Avraham Avinu overcame all his physical instincts to go wherever God instructed him to go and to do whatever God commanded him to do. Likewise, Moshe Rabbenu overcame any physical inclination to refuse to carry forth his monumental mission and he went forward with all his strength to fulfill it. Avraham Avinu was the paradigm of faith and trust in God, while Moshe Rabbenu was the paradigm of a Torah personality. The Mashi'ah will personify absolute obedience to God and His Torah, conquering his *yetzer hara* completely and permanently. This is what the Midrash means by saying that these three personalities ride the same *hamor*, controlling their bodily *homer*.

Harav HIDA (*More Ba'etzba* #3) stated that since the very first halakha found in the *Shulhan Arukh* is to rise from one's sleep early in the morning, anyone who fails in this primary test is certain to have difficulties overcoming the *yetzer hara* in all his affairs. Therefore it is imperative to place great effort to succeed in this first battle. One must internalize the lesson of Rama in his first gloss to the *Shulhan Arukh*: ''One must be conscious of the concept that God is always watching us, that He is present everywhere in the entire world.'' If someone is lazy to get up early in the morning for his prayers, God is fully aware of it. Therefore one must leap like a gazelle and run to serve God. It is recommended that one refrain from speaking any mundane conversation in the morning until one has prayed and blessed his Creator. One must certainly avoid any lengthy conversation until then.

The *sefer Pele Yo'etz* (entry *Hashkama*) cites our Sages' teaching – ''If someone wishes to murder you, beat him to it and kill him first.'' Since the *yetzer hara* fully intends to kill people with its wiles, we must stand fast in self defense. If we fight this battle first thing in the morning, God will give us assistance all day long. Therefore, one must make sure to rise before dawn.

The *Hesed La'alafim* (*Siman* 1) states: One must display the strength of a lion to rise early in the morning to serve one's Creator. One's entire connection to Judaism depends on rising early and beginning the day by performing good deeds and avoiding all evil. It takes great effort to break one's desires and overcome the *yetzer hara* that fights to drag one down. One must fight this battle during all hours of the day, but the struggle is fiercest when one first wakes up and one's mind is still foggy with sleep. At that time, the *yetzer hara* pounces upon the person, persuading him to go back to sleep in the winter because it is cold and in the summer because the night is short. Its goal is to make sure that the person at least misses the opportunity to pray with the congregation, or at best to make him sleep through the entire morning. If it succeeds in this, it will continue to hound the person throughout the day, as each sin precipitates another.

Therefore, anyone who wishes true life should employ strategies to win this battle. He must make sure to rise early in the morning to serve God, at all

costs. If he slips one day, he should impose a monetary or physical fine on himself. This is what our Sages referred when they taught (*Bereshit Rabba* 75:1), "Act against the evil one before he acts against you." This is the formula for anyone who wishes to conquer his *yetzer hara* and serve his Creator.

Harav Hayim Palachi (*Kaf Hahayim* 2:3) commented that people should imagine how quickly they would react and jump out of bed if a fire broke out near one's house in the middle of the night. They should likewise realize that if they do not care to wake up to study Torah they are likely to be cast into a fire, the fire of Gehinnom. Likewise, if someone heard burglars breaking into his home during the night, he certainly would not turn over and go back to sleep. He would rush to save his life and property from danger. On the positive side, if someone was notified that if he would interrupt his sleep and get up before dawn he would find a treasure of gold and silver, he would surely jump out of bed no matter how tired he is. The Torah is more precious than gold and treasures.

It is important that people avoid staying up too late at night. Even if someone is involved in Torah study, it might be that the *yetzer hara* is encouraging him to continue studying to make sure that he will miss the mitzvah of reciting the *Shema* and praying on time the following morning. According to eyewitness accounts, Harav Yisrael Meir Kagan (author of *Hafetz Hayim*) would personally shut the lights in his yeshivah so that his students would go to sleep and get up in time for the prayers the following morning. In fact, the responsa *Pe'at Sadekha* (Vol. II, #68) suggested that this is the intent of Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* – one must be like a lion, whose nature is to sleep at night and wake up early in the morning.

סימן א

דין השכמת הבוקר

א. יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו, שיהא הוא מעורר השחר. [ש"ע סי' א ס"א]. כמו שאמר דוד המלך עליו השלום (תהלים נז, ט): "עורה כבודי עורה הנבל וכנור אעירה שחר", אני מעיר השחר, ואין השחר מעיר אותי. [ראה ירושלמי ריש ברכות, רש"י ברכות ד ע"א ד"ה אעירה]

Siman 1

Early to Rise

Rise before dawn

1) One must gird one's strength in the manner of a lion to rise in the morning in order to serve one's Creator. One should rise before dawn's light,[1] as King David declared (*Tehillim* 57:9), "My soul – wake up! Wake up to the lyre and harp as I awaken the dawn." Our Sages interpreted this as, "I awaken the dawn rather than have the dawn's light wake me up."[2]

1. The *sefer Tur Orah Hayim* begins: Yehuda ben Tema says, "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer and brave as a lion to perform the Will of your Father in Heaven." These are four important aspects of serving God, parallel to four parts of a human being. "Brave as a lion" refers to one's heart. One must gird one's strength in the manner of a lion to rise in the morning in order to serve one's Creator. Even if it is midwinter and the *yetzer hara* argues, "How can you get up when it is so cold?" or if it argues in the summer, "How can you rise so early in the morning when you have not slept long enough to replenish your strength?" one must nevertheless ignore these arguments and rise early in the morning. In fact, one must awaken the dawn rather than have the dawn's light wake one up, as King David described his manner of serving God. It is even more praiseworthy if a person gets up while it is still night to recite special supplications.

