THE DOT ON THE שִׁין



By

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לזכר נשמת נדב בן אהוביאל ומלה

In loving memory of Nadav Ezra *z"l*

אוֹת

Ot is the Hebrew word for letter

Written and illustrated
by Mordechai Pinchas/Marc Michaels
Sofer Sta"M

with great thanks to Dr Seuss

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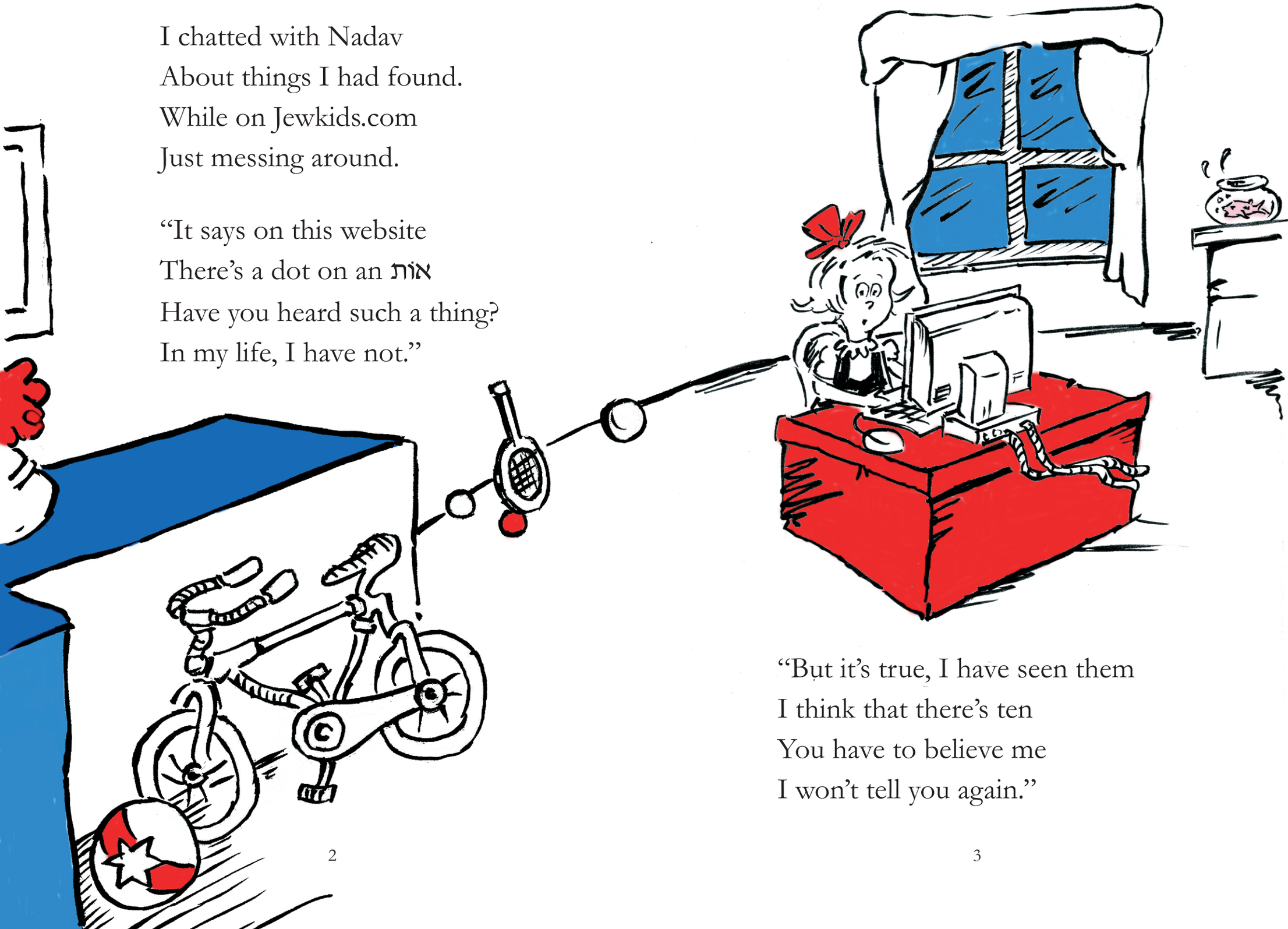
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The sun did not shine.
It was too wet to play.
So we surfed on the web.
All that cold, cold, wet day.

I chatted with Nadav
About things I had found.
While on Jewkids.com
Just messing around.

"It says on this website
There's a dot on an אות
Have you heard such a thing?
In my life, I have not."



"But it's true, I have seen them
I think that there's ten
You have to believe me
I won't tell you again."



