

SWORN TO SECRET



Many titles and attributes can be used to describe Rabbi Eliyahu (Yaichel) Simpson. Chozer, mashpia, rov, gabbai, shadar, oved, maskil, pnimi, but one that represents who he was perhaps more than anything else is Ba'al Sod - trustworthy. The Friediker Rebbe said that he maintained the highest level of one who could keep a secret.

He was trusted by the Friediker Rebbe and the Rebbe with many matters of critical importance, and all that he was involved in he would carry out with utter modesty. Indeed, the Rebbe used the expression ne'eman bayis, trusted by Beis Harav to describe Rabbi Simpson.

A GLANCE INTO THE LIFE OF A CHOSSID OF THREE REBBES, RABBI ELIYAHU SIMPSON.

By: Rabbi Bentzion Schtroks



לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת רב פעלים וכו' ר' דוד ז"ל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
ראסקין
יו"ר צאנז"ח העולמית ומנהל ישיבת תות"ל
המרכזית - 770 למעלה מיובל שנים
נלב"ע ז' אייר ה'תשע"א
ת"נצ"ב'ה'
נדבת משפחתו שיחיו

Born in the city of Babruysk on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz of 5649*, Rabbi Eliyahu (Yaichel)¹ Simpson began learning in Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch in 5661* from the young age of twelve. Since his older brothers didn't go in the ways of Chassidus, his father decided to send him at this tender age to the Rebbe Rashab.

He would often repeat the line that his father used to say: "We come to the Rebbe with three things: *bitul*, *butul*, and *baitel*." Meaning, nullification of one's ego, a bottle of *mashke* to farbreng, and a wallet for giving *d'mei pan*.

When Reb Eliyahu arrived in Lubavitch with his father, the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe—who was the administrator of the yeshiva—were opposed to accepting him at such a young age. When the Rebbe Rashab heard of the young boy's quest to join the yeshiva, he said: "They are coming already with the cradles?"

Admission into Tomchei Temimim in general was very strict. When Reb Shimon Aharon Yaichel, the young boy's father, came to the realization that there was no way his son would be officially accepted, he departed from Lubavitch in the middle of the night, leaving young Eliyahu behind. His thinking was that this will leave the yeshiva no choice but to accept his son.

The *hanhala* only agreed to accept the young Eliyahu after his uncle, Reb Chaim Itkin, took upon himself to learn with his nephew and to watch over him.

Now that the young boy was already in the yeshiva, a small *cheder* was opened and started with three students; Rabbi Simpson, Reb Avrohom Pariz, and Reb Aryeh Leib Sheinen. This was the springboard that eventually led to a full *cheder* in Lubavitch.

Rabbi Simpson, who was known in

Lubavitch as Elye Babruysker, studied in Tomchei Temimim for fifteen years. He was blessed with a very sharp memory, was amongst the elite in the knowledge of *nigleh* and Chassidus, was a *chozer* of the Rebbe Rashab, and was a deep thinker.

Rabbi Simpson was so consumed by his service of Hashem, to the point that he once became sick and didn't visit a doctor. When his illness became very severe, the Rebbe Rashab prescribed him to eat a certain amount of apples and gave him a *bracha* to recover quickly.

Indeed, he did soon recuperate but the Rebbe Rashab told him that from now on this is not the correct approach and that if he fell ill again he should see a doctor.

Although he had much to boast about, Rabbi Simpson carried himself with simplicity. Holding an especially close relationship with *Beis Harav*, Rabbi Simpson was assigned many important tasks and served as the head of several organizations. At the same

time, he was known for his incredible patience and humility.

Rabbi Simpson was accustomed to doing a lot and speaking little. Throughout the years, he devoted himself to the Rebbe Rashab, the Frierdiker Rebbe, and the Rebbe in a wide variety of capacities that we will learn about in the following pages.

A MAN OF DEPTH

"One of the great *chozrim* of Chassidus in Lubavitch." This is the title that the Rebbe wrote in his own handwriting for the headstone of Rabbi Simpson. Perhaps an even stronger term the Rebbe used was in a letter to Shazar: "From the lead *chozrim* and *tofsim*" [i.e. greatest of incorporators of Chassidus]."

Reb Moshe Dovber Rivkin related: "One Shabbos in the year 5666*, the Rebbe Rashab said a particularly long



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT THE WEDDING OF RABBI SIMPSON'S SON, REB SHOLOM MENDEL. 2 KISLEV 5714

maamar and I could not understand it. I asked some of the *bochurim* to explain it to me, but they didn't understand it either. Finally, I was pointed to Rabbi Simpson and he knew the *maamar* inside and out."

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was away from Lubavitch, it was Rabbi Simpson who he asked to send him pointers from that week's *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab.

After the regular *chazara*, the *chozrim* would go into the Rebbe Rashab's room to receive corrections and additions to the *maamar*. In the following days, it was Rabbi Simpson's responsibility to transcribe the *maamar*.

