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Brightly colored wax spelled out the words "Polska" and "America" over the bodies of two small stick figures sitting at a simply drawn Shabbat table. This untainted picture of two strangers sharing a meal framed for me what it means to be Jewish. Jeremy, a young Polish child, gave the drawing to me as a gift, but he had given me more than a simple piece of construction paper.

Bill Bryson the author of *Neither Here Nor There*, writes, I can't think of anything that excites a greater sense of childlike wonder than to be in a country where you are ignorant of almost everything. Suddenly you are five years old again. You can't read anything, you have only the most rudimentary sense of how things work, you can't even reliably cross a street without endangering your life. Your whole existence becomes a series of interesting guesses. "My world had been flipped and suddenly, a seven year old, had a greater vocabulary and knew the customs for dining. Essentially, my entire trip to Poland had been a series of interesting guesses: Would I cry at the concentration camp? Were there even Jews left in Poland? How can I spend a night in Auschwitz? Although those questions may have been somewhat satisfied, I left Poland feeling more confused than when I had arrived. Tomaz, our tour leader, suggested that we shouldn't look for simplifications in life, but look for complexities. To give a summary or an impression of the entire journey, would be to simplify one of the greatest complex set of thoughts that I have ever possessed. The almost religious episode of touching the graves of Talmudic scholars, to have intellectually stimulating conversations with international peers, and to hear firsthand accounts of those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis and those who had the bravery to risk their own lives for others, are all events I will never be able to give justice to through words.

Before embarking on this voyage, my father told me, "I know it will be a tough and emotional trip but it will be a great experience." An experience, truly a set of individual experiences. Quick snapshots float through my mind like a nightmare, deep bullet holes in ghetto walls, cramped wooden shelves that served as beds, and gallows that stole the lives of those that deserve to be alive. Haunting images juxtaposed with the joy of generations sharing a dance on Shabbat, and Israeli's brilliantly flying their state flag on the grounds of death. But when the dream was over, I awoke, and I was allowed to walk out of the gas chamber. My ancestors were murdered for committing the same crime I had committed and yet I am allowed to live. I am a Jew, a crime that sixty years ago would have claimed my life. I may have had millions of other traits and qualities, and done thousands of mitzvahs, but I am a Jew, and for that I would have been killed.

But what does it mean to be a Jew, and moreover a Jew in Poland? This newfound definition was determined with my steps out of the gas chamber. I am alive. To be a Jew is to be alive. It is to fully appreciate not being confined by the walls of a ghetto, to be thankful there is at least one surviving synagogue available for prayer, and to understand that the American lifestyle is not the only way, nor the best. It is shared customs sung to a different tune. My trip was culminated by Jeremy's gift, his true gift of sharing innocence and amazement, of acceptance and love.

It was said in a documentary that we should not ask how God could let the holocaust happen to his chosen people but to accept that it is alright to have more questions than answers. To have questions unanswered is to have faith. In Poland, I cemented my faith.