

Rabbi David Wolpe's

# *Off The Pulpit*

March 5, 2015

## **Short!**

Mark Twain wrote of his experience in church: "I couldn't wait for him to get through. I had four hundred dollars in my pocket. I wanted to give that and borrow more to give. You could see greenbacks in every eye. But he didn't pass the plate, and it grew hotter and we grew sleepier. My enthusiasm went down, down, down — \$100 at a time, till finally when the plate came round I stole 10 cents out of it."

*Kol Hamosif Goreah* we say in Hebrew — all who add, subtract. The notion that the level of conviction rises with the number of words is contradicted by the Gettysburg Address and the Ten Commandments. Too much is just too much.

For close to 25 years I've sent 200 words

weekly to the NY Jewish Week. Sometimes the cuts I made bothered me, but mostly they were improvements. And people often read them to the end, in an age when Twitter begins to seem long winded.

There are definite virtues to length; some books, movies and speeches benefit from complications of plot, from the luxuriance of symbols and nuance. But for the most part, be blunt, be brief — be gone.

The Jews Cannot Rely on Miracles.

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.