The Rebbe Rashab showed specific interest in the *hanachos* that Rabbi Simpson wrote, perhaps more so than others. There were several times that the Rebbe Rashab asked Rabbi Simpson for his *hanachos* and wrote comments on them. Many of Rabbi Simpson's *hanachos* were later printed in *Sifrei Hamaamarim* of the Rebbe Rashab, and in *Toras Shalom* (with edits from the Rebbe).

One of the *hemsheichim* that Rabbi Simpson wrote *hanachos* for is the famed *Besha'ah Shehikdimu* 5672*. Rabbi Simpson felt a special connection to this *hemshech* in particular and always yearned that it finally be printed. On several occasions, he asked the Rebbe if it could be printed, but his request did not receive an approval.

Many years went by, and on 20 Kislev 5737* the Rebbe announced that the *hemshech* will go to print. The Rebbe explained that the Rebbe Rashab had a special fondness for this *hemshech*, and it contains revolutionary ideas even in comparison to the *hemshech* of *Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah* 5666*.

The Rebbe announced that whoever would like to participate in the printing, should give one dollar, no more and no less, this way everyone

PARNASA OR CHASSIDISHE CHILDREN?

Reb Mendel Feldman, Rabbi Simpson's son-in-law, related:

"My father-in-law suffered from great financial challenges, and yet he spent a tremendous amount of time educating his children in the ways of Chassidus. My father-in-law was a true role model of being a parent first and foremost. It has been said that the Rebbe once told someone to learn how to educate his daughters from Rabbi Simpson.

"Once, he went into *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe and lamented about the difficulties that he struggles with financially. The Frierdiker Rebbe said to him: 'Would you rather have an abundance of wealth, or that your children should be Chassidim?' He answered that he wants *chassidishe* children, and *baruch Hashem* the *bracha* was fulfilled."



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ADDRESSES THE CROWDS FROM THE PORCH OF THE SIMPSON HOME IN BORO PARK.

will have an equal part.

Nine days later, on 29 Kislev, Rabbi Simpson passed away. Rabbi Simpson did not leave a will of any sort, aside from an envelope for the Rebbe, with instructions that only the Rebbe should open it. In the envelope, there was a sum of money intended to support the printing of *Besha'ah Shehikdimu*.

(Since the Rebbe said that each person should give only one dollar, the money Rabbi Simpson left went towards a dedication in the next printing of *maamarim* from the Rebbe Rashab, which was *Sefer Hamaamarim*

5678*.)

When the *sefer* was ready, the Rebbe called Rabbi Simpson's sons, Reb Sholom Mendel and Reb Leibel, into his room and gave them each the three-volume set of the *hemshech Besha'ah Shehikdimu* together with the index, and told them that in the envelope that Rabbi Simpson left was money for the printing of the *hemshech* together with something else.² The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* that it should be a *zechus* for the *neschama* of their father and his descendants.

* 5672-1912, 5737-1976, 5666-1906, 5678-1918

A YOUNG MASHPIA

In 5676* Rabbi Simpson married his wife Fruma Ita, daughter of Reb Yehoshua Binyamin Lypszyc, in the vacation resort where the Rebbe Rashab was then staying. He spent the following year learning in the town of Kublitz, financially supported by his father-in-law.

One year later, the Rebbe Rashab sent Rabbi Simpson to become the *mashpia* of the Lubavitch community in Odessa, despite his young age of 28.

Several months after he moved there, the Bolshevik revolution began, and years of war and chaos followed. The Communist regime took over the city, banned all religious activities, and physically oppressed all religious Jews, especially Lubavitcher Chassidim who would not bend.

Throughout this spiritually, physically, and financially difficult time, Rabbi Simpson stayed together with his community, encouraging them and leading them through it.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Rabbi Simpson continued to travel to the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov regularly,

notwithstanding the many dangerous obstacles that he had to face on the way.

MOVING TO AMERICA

In 5683*, Rabbi Simpson received an American visa from his brothers who had already managed to escape. He asked the Frierdiker Rebbe if he should immigrate to the United States and received the answer: “*Al menas lehachzir*—In order to return,” with the explanation: “In order to bring *neshamos* back to their father in heaven.”

Arriving in the United States, Rabbi Simpson settled in Harlem and began his efforts of bringing Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit.

There was a Nusach Ari shul in Harlem with members that had some connection to Chabad in Russia. The Frierdiker Rebbe had sent letters to Chassidim in America encouraging them to become influential in Nusach Ari shuls, and Rabbi Simpson started to involve himself there.

He would encourage people in the shul to financially support the Frierdiker Rebbe. After receiving a sum of donations, the Frierdiker

Rebbe sent the congregation a letter thanking them, and urging them to take advantage of Rabbi Simpson and to have him teach *shiurim* in *nigleh* and Chassidus. After some time, the congregation hired Rabbi Simpson as their rabbi.

By 5688* the Jewish community in Harlem had dwindled significantly, and Rabbi Simpson moved to Borough Park. At the time, the neighborhood did not have a large *frum* community, and Rabbi Simpson established Anshei Lubavitch, where he was eventually appointed by the community to serve as *rav*.

