to prove Him will reify God. Again, Maurice Blondel, the founder of the philosophy of motion, thinks that there is an opposition between reason and faith and that one should be sacrificed for the other. Within this framework, the religious thought of the scholastic period, developed and crystallized within the church and became doctrine, described anything that did not comply with this institutionalized doctrine as perversion. For example, the views of Copernicus and Galileo were rejected by the church because they did not align with scripture. Because it has been claimed that there is a fundamental opposition between science and faith, according to the theoretical religious framework that has been created and turned into dogma. However, in a letter he wrote in 1613, Galileo said that the Bible is infallible, but its interpreters can be mistaken (Sobel, 2000).

The whole problem is that interpreters of the holy books, rather than the books themselves, are believed to be infallible, and that they have solved every problem that will ever occur or is likely to occur. This means absolutizing the interpretations, that is, dogmatizing them. Therefore, the authority to comment in such a dogmatic environment belongs to those who have institutional identity and personality. After this stage, comments replace the original text and become the basis for all applications. Religion itself here is no longer in question, but the universal acceptance of what people understand from religion and the transformation of these acceptances into a dogmatic, ideological structure. In this sense, Tommasa Caccini, a Dominican priest, accused Galileo and his followers of being “enemies of true religion who practice Satan's art” (Sobel et al, 2000). Again, the following statements, on which the Catholic church swears against Protestantism and all its

followers who believe in Catholicism, are pretty significant: “I absolutely accept and adopt the traditions of the apostles and the church, as well as other customs and regulations of the church. It is also responsible for interpreting the sacred texts and determining their true meaning. Moreover, I will not make or accept any interpretation other than those unanimously agreed upon by the church fathers” (Sobel et al, 2000). These examples show that religions can become static over time and turn into a dogmatic ideology through the hands of interpreters and believers. Solidifying religious interpretations and understandings into dogmas means universalizing them. These attitudes and understandings damage, sterilize, and even destroy the content and universality of the actual sacred texts. Dogma is generally used in this sense today. When we say 'dogma,' we refer to religious beliefs and judgments that are not debated, questioned, asked for reasons, or required to be supported by evidence. In our society, two groups of people use the term 'dogma' and its derivatives in this sense. The first are those opposed to religion, or at least distant from it and its values. People in this group call religion's principles, provisions, and values 'dogma'. Because of this way of thinking, they claim that religion, religious beliefs, and principles are irrational, illogical, unthinkingly held, and devoid of a rational or scientific basis, and they try to expose the invalidity of religion and religious value standards. The second group consists of conservative and religious people. Just like the anti-religious group, they accept and defend that religion is a dogma, as if they think that they are defending religion in their minds. Thus, by claiming that Islam is indisputable, they claim that objections to Islam are meaningless and that the religion is indisputable. According to them, religion is believed the way it is said, without discussion or thought, or not believed at all. They believe that they protect Islam from attacks by claiming that religion cannot be reasoned with. Undoubtedly, although these two groups seem to be opposing each other, they view and reject or defend the religion of Islam with the same mentality. Therefore, it is evident that the Christian understanding of religion influenced both sides. In other words, both groups are far from knowing Islam and understanding the purpose, goal, and philosophy of the religion. They look at and evaluate Islam with shallow logic. It is understood that with this understanding and attitude, they were influenced by the meaning Christian religious commentators gave to the word dogma (Atay, 1995). Therefore, does the belief system built by the Quran allow a dogmatic culture like the Christian culture to find a basis? Let us try to find the answer to this question in the following section.

#### **4.2 The Qur'an's View of Dogmatic Behavior and Attitude**

When we evaluate this issue from the perspective of the Quran, we encounter the following remarkable observation. According to the Quran, what is dogmatic is not faith, but impiety. This

issue is expressed in the Qur'an as follows: "There are among the people who say, 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' while they do not believe, but they do not believe" (al-Baqara 2/8) "...There is a disease in their hearts." (al-Baqara 2/10) One of the meanings of "heart disease" mentioned here is a disability in a person's ability to know, understand, interpret, perceive, and decide; in other words, not being able to use the mind appropriately, which is a kind of dogmatism (Aydın, 2000) The Holy Quran in this context warns, saying: "Do not pursue something about which you have no definite knowledge. Because the ear, the eye, and the heart are all responsible for it." (al-Isra 17/36) Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only those who are wise take advice" (az-Zumar 39/9). The Holy Quran describes those who base their religious understanding on religion, tradition, customs, and imitation of their fathers as blind, deaf, mute, and those who do not reason and do not think.(See al-Baqara 2/18,171; al-Anfal 8/22) Moreover, in this context, the Quran did not even hesitate to make the concept of Tawhid, the oneness of Allah, which is the most fundamental principle of Islam, open to debate (See al-Anbiyā 21/22; al-Isra 17/42), and found the evidence of Allah's existence not from abstract things but from the existential qualities of the universe and people themselves brought examples (See al-Fussilet 41/53; Yusuf 12/ 105; er-Rûm 30/30) The Quran, while establishing the prophethood of Muhammad, rejected the polytheists' requests for miracles and presented the Prophet's forty years of a pure and honest moral life as evidence. (See Yunus 10/16; al-Kalam 68/4) Again, the Quran has opened itself to discussion, challenged all its opponents, and called everyone to discussion and debate. He continues this call even today. (See an-Nisa 4/82; Yunus 10/100; al-Isra 17/88; et-Tur 52/34).

