

Response to Corresponding Suffering*(Letter from Yonathan)*

Dear Racham,

Today is a beautiful sunny day. I'm thankful for sunshine and for light. There's been a lot of light shining into all our lives here recently and we're all changing. Yoneq and Hâ-Êmeq arrived two days ago and it's so refreshing to have them here — it gives such a fresh appreciation of the Word. After two years in the Edah I have a deeper appreciation of him than when in Sus. I'm thankful for the anointing he brings — that is so clear, founded on the rock, the Word of our God.

Response to Corresponding Suffering

The teaching *Corresponding Suffering* stirred all our hearts and made things so clear. It has increased my love for our Master in seeing His love and the outpouring of His life for our sake. I am certainly one who was going to the Second Death and I am so thankful to be saved. Israel (Andrew Hundleby) spoke last night at the Breaking of Bread that through the fall of Adam we were all worthy of the First Death (Rom 5:16-18). But it was our own continued, deliberate transgressions — the things we knew about and saw warnings for but ignored — that condemned us to the eternal fire, the Second Death, for how we loved and practiced these things (Rev 21:8; 22:15).

We, as disciples, have authority as messengers of the good news of salvation only as far as we live out the message we are preaching. Our life must be one of obedience to our Father's will. Yahshua suffered righteously because He was obedient to His Father. Obedience is the only way that our lives and all that we do can correspond to His suffering. So many Christians (as I once was) are deceived into pouring out all kinds of sacrifices of good works, yet our Father can't recognize any of it because they haven't died. They never lost their life in response to what He did for them (2 Cor 5:14-15). What we do has to be the right response. The only right response is to lose our lives for His sake and the gospel's sake (Mk 8:35; 10:29-30). We don't know everything that is pleasing to our God yet, but we do know Rom 12:1 — we can do this (Eph 5:8-10).

When Yahshua went to death, it recognized Him by the sins of the whole world He was carrying. Because He took on himself all that is rotten in us, Death saw Him as if He had sinned our own sins, as if He had done what we had done. He became sin (2 Cor 5:21). Yet death could not hold Him once He had suffered enough to pay for those sins because He was still in obedience to His Father — He still had not transgressed and Death had to spit Him out, just like Yonah was spit out of the whale. His was a life which Satan wanted to own. Our life was no payment for even our own sins, because we'd already given it to Satan in giving in to temptation — the desires of our flesh. His blood was pure — it needed the pure to cover and cleanse the impure — our dirty blood. It is awesome how much the gift of His life outweighs the transgression. His sacrifice was so perfect it could cover all the accumulated guilt of all mankind. And even so the balance doesn't tip to equality. A sacrifice so pure covers an eternity of fallen lives. It can never be filled up. Yet to those of us who love Him we can be desperately eager to give back everything we can to make up for that lack (Col 1:21) to express thanks to Him, to show that someone on the earth respects and is eternally grateful to Him for what He has done. He deserves to be satisfied. He deserves to be encouraged. We need to put a smile on His face every day as we lay down our lives for Him. It's not right that we'd hold back in any way. He is gaining, even for the few that we are who have found life, He's beginning to get something back.

Individually no one can correspond to His suffering in the body; but the body collectively can do enough to correspond — we can ~~all~~ do our share. In the first church some had to make up for the lack of overcoming in others — there was a portion to be made up. We can be the same. It can't equal but it can correspond. We're not suffering as fallen man but in our spirit — for righteousness sake. So as a corresponding suffering it does come to equal — a collective righteous suffering to His afflictions. Col 1:24 speaks of the full measure of suffering that the body must fulfill. Paul did a lot of suffering.

There's no sin His blood can't cover, no type or degree of perverse abominable acts that we could have done that He can't cover — all the things we continued to do against our conscience, loving it, not even hating it. In going to the Second Death, He's suffered to the maximum degree that any man deserved. Here is a man, Yahshua, who completed all that He was sent to do. He took away our sins, and the peace of His forgiveness is

very real — it's priceless, it's worth everything. We hardly know Him, can hardly see the depth and breadth of His love compared to what we will (Eph 3:18), yet to see the cost of the blood of our Messiah brings us to see clearer the corresponding cost of being a disciple — what we should give.

It struck me that the blood spilt for Israel's sin over the years is great, yet compared to what is required for the rest of the world — should they have adopted the same sacrificial system — is an immense bloodshedding. The life of this one pure man is priceless.

Christianity makes such a mockery of His life and word, takes away from all that He's accomplished because they're not obedient. There's no corresponding result at least attempting life for life — the right response, of the right kind. This is a matter of the heart — His heart was to be obedient to His Abba — as we know in raising our children, bringing about a *heart* to obey is a difficult thing. It's a very precious thing to our God, yet how can He call anyone His son if they haven't the heart to obey His word? Christians let a lot of things slide that old Israel would have given sacrifice for. Israel couldn't make a sacrifice for premeditated sin — things they knew about. The world doesn't know that, so they forgive Christians for the deliberate abominable sins they commit while they're supposedly "saved." To excuse these things is to take away from the depth of the suffering our Master endured in Death as if there was some sort of over-estimate made of man's guilt and the due penalty he deserved.

Yahshua spent three days and three nights in Death and that was enough to pay for our sin; the suffering He went through was enough. It said in the teaching that everyone who has not been transformed in their minds will still reason in Hell, still not feel they deserve what they're going through. There was no reasoning in Yahshua. That's why the full pain of the Lake of Fire was able to reach to His very core in only a day, the suffering He willingly received there in that day was equated with an eternity of suffering for billions of resistant hearts that will never give up reasoning. I want to be transformed to not have any resistance in me.

