

# Tafseer Surah al-'Adiyaat (العاديات)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Quran

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## Introduction

- There are three sections of this surah based on subject matter
  - The first five verses are part of the first section
    - This section describes horses going into battle
      - It is possible that this is in reference to the Battle of Badr
    - Some interpreted it to mean camels being taken to Hajj
    - Some interpreted it to mean horses going into battle or raids in general
      - Meaning it is not in reference to any particular battle
  - The verses 6-8 are the second section
    - This section deals with mankind's ingratitude and disobedience to Allah
  - The rest of the verses are the third section
    - This section speak about the Day of Judgement

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. By the racers, panting

- a. The Arabic word *al-'adiyaat* (racers)
  - i. The origin means to pass over something or cross the limit
    1. It also means intense speed
    2. It is also used to refer to the rider of the horse
    3. It is also used to refer to rob, steal, pillage, snatch and grab, arrest and bring before the ruler for judgement
  - ii. In the context of this verse, it is in reference to the first small band of horses that go into battle
    1. This first cavalry is usually small in number and risk their lives by running towards the enemy in battle
- b. The 'panting' is in reference to the horses making sounds from their chests due to the running
  - i. The imagery here is that they are moving very fast

### 2. And the producers of sparks [when] striking

- a. This is continuing the discussion of the horses from the previous verse
- b. The verse is in reference to the sparks caused by the feet of the horses hitting the ground at a fast speed
  - i. The imagery is that those sparks are so intense that they almost turn into a fire

### 3. And the chargers at dawn

- a. The imagery being depicted here is that these horses are raiding in the morning time at dawn
  - i. The language also tells us that these horses are descending from a high place and they are coming from the direction of sunrise

#### **4. Stirring up thereby [clouds of] dust**

- a. The Arabic word *atharna* (stirring up)
  - i. The origin means to put a dent into something, for example, to put a mark into the hoof of a camel
    - 1. The word also refers to when someone leaves an impression on you or when someone scars you for life
      - a. The imagery being described in this verse is that these horses that are raiding are leaving a mark on the ground that will not go away
- b. The Arabic word *naq'an* (clouds of dust)
  - i. It is used when referring to water that has been left stagnant for a long time
    - 1. So it is as if to say that these horses are stepping in water that's been left for a while and it jumps up due to their feet hitting it
  - ii. It also means when something rises
    - 1. This is what led some to interpret it to mean clouds of dust rising from the feet of the horses due to their running
  - iii. Some tried to combine both meanings and said that these horses are rising clouds of dust as if it was water

#### **5. Arriving thereby in the center collectively**

- a. Meaning all of these horses penetrate together through the ranks of the enemy like a spear and arrive at the center of their enemy
  - i. It is as if these horses used the dust cloud as an invisibility cloak to enter the ranks of the enemies
- b. There is a switch to the verb now because it is happening very fast
  - i. Verbs are used to describe things that take a short time and nouns describe things which take a long time

#### **6. Indeed mankind, to his Lord, is ungrateful**

- a. After describing the intense scene in the previous verses, Allah does not delve into the subject further but switches to another topic
  - i. It was done to grab their curiosity and attention through storytelling
    - 1. Storytelling was the original form of human entertainment
      - a. Even today's movies and TV shows are just an extension of storytelling
- b. Meaning mankind is disloyal, disobedient, and disconnected from Allah
  - i. But why did Allah use imagery of horses to remind us of this fact?
    - 1. Because He wants us to learn from the loyalty of the horse, when his master takes care of him, the animal obeys him fully even on the battlefield. The horse was not given that much by his master yet is so loyal and obedient to him, whereas, Allah has given mankind far more yet we constantly are disloyal and disobedient to Him

- c. The Arabic word *kanood* (ungrateful) can mean:
  - i. Someone extremely ungrateful
    - 1. In the context of this verse, it means mankind forgets the favors Allah has done for them
  - ii. Someone who becomes miserly
    - 1. In the context of this verse, it means that mankind only thinks of its immediate benefit and tries to get whatever it can get in a miserly way
  - iii. Someone who is disobedient
    - 1. In the context of this verse, it means that due to the previous two reasons mankind remains disobedient

**7. And indeed, he is to that a witness**

- a. Meaning no one can testify to how disobedient, miserly, and ungrateful mankind is better than itself. We know what we are doing is wrong but continue to do it
  - i. This fact is constant and there is never a moment when we will not testify to this fact
    - 1. The only people who deny it are those who have cut Allah off from themselves

**8. And indeed he is, in love of wealth, intense**

- a. The word 'intense' is used because it is tight and cannot be undone
- b. Meaning that mankind has intense love for lots of money
  - i. This is the case even when we do not have any money, because the focus of this verse is what we have in our hearts. It is saying that people have an intense amount of love and desire for lots of wealth in their hearts
- c. Some interpreted this verse to mean that mankind always wants the best for itself and is never satisfied with what it has been given
  - i. In order to obtain this 'best' of everything, mankind is willing to put its life on the line due to the intensity of its love for it

**9. But does he not know that when the contents of the graves are scattered**

- a. The Arabic word *ba'thara* (scattered)
  - i. It carries meanings of to pull things apart, to disperse things, to mix things together, to put things on top of others, to ransack, etc.
  - ii. Meaning the graves will be ransacked on the Day of Judgement

**10. And that within the breasts is obtained**

- a. This is in reference to our hearts being pulled out of the graves on the Day of Judgement
  - i. Meaning whatever was in their hearts will be brought out on the Day of Judgement. This will be done to prepare them for their judgement before Allah
- b. Some said it is the angels that will be bringing them out of their graves by the command and permission of Allah

**11. Indeed, their Lord with them, that Day, is [fully] Acquainted**

- a. Meaning Allah knows exactly what is in their hearts
- b. Why use the word *khabeer* (fully acquainted)

- i. Because it not only means knowing but also carries the meaning of experiencing and understanding something really well to its core
  - 1. This is why no excuses before Allah will work on the Day of Judgement because He knows every sentiment of our hearts and details of our actions