A year after the new appointment, Rabbi Simpson established another Lubavitch shul, Ahavas Achim Tzemach Tzedek, and commissioned the construction of a new building for it. The first floor would serve as the shul, and the second floor would be Rabbi Simpson and his family's personal dwelling.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited New York in 5689*, he was the first one to stay in this apartment. Years later, in 5711*, the Rebbe visited there as well when he was *sandek* for Rabbi Simpson's grandchild. During the *seudah* the Rebbe spoke about *bris milah* and its association with *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.³

FIRST BEIS RIVKAH

In Kislev 5702*, the first branch of Beis Rivkah was opened in Rabbi Simpson's shul. It was an afterschool program where public high school girls would come to learn Jewish studies. The teachers were Lubavitcher women, and the school was under the umbrella of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. As a result of this program, a full-time school called Beis Yaakov

HANDS BEHIND MY BACK

Reb Dovid Edelman related:

“After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, it was a strange time. On the one hand, most of the Chassidim considered the Rebbe as Rebbe. The Rebbe himself, though, behaved as though he was not.

Once I was returning from a trip, and I was going to enter the Rebbe's room. I knew that the Rebbe would offer me his hand to shake, and I was terrified of the thought that I wouldn't know what to do.

I decided to ask Rabbi Simpson for his advice, I was sure he would know what to do. Rabbi Simpson told me: “Do what I do, hold your hands behind your back and the Rebbe will understand your intention.” That is indeed what I did, and it worked.

was established that now boasts thousands of students.

AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD IN AMERICA

In 5684*, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to the Chassidim in America, addressing the difficulty posed by the physical distance of Chassidim in America and Canada to their Rebbe. The solution, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote, is for Chassidim to gather together as one *agudah* and institute *takanos*, especially in the realm of *shiurei Torah*.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe sent the letter, the Rebbe then sent letters to community leaders explaining in detail exactly how these *shiurim* should be implemented.

In Cheshvan of that year, the Rebbe wrote a letter to the three directors of Agudas Chabad, Rabbi Simpson, Rabbi Moshe Eliezer Kramer, and Rabbi Dovid Shifrin, giving them permission to send out a copy of the Frierdiker Rebbe's letter, and asking them to announce that whoever would like to reach out to the *agudah* should reach out to them directly.

A week later, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to Rabbi Simpson, encouraging him to invest his heart and mind into building the new network of Agudas Chabad.

The *agudah* was officially incorporated as an organization in Tammuz of that year, initially with the name Agudas Hachassidim Anshei Chabad, and later as Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

At its beginning, Reb Moshe Eliezer Kramer—who together with

HALACHIC AUTHORITY

Rabbi Simpson was well known for his vast knowledge of *halacha*, and even the Rebbetzin once called him to discuss several halachic questions.

His grandson Reb Yosef Rosenfeld relates: "I write with my left hand, although my right hand is dominant in all other areas. When I became bar mitzvah, I started putting on tefillin on my right hand, as the Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch for a person in my situation to do. A few years later, I saw that the Tzemach Tzedek writes that one who does most functions with his right hand, should put tefillin on his left hand, otherwise he does not fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin. This is in contradiction to the ruling of the Alter Rebbe.

"I continued to look into the matter until I finally asked the Rebbe what I should do. The Rebbe's answer was: "Per the instruction of *rabbonei anash* in this regard."

Following the Rebbe's directive, I turned to several Lubavitcher rabbonim. One rav told me to put tefillin on both hands, another told me to continue putting it on my right hand, and my grandfather said that I should put tefillin on my left hand. Since I was now left with an even greater dilemma of whom to listen to, I once again asked the Rebbe. The Rebbe wrote me the following answer: "כהוראת אביו זקנו שליט"א—Follow your grandfather *shlita's* instructions."



his sons contributed large amounts of money towards the establishment of Lubavitch in America—was appointed as the chairman of the *agudah*.

On 6 Iyar 5685* Reb Moshe passed away, and a board of seven Chassidim including Rabbi Simpson was created to direct Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

Rabbi Simpson was of the foremost active members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and together with his peers accomplished a wide array of achievements, carrying out the instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION

After the Frierdiker Rebbe was freed from imprisonment in Spalerna and exile in Kostroma, the KGB and *yevsektzia* continued to persecute him in new ways, and he traveled from Leningrad to Malachovka for six weeks.

During this time, Chassidim in Europe and in America made every effort to obtain the necessary papers for the Frierdiker Rebbe to be able to leave Russia together with his family. Several letters were sent by *mazkirim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, instructing them to implore the Chassidim in America to send funds that would enable the Frierdiker Rebbe to leave Russia.

Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson's efforts netted a sum of four thousand dollars collectively from many people. Receiving the funds, Reb Yechezkel Feigin replied that the Chassidim in America must not

understand how dire the situation is. Since the Chassidim in the Soviet Union have already given more than they are able to, the Chassidim in America need to exhibit *mesiras nefesh* and come up with additional funds.

