

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Rabbi Jeffrey M. Cohen's article "Abraham's Hospitality" (XXXIV:3, July-September 2006) offered some fascinating comparisons and contrasts for the reader to consider. Whereas I agree with the substance of his creative interest in these two biblical figures of Abraham and Melchizedek, there are a couple of points that I want to bring to your readers' attention. Rabbi Cohen notes that Abraham also served wine in the meal that he presented to the strangers (page 168). While it is true that Melchizedek's hospitality was formal and scanty, I must point out that Abraham also did not invite the strangers into his home (tent). Indeed, the Torah refers to Abraham standing while serving his guests while they were seated "under the tree" (Gen. 18:8).

Israel C. Stein
Bridgeport, CT

Sir,

The essay by Gerardo Sachs on "David Dances – Michal Scoffs" (XXXIV:4, October-December 2006) is rich with detail, but it avoids the full impact of the extraordinary climax to the tragic relationship between David the King and his wife Michal. It is important to note that the Bible is making an important judgment in stating that they had no children. Had David and Michal been blessed with a son, the pedigree of this prince would have guaranteed his succession to the throne. He would have carried royalty in his blood from both his father and his mother, a daughter of King Saul. It is clear, however, that David's rule and his posterity were doomed both by history and by God's disapproval of his actions. I refer to his complicity in the death of Uriah and his adulterous relationship with Bath-sheba.

Michal's disapproval of David's conduct during the procession of the Ark is complemented by the prophet Nathan's condemnation of David (II Sam. 12:7). Perhaps David's actions throughout his reign raise many questions about his character, and this explains why he and Michal could not and would not bear an heir. In I Samuel 18:20 the Bible tells us of Michal's youthful and passionate love for David. Indeed, the Scripture makes it clear that David never reciprocated with love for her. This confirms the author's comments that David treated her as an object, exploiting her for his own personal gain and access to the throne.

Israel C. Stein
Bridgeport, CT