Bobover Jews in the New York Metro Area

QUICK FACTS:
Place of Origin: Southern Poland (Galicia)
Significant Subgroups: Those that follow Mordecai David Unger as their rebbe and those that follow Ben Zion Aryeh Leibish Halberstam.
Location in Metro New York: Brooklyn (Borough Park, Williamsburg), Rockland County (Monsey)
Population in Metro New York: 10,000 (Community Estimate)
Primary Religion: Judaism (Bobover Hasidism)
Status of Christian Witness: Less than 2% evangelical
Secondary Language: English
Significant Notes: Bobovers are descendents of Polish immigrants. Instead, most were drawn to Bobov, in the region of Galicia in southern Poland. Ninety percent of Polish Jews perished in the Holocaust, including the Bobover rebbe. Among the survivors were his son Shlomo Halberstamm and grandson, who came to New York and rebuilt the community.

When Did They Come to New York?
Hasidic Jews came late to America, opting to stay in Eastern Europe during the massive Jewish emigration from 1880-1920. Bobover Jews took their name from their hometown, Bobowa, in the region of Galicia in southern Poland. Ninety percent of Polish Jews perished in the Holocaust, including the Bobover rebbe. Among the survivors were his son Shlomo Halberstamm and grandson, who came to New York and rebuilt the community.

Where Do They Live?
Observing the mass of Bobover families out for a Sabbath stroll, it is easy to see how 48th Street in Brooklyn's Borough Park received the name "Bobover Promenade." The Bobov left Crown Heights for Borough Park in the late 1960s to escape growing crime, settling along 48th Street between 14th and 15th Avenues. Their two rival synagogues are on 45th and 48th Streets. Because housing in Borough Park is expensive, some Bobovers live in other Hasidic enclaves, such as neighboring Williamsburg and Rockland County's Monsey in upstate New York.

What Do They Believe?
Like all Hasidim, the Bobover's beliefs are centered on studying the Torah and obeying the 613 mitzvot (commandments), laws that cover every aspect of life and include ethical, social, and ritual obligations. At the core of Hasidic belief is the power of prayer—especially the prayers of the rebbe—to obtain miracles typically related to health or business concerns. The Bobover tend to downplay tales of miracles performed by their rebbe, focusing instead on the rebbe's holiness and wisdom. Bobover Jews are friendly with all Hasids. They do not take a political stand on Israel, unlike the Lubavitch and Satmar groups, has provided the Bobovers with a home -grown crop of professionals that serve the community. Like all Hasidim, Bobovers center their lives on family, community, and worship. They marry young, raise large families, and have defined roles. Women manage the home and children, and men have a few career options, such as rabbinical studies, teaching at the yeshiva, or entering a profession or family business.

How Can I Pray?
- The Bobover seek shalom in their lives, a word that signifies being "complete, perfect, and full." Pray that they would recognize Christ as Messiah and Sar Shalom, the Prince of Peace.