

Auschwitz Remains a Haunting Place Today

I have just returned from my first trip to Poland, where I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau.

I was born in a refugee camp in Germany in 1947. My parents were both Holocaust survivors who lost most of their family and possessions. Only one of my father's brothers survived because he came to Israel in the 1930s.

Both my parents were Polish. My mother was born and grew up in the Jewish section of Warsaw. When the Germans invaded Poland, they turned it into a ghetto.

She was able to escape and made her way to Russia. Moving from place to place against all the odds—freezing cold weather, hunger, no shelter or proper clothing—she survived. After the war, she came back to Warsaw, only to find it totally destroyed, including the street where she grew up. Looking through the rubble for anything that might belong to her, she found nothing. No one survived but her. (My mother died in 1998 at the age of 85.)

I was 1 year old when Israel was declared a nation in 1948, and we emigrated to Israel. So I grew up with the Jewish nation. I heard of the events of the Holocaust all my life, but only after I became a believer in Yeshua and grew in faith did I have a desire to understand this unbelievable disaster that befell my people. Now it was time to discover my roots. My daughter, Liat, joined me.

The spring day was unusually cold when we arrived at Auschwitz. I walked in the snow and listened to the Polish tour guide explain that the "inmates" (who were mainly Jews) were transported by train to this place. Upon arrival they were segregated by sex, surrendered their valuables and

removed their clothes before entering the gas chambers.

I shivered as I stood there listening, but not just from the cold. Standing in that death camp, seeing the huge size of the place, I thought, *It's amazing to what length the Nazis went in order to kill the Jews. So many buildings were built to house them. What an investment.*

Many people from all over the world come to visit Auschwitz today. We hear the number—6 million—of the Jews who died, but it's hard to grasp the meaning of such a huge number of people. Seeing the enormous piles of hair, shoes, toothbrushes and glasses gave us a little idea of how many died. When I saw the piles of glasses, it struck me that these were not just glasses. Every pair represented a Jew who was murdered.

I cried and prayed to God that all this was not in vain. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust, He brought His people back to the Land. Now He is bringing us back to Himself. I join Paul in his prayer: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

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