

Archangel Bedtime Prayer

The Jewish tradition has evolved prayers and blessings that may be recited at various times of the day and when performing various acts, such as eating and drinking, lighting candles for the Sabbath and festivals, beginning our day upon awakening and preparing for sleep.

The set of traditional prayers that are recited at bedtime by religiously observant Jews, is collectively called the bedtime Shema, because the Shema is a central to the set.

Among the prayers of the bedtime Shema is the Angel Prayer referred to in Hebrew as BeSheim HaShem. The Angel prayer invites the protection of the archangels. It is a prayer of faith and not of explanation. It does not explain that there are angels. It does not discuss the nature of angels and it does not tell us that we should believe in angels. Rather, it invites us to feel assured that we will be soothingly surrounded with protection as we sleep.

It is wonderful to recite the Angel Prayer at bedtime together with the Shema, and it is appropriate for adults, children and teens.¹

בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
מִיְמִינִי מִיְכָאֵל, וּמִשְׂמָאלִי גַבְרִיאֵל,
וּמִלְפָּנַי אֱוִרִיאֵל, וּמֵאַחֲרָי רִפְאֵל,
וְעַל רֹאשִׁי שְׁכִינַת אֵל.²

Besheim Adonai Elohei Yisra'el
Mimini Micha'el, umismali Gavri'el
umil'fanei Uri'el, umayacharai Refa'el
Ve'al roshi Shechinat El.

In the name of God, God of Israel,
To my right, Michael, and to my left, Gabriel
And before me Uriel, and behind me, Refael
And upon my head, the Shechinah

¹ This teaching was crafted by Rabbi Pam Frydman.

² The Hebrew lettering comports with the version of the prayer set forth on pages 205-206 of the *Artscroll Transliterated Linear Siddur, Sabbath and Festival*. Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Heritage Foundation, 2002.