

לע"נ  
אבינו הרה"ח הרה"ת  
ר' יוסף מנחם מענדל  
ב"ר יצחק ע"ה  
ואמנו מרת זיסל דבורה  
בת ר' אלי הכהן ע"ה  
טענענבוים  
ת"נ צ"ב

## The Rebbe Remembered

*Rabbi Eli Seidman served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army, retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. During a visit to Anchorage, Alaska in 2017, he shared the following story with Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, head shliach of Alaska.*

In 1985, my wife and I were living in Tucson, Arizona — before I joined the Army. We had been married for about five or six years and we had no children. We tried everything — all the medical technology and all the treatments available then. We were worried. I was talking to my friend, Rabbi Yossie Shemtov, the shliach in Tucson, and he said to me, “Why don’t you write a letter to the Rebbe.” “Well, I’m not a Lubavitcher,” I said. “Where would I come from, writing a letter?”

“No, really,” Rabbi Shemtov said. “The Rebbe cares about every Jew. You tried all of these other treatments; you might as well try a spiritual treatment. It would cost you nothing more than a stamp!” So I sat down, wrote the letter, mailed it — and I forgot all about it.

A year and a half later, I joined the Army. We were first stationed in Fort Louis, Washington, and then later in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1987 we had a son, and then a daughter in 1990.

Later on, in 1991, I had an occasion to come back for a course in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and while I was there, I called up Chaplain Yaakov Goldstein — another friend. He asked me whether I wanted to come for Dollars, where I would be able to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. “Come dressed in uniform,” Goldstein told me. “Come at this specific time, and meet me at the side door; they’ll call us in. Have a little *kvittel* with what you’re asking for written on it, go up to the Rebbe, and give that note to the *mazkir*. Say to the Rebbe, ‘My name is Elimelech Seidman, a chaplain in the United States Army, and I want to ask for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.’”

So I got dressed in my dress uniform and waited at the door to meet the Rebbe with Rabbi Goldstein. The time came and they called us in. I walked up to the Rebbe, gave the *kvittel* to the Rebbe’s secretary, and said to the Rebbe, “My name is Elimelech Seidman, I’m in Frankfurt as the Jewish chaplain and



I wanted to ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*." The Rebbe said to me,

"איך האב געהאט אמאל א בריך פון אייך"

"I once received a letter from you."

I said, "No, I just gave a note." The Rebbe said, "Not today, but a few years ago." And then I remembered. It must have been about six years after I had written that letter on Rabbi Shemtov's suggestion, asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* for children. "A few years ago, when I was in Arizona, I did write," I said to the Rebbe.

"May G-d Almighty bless you to be successful about all the soldiers under your guidance, to guide them in the right direction. It's your responsibility." Then the Rebbe gave me another dollar and said, "For all your family." The Rebbe then gave Chaplain Goldstein two dollars and said to me, "He received two because he's your chaplain."

I didn't know what to say. I was in shock. I was tongue-tied. Rabbi Goldstein helped me finish the time with the Rebbe. When you watch the video of it, it happens so fast. But when it happened, it seemed like a long time, a very long time.

I went out with Rabbi Goldstein, back to his house on Montgomery Street. At his house — this was during the Kinus Hashluchim — who would be there but Rabbi Yossie Shemtov! Rabbi Shemtov exclaimed, "I told you — even if you didn't get a written answer from the Rebbe, writing still makes an impression in *Shamayim*."

I returned to Frankfurt and I picked up the phone to call another friend — also a Lubavitcher — in Zurich: Moshe Rappoport. His wife answered the phone — this was a day after this happened — and she said, "I heard about what happened with you and the Rebbe." "How did you hear so quickly?" I asked. "It's in the Kfar Chabad news," she said. She then sent me a copy: A transcript of what the Rebbe said and what I said, and above it there was a banner headline that read, "The Chaplain forgot but the Rebbe remembered."

I wrote one letter to the Rebbe my whole life, and I didn't remember it. How many letters did the Rebbe get? A million? And the Rebbe remembered my letter. I can't explain it. ①