

Surah 17. Al-Israa

Asad: and spread over humbly the wings of thy tenderness,²⁸ and say: "O my Sustainer! Bestow Thy grace upon them, even as they cherished and reared me when I was a child!"

Malik: You shall lower to them your wings of humility and pray: "O Rabb! Bestow on them Your blessings just as they cherished me when I was a little child."

Pickthall: And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy, and say: My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little.

Yusuf Ali: And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility and say: "My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." ^{2205 2206}

Transliteration: Waikhfid lahuma janaha alithulli mina alrrahmati waqul rabbi irhamhuma kama rabbayaneesagheeran

Khattab:

And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, "My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young."

Author Comments

28 - Lit., "lower for them the wing of humility, out of tenderness (rahmah)" - a metonymical expression evocative of a bird that lovingly spreads its wings over its offspring in the nest.

2205 - Cf. xv. 88 and n. 2011. The metaphor is that of a high-flying bird which lowers her wing out of tenderness to her offspring. There is a double aptness. (1) When the parent was strong and the child was helpless, parental affection was showered on the child: when the child grows up and is strong, and the parent is helpless, can he do less than bestow similar tender care on the parent? (2) But more: he must approach the matter with gentle humility: for does not parental love, remind him of the great love with which Allah cherishes His creatures? There is something here more than simple human gratitude; it goes up into the highest spiritual region.

2206 - Note that we are asked to honour our father and mother, not "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. xx. 12), but upon much higher and more universal grounds, such as befit a perfected revelation. In the first place, not merely respect, but cherishing kindness, and humility to parents, are commanded. In the second place, this command is bracketed with the command to worship the One True God. Parental love should be to us a type of divine love: nothing

that we can do can ever really compensate for that which we have received. In the third place (see next verse) our spiritual advancement is tested by this: we cannot expect Allah's forgiveness if we are rude or unkind to those who unselfishly brought us up.

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