The *sefer Shulhan Melakhim* (unpublished manuscript) noted that Maran cited only one of the four aspects in the *Shulhan Arukh*. The Hebrew words "*yitgaber ka'ari* – be brave as a lion" have the numerical value of 846, which equals the numerical value of Maran's name – Yosef ben Efrayim Karo.

The *sefer Haye Moshe* noted as well that Rama inserted two glosses into the first halakha of the *Shulhan Arukh*. The Hebrew word for gloss – *hagah* – has the numerical value of thirteen. Two times *hagah* equals twenty six, which represents God's Name.

Like a Lion

The *Ture Zahav* (1:1) stated that a lion fears no other creature. Likewise, a person is supposed to stand up fearlessly to the *yetzer hara* although it might warn him of negative consequences for performing mitzvot. Harav Hayim Moda'i, cited in the *Petah Hadevir* (1:1), pointed out that according to the *Midrash Talpiyot* (entry *Lion*), a lion sleeps with its eyes open. If it notices a hunter in the vicinity, it immediately blends into its surroundings so that it will be almost invisible. If it is discovered nevertheless, it will attack the stalker fearlessly. In the same way, a person must be constantly on the lookout for the *yetzer hara's* wiles, even when going to sleep.

The responsa *Halakhot Ketanot* (Vol. II, #3) explained that the four creatures featured in Ribbi Yehuda ben Tema's mishnah represent the four basic elements of the universe. The lion represents the element of fire, and the *yetzer hara* is itself a fire, as we see in *Kiddushin* 81a. The *Petah Hadevir* explained, according to this, that in order to combat the *yetzer hara* one must fight fire with fire. See the lengthy discussion of the *Yafe Lalev* on this subject.

2. Heavenly assistance

The *Ture Zahav* (1:2) pointed out that Maran omitted the final phrase of the Midrash – "rather than have the dawn's light wake me up." To explain this omission, he remarked that our Sages teach that if a person does what he can to sanctify himself, Heaven will enable him to achieve much more sanctity than his human nature would allow.

ואף אם ישיאנו יצרו בחורף לומר, איך תעמוד בבוקר כי הקור גדול, או ישיאנו יצרו בקיץ לומר, איך תעמוד ממטתך ועדיין לא שבעת משנתך, יתגבר עליו ויקום, ואל ישמע לו. [טור סי' א]

ומיד שאדם ניעור משנתו בבוקר, מיד יחשוב בנפשו, אילו היה נצרך לעמוד לשרת לפני מלך בשר ודם, כמה היה זהיר וזריז לעמוד בהשכמה להכין עצמו לעבודתו, כל שכן וקל וחומר בן בנו של קל וחומר, לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא. [משנ"ב ס"ק א, וראה במורה נבוכים המובא בדרכ"מ אות א]

Even if it is midwinter and the *yetzer hara* argues, "How can you get up when it is so cold?" or if it argues in the summer, "How can you rise so early in the morning when you have not slept long enough to replenish your strength?" one must nevertheless ignore these arguments and rise early in the morning.[3]

Immediately upon awakening, a person should think, *If I had the privileged duty to serve a mortal king I would jump out of bed to make sure that I am ready on time. Imagine how important it is when I have been summoned to serve the Supreme King of kings, the Blessed Holy One.*[4]

Likewise, when someone does his utmost to inspire himself to serve God, his efforts will be rewarded and he will receive abundant inspiration from Heaven.

King David said, "I awaken the dawn rather than have the dawn's light wake me up." His power of serving God was so great that he did not need Heaven's assistance; he did not need the dawn's light. We cannot pretend to be on his level, however. We can say only that, "I awaken the dawn" – I do my best to serve God, however limited I am. I know that I still need Heaven's assistance to go farther.

Only King David could truthfully declare, "rather than have the dawn's light wake me up." Therefore, Maran did not quote this phrase in the *Shulḥan Arukh*.

3. The *Bayit Ḥadash* presented for us some of the wily tactics of the *yetzer hara*. In the winter it argues that the coldest hour of the day is just before the sun rises. "Wouldn't it be more comfortable," it suggests, "to wait until the sun has risen and the temperatures have begun to rise? How can you concentrate on the prayers when you are shivering with cold?"

In the summer, it is more comfortable during the earliest hour before it gets too hot. Therefore, the *yetzer hara* changes tactics, arguing, "The night has been very short, so continue sleeping for another hour or two. That way, you will be able to concentrate on your prayers instead of falling asleep over your prayer book."

