



THE RABBI AND THE TWENTY-NINE WITCHES

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A clever rabbi is finally able to overcome the witches that frighten the villagers once each month, when the moon is full.

The *Rabbi and the Twenty-nine Witches* is a tale that originated in the *Talmud*, a collection of ancient rabbinic writings on Jewish law and tradition. From the Hebrew meaning “instruction” or “learning,” the *Talmud* illustrates how Jewish civil and religious laws and practices are to be applied in everyday life, and does so by means of debates, discussions, stories and commentaries.

In the *Talmud*, Rabbi Simeon ben Shetah defeated a coven of witches by having each of 80 men lift a witch off the ground, thereby robbing her of her power.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Consider with your children:

- What makes *The Rabbi and the Twenty-nine Witches* a Jewish story?
- How might it feel to live in a town where everyone is frightened?
- Why do you think the rabbi was the one who discovered a way to defeat the witches?
- Do you think the townsfolk were brave, foolish, trusting and/or wise to follow through with the rabbi’s plan?
- Can you think of different ways of overcoming the witches in this story

COMMUNITY

It is essential that our children understand that they can turn to teachers, rabbis, and counselors -- among others – for help and guidance. This story illustrates that community allows us to feel part of something greater than ourselves; it also offers a lesson about the value of banding together to deal with difficulties.

Talk with your children about ways neighbors can help each other. Teach your children the power of community action – whether donating a hand-knit scarf to a family shelter, setting tables at a soup kitchen, or singing holiday songs at a senior living facility. As your children grow, help them develop habits of community service through involvement.