

Ṭabarī). *Nuḥās* is the most common reading; variants include *niḥās* (read by Mujāhid, Ḥumayd, ‘Ikrima and Abī ‘Āliya); *naḥsun* (read by Muslim b. Jundab); *naḥsin* (read by Ḥanzala b. Murra b. al-Nu‘mān al-Anṣarī); *nuḥus* (read by Ḥasan al-Baṣarī); and *naḥuss* (read by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakra) (Ṭabarī; Zamakhsharī; Qurṭubī). Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32/ca.652), Allah be well-pleased with him, glossed *nuḥās* as *muḥl*—which is also used in Q 70: 8 and is variously glossed as molten lead, copper, or silver or as dregs of oil (*durdiyy al-zayt*); the Successor Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 102/720) called it decoction of oil (Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 55:36).

The verse appears in a powerful description of the events of the Day of Reckoning (*q.v.*):

*O the gathering of jinn and men, if you are able to go beyond the heavens and the earth, then go; you shall not be able to go, except by the permission [of your Lord], so which of the favors of your Lord will you two deny? There will be sent upon you a flame of fire and nuḥās, and you shall not prevail. So which of your Lord’s favors will you two deny, when the sky shall be rent asunder and when it shall turn crimson like red hide? So which of your Lord’s favors will you two deny? (Q 55: 33-38).*

### Bibliography

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Ibn ‘Ādil. *Lubāb*.  
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Māwardī. *Nukat*.  
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Rāzī. *Tafsīr*.  
Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.  
Zabīdī. *Tāj*.  
Zamakhsharī. *Kashshāf*.

See also: DAY OF RECKONING; DHŪL-QARNAYN; EARTH; HEREAFTER; HUMANS; JINN; MOUNTAINS; RESURRECTION; SULAYMĀN, UPON HIM PEACE; YA‘JŪJ AND MA‘JŪJ.

## CORRUPTION

### FASĀD, FISQ

This article comprises the following sections: (i) Definitions and usage; (ii) The Human Capacity to Work Corruption; (iii) Corruption of Beliefs; (iv) Corrupt Deeds; (v) Specific Mentions; (vi) Outcome of Corruption; (vii) Prohibition of Corruption; (viii) Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

Two Qur’ānic terms denote corruption of various kinds: *fasād* and *fisq*. *f-s-d* connotes turning away from the just median (*al-i‘tidāl*). The noun *fasād* “refers to any kind of deviation, regardless of its extent. It is the opposite of *al-ṣalāḥ* (rectitude, virtue, honesty, incorruptness)” (Rāghib, *sub* *f-s-d*; cf. Ibn Manẓūr). The root appears fifty times in the Qur’ān; three times (Q 2:251; 21:22; 23:71) as the simple verb *fasada*—to have been corrupted”; fifteen times (Q 2:115, 27, 30, 205; 7:56, 85; 12:73; 13:25; 16:88; 17:4; 26:152; 27:34, 48; 47:22) as Form IV verb *afsada*, *yufsidu*—to cause corruption; eleven times (Q 2:205; 5:32, 33, 64; 8:73; 11:116; 28:77, 83; 30:41; 40:26; 89:12) as noun *fasād*—corruption; twenty-one times (Q 2:12, 60, 220; 3:63; 5:64; 7:74, 86, 103, 142; 10:40, 81, 91; 11:85; 18:94; 26:183; 27:14; 28:4, 77; 29:30, 36; 38:28) as *mufsid*—the one who spreads corruption, the active participle of Form IV verb (‘Abd-al-Bāqī).

The Qur’ān commentaries and works on polysemy mention six types of corruption denoted by the terms *fasād* and *mufsid*:

- i. acts of disobedience (*al-ma‘āsī*), as in Q 2:11, *do not cause corruption on the earth*; and Q 7:56, *do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been reformed* (also Q 7:85; 47:22) in the same sense (cf. Bayḍāwī *sub* Q 2:11);
- ii. perdition (*al-halāk*), as in Q 17:4, *you will surely cause corruption on the earth twice*; and Q 21:22, *had there been within them [the heavens and the earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been in disorder (la-fasadatā)*, that is both would have been destroyed and ruined;
- iii. famine and meager vegetation (*qaḥṭ wa qillat al-nabāt*), which is the meaning of *fasād* in Q 30:41, *corruption has appeared (zahara-l-fasād) throughout the land and sea* (Bayḍāwī; Zajjāj; Wāḥidī, *Wajīz*);
- iv. killing, vandalism, and destruction of crops (*qatl wa-l-takhrīb wa iltāf al-zar‘*) as in Q 7:127, *shall we leave Mūsā and his people to cause*

corruption in the land, and Q 40:26, indeed, I fear that he will change your religion or that he will cause corruption in the land, and Q 18:94, indeed, *Yāʿjūj and Maʿjūj are corrupters in the land (Tafsīr)*;