Rabbi Feigin later explained in another letter that the Frierdiker Rebbe received papers to leave Russia, and now a sum of twenty-five thousand dollars was needed so that the Frierdiker Rebbe could move to Riga.

Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson continued to do all they could, calling many different meetings and fund-raisers. Although they pursued every avenue they could think of, their work still turned up short.

In a letter dated 14 Elul 5687*, Reb Yechezkel Feigin once again writes to Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson about the great need for funds. He expressed that there is no other way, and Chassidim must donate the funds. If the money isn't found they should take a loan that the Frierdiker Rebbe will pay back.

At the end of the letter, Rabbi Feigin writes that he is not writing this merely on his own accord. It now became clear to Rabbis Jacobson and Simpson that everything was coming from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Finally, at a meeting with Rabbi Simpson, Rabbi Jacobson, Reb

Avremel Lokshin, and the two Kramer brothers, the latter acquiesced to single-handedly give a huge sum of four thousand dollars. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent them a letter thanking them for the money that helped cover "some of the expenses."

REUNITING WITH THE CHASSIDIM

When the Frierdiker Rebbe left the Soviet Union, Rabbi Simpson sent a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe expressing the deep yearning of Chassidim in America to see him. In response, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a letter validating the Chassidim's wish, and saying that he too wants to reunite with the Chassidim.

Finally, in the middle of 5689*, Chassidim were notified that the Frierdiker Rebbe would be visiting America. After some deliberation, it was decided that the Frierdiker Rebbe would stay in Rabbi Simpson's newly built residence before the Simpson family moved in.

The Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on 12 Elul 5689* on the ship *La France* and

HAVE YOU JUST SMOKED?

In those days (5700s*) it was very common to smoke; Rabbi Simpson was a heavy smoker and he would smoke very strong cigarettes. Although it was already known that smoking was proven to be harmful, many people were still smoking since it was difficult to quit their addiction.

Shortly after Rabbi Simpson became the Frierdiker Rebbe's *gabbai*, an incident occurred that changed that for him.

He once walked into the Frierdiker Rebbe's room right after he smoked. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked in a dissatisfied tone: "Have you just smoked?" Rabbi Simpson understood very clearly that the smell bothered the Frierdiker Rebbe, and immediately quit smoking entirely.

went directly from the port to Rabbi Simpson's house.

The Frierdiker Rebbe said that all rabbonim, rebbes, and *bnei Torah* should be allowed to visit, and within a short amount of time a crowd of two thousand people gathered outside the building. The Frierdiker Rebbe came out to the balcony together with Rabbi Simpson and other Chassidim and addressed those gathered in a loud voice.

That Shabbos, the Frierdiker Rebbe farbrenged in Rabbi Simpson's shul for a large crowd that overflowed into the streets.

During the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit, Rabbi Simpson served as a temporary *mazkir*. In his *reshimos*, the Friedker Rebbe writes that Rabbi Simpson

asked if an elderly man could enter into *yechidus*, saying that it has been more than thirty years since he has seen the Frierdiker Rebbe, and he would like to see if the Frierdiker Rebbe will recognize him. When the man entered, the Frierdiker Rebbe saw that it was Reb Moshe Binyamin, the *melamed* who taught him how to write and tested him on Mishnayos.

AGUDAS HATMIMIM

When Rabbi Simpson came to America, there were a small number of alumni of Tomchei Tmimim scattered

throughout the country. Many of them were involved in the spreading of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, but each was on their own.

In an effort to bring the Lubavitcher Chassidim in America together, the Frierdiker Rebbe established Agudas Hatmimim in 5686* and put Rabbi Simpson at its head.

At the inaugural meeting which took place at Rabbi Simpson's home, a group of Chassidim signed a letter saying that they would join together as one group, in heart and soul, and convene once a month at the house of a member of *anash*, to learn Chassidus and farbreng. They added that they take upon themselves the duty to look after the physical and spiritual wellbeing of one another, as well as the



RABBI SIMPSON (BEHIND THE REBBE) IN HIS USUAL SPOT AT FARBRENGENS. CRICA 5728.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S YECHIDUS ROOM IN 770

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon related:

I was in attendance at a farbrengen on Beis Nissan 5698* at the home of Rabbi Simpson. One of the elderly Chassidim who was there began to cry when he exclaimed: "Rebbe, Rebbe!" expressing his great yearning for the Rebbe Rashab.

Suddenly, Rabbi Simpson began to reprimand him: "We have a Rebbe now, why are you crying so much? You never had the Rebbe that you are crying about, and you don't have the Rebbe that we have now," adding sharp words that I never otherwise heard from Rabbi Simpson.

Rabbi Simpson was known to be reserved and calm-natured. But he could not hold himself back when he saw a Chossid who hadn't internalized that we have a Rebbe.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe settled in America, Rabbi Simpson went back to the role of *chozer*, which he served in as a *bochur*, though not to the same extent.

