

## Jesus the Word

### Qur'an

#### Surah 4, An-Nisa

١٧١- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ○

171. O people of the Book! commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of God aught but truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an Apostle of God and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in God and His Apostles. Say not "Trinity": desist: it will be better for you: for God is One God: glory be to him: (for Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is God as a Disposer of affairs.

#### Surah 3, Al Imran

٤٥- إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ○  
45. Behold! the angels said "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus the son of Mary held in honor in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God.

٤٦- وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ○  
46. "He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity and he shall be (of the company) of the righteous."

٤٧- قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ ۗ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ○  
47. She said: "O my Lord! how shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?" He said: "Even so: God createth what He willeth; when He hath decreed a plan He but saith to it 'Be' and it is!

٤٨- وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ○  
48. "And God will teach him the Book and Wisdom the Law and the Gospel.

٤٩- وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ أَنِّي أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّجِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ○  
49. "And (appoint him) an Apostle to the Children of Israel (with this message): I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I make for you out of clay as it were the figure of a bird and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave; and I heal those born blind and the lepers and I quicken the dead by God's leave; and I declare to you what ye eat and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if ye did believe.

٥٠- وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلِأَجْلِ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرًا ○  
50. "(I have come to you) to attest the Law which was before me and to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me.

٥١- إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ○  
51. "It is God who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a way that is straight."

## New Testament

### John 1

**1**Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. **2**οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. **3**πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν **4**ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· **5**καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

**6**Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· **7**οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. **8**οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. **9**ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

**10**Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. **11**εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. **12**ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, **13**οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

**14**Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας· **15**(Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν· ) **16**ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· **17**ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. **18**θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

**1**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was in the beginning with God. **3**All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4**In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**6**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. **8**He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

**9**The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10**He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. **11**He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12**But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13**who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**14**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **15**(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") **16**For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18**No one has ever seen God; the only God,<sup>f</sup> who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

## Old Testament

### Genesis 1:1

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: **1**

**1**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

### Midrash: Genesis Rabbah 1

1:1 The great Rabbi Hoshaya opened [with the verse ([Mishlei 8:30](#)),] "I [the Torah] was an amon to Him and I was a plaything to Him every day." Amon means "pedagogue" (i.e. nanny). Amon means "covered." Amon means "hidden." And there is one who says amon means "great." Amon means "nanny," as in ([Bamidbar 11:12](#)) "As a nanny (omein) carries the suckling child." Amon means "covered," as in ([Eichah 4:5](#)) "Those who were covered (emunim) in scarlet have embraced refuse heaps." Amon means "hidden," as in ([Esther 2:7](#)) "He hid away (omein) Hadassah." Amon means "great," as in ([Nahum 3:8](#)) "Are you better than No-amon [which dwells in the rivers]?" which the Targum renders as, "Are you better than Alexandria the Great (amon), which dwells between the rivers?" Alternatively, amon means "artisan." The Torah is saying, "I was the artisan's tool of Hashem." In the way of the world, a king of flesh and blood who builds a castle does not do so from his own knowledge, but rather from the knowledge of an architect, and the architect does not build it from his own knowledge, but rather he has scrolls and books in order to know how to make rooms and doorways. So too Hashem gazed into the Torah and created the world. Similarly the Torah says, "Through the reishis Hashem created [the heavens and the earth]," and reishis means Torah, as in "Hashem made me [the Torah] the beginning (reishis) of His way" ([Mishlei 8:22](#)).

