

Wisdom Bird

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What's the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

A Meeting of Great Minds

In this story, the Queen of Sheba journeys to Jerusalem to meet Solomon, the famous King of Israel from around 970 to 930 BCE. Solomon is widely known for building the Temple in Jerusalem and helping make peace with surrounding nations, but in this story, Sheba wants to determine his greatness for herself. "You have great knowledge," she says, "but show me what you can do with it." In other words, Sheba does not want to meet Solomon because he is an important leader, but because she wants to learn from him. This says as much about Sheba as it does about Solomon: Both are unique figures of their time, seekers of knowledge and wisdom.

A Little Bird Told Me

Solomon was famous not only for his wisdom but also for magical powers. Great power can be dangerous, though. Solomon, normally wise, is so eager to prove his point that he ignores how cruel building a palace of beaks would be. "The birds are meant to last forever," Solomon realizes in this story, "but I am changing them." Jewish tradition teaches us to preserve life on earth, as the hoopoe points out to Solomon. And that very lesson reminds both Solomon and Sheba of another important truth: Teachers can come in unlikely forms. As it says in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Ancestors*, an ancient collection of rabbinic sayings), "Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone." Even a small bird may offer an important lesson. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/wisdombird.

Course Correction

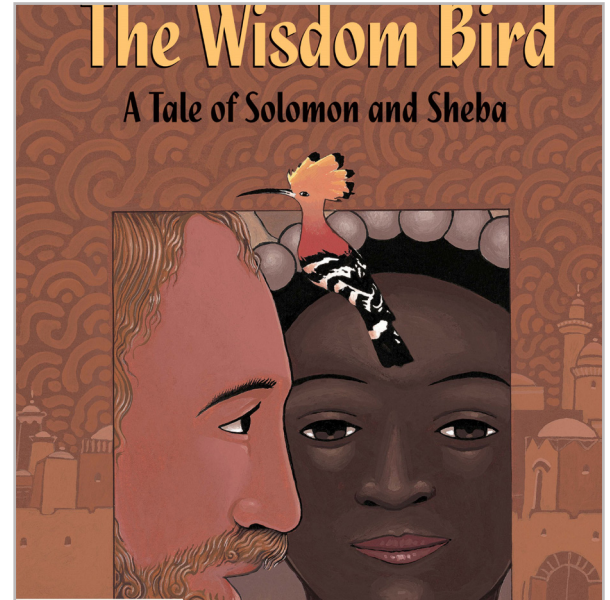
When presented with new information, Solomon changes his mind. Sheba applauds him, and well she should: "It is better to break a promise than to do something that is wrong." Changing our minds in order to do what's right is part of the Jewish concept of *teshuvah*, Hebrew for "returning." When we change our actions to do the right thing, we are returning to our best self. No one is right all the time — not even King Solomon! The key to true wisdom lies in admitting when we're on the wrong path and being willing to correct our course.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

Both King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were known for their wisdom. How were they wise? How were they unwise?

The hoopoe taught Solomon that we can learn from anyone, even from a little bird. What is something that you learned from a surprising source?

When have you changed course to do the right thing?



HANDS ON!



Create Your Own Crown

In this story, many characters wear crowns — not just kings and queens! Make your own crown to wear with pride.



Supplies

Sturdy paper

Tape

Scissors

Decorative items: stickers, feathers, beads, and so on

Cut the paper into a long strip (you may need to tape two sheets together), then trim the strip so that it fits neatly around your head. Decorate it as you wish, then tape it to fit. *Tada!* A headpiece fit for a king...or a bird.