

Deceit and Treachery

(Letter from Hoshua)

Dear Yoneq and ha-Emeq,

I have been in close communication with Shoresh and Daniel regarding a couple of the youth here in Island Pond. Specifically, Shannon, son of Yathed and Atarah, and Yacob, son of Abel and Shiminah. Please consider the situations which have come to our attention and please help us determine an appropriate course of action concerning them. We deeply appreciate your lives and the wisdom that Our Elohim has given to you.

First regarding Shannon. We have had numerous encounters with Shannon since having come to us from Bellows Falls over a year ago. Bellows Falls sent him to live here with us since his imma, Atarah, lived in this Community and Yathed was away in California on discipline. He was no longer manageable to the brothers there in Bellows Falls and had been found attempting to leave the Community. Upon his arrival here, we judged that Atarah would need support covering her son, so we had Nadiv from Gad, who was staying with us, cover him full time.

Nadiv labored extensively with Shannon and realized very little fruit from it. Shannon was extremely disrespectful on a consistent basis. On occasion he would say that he loved his abba and desired to be with him, even before Yathed had arrived in Monticello by way of California. (Yathed recently told me that Shannon's desire to be with him was not genuine but merely a desire to live in the world). Upon Yathed's arrival there Shannon was sent to stay with him and Sameach. After a few months Sameach judged that it was appropriate to send Yathed back to the Community where he could be reconnected to us. Shannon remained with Sameach at our request for a short period of time in order to give Yathed and Atarah a chance to be restored to one another apart from the pressure of covering Shannon.

After a while it became intolerable for Sameach to continue covering Shannon along with all of the pressure Sameach was experiencing from covering Joseph and the other needy ones under his charge. Joseph and Shannon would get into fights. Sameach discovered that Shannon was working with his and Michael Ricatto's enemies by giving them Michael's grain from the farm. This was all done without Sameach's knowledge or approval. Sameach sent Shannon back to Island Pond.

Since Shannon has been back under his abba's covering, it has become apparent that he continues to decline in his behavior, becoming more defiant and rebellious. Much of the time Yathed is exasperated with Shannon and overwhelmed by his son's rebellion and independence. In the past month numerous incidents have occurred which have caused the shepherds to have great alarm. Therefore, Shoresh felt it necessary for me to relate the specifics of these incidents to you.

About six weeks ago, the town of Island Pond was celebrating a Fall festival weekend. On that Friday night, Shannon left the Maples without his parents' knowledge and attended a gathering where a country music band was playing. He stayed and listened to the music. (He has since admitted to listening to this music on and off). Yathed found out about this the following day when he went on a walk with Shannon. Yathed told his son not to leave the house to go on walks downtown at night any more. Shannon informed Yathed that he had decided to leave the Community and Yathed told him that he must remain here until he was eighteen. Shannon threatened his abba by saying that he would run away.

I do not believe it was the first time he had threatened to leave since Bellows Falls. He has talked about this with a number of people, including an unbeliever in our midst. The next evening Shannon defied his abba by leaving the house again — briefly. Since that time Shannon has proven to be extremely deceitful. He has worked for a neighbor and been paid money without his parents' knowledge. He has used this money to purchase a bicycle, a BB gun, and has stolen pornographic magazines from a local store. Shannon has desired a gun ever since he has lived in Monticello, where Sameach purchased a 22-caliber rifle to shoot groundhogs. Since then he has been determined to purchase a BB gun to kill pigeons and other small animals. He has conspired with another youth in an attempt to be deceitful. He has taught our children within the household to use terminology such as *retarded*, *stupid*, *crazy*, etc. When his abba confronted him about saying these things, he reasoned with Yathed and defended the use of these words. He has confessed to Yathed and me that he uses profanity.

On one occasion he picked my son, Naiyim, up in the air by his ankles and told him he was going to drop him over the third floor railing down to the second floor of the Maples. My son panicked and clung to Shannon's legs fearing for his life as Shannon moved closer to the railing. He carried Naiyim downstairs to the first floor and tossed him onto the couch. Later he said *he was just joking* (Pr 26:18-19).

