

Night Time Halachos:

Night Time:

1. It's important to learn at night and not waste it all with sleep, eating, and talking because one accomplishes most of his learning at night that learning is not easily forgotten and is considered like the Avoda of the Korbanos. The joy of Torah is specifically felt for learning at night and Hashem grants a special Chesed for one who learns at night. One must be very careful to learn torah at night, more careful than the day!
2. There's a special practice to "join the day and night" with learning or davening by learning during sunset and sunrise.
3. According to the Kabbalah, it's preferable not to learn Tanach at night. However, some argue that one may be lenient. However, since it's not forbidden but only preferable, if not learning Tanach will cause Bitul Torah one may learn Tanach.
4. It is permissible to read Tehilim at night if read as a prayer for the sick or for another cause.
5. It is permissible to read Tanach on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night or the night of Yom Tov.
6. It is permissible to learn Tanach along with Rashi at night.

Preparing for Bed:

7. One should not sleep at night in a house alone for fear of being harmed by "mazikin - demons. However, according to many Poskim, if any amount of light is present in the room, even if shining from the outside (e.g. moonlight or streetlight) one need not be concerned.
8. For purposes of this halacha, even a small child in the same house acts as a protection. It is questionable whether a non-jew in the house actually as a protection.
9. The following people need to be more careful than others from being harmed by "mazikin" - demons at all times during the day and night, and they should therefore not be left alone: One who is sick, a woman who gave birth within the past 7 days, a Chosson or a Kallah (during the sheva berachos), an Avel (mourner during the shiva), and a Talmid Chochom (only at night in the dark).
10. One need not be concerned of harm from "mazikin - demons when sleeping alone at night in the Sukkah, because, says The Vilna Gaon, the mitzvah of sleeping in the Sukkah acts as a protection.
11. Men, boys, girls, and women who are pregnant (as this may affect the baby) should not sleep while wearing shoes because this harms one's ability to remember Torah learning.
12. This halacha is only applicable if one is sleeping in a bed, or elsewhere for more than a half hour. If one is only napping for less than a half hour on a couch, or in an easy chair, one need not be concerned.
13. Men, boys, girls (who study Torah), and women who are pregnant (as this may affect the baby) should not remove (or put on) two articles of clothing simultaneously because this can harm one's ability to remember Torah learning.
14. When one removes one's shoes at night one should untie and remove the left shoe first.
15. Initially, one should not sleep in one's regular clothes, and one should not place one's clothes under the pillow {as this will cause one to forget one's Torah learning}. There are lenient opinions who allow sleeping in one's regular daytime clothes.
16. One should not store food (even in sealed containers) under one's bed. If one already put food under a bed, some poskim hold that the food may be eaten, while others say that it should be thrown out.

17. Some have the custom before going to the bed, (and before saying Hamapil), to place a hand on the mezuzah and say "Hashem Shomri etc.", and then seven times "Bechol Derochecha etc." (as printed in many siddurim).
18. Men should ideally go to sleep with their head covered. Some also have the custom to sleep with one's Tzitzit.
19. One should have intention that one is going to sleep in order to get energy to serve Hashem with energy tomorrow. According to some, one should verbalize this intention.
20. Before going to sleep each night it is proper for one to examine his behavior that day, and if one realizes that he sinned, one should regret the sin and accept upon himself not to repeat the transgression again.
21. The following common sins require special attention; Chanifus - false flattery, Shekarim - lies, Laitzanus - mockery, Lashon Horah - (Speaking or Listening), Bittul Torah (for men).
22. Before one goes to sleep each night one should verbally forgive anyone who sinned against him and/or caused him pain. In this merit one will receive long life. This text is in the Siddur. This prayer is omitted on Friday night.
23. If a person can't bring himself to forgive someone who wronged him he should skip the הרי אנו מוחל וסולח that says he forgives everyone until the day he is able to forgive them.
24. Men should train themselves to only sleep on their side, and it is a serious transgression for men to sleep lying on one's back or stomach.
25. It is beneficial for one to first sleep on one's left side and then to switch to one's right side {because the liver is on the right side and it will lean on and warm the stomach, helping for food to digest. Then, one should turn to lie on the right side so that the digested food will more easily pass out of the stomach.} One should also not turn from side to side during the night.
26. Initially, one should have marital relations before saying the bedtime Shema, after cleansing oneself. However, if one feels that one will be too tired afterwards, you may say the bedtime Shema beforehand. (and repeat just the paragraph of the Shema afterwards.)
27. One may place one's bed in any direction that one wants, however if possible it is preferable to situate the head of the bed in the east and the foot of the bed in the west.
28. One is not meant to sleep longer than 8 hours or less than 6 hours. The correct amount of sleep is a subjective measure and some people may need more than others. Someone who is weak and afraid that, should they not get enough sleep it will result in them falling asleep during davening, may sleep more than 8 hours.

