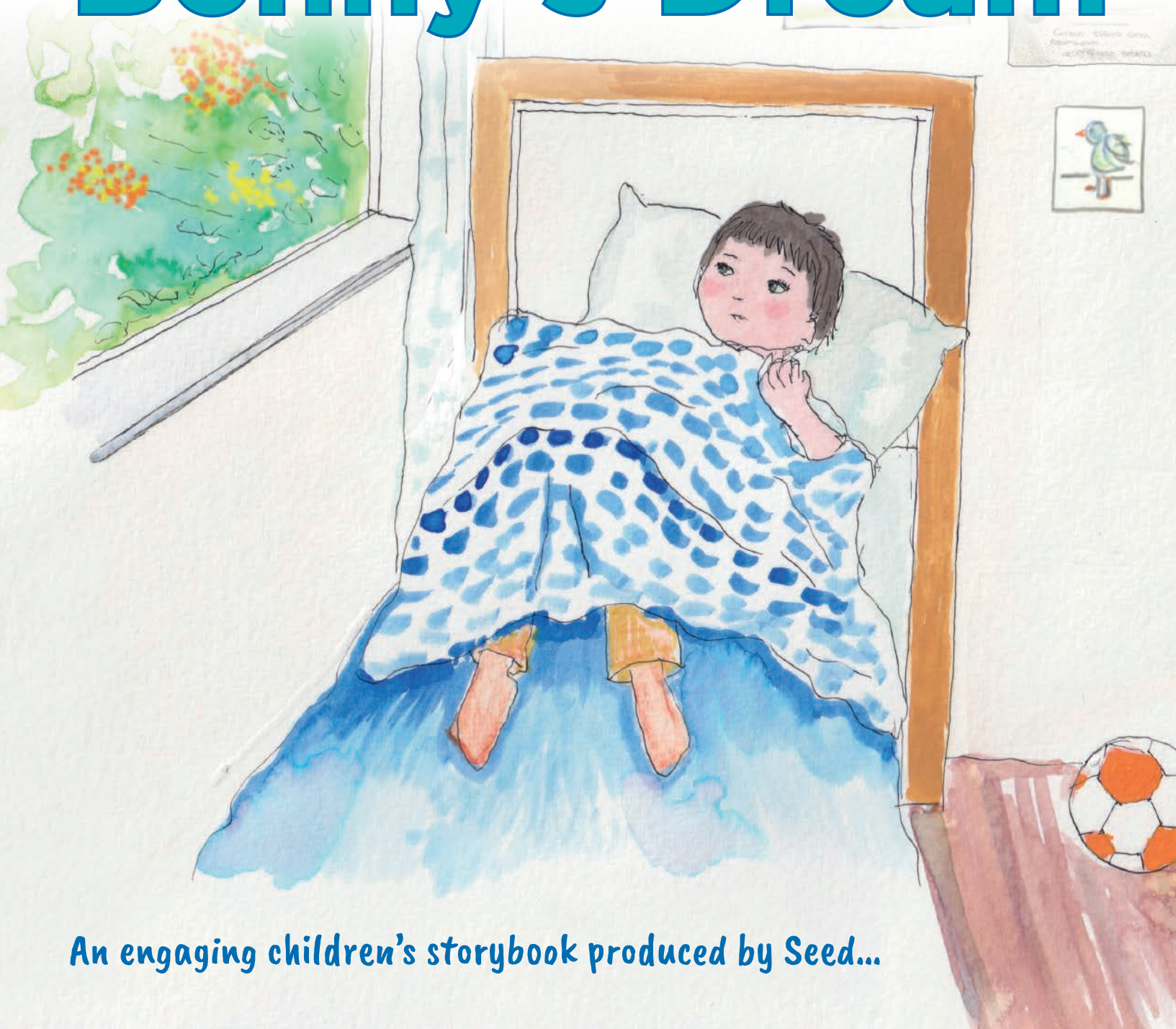


Benny's Dream



An engaging children's storybook produced by Seed...

Lilui nishmas Chaya bas Sara, Charlotte Shein –
a talented and dedicated teacher and very special person.