- v. magicians and magic (*q.v.*) as in Q 10:81, indeed, Allah does not correct (*lā yuṣliḥu*) the work of corrupters, the verse proves that magic is a type of *fasād (Tafsīr)*;
- vi. corruption itself (*al-fasād nafsuhu*), that is, as a term that generically denotes all kinds of deviations, as in Q 2:205, to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals; and Q 27:34, indeed, the kings—when they enter a city, they cause corruption therein; this is destruction by aggression and tyranny (*al-kharāb bi-l-zulm wa-l-jawr*), for these tyrannical rulers destroy and demolish the conquered towns (*Wāḥidi, Wajīz*). (*cf. Mūsā al-Qārī, al-Wujūh wa-l-nazāʿir; al-Damaghānī, Iṣlāḥ al-wujūh wa-l-nazāʿir, sub f-s-d*)

The second root, *f-s-q*, linguistically denotes *khurūj*—going forth of a thing from another in a corrupt manner (*Fayyūmī, Miṣbāḥ, sub f-s-q*). *Fisq* generally refers to corruption and moral depravity which is the result of going forth beyond the limits of the Law (*Rāghib*), or leaving the Truth (*Firūzābādī, Baṣāʿir; baṣīra, fī f-s-l wa f-s-d wa f-s-r wa f-s-q wa f-s-l wa f-s-l; Ibn Fāris, Maqāyīs*). This going forth is either through a deed (*fīʿlan*), a false belief (*ʿiṭiqādan*), or both together (*Kafawī, Kulliyāt, faṣl al-fāʿ; p. 693*). *Fisq* includes disobedience (*ʿiṣyān*), and is the abandoning Divine Commands and leaving the Path of Truth (*ṭariq al-Ḥaqq; Ibn Maẓūr*). *Iblīs (Satan) went forth from the command of his Lord (fa-fasaqa ‘an amri Rabbihi, Q 18:50)*. Most of the “*fisq-fusūq*” verses refer to disbelief (*cf. Q 2:99; 3:82; 5:81; 9:8, 80, 84; 10:33; 11:33; 24:55; 57:16; 26-27*). In addition, hypocrites are also called *fāsiqūn (Q 9:67)*, and they will be in the lowest depths of the Fire (*Q 4:145*), because they seek to corrupt belief of the weak believers by planting doubts and by forcing them to leave their faith, thereby earning the penalty of Fire for their attempt to cause corruption (*Māturīdī, sub Q 4:145*).

The root *f-s-q* appears fifty-four times: ten times as Form I verb *fasaqa*, generally in the sense of “to be defiantly disobedient”; four times as the noun *fusūq* (wickedness, sinful conduct and disobedience; *Q 2:197, 282; 49:7, 11*); and thirty-seven times as the active participle of Form I, “*fāsiq (pl. fāsiqūn)*. The

substantive *fisq*, which refers to both corruption and disobedience, occurs three times (*Q 5:3; 6:121, 145*) (*‘Abd al-Bāqī*).

### The Human Capacity to Work Corruption

Human beings have been created with a limited capacity to work corruption as the creation narrative in Q 2:30 states when the angels wondered about creation of a new species: *And when thy Lord said to the angels, “I am placing a vicegerent upon the earth,” they said, “Will You place therein one who will work corruption therein, and shed blood, while we hymn Your praise and extol Your Holiness?” He said, “Truly I know what you know not.”* The angels’ curiosity was an attempt at understanding the Divine wisdom behind this new creation (*cf. Tafsīrs of Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr*). Their assertion that human beings would work corruption and spill blood was based on (i) prior knowledge given them by Allah Most High; (ii) a deduction based on some special insight given them; (iii) they inferred it from the substances of human creation; or (iv) they inferred it from the term “successor” (*khalīfa*), meaning that human beings would replace the jinn (*q.v.*), who had lived on earth before and who had shed blood and wrought corruption (*cf. Tafsīrs of Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr*). The Divine response, “*I know what you know not,*” is understood by exegetes as referring to Allah’s inexhaustible knowledge, which cannot be comprehended by any creature. He knew, they explain, that while some human beings would work corruption on earth, there were among them His Prophets and Messengers, the Truthful (*al-siddīqūn*) and the martyrs, the righteous and ascetics (*al-zuhhād*), His devoted servants and friends, the Foremost (*al-sābiqūn*) and the righteous scholars, deeply conscious of their Creator, and those who love and follow His commands (see the *Tafsīrs* of Ṭabarī, Samʿānī, Rāzī, and Ibn Kathīr, *sub Q 2:30*).

The first corruption occurred when Satan whispered to Ādam and his wife and made them stumble therefrom, and expelled them from that wherein they were, and We said, “*Get you down, each of you an enemy to the other. On the earth a dwelling place shall be yours, and enjoyment for a while*” (*Q 2:36*). Satan allured them (*aghrāhumā*) and compelled them to commit their act of disobedience (*Samarqandī*), which is was corruption of their pure faith, by whispering (*q.v.*) to them deceiving words, “*O Ādam, shall I lead you to the tree of eternity and to kingdom that will never perish*” (*Q 20:120*). The consequence of eating from the tree was that their means of living was corrupted and ruined