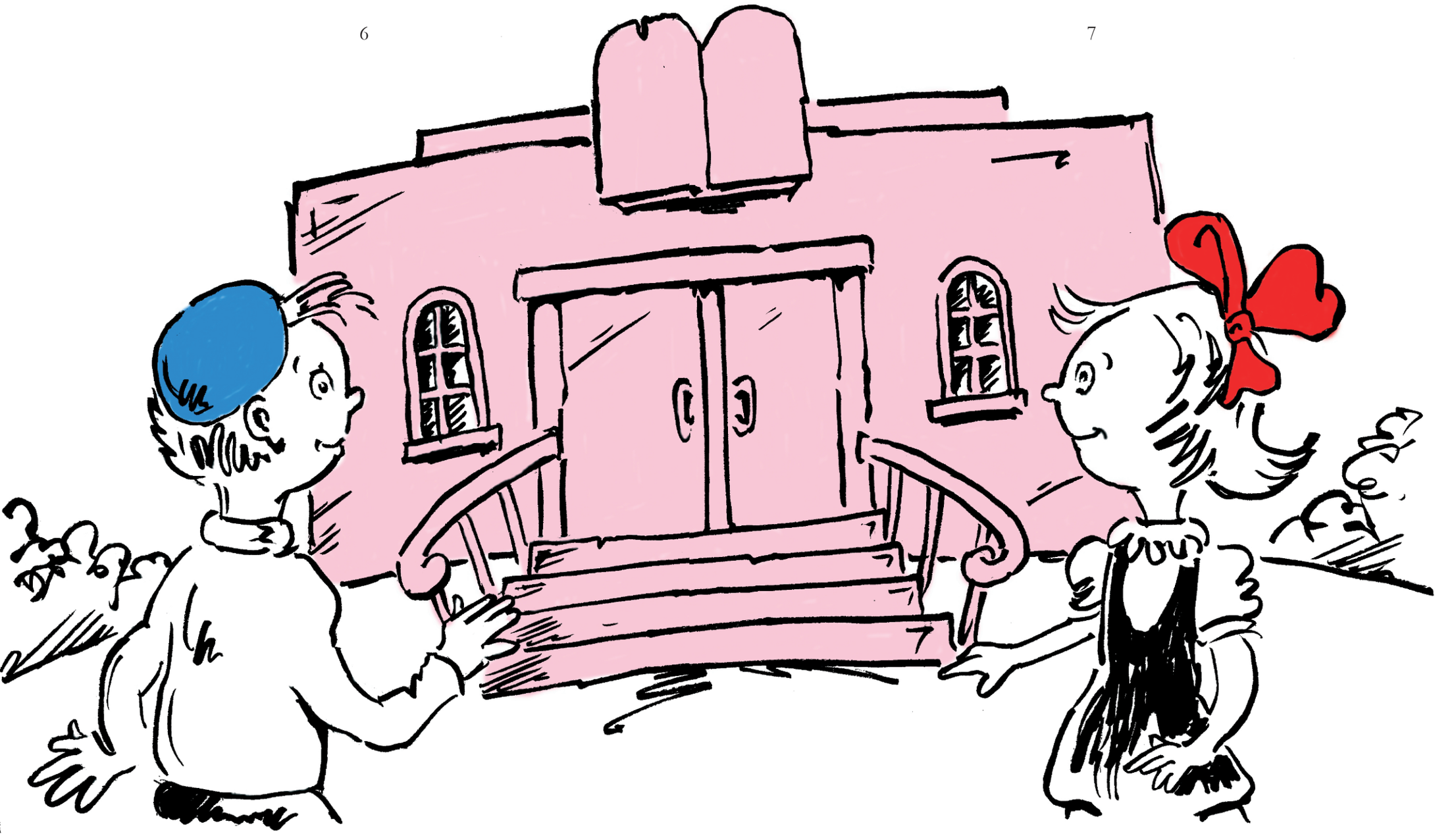
"I don't want to argue
For years we've been pals.
But I just don't believe you
TORAHs never have vowels.

I won't ever believe you.
Won't!
Won't!
Won't!
Won't!
I'll go ask the Rabbi
Just see if I don't."



That week after SHUL
We both stayed behind.
To ask Rabbi Goldberg
To see if he'd mind ...

... showing us both the TORAH
And finding the place
With a dot on the אות
So I wouldn't lose face.



He smiled at us kindly,
"We don't need to look far
The first one's next week
In PARSHAT LECH L'CHA!"

