

Say to the Kohanim,...and tell them (21:1)

Rashi explains that the *Torah's* dual injunction, "*Emor V'omarta*, emphasizes the significance of "saying." This suggests "*I'hazhir gedolim al haketanim*," that the older ones should warn and instruct the younger ones. In a salutary lesson for the *Kohanim*, the *Torah* teaches us a valuable lesson. Only by appropriate attention to the education of the children can our future be assured. Ignoring the process of education can have devastating effects.

Deviating from the usual interpretation of this *pasuk*, *Chazal* assert that in the normative educational process, the older generation should teach the younger generation. Woe is the generation in which the young teach the older ones. In a poignant analogy, they relate the story of a child whose father was recovering from a grave illness. He was literally being trained to walk again on his frail legs. As he tried to walk, he fell, to the anxiety and anguish of those watching his labored movements. His young son who stood observing in wonderment asked his father, "When my little brother was learning to walk and occasionally fell down in his attempt, even if he hurt himself, everyone laughed and was happy. Why is it that now, as you are learning to walk and you fall down, everyone is concerned and sad?" The father responded in the obvious manner, "When I was teaching your little brother to walk, it was following the normal course of events; a child was learning to walk as he developed. This is a reason for happiness. When a child must teach his father to walk, however, it is tragic."

The message is apparent. In the normal course of events, the *gedolim*, older generation, teach the young. Today, regrettably, we find the *ketanim*, younger generation, have returned to *Torah*. They have had parents who, despite their own lack of education, sought to educate their children. These children are teaching the *gedolim*, older generation. Young people are compensating for lost time. They are encouraging their fathers and mothers who did not, for whatever reason, have the opportunity to enrich their lives through *Torah*. That is not the way it is supposed to be. Hashem gave us the *Torah* to be transmitted from father to son - not the reverse.