

a destroyed city (Q 21:95); if a city is destroyed, it is impossible that any form of normal life could return to it (Sam‘ānī); a demolished city cannot return to life (Samarqandī); the destruction leads to “so it is [now] fallen into ruin” (Q 22:45); due to the disbelief of the denizens, the city lies on earth as scattered fragments, their wells are abandoned and dry (Wāḥidī, *Wajīz*). Allah *seizes* the city to be destroyed (Q 22:48); *seizes*, that is, He sends upon it His punishment (Bayḍāwī); or as in the case of Lūṭ’s city, *and We rained upon them a rain; and evil was the rain to those who were warned* (Q 27:58); and that rain brought a storm of stones falling on them (Wāḥidī, *Wajīz*; cf. Q 7:84; 11:82; 15:74; 26:173); or by sending *rijz* on the people of the city (Q 29:34) which is defined as “a severe torment and punishment” (Ṭabarī)—in the form of heavy pebbles (*ḥaṣb*) and collapsing (*ḥaṣf*) of their dwellings (Ibn al-Jawzī). Such cities could have *no helper for them* (Q 47:13).

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**See also:** BELIEVERS; BELYING THE MESSENGERS; COMPANIONS; COMMUNITY; DELUGE; DESCENT OF THE QUR’ĀN; DISBELIEVERS; DISCIPLES OF ‘ĪSĀ; DISOBEDIENCE; FIR‘AWN; GLAD TIDINGS AND WARNINGS; HIJRA; HOMOSEXUALITY; IBRĀHĪM, UPON HIM PEACE; ‘ĪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; KA‘BA; AL-KHADIR; LŪṬ, UPON HIM PEACE; MADĪNA; MAGIC; MAKKA; MŪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; NŪḤ, UPON HIM PEACE; PEOPLE OF THE CAVE; POLYTHEISM AND POLYTHEISTS; PRESERVED TABLET; QIBLA; SABA’; SHU‘AYB, UPON HIM PEACE.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

### CLAY

ṬĪN, TURĀB, ṢALSĀL, FAKHKHĀR, ḤAMA’, SIJĪL

“Clay” is used here to denote six forms of the earthly substance mentioned in the Qur’ān as (i) the material from earth used for the creation of human beings (*q.v.*); (ii) substance used by the Prophet ‘Īsā, upon him peace (*q.v.*) to make a bird-figure; (iii) mentioned by Pharaoh when he ordered Hāmān to construct a tower to the heavens; (iv) used as stones of punishment; and (v) referring to powdery earth or dust.

### Definitions

- i. **ṭīn:** The nominal form *ṭīn* is derived from the root *ṭ-y-n* and its Form II verb *ṭayyana*, and is defined as earth mixed with water (*al-turāb wal-mā’ al-mukhtalīf*) (Rāghīb, *Mufradāt*). The linguist Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Fāris b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (306-395/1005) illustrates the verb’s two usages with the phrases *ṭayyantu al-bayt* (“I coated the house with clay”) and *ṭintu al-kitāb* (“I sealed the letter [with a clay seal]”) (*Maqāyīs*). The noun *ṭīn* is used in the Qur’ān 12 times in both indefinite and definite prepositional phrases and as an indefinite accusative form (*min ṭīn*: Q 6:2; 7:12; 23:12; 32:7; 37:11; 38:71, 76; 51:33; *min al-ṭīn*: Q 3:49; 5:110; *‘alā al-ṭīn*: Q 28:38; *ṭīnan*: Q 17:61).
- ii. **turāb:** Derived from the root *t-r-b*, the noun *turāb* is defined as fine, dry, powdery earth (Farāhīdī, *‘Ayn*; Azharī, *Tahdhīb*, Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ*). It is used 17 times: six times in reference to the creation of human beings (Q 3:59;

18:37; 22:5; 30:20; 35:11; 40:67) and eleven times as dust—eight of which refer to the statements of the deniers of Resurrection (*q.v.*), who say how can we be resurrected after we (or our bones) have become dust (Q 13:5; 23:35, 82; 27:67; 37:16, 53; 50:3; 56:47), and once in their wish to be like dust (Q 78:40) on the Day of Reckoning (*q.v.*); once as earth (Q 16:59) for the live burial of a daughter (see BURIAL) and once as dust on a rock (Q 2:64) in a metaphor of great power, reminding the believers not to *invalidate your charities with reminders or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His example is like that of a smooth rock upon which is dust and it is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.*

