

# Days of Awe

## PRAYER GUIDE





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**F**or the past several years, we have been pioneering a ministry of reaching out to Haredim with the love of Messiah. What we have learned is that this work must absolutely be built on the foundation of prayer. Intercession is crucial for this endeavor to be effective. As with all labor in God's kingdom, the work is His and we are privileged to participate as His servants. We know that without Him, we can do nothing, and our work would be in vain.

This guide is modeled on a prayer booklet that was distributed among churches several years ago that covered *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World*. In this iteration, we focus on the Ten Days of Awe, the *yomim noraim*, during the Jewish calendar month of Tishri between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Our long-term goal is to see a more comprehensive treatment for intercessory prayer for an entire month, covering a broader spectrum of the Jewish community and reaching a wider range of the Christian world. So, we thank you for standing with us in these small beginnings and being watchmen on the wall for the salvation of our people.

Before Rosh Hashanah, which begins on September 18 this year, you will have this guide, which is intended to give you a prayer focus for each day of the Days of Awe. Although this is a general prayer guide, it is important for you to know that the Haredim worldwide have been tragically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Haredi community suffered the greatest percentages of infections and deaths in Israel, New York, and other centers. They are grieving the loss of many rabbis, community leaders, and parents of large families. Related to this, there has been a steady rise in the tide of anti-Semitism. These circumstances present unprecedented opportunities for believers in Jesus to express their love and support for the Haredim. Let this be the backdrop for your prayers during this season.

Thank you, the Haredi Team

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# For the Haredim Worldwide

Dear Friends,

Once again, we want to thank you for taking time to join us in our **10-Day Awesome Prayer Initiative** during the days between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. As Jews from all over the world gather in synagogues to reflect, repent of their sins from the previous year, and ask forgiveness from God and man, our heart's cry is that they will find the true atonement that is only found in Messiah Jesus.

As we begin our journey in praying for the Haredim, it is important to understand that there are a wide range of sects, each with its own beliefs and practices. In Isaiah 66:2\* we read, "All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." The Hebrew word *hared* in this verse means "tremble." Haredi is the term that today refers to groups within Orthodox Judaism characterized by strict observance of Jewish law and values. Modern values and worldviews are rejected. It helps to know some history and origins of the people we are praying for.

Hasidim is a term derived from the Hebrew word *hesed* meaning, "kindness and grace." Hasidic Judaism arose in the eighteenth century as a spiritual revival movement and spread quickly throughout Eastern Europe. The founder, known as the *Baal Shem Tov* ("master of the good name"), emphasized prayer, emotion, spirituality, and mysticism. The common people were drawn to his message, which stressed joy, faith, and ecstatic prayer.

As Hasidism grew in popularity, some traditional Jews opposed the teachings of the Hasidim, feeling that they were not placing enough emphasis on prayer and learning. The *Mitnagdim* ("opponents") led by Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman (the Vilna Gaon) developed a very stringent educational program that still exists. Although today both the Hasidim and Mitnagdim are no longer regarded as adversaries, and share many of the same principles, differences do exist.

## What to pray:

- For divine spiritual revelation. In Acts 9:1–19, we read of the miraculous conversion of one of the staunchest opponents to "The Way." Just as Paul met Yeshua on the Damascus Road, we pray that many Haredim will receive divine revelation of Messiah Jesus and be used mightily to impact the world.
- Father, we pray that You would open the spiritual eyes of those who read the Law of Moses without Messiah. We pray that You would create a spiritual hunger in their hearts. May You reveal Yourself through the reading of Your Word (2 Corinthians 3:12–18).
- Lord, please guide those seekers who are open to understanding the gospel message. Bring believers to speak into the lives of Haredim who are open and searching for spiritual truth.
- Lord, we pray for existing churches to become aware of this unreached people group. Help Christians to overcome any attitudes toward the Haredim that would hinder them from experiencing the love and grace of Messiah.
- We pray for wisdom, understanding, and divine strategies for those involved in this ministry. We ask for their protection, protection for their families, and supernatural strength to sow seeds for God's kingdom in this community.

\*All Scripture citations in this document are in the English Standard Version.

# Satmar Community



In 1905, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum founded what was to become the Satmar Dynasty in Satu Mare, Hungary (now part of Romania). After World War II, Teitelbaum settled in Williamsburg, New York City, and set out to reestablish his sect. Today, with an estimated 100,000 adherents, they are one of the largest Hasidic groups, with significant populations found in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Lakewood (New Jersey), Montreal, Argentina, Australia, and of course Israel. They are known for their rejection of modern culture, strict religious observance, and anti-Zionism.

