

FROM THE EDITOR

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Last month, I mentioned that, during a recent trip to the USA, my family and I managed to visit Lakewood, New Jersey. While we were there, we were tremendously blessed to be able to sit down on motzei Shabbos with Rebbetzin Shoshana Gifter, may she live and be well, who lives nearby to Lakewood. Rebbetzin Gifter is part of the illustrious Telshe Yeshiva dynasty that began in Telshe, Lithuania and which has had a significant impact on South Africa via the likes of such rabbis as Rabbi Azriel Chaim Goldfein, z"l, Rabbi Tzadok Suchard, and Rabbi Avraham Tanzer to name just a few. Rebbetzin Gifter is the widow of Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, z"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland.

Rebbetzin Gifter shared with us stories of what it was like growing up as a young girl in Lita, and of her fortuitous journey to America, shortly after which the entire town of Telshe, including the Yeshiva, was destroyed by the Nazis, *yemach shemom v'zichrom* (may their names and memory be blotted out).

At my wife's request, Rebbetzin Gifter also shared with us the following advice regarding educating our children (and she very kindly gave permission for me to share it here):

"When my older sister was born, my father [Rabbi Zalman Bloch] wrote to his father, to Rabbi Yoseph Leib [Bloch, Rav of the community of Telshe, as well as the Rosh Yeshiva], and asked him what are the main things that [he has] to know about *chinuch* [education] of *kinder* [children].

[His father] answered the following, 'First of all, you are one day too late. The child has to be [educated] from the first day that he's born because you never know when will be the first time that he will understand. Don't say, 'He's only 3 years old, he doesn't understand.' The *chinuch* has to be from the beginning.' That's number one.

Number two, never... 'fool' a child. What do I mean? No parent wants to fool or tell a lie, but if you say to a child, 'Be a good girl and I have something for you...' – not bribery, which is not good, but rewards which are okay – '...I will bring you a candy.' And then you go away to work and you forget to buy the candy. So you come home and you say, 'I'm sorry. I forgot to bring you the candy, but tomorrow, *im yirtza Hashem* [G-d willing], I will bring it to you.' By the child, when [a child] is young, it's like you're telling him a lie. 'You said you'd bring it for Yom Tov' – [the child] doesn't know time, tomorrow – 'You said you'd come and bring me' – so never do it to a child; he will lose faith in you, while [learning] that he can say, 'I'm sorry', [that he] can do it too.

The third thing which is very important: never punish a child while you are a little bit angry and excited. We are only human and sometimes the mother or the father gets a little bit excited when the child does something wrong, so never punish [him] while you feel that you are excited. The same thing with a teacher – because if you will punish [him] when you are excited, the child thinks that [the parent or teacher] has to let out his anger, so it's not important – [the child] will not accept whatever you have to tell him.

And the [fourth and] last thing is that in the eyes of your child, you always have to try and be right. You know, we make mistakes sometimes... now what they think in psychology [is that] a mother can do something wrong and come home and say, 'Oh, I'm sorry. I did wrong. Excuse me.' The child will think, 'You did wrong. I can do wrong and say, "I'm sorry."' So in the eyes of the child you have to try always to do the right thing – not to fool them, *chas v'shalom* (G-d forbid), but to be careful to do the right thing. Not so easy, but those are the main four points in *chinuch*. And even if the child is older, it's very important."

Sage advice for old and new parents alike, no matter the age of our children.

From everyone at *JL*, hearty congratulations to the class of 2019 and best wishes on your next step, whatever it may be. And we wish all the best to every student in the coming year!

The *JL* team was saddened to hear of the passing of Rabbi Ze'ev Kraines, z"l, who recently retired, after 27 years, as the Rav of Ohr Somayach Sandton, and who, at one time, wrote a monthly column for *Jewish Life*. We wish his family long life.

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