



Children of Sholom and Mirel Deitsch in mid-1960s. Standing, L-R: Rochel Leah (Schusterman), Zalman, Yaisef. Seated, L-R: Tzivvy (Gopin), Alta (Schwartz), Avrohom Maishe.

# ‘Don’t Be Sad’

RISHE DEITSCH

My dear sister-in-law Tzivvy Gopin passed away this year on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Av.

Her children recently shared a video of a birthday party for Tzivvy just a year or two ago. Her grandchildren are giving her gifts. And she is responding with statements like, “This is EXACTLY what I wanted!” and, “Oh, I NEED this!” and, “I LOVE this, thank you!”

And it struck me. I never do that because I’m, well, you know, HONEST. I would be more likely to say, “What is this thing? What should I do with this? Can you still return it?”

And I resolved to be more like Tzivvy... less blunt, more kind.

Before Tzivvy passed away, she said to us a few times, “Don’t be sad, after...”

She didn’t want us to be sad.

I don’t really know how it could be possible to not be sad, Tzivvy. But it was rather amazing of you to worry about *our sadness* as you prepared to leave this world.



Tzivvy Gopin at Sunday Dollars on 11 Tammuz 5751/1991. JEM Photo ID#184541

In the 1970s, Tzivvy and I were counselors together as girls in Long Beach, California. One time we were being driven somewhere in a station wagon and a bunch of us were stuffed into the very back. Suddenly, going about 80 miles per hour, we hit a pothole and the car gave a massive BOUNCE. My head hit the roof of the car HARD. When my eyes uncrossed, they filled with tears because it hurt. Tzivvy made eye contact with me and said quietly, "Rishe, cry!" At first I didn't know what she meant, but I soon realized she meant, go ahead, it's okay to express your pain, you're entitled, and I take it seriously.

I remember thinking how kind it was for her to tell me to go ahead and cry. She had compassion and empathy and was very far from a self-centered teenybopper.

Tzivvy and I became real friends when we became engaged at the same time. I got engaged to her brother, Avrohom Maishe, and she got engaged to Gavriel Gopin. We were the same age and shared the same house for the first seven years after we got married (Deitsches upstairs, Gopins downstairs).

I realized when we lived together that if you told your problems to Tzivvy, she would never roll her eyes

and tell you to get over it. The funny thing is, just by telling it to her, and having her feel for you, you *would* get over it.

I knew Tzivvy was a fine human being and I loved her for that and for many other things, but it was during my brother-in-law Yaisef Deitsch's final illness that I came not just to love Tzivvy but to deeply respect her.

Tzivvy getting into that Boro Park van in the morning, traveling to Maimonides Hospital, sitting together with Yaisef's wife and children at his bedside, talking to him, playing music for him, all the while either knitting something beautiful for someone she loved or saying her *Tehillim*... and then catching the van back to Crown Heights in time to give piano lessons and care for her young children... was something you just don't see. You just don't see a woman with a family, a house, a LIFE, move everything to the side so she can spend time with her beloved brother day after day. It seems to me that it was probably very painful for Tzivvy to see her brother in such a state, but she did it, willingly and humbly. I can never forget that sight.

We have to live up to this. We have to try to have that humility and that willingness to do what is needed even when it hurts.



L-R: Rochel Leah Schusterman, Rishe Deitsch, and Tzivvy Gopin, at Rishe's wedding to Avrohom Maishe on Ches Elul 5738/Sept. 10, 1978.

There were times that I would call Tzivvy with something that was on my heart. Sometimes I would call her late at night. She never said, "Rishe, you know, it's 11:00!" And what's more, she never said, "Rishe, you are calling me to have THIS conversation, AGAIN? We covered these exact same topics last night!" Each time I hung up I felt a little better, a little stronger, than when I had picked up the phone to call her.

Tzivvy was wise, generous, loving, humble, patient, and

hardworking. On top of that, she was a *chassidische* and G-d-fearing woman.

And—most of the time—she was happy! Despite the hardships she endured, she was determined to be a happy person, and to encourage others to be happy, and she succeeded, helped constantly by her devoted husband, *ybl"ch*, Gavriel Gopin.