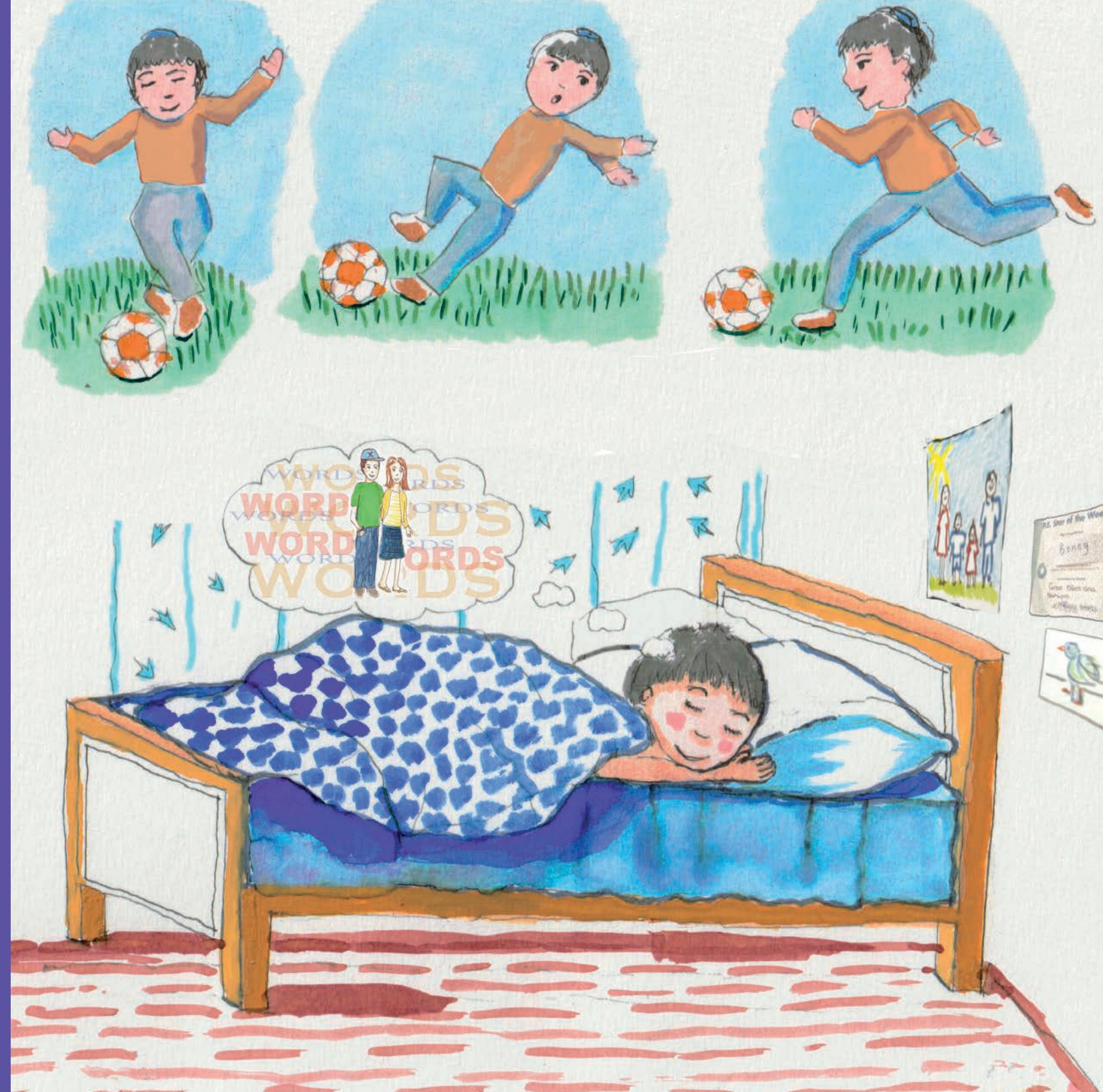


This book was written by Rabbi Daniel Fine
and illustrated by Anna Goldberg



Benny is ten years old. He has short brown hair and warm green eyes. Benny has a lot of energy and loves running around and playing sports. He gets quite tired at night. Do you know why? It's because he runs around so much during the day. Benny doesn't have any trouble falling asleep. He just lies down, puts his head on the pillow and quickly falls asleep.

One night as Benny slept comfortably in his bed, he had a very odd dream. In his dream, his Mummy and Daddy told him that the next day he would be able to see the impact of all the words he said. If Benny said something nice about other people, he would be able to see exactly how they felt but if he said something not nice about someone, he would be able to see the impact of these unkind words too. Can you imagine what this could look like?