I understand that he literally punched one of our women in the arm and has tried to kick and strike the younger children. One day he flaunted a can of coffee in one of the single sisters faces and asked her to make him a thermos full. When she refused he went to a relatively new and naive couple and asked them to do it. They made a cup of coffee for him and he returned to the single sister and shook the thermos in her face, pretending to have had it filled. He did this in an attempt to provoke her. I brought this to his abba's attention and Yathed took the can of coffee from him. He had already drunk the cup by that time. He had found the coffee while wandering around in the old print shop.

The Elders have met with Shannon and Yathed in an attempt to help him. We asked him why he wanted to leave. He said that he didn't understand how people who mistreated others in the Body could still be here and we would say that these people had the Holy Spirit. He made

reference to Ben Nabi and others. He is extremely bitter. However, I believe that he is merely using this as a smoke screen to justify his own rebellion and desire to leave. *Many* have extended themselves to Shannon and loved him. To date he still desires to leave. His abba is very much exasperated with him and makes little if any attempt to cover him. Yathed is passive and emphatically states that he *cannot* cover him. I believe that Yathed's condition, past and present, has everything to do with his son's condition. He does not pursue him when Shannon leaves his presence. Thus Shannon has become extremely independent and deceitful.

Shannon and Yacob ben Abel conspired in their deceit to purchase this BB gun without our knowledge and the fruit of this became painfully evident to us today. The boys used some money which they had acquired from a neighbor for doing some work. Rather than turn the money over to their parents, they kept it for themselves. Also, their parents knew nothing of the money. Two weeks ago today they went to a gun shop here in Island Pond and purchased a BB gun in another boy's name. (They used Neil Stanzione's son's name instead of their own.) They purchased the gun for forty-six dollars and concealed it by wrapping it up in one of their jackets. They walked over to one of our vacant houses and stashed it there.

Unknown to their parents, they would steal away to this house and use it to shoot squirrels and chipmunks. About four days after it was purchased, Abel found a mysterious receipt for the BB gun in his children's bedroom. Upon questioning his son, Yacob said he knew absolutely nothing about it. Abel approached his younger son Chayah and he said he had seen his brothers shooting the gun at this vacant house. Abel went back to Yacob and Yacob fabricated a story about it belonging to Jeff Weaver, a new brother who has some personal belongings in storage there. Abel went to Jeff, and Jeff knew nothing about a BB gun. Jeff had gotten rid of his guns before he had come into the Community.

At some point in time Shannon was implicated in this thing and Yathed confronted Shannon with it. Shannon admitted to it, but Yacob continued to hold out and not confess. It was only when I mentioned to Abel that we would possibly get together with his son and Shannon that Yacob became frightened at the thought of being exposed and called Sameach in Monticello. Sameach encouraged Yacob to be open about everything and so he confessed these things to Abel.

The next day we met with Shannon and his abba. Abel confiscated the BB gun. Today, I believe our Abba led my wife, Ruth, to go into a store here in Island Pond that she has probably never been in before, nor will she have any need to go into again. It was during her short time in this place that she overheard a conversation between two women who were there. One of the women was our next-door neighbor. They have an eight-year-old son named Tyler. Tyler's mother was talking about how her son had been shot in the head by a BB gun and that some of the boys in the neighborhood had done it. After hearing this, my wife communicated with me

about it and I wondered whether or not Shannon and Yacob were involved. When I came home this evening I went to Tyler's mother immediately after she arrived home and asked her who the boys were. She said, "They are boys in the Community."

Yoneq, this whole thing grieved me *so* much! Although she did not know their names, she described Yacob, Abel's son. She said it concerned her that Yacob had lied to her about the incident. She said that Yacob had told her that Tyler had fallen on a stick in the woods. She told me that her son had developed an infection in his head, and it was only when Tyler realized that he was going to have to go to the doctor that he told his mother the truth about it being a BB. The physician had told the woman that her son was very fortunate because the BB had struck him less than a finger's width away from his eye.