When he was present for a *sicha* or *maamar*, he would repeat it together with Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik in the small *zal*. Occasionally Rabbi Simpson would also write the *hanacha*.

Part of the *hanachos* that Rabbi Simpson wrote were edited by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and parts were edited later on by the Rebbe. Many of these *hanachos* were used in the Sefer Hasichos series.

Rebbe's *mosdos*.

In response to the reports from this meeting, the Frierdiker Rebbe laid out the first steps that should be taken to begin the work of the *agudah*. A database should be made, containing the names of each member of the *agudah*, their address, occupation, and which communal work is right for them.

Each person should be assigned their specific duties, the Frierdiker Rebbe continued. The categories of work included reciting Chassidus in public, launching Torah classes, establishing *chadarim* and yeshivos, recruiting people to join Agudas Chassidei Chabad, spreading writings of Chassidus, finding communal work positions for *anash*, and helping the Chassidim in Europe.

After the lists were compiled, the Frierdiker Rebbe said that the *agudah* needs to officially appoint a leadership. A few months later, a *vaad* was chosen to lead the *agudah*. Rabbi Simpson was appointed as the chairman, Reb Gershon Simpson (Reb Eliyahu's brother) the treasurer, and Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson the secretary.

Indeed, the Agudas Hatmimim accomplished many great things, from establishing *chadarim*, sending funds to the Frierdiker Rebbe, helping Chassidim leave Russia, raising money for the printing of Likkutei Torah, and mainly creating a warm and vibrant community atmosphere among Chassidim with monthly meetings, farbrengens, and *shiurim*.

Aside from serving as the chairman of Agudas Hatmimim, Rabbi Simpson was also later chosen as a member of the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim in New York in 5700* and the umbrella Tomchei Temimim organization in 5711*, recruiting many students to enroll in the yeshiva, amongst a large array of things.

GABBAI YECHIDUS

When the Frierdiker Rebbe came to America to settle in 5700*, Rabbi Simpson was appointed as the *gabbai* for *yechidus*. At times he would also join the *yechidus* to help people understand the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Although Rabbi Simpson was constantly with the Frierdiker Rebbe, he never repeated any conversations that he witnessed. The Rebbe said about Rabbi Simpson on the eve of Simchas Torah 5710*: “With him everything is private.” When his son Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson was appointed as the Rebbe’s *mazkir*, the Rebbe told him that he should be a *ba’al sod*—secret keeper—like his father.

The Frierdiker Rebbe expressed about Rabbi Simpson, that from the three levels of a *ba’al sod* the Rebbe Maharash described, Rabbi Simpson exhibits the highest level. Even when he is told a secret that he had already heard, it is not noticeable that he already knew the information.

Rabbi Moshe Pesach Goldman, Rabbi Simpson’s son-in-law, related: “I remember when a member of *anash* was in *yechidus* with my father-in-law present. After the *yechidus*, the man asked my father-in-law to explain what the Frierdiker Rebbe said. My father-in-law said: ‘Since you didn’t ask me to remember what was said, I don’t remember anything. As soon as I leave, I erase everything from my memory.’”

Rabbi Simpson even said about himself, that during the ten years he merited to serve as a *gabbai* for the Frierdiker Rebbe, he trained himself not to look at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s desk, in order not to see something which is not relevant to him.

At one point, the Frierdiker Rebbe

told Rabbi Simpson that he is considering whether to cease receiving people for *yechidus*, explaining that the Alter Rebbe instituted *yechidus* for people to ask for blessings and advice in spiritual matters. Here in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, people primarily ask for material matters.

Rabbi Simpson related what he was told to Reb Shmuel Levitin. They decided to instruct *bochurim* to make special preparations for entering *yechidus*, and prescribed an elaborate schedule for them. After some time, Rabbi Simpson told the Frierdiker Rebbe that there is a group of *bochurim* that would like to enter *yechidus* to ask about spiritual matters. They indeed entered *yechidus*, and the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to accept people for *yechidus*.

On the *yechidus* nights, Rabbi Simpson was meticulous to arrive exactly on time. Once, when he arrived a minute late, the Frierdiker Rebbe told him the following story:

“There was once a prestigious minister who called a local citizen to an interview. When the man arrived one minute late to the appointment, the minister pulled out a clock and said: ‘That is it! I am no longer a minister.’”

The story had a strong effect on Rabbi Simpson, and he made sure never to be late again.

Rabbi Yitzchok Groner related: “In the middle of a farbrengen with the Frierdiker Rebbe in the late 5700s*, a dissatisfied reaction was noticeable from the Frierdiker Rebbe as he looked at an open window allowing in cold air. Rabbi Simpson crawled under the tables, treading between the crowd, and closed the window. Certainly, Rabbi Simpson could have motioned to one of the younger men to close the window. But that was not the way he operated, he went and did it himself without any fanfare.”