1:3 "In the beginning of God's creating..." - Six things preceded the creation of the world; some of them were created and some of them were decided to be created. The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created. How do we know the Torah was? As it says ([Proverbs 8:22](#)): "God made me at the beginning of his way." How do we know the Throne of Glory was? As it says ([Psalms 93:2](#)): "Your throne is established as of old etc." The Patriarchs, Israel, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah were decided to be created. How do we know the Patriarchs were? As it says ([Hosea 9:10](#)): "Like grapes in the wilderness etc." How do we know Israel was? As it says ([Psalms 74:2](#)): "Remember your congregation, whom you purchased from old." How do we know the Temple was? As it says ([Jeremiah 17:12](#)): "Your throne of glory, on high from the beginning etc." How do we know the name of the Messiah was? As it says ([Psalms 72:17](#)): "May his name exist forever etc. [his name shall be Yinnon as long as the sun]." Rabbi Ahavah said in the name of Rabbi Ze'ira: Even repentance was, as it says ([Psalms 90:2](#)): "Before the mountains were birthed," and at the same time ([Psalms 90:3](#)), "You turned man to contrition etc." However, I do not know which was first--if the Torah preceded the Throne of Glory or the Throne of Glory preceded the Torah. Rabbi Abba Bar Cahana said: The Torah preceded the Throne of Glory, as it says ([Proverbs 8:22](#)): "God made me at the beginning of his way, the first of his works of old." This is before that of which it is written ([Psalms 93:2](#)): "Your throne is established as of old." Rabbi Hunna and Rabbi Yirmiyah in the name of Rabbi Shmuel the son of Rabbi Yitzchak said: The thought of Israel was before everything. This is like a king who was married to a woman and did not have a son. One time the king was in the market and said: "Take this ink and pen for my son." They said: "He does not have a son."

He replied: "Take them; the king must expect a son, because otherwise he would not command that the ink and pen be taken." Similarly, if there was no expectation of Israel receiving it after 26 generations, God would not have written in the Torah: "Command the children of Israel" or "Speak to the children of Israel." Rabbi Bannai said: The world and its contents were only created in the merit of the Torah, as it says ([Proverbs 3:19](#)): "God founded the world with wisdom etc."

## Proverbs 8

[12](#): אֲנִי־חֲכָמָה שִׁבְנֹתַי עֲרַמָּה וְדַעַת מִזְמוֹת אֲמַצָּא:

[22](#): יְהוָה הִנְנִי רֵאשִׁית דְּרַבּוֹ הַדָּם מִפְּעֻלָּיו מֵאֶזֶר:

[23](#): מֵעוֹלָם נִסְכַּתִּי מֵרֵאשִׁית מִקְדַּמֵי־אָרֶץ:

[24](#): בְּאִין־תְּהוֹמֹת חוֹלְלֹתַי בְּאִין מְעִיבוֹת נִכְבְּדֵי־מַיִם:

[25](#): בְּטַרְס הַרִים הִטַּבְעוּ לִפְנֵי גִבְעוֹת חוֹלְלֹתַי:

[26](#): עַד־לֹא עָשָׂה אָרֶץ וְחוֹצוֹת אֶרֶץ וְרֵאשִׁית עִפְרוֹת תִּבְל:

[27](#): בְּהִכְיֵנוּ מַיִם נֶשֶׁם אֲנִי בְּחוֹלְקוֹ אֲחִי עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם:

[28](#): בְּאֲמִצּוֹ שְׁחָקִים מִמֶּעַל לְבַעֲזוֹ עֵינֹת תְהוֹם:

[29](#): בְּשׁוֹמוֹ לָלֵם אֶחָקוֹ וְיָמִים לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ־פִיו בְּחוֹלְקוֹ מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ:

[30](#): וְאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אֲמוֹן וְאֶהְיֶה עֹשֶׂה־יָוֵם אִם אֶיּוֹם מִשְׁחָקֶת לִפְנֵי בְכַל־עַת:

[31](#): מִשְׁחָקֶת בְּתִבְל אֶרְצוֹ אֲשַׁעֲשְׂעִי אֶת־בְּנֵי אָדָם:

[12](#)“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.

.....

[22](#)“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

[23](#)Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

[24](#)When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.

[25](#)Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth,

[26](#)before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.

[27](#)When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

[28](#)when he made firm the skies above, when he established<sup>d</sup> the fountains of the deep,

[29](#)when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

[30](#)then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his<sup>e</sup> delight, rejoicing before him always,

[31](#)rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.

