

Massive Mesamche Lev Pesach Distribution Expands To Beit Shemesh

By Frimet Blum

Tens of thousands across Eretz Yisroel consider the Mesamche Lev *Pesach* distribution a cornerstone of the *chag*. During the weeks leading up to *yom tov*, they converge on Rechov Shmuel Hanovi in Yerushalayim, and leave laden with meat, shoes, wine, and grocery coupons.

But this year, the residents of Beit 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 Beit Shemesh, where over fifteen hundred poor families, including more than twelve thousand children, will receive the same *Pesach* necessities as their counterparts in Yerushalayim. They will receive *yom tov* needs, including meat, wine, grocery coupons, and shoes.

The community of Beit Shemesh includes many poor Torah families who struggle mightily to feed their children. It also includes American *olim* who left comfortable lives in the States in favor of the holiness of Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Moshe T., a distinguished *kollel yungerman* and *mechaber seforim*, left his comfortable New Jersey home for the privilege of living in Eretz Yisroel. 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 *feishigs* from *Shabbos* to *Shabbos*, and that they wear their shoes for months after they start complaining that their toes pinch. He is delighted that the distribution is coming to his hometown.

"It's *mamash a mechaye*," he says. "There's no *shaila* that Mesamche Lev is making our whole *yom tov*. We'll get everything we need. Meat, wine, groceries, and of course, shoes. It's a *gevaldige* thing that we're getting shoes. The children can't wait. And... that it's being here in Beit Shemesh is a real bonus. I don't have to miss a single *seder*." The Beit Shemesh distribution will go a long way towards bringing *simchas yom tov* and peace of mind to the city's needy families.

Although the Beit Shemesh event fills a large hall, it is miniscule compared to the main event in Yerushalayim, where the logistics of the distribution are mind-boggling. Forty two thousand children walk down aisles of shoes, carefully arranged by style, size, and gender. The shoes disappear, 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. The second stage of the distribution includes cases of meat, poultry, wine, and grape juice, picked up by throngs of recipients who carefully set them aside



for the *Seder*. There are also be grocery coupons redeemable at local stores.

The event is a magnificent display of *ahavas Yisroel*. Generous Jews from every corner of the world sponsor coupons, which are given to poor families. The poor use the coupons to purchase meat, groceries, and shoes, and the Mesamche Lev donors are directly responsible for all the joy at the distribution. The distribution has been bringing *simcha* to life for over forty years, and was the brainchild of Rabbi Zalman Ashkenazi *zt"l*, legendary founder of the organization. It is distinguished not only by the scope of the distribution, which gives families virtually everything they need for *Pesach*, but also by the focus on maintaining the dignity of the recipients. It is *tzedakah* at its finest.

In recent years, Mesamche Lev's work reached close to home as well, with its American programs serving an ever-growing number of families. In addition to distributing funds to three hundred sixty eight widows in Eretz Yisroel, the organization helped close to one hundred fifty American widows with generous checks.

That is aside from subsidizing forty six thousand pounds of *matzah* for over two thousand large families in Boro Park, Williamsburg, Flatbush, Lakewood, Monsey, Monroe, and New Square. The families purchased the *matzah* at half price, paying just twelve dollars a pound for expensive brands that retail at twenty five

dollars. The high-tech automated phone system that served those seeking to buy discounted *matzah*, at telephone number 718-705-6500, was flooded with calls from the moment it was opened. Mesamche Lev also distributed shoe coupons to over one thousand American *kollel yungerleit*, offering them a fifty percent discount in local shoe stores and dry goods stores.

To participate in what is almost certainly the largest worldwide *maos chittin* operation, send your contribution to Mesamche Lev, 1364 53rd Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11219, or call 718-506-1400. You can also download meat, grocery, and shoe coupons at mesamchelev.org.



Mesamche Lev showcases in Yerushalayim and Beit Shemesh turn the shoe distribution into a boutique-style shopping experience.

Yeshuas Hachaim Segulah From Rav Chaim Palagi *zt"l*

By Frimet Blum

Mrs. Breindy Katina of Kiryas Joel, New York, regaled the students of Bnos Zion seminary with the story of her daughter's recovery. The little girl, who has Down syndrome, had open heart surgery on June 10, to repair a defect. As usual during such an operation, she was put on a respirator. The surgery was successful, and about an hour after the patient was wheeled into the recovery room, the doctor, following standard procedure, tried an extubation, a procedure to take her off the respirator.

But something went terribly wrong. The little girl couldn't start breathing on her own. As soon as the respirator was removed, her oxygen levels began to drop. The doctor put her back on the respirator. Over the course of the day and throughout the following week, doctors kept trying to extubate her, to no avail. There appeared to be no solution. The child seemed to have lost her ability to breathe. Stymied, the doctors prepared the parents for the worst. On June 18, over a week since the surgery, a friend called Mrs. Katina.

"There's a *segulah* to weigh a sick patient, and donate as much meat as the patient weighs to poor *talmidei chachomim*," she said. Mrs. Katina grasped at the opportunity, and asked for more information.

"It's from a big *mekubal*, Rabbi Chaim Palagi. Mesamche Lev takes care of the whole thing," said her friend. "You multiply the patient's weight by the cost of a pound of meat, and send it to Mesamche Lev. They use the money to buy meat for *talmidei chachomim* for *Shabbos* or *yom tov*. The *talmidei chachomim daven* for the patient and it creates a *zechus* for a *refuah*."

Mrs. Katina was familiar with Mesamche Lev. She called the organization, told them that her daughter weighed twenty one pounds, and donated \$161.70 for twenty one pounds of meat. The next time the doctors attempted the procedure, it went perfectly. The child began to breathe on her own, with no complications. She was soon transferred from the Intensive Care Unit to a regular room and was discharged from the hospital the very next day.

Mesamche Lev is a renowned charity organization that has been helping the poor in Eretz Yisroel since 1971. One of the many ways they help the poor is by distributing meat and poultry. The recipient families are so poor, many consider a sliver of *Shabbos* chicken the ultimate luxury. When a patient donates funds for the Yeshuas Hachaim *segulah* to Mesamche Lev, the organization purchases meat and distributes it to *talmidei chachomim* in honor of the next *Shabbos* or *yom tov*.

To learn more about *yeshuas hachaim*, call Mesamche Lev at 718-506-1400, or visit MesamcheLev.org.