

It was while Chaim Ozer was learning in Ishihuk that he celebrated his Bar-mitzvah. All the lomdim and Chachomim of the town joined in the great Seudoh. When the appropriate time arrived the Bar-mitzvah bochur was called upon to say a 'drasha'. Chaim Ozer replied that he was not prepared to say any drasha, but, in its place, he would be glad to recite, from memory, complete pages of the two great seforim, the 'Kitzos Hachoshen' and 'Nisivas Hamishpat'; as many pages as were asked of him. How great was the wonder and amazement of the assembled Gaonim who could remember exactly only certain passages from these seforim; and the young Eyluy rambled along, repeating page after page. In the same way, he was given two widely disparate Talmudic ideas which had, seemingly no connection of thought between them, and the bar-mitzvah bochur in his complex theme-relationship, securely bound the two ideas; intertwining their talmudic reasoning.

One of the great Yeshivos of Europe at the time was the world-famous Volozhin Yeshiva, renowned both for its great Roshei Hayeshivos and talmidim. This was the golden age of Volozhin; at its head were the great Gedolim, the N'tziv, and his son-in-law, Rav Raphael Spira, Z.T.L. Volozhin was at the very peak of the great Torah institutions of Lithuania. Its talmidim were the elite of European yeshiva-bachurim. Everyone who was accepted as a student there considered it a signal honor, a certain sign of his elevation of Torah-learning; recognition of his having attained a spectacular breadth of Talmudic knowledge.

Among the Roshei Yeshivos of Volozhin was the grandson of the N'tziv, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, z.t.l., later to become known as the Brisker Gaon. Although young at the time, he was well known to the yeshivoh world and during these years he began to form the nucleus of carefully chosen tal-