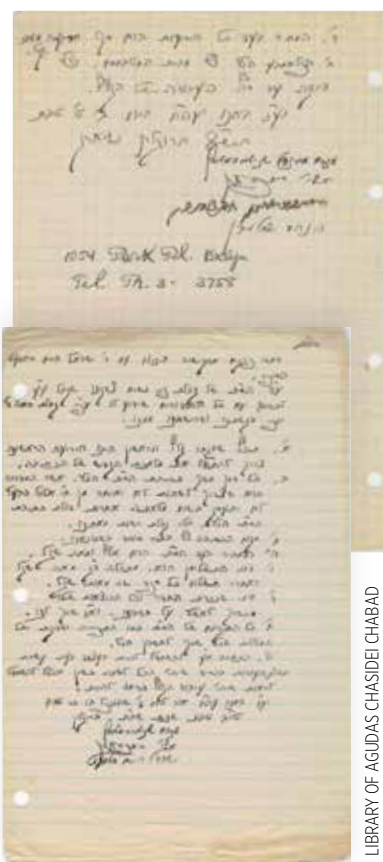
Although Rabbi Simpson kept most things discreet and confidential, there

were some things that he was able to share from what he saw in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room. The following are a few examples:

Once, the Frierdiker Rebbe was looking for a specific *sefer* and could not find it. It was clear that it was bothering him. The next day the Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson: “My father came to me and showed me where the *sefer* was.”

In a conversation about the Frierdiker Rebbe’s health, the Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson: “We need to be Chassidim, and then I will be healthy.” The Frierdiker Rebbe also said that he feels that there isn’t peace among *anash*, and that there is a lack of good character traits.

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi



TWO CONTRACTS FROM 5702*, 1) WITH THE ORIGINAL SOFER COMMISSIONED TO WRITE MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH, AND 2) THE MANUFACTURER OF THE KLAUF, SIGNED BY THE REBBE AND RABBI SIMPSON

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



SCENES FROM THE SIYUM OF MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH, ON 9 SHEVAT 5730. RABBI SIMPSON CARRIES THE SEFER TORAH DOWN INTO THE MAIN SHUL. BEHIND HIM, THE REBBE HOLDS A BOX CONTAINING THE SPECIAL CROWN.

Simpson suffered from health issues. He once mentioned to the Rebbe that perhaps his health was deteriorating since he did not fulfill his role as *gab-bai* for the Frierdiker Rebbe properly. The Rebbe negated this completely and said: “*Chas v'shalom* to accuse my father-in-law of such a thing. A Yid that served in the ‘*kodesh penima*’...”

HAKRIAH VEHAKDUSHA

At the height of the Holocaust, the Frierdiker Rebbe started to publish the Hakriah Vehakdusha monthly magazine, to strengthen Yidden and their belief in the coming of Moshiach in this dark time.⁴

The publication efforts happened very secretly and Rabbi Simpson was one of the only people that were

involved. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked him to find a professional editor who writes Lashon Hakodesh well, and can keep his work secretive. Rabbi Simpson brought Mr. A. Levitt to the Frierdiker Rebbe and he was hired. Mr. Levitt's real name was Ahron Hirsch. At the time he was the editor of a weekly Yiddish newspaper called *Dos Idishe Licht*.

Every aspect of the magazine was done with the direction of the Frierdiker Rebbe, from the *maamarim* that were included to the distribution process and everything in between.

Mr. Levitt would visit the Simpson home almost every single day and speak with Rabbi Simpson for long periods of time. The family did not know what the content of their conversations were, but could only imagine that it was regarding the magazine.

When the fresh copies of the magazine were ready, they were secretly brought to the Simpson home where

they were packed to be sent around the world.

MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH

On the eve of Simchas Torah 5702*, before *hakafos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe announced the writing of a *sefer Torah* that will be used to greet Moshiach. On Isru Chag, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Rabbi Simpson to send out a special announcement about the new initiative.

On Beis Iyar, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed three Chassidim to be in charge of commissioning the *sefer Torah*: Reb Shmuel Levitin, Rabbi Simpson, and Reb Dovid Shifrin. That same day Rabbi Simpson and the *sofer* Reb Shmaryahu Faktor entered the Frierdiker Rebbe's room and started

the writing of the Torah.

The *sofer* outlined the letters of the word Bereishis, and the Frierdiker Rebbe filled them. Afterward, the Torah was put in the *zal*, and Chassidim came over to buy letters and fill them in. Later there was a special *seudah* and Rabbi Simpson read a letter that the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the new *vaad* for the *sefer Torah*.

Later, the *yeriah* became unusable and needed to be buried. The Frierdiker Rebbe started the Torah again, but this time in complete secrecy.

Although plans were made for a *siyum sefer Torah* that same year, and again in 5707*, for reasons that remain unknown, the Torah awaited completion for many years. Twenty-eight years after the Torah was originally started, at the farbrengen of 3 Shevat 5730*, the Rebbe announced that the *siyum* for Moshiach's *sefer Torah* was soon to take place. The Rebbe spoke at length about the purchasing of letters in the Torah, mentioning that those who had already bought letters need not buy them again.