This woman told me that she wanted to speak to Yacob and his parents about the incident. I remember thinking when this thing about the BB gun was initially exposed how horrible it would be if these boys would shoot somebody in the eye and blind them. It is amazing how our Abba exposes sin and warns us of impending danger. Little had I realized that this very thing had already nearly occurred before their lawlessness was discovered. After I spoke with the boy's mother, I returned home and took a few moments to prepare something for the minchah. I knew that this deceit must be exposed.

At the gathering I told the story of Ananias and Saphira to the children. Shannon and Yacob were both present. I read from Proverbs 6 concerning the things our God detests. I read about the fate of those recorded in Rev 21:8. I expressed that there were some present who were guilty of hidden sin and lying, and that they should confess their sins before their hearts became hardened.

Neither one of them responded. Ruth told me later that Shannon's face appeared as stone. After the minchah, Ehud and I met with Abel and Yacob. On the way to the meeting Yacob confessed to his Abba that he and Shannon had "taken" some pornographic magazines from a local store here (also about 2 weeks ago). They entered the store one evening after the minchah and walked over to the magazine rack. They briefly glanced through one of the magazines and decided to take all three, which were a set. Yacob told Shannon that he was too embarrassed to pay for them at the counter, so they stuffed them under their shirts and walked out the door. Yacob said he came back a while later and laid six dollars on the counter to cover the cost of the magazines, therefore feeling justified that he had not stolen them.

After he had confessed these things, we asked him if there was anything else in his conscience. He said no, he knew of nothing else. At this point I exposed the entire incident concerning the boy, Tyler, who was injured by him using the BB gun. Apparently, he was shot in the head while Yacob was aiming at a squirrel and missed. The boy was in close proximity to the squirrel when Yacob fired the gun. The young boy begged Yacob not to tell his mother because

he didn't want to get in trouble with his parents. Tyler knew his parents didn't want him to be around guns. Because of this, and I'm sure due to Yacob's bad conscience, Yacob agreed to it. Yacob is fourteen and Tyler is eight. They went to another neighbor's home whom Tyler was acquainted with and got the wound cleaned, however the BB stayed inside and later caused the infection. From that point on they told Tyler's mother that Tyler had fallen on a stick of wood.

Yacob appeared broken and relieved that these things had been exposed. However, it is difficult to judge considering Yacob's pattern of deceit. Yacob states that Shannon is aware of the incident with Tyler, yet Shannon has been silent. Shannon has yet to confess anything in regard to the pornography. I will be investigating this matter this morning. Yacob said that Shannon was going to burn the magazines. But he couldn't be sure that he had actually done it. Yacob said that Shannon had the magazines in his bedroom at one point.

Yoneq, needless to say we are concerned about the "little ones" under our charge, our children. We do not desire this leprosy to spread to them! I heard about what you recently communicated to Sameach about the youth he is caring for in Monticello, "To be patient and not be frustrated with them." I believe that we have done this. I came home from the meeting in Boston last week determined to reach out to Shannon and I have noticed him responding to encouragement, but I honestly have to ask myself we are merely being manipulated by him even as he manipulates his abba.

We need wisdom on how to continue on with them both, but especially Shannon. We definitely need helping in judging these matters. We have a sense of urgency regarding our need to have clarity with this, and also Hannah Sage, because they have affected others in the general public outside of the Community.

Ruth and I love you both and we deeply appreciate your affect upon our lives.

Your servant in Our Master, Yahshua's name,

Hoshua

Postscript

There are a few additional details which came out through Shanon's testimony. He was much more open about his rebellion than Yacob, and about confessing what he had done in secret, but it is apparently because he wanted to be sent away. Deeds brought out by him (or by other investigation) include the following: Pornography was stolen by them on two separate occasions, and no money was ever left on the counter to pay for it. The money for the BB gun was not earned (except for a couple of dollars), but stolen from the cobbler shop. They shot out lights and windows at neighboring properties at night with the gun. They scrawled obscenities on the fire tower on the top of Bluff Mountain during a household hike. They were also attempting to lure other children into their underground by confiding to them about their deeds and asking

them if they were going to tell. In all this, Shanon readily admitted to things, while Yacob almost always denied them or lied to make himself not look as bad as he was.