

Sura Yusuf, Verses 13-15

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنَّ تَذْهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّبَابُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

He said; Surely it saddens me that you should take him away, and I am afraid that the wolf may eat him while you are heedless of him.

قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّبَابُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَخَاسِرُونَ

They said; if the wolf eats him while we are a strong group, then surely we would be of the losers.

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَأَجْمَعُوا أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

So when they went off with him they agreed that they should throw him into the bottom of the well. And we revealed to him, surely you will inform them of this deed of theirs while they do not know you.

Reflections

- Nabi Yaqub gives two reasons for his reluctance to let Yusuf go with them; he is sad to part from him, and he is afraid of the wolves. Did he have others reasons he does not mention?
- a lot of big talk again from the brothers; *we are a strong group, we will be of the losers.*
- their pretense is over as soon as they move away with Yusuf. They all agree to throw him into the well. None of them disagrees or supports Yusuf.
- Allah does not leave Nabi Yusuf. He may have been feeling very lonely and afraid but Allah consoles him by telling him about the future. God is always with the righteous people. We have to listen to the voice inside us that can strengthen and comfort us.

Tafsir

Nabi Yaqub replies to the suggestion that Yusuf should go out to enjoy time with his brothers. He does not deny that that is necessary but he says he is sad to part with Yusuf and is afraid of what the wolves might do to him. What if the brothers forget him for a while and are busy playing? The danger of wolves is a real threat. Nabi Yaqub does not say anything about how he is suspicious of the affection they are displaying for Yusuf. Earlier he had told Yusuf not tell his brothers about his dream. He was very aware of how the brothers felt about Yusuf but here he

does not bring that up. He cannot accuse them of something they have not done. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty.

The brothers answer by saying they are strong and would be losers if anything happened to Yusuf. The principle they were promoting, though wrongfully, is that when someone takes on a responsibility it is a serious undertaking. Everything must be done to fulfill that responsibility as best as possible, till the end.

The father then agrees that Yusuf can with his brothers the next day. The brothers pass the night in anticipation of what they will do tomorrow. They plot their evil plan against the brother and are just worried that their father should not change his mind. In the morning they prepare for their outing and take Yusuf along with them. Their father reminds them of his concerns and they give false assurances of their promise to look after him and their concern for him. It is narrated that Nabi Yaqub walked with them till the end of the city. He then embraced Yusuf and wept a little. As the group left the father watched them until they were out of sight. The brothers were respectful and loving to Yusuf so long as the father was watching. As soon as they knew he could not see them anymore they began to show their anger and hatred. The jealousy of so many years now came out and they treated him cruelly. Yusuf asked them to have mercy on him but none of them would listen.

It is narrated that in the midst of his tears Nabi Yusuf began to smile. The brothers wondered why he was smiling, did he think this was a joke? Yusuf explained; I used to look at my brothers who were so big and strong and think that I was so safe. Nobody could hurt me if I had such brothers. But now I am being hurt by you and am seeking refuge but you will not help me. God has taught me a lesson. I should not rely on anyone other than Him for help, not even my brothers.

The brothers then decide to throw him into the well. At that time Nabi Yusuf receives an Ilham from God, a revelation through an inner voice, which tells him that one day he will have the upper hand over his brothers. They will not recognize him but he will ask them about this deed of theirs. This gives hope to the heart of Yusuf at a time when he felt alone and hopeless. He knew that God was with him and promised him that things would change and one of these same brothers would be humbled before Yusuf.

Important Lessons

1) Do not accuse anyone before they have done something. Suspicion alone is not always correct and should not be acted upon.

2) Do not tell your fears to everyone, especially those who you do not trust. They may use it against you, like the brothers did. Nabi Yaqub told them he was afraid of the wolf, and that is the excuse they used later.

3) Never forget that God is with you. That gives you a lot of strength and comfort, even when you are surrounded by hardships.

Ideas

- ask children to come up with how Nabi Yusuf may have felt when his brothers threw him in the well. They could give adjectives to describe his emotions, say sentences etc.

- if the children could advise the brothers what would they tell them?

- put up four posters in different parts of the room. An incident when you were sad, when you were afraid, when you were angry, frustrated, lonely ... etc. What would you think, say, do ... children can walk around in pairs or groups and write their responses.