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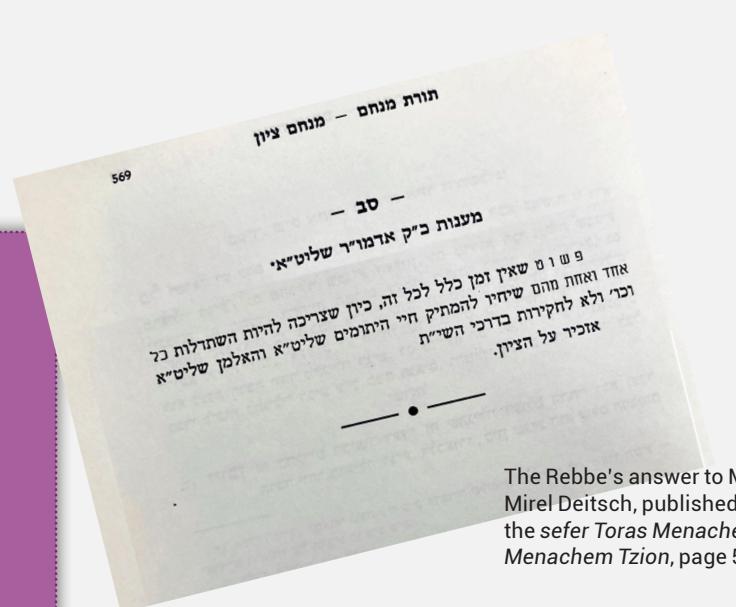
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**O**n the fourth day of Nissan in the year 5746/1986, my sister-in-law Rochel Leah Schusterman passed away suddenly at the age of 36, leaving a young husband\* and 11 children including 16-month-old twins. Obviously, naturally, my mother-in-law (Rochel Leah's mother), Mrs. Mirel Deitsch, was shattered. She poured out her heart to the Rebbe, and asked the Rebbe a simple but profound question (paraphrased): "How could Hashem do this???"

**As a piano student myself**  
 when I was young, and as a mother of several piano students, I think I know a good piano teacher when I see one at work. And I never knew a piano teacher like Tzivvy. She was so incredibly proficient at it that she somehow, miraculously, managed to teach some children who did not have "an ear" to play by ear. Somehow she explained the chords to them and next thing I know, they're playing whatever they want to play, without notes. *Magical*. But what impressed me even more was what happened when Tzivvy couldn't teach piano anymore following surgery. At that point, she could have chosen to drop all ambition and just focus on staying alive. She could have rested all day and nobody would have thought any less of her. Instead, she made a different choice. On top of hosting family and guests, she began teaching *Likutei Sichos* and Jewish history and knitting at Lubavitch Sparks High School. Just one more thing to love and respect about Tzivvy, and to learn from her: ***Don't take the easy way out even when you can get away with it. Work hard and do something worthwhile with whatever time and energy and ability Hashem gives you.***



The Rebbe's answer to Mrs. Mirel Deitsch, published in the sefer *Toras Menachem – Menachem Tzion*, page 569.

Here is part of the Rebbe's answer to her, in which the Rebbe wrote that he is speaking "*lekol echod v'achas maihem*, to each and every one [of the family]."

The Rebbe replied (free translation), "Clearly, there is no time for this [questioning of Hashem] at all, because each and every family member should be spending their time and effort on trying to sweeten the lives of the orphans, may they live and be well, and the widower, may he live and be well. Time and effort should not be spent on trying to understand the ways of Hashem..."

The Rebbe was clear about what he expected from her and from us, but please don't imagine for a second that the Rebbe was not compassionate and kind to my mother-in-law. During a *yechidus* with the family in 1975, there was a conversation about the fresh loss of my father-in-law, Reb Sholom Deitsch.

The Rebbe was speaking to my mother-in-law about carrying on with strength and *simchah* despite her loss, but every time my mother-in-law cried, the Rebbe stopped speaking, until she regained control.

He validated and respected her pain.

And yet, he was saying what Tzivvy said to us: "Don't be sad..."

May Hashem wipe away all tears with the coming of Moshiach NOW!

\*Rabbi Gershon Schusterman, author of the bestseller, *Why G-d Why? How to Believe in Heaven When it Hurts Like Hell*.