

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *At-Takāthur*, 102.

This probably early Makkan Sūra gives a warning against acquisitiveness, *i.e.*, the passion for piling up quantities or numbers, whether in the good things of this world, or in man-power or in other forms of megalomania, which leave no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things of life.

At-Takāthur or Piling Up.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. The mutual rivalry
For piling up (the good things
Of this world) diverts you⁶²⁵⁷
(From the more serious things),
2. Until ye visit the graves.⁶²⁵⁸
3. But nay, ye soon shall
Know (the reality).
4. Again, ye soon shall know!
5. Nay, were ye to know
With certainty of mind,⁶²⁵⁹
(Ye would beware!)
6. Ye shall certainly see
Hell-fire!⁶²⁶⁰



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْهَنَكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ ①

حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ②

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ③

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ④

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ⑤

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ⑥

6257. Acquisitiveness, that is, the passion for seeking an increase in wealth, position, the number of adherents or followers or supporters, mass production and mass organisation, may affect an individual as such, or it may affect whole societies or nations. Other people's example or rivalry in such things may aggravate the situation. Up to a certain point it may be good and necessary. But when it becomes inordinate and monopolises attention, it leaves no time for higher things in life, and a clear warning is here sounded from a moral point of view. Man may be engrossed in these things till death approaches, and he looks back on a wasted life, as far as the higher things are concerned.

6258. That is, until the time comes when you must lie down in the graves and leave and pomp and circumstance of an empty life. The true Reality will then appear before you. Why not try to strive for a little understanding of that Reality in this very life?

6259. Three kinds of *yaqin* (certainty of knowledge) are described in n. 5673 to lxix. 51. The first is certainty of mind or inference mentioned here: we hear from someone, or we infer from something we know: this refers to our own state of mind. If we instruct our minds in this way, we should value the deeper things of life better, and not waste all our time in ephemeral things. But if we do not use our reasoning faculties now, we shall yet see with our own eyes, the Penalty for our sins. It will be certainty of sight. We shall see Hell. See next verse. But the absolute certainty of assured Truth is that described in lxix. 51. That is not liable to any human error or psychological defects.

6260. See xix. 71-72, and n. 2518.

7. Again, ye shall see it
With certainty of sight!

8. Then, shall ye be
Questioned that Day
About the joy⁶²⁶¹
(Ye indulged in!)

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا بِبَصَرٍ يَلْقَيْنِ

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

6261. We shall be questioned, i.e., we shall be held responsible for every kind of joy we indulge in—whether it was false pride or delight in things of no value, or things evil, or the enjoyment of things legitimate.—the last, to see whether we kept this within reasonable bounds.