

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Someone wakes up in the middle of the night and cannot fall asleep again. He decides to get up and study some Torah. He plans to go back to sleep when he gets tired enough. Which *brochos*, if any, should he recite now? If he goes back to sleep, should he recite *shema* and *hamapil* again? Is there a minimum time period for any of these 'activities' – the time he actually slept, the time he is awake, and the time he plans to sleep for the second time? When he wakes up in the morning, which *brochos* should he recite or repeat?

The issues:

- A) The *brochos* recited in the morning; their timing
- B) *Krias shema al hamitah*, bed-time *shema*, and *hamapil*
- C) One who is awake at night

A) Timing of *birchos hashachar* and *bircas hatorah*

The Talmud lists *brochos* recited upon rising, corresponding to the experiences at that time. This indicates a connection to benefits, and that they are *birchos hanehenin*, similar to those recited before eating. However, the poskim debate this implication. Some consider these *brochos* thanksgiving for Creation of the order of nature and the day-night cycle, especially as it pertains to humans. There are differences between the opinions. In Talmudic times, immediately upon awakening, he could recite all of these *brochos* in order of the experience. [Nowadays, one recites them all together at *shul*, or after dressing, before progressing to another activity, such as Torah study in our case.] According to the second view, they are not connected to personal experiences. One need not wait for that experience. They may all be recited at the same time. Further, one need not experience the causes for the *brochos*, but may recite them as praises. [The first view maintains that in this case, one recites the *brocha* without the *shaimos*, Names of Hashem.] Finally, one need not have slept, but may recite them after being awake all night.

These *brochos* appear connected to morning, yet many poskim rule that they may be said before dawn. For one who has slept, his new day has begun. As for the *brocha* referring to the rooster distinguishing between day and night, one who hears a rooster crow before dawn may recite it then. Otherwise, he should wait for dawn. According to *kabalah*, one may recite it any time after *halachic* midnight, if one slept and awoke.

Birchos hatorah are considered a *birchas hamitzvah*, on the *mitzvah* of Torah study. These do not correspond to the daily cycle. The reason that they are recited in the morning is that it is assumed that one who breaks from his study intends to resume as soon as possible. Therefore, they need not be recited every time one begins studying. If one sleeps by night, he must recite it again when he awakens. Some maintain that as long as one sleeps properly by day, he should repeat these *brochos* when he wakes up. Others maintain that when one recites them, he has in mind the entire twenty-four hour period

ahead of him, or until he goes to sleep for the night. [See Brochos 11b 60b Menachos 43b, Poskim. Tur BY Sh Ar OC 46- 47, commentaries.]

B) Krias shema al hamitah and hamapil

The *mitzvah* to recite *shema* in the evening is fulfilled Scripturally at *maariv*. Rabbinically, one is obliged to recite it before going to sleep. Four reasons are given for this: (i) The Torah uses the term *besachbecha*, when you go to sleep. The actual meaning is to recite *shema* at sleep-time, evening. The Rabbis instituted an obligation to fulfill the literal meaning as well. By this reasoning, there should be an obligation to recite it when rising in the morning. There is no such institution, because the Rabbis add a link to a verse that mentions 'saying in your heart' while in bed right before sleeping. The words 'in your heart' occur in *shema*. (ii) One should fall asleep with words of Torah in his mind. *Shema* is most appropriate. It is in the Torah and also mentions sleeping. By this reasoning, one deeply involved in Torah study is exempt. He anyhow has words of Torah in mind when retiring. (iii) It is a prayer before sleeping. One explanation is that sleep is considered 'a sixtieth of death'. One accepts the yoke of Heaven, the first part of *shema*, before going through this. Even one engrossed in study must recite it according to this reason. However, the first verse is sufficient. (iv) It protects against *mazikin*, damaging spiritual forces that abound at night while people are asleep. Everyone is in need of the protection of *tefilos* and Torah. Some interpret *mazikin* as harmful thoughts and opinions, that enter one's mind in bed. A scholar engrossed in study is less vulnerable to these.

