

## **Right Now**(*Letter from Shahar*)

Dear Yoneq and ha-emeq,

I appreciate you. Sometimes I look at you and I realize that you're always encouraging others and spurring others on to love and love and love and do good deeds. And you keep yourself clean to hear what our God is saying so that you can pass it on to us and we will be well fed. And you lift up prayers and petitions for all of the tribes in Israel. You intercede for us. And I just wanted to say that from the bottom of my heart, I appreciate you. Your kindness and patience is steadfast so I know the patience of our Father is like that too.

I saw this morning how much our Father wants to save us. He has given us his spirit to encourage us. Daily he feeds us with the richness and fullness of his word and he's given us this wonderfully designed life — so complicated in circumstances just to make certain that not one aspect of our salvation will be missed. Our Father speaks hard words to us to protect us from slipping dully and passively into death. To keep us from unknowingly falling away. Everything he has said to us, he's said to us to change us *now*, to invoke a reaction that will cause us to change *right now*, so that we won't wait until the next age to receive our discipline, but that we would eagerly snatch up every single opportunity set before us each day.

Sometimes we have those opportunities to confess our sins or to run to the throne of grace out of desperate weakness and necessity or to encourage our brothers and sisters, or to overcome intimidation and speak, or be salt to one another, or just any number of actions the Holy Spirit puts on our hearts. If we're led by the spirit, we're given opportunities and chances to do the things that please our God. But sometimes we just don't take those opportunities. We just allow them — one after the other — to slip by. And so do we slip ... slowly by, into that tendency to fall away. And then we're like that man who sees his face in the mirror and goes away forgetting what he looks like, because our Father has said to us time after time after time, "Take those opportunities! I'll forgive you if you humble yourself and confess your sin! Come to me for grace! I'd give it to you abundantly and freely if you'll just depend on me! If you'll just come to me and ask!"

But I feel sometimes like I should jump up and down and dance because our great hope is that we can change now! He doesn't speak to us these words to condemn us of course, but to *rescue* us *now*! We can *qashab* and heed with the zeal that will cause us to change! We can *shamah* — listen and obey. We can cry out day and night for the wisdom that we need to live. With a loud voice. And we can receive with humility and gladness the correction that comes to us — even though it is painful to save us from death. We can wake up! Really open our ears to listen and hear the truth which will help us to build our foundation with gold and silver and precious stones which will endure, instead of with straw and wood and stubble. We can listen! We need to build with that which is imperishable and let burn (with correction) all that will not stand for eternity. It's difficult, but we have to let all those things which are not worthy to rule with our King burn out *now*.

I want to give myself with violence to listening and obeying. Our Father has spoken so many immeasurably valuable truths since I've been here in Brazil and I don't want to let worthlessness and intimidation hold me back from heeding. If I could shout it from all of the rooftops of every edah, I would, but my voice is too quiet. And I really appreciate how ha-emeq, you are so bright and shining and full of life and joy and peace and patience and all of those good fruits that so bountifully grow when you're being led by the spirit. I know that it takes time to come to fully mature into that and it encourages me to press on. I'm thankful to have come here and seen the development of this amazing and wonderful tribe, and thankful to have lived with you.

Shahar