



RABBI DANIEL LAPIN.COM  
..:MODERN PROBLEMS ..:ANCIENT SOLUTIONS

Thought Tools

## Shakespeare it Ain't

March 3, 2010

17th day of Adar, 5770

Volume III Issue #9

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Over four hundred American universities teach a course on “The Bible as Literature.” As a public service I urge you to save your tuition money.

I believe that there really are only two ways to view the Bible. Either it is the word of God and each and every letter holds transcendent meaning for my life. Alternatively, it is second-rate literature that has undergone appallingly poor editing and that has inexplicably survived through the ages. In other words, secularize the Bible if you wish but don't descend to duplicity by pretending it is wonderful literature.

Let me offer just one of many examples of how the Bible does not match the norms of outstanding literature.

Open your Bible to Exodus chapter 39. Go ahead and count how many times in that chapter we are informed that some detail in the building of the Tabernacle was in compliance with God's commandment.

Did you find all ten instances? Can you believe it? There are only forty-three verses so we see one “they did as God commanded” approximately every four verses. C'mon, you recognize that as literature this would earn a failing grade. A good writer would have concisely provided all the instructions followed by a verse something like this:

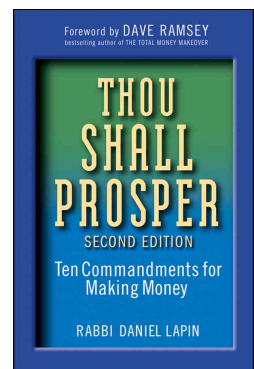
“And they constructed everything mentioned above strictly in accordance with God's commandments to Moses, and I mean everything!”

Those of us who view the Bible as God's word rather than as secular literature don't waste our time contemplating how we could improve it. Rather, we ask what lesson has God embedded in these verses as a guide for our daily lives. What is God's message to me in Exodus chapter 39? Why do I need to know that each consecutive detail was completed in accordance with God's wishes?

The final fifteen chapters in Exodus detailing the Tabernacle the Israelites built in the desert over three thousand years ago also refer to our own lives today. We each have the opportunity every single day, to build our personal lives, our business lives, our families and our communal organizations into houses of God.

## [Thou Shall Prosper:](#)

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And for a business, a family or an organization to be a house of God, it has to be both attractive and effective. If people are not attracted to it and it is a chaotic mess, it most certainly is not a house of God.

Exodus chapter 39 teaches us that to build something as attractive and effective as the Tabernacle was, we need to keep the end goal in mind while focusing meticulously on accomplishing the detailed elements of the plan along the way. Every few verses in Exodus 39, Scripture reminds us that each sequential step along the way was executed flawlessly.

Turbulent maelstroms swirl around the lives of most of us. Frenzied activity forces itself into our schedules. In our haste to reach a destination we fail to construct solid steps along our path.

Sometimes we race relationships along rather than attending to the correct development of each phase. Sometimes we impatiently take business steps without laying the foundation. Sometimes we expose our children to adult privileges before they have acquired the tools needed to deal with those privileges.

We can only imagine how eager the children of Israel were to build the Tabernacle after the sin of the Golden Calf. Their goal of reestablishing close connection with God was laudable and haste would have been understandable. Yet, precisely at this point in the narrative Scripture emphasizes the importance of sequence and precision.

During the last week I was privileged to teach many of Puget Sound's finest husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, lay leaders, pastors and business professionals. I imparted that one necessary principle of economic success is relating to others as fellow children of a loving God.

I describe other vital steps on the path to prosperity in my book, [Thou Shall Prosper: Ten Commandments for Making Money](#). So that everyone who needs it can benefit from this life-transforming book, I am offering the special back of room price to those of you who were unable to attend the uplifting conferences that I was honored to address.

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## Susan's Musings

This week's musing - [Flower Fraud](#)

To post comments and feedback, or to print, go to [www.susanlapin.com](http://www.susanlapin.com).  
You can also reach me at [susan@rabbidaniellapin.com](mailto:susan@rabbidaniellapin.com).

A few weeks ago, some delightful Shabbat guests presented us with a simple but striking flower arrangement. Six yellow roses stood in a long, narrow vase...

To read the rest of Susan's Musings click [here](#)

### [Ask the Rabbi](#)



Hi,

Thank you for giving me this space to help me clarify my thoughts.

My husband has a good job, he is an excellent provider. I am a good wife; I take care of him and our 2 little ones. He works in a job that needs him to travel every week.

I consider we are a good team. He works and provides. I stay home and take care of everything else.

The problem is when he asks me to go to work. He tells me all the time that I need to be out of the nest. He puts money in my night table every week. I don't have a credit card or checking account. He says that we are fine like this. I don't agree. I am the kind of woman that shops with coupons and looks for clearance sales. He doesn't appreciate the way I contribute to the family.

I feel very hurt when he pushes me to hard to go to work even though he has a good job. If he is not here during the week and I will be outside working, who is going to take care of our girls?

Please help. Thanks!

Gabriella

[See Rabbi Lapin's Answer](#)

[Ask a Question](#)



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Sundays 1-4 PST

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