



## BROOMSTICKS OF LIFE

**Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita**

What day is it? With all the media noise one could easily become flummoxed by all the days, deals, and dates. "Black Friday" struggles to whet our appetite for stuff we never knew we needed. Then "Cyber Monday" rushes in, a day just swollen with even more beckoning bargains coupled with dire warnings that time is running out and we must purchase their wares immediately. Of course, any student of such affairs will know that "Black Friday" usually bleeds into a full week, so one can never be sure if he should celebrate "Cyber Monday" by not saying tachanun, or set up a Bais Din to be mattir neder instead.

As I youngster I never knew there were such wondrous holidays, "Black Friday" would have sounded like something draped in sadness, and the word "Cyber" didn't even exist.

There is a story that was shared by the great Mashgiach of the Gerrer Yeshiva, Harav Godel Eisner Ztl that reminds me of some of the antics we are seeing in our current golus.

Back in the day, there was this small village that was populated by a mixed crowd of hard-working farmers and shopkeepers. Suddenly a weird thing happened and everyone in the village decided to go about their business using a broom stick as if it was a horse. They were fixated with this blend of madness and it was a site to behold as young and old pranced about with these sticks between their thighs as if they were transporting them. Amidst this bedlam was one singular fellow who saw this all for what it was, craziness! The others started making fun of him, "how can you go about without a broomstick?" They bellowed, "how come you don't see things the way we all do?" The poor guy was at his wits end, as the atmosphere started to get fraught with judgmental anger. He sat down and wrote to a friend of his in a far-off city, depicting the madness that had captured the village and the difficulties

בס"ד



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he was experiencing daily. His wise friend wrote back to him, telling him that if the whole town is prancing about with their broomsticks, he should do so as well. Why be different he asked. Now our hero really became agitated. He had written to his wise friend about his difficulties and received advice to in fact join in the madness. He wrote another letter, decrying his wise friend's advice and wondering if in fact he was wise at all. He soon received a sagely reply. His friend wrote that obviously he never meant to tell his dear friend to buy into the madness, only that if he really has to participate in the shenanigans, he should always remember that he is the sane one and not part of the insanity that is all about him. So yes, you may have to pretend a bit so that you can survive but never forget that those sticks are just that, and nothing more.

Said Rav Godal, Chevra, we live in a world of immorality and madness, but we must always know who we are and what we believe, that everything is Hashem, and nothing else exists without Him.

Allow me to take these lessons into our own time and place. The new holy days of shopping for bargains or whatever are not who we are, the weavers of materialistic dreams are creating a world of blue smoke and mirrors. A Yied must never forget our real goals and what they are for. Our neshomahs are attached to The Eibishter, and it is His truth that keeps us going. It is not the next round of stuff that will soon spool out onto our shop's shelves, nor the exorbitant holidays and weddings we break our backs in acquiring. We must always be aware of how the yetzer horah is dancing his enticing jig just to desensitise us to what is true. This will be our true world, filled with simchas hachaim, without the trappings of materialistic flimflam.

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