When Benny awoke in the morning, he began to think about his dream. 'Can I really know what people think when I say things to them?' he thought.



With thoughts about the dream still on his mind, Benny got dressed and rushed downstairs for breakfast. Benny loves breakfast, it's his favourite meal of the day. As Benny loves running around and playing so much sport, he needs all the energy that breakfast can give him. Benny always has a full bowl of cereal, and sometimes some toast too. He loves spreading thick, sticky jam on his toast, and still has room to eat more toast with chocolate spread. Benny really loves breakfast!

Benny was about to start pouring his favourite cereal when he noticed that the box was actually empty. Isn't it somewhat frustrating when the cereal box is empty? Especially when it's your favourite cereal.



Feeling disappointed and upset, Benny exclaimed, 'I can't believe someone finished my favourite cereal. Why didn't they tell me or buy a new box?'. Just then he noticed his sister Ella getting embarrassed. Her face started to go red.



Maybe my dream last night is coming true. I can really see the effect of my words on Ella. She was so embarrassed because of what I said.' Benny decided to forget about his cereal and have a bagel instead.



When he got to school, Benny saw his friend Adam in the corridor. Adam was looking a bit upset. Benny put his arm around him and said, 'It's great to see you, Adam.' Adam's frown turned into a smile and they walked happily to the classroom together.



Benny noticed that his words had changed how Adam was feeling. Again, Benny's dream came into his mind and he thought about the words his parents has said in the dream. Maybe it really was coming true.



Benny decided to test his dream one last time. Lunchtime in school is very busy. All the children sit and have their lunch at long tables in the big school hall. Benny sat near the end of the table and was eating his sandwiches and apple. He always has chocolate spread sandwiches for lunch, although every now and again he asks for cheese.

Benny noticed that his friend Simon had forgotten his lunch. He felt bad that Simon was hungrily watching all the other children eating lots of yummy food. As Benny looked around the big lunch hall, he spotted that Adam had a huge bag of crisps in his lunch bag but Adam hadn't noticed that Simon had no food.



Benny wanted to shout across the lunch tables to Adam to make him give some crisps to Simon before they all got eaten. He opened his mouth wide to bellow out Simon's name above all the noise in the Lunch Hall. Suddenly, he stopped, shut his mouth, and thought about what he was doing.

Benny realised that if he would shout at Adam, Adam would feel bad. Instead, Benny politely went up to the teacher and explained the situation. The teacher made sure that Simon had lunch.

What would you have done if you had noticed Simon without any lunch and Adam with a big bag of crisps?



That's how Benny's day continued. When he called out in class he saw that his teacher was upset. When he helped his friend with his classwork he saw that his friend was happy.



Normally when Benny comes home from school he sits on the couch and has a short rest. Afterward, Benny tells his Mummy about everything that has happened to him that day – what happened during lessons, during break-time, and of course how much he ran around. But today was different. When Benny came home from school he immediately told his Mummy about the dream and how each time he said something to someone that day he saw how the person felt. ‘My dream came true!’ said Benny excitedly. Mummy smiled and gave Benny a hug. Then she explained, ‘Benny, words are very powerful. You don’t need a dream to see that when you speak in a kind and friendly way to someone they become happy and when you speak unkindly to someone they feel sad. You just need to look at the person you’re talking to and you will see the power of your words.’

You can also notice how people react to your words and how they feel. Just try it and see.



In Jewish thought, speech is about much more than just the basic conveying of ideas and information. Major Torah stories involving speech do not conform to the Western understanding and perception of speech. God 'speaks the world into existence,' God speaks to Adam and the serpent speaks to Eve.

In Jewish thought speech is creative. Just as God created the world from nothing, we create finite words from near-infinite thoughts. When we speak we are emulating the Divine and expressing our Divine spark.

Therefore, we must be extra careful with our words and communication, which is why the Torah cautions against hurtful words and spreading negative gossip. Here is a checklist to think about:

- Do I use speech to construct and encourage others?
- How many positive words do I say each day?
- Do I listen to others attentively?
- Do I avoid badmouthing others?

Can I work on achieving progress in the above four areas?

The gift of speech presents a major opportunity to uplift the lives of others and have a positive impact on them.

For the Jewish Interactive Clean Speech game visit:

<https://jitap.net/activities/gf4j/play/seed-clean-speech-project>



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