

Sura Yusuf, Verses 11-12

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَاصِحُونَ

.They said, O our father, why do you not trust us with Yusuf? Surely we wish him well

أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبُ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

Send him with us tomorrow so he can enjoy and play, and we will take care of him

Reflections

Their address 'O our father' is respectful and loving but has a motive behind it - seems like even in the past their father had not trusted them with Yusuf. This was not a first - time experience .one who is lying will say a lot to cover up the lies; *we wish him well, we will take care of him* - playing and sports was part of the life of the Prophet's family -

Tafsir

Once the brothers decided they would not kill Yusuf but throw him in a well, they have to plan how to get their father to allow Yusuf to come with them. They know he is very attached to Yusuf and is aware of their jealousy of him. So they come to him pretending to be concerned for Yusuf. They declare how much they care for him and want him to enjoy and have fun, they cannot understand why the father will not trust them to take him with them. If the father is concerned about what they will do to him, they declare that they wish him well. If the father is concerned about what others will do to him they say they will take care of him and protect him well. In this way they prepare answers to whatever concerns the father might have

Often an enemy will not come with outright animosity. He may come under the guise of love and concern and deceive others. Many people fall for such caring words and believe them to be genuine. But it is all a plot to get their way so they can achieve their evil intentions. A believer is careful and cautious about such people and is smart about the ways of people. He cannot be deceived easily

The brothers ask that Yusuf should go with them so he can play and enjoy himself. He can enjoy some fresh air and have fun. Nabi Yaqub does not deny that such activities are good for the human being. To be engaged in leisure and recreation that is halal and good is very healthy and fulfills a natural need. The human being is not a machine that can run continuously all the time. It needs rest and rejuvenation. To do something that is enjoyable lifts the spirits and calms the

mind. It renews strength and allows the person to then work better with more zeal and enthusiasm. A hadith of Imam Ali (a) says; *The believer's time has three periods: The period when he is in communion with Allah; the period when he manages for his livelihood; and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant.* (Nahjul Balagha, Hadith #390) Of course it does not mean the three periods are equal in time, but there should be a part for each of them.

The Holy Prophet (s) also used to play and race with his companions. Once when returning from the battle of Tabuk they were racing to see who would be the fastest. The Prophet was not on his well-known horse by the name of al Ghazba. Instead Usama was riding it. When the people saw that al Ghasba won the race they shouted that the Prophet had won. But the Prophet corrected them saying it was Usama and not he who had won. It was just that Usama was using his horse. This incident shows that the Prophet also engaged in such playful activities.

Important Lessons

- 1) Be careful of people who display concern but are actually wishing harm. These are hypocrites whose danger is worse than that of an open enemy.
- 2) Sports and leisure are necessary to enjoy life and to be more energetic for the work that has to be done.

Ideas

- ask children to act out the conversation between Nabi Yaqub and his brothers. They can just speak using the verses of Quran, and emphasize it with appropriate expressions and tone of voice.
- discuss the sports that the children enjoy. What are some things children should be careful of in their sports activities?