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Chassidic Commitment

At a wayside inn, a dozen chassidic merchants were warming themselves at the fire. The group included men from towns and villages across Russia and Poland, all traveling to the great annual fair at Leipzig. The conversation soon turned to the greatness of their rebbes, as each extolled the virtues of his master.

One by one, the chassidim told stories about the miraculous powers of their rebbes.

One told how for fifteen years he and his wife had yearned for a child, until they received a blessing from their rebbe: within a year, they were cradling their newborn son in their arms.

A second told of how his rebbe had neutralized the Jew-hating, pogrom-inciting priest in their village.

A third related how his rebbe's blessing and special instructions had brought home his wayward son.

And so they passed the hours, recounting the wonders performed by their holy mentors.

Finally, they all turned to the one chassid who had listened in silence to their stories. "Nu, whose chassid are you?" they asked. "Let's hear something about your rebbe."

The chassid said: "I am a Chabad chassid, a disciple of **Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch**. I deal in lumber, and several years ago I was offered a forest for sale. The price was high, but the opportunities were even greater — there was talk of a railroad to be constructed, raising the demand for and profitability of the local lumber. As I do with all major decisions in my life, I consulted with the Rebbe. He advised me to buy the forest.

"The purchase ruined me. The railroad project fell through and I was left with a basically worthless forest. I lost my entire fortune and was cast heavily into debt."

After a lengthy pause, one of the puzzled listeners asked, "And then? What happened?"

"Nothing," said the chassid. "I am still struggling to feed my family and repay my debts."

"So what's the miracle?" they all asked.

"That my relationship with the Rebbe has nothing to do with his wonder-working powers. That I continue to follow his directives in every area of my life. The miracle is that I am still his chassid."

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Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from Tauber's rendition on [//chabad.org](http://chabad.org).

[From 1999 to 2013 R. Yanki Tauber served as chief content editor of *Chabad.org*. He is currently chief writer and editor of *The Book*, a new translation and anthologized commentary for The Five Books of Moses. His most recently published work is *Inside Time*, a three-volume work containing 113 essays on the Chasidic perspective on time, the Jewish calendar, and the festivals and special days of the Jewish year.]

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneersohn** [of blessed memory: 20 Cheshvan 5621 – 2 Nissan 5680 (Oct. 1860 – April 1920)], known as the **Rebbe Reshab**, was the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitcher dynasty. He is the author of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chasidic thought. In 1915, after 102 years of four Chabad rebbes living in Lubavitch, he transferred the center of the movement to Rostov-on-the-Don.

*Connection:* Seasonal -- Friday, the 2nd of the Jewish month of *Nissan*, is the **100th** yearzeit of the *Rebbe Rashab*.