- iii. **ṣalṣāl:** The nominal form *ṣalṣāl* (verbal forms *ṣalṣala/yaṣalṣilu*) denotes a ringing sound and is derived from the geminate root *ṣ-l-l*. It is defined as a kind of clay (*tīn*) that produces a sound when worked (*hurrika*) on the potter's wheel, and is used in making kiln-treated earthenware (*khazaf*), the treated material is then called *fakhhār* (Farāhīdī, *sub al-ṣād wa-l-lām; stem ṣ-l-l*). The noun *ṣalṣāl* refers primarily to the reverberation of sound as when a dry vessel is struck, and secondarily to the material composing such a vessel (Rāghib, *Mufradāt*). It occurs in the Qurʾān four times in two specific constructions (Q 15:26, 28, 33: *min ṣalṣāl min ḥamaʿin masnūn*; Q 55:14: *min ṣalṣālin kal-fakhhāri*).
- iv. **fakhār:** The genitive masculine singular noun *fakhār* (from the root *f-kh-r*, meaning sounding clay) is used once (Q 55:14): *He created human being from sounding clay. Fakhār is baked pottery because, when struck, it makes sound like the one who is boasting* (Rāghib).
- v. **ḥamāʿ:** The noun *ḥamāʿ* (from the root *ḥ-m-ʿ*, meaning black mud) is used three times in one sura (Q 15:26, 28, 33), always in conjugation with *masnūn* in the phrase *min ṣalṣāl min ḥamaʿin masnūn*.
- vi. **sijjil:** “Ibn Qutayba said *al-sijjil* is a Persian word, [made from] *sang* and *gil*, that is, stone and clay” (*Muʿarrab, sub sīn*, no. 336; cf. Suyūfī, Type 38, *fi-mā waqaʿa fih bi-ghayr lughat*

al-ʿArab; Rāghib, *sub s-j-l*, calls it “Arabized Persian”). It is used three times, twice (Q 11:82; 15:74) referring to the rain of stones sent down upon the People of Lūt, upon him peace, and once (Q 105:4) referring to the stones dropped by the birds that destroyed Abraha's army (see PEOPLE OF THE ELEPHANT).

### Material Used in the Creation of Humans

All five nouns (*tīn*, *turāb*, *ṣalṣāl*, *fakhār*, and *ḥamāʿ*) mentioning the substance of creation of Ādam, upon him peace (*q.v.*), and of humankind in general, refer to various forms of earth; except for *turāb* (dry dust), they all refer to earth mixed with water (for detailed discussion, see ĀDAM, UPON HIM PEACE; HUMANS). The Companion Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (d. 44/ca.664), Allah be well-pleased with him, narrates that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said, “Allah the Exalted created Ādam from a handful that He took from all parts of the earth, such that the descendants of Ādam appear according to this measure: some of them have red complexion, some black, and others white... Then his clay (*tīnatuh*) was moistened (*bullat*) and became sticky clay (*tīn lāzib*); some time passed and it became shaped and altered mud (*ḥamaʿ masnūn*); it was left for a period of time, then it became [like] “resounding earthenware” (*ṣalṣāl*)” (Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Abwāb Tafṣīr al-Qurʾān, [bāb] *wa min sūrat al-Baqara, grad-ed ḥasan*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, Dhikr khalq Ādam).

The Sufi master and exegete Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (376-465/986-1072) explains the symbolic significance of Q 6:2: “He established the original substance of clay and imbued it with wonders, and shed on it what is not shed on any [other] created being. The significance (*ʿibra*) is hidden in their union (*bil-waṣl*) and not in the origin (*al-aṣl*), for the union is nearness (*qurba*) [to the Creator] while the origin is dust (*turba*)” (*Tafṣīr*). Rūzbahān al-Baqī (d. 606/1209) writes (*ʿArāʾis*), “The heavens are a body (*jasad*), and that body's heart is the earth. Allah Most High singled out the heart of the heavens for His Majesty to shine therein, [as is stated] in the verse *And the earth shall shine with the light of its Lord* (Q 39:69). It is because of this special distinction that He created the outer form of Ādam from the heart of the world.” The Moroccan Sufi exegete Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mahdī Ibn ʿAjība al-Ḥasanī al-Idrīsī al-Fāsī (d. 1224/1809) comments further (*Baḥr*), “Repositories (i.e., human bodies) are [made] of clay, while souls are [made] of the light of the Lord of the Worlds. Their being made from clay (*tīniyya*) is a covering