



KING SOLOMON AND THE BEE

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In this sweet retelling of a traditional Jewish tale, a lowly bee unexpectedly repays the kindness of a king by helping him solve a queen's difficult riddle.

Among the many fascinating kings of Israel, Solomon stands out. The son of King David and Bathsheba, Solomon ruled for nearly forty years, beginning about the year 970 B.C.E., and was responsible for building the first Temple in Jerusalem.

Solomon was renowned for his wisdom and was also famous as a magician, performing feats that others could neither explain nor understand. Solomon was said to understand all of the world's languages and to converse with animals, an accomplishment some say he shared with the Queen of Sheba. Though a powerful ruler, Solomon accepted help from the lowly bee in order to answer the queen's thorny question.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

While reading the book, consider introducing questions to your children such as:

- What qualities do you think made Solomon a great king?
- What attribute of King Solomon would you most like to have? Why?
- Would you prefer to be smart or wise?
- Can one be wise without being smart or smart without being wise?
- If you could talk to animals like King Solomon, what would you like to ask or tell them?

TZA'AR B'ALEI CHAYIM

Jewish tradition teaches consideration for all God's creatures. Solomon practiced the value of *tza'ar b'alei chayim* (literally, "the pain of living creatures"), by showing kindness to animals. The Torah (the first five books of the Bible) teaches that we must not cause pain and suffering to animals.

The Talmud (an ancient Jewish text of rabbinic laws, ethics and customs) states that we should own animals only if we can care for them and that we must feed animals before ourselves. What a great basis for discussion when children ask for a pet or need reminders to help care for one.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

The value of *tza'ar b'alei chayim* introduced in this book allows for some important discussions surrounding animals and the earth. Consider asking the following questions as you read:

- Why did God put animals on Earth?
- How would the world be different without any animals?
- Why is the proper treatment of animals such an important Jewish value?
- Are there birds in your neighborhood that might enjoy a new bird feeder or ducks in a nearby lake that might like the *challah* crumbs from last Shabbat? Pj