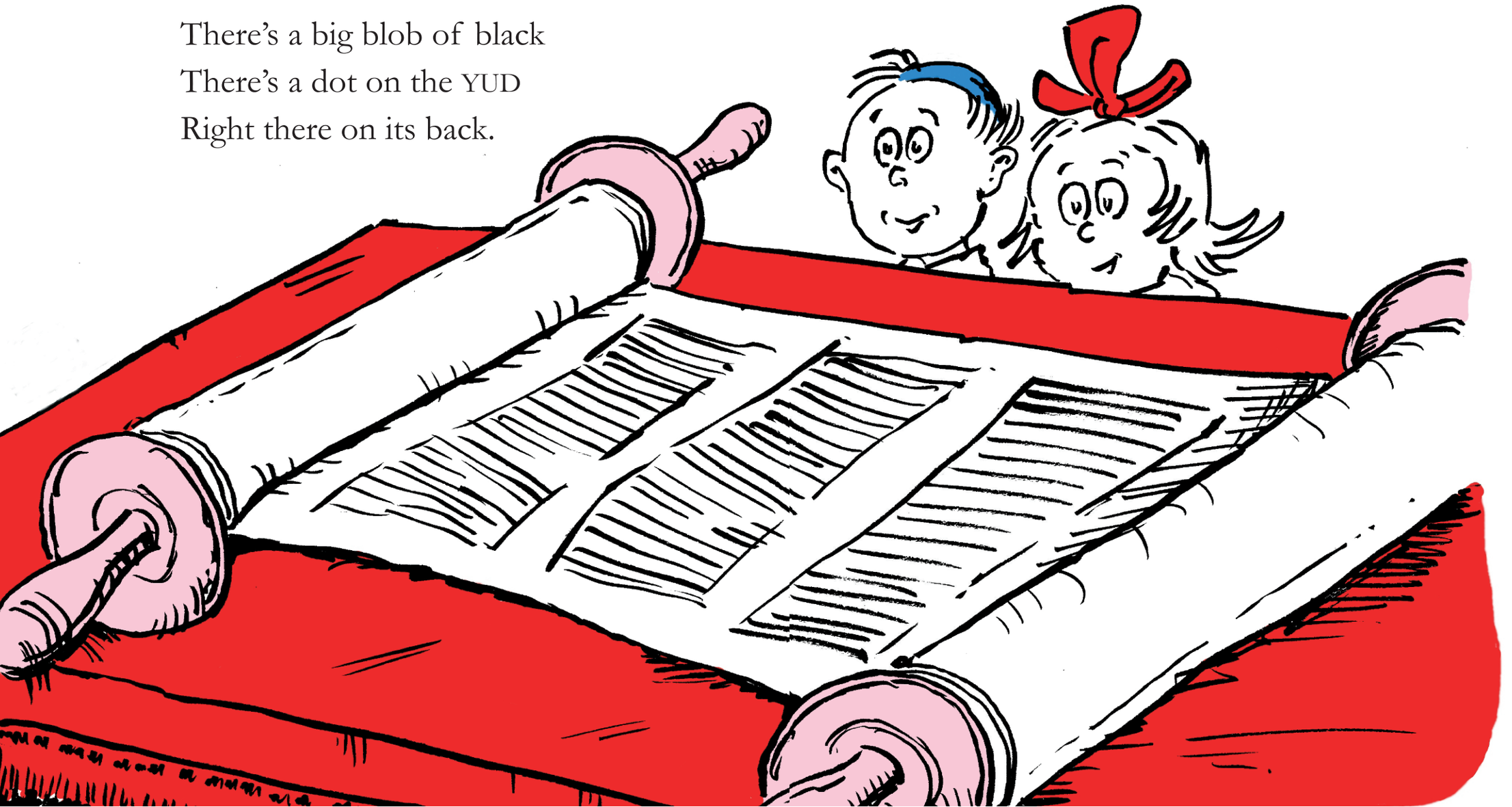


"They really are there,"
I cried out with joy.
"Yes there's a dot on an אות
My dear girl and boy."

So we each grabbed a handle
Then we roll and we roll.
To get to the first time
There are dots in the scroll.

And there on the letter
There's a big blob of black
There's a dot on the YUD
Right there on its back.

"Are you really quite sure
That's a dot on that אות
I just can't believe it,
I think it is not."



"The scribe wrote a vowel there
Because he forgot.
Or maybe the ink spilled
And that's just a spot."

Said the Rabbi, "My child
It's supposed to be there
It's a dot on an אוֹת
And it's really quite rare.

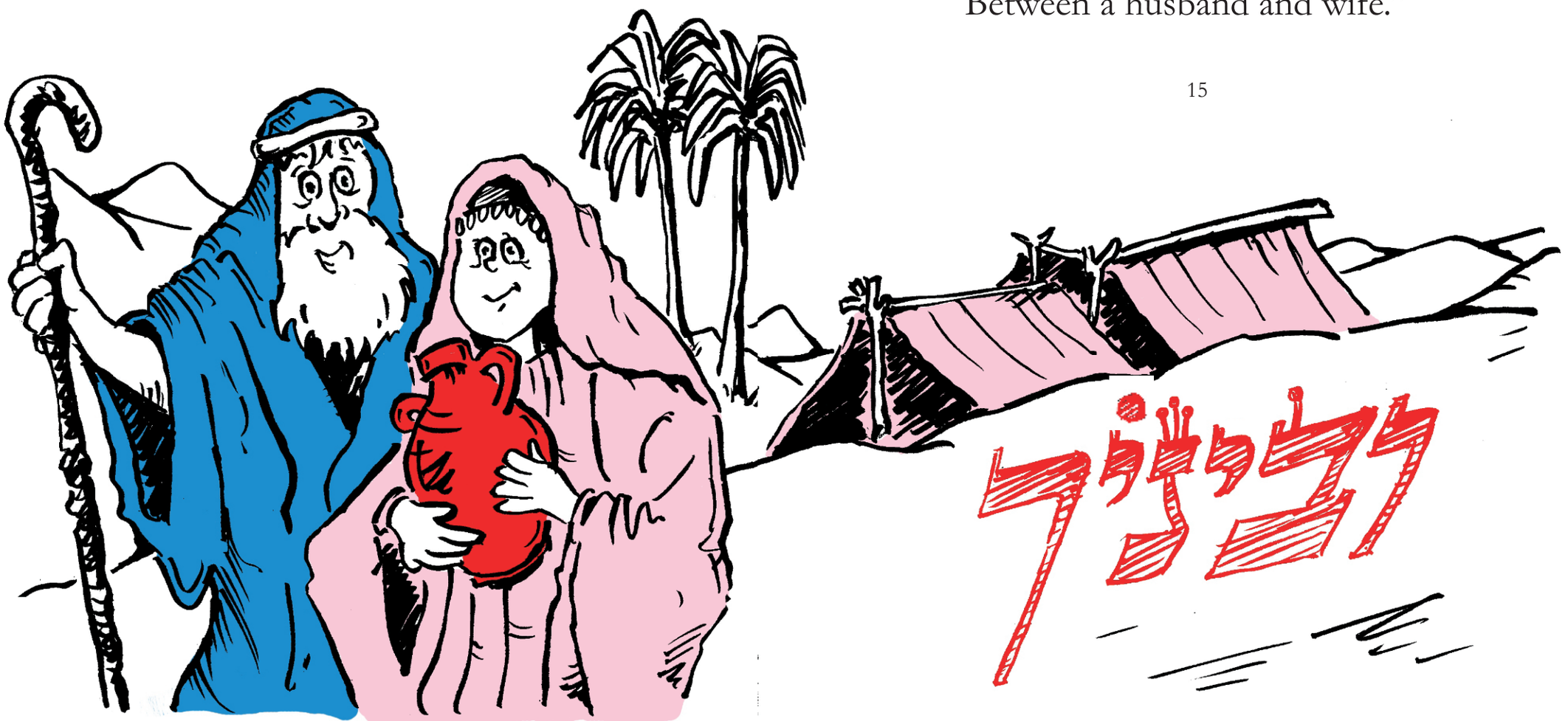
The scribe writes it in
Most deliberately
It's in all the rules
Just as plain as can be."



