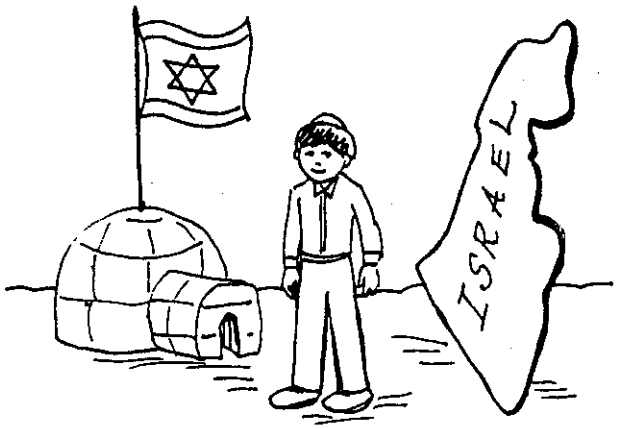
A LETTER FROM ISRAEL

by Adam Ruskin

Dear Rabbi Buchwald,

It was good seeing you here in Israel at the Pidyon HaBen of our son, Amitai Aviv. Your presence made the occasion extra special, because thanks to you, six years ago, I decided to tether my life to our heritage. You reached out then and touched me just as you have reached out and touched tens of thousands of other Adam Ruskins.

As a recent immigrant to Israel, and a relatively veteran "immigrant" to Judaism, I feel much as my great-grandparents must have felt when they landed on the shores of America 85 years ago. I speak Hebrew well, but will always speak with an accent. Jewishly as well, my return to observant Judaism is very rewarding and satisfying, but I will always feel that I am in a process of transition. Not that I mind! In fact, I enjoy the challenge of the life I have chosen, and am proud of the contributions that I and my fellow Ba'alei Teshuva have made to the established Jewish community, both in the United States and in Israel. Our vitality, fresh blood and fresh ideas continue to be appreciated and needed!



But Amitai's life will be different than mine. I was born in the "Siberia" of the Jewish people, figuratively and geographically as well (Anchorage, Alaska, my home town, is pretty close to Siberia). Amitai was born in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish people. When Maura and I say the Shm'a to him at night, or put a spice box to his 34-day-old nose during the Havdala ceremony, and get cinnamon on him, as we did last night, I feel so proud that my son, and G-d willing, all of his future siblings, will breath Judaism from the day they are born. Judaism will be natural for them, and they will, please G-d, swim in the sea of Torah as easily as fish swim in the ocean. Amitai is the continuation and perhaps the payoff, of my Teshuva.

In a world devoid of core values, and where, outside of Israel, Judaism's best days may well be behind us, Rabbi Buchwald, you are saving lives, or at least souls. I don't know what kind of life I would have had if you hadn't introduced me to Judaism. I don't know what kind of life Amitai would have had, either. In future years, when, G-d willing, Maura and I are grandparents and our house is teeming with little children, the boys are wearing tsitsit and yarmulkes, and our house is full of Jewish *z'mirot* and joy, it will all be because you inspired me to re-embrace my religion.

The two greatest challenges facing the Jewish people today are the struggle against the spiritual destruction of our people, and preserving the State of Israel, the embodiment of our physical existence. You are doing exactly what has to be done, and answering the challenges of our generation. You are my personal hero, and my personal inspiration. Whenever I face challenges in life, I think about how you started the National Jewish Outreach Program in a tiny office, with the goal of bringing the Jewish people back to their heritage. Seven years later, you are doing it, with remarkable success.

Well, I'll sign off now. Thank you for everything, Rabbi Buchwald. But especially, for the fact that Maura and I are privileged to say the *Shm'a* to Amitai every night.

Shalom and L'hitraot,

Adam Ruskin

Adam Ruskin is an attorney residing in Jerusalem.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

Beginners Shabbat Luncheons
cost $15
Jan. 1, Feb. 5, Mar. 5

Beginners Schmooze
Mondays, 8:15 PM
Dec. 6, Jan. 3, Feb. 7, Mar. 7

Beginners Shabbaton
Cost $30
Dec. 3-4

Beginners Parties
Chanukah
Wednesday, Dec. 15, 1993
Purim
Thursday, Feb. 24, 1994

ENGAGEMENTS

Neva Aboudi and Daniel Bettinger
Bonnie Keehn and Ed Weintraub
Robin Levine and Paul Shainberg
Leslie Masuda and Peter Farkas
Emily Turchin and Michael Flamenbaum

