



. . . from Rabbi Keller

We find ourselves in the month of November with cooler temperatures and the anticipation of Thanksgiving at the end of the month. However, our Jewish calendar is rather quiet. We've celebrated the High Holidays, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah, but now we enter a time of several weeks without any "major" Jewish holidays; the entire secular month of November is void of Jewish holidays. The closest holiday is Chanukkah which begins on December 4th. So, how is it possible that we don't have a Jewish holiday for this long?

Well...by examining the calendar a little more closely, we find that indeed there are holidays throughout the month: Shabbat.

How could we possibly forget the great weekly celebration of rest: our opportunity to recharge, refuel, and spend quality time with our family and friends? It might be easy to overlook Shabbat because, after all, it does come every week, so why pay the same amount of attention to Shabbat as we do for the "bigger" holidays? The answer is simple: Shabbat is our constant, consistent available opportunity to withdraw from the craziness in our lives into a time of peace and rest.

Abraham Joshua Heschel famously writes in his book The Sabbath, that Jewish ritual becomes our 'architecture in time' where *Shabbat* is our great 'palace.' Heschel wrote, "Think of Shabbat, then, as the destination of a weekly pilgrimage that will be seen differently, depending on our approach. Every week, here at home, wherever 'home' may be, we revisit Shabbat, our palace."

We have a chance to escape from the everyday, from the mundane in our lives and visit this palace in time. Shabbat is a very special time that can be celebrated in a variety of different ways. Traditionally, we can light candles, attend services, and engage in all the proper rituals. As Reform Jews who make informed choices, we can also celebrate Shabbat in our own way; by doing something special that we would not do during the rest of the week. Although some of the practices may not be traditional forms of celebration, we can still make a separation and spend some quality time in our Shabbat palaces.

Even though these days leading up to Chanukkah may seem like they are void of Jewish holidays, we should all find ways to make Shabbat a special sanctuary in time in our lives. If you have not truly celebrated Shabbat recently, here is your chance to live in your own personal palace...even if it is only for one day. The beauty of Judaism is that we can make time holy; we can create a unique space for ourselves and for our families.

Lisa and I wish you a wonderful November, filled with tranquility, peace and meaningful Shabbatot.

L'Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Keller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.