"This one is the first one
It says U'VEYNECHA
To let GOD be the judge
Between Abraham and Sarah."

"So why is it there?
And what does it mean?
Why does a dot on an אות
Have to be seen?"

"This dot on the אות
Teaches a lesson in life.
That no-one should interfere
Between a husband and wife."



"Show us some more
More letters with dots!"
But he closed up the TORAH
And he said, "I cannot.

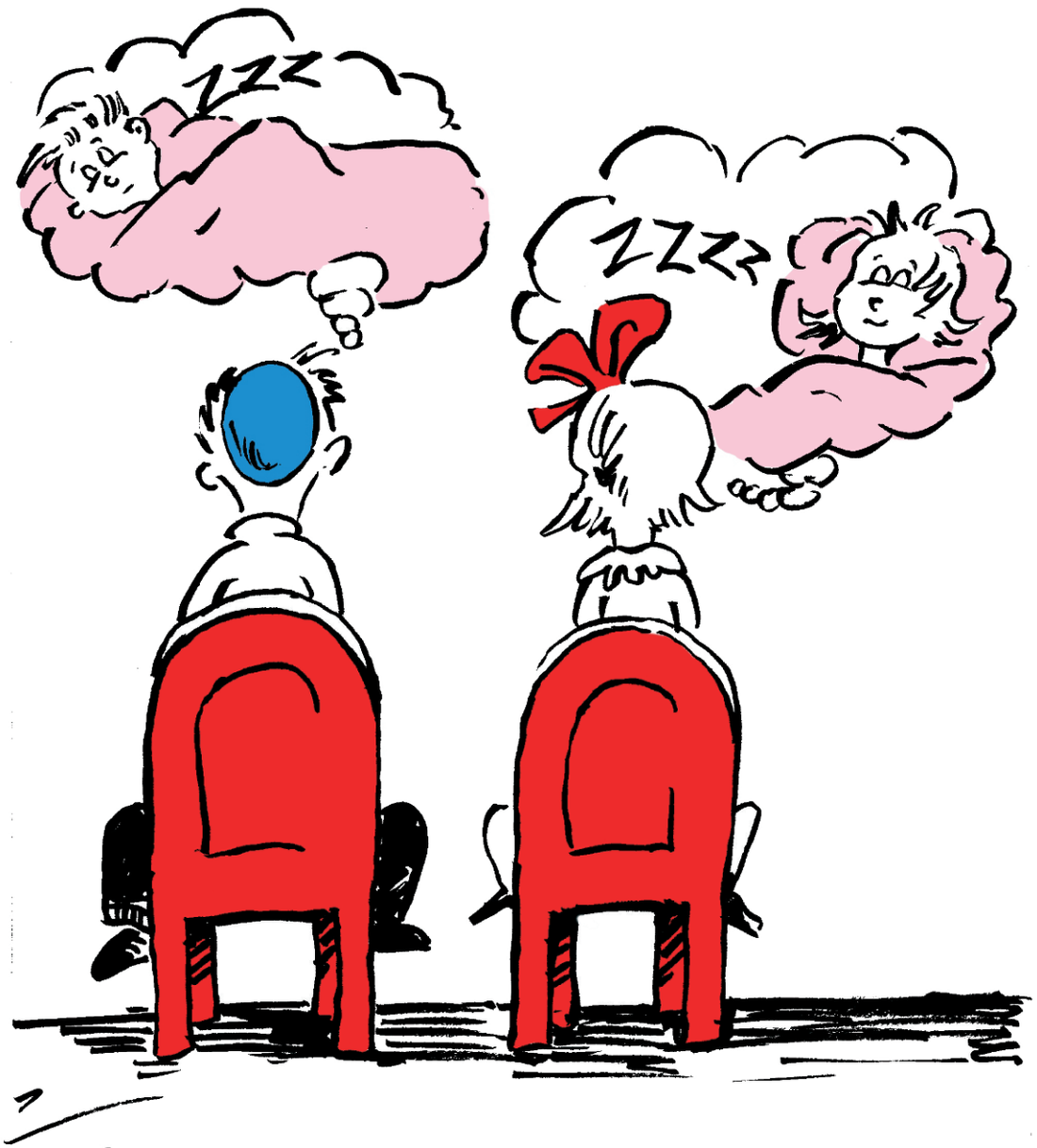
We've rolled quite enough
And we don't want to miss
Setting the place
For our MINCHA service.

