

CHAPTER ONE

HIS YOUTH

On the ninth day of Ellul, in the year 5623 (1863), in the small town of Aivia, near Vilna a son was born to the Rav of that town, HaGaon Rav Dovid Shlomo Grodzenski, and was named Chaim Ozer.

The proud father, Rav Dovid Shlomo, had also been born in the little town 32 years previously and held the position as Rav there for almost 50 years, during which time he was considered to be among the Torah Gedolim of the age. His father before him, Rav Moshe Arieih, also held the position of Rav of Aivia for a period of 37 years.

At a very tender age, Rav Dovid Shlomo Grodzenski earned a reputation as an 'Eyluy' and his brilliance was acclaimed throughout the neighboring areas. While yet a young man, Rav Dovid Shlomo married Rivka Elka of Volkvisk and it was her father's name, Rav Chaim Ozer Einhorn, which was given to the newly born Chaim Ozer Grodzenski.

Rav Dovid Shlomo was but 27 years old when he succeeded his father Rav Moshe Arieih as Rav in Aivia. Until the very day he died, Rav Dovid Shlomo remained in the little town, despite many lucrative offers he received to serve as Rav in the great Kehillos of Europe.