



**B**ack in the 60s when I attended yeshivah, the challenges facing Jewish education were formidable. The students tended to be first-generation Americans; the *rebbeim* were Yiddish-speaking survivors. Understandably, there was a significant cultural gap between the European *rebbe*s and their baseball-obsessed, American-as-apple-pie *talmidim*. While the *rebbeim* tried valiantly to forge a connection with their *talmidim*, they seem to have come from a different world. To make matters more challenging, we had to translate Chumash and even Gemara into Yiddish, a language we heard at home but did not really speak. I recall spending many hours with my father, *a"h*, on long winter Friday nights reviewing Gemara, struggling to commit the more difficult Yiddish words to memory.

The challenges facing Jewish education today are, of course, radically different. *Rebbeim* and *talmidim* often share the same cultural background (and even play baseball together!). In most yeshivas, students are expected to translate Chumash, and certainly Gemara, into English. Moreover, the plethora of educational aids, including many classical sources (and even *Talmud Bavli!*) available in English, makes

the learning experience more pleasant and enjoyable.

Nevertheless, reaching the twenty-first-century *talmid* is no simple feat. How does an iPod-and-iPhone-addicted teenager get turned on to Rashi and Rambam? How does a member of the IM (instant messaging) generation cultivate the necessary patience and diligence to master Tosafot?

And yet, some of the fundamental issues facing Jewish educators today are, in fact, issues that have faced Jewish educators since time immemorial. Indeed, while educational methodologies change from time to time, the goals of Jewish education have always remained the same: to make Torah alive and relevant, to instill in students a deep and lifelong love of learning, to provide students with a strong spiritual foundation that will enable them to cope with life's vicissitudes. What is the best way to achieve these goals? This remains the perennial challenge of Jewish education.

In this issue, Jewish educators including Rabbis Berel Wein, Yaakov Bieler, Karmi Gross, Dovid Gottlieb and Immanuel Bernstein explore this question from a variety of perspectives. Rabbi Gottlieb argues for a return to the traditional method of Jewish education espoused by Chazal, known as the "Zilberman method," which, he claims, gives students greater mastery of and fluency in Torah, among other advantages; Rabbi Wein contends that the overemphasis in today's classrooms on Gemara at the expense of Tanach tends to leave students uninspired and disinterested.

I doubt my father realized it at the time, but those Friday nights I spent

learning with him, struggling to decipher the dense Talmudic discussions, gave me precious memories and helped nurture my love of learning Torah. For my solid Jewish education, I owe an extraordinary debt to my dear father, whose *yahrtzeit* is on 5 *Nisan*.

Aside from the phenomenal array of education-oriented articles in this issue, we offer many other articles of interest including an insightful review essay by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, *rosh yeshivah* of Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel, on Rabbi Aharon Feldman's new book, *The Eye of the Storm*.

With Pesach around the corner, harried Jewish homemakers will especially appreciate our article on a very valuable Pesach resource: the OU Kosher Consumer Hotline, which receives an astounding 500 phone calls per day during those frantic days leading up to Pesach. And if you think your Pesach preparations are challenging, check out Bayla Sheva Brenner's article, which takes readers to US bases in Baghdad, Iraq; Okinawa, Japan and other places around the globe to see how American Jewish soldiers prepare for a Seder so far from home. Additionally, our own Rabbis Yaakov Luban and Eli Gersten provide an in-depth and informative look at *kitniyot*, clarifying many little-known details about this age-old *minhag*.

This outstanding issue also features articles on Israel—including a fabulous photo essay by an award-winning photographer—health, books, *kosher lePesach* recipes and more. As always, I look forward to receiving your e-mails at [ja@ou.org](mailto:ja@ou.org) Best wishes for a *chag kasher vesameach!* ■