If there's a dot on an אות
I'll let you take a peek.
But you'll just have to come
To our SHUL once a week.

There's ten to be seen
And you both need not fear.
We'll cover them all
In ... only a year!"



"Every week at the SHUL
Don't you think we'll get bored?"
"Could be", said Nadav,
"but we'll be assured ...



... of seeing the letters
With dots on their head."
"I guess that we'll come.
We won't stay in bed!"

So that's how our Rabbi
got us to the SHUL.
Every single SHABBAT
For us was the rule.

And at the end of the service.
Every once in a while.
He'd open the TORAH
And give us a smile.

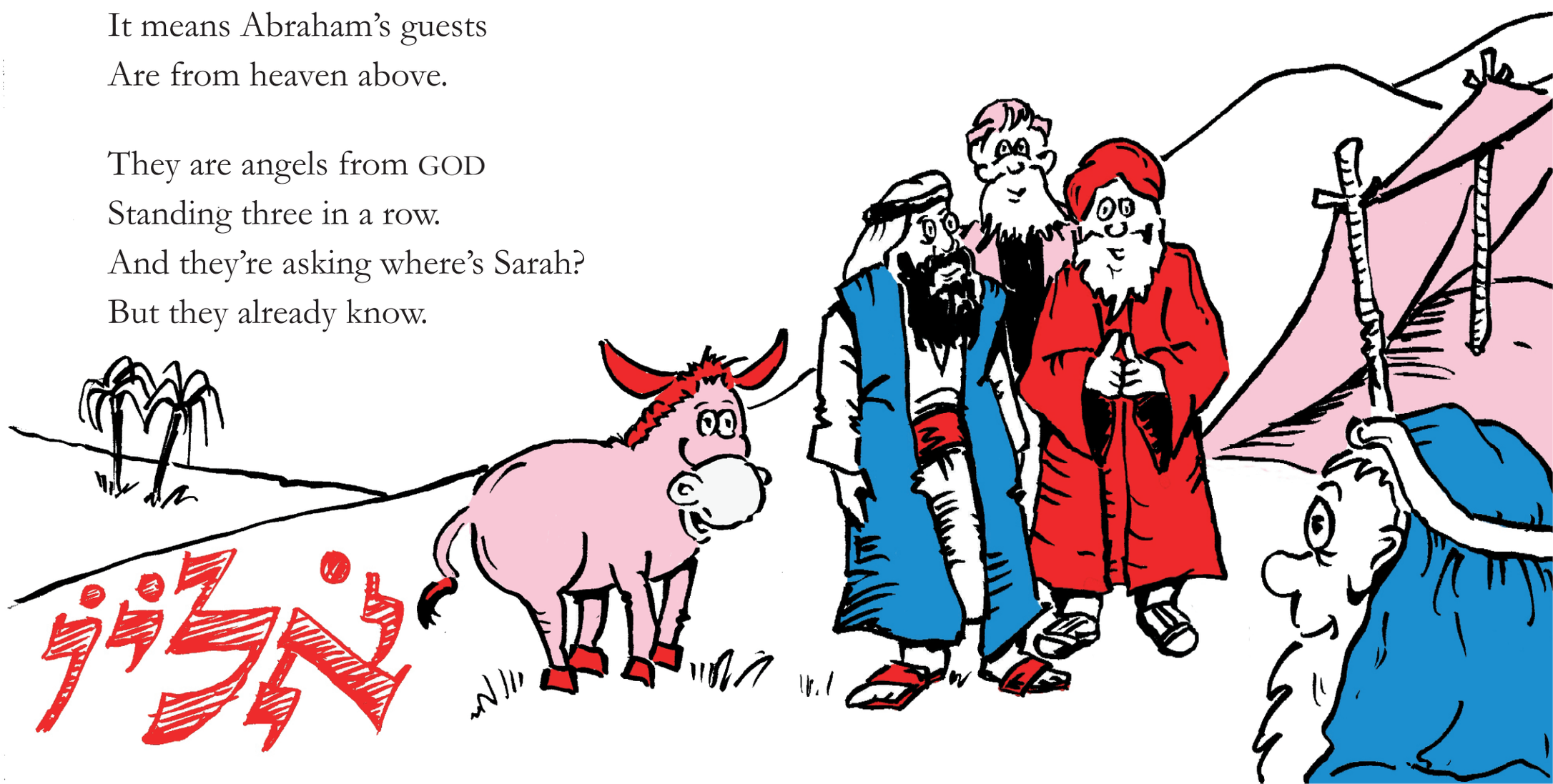
"There's one here this week,"
He'd tell us with pride.
We'd shuffle up close
And we'd both look inside.