MARRIAGES

Melissa Balkin and Meyer Dubitz
Eva Fishman and Arthur Bodek
Monica Fishof and Mark Singer
Susan Greenberg and Dr. Les Yermush
Melany Haber and Gerald Weiss
Tracy Hoberman and Sharon Kedar
Nancy Jacobs and Lenny Cohen
Marsha Perlmutter and Dr. Ira Keline
Carolyn Pleva and Mark Rowan
Dr. Fabienne Rottenberg and Moshe Greenberg
Elizabeth Shuchat and Rabbi Yaakov Schwartz
Shelley Zelin and Victor Megerman

BIRTHS

Karen and Stuart Adler, on the birth of a boy, Noah Daniel
Robin and Steve Apple, on the birth of a girl, Emily Rose
Barbara Berson and Ed Weinberg, on the birth of a boy, Shmaryahu Yisrael
Meira and Tom Fleisch, on the birth of a girl, Julia Elizabeth
Judith Garmaise and Boris Schlossberg, on the birth of a girl, Ariella Renee
Micaela and Yigal Herari, on the birth of a boy, Saleh Chai
Miriam and Akiva Lane, on the birth of a girl, Tova Sima
Lisa and Jerry Marcus, on the birth of a boy, Yosef Baruch
Debbie and Mark Rosalimsky, on the birth of a boy, Ari Chaim
Sara and Mordechai Schandelson, on the birth of twins, a girl, Chaya Rachel, and a boy, Moshe David
Randee Schottenstein and Dr. Alan Gordin, upon the arrival of a girl, Atara Yonina
Toby and Bruce Simon, on the birth of a boy, Yitzchak Yoel
Ganit and Michael Steifman, on the birth of a girl, Danielle Madeline
Leslie Taylor and Reuven Helfgot, on the birth of a girl, Rebekah Tamar

TZEITCHEM L'SHALOM (To live and/or study in Israel)

Melissa Jorslemon
Yaffa and Nachum Cohen

CONDOLENCES

Dr. Lynn Davidman, on the loss of her father, Sam Davidman
Alan Forman, on the loss of his father, Jacob Forman
Nan Levy, on the loss of her father, Mel Berman
Joe Morris, on the loss of his father, Max Morris

CONGRATULATIONS

To Elaine Hausman, on her successful sculpture exhibition at the Paris-New York Kent Gallery
To Beryl Korot and Steve Reich, for their acclaimed opera "The Cave"

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Saturday, November 20th (VAYETZE)
Daf Yomi.....:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:30 p.m.
Mincha.....4:15 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Wednesday.....6:20 p.m.

Thursday November 25th (Thanksgiving)
Morning Services.....7:05 & 8:30 a.m.

Friday, November 26th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:13 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:20 p.m.

Saturday, November 27th (VAYISHLACH)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:25 p.m.
Mincha.....4:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, December 3rd
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:11 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:15 p.m.

Saturday, December 5th (VAYESHEVE)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:25 p.m.
Mincha.....4:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha & Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Wednesday, December 8th
Kindle First Chanukah Candle at.....5:00 p.m.

Thursday & Friday, December 9th & 10th
Chanukah morning services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.

Friday, December 10th
Kindle Chanukah candles.....4:00 p.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:11 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:15 p.m.
Synagogue Chanukah Dinner

Saturday, December 11th (MEKETZ)
Hashkomah Minyan.....7:40 a.m.
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:10 p.m.
Mincha.....4:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv Only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.
Light Chanukah Candles

Sunday December 12th
Chanukah Morning Services.....7:00 & 8:30 a.m.
Monday December 13th
Chanukah Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.
Tuesday December 14th
Chanukah & Rosh Chodesh Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.
Wednesday December 15th
Chanukah & Rosh Chodesh Morning.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.
Thursday December 16th
Chanukah Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.

Friday, December 17th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:22 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:25 p.m.

Saturday, December 18th (VAYIGASH)
Daf Yomi.....5:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Class.....3:25 p.m.
Mincha.....4:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, December 24th Asarah Betevet Fast day
Fast begins.....6:06 a.m.
Morning Services.....7:00 & 8:30 a.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:05 p.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:15 p.m.
Fast Concludes.....5:04 p.m.

Saturday, December 25th (VAYECHI)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:25 p.m.
Mincha.....4:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:25 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, December 31st
Morning Services.....7:10 & 8:30 a.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:20 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:25 p.m.

