

# CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

It took a snip of hair for me to understand. It was not just any hair, nor just any cut. No, the moment was wrought with a thousand answers and even more importantly, the promise of all future hope.

The Jewish calendar is full of auspicious days that take on an energy that defies all halachic need. They become holy by dint of the peoples' needs and this makes them holy in a unique way.

Two such days are *Lag Baomer* and *Zayin Adar*. Everyone knows about Lag Baomer and looks forward to it to brighten up the *Sefira* days and herald the coming of *Shavous*. On Lag Bamoeer people converge on *Meron* from all over the world and the simcha experienced there is something out of this world, as many great tzaddikim have testified. Lag Baomer has a more silent partner, *Zayin Adar*, and I was there in *Meron* on that special day. *Zayin Adar* is the anniversary of *Moshe Rabbeinu's* birth and passing. This date is cherished by Jews as a moment when the merit of *Moshe* is remembered with huge warmth and love. *Chevra Kaddisha* members fast on this day throughout the world, and Jews gather together in prayer, cheerful in the knowledge that they have a connection with *Moshe* and the Torah. However, if you want to really understand the dynamics of how Jews can make a day into a vehicle of unbridled love, then you must go to the *Galil* on *Zayin Adar*, and allow yourself to be taken by its sights and sounds.

Thanks to being in those holy places I cannot get my heart to stop dancing. We started at the grave of *Rabbi Meir Baal Haness*. There we stood in a packed room and davened with a group of the sweetest *Sefardishe Yidden* you will ever meet. Their Rav was leading them in a special service for the *Chevra Kaddisha* members. We stood saying *Tehillim* and all of a sudden we were swept up with a *Yom Kippur Ne'ila* service. There were tears, cries of *Shema Yisrael, Baruch Sheim Kevod Malchuso Le'olom Va'ed*, on it went, and then this small little Jew pulled out a shofar from a frayed plastic bag and blew it with such intensity that I can't believe there was a heart left there untouched. A shiver ran through me, whilst all around the lovely *Yidden* were offering compliments to the shofar blower.

From there we went to *Tzefas*, to the holy cemetery where so many of our early saints are laid to rest. This mountain top holds a special place in the Rubin family heart, for amongst its many graves rests the parents of my Rebbetzin. We spent a long time there, and all the while crowds of people were coming and going, saying *Tehillim*, and beseeching Hashem, each in his own way, for His continuous help.

Then we drove to Meron, that sacred place of pilgrimage where *Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai* is buried. It was here that the full impact of the day hit me. Thousands of Yidden were there, of every conceivable sort, all together, sharing something that was just beyond all understanding. There is no nation like the Jewish nation, full stop; and if you want to understand this truth, visit Meron on such a day. As soon as we arrived we were overwhelmed by the spiritually energized atmosphere. At one end of the open courtyard was a stage upon which stood a *Chassidic klei zemer* band that was playing such haunting tunes that one's feet began to dance without any forethought. Circles of dancing figures formed a tapestry of poetic majesty. It was as if the angels had come down from on high and joined this little slice of Klal Yisrael in celebration. Inside were the thousands of Yidden saying Tehillim, davening Mincha, crying, sighing, opening hearts laden with the grim actuality that is often today's everyday reality.

Just as I was making my way through the throng, a Chassidische Yid stopped me and with a smiling face handed me a scissors. I looked down to see his cherubic faced three-year-old son, long blond tresses flowing, and I understood. I cut a bit of the child's hair, as his wonderful clear and sparkling eyes looked into mine, and it was then that I really understood. That little boy was so full of trust and pleasure; his entire future seemed to shine. Hashem knew whom He chose as a people. They bomb us on our buses, they hate us in the corridors of international power, but we dance, we cry, and we cut the hair of our young. That sweet child's face was alight with the future hopes of all those who danced. Hashem gave us the power that no nation could ever understand. It is the ability to cut through the darkness and know that only our connection with the Torah will bring us true joy.

*Kapitel 117* is the shortest one in the entire Tehillim. Like a sharp scissor it cuts through the entire facade and comes to the kernel that is eternal. Our Sages tell us that its simplicity shows how apparent things will be when the Moshiach arrives.

*Hallelu Es Hashem ...* "Praise Hashem, all you peoples; laud Him, all you nations!" This will be said in a unified voice by all the nations. Until then the world will continue to be in chaos, with different factions, religions, and cultures. When the Moshiach will come, all those borders will be seen for what they have always been, places created out of conceit and lies. In that future moment, it will be so clear, so pristine, that all will cry out Hashem's praise, descent will no longer be heard.

*Ki Gavar Aleinu Chasdo ...* "For His kindness to us was overwhelming, and the truth of Hashem is eternal. Praise G-d!"

They will never understand that place called the rest of the world. How could they? We are a people hounded and disparaged, yet, our children smile and our fathers bring them to learn Torah. Can anyone understand? In truth it's beyond reasoning, and it stems from Hashem's overwhelming love for us. We survive beyond comprehension, because our bond is with Hashem, and that is eternal.

They may try, they may seek our demise in any way they can. It will never stop us from dancing; never stop us from cutting little boy's hair and introducing them to their G-d given reality.

Call me a softy, I am not ashamed, that little sweet child gave me such strength. I see his shy smile, and it is now part of my heart. I blessed him, his father thanked me, and I thanked him in turn. He will never know how much I owe him, never.

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