The Bedtime Shema:

1. The Talmud explains that one should recite Shema before going to sleep, so as to go to sleep with words of Torah on his lips. This is learned from the verse in Psalms, "Quake and do not sin; say [this] in your heart on your bed and be forever silent."
2. Additionally, the recitation of the Hamapil after the bedtime Shema serves as a protection from evil thoughts and impure forces (both physical and spiritual) during the night.
3. Sleep is described in the Talmud as one-sixtieth of death. The absence of life creates a vacuum which draws in forces of impurity and unwanted thoughts. Shema provides us with extra spiritual vitality to overcome this.
4. The way one goes to sleep is the way he or she wakes up in the morning. So if you go to sleep with the Shema, you'll be able to wake up reinvigorated to start a productive, meaningful and spiritual day.

Laws of Saying the Bedtime Shema:

1. The text of this Shema is found in the Artscroll Siddur pp. 288 - 294. There are also laminated cards that have the complete bedtime Shema prayer.
2. Before one goes to sleep at night one must say Krias Shema, the beracha of Hamapil, and other pesukim and teffilos
3. Once one has said Krias Shema & Hamapil one should not eat, drink or speak. Rather, one should promptly try to go to sleep.
4. If one davened Maariv before night, one must say all three parshios of Shema (i.e. Ve'ahavata, V'hoya, and Va'yomer) and have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah of Shema at night, and Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim.
5. Nevertheless, even if one davened Maariv after night it is recommended practice to always say the 3 parshios because it has a total of 248 words (including the preface of "Kel Memlech Ne'eman") and correspondingly acts as a protection for one's 248 limbs.
6. If one is unsure that he will actually fall asleep during the night one should not say Hamapil, but should say Krias Shema.
7. If one went to sleep after Amud Hashachar (i.e. appx. 90 minutes before sunrise) or anytime during the day, one does not say Krias Shema or Hamapil.
8. If a person is on a night flight and plans on sleeping on the plane he should recite Hamapil since his chair is like a bed for that time. However, if one doesn't plan to go to sleep and only accidentally dozed off he doesn't need to recite Hamapil
9. There are some who are stringent to initially only say Krias Shema & Hamapil while sitting or standing, but not while lying down. Others are stringent in this regard only when they have davened Maariv before night and have not yet been yotze Krias Shema.
10. Nevertheless, if one has already been yotze Krias Shema at Maariv (ie after night) it is permitted L'chatchila to say Krias Shema and Hamapil while lying down (on one's side).
11. it is forbidden to say it while lying on your back or on your belly, after the fact one fulfills one's obligation in any position
12. If one sometimes falls asleep while saying Krias Shema & Hamapil one should say Hamapil first, then Krias Shema, and then the pesukim and tehillim (as found in the siddur).
13. If one does not expect to fall asleep during Krias Shema and Hamapil one should first say Krias Shema, then all the pesukim and tehillim, and then end with Hamapil.
14. After saying Krias Shema one should say the following pesukim and tefilos mentioned by the Shulchan Aruch (printed in most siddurim) which protect a person, followed by Hamapil;
 - a) (Vehi Noam etc., &) Yoishev Besaizer Elyon etc.
 - b) Hashem Moh Rabu Tzoroy etc.
 - c) Boruch Hashem Bayom etc.
 - d) Vayomer Hashem El Hasoton etc.
 - e) Hashem Shom'recha etc.
 - f) Biyad'cha Afkid Ruchi etc.
 - g) Yevorechicha Hashem V'Yishmirecha etc. (according to some, say 3 times)
 - h) Hashkivainu etc. (from Maariv - without the beracha at the end)
15. Many have the custom to say additional pesukim and tefilos (followed by Hamapil), which are printed in siddurim, and include, but are not limited to, the following;
 - a) Yir'u Einainu V'Yismach Libainu etc. (from Maariv - without the beracha at the end)
 - b) Hamal'ach Hagoail Osi Mikol Roh etc.
 - c) Vayomer Im Shomoah Tishmah etc.
 - d) "Hinai Lo Yonum Velo Yishon Shomer Yisroel" (3 times)