## What to pray:

- That God reveals that Jesus is the Messiah in creative and powerful ways. In Acts 2:17, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel: “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Let’s pray that God reaches these insular Satmar communities where outsiders have little access.
- Lord, You know that the Satmar are focused on religious studies conducted primarily in Yiddish or Hebrew, and that college and professional studies are not options. You also know those who wish to leave the community but are not prepared. Please guide those wishing to leave, that they would find educational opportunities, life-skills programs, and employment. Most of all, Father, bring them into contact with Your followers so they can hear the good news of Yeshua.
- We especially pray that You would raise up Satmar believers in Jesus to proclaim the gospel among their own people. Amen!

# Chabad Lubavitch

From 1950 until his death in 1994, Menachem Schneerson, simply known as The Rebbe, led the Chabad Lubavitch Hasidic Jews to become one of the most dynamic forces in Judaism today. Chabad is an acronym for *Hesed* (“charity”), *Binah* (“understanding”) and *Daat* (“knowledge”). Lubavitch is the town in White Russia from where this sect originated. Many followers of Chabad today believe that the Rebbe is the Messiah who will rise from the dead. Today, Chabad is a worldwide movement with more than 4,700 *shalichim* (“emissaries”) in approximately 100 countries. Their extensive outreach efforts include encouraging secular Jews to return to traditional Judaism through educational programs and seminars, Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, and family activities in a welcoming community atmosphere. Chabad embraces Jewish people from all different backgrounds. Due to their outreach efforts, this is the most accessible group of Hasidic Jews, and they are often very open to discussing spiritual matters. Even though our ideas of the Messiah are quite different, there are many points with which we can connect to begin conversations.



Lubavitcher Rebbe, circa 1987

## What to pray:

- Many Chabadniks (Lubavitch Hasidim) are what are known as *Ba’alei Teshuvah*—secular Jews who have turned to Orthodox Judaism. They are familiar with modern values and conventions, which have brought more of the world into the Chabad camp. Pray for those who returned to traditional Judaism to keep seeking until they find the true Messiah.
- We pray that followers of Chabad will find Rabbi Yeshua. Lord, though they see their Rebbe being described in Isaiah chapter 53, please help them see that the prophet wrote about Yeshua, who died for their sins and rose from the dead.
- Father, because Christians have more in common with this community, please give us many opportunities to meet and discuss the Scriptures with this group of Hasidim.
- Lord, without You, we are helpless in this work. We pray for Your divine intervention to pave the way.



# The Bobover

In 1892, Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam left his home in Vishnitz, Poland, and founded a yeshiva in Bobowa, Galicia, in southern Poland. His son, Ben Zion, continued in his father's footsteps until he, his family, and thousands of his followers perished during the Holocaust. Of the approximately 300 who survived, one of them was Ben Zion's son, Shlomo Halberstam (named after his grandfather). Shlomo witnessed the deaths of his parents and siblings at the hands of the Nazi SS and lost his wife, children, and most of his other relatives in the camps. Shlomo eventually made his way to New York, where he is regarded as the rabbi who revived the Bobov dynasty. Today, their headquarters is in Brooklyn, New York (Boro Park). They are known for their ecstatic joy, adherence to Jewish law, and for acts of charity to Jewish causes.

## What to pray:

- The Bobover sect allows men to pursue secular studies. That means that some will gain access to new ideas they were not raised with, particularly the gospel. Let us pray for open doors!
- Lord, we pray for those who pursue this path of education outside their communities, that they will meet believers who will testify to them about the Messiah Jesus.
- Father, we pray that You will bring Bobov families to faith and that they will be witnesses in their own communities. Please give them courage to stand up for Jesus even if there is persecution.
- We also pray for those who don't study outside the community, that as they seek You through good works, prayer, and following the commandments, their hearts will soften and be open to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah.



# Yeshivish Communities

The Yeshivish community, also referred to as Litvish (Lithuanian), traces its lineage to the Mitnagdim (the movement led by the Gaon of Vilna who opposed the Hasidic movement—see the Day 1, introduction). Even though Hasidic and Yeshivish community members respect one another, they are distinct. The focus of the Hasidic community has been to replicate and maintain the pre-WWII lifestyle, while the focus of the Yeshivish has been to build communities around the yeshiva (religious school for singles) or kollel (yeshiva for married students), and to promote dedication to Torah learning and strict observance of the Law. Though religious classes form the heart of their curriculum, Yeshivish men and women both receive some secular studies in their native tongue. Though standard post-secondary education is considered off-limits, there are alternative options to obtain graduate and postgraduate degrees. Members of the community differ in their adherence to Jewish law, their Torah study, and their degree of willingness to mingle with the popular culture. The Yeshivish community is more open to outsiders than the Hasidim.