According to (ii) and (iii) only the first part of *shema* is necessary. According to (i) The second paragraph is also appropriate. It also mentions *shema* at bed-time. Some suggest that one should ideally recite all three paragraphs. [The third paragraph also mentions straying after wrong thoughts.] A Midrash is cited to support (iv) indicating that the number of words in the three paragraphs add up to the number of limbs. For maximum protection, one should recite all the paragraphs of *shema* at bed-time.

In practice, one should recite the first paragraph, even if engrossed in Torah study, and ideally should recite all three. The Talmud singles out passages and verses to protect from *mazikin*. It is customary to add these to *shema* at bed-time, though not obligatory. Some poskim do not mention this. Some consider it a matter of Talmudic debate, with the majority against saying them. Thus, some recommend saying them before *shema*, if at all. The consensus is to say them, after *shema*.

Bircas hamapil primarily thanks Hashem for sleep, and asks for spiritual and physical welfare and protection from confusion during sleep. It could be viewed as *bircas hashvach*, praising Hashem, like those recited on wonders. It could also be considered *bircas hanehenin*, recited before a benefit, on the benefits of the creation of sleep. A minority considers it a *bircas hamitzvah*, on the *mitzvos* fulfilled in bed.

Brochos on food benefit are recited immediately before eating. In what order should one recite *shema* and *hamapil*? What if one will not fall asleep right away, or at all? There are differing views on the order and immediacy of both *shema* and *hamapil* to one's actual sleep. In regard to insomnia, some say that the *brocha* is on the 'action' of going to sleep, regardless of its success. This is like the *brocha* on *bedikas chametz*, regardless of whether one will find any. It is thanksgiving for the ability to sleep, to which one will ultimately succumb inevitably, and on the existence of sleep in the Creation. This

brocha was instituted in the knowledge that sleep is not within one's power. The greatest acknowledgment to Hashem is for what He alone can do for us. Some say that one who is unsure whether he will sleep should omit Hashem's Name in the *brocha*. This is suggested for cat-naps outside bed. There is a *kabalistic* view that one should not say *hamapil* when retiring after *halachic* midnight. [See Brochos 4b-5a 60b Yerushalmi 1:1 Shavuos 15b, Poskim. Tur sh Ar 231:1 239:1, commentaries (MB Kaf Hachaim, Ar Hash).]

C) One who is awake at night

The issues that concern us could be addressed by analyzing discussions about other unusual situations. Two abnormal behaviors raise questions: one who sleeps by day, and one who is awake all night. The norm is to remain awake by day. If one is exceptionally tired, he might nap during the day. He will not usually sleep for an extended period. The night is normally dedicated for sleep. One who cannot sleep due to insomnia, or one who must attend to things by night that were not taken care of by day, will be awake during the night. In both of these situations, questions arise with regard to the *brochos* usually recited before sleep and after awakening. These seem to be connected to nighttime and daytime. How should one proceed when the timing crosses over?

The poskim debate whether one should recite the *birchos hatorah* if he stayed awake all night. Some say he should not recite them. Others maintain that the *brochos* only work for a single twenty-four hour period. Though they are not *birchos hashachar*, they should be recited daily, on that day's obligation of Torah study. Therefore, they work until the next morning, or until one wakes up from his nightly rest, even if it is still dark. If one plans to go back to sleep, some say that if he wakes up before midnight, he should not repeat *birchos hatorah*. If he wakes up after midnight, he should repeat them. Some suggest that even if he plans to remain awake until dawn, he should wait for midnight before reciting *birchos hatorah*. Then, he may recite them together with *birchos hashachar*.

In regard to the morning *brochos*, some maintain that they should only be recited in the morning. Others, especially those who follow *kabalistic* nuances in *halacha*, maintain that they should be recited any time after midnight, regardless of whether one slept, or of whether one plans to sleep after some study. [It appears that if one awoke to relieve himself and then go back to sleep, this would not apply.] However, if one did not sleep at all, he should wait for dawn for *birchos hatorah*. The rest of *birchos hashachar* should be recited at midnight. We have already discussed the first *brocha*. *Elokai neshama* is subject to debate. Some say that if one plans to go back to sleep, he should wait until morning.

