

So Avraham woke up early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey. (22:3)

The above *pasuk* teaches us about Avraham *Avinu's* alacrity to serve Hashem. The Almighty instructed him regarding a mission. Avraham did not tarry. He went about performing the mission at the earliest possible moment. The *Tur Orach Chaim* 1:1 begins with this idea: "That you should 'wake' the morning – rather than (have) the morning wake you." Likewise, in *Shulchan Aruch* 1:1, the *Bais Yosef* writes his well-known opening words: "Arise like a lion, to get up in the morning to serve his Creator; that you should wake up the morning." While this concept is probably the last thing that goes through our minds when the alarm rings in the morning, when the last thing we feel like doing is getting up and out of a warm bed. Perhaps the following vignette will give us a reason to rethink our morning wake-up call.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, shared the following thought concerning his revered *Rebbe, Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl* (related by *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, in *Nifleosecha Asichah*), "I merited to be with *Rav Elya* for a period of six months, during which I was able to see his unique activities with regard to his serving Hashem. Among those which impressed me the most was his meticulous diligence to arise early in the morning. This went on without fail, regardless of how late he had retired to bed the night before, and continued when the venerable *Mashgiach* was in the later days of his life, when he was quite aged.

"I once asked him to explain why arising so early was so much a part of his service to Hashem. (After all, it was not as if he did not have a legitimate excuse to sleep a little bit longer, or had problems locating a later *minyan* for *Shacharis*.)

"He replied with the following, 'After my one hundred and twenty, and I will be called before the Heavenly Tribunal, they will question me concerning my carrying out the laws of the *Shulchan Aruch*: "Did you fulfill each and every *halachah* in the *Shulchan Aruch*?" is a weighty and demanding question. It makes sense that they will ask in order of sequence beginning with the very first *halachah*: – "Arise like a lion to serve his Creator that you should wake-up the morning." Imagine how I will appear if I cannot give a positive reply to the very first question! Therefore, I have decided that arising in the morning, before daybreak, is a requirement I cannot chance failing to respond to affirmatively. At least I will have one positive answer/merit in my behalf."

Life is a gift which must be appreciated. One executive rises an hour earlier in the morning, just so that he can "live" one more hour. Napoleon said, "Every moment that I am awake I can bask in the glory of being the king, but, when I sleep, I lose the experience. What a shame to miss it!" Certainly, one must get his rest to function properly. There is a concept, however, of squandering away life. Time is life. It was given to us to serve Hashem and fulfill our mission in the world. If this notion would be coursing through our minds in the morning when the alarm rings, we would race to *shul* with excitement. People that have nowhere to go and nothing to do tend to sleep a lot. Sleep

becomes their escape from the reality of life. Someone who is excited about living, about serving, about doing and achieving, cannot wait to get up and go.