I saw that to be worthless is to say we can't (or won't) make up for the lack in correspondence to the affliction He suffered. It is like giving up that He saw that we could do something to correspond to the suffering He endured for our sake. He had confidence in us. To not give back what He knows we *can* give is to be ashamed of Him.

He went through all that He did because since the foundations of the earth He looked ahead in love to see a people who would walk holy and blameless before Him. That we would walk as He walked — laying down our lives. He saw in us vessels that could respond and do something that would correspond — to come to obedience, to suffer to remain there, as He suffered to take on that weight of disobedient rebellion that was man's sin. He died to bring us into obedience. This is retribution. In this He can be satisfied. In this He will see a work done on the earth that will make Him *want* to return. It's so encouraging that He knew His Spirit would be strong enough that in dwelling in us, we *would* overcome to be holy and blameless (Eph 1:4).

I know more clearly now what death is really about. The only grip or control a person has over their own lives is when they are in their physical bodies; and once separate from them, they are totally within death's grasp. In death they are in a place where they can't even choose what they want to do anymore. When they had the power to do what they wanted, they gave themselves over to the flesh, to practice those things that lead to death, and death's control. In life they did not control themselves, but handed themselves over to death. Death has a right to their soul when they die. In contrast, how right it is that self-control is one of the greatest fruits of the spirit, because death is total loss of control. It is the place where their soul no longer has any capacity to maintain control. All their lives they had opportunity to crucify the flesh and live by the Spirit. They could have had self-control, but they didn't choose it, so their souls were ripped out and given over to death. How wonderful now that we can exercise control over death, crying out for grace and living by the Spirit who gives life. Then death will have no claim on us.

Sometimes the little burden we carry seems so great, some light afflictions seem to weight so heavy, yet the burden He carried, the guilt of the whole earth — past, present and future — must have been really heavy. He carried our burden; now we must complete Him — to carry the burden He has to see Satan judged once for all, dealt with.

Mary Magdalene wasn't self-conscious; she wasn't ashamed at all to wash our Master's feet, even in the

presence of all those others there. There was only one thing she wanted to do — she was obsessed with wanting to serve Him, to pour out her thankfulness. We can't have any confidence to speak the gospel if we're at all ashamed of Him. We can't celebrate with any joy if we're at all ashamed of Him. The way she expressed her appreciation corresponded to the love she'd been shown. She was self-less, her flesh was dead. We need to come to clearer revelation about our flesh being dead. We aren't going to have 50 years of battling with the flesh. The flesh has to be dead for us to make it. It's so important to set our minds on the Spirit every day — in this we will find grace. If we don't then we'll walk according to what we already buried in baptism, by the sin that enslaved us all our lives. If we're trying to overcome in our own strength we cannot succeed. It's easy for us to try to — we did it for many years — we can almost not notice when we've separated from our Father, yet it hurts Him so much that we walk in darkness. Yahshua died when He became separate from His Father — he wouldn't survive on His own. It has to be the same in us — that we couldn't go a single minute being separated from Him. If we truly want to be like Yahshua, that's His heart — that it tore Him apart to be separated, to be forsaken. I'm so thankful for His grace. Sometimes it seems there's a barrage of thoughts coming that are foreign — usually when I've given a bit of room to myself. I know that to cry out, "Father, I want you grace to stand against this" is the only hope we have.

I know that the only reason I have life, the only reason I can every be encouraged, is because of Yahshua. It's so wonderful that Yahshua's return to the earth will be because a people have responded, that His return will be righteous — the suffering of three generations of men in correspondence with Him — a response as pure as Mary Magdalene's. It will never fully equate, but it will be enough for Him to know that He's loved and that a people long for Him.

These are all thoughts and things that spoke to me from the *Corresponding Suffering* teaching. Yoneq encouraged us to share with you what was speaking to us.

News from New Zealand

We are a short time away from going to Australia. All we wait on is Nûn's immigration to be sorted out. There are a few people with tender hearts already waiting for us. It's so wonderful here, too, having our new sister, Shua, from Germany with her daughter Inga (age 4). There's much to tell of our sister Tara, from Boston, who's going through a lot in India with her family right now, but I'll leave that for now as we're not sure what's going to happen. Another German woman, Heidelind, is very drawn to us and we believe will be our sister soon.

This letter has waited until February now, used in the writing of a *Corresponding Suffering* article in our new freepaper (almost all from New Zealand). Much has happened — mainly a trip to a Christian Rock Festival (many freepapers handed out but no fruit yet), a new sister baptized two days ago: Derushah (was Linda) and her 1-year-old daughter Janaya, from Australia, whom they met one year ago while scouting. Circumstances brought her to desperation, and now she's our sister, saved out of Babylon.

Heidelind is back again, getting softer. A German man, Alex, a carpenter, has been here eight weeks now — he's hard, but can't leave. Janet, a New Zealander we met dancing, an artist/book illustrator who did a lot of art for our freepaper, has been here for three weeks and is almost ready to die, if she can put aside her intimidation. Asher is growing! A foundation is being laid. It's so exciting. Thankful we all are for you there. I feel a closeness with you all — living in the city — urban communities.

Racham, you're someone I feel connected to. I found a letter of yours from a year or two ago and it stirred my heart. I'm thankful to have friends.

Our love to everyone, in Yahshua's name,

Yonathan

P.S.: Janet was baptized a week ago — we call her Yael now.