## What to pray:

- Lord, we pray that the Messianic believers in Lakewood will have a good reputation among their Yeshivish neighbors and that You will use them to lead many to faith in Messiah Jesus.
- We pray that You will strategically place believers in places of business, work, home health care, etc., to share their faith with Yeshivish Jewish people.
- Lord, cause the local church to rise up in prayer for their neighbors in Lakewood and in the other Yeshivish communities in the United States, Israel, and around the world. There is a very large concentration of Yeshivish Jews who live in Lakewood, New Jersey. There is also a Messianic community (Jewish followers of Yeshua) nearby. Let us see this as God's plan and uphold these believers in our prayers.

# Seekers



As we write this to you, we are encouraged by an email we received from a Jews for Jesus missionary Miri serving in Brooklyn. Miri developed a relationship with Sarah,\* a young Hasidic woman in her knitting group. Recently during a short, private conversation, Sarah asked Miri if she could come over to her apartment because she wanted to speak with Miri's husband regarding what she called his "transformation from being Jewish to believing in Jesus." They had a meaningful visit with her during which Sarah asked several pointed questions, especially focusing on Messianic prophecies. Sarah understands she is a sinner and has no security of atonement. Today, let's pray for Sarah and others like her who are truly seeking the truth and the assurance of true atonement. Sarah continues to meet with Miri.

## What to pray:

- For God-directed access and exposure. Many Haredim have legitimate questions but no one to answer them. Limited access to secular and Christian books, to the internet, and to others different than themselves have created communities that are very insular. Seekers generally have no safe place to go to ask controversial questions and receive objective answers.
- Pray for the salvation of Sarah and others like her who are seeking to know the truth about Messiah, that they will come to the full assurance of atonement found through faith in Him.
- Pray for the miracle of a Bible study filled with Haredi Jews who have come to faith in Messiah and are being disciplined not only individually, but in community.
- Pray for Miri as she meets with Sarah, and for more opportunities for missionaries to engage with Haredi women in authentic, organic settings where deep relationships can thrive.

\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



# Believers in the Community



Deep in the heart of a Haredi neighborhood in Jerusalem lives a Hasidic man who professed faith in Yeshua many years ago. He is afraid to make his faith public or even share his belief with his own children. Sadly, this is not an isolated example. Most of the Haredim who do receive Yeshua live in fear of ostracism and excommunication from their families, friends, and community if their faith is discovered. They do not even want to meet other Haredi believers. If they veer off the accepted path, it is not uncommon for mothers to lose custody of their children. Many Haredim have limited secular education and do not have the language or life skills to live outside their community.

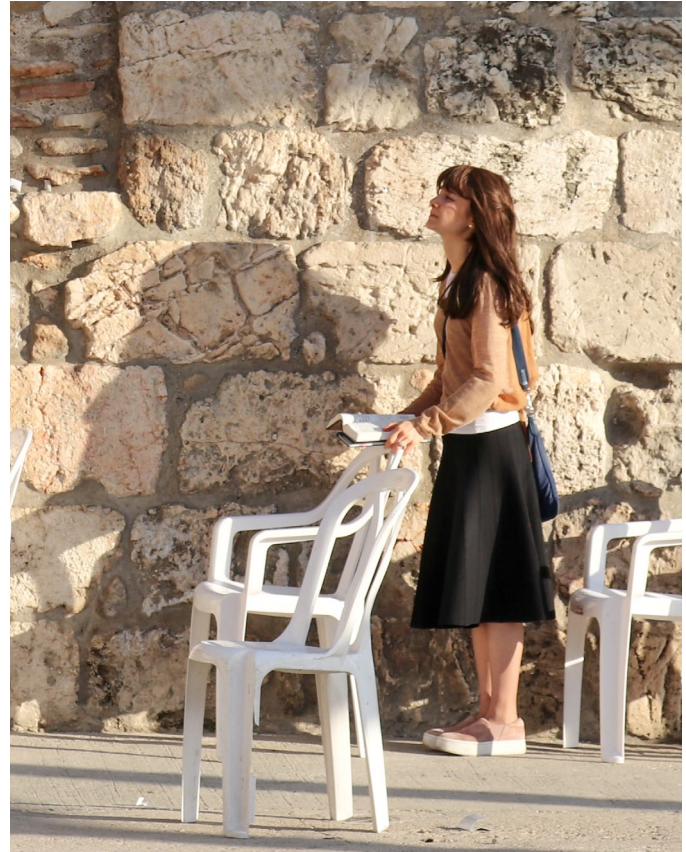
## What to pray:

- For discipleship and spiritual growth. The few Haredi believers who choose to remain within their communities must lead a double life. Without opportunities to attend worship services, to study the Bible in a group setting, and to have ongoing fellowship with other believers, growth to full maturity in the faith is difficult and compromise is likely.
- Father, we pray for the Haredi believers living within their communities. Bring them into friendships with strong believers who can disciple them, and may Your Holy Spirit give them the courage to share their faith.
- Lord, in Your time and in Your way, create a fellowship of Haredi believers who will be able to grow in their faith in community with others.
- We also pray that You would enable Christian organizations to help Haredi believers who may need temporary shelter, education, and other help if they need to leave their communities. Please supply the resources they will need to provide these services.

