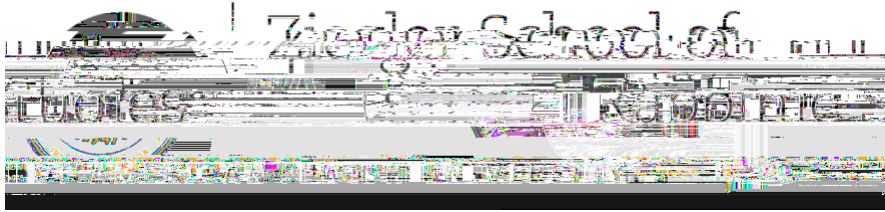academy of the arts in Jerusalem is named—as the master craftsman responsible for fabricating the Mishkan. In fact, as Kalman Bland argues in a book devoted to the subject, *The Artless Jew*, the prohibition of figurative art in Judaism is more perception than reality, and a modern perception at that, unknown to most Jews throughout our history.

Abraham Ibn Ezra, in a fascinating comment on this verse, provides a theory about the types of intellection marshalled by Betzalel to attain his task. Referring to the Torah's description of Betzalel in Ex. 31:3, *I have endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft,* Ibn Ezra comments: *"Endowed him,* just as Joshua bin Nun was endowed with a *divine spirit* (in Deut. 24:9), as it says, *a divine spirit rested upon him* (in Isa. 11:2). The meaning of *divine spirit* is a *spirit of wisdom and insight* (as it says in the aforementioned verse from Isaiah)." So far, this interpretation is standard fare for Ibn Ezra; he notices that the description of Betzalel is like the (chronologically later) description of Joshua. Building upon that observation, Ibn Ezra further notes a verse in Isaiah, which can help, clarify what divine spirit means in reference to Betzalel's abilities, too.

Ibn Ezra continues: "And *skill* refers to those forms that emerge in the back ventricle of the brain in the head, while the words *ability* and *knowledge* derive from the same root meaning *between*, which occurs in the ventricle between *ability* and *knowledge*, given that *ability* is situated in the rear ventricle between the ventricles of *ability* and *knowledge*, while *knowledge* is connected through conduits in the brain to the forehead by means of the senses." Here, Ibn Ezra applies scientific theories he knew in order to explicate the text. Specifically, he seems to be influenced by the harmonization of two respected understandings of human cognition from antiquity, those of Aristotle, whÄ

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