

Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them, Each of you shall not contaminate himself to a (dead) person. (21:1)

The various commentators address the *Torah's* redundancy in its enjoinder to the *Kohanim* regarding the laws of *tumah*, ritual contamination. *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who say that the *Torah* is emphasizing the need for the *gedolim*, adults, to warn the *ketanim*, children. In a homiletic rendering of the *pasuk*, the *Chasam Sofer* focuses upon what has regrettably become common practice: We take an interest only in the "*gedolim*," while we ignore the "*ketanim*". For example, when a member of the community passes away, we make an effort to provide everything for the "*niftar ha'gadol*," the distinguished deceased. We prepare a "great" funeral, with "great" eulogies; we see to it that a "large" crowd assembles for the funeral, followed by an appropriate burial. What about the "*ketanim*," the "little," forgotten people, the widow and orphans who are now left to fend for themselves, bereft of their husband and father? When the *Torah* begins its chapter dealing with death in a family, it seeks to make us acutely aware of the responsibility for caring about the little things in the same manner in which we dedicate ourselves to addressing the big issues.