# Haredi Women

*Hi! My name is Rachel. I was born into a religious family in Israel and I am the sixth of 10 children. My father studies in the yeshiva all day, and my mother works as a teacher in the girls' school, in addition to taking care of our family. We are poor, but so are most of my neighbors. We receive help from the government and religious organizations. My mother tongue is Yiddish, but I speak some Hebrew. My schooling in secular subjects was very limited, and I missed a lot to help my mother at home. I got married when I was 18. The day I was married, I shaved off all my hair and I wear a wig or a head covering every day. According to Halacha (Jewish law), I am the property of my husband. I do not have any friends outside of my community. I have a phone that only lets me call certain numbers, and I only use the internet on certain computers with restricted access. I am 30 and already have seven children and one on the way.*

Although the above scenario is fictitious, it is a composite sketch of the life of many Haredi women. Today, let's intercede for God to move among this unreached people group.



## What to pray:

- For courageous workers. The workers are few, and fear of intense persecution from the Haredi community frequently inhibits believers in Israel, the United States, and around the world from reaching out. Many Israeli believers who would like to share the good news of the Messiah are concerned that they would lose their status as citizens if they did so.
- Oh God, we pray for You to raise up workers who can penetrate these communities of isolated women and demonstrate the love of Messiah to them in word and deed.
- We pray for protection of the believers who do reach out to Haredi women. Keep them healthy and regularly in your Word and prayer. Defend them against lies and guard them from the schemes of the enemy.
- Lord, shower Your love and blessing on these women. They work hard and are loyal to their families, but many are so tired and without support. Give them hope! Give them joy! Give them hearts that long for You, Your truth, and Your salvation!



# The Ongoing Work

We were sitting in our Airbnb in Jerusalem in 2018 and we all declared, “We are not done!” We had just wrapped up a month-long intensive outreach to Haredi women that had required years of preparation, multiple volunteers and partnerships, and yet, it only felt like the beginning of what God wanted to do. We believe that we are standing on the precipice of a new move of God among the Haredim. We are amazed at what the Lord has continued to do during this season following our outreach!

## What to pray:

- For this work to grow. We are in touch with Haredi men and women who are growing in the faith by actively participating in discipleship relationships with us. Our vision is to have a team that is dedicated full time to Haredi evangelism and discipleship.
- Lord, please bring unity and partnerships among ministries trying to reach Haredim. Give them a desire to generously share resources, information, and areas of expertise to effectively reach Haredi communities.
- Father, please provide the necessary funding for various projects we have planned to reach Haredim. You know the needs, and we ask You to meet them through Your riches in the Messiah Yeshua.
- Lord God, we pray for the protection and encouragement of Gentiles involved in ministry to the Haredim and that You will also raise up Haredi believers to be witnesses and lights in their own communities. Right now, that seems nearly impossible, but with You all things are possible!
- And finally, Father, we pray that You would raise up a body of intercessors who commit to regularly pray for the Haredim. Lord, You invite us to pray. You’ve told us to keep knocking until the door opens and to present our requests to You. We ask now that You would touch the lives of Haredi men, women, and children and draw them to Yeshua. We ask that You raise up an army of prayer warriors who will faithfully intercede on behalf of Haredim.



# God's Promises to Israel



For the past nine days, we have interceded together on behalf of the worldwide Haredi community and those who labor diligently in the vineyards for their salvation. Yet, we may have barely scratched the surface in breaking down their resistance to the gospel. Today, let us seek heaven for God's intervention to continue pulling down the spiritual, political, and emotional fears and objections of the Haredim to Yeshua and His followers.

Below are a few prayers based on God's promises to the people of Israel. Please include your favorites during your prayer time today.

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." (Romans 10:1)

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch." (Isaiah 62:1)

"O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God! For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones. They say, 'Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!'" (Psalms 83:1-4)

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10) On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.'" (Zechariah 13:1)

We thank you for your commitment and faithfulness. It is our hope and prayer that you will continue to pray with us and for us and all those involved in ministry to Haredim as we continue to develop effective ministry. Although we are encouraged by what God has allowed us to accomplish so far, we are just breaking ground. Our heart is that you will continue to labor in prayer and support us. We plan to send out ministry updates as well as prayer requests. To opt out, please unsubscribe at the bottom of the page.





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