Saturday, January 1st (SHEMOT)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:30 p.m.
Mincha.....4:15 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:30 p.m.
Maariv Only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, January 7th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:27 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 8th (VAERA)
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:40 p.m.
Mincha.....4:25 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:35 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Thursday, January 13th Rosh Chodesh Shevat
Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.

Friday, January 14th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:34 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:40 p.m.

Shabbat, January 15th (BO)
Shabbat Morning services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:45 p.m.
Mincha.....4:30 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:45 p.m.
Maariv only Monday - Thursday.....6:20 p.m.

Monday, January 17th (Martin Luther King Day)
Morning Services.....7:05 & 7:50 a.m.

Friday, January 21st
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:42 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:45 p.m.

Shabbat, January 22nd (BISHALACH)
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....3:55 p.m.
Mincha.....4:40 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....4:50 p.m.
Maariv only Mon-Thurs.....6:20 p.m.

Thursday, January 27 Tu B'Shevat
Morning Services.....7:05 & 7:50 a.m.

Friday, January 28th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:51 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....4:55 p.m.

Saturday, January 29th (YITHRO)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:05 p.m.
Mincha.....4:50 p.m.
Daily Mincha & Maariv.....5:00 p.m.
Maariv only.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, February 4th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....4:59 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:05 p.m.

Shabbat, February 5th (MISHPATIM)
Shabbat Morning Service.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:10 p.m.
Mincha.....4:55 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:10 p.m.
Maariv only Mon-Thurs.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, February 11th Rosh Chodesh Adar
Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:40 a.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:08 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:15 p.m.

Shabbat, February 12th (TERUMAH - SHEKALIM) Rosh Chodesh
Hashkama Minyan.....7:40 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:20 p.m.
Mincha.....5:05 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:15 p.m.
Maariv only Mon-Thurs.....6:20 p.m.

Friday, February 18th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:16 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:20 p.m.

Shabbat, February 19th (TZAVEH - ZACHOR)
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:30 p.m.
Mincha.....5:15 p.m.
additional reading of Parshat Zachor follows Mincha
Daily Mincha and Maariv (Mon-Wed).....5:25 p.m.
Maariv only Tues - Wed.....6:20 p.m.

Monday February 21 President's Day
Morning Services.....7:05 & 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, February 24th Taanit Esther
Fast begins.....5:26 a.m.
Morning Services.....7:00 & 7:30 a.m.
Mincha.....5:15 p.m.
Fast ends.....6:12 p.m.
Maariv and Megillah reading.....6:10 p.m.
Late Megillah reading.....9:15 p.m.

Friday, February 25th Purim
Morning Services and Megillah reading.....6:30 & 7:45 a.m.
Late Megillah reading.....12:45 p.m.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:25 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 26th (KI TISA)
Daf Yomi
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:35 p.m.
Mincha.....5:20 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:35 p.m.
Maariv Only.....6:20 p.m.
This is the last week of Maariv only

Friday, March 4th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:32 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:35 p.m.

Saturday, March 5th (VAYAKEL PARSHAT PARAH)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.

Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:45 p.m.
Mincha.....5:30 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:40 p.m.

Friday, March 11th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:40 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:45 p.m.

Saturday, March 12th (PEKUDEI) PARSHAT HACHODESH
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 a.m.
Talmud and Bible Classes.....4:50 p.m.
Mincha.....5:35 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:50 p.m.

Sunday, March 13th Rosh Chodesh Nisan
Morning Services.....7:00 & 8:30 a.m.

Friday, March 18th
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:48 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....5:55 p.m.

Shabbat, March 19th (VAYIKRA)
Daf Yomi.....8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 p.m.
Mincha followed by Shabbat HaGadol Drasha....4:50....5:10 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv.....5:55 p.m.

Thursday, March 24th
Morning Services.....6:45 & 7:45 a.m.
The first born are invited to complete a Talmudic Tractate after each service so that they may be able to eat on what would normally be a fast day for them.

Friday, March 25th
The proper time to burn Chametz before.....10:49 A.M.
Kindle Shabbat Candles.....5:55 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat.....6:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 26th (TZAV - Shabbat Hagadol)
Morning Services.....6:45 a.m.
The latest time to eat Chametz.....9:34 a.m.
The latest time to destroy Chametz.....10:46 a.m.
Kindle Yom Tov Candles not before.....6:55 p.m.
Mincha and Kabbalat Yom Tov.....5:50 p.m.
followed by the first Seder.....p.m.