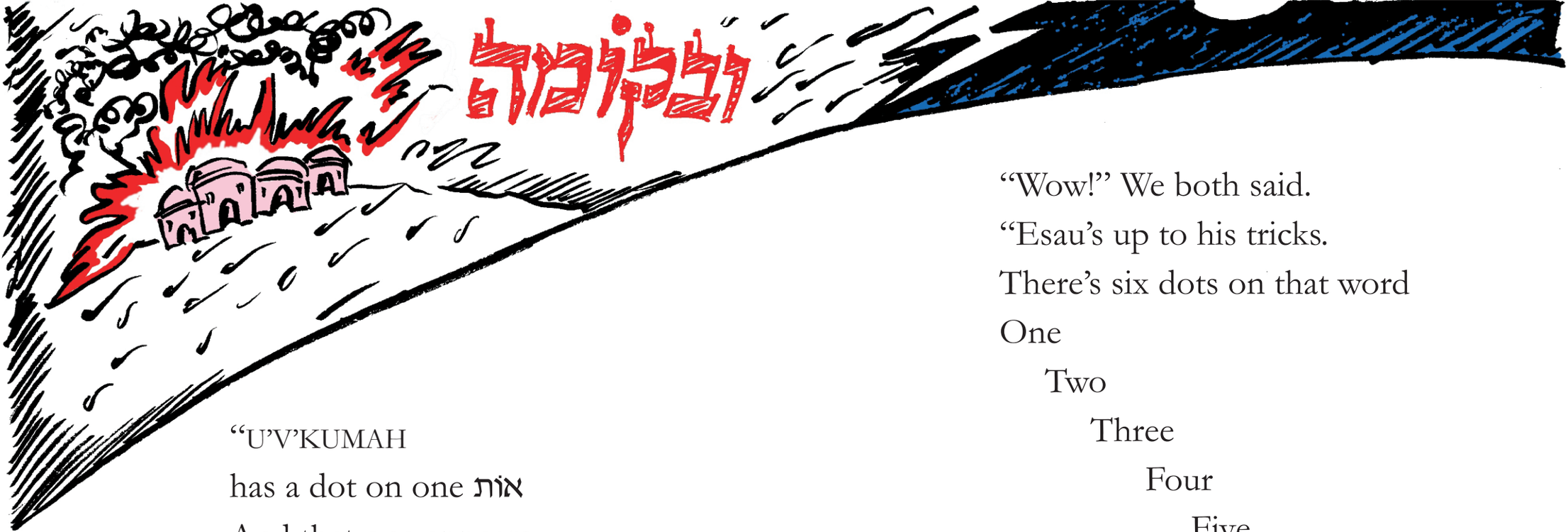
Sometimes in a PARSHA
There was more than just one
It was really exciting
It was really quite fun.

"EYLAV has got three dots
On the ALEPH, YUD and VAV.
It means Abraham's guests
Are from heaven above.

They are angels from GOD
Standing three in a row.
And they're asking where's Sarah?
But they already know.

They're asking quite nicely
And teaching us all
That we should all be polite
To everyone - big or small."





"U'V'KUMAH
has a dot on one אוֹת
And that one appears
in the story of Lot."

But our favourite of all
Just has to be this.
"On VAYISHAKEHU
Which means
'he gave him a kiss'."

"Wow!" We both said.
"Esau's up to his tricks.
There's six dots on that word
One
Two
Three
Four
Five
And Six."



"Esau meets Jacob
After some years apart
He pretends that he loves him
But we can see in his heart.

The dots on the letters
Simply give him away.
He just meant to bite him
And then run away."

"In the story of Joseph
His brothers are out in SHECHEM
Then Jacob sends Joseph
To go look for them.

They were all meant to be
Looking after their sheep
But dots on the word ET
Shows they were drunk and asleep.

The TORAH is telling us
To be a good Jew.
And not mess around
When there's something to do."



And then there were months
Without a single dot on an אות
It got so that we thought
Rabbi Goldberg forgot.



The TORAH will be finished
And we'll never know.
If we saw all the dots
But we continued to go.

And then all of a sudden
Not just one dot but five.
It perked up our spirits.
We felt so alive.

He hadn't forgotten
We gave a huge clap
Between BERESHIT and BAMIDBAR
There was just a big gap.



All of the letters
in V'AHARON, the High Priest
Had a dot to show that
He was a seeker of peace.

"I think that the answer
Without any doubt
When they counted the Levites
That they left him out."

"R'CHOKAH has a dot
Above the letter HEH
To show that God's word
Is really not far away.