After this the Rebbe said: "As there is a *vaad* of the *sefer Torah*, they will probably announce the time and place of the selling of the letters." The Rebbe then told Rabbi Simpson to announce that the sale will take place in 770 which has the numerical value of *paratzta*. After Rabbi Simpson made the announcement, the Rebbe told him to start a joyous *niggun*.

In preparation for the *siyum*, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Simpson to organize a list of people that bought letters in the Sefer Torah and to make a card for each family. As the *siyum* neared, the Rebbe called Rabbi Simpson into his room and briefed him on who would be receiving the various honors, including *hagbah* which the Rebbe gave to Rabbi Simpson himself.

The date of the *siyum* was not announced, but approaching Yud Shevat that year, Chassidim felt that

it wouldn't be an ordinary year, and people flocked to the Rebbe from all over the world.

On Thursday, 8 Shevat, after returning from the Ohel and davening Maariv, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Simpson to enter his room. The Rebbe told him that the *siyum* would take place the next day at 2:30 p.m. at the beginning of a farbrengen that would take place in 770.

Those who were there remember the extraordinary sight when Rabbi Simpson came down from the Rebbe's room holding Moshiach's *sefer Torah*, as the Rebbe walked behind him holding a box that later was revealed to be containing the crown for the *sefer Torah*. Exiting the Rebbe's room, Rabbi Simpson waited at the side while holding the *sefer Torah* so that the Rebbe should walk in front, but the Rebbe explained that he couldn't show his back to the Sefer Torah.

Reb Shaya Matlin was the *sofer* in 770 who would fix the Sifrei Torah as necessary. He once asked the Rebbe if he could fix the *mantel* (cover) for Moshiach's *sefer Torah*. The Rebbe responded: "Follow the instruction of Rabbi Simpson (the father) *sheyichye* regarding this."

SHADAR

The Frierdiker Rebbe would send Chassidim to cities around the world, to strengthen Chabad communities with words of inspiration and Chasidus, and also to collect funds for *maamad*⁵ and Chabad institutions. Those that the Frierdiker Rebbe sent were known as a *shadar*⁶. Rabbi Simpson merited to be sent on many such *shlichusen*.

The first shlichus Rabbi Simpson was sent on was to Chicago together with Reb Shmuel Levitin. They traveled there three times.

A few years after Tomchei Temimim in Montreal opened, in the summer of 5706* the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson together with two others to uplift the yeshiva. The yeshiva was composed of nine *bochurim* that fled from Otwock, Poland, to Shanghai, China, and managed to come to Montreal. The Frierdiker Rebbe directed the *bochurim* there that were of age to seek Rabbi Simpson's guidance in their *shidduchim*.

A short while before the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Simpson

A SPECIAL DREAM

About a week after Shavuot 5710*, Rabbi Simpson had a unique dream. He was sitting at a large farbrengen when the Frierdiker Rebbe asked the crowd why everyone was so broken, and continued: "I left my Mendel, he is fit for this."

At the end of the farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe went into his room and told Rabbi Simpson to close the door behind them. The Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson twice: "Call Reb Mendel here, I want to anoint him." Rabbi Simpson opened the door to go and call the Rebbe, and the dream was over.

The dream repeated itself a few times, and Rabbi Simpson told it to the Rebbe in *yeichidus*. The Rebbe replied: "It seems that you are thinking about this all day." Rabbi Simpson said, "Actually I had been busy that day and hadn't thought about this." The Rebbe replied: "I don't feel this."

* 5707-1947, 5730-1970, 5706-1946, 5710-1950

was sent to Cincinnati and then to Miami. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent letters to the two communities notifying them that he is sending Rabbi Simpson to inspire communal *shiurei Torah* in *nigleh* and Chassidus, to examine and strengthen the children's education, and to strengthen the ways of Chassidus.

Only five days before the *histalkus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson a letter expressing satisfaction with the reports, and encouraging him to do more.

After the *histalkus*, the Rebbe continued to send Rabbi Simpson to communities. In the beginning, he used to travel with Reb Shmuel Levitin, and later it was with Reb Kadish Romanoff.

In Teves 5713*, the Rebbe wrote a letter⁷ addressed to rabbonim and all Yidden, officially appointing Rabbi Simpson to be a *shadar*, referring to

him with the rare title “*ne’eman bayis*.”

One shlichus that stands out is when the Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson along with the first group of *talmidim hashluchim* to Australia. The Rebbe told the *bochurim* that went: “Rabbi Simpson, who will go with you—he is from the older Chassidim—will mentor you. You will receive guidance from him for a while, and consult with him regarding (finding) a *mashpia* and *rosh yeshiva*.”

