



# MACHASEH NEWSLETTER

Newsletter May 2015

Happy  
&  
Blessed  
Shavout

חג  
שבועות  
סמח



## Dear Friends & Intercessors

**Greetings & blessings from Jerusalem! From 23th (sunset) to 24th May 2015 (sunset) we will celebrate Shavuot, which can be seen as the last day of Passover!** Shavuot follows Passover by 50 days and is the festival of the giving and the receiving of Torah — of Torah as revelation, as law and as study. The word "Torah" means teaching, guidance, instruction, orientation. It is actually synonymous with Judaism itself and it has been used as such through the centuries.

Shavuot originated as an agricultural festival. It celebrates the beginning (the "first fruits") of the wheat harvest in Israel which continues throughout the summer and ends with Sukkot in the fall. *"On the day of the first fruits, your Feast of Shavuot, when you bring an offering of new grain to the Eternal, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations"* (Numbers 28) Harvest festivals are universal, but what transformed Shavuot into something more than an agricultural celebration was the fact that our forefathers came to thank God not only for the harvest of their fields, orchards and vineyards, but also for the laws and traditions of the harvest which they had developed during the centuries.

Israelite law, for example, insisted that even during the busy planting and harvesting seasons *the Sabbath be observed as a day of rest for people and animals alike* (Exodus 34). Israelite law also ordained that the edges of the field and the gleanings of the harvest belonged exclusively to the poor and unfortunate. *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger"* (Leviticus 19). It is a vital part of our ministry to serve those who are poor and less fortunate and share the love and gifts of God. We go to 'the edges and fences' of society to invite them to be participants of God's harvest, to receive his love & gifts. He has not forgotten them, neither do we. Happy and blessed Shavout!

### Program for Ethiopian Single Mothers and Children

Often we are asked, why people living here are in need of support and help because Israel is a highly developed country. Reality is not black and white, and beside security needs Israel is struggling with a lot of socio-economic problems. More than half of the taxes are needed for the defense of our country. This leaves in the end not much tax money for the social system. Marginalized groups face the consequences on a daily basis in regard of housing, utilities, food etc. and their needs are existential. Rents did sky-rocketing the recent years, so prices for food and other needed items in the home.

One of the marginalized groups we serve are Ethiopian single mothers and their children. The Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel in two operations (Operation Moses 1984 and Operation Solomon 1991). Today about 114,000 Ethiopians Jews are living in Israel. Due to the low level of education of the immigrants, their situation is very challenging. Except a few immigrants, they had no useful training for a developed economy like that of Israel when they arrived, and in addition to that they did not know Hebrew. Because the lack of work qualifications high unemployment among Ethiopians is widespread. A lot of the male immigrants couldn't stand the pressure of life in Israel. Additional, they were used to a hierarchic patriarchal society – man is the head of the family, women and children are subordinate. In Israel they got confronted with modern hierarchy – children first, then women and men. Additional, domestic violence in Jewish Ethiopian families is widespread. For the men it was more difficult to learn a new culture and to adjust. As a result, many of them left their wives and children, and half of the men the country again.



## Psalm 69:16

**Answer me, Lord,  
out of the  
goodness of your  
love  
in your great mercy  
turn to me.**

The single mothers are forced to master life alone under difficult socio-economic circumstances. Many of them have 2-3 jobs, mostly cleaning or other low income jobs, and struggle to survive and provide for their children. Fathers don't pay alimony because they don't work or have a very low income. Additional, Ethiopians are not well received and integrated into the Israeli society which creates a lot of problems especially for children in school.

We try to help a group of single mothers and their children in different ways. Currently, we serve a number of single mothers (in average each one has three children). We offer social assistance, when they need help with ministries and authorities as well as financial support, food bags and clothes. Our social worker is doing regular home visits and is providing educational and personal counseling. She looks into the individual circumstances and needs of a family and helps to find solutions and help. Bi-monthly the mothers are meeting in a self-help group, where their can share their problems, needs and encourage each other. Weekly they meet with the social worker for prayer. We are also running a group for the children and providing counseling for them. Most of them are teenagers and try to find their place in life.

We organize also social events and trips, going out together to get the mothers and children out of isolation and help them to pay fees for schools, sport clubs and swimming.

It is our desire, to help them to get a good education, develop a good attitude towards our nation as well as a solid and a strong character... and finally to get a better future. We would need volunteers to train them in English and other subjects, so they would be able to get a higher education, vocational training and/or go to university. Also the mothers would like to learn English or to get a better vocational training, but they don't have enough time and money to do so.



We hope and pray, that in the future the Jewish Ethiopian community will be an integrated part of our society and gets well accepted. Education and support to them is vital in order to find their place in our society.

End of June 2015 our social worker will go with a group of 5 teenager to Finland to attend a bible youth camp. They are very excited and for them it will be the first time to go abroad. It is very important for us to invest into their lives and to motivate them to improve their skills and draw out their potential. Please pray for our single mothers and youth and invest into their lives.

## Nicola, Schweiz: Some Snippets from my Time as a Volunteer with Machaseh

When I met Lena in Switzerland, I got deeply touched in my heart so that I wanted to support the work of Machaseh. From my hundreds of diverse impressions, different activities and experiences I would like to highlight especially one contact. (In Israel things are working different than you think). After some changes in my program, I got assigned to a nice Jewish-messianic family that origins from Africa. The social worker from Machaseh took me to a suburb of Jerusalem. From a dark staircase we came into a nice, clean and cosy apartment.

The mother of the family shared her health problems with me, because she was facing a risky surgery. But I am a nurse and not a Doctor, so my education is not sufficient to give her a second medical evaluation. But I could discuss the next steps with her, because the children couldn't take care of themselves during the time of her surgery and recovery. While the social worker discussed more details with the mother in an African language, I took care of the youngest son. Even without a corporate language there are certain things you can do together: folding ships and planes from newspapers. This was great fun for the son! So you can conquer new land with newspapers!

The following visits I made alone – and praise the Lord I could find my way with bus and train. The mother needed help with showering because she was partially paralyzed and afraid to fall in the bathroom. Then my involvement with the family developed into 'some special operations' to make new order in the closets of the children. The mother was not able to take care of anything. She just left the house for Dr. visits so the children brought all kind of stuff. After sorting out everything, I could bring a number of suitcases into the distribution center, so that other poor families could benefit from it. For the mother it was a great joy that all the closets are in order again and that you have a good overview now... also that this could be a blessing for other families.

The shoe cupboard on the balcony for example was a special project: last year a bird has built his nest there and the children were afraid of the the bird so that the cupboard was 'taboo' for them. When they discovered the cleaned and newly organized cupboard, they spontaneously hugged me with joy in their eyes. This was the most beautiful thank you I could imagine. At the same time it opened their heart, so in the end of this day we would sit together, holding hands and praying together, each one in their own language... a big family in Christ. Yes, and of course we still did the showering and I gave the mother some safety instructions with a special board for showering. As a nurse this is of course the right thing for me to do.

At my last visit with the family I was very impressed and felt ashamed at the same time: the mother told me that she was fully fasting for three days and then continued with drinking, not in order to ask for her own health but to pray for other poor people, especially members in her congregation that suffer of cancer. I was deeply touched by her attitude and engagement in prayer. So we could build a blessed and beautiful relationship within a short time. It was a privilege for me to get to know this Jewish family and to support and to encourage them. Just sad, they are living so far away from me.

**We want to thank all of you for partnering with and praying for us! We are very encouraged by your faithful support and interest in our work and to know you are behind us. May our Lord and God bless you in return for your love and generosity!**

**With many Greetings & Blessings  
Your Machaseh Team**

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