

## Did I conceive this entire people... that You say to me, Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a suckling. (11:12)

**Horav Meir Shapiro, zl**, interprets Moshe *Rabbeinu's* lament to Hashem as analogous with the complaints issued by rabbinic leaders throughout the generations. Two words used by Moshe are not synonymous with one another. An *omein* is more of a governess, who raises and instructs the child. We find Mordechai being referred to as Esther's *omein*, *V'hu omein es Hadassah*, "And he raised Hadassah" (*Megillas Esther* 2:7). A *yoneik*, on the other hand, is a young suckling infant whose interest is primarily concerning its next meal. What is the relationship between the individual who is charged with educating the child and the individual who is providing for its meals?

This is what Moshe was saying to Hashem. "Almighty, I have the skills and ability to teach the nation Torah, to inspire and elevate them spiritually, to guide and embellish their moral rectitude. Instead, I am being asked to provide them with food and meat. Am I a *meinekes*, nursemaid, or am I an *omein*, who teaches?"

Likewise, the members of our rabbinic leadership have spent their lives developing a proficiency in Torah erudition, in learning how to inspire and guide the spiritual development of their flock. Their time should be well spent studying and teaching Torah, elevating their congregations to unprecedented spiritual heights. The material sustenance and maintenance of their congregants' needs should be provided for and directed by those whom Hashem has blessed with material abundance. Instead, the rabbis spend a good part of their precious time fundraising to provide the basic needs of their congregants. Whether it be food on the table; finding a job for the family's provider; raising money for tuition; seeing to it that families have decent, presentable clothing for *Shabbos*, *Yom Tov* and yes, for during the week; seeing to it that a family is not evicted, nor foreclosed upon; making sure that those who prey upon the unknowing are dealt with and the unknowing are paid back. These are some of the responsibilities of today's *rabbanim*. Oh, yes, they also teach and render *halachic* decisions but, as *Rav* Meir Shapiro bemoans, this is secondary to the financial obligations that really should be addressed by the community's lay leadership. Apparently, the more things change, the more they stay the same.