In regard to *shema* and *hamapil*, all discussion assumes that the norm is to recite at 'bed-time', i.e., night sleep. The Talmud never discusses day sleep. For *shema*, the first three reasons could apply to day sleep. The poskim discuss *hamapil* when going to sleep by day. Some maintain that *hamapil* corresponds to *elokai neshama*, recited when rising. According to the opinion that one recites *elokai neshama* when waking from daytime sleep, it follows that one should recite *hamapil* before such sleep. Some agree that the two are connected, but maintain that they are meant for before and after nighttime sleep. Some consider them unconnected, one being for the night and the other for morning. Some poskim say that one who sleeps during the day should think the *brocha* in his mind, and one who is awake all night and sleeps only during the day should say the *brocha* omitting the Names of Hashem, but should include them mentally.

For one going to sleep between dawn and sunrise, there are varying opinions. In one view, at this time one may no longer say *hamapil*. Though people are still asleep, and it is a valid time for evening *shema* in emergency, it is not prime time for *shaina*, sleep. Others maintain that this does not apply to one who remained awake all night. Therefore, when there is no actual 'night', one may rely on those who permit saying *hamapil* by 'real' day. The same is true in places where dawn in summertime is so early that many people going to bed late, are actually retiring after dawn. Many conclude that one does not say *hamapil*, but should recite verses for protection. Presumably, they should be said together with *shema*, indicating that one needs protection by day as well. In Northern and Southern extremes, when there is sometimes no nightfall, one recites *shema* when going to sleep. The same should apply any time one retires early, especially since certain *mazikin* roam in late afternoon. Any time the local population is asleep, one is more vulnerable.

If one wakes up, then goes back to sleep, should he repeat *shema*? While all reasons could be invoked to repeat it, some of them might have been satisfied the first time. He already prayed, presumably for the sleep of this night. He fulfilled the literal meaning of *bashachbecha* for this night. He asked for protection. If he studied Torah while awake, he satisfied that reason as well. However, since some suggest that when sleeping by day one needs protection, it is a good idea to repeat it every time he goes to sleep. What about *hamapil*? If it is a *brocha* like the morning *brochos*, just as they are not repeated, nor should this be repeated. If, however, it is connected to sleep, as indicated by the opinions that it (or *elokai neshama*) may be recited at any time, it may be recited again at night. It is best to recite it omitting the *shaimos*, but including them mentally. [See Tur Sh Ar OC 46:1 8 47:11-13 239:1, Ar Hash, Kaf Hachaim. Machaze Eliyahu 1-3.]

In conclusion, if one plans to resume sleeping later he may recite all *brochos* after midnight, if he wishes. He should not recite *al netilas yadayim* until dawn. *Ashkenazi* non-*kabalists* do not recite *elokai neshama* until they wake up for the day. When going back to sleep, he should recite *shema*, and may say protection verses. *Hamapil* may be recited without the *shaimos*. There seems to be no clear minimum time for this waking or sleeping period. However, 'sleeping' seems to mean in one's bed. Any *brochos* recited by night should not be repeated by day. One should try to hear *elokai neshama* and *birchos hatorah* from another person who is obliged to say them for himself.

On the Parsha ... *Who gave a mouth to man, Who makes one speechless, or deaf, or seeing or blind, is it not I Hashem? ... [4:11]* From this passage, it would seem that speech is the most obvious ability over which to recite a *brocha*. Why is it that the series of *birchos hashachar* do not include one for speech? *Birchos hashachar* are considered *birchos hanehenin*, recited before benefiting. [Tosfos]. Here, Hashem is telling Moshe that speech is not to be considered a personal benefit. Rather, it is given to us to be used in His service. Thus, before *shemone esrai* we ask Hashem to open our lips. Anyhow, one could not recite a *brocha* before speaking! But perhaps it would be worthwhile to think it in one's mind before beginning any *brocha*.

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