

I apologize, but nothing came together usefully this week. For one week I shall console myself with the complete and somewhat startling commentaries of Joseph ibn Kaspi to both this and next week's parshiot:

From his Tirat Kesef

"I shall say nothing original with regard to these parshiot, and their subject matter is not essential (ein inyanam hekhreikhi), so the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn Ezra my predecessors suffice."

From his Metzaref L'kesef

"In the narratives of Terumah and Tetzveh, which together comprise the construction of the Mishkan and its accessories, what Maimonides ("the Guide") mentions as the foundational idea is sufficient. And since the foundational idea is that this is an imitation of the monarchs found among us, and it was the place for his deputy Moses to meet so to speak (al derekh mashal) with Him, all this as a sign and parable for the populace, what reason have we to seek reasons for the details, i.e the number of mats and the measurements, the likes of which have brought many to attribute (to the verses) intentions and statements not intended by their Author.

There is, however, no doubt that the primary categories have essential meaning, for example the categories "table" (shulkhan) and "covering" (kaporet), but I shall not explain them extensively, as they are also clear to those of understanding. I note only that I do not believe that the "ephod" and "choshen" (i.e., the urim v'tumim) are like any objects (keilim) found among us today, unlike the many of our nation who, seeing our failures and inadequacies at understanding the works of Moses, attribute our matters to him, when, as the Heavens rise above, so too are his actions above ours.