

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Scars of A Lion

"You shall arise as a lion each morning to do the will of your Creator." That stirring sentence opens the Shulchan Aruch, the Jewish code of law. It reminds us that at the heart of the Jewish tradition is the conviction that there are things worth fighting for.



In a more peaceful age, it is easy to dismiss the necessity of fighting. Acceptance has a long and noble tradition, but unwise appeasement has a long and ignoble one. Everybody who cherishes some value in this world has to be willing to bear the consequence of defending that value, or it will disappear.

There is a stirring conversation in Alan Paton's book, "Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful." It's between a black person and a white person who both fought for racial justice in South Africa and risked their lives. One of them says they may bear a lot of scars for the effort and the other answers: "Well, I look at it this way. When I get up there, the great judge will say, 'Where are your scars?' And if I haven't any, he will ask, 'Were there no causes worthy of getting scars.'"

Arise like a lion and bear proudly the scars from a noble struggle.