

Always extremely careful never to transfer money from one charity to another and to give every penny he received to the proper Tzedokoh, Rav Chaim Ozer never allowed personal interests to interfere with what he considered to be a sacred trust. After the Lithuanian Army conquered Vilna, at the beginning of the First World War, proclamations were issued by the new government declaring all Polish currencies as null and void and establishing the Lithuanian coin as the only official substance. The borders between old Lithuania and the vicinity of Vilna were still closed and nothing and no one could pass over. In the course of one week, a very extraordinary and difficult situation arose. It was impossible to buy even the smallest item in the stores of Vilna. The Polish currency was unacceptable and the Lithuanian currency was as yet very scarce in the city. Even the extremely wealthy found it difficult to purchase the very bread for their tables.

At about this time, a significant sum for the Yeshivos that had drifted to Vilna arrived from the 'Ezras Torah' fund in New York and was collected by Rav Avrohom Dov Spira, Rav in Kovno. These funds were the first aid to arrive for the badly hit Yeshivos and their destitute talmidim. Rav Chaim Ozer, at just this time fell gravely ill. With no available Lithuanian currency, it was quite impossible to purchase the vitally necessary drugs. When the Kovno funds arrived in Vilna, Rav Chaim Ozer was strongly urged to borrow a small amount for a specified time in order to buy the drugs which he had to have immediately. Resolutely he replied, 'It is forbidden for me to use the money of the Yeshivos, even to borrow some of it is forbidden. For who knows whether I shall be able to get Lithuanian money to repay the debt.'

On one occasion a new law was under discussion