## Muslim commentary on Surah an-Nisa 4:171

### Al-Tashani

[4:171] O People of the Scripture, do not go to extremes in your religion: as for [the extremism of] the Jews, it is their absorption in the exoteric and the denial of the esoteric aspects [of things], and [their] demotion of Jesus from the rank of prophethood and the station of the possession of the attributes of lordliness. In the case of the Christians, it is their absorption in the esoteric aspects and their denial of the exoteric as well as the elevation of Jesus to the station of divinity; and do not say about God except the truth, by combining [belief in both] the exoteric and esoteric aspects as well as the union and the differentiation, as is the case with the Muḥammadan affirmation of Oneness and with the statement that Jesus was the locus for the manifestation of the divine attributes, drawing life from His life and calling to the station of the affirmation of descriptions;

**and [Jesus is] His Word, a disengaged soul, a word from among the words of God, that is, one of His spiritual realities, a spirit from among [many] spirits.**

So believe in God and His messengers, at the level of union and differentiation, and do not say, 'Three', by adding life and knowledge to the essence such that the divinity becomes three things and Jesus becomes a part of His life at the breathing [into Mary]; or [do not say 'Three'] by differentiating between the essence of the Truth and the world of light and the world of darkness such that Jesus becomes generated by His light; rather believe in all [as one], since He is all and hence knowledge and life constitute His very essence, as well as the world of light and that of darkness, and Jesus becomes annihilated in Him, existing by His existence, alive by His life, knowing by His knowledge, all of which constitutes His essential unity, expressed in His words: Verily, God is but One God. Glory be to Him, exalted above that there should be an existent other than Him such that it can be generated from Him, separate itself [from Him] and share in His genus by being an existent like Him; nay, He is the [only] existent in the sense that He is existence. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens, spirits, [and in] the earth, bodies, being His Names and His exoteric and esoteric aspects; [God suffices] as a Guardian, standing in for creatures in terms of their acts, their attributes and their essences upon their annihilation in the affirmation of the Oneness, as the Commander of the Believers 'Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib], peace be upon him, said, 'There is no god except God after the annihilation of creatures'

### Jalalayn

[4:171] . . . the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word which He cast to, [which] He conveyed to, Mary, and a spirit, that is, one whose spirit is, from Him: he [Jesus] is here attached to God, exalted be He, as an honouring for him, and not as you claim, that he is the son of God, or a god alongside Him, or one of three, because one that possesses a spirit is compound, while God transcends being compound and the attribution of compounds to Him . . .

### Ibn Abbas

[4:171] Allah then revealed about the Nestorian Christians of Najran who claimed that Jesus was the son of Allah and that Jesus and the Lord are partners, saying: (O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate) do not be extreme (in your religion) for this is not the right course (nor utter aught concerning Allah save the Truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary) and through His word he became a created being, (and a spirit from Him) and

through His command, Jesus became a son without a father. (So believe in Allah and His messengers) all the messengers including Jesus, (and say not “Three”) a son, father and wife. (Cease!) from making such a claim and repent ((it is) better for you!) than such a claim. (Allah is only One God) without a son or partner. (Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth) are His servants. (And Allah is sufficient as Defender) as Lord of all created beings and He is witness of what He says about Jesus.

### The Study Qur’an

171 From the Quranic perspective, if the error of the Jews is in their failure to recognize certain prophets who had been sent to them, the error of the Christians is to exaggerate in their religion by ascribing divine status to their prophet, Jesus (R). In this verse, then, O People of the Book is addressed primarily to Christians. The verse asserts the Quranic view of Jesus as only a messenger of God, meaning a human messenger like Muhammad and the prophets who preceded him (see also 5:75). The understanding of Jesus as a messenger of God is consistent with several Gospel verses that state that Jesus was sent by the Father (see, e.g., John 5:23; 5:30; 5:36–37; 6:39; 6:44; 6:57; 8:16; 8:18; 8:29; 8:42; 10:36; 12:49; 14:24; 17:21; 17:25; 20:21.)

Yet, the Quran ascribes unique distinctions to certain prophets, which then become the basis of their honorific titles in Islamic tradition. For example, God is said to have taken Abraham for a friend (v. 125), the basis of his honorific title *Khalīl Allāh* (the intimate friend of God), and to have spoken to Moses “directly” (v. 164), the basis of his honorific title *Kalīm Allāh* (one who speaks with God).

