

The adab of sleeping

The Qur'an calls sleep a kind of death and the night a covering. The sunnah fills the few minutes before it with wudu, a side to lie on, and words to end on.



★ A covering, and a rest

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا

"It is He who made the night for you a covering, and sleep a repose, and made the day a rising." Sleep is placed in the same verse as resurrection.

Qur'an 25:47

★ Souls taken nightly

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die, during their sleep." One returns in the morning; one does not.

Qur'an 39:42

★ Dust the bed first

إِنْ أَمْسَكَتَ نَفْسِي فَارْحَمْهَا، وَإِنْ أَرْسَلْتَهَا فَاحْفَظْهَا بِمَا تَحْفَظُ بِهِ عِبَادَكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

Shake out the bedding with the edge of your garment, then: "If You take my soul, have mercy on it; if You send it back, guard it as You guard Your righteous servants."

Sahih al-Bukhari 6320

★ Wudu, right side, last words

فَإِنْ مِتَّ مِنْ لَيْلَتِكَ فَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، وَاجْعَلْهُنَّ آخِرَ مَا تَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ

Make wudu as for prayer, lie on your right side, say the du'a': "If you die that night you die upon the fitrah — so make them the last thing you say."

Sahih al-Bukhari 247 • 6311

★ The short one

بِسْمِكَ اللَّهُمَّ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَا

"In Your name, O Allah, I die and I live." On waking: praise to Allah who gave us life after taking it, and to Him is the return.

Sahih al-Bukhari 6324

★ The three Quls

كَانَ إِذَا أَوَى إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ جَمَعَ كَفَّيْهِ ثُمَّ نَفَثَ فِيهِمَا فَقَرَأَ فِيهِمَا

Every night he cupped his hands, breathed into them, recited al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq and an-Nas, then wiped what he could reach — head and face first, three times.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5017

★ Ayat al-Kursi

صَدَقَكَ وَهُوَ كَذُوبٌ، ذَاكَ شَيْطَانٌ

A thief told Abu Hurayrah to recite Ayat al-Kursi at bedtime and a guard would stay over him. "He told you the truth, though he is a liar — that was a shaytan."

Sahih al-Bukhari 3275

★ 33 • 33 • 34

تُسَبِّحِينَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَ مَنَامِكَ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ، وَتُحَمِّدِينَ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ، وَتُكَبِّرِينَ اللَّهَ أَرْبَعًا وَثَلَاثِينَ

Fatimah asked for a servant. "Shall I tell you of something better? At your bedtime, say subhanallah 33, alhamdulillah 33, Allahu akbar 34."

Sahih al-Bukhari 5362

★ Not face down

يَا جُنَيْدُ بُ إِذَا هَذِهِ ضَبَعَةُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

He found Abu Dharr lying on his stomach, nudged him and said: "O Junaydib, this is how the people of the Fire lie."

Sunan Ibn Majah 3724 • sahih