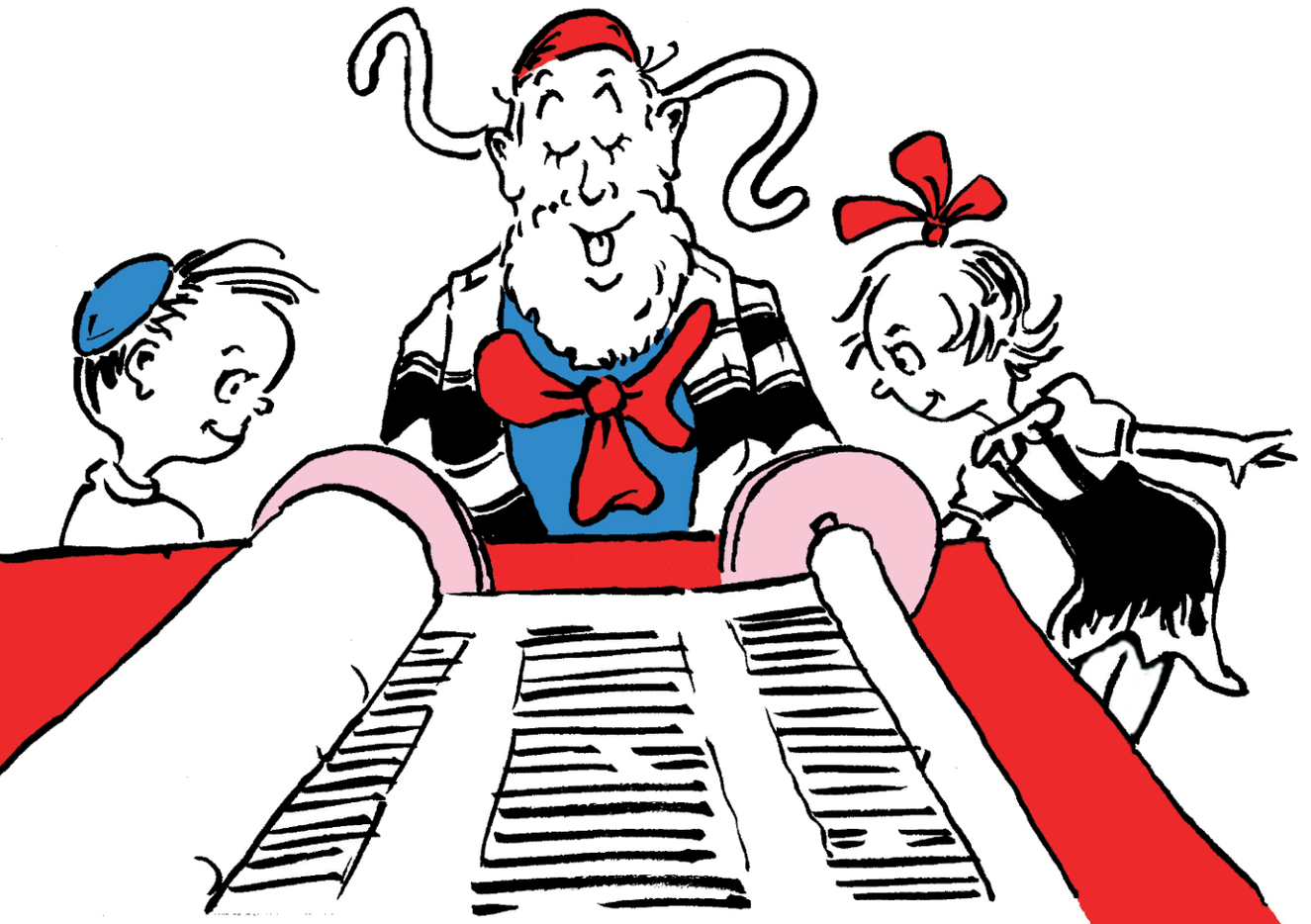
And ASHER as well
Has a RESH with a dot
To show that worshipping idols,
One just does not.

V'ISARON mean a tenth
With a dot on its VAV.
We give a tenth to TS'DAKAH
Out of duty and love."



And then one day it happened
We both knew it would.
The Rabbi called us over
By the TORAH we stood.