The *yetzer hara's* favorite strategy is to disguise his arguments as being the right thing to do, as if he wishes to assist us to serve God better. Those people who repeat his arguments, claiming that they purposely sleep late in the morning to pray with better concentration, must realize that they have fallen prey to his trap. After two or three hours of sleep a healthy person should be able to remain alert through the prayers. He can make up the sleep he needs afterward instead of postponing his prayers. One cannot overestimate the value of praying with a minyan in the synagogue at the proper time.

4. This comes from Rambam in *More Nevukhim* (Unit III, chap. 52) cited by the *Mishna Berura* (1:1). Rambam's words (cited in *Darkhe Moshe* 1:1) are: "One must realize in Whose Presence one is sleeping, that the Supreme King of kings, the Blessed Holy One hovers overhead, as the verse states (*Yeshayahu* 6:3), 'The entire world is filled with His Glory.' If someone would lie down in the presence of a mortal king, he would surely be executed for his insolence. How much more so is it sinful to remain sleeping when one is expected to rise and serve the Blessed Holy One."

The *Mishna Berura* did not bother to copy Rambam's words, "in Whose Presence one is sleeping, that the Supreme King of kings, the Blessed Holy One hovers overhead," since that concept is already expressed in Rama's gloss.

Strategy for rising with inspiration

The Rama (gloss to 1:1) wrote: "When you lie down to sleep, realize in Whose Presence you are lying. As soon as you awaken, jump up and begin serving God actively." The responsa *Si'aḥ Yitzḥak* (#3:1) explained that these are not merely two separate instructions, but that one leads to the other. If someone is filled with fear of God's Presence when he lies down in bed and he goes to sleep specifically in order

ב. יהודה בן תימא אומר, הוי עז כנמר, וקל כנשר, רץ כצבי, וגבור כארי, לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים (אבות ה, כ). פרט ארבעה דברים בעבודת הבורא יתברך, והתחיל "בעז כנמר" לפי שהוא כלל גדול בעבודת הבורא יתברך, לפי שפעמים אדם חפץ לעשות מצוה ונמנע מלעשותה, מפני בני אדם שמלעיגין עליו, ועל כן הזהיר שתעיז פניך כנגד המלעיגין, ואל תמנע מלעשות המצוה. וכן אמר ר' יוחנן בן זכאי לתלמידיו (ברכות כח ע"ב) "יהי רצון שתהא מורא שמים עליכם כמורא בשר ודם".

וכן הוא אומר לענין הבושה, שפעמים אדם מתבייש מפני האדם יותר ממה שיתבייש מפני הבורא יתברך, על כן הזהיר שתעיז מצחך כנגד המלעיגים, ולא תבוש. וכן אמר דוד עליו השלום (תהלים קיט, מו): "ואדברה בעדותיך נגד מלכים ולא אבוש", אף כי היה נרדף וברוח בין האומות, היה מחזיק בתורתו ולומד, אף כי היו מלעיגים עליו. [טור]. ועל כל פנים לא יתקוטט עמהם, מפני שמדת העזות מגונה מאד, ואין ראוי להשתמש ממנה כלל אפילו בעבודת ה' יתברך, כי יקנה קנין בנפשו להיות עז אפילו שלא במקום עבודתו יתברך. [ראה ב"י ואחרו]

Day 3

Like a leopard, an eagle, a deer, a lion

2) Yehuda ben Tema says, "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer and powerful as a lion in performing the Will of your Father in Heaven" (*Avot* 5:20). These are four basic aspects pertaining to serving God. First on the list is to "be bold as a leopard," a very important trait. Many times a person is inclined to perform mitzvot but then he refrains because he is afraid that others will ridicule him for it. Therefore, the Tanna instructs to adopt the trait of boldness and pay no attention to the taunts of others.

This is parallel to the teaching of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai (*Berakhot* 28b): "May it be that your fear of God will match [people's] fear of mere mortals." Sometimes people are ashamed to act incorrectly in view of others who might disapprove of them but they are not ashamed to act incorrectly in God's Presence although He disapproves of them. Therefore we are told to be bold and pay no attention to those who attempt to ridicule us for fulfilling God's Will.

In conjunction with this, King David said (*Tehillim* 119:46), "וַאֲדַבְּרָה בְעֵדֹתֶיךָ נֶגֶד מְלָכִים וְלֹא אֵבוֹשׁ – I speak about Your statutes in the presence of kings and I feel no shame." This refers to the period when David was pursued by King Sha'ul, who wished to kill him. David was forced to flee from the Land of Yisrael and he found asylum in the courts of neighboring kings. Even in that situation, he continued his daily routine of Torah study, although the kings heaped ridicule on him for it.

Although we must be bold in the presence of those who attempt to ridicule us for performing mitzvot, we must not brew conflict with others. The trait of boldness should

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to replenish his strength so that he can serve God better, he will have no problem rising as soon as he awakens and continuing to serve God. The *yetzer hara* will have no control over him. This is alluded to in the verse (*Tehillim* 63:7), "אִם זְכַרְתִּיךָ עַל יְצוּעָי בְּאַשְׁמֻרוֹת אֶהְגֶּה בָּךְ – If I remember You on my bed, I will contemplate You during the night watches."