In any case, calling a book, revelation, and the religion it brings, which renews such a call and challenge at every moment, dogmatic, must be shallow, to say the least, because dogma means indisputable. However, the Quran discusses the principle of Tawhīd, which is its most basic principle. To show that this challenge does not remain at the level of discourse, the Quran asks, in 275 places, "Don't you think?" "can't you understand?"; "Thinking and contemplation" itself is commanded in 20 places; "Wandering, researching and learning from" is recommended in 12 places, and science and knowledge are encouraged in 670 places (Fıġlalı, 2014). This means that the Qur'an encourages people to use their minds, reflect on God's blessings, understand God's verses and the truth of existence, and urges them to open their eyes and hearts/minds to learning and knowledge. This approach and feature of the Quran are, first of all, clear evidence that it seeks to build a society of not unquestioning believers, but of enlightened individuals who are knowledgeable, inquisitive, investigative, thinking, and using their minds. In addition, the fact that

the Holy Quran guides people with these commands and recommendations clearly shows that they have complete freedom of judgment, thought, and action, whether to believe or not. Because the method followed by the Quran is persuasion and suggestion. The methods of suggestion and persuasion are found only in intelligent and free people who use their reason. For these reasons, the only thing that the Quran does not allow one to leave is reason, which is expressed as “thinking, contemplating, taking lessons”. According to the Quran, reason is the arbitrator and a fundamental principle for distinguishing right from wrong. As in Christianity, it does not recommend believing first, but understanding, that is, observation, contemplation, and reflection. In other words, it connects the act of believing to the act of understanding (Güler, 1999). In light of these explanations, we think that a person who uses his mind and puts it to work, whether he is a believer or a non-believer, will not commit the shame of calling the understanding of religion revealed by the Quran dogma, based on plain logic. It should also be kept in mind that not everyone, not every scholar, and not every theologian can analyze every issue posed by the Quran and explain its rational evidence and reasonableness. However, someone else may be able to explain it. For this reason, we reiterate that one should avoid saying that principles and provisions that one cannot explain or cannot find an explanation for are dogma (Atay, 1995). In the words of Carullah, “Reason is the standard of every truth. The measurement of reason confirms the rightness of the truth. For the authenticity of the narration, its agreement with clear reason is essential; Explicit narrations always agree with express reason. Any narrations that contradict clear reason will never be valid” (Bigiyef, 2009). Therefore, although there is nothing contrary to reason in the Quran, it can be said that there are things that exceed reason. However, being contrary to reason and exceeding reason are different things. It is not possible to talk about things that go beyond reason, for they are contrary to reason. Because issues beyond reason today may be explained in the future as man’s knowledge increases, his understanding of the Quran will also increase (Akbulut, 2017). In conclusion, what we mean is that the Quran, opposite to the Christian theology, does not sacrifice reason and science to fideism, shelve it, dogmatize religious belief, and rejects the nonsense as expressed in Kant’s words, “I denied knowledge in order to find a place for belief” (Aydın, 2000), in other words; “I believe because it is nonsense” (Aydın, 1990) In other words, it is not possible to reconcile faith, practice and moral principles and values of the religion preached by the Quran with this religious discourse and the mentioned attitude and understanding (See al-Baqara 2/ 171; an-Nisâ 4/82; al-Anfal,8/22; Yunus 10/100; al-Isra 17/36; al-Ankebut 29/43; az-Zumar 39/9 etc.). In our evaluation of the internal structure and content of the Quran, we believe the religious understanding it offers is not dogmatic.

How was Islam comprehended, interpreted, and practiced during its founding century, and how did the Mecca-Medina experience shape this interpretation under the guidance of revelation and the leadership of the Prophet? The answer to this question can be framed as follows: During this period, the Prophet sought to shape life according to the principles laid out by the Qur'an. He led a social life as a commoner in the society he lived in, never defending his mission based on a divine revelation of his identity. On the contrary, he presented his duties very naturally and clearly as a human being. For example, he experienced happiness, sadness, anger, consulted others, and occasionally revised the decisions he had made. In short, he did not conceal any of his human characteristics that were not private. There is no mystery (dogmatism) in his life or in the decisions he made.

## **Conclusion**

When evaluating dogmatism from the perspective of the Quran, the most important and fundamental source of Islam, it rejects—unlike Christian theology—any reasoning or understanding that sacrifices reason and science for faith, sets them aside, and dogmatizes belief. This idea also contrasts with Kant's words, "I denied knowledge in order to find a place for faith," or with the idea, "I believe because it is absurd," attributed to Tertullian. The Quran rejects dogmatism because one of its most fundamental principles—"Do not follow what you do not know..."—serves as a clear warning and directive on this matter. In fact, dogma and similar terms were initially used in their original, literal senses to refer to scientific principles and the basis of philosophical ideas, grounded in evidence and discussion. However, later on, Christianity separated this concept from its own context and used it as a basis for the infallibility, indisputability, and unreasonableness of religious beliefs established by the church.

Thus, it was aimed to prevent rational objections to Christian beliefs. Therefore, the Quran or Islam has no such concern. On the contrary, the Quran does not command mystery, dogmatism, and agnosticism as in Christianity, but it commands forethought, observation, understanding, and contemplation. In other words, it connects the act of believing to the act of understanding and knowing. Undoubtedly, it cannot be denied that some basic religious tenets (original sin, trinity, etc.) play a role in the formation of a dogmatic attitude in Christian theology. In this sense, there is no way to identify any principles of belief that could lead to dogmatism among the basic principles and values revealed by the Quran. In other words, it is not possible to claim that a Christian-like dogmatic attitude and understanding exist within the content revealed by the Qur'an or the religious thought and structure established by the Prophet during the Mecca-Medina period. Although, after the death of Prophet Muhammad, some deviations, tendencies, and understandings

arose—often not related to the basic principles of faith but rather to the interpretation of religious texts and the personality and individuality of the Prophet, which could be considered dogmatic—equating Islam with Christianity in terms of dogma, dogmatism, and similar concepts must, at the very least, be seen as a lack of knowledge.

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