WE WANT TO HEAR CHASSIDUS

Rabbi Simpson would converse with the Rebbe years before the

beginning of the *nesius*. The relationship began when the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson amongst a group of Chassidim to greet the Rebbe and Rebbetzin when they arrived in America. After the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed the group, he shared with them a little bit about the Rebbe:

“I will reveal to you who he is: He observes *tikkun chatzos* every night. He is versed by heart in Talmud Bavli together with the Ran, Rosh and Rif, as well as Talmud Yerushalmi with its explanations, as well as Rambam, Likkutei Torah with all of its “*ayens*” [notes of the Tzemach Tzedek, which usually start with the word ‘*ayen*’]. Go and greet him.”

Rabbi Simpson's family recalls how in the 5700s* the Rebbe would call the house very often and ask to speak to Rabbi Simpson. They would speak for lengthy periods of time.

After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Simpson was among the first to push that the Rebbe accept the *nesius*. He would speak about it in public, as well as speak to the Rebbe about it personally in *yechidus*.

At the farbrengen of Shavuos 5710*, Rabbi Simpson stood up and said: “The *sichos* are good, but we want to hear Chassidus!” But the Rebbe did not respond. After the next *sicha*, Rabbi Simpson stood up again and asked in the name of all of *anash* that the Rebbe should say a *maamar Chassidus*. The Rebbe smiled widely, and after pausing for a few moments said: “It needs to be specifically now? It doesn't need to be specifically right now, it can be another time.”

MEKUSHAR TO THE REBBE

Rabbi Simpson was steadfast in his *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe from the very

THE ONLY BOSS

In the 5710s*, someone suggested the idea of appointing a president for the shul in 770. When there was a conversation about whether to pursue this, Rabbi Simpson got up and exclaimed:

“Are you completely crazy? The Rebbe is the only one in charge of 770. The fact that we can daven here is only because he allows us to.”



RABBI SIMPSON ARRIVES IN AUSTRALIA WITH THE SHLUCHIM, 5727.



CUSTOMARILY, WHEN A NEW MAAMAR WAS PRINTED, THE REBBE WOULD BRING A COPY ALONG WITH HIM ON HIS NEXT TRIP TO THE OHEL.

ON 29 ELUL 5736, RABBI SIMPSON'S LAST EREV ROSH HASHANAH ALIVE, HE APPROACHED THE REBBE AS HE ENTERED HIS CAR EN ROUTE TO THE OHEL, TO HAND THE REBBE HIS PAN. THE REBBE TURNED TOWARDS HIM, TOOK OUT THE NEWLY PRINTED KUNTRES OF MAAMARIM OF THE REBBE RASHAB FROM THE YEAR OF RATAT, AND HANDED IT TO RABBI SIMPSON.

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first moment. Every decision in his life was made only after asking the Rebbe. Already in 5710*, when his daughter was in the middle of a *shidduch*, he said that they cannot go ahead with it before receiving the Rebbe's *bracha*.

During the farbrengen of Purim 5711*, the Rebbe expressed to Rabbi Simpson rare remarks about his *hiskashrus* despite having been *mekushar* to the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe:

"During the building of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, there were elderly people who remembered the first *Beis Hamikdash*, and they cried. You, who was with the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden* and with the [Frierdiker] Rebbe,

how are you not crying? It is understandable [that you were *mekushar*] to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe who was an only son and successor. But what am I and who am I?"

After this, the Rebbe instructed that a *niggun* be sung and only parts of the continued conversation could be heard. One expression that was heard was: "*Mekushar* to me? *Mekushar* to the Rebbe! I am only a successor in one aspect." Another expression that was heard was: "You have faith in the *Aibershter*, I am only a conduit. We need to go out of ourselves, although I haven't gone out from being a *memaleh makom*, we don't need to learn from this."

THE REBBE'S BIMAH

In the months following Yud Shevat 5710*, many people would join the Rebbe's farbrengens in the *zal*. Because of the large crowd, it was difficult to hear the Rebbe and most people couldn't even see.

An idea came up to build a platform for the Rebbe to sit on, but nobody wanted to commission it since the Rebbe might not approve of it.

Realizing what needed to be done, Rabbi Simpson went and built a *bimah* with his own hands. Surprisingly when the Rebbe came in and saw it, he did not oppose it.

PASSING

On the fifth night of Chanukah, 29 Kislev 5737*, Rabbi Simpson passed away. His *levaya* left from his shul in Boro Park and then stopped in front of 770. The Rebbe came out to accompany the procession and remarked that he would want to go to the burial but had to visit the Ohel that day.

Rabbi Simpson was buried near the Ohel. Very shortly after the *shivah*, the Rebbe asked Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson why the *matzevah* was not erected yet. The family hurried to arrange the *matzevah*, and the Rebbe edited the words written on it. The Rebbe asked to add the title: "Of the great *chozrim* in Lubavitch." 1

1. The family's original name was Yaichel, but upon arrival in the United States he was given the name Simpson.
2. Until today it is unknown what that was.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 3 p. 102.
4. See "*Shake the World*," Derher Adar 5775.
5. Money given to the Rebbe by Chassidim to support his household needs and to distribute to others at his discretion.
6. Acronym for *shlucha d'raban*.
7. Igros Kodesh, vol. 7. p. 108.