- e) "Lishuascha Kivisi Hashem, Kivisi Hashem Leshiascha, Hashem Lishuascha Kivisi" (3 times)
- f) Bishaim Hashem Ysiroel etc. (3 times)
- g) Shir Hama'alos Ashrei Kol Yirei Hashem (tehillim 128)
- h) "Rigzu Ve'al Tech'tau, Imru Bilvavchem Al Mishkavchem, Vidomu Selah" (3 times)
- i) Adon Olom etc.
- j) The first four chapters of tehillim

- 16. If one is ill, or is otherwise unable to say all the pesukim and tefilos printed in the siddur, it is sufficient if one simply says the Shema with the first parsha (Ve'ahavat) and Hamapil.
- 17. If one sleeps during the day one does not say Krias Shema or Hamapil. Nevertheless, it is advisable for one to say Vehi Noam & Yoshev Besaizer Elyon (tehillim 90:17 and 91).

After the Bedtime Shema:

- 1. It is a good idea to review words of Torah while one is going to sleep.
- 2. If one is having difficulty falling asleep, one should repeat the first parsha of Shema (i.e. Ve'ahavta without Shema Yisroel...) several times until one falls asleep, or alternatively, one may think Torah thoughts.
- 3. Even if one didn't end up falling asleep the Bracha is not considered in vain because the Bracha was said about people in the world going to sleep but was established for when one tried going to sleep.
- 4. Initially one should not drink or do anything once one has said Shema (even if one has not yet said Hamapil).
- 5. However, if one is thirsty and wishes to take a drink, or must do some activity before saying Hamapil and lying down to sleep, one may do so, and afterwards one should repeat the first parsha of Shema (i.e. Ve'ahavta) and then say Hamapil.
- 6. If one has already said the beracha of Hamapil, one should act stringently and avoid even drinking, or doing any activity before going to sleep. {The opinion of The Mishnah Brurah is that Hamapil is a beracha on sleeping and therefore one should not make an interruption between the beracha and the activity of sleeping.}
- 7. However, after the fact, if one has an urgent need to interrupt after saying Hamapil, (e.g. to attend to a crying baby) according to many poskim, one may rely on the more lenient ruling of The Chayei Odom who permits one to talk or eat after saying Hamapil {because he holds that Hamapil is a beracha of praise to Hashem and not on sleeping}.
- 8. If after one already said Birchas Hamapil one's parent asks one something and one has to answer, then it is permitted to ask because of Kibbud Av VeEm.
- 9. If one realized that he did not say Maariv or count Sefira, he may get up and do so after one already said Birchas Hamapil.
- 10. Even though one should strive to say birchas hamapil as close to falling asleep as possible, if one goes to the bathroom after having said Hamapil he should still recite asher yatzar.
- 11. If one wakes up during the night after sleeping, one may talk and eat, and one does not repeat Hamapil a second time before going to sleep again.
- 12. If one wakes up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, one should first wash negel vasser (i.e. netilas yadayim without a beracha) and recite an Asher Yotzar immediately after using the bathroom, before going back to sleep.
- 13. One should not wait until the morning (or Shachris) to recite the Asher Yotzar, because by doing so, if one goes to the bathroom again upon waking in the morning one will have missed the first Asher Yotzar opportunity because the window of opportunity for Asher Yotzar is only until the next time one goes to the bathroom.