In the present verse, the uniqueness of Jesus among the messengers is affirmed in several ways, including his title *Rūḥ Allāh* (“Spirit of God”). He is referred to here and in certain places, however, as the Messiah (*al-Masīḥ*), a term that in Arabic is understood to refer to his having been purified by God of sin (T). This is not unrelated to the concept of being “anointed,” the root meaning of the word in Hebrew.

He is also identified as God’s Word (see also 3:45; 19:34), an idea that has clear resonance with the Gospel tradition, where Jesus is identified as the “Word” of God (see John 1). Christian and Islamic tradition, however, derive different theological conclusions from this appellation. In the Islamic context, the identification of Jesus as God’s Word does not preclude or overshadow his function as the bringer of the Gospel, which, like the Torah and the Quran, represents God’s Word and message to humanity. Some commentators interpret His Word here as the tidings Mary received of his miraculous conception in her womb or as an allusion to the Divine Creative Command *Be!* by which Christ was formed in Mary’s womb (see 3:45, 59; R, T).

However, while all created beings are brought into existence through God’s Word, Christ alone is specifically identified as “a Word from God.” Some might argue, therefore, that Jesus, by virtue of being identified as God’s Word, somehow participates (uniquely) in the Divine Creative Command, although this is not the traditional Islamic understanding of Jesus’ identification as a Word from Him (3:45). The miracle of Jesus’ virgin birth is also alluded to here in that he is identified as God’s Word committed to Mary (*alqāhā ilā Maryam*), which could also be rendered “cast upon Mary.” Cf. 66:12, where it is said that God breathed His Spirit into Mary.

Consistent with the implicit representation in 66:12 of Jesus as God’s “Spirit” breathed into Mary, in the present verse Jesus is also identified as a Spirit from God. Cf. 2:87, 253; 5:110, where Jesus is

strengthened . . . with the Holy Spirit. It is on this basis that Jesus is given the honorific title of “Spirit of God” (Rūḥ Allāh) in the Islamic tradition. Some commentators, however, understand Jesus’ description as a Spirit from God metaphorically and consider Spirit here to be either a reference to Jesus’ purity or a metaphor for God’s Mercy (rahmah; R).

In addition to reaffirming the full humanity of Jesus, the present verse commands Christians to say not “Three.” This is understood as a command to abandon the doctrine of God as Trinity. Here they are merely told to refrain from asserting this doctrine, as it is better for them. In 5:73, Christians who call God “Three” are more seriously criticized, but this verse is embedded in a larger discussion that seems to be addressing those Christians who took not only Jesus, but also his mother, Mary, to be divine (see 5:73c). In both the present verse and 5:73, however, the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as three “persons,” or hypostases, “within” the One God is not explicitly referenced, and the criticism seems directed at those who assert the existence of three distinct “gods,” an idea that Christians themselves reject. Al-Rāzī is aware that Christians do not believe in three separate gods, but rather in three qualities (ṣifāt) in a single Divine Essence, but argues that the claim that the Divine Reality inhered in the human form of Christ belies the idea that the trinitarian concept ultimately posits a single Divine Essence. He also contrasts the Christian doctrine of aspects, or hypostases, within a single Divine Essence with the Islamic doctrine of God’s Names and Qualities, which, unlike the Christian hypostases, are not understood as aspects of God that can be seen as multiple, distinct entities (R).

Despite these strong criticisms of Christian trinitarian doctrine as well as the implication through juxtaposition in 5:72–73 that Christian beliefs in the divinity of Jesus, and in God as the third of three can be understood as a kind of shirk (ascribing partners unto God), Islamic Law never considered Christians to be “idolaters” (mushrikūn) and accepted Christians’ own assertions of monotheistic belief, maintaining the clear distinction the Quran itself makes between idolaters (mushrikūn) and the People of the Book. Having addressed the Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus and in the trinitarian concept of God, the present verse concludes by refuting the Christian belief in the divine sonship of Jesus: Glory be to Him that He should have a child. For other rejections of the notion of Jesus’ divine “sonship” or of God’s having offspring of any sort, see 2:116; 6:100–101; 9:30; 10:68; 16:57; 17:111; 43:16.