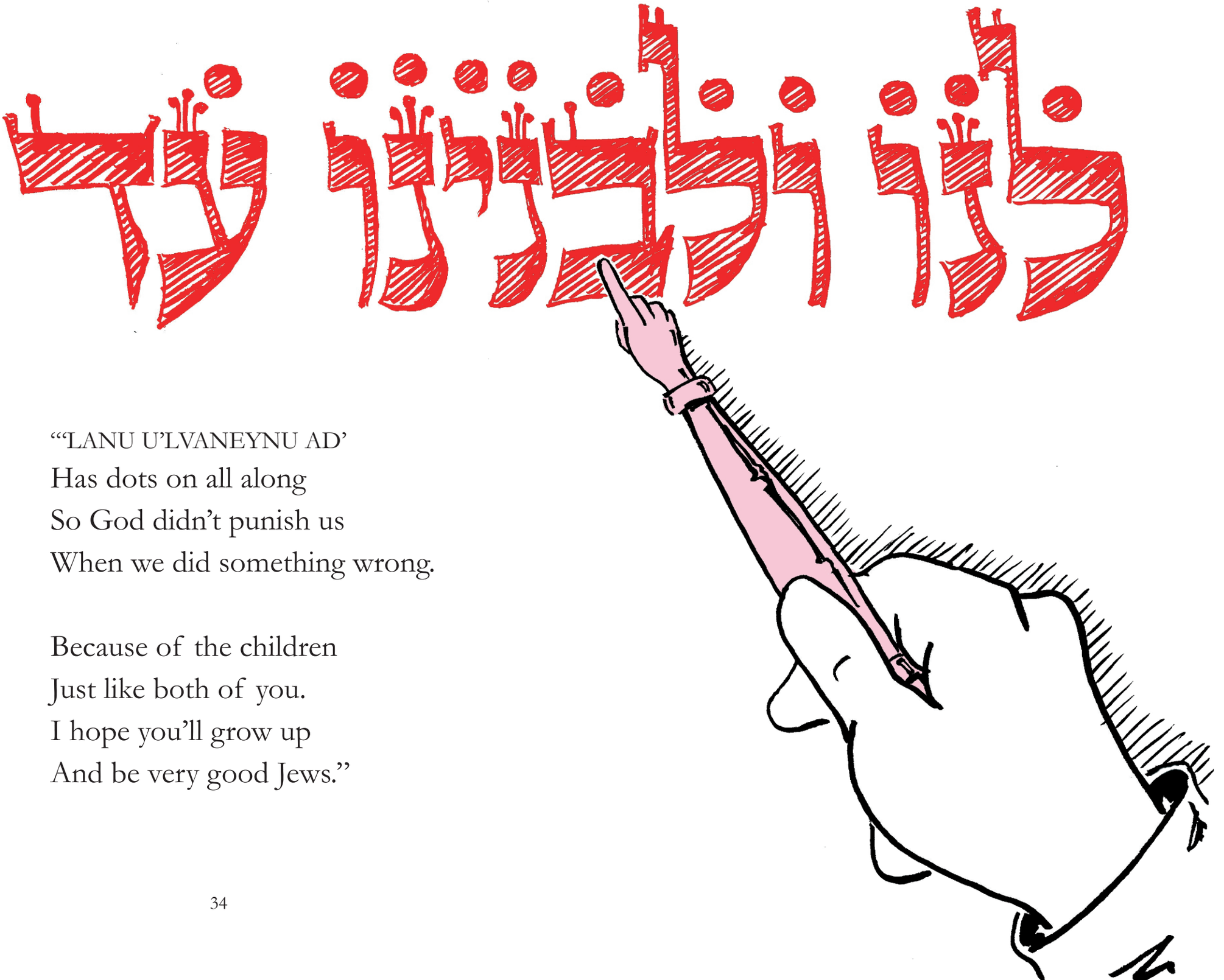
"I'm afraid it's the last one
The last dot on an אות.
But it's very impressive
It's the best of the lot."



And he wasn't kidding
No he really was not.
There were dots everywhere
We had hit the jackpot!

One
Two
Three
Four
And then Five
Six
And Seven
Eight
Nine and
Ten
It went up to
Eleven!

We just couldn't believe it
Just count them - eleven
Dots on each אות
We were really in heaven.



"'LANU U'LVANEYNU AD'
Has dots on all along
So God didn't punish us
When we did something wrong.

Because of the children
Just like both of you.
I hope you'll grow up
And be very good Jews."



And then Rabbi Goldberg
Looked a bit sad.
"What's the matter Rabbi?
Have we been bad?"

"No", said the Rabbi
"But I guess now you're done
You won't be here next week
Perhaps you won't come?"

Nadav looked at me
And I looked at him.
And then we looked at the Rabbi
And gave him a grin.

"We'll both still be coming
It's been really cool
We both hadn't thought
That we'd enjoy it at SHUL.



But we've learnt how to pray
And we love the KIDDUSH.
We've learnt lots of Hebrew
And even some Yiddish.

And thanks to us finding
A dot on an אות
We'd read the whole TORAH.
We'd read the whole lot!"









Genesis 16:5



Numbers 3:39



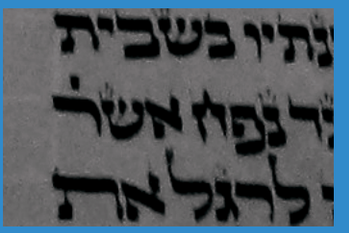
Genesis 18:9



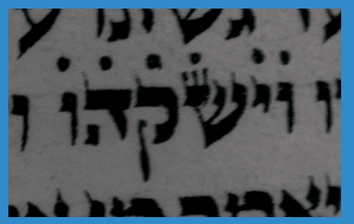
Numbers 9:10



Genesis 19:33



Numbers 21:30



Genesis 33:4



Numbers 29:15



Genesis 37:12



Deuteronomy 29:28

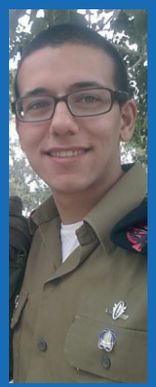
The ten words with dots - from many different *Sifrey Torah*.
Mostly they are simple dots, but sometimes the scribe shapes or decorates them.



I CAN READ IT ALL BY MYSELF

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If you have enjoyed this book and have learnt some *Torah*, then an ideal way to say thank you would be to make a donation to *ts'dakah* (charity) in the name of my nephew Nadav Ezra *z"l.*



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