



Mesamche Lev's Massive Pre-Pesach Distribution

BY FRIMET BLUM

World's Largest Maos Chittin Operation Comes to Bet Shemesh. Mesamche Lev's annual Pesach distribution has become a fixture on Yerushalayim's pre-Pesach scene. The sight of thousands of Jews of every stripe flocking towards the distribution is a yearly marvel, and the excited chatter of hordes of children clutching shoe boxes almost drowns out the ubiquitous honks of drivers navigating impossibly clogged roads.

The distribution typically attracts families from every corner of the land.

But this year, the residents of Bet Shemesh won't be there. Thanks to an anonymous donor who sponsored a large part of the cost, Mesamche Lev will be hosting a satellite distribution in Bet Shemesh, where over 1,500 poor families, including more than 12,000 children, will get the same Pesach necessities as their counterparts in Yerushalayim. They will receive everything they need for *yom tov*, including meat, wine, grocery coupons, and shoes.

The community of Bet Shemesh includes many poor Torah families who struggle mightily to feed their children. It also includes American *olim* who left



Giant Tnuva Trailers Bring Discounted Dairy Products For Mesamche Lev

Mesamche Lev will be making a major difference to thousands of families in three locations this Pesach by greatly subsidizing dairy products *l'kavod yom tov*. Three giant trailers filled with Tnuva dairy products will unload their goods at Mesamche Lev distribution locations in *Eretz Yisrael* this Sunday, offering expensive *yom tov* basics at half price. The events, to take place in Shomrei Emunim, Ezras Torah, and Bet Shemesh, will be a major source of sustenance to thousands.

Families are very excited about this project, a Mesamche Lev initiative valued at NIS 1,500,000. Libby E., a Bet Shemesh mother of nine, is looking forward to buying leben and yogurt. "It's going to be a real treat for my children," she says. "In my house, leben is a specialty. I buy it for birthdays. Now it'll be for *yom tov*." She'll also buy plenty of milk, butter, soft cheese, and sliced cheese—another expensive item she splurges on only occasionally. "My husband is in *kollel*, and we have a very small grocery budget," she says. "I buy two bags of milk, and it has to last all week. On Pesach, I always wish I could buy dairy products, to add variety to the menu. This is the first time I'll be able to do that."

Hadassah I. of Meah Shearim says that her children barely know what these products taste like. "When I told them about the sale, my girls went to the *makolet* to study the dairy case. They wrote down for me exactly what they want. My six-year-old can't stop asking if I can buy her chocolate milk."

The dairy-products program will add yet another dimension to Mesamche Lev's massive Pesach distribution, and it demonstrates the organization's commitment to "bringing *simcha* to life" for thousands of families.

Mesamche Lev: By The Numbers

Mesamche Lev distributes mind-boggling amounts of meat, shoes, and funds to the poor for *yom tov*.

In Israel:

- 85,000 pounds of meat
- 42,000 pairs of shoes
- 380 checks for widows

In the U.S.:

- 143 checks for widows
- *Matzah* subsidies for over 2000 families
- Nearly 50,000 pounds of *matzah* sold for just \$12/lb.
- Coupons, 50% discounts for shoes and dry goods distributed to over 1,000 *kollel* families

comfortable lives in the States in favor of the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*. Rabbi Moshe T., a distinguished *kollel yungerman* and *mechaber sefarim*, left his comfortable New Jersey home for the privilege of living in *Eretz Yisrael*. He lives in a tiny, cold apartment with his wife and nine children and is grateful to his parents for paying his rent. But they would be shocked to know that his children don't eat *fleishigs* from Shabbos to Shabbos and that they wear their shoes for months after they start complaining that their toes are pinched. He is delighted that the distribution is coming to his hometown.

"There's no *shayla* that Mesamche Lev is making our whole *yom tov*," he says. "We'll get everything we need—meat, wine, groceries, and of course, shoes. The children can't wait. And that it's here in Bet Shemesh is a real bonus. I

don't have to miss a single *seder*." The Bet Shemesh distribution will go a long way toward bringing *simchas yom tov* and peace of mind to the city's needy families.

Although the Bet Shemesh event will fill a large hall, it will be minuscule compared to the main event in Yerushalayim. There, the logistics of the distribution are mind-boggling. At this very moment, 42,000 children are walking down aisles of shoes, carefully arranged by style, size, and gender. The shoes are quickly disappearing, as the children choose top-quality, fashionable leather shoes to replace their pinching, worn out, snow-damaged footwear.

"My daughter's old shoes are so worn, they fall off her feet like slippers," says Dina H., a widow from Bnei Brak. "Now she chose brand-new navy flats with tan piping, just like the ones she admired in a store window. She is so happy. Thank you." Overwhelmed with emotion, Dina wipes away a tear, and thanks the organization for bringing her children joy.

"It's not easy to make my children happy," she said. "But you did it. You brought orphans *simcha*." For Mesamche Lev, it's par for the course. By week's end, the *simcha* operation will enter its second stage. Instead of shoe boxes, there will be cases of meat, poultry, wine, and grape juice awaiting pickup by throngs of recipients who will carefully set them aside for the *Seder*. There will also be grocery coupons redeemable at local stores.

The event is a magnificent display of *ahavas Yisrael*. Generous Jews from every corner of the world sponsor coupons, which are given to poor families. The poor use the coupons to "purchase"