



Ibi's Story, Chapter 5

The place we arrived they told us we are going to have a shower. The place we arrived consisted of 3 large room and as we were going up, we had to go up on 3 steps to get in, our kapo said "Now I want you to get in there and get undressed, take everything off, and leave your clothes on the floor. Make sure you have got your shoes in your hand and move forwards. Well I didn't understand why she has to tell that outside but we went in, was absolutely jammed packed of women, was a huge room and all round the walls there were SS men standing with rifles on their shoulders. And women who were already stripped were moving into the next room. And we just stood there not believing ourselves what is happening. And our kapo shouted "Get on with it because if you don't they will start shooting, what do you think they are standing here for?" So what do you do? You get undressed. And you move into the next room.

The next room was already empty. We had to stand in single files. There were 5 chairs and in front of the chair was an inmate and we had to sit on the chair and she had a pair of hair clippers in her hand that size, that wide and without a word she just shaved off her hair. It was terrible, it just tumbled and none of us tried to resist or say "Why are you doing it?" We were so petrified that we wouldn't even say that, we couldn't. And it went very fast, "Next, next" and it was tumbling down. From there we went into the room, the next room, and there they shaved off our underarm hair and our pubic hair and there was a woman standing with a bucket and a great big sponge and in the bucket there was some disinfectant and as we were going into the, under the shower, into the bath actually she plonked this all over you and it was burning, it was horrible. And as I was going into the shower, it was a huge room with rows and rows of showers, and under each of these showers there were five, six women trying to have a wash. I ran to the first shower and the water was beautiful and warm and they gave us something that looked soap as we went in and I rubbed this together and the water was lovely and I realised I had no soap, it just melted in the hand. It had a bit of a tacky feeling and I smelt it, it didn't smell very good but I didn't bother about it, all I wanted to have a wash under that shower.

And the next excitement was, I suddenly realised I haven't got my sister. I just promised my mother that I take good care of her. I was such a zombie, I couldn't organise myself and I started shouting. I nearly collapsed. "Judith, Judith, where are you?" And the child stands in front of me and touched me here. She says "I am here." And I looked at her. "Where?" And just the voice I recognised because that was the first time I saw her without hair and looked at us what we looked like. I couldn't see myself there were no mirrors so that was good. Pretty soon after that they started shouting "Out, out, everybody out" so that was our shower and I said to my sister "Don't ever leave me, will you?" She says "I didn't leave you. They cut my hair before yours" and she waited for me.

So when we got out we actually got out outside from the hair all cut, you had all over your body it's prickling you and there is this cold wind and you are wet and nobody gives you a towel or underwear, they just give you a long grey garment. "Put it on" and we had to put it on our wet body. And the wind very quickly dried us off. And there and then as we looked around there were trestle tables and German women in overcoats were taking our particulars. Where we came from, what school we went, who was our father, our mother, everything. And then we had to stand again in fives and they took us into our camp which was actually the gypsy camp. But the gypsy inmates were locked in their barracks, we didn't see them, we never saw them. But there were some empty barracks and they just put us in there until the next camp was finished because we were coming, they were bringing the Hungarian transports in so fast that they couldn't build it fast enough. When we went into the building it was a long shed, concrete floors, I think it was wooden and corrugated sheets for the top and right on the top there was a row of windows so it was quite light and from both sides there were 3 tiers of bunks right through and on each of these bunks 10 of us could go on. I, ours was the middle one. We went up there, there was my sister, 3 girls from our town and another 5 girls were also sisters and friends. And I just lay down on the bare wood and I fell asleep. I was completely exhausted. And this must have been midday.