

## Didan Notzach and Geuloh

*By Yankev Bock*



The excitement surrounding the Rebbe's victory of the seforim (5 Teives, 5747) is so intense that it begins even while we are still celebrating Chanukah. The day which the Rebbe referred to as "our side wins" ("Didan Notzach") is a powerful *dor hashvi'i* celebration that rightly sweeps through Lubavitch. But beyond the farbrengens and the purchasing of seforim, the events of *Didan Notzach* and the sichos surrounding it deserve proper attention in order to understand at least something of the true magnitude of the victory. In particular, to recognize how 5 Teives represents the culmination in this physical world of the battle that has been going on since the times of the Alter Rebbe — the battle to bring the Geuloh.

### **The War of the Alter Rebbe**

Hey Teives arrives a few days after the month of Kislev, when everyone is still saturated with the story of the *kitrug* against the Alter Rebbe and against spreading Chassidus, concluding in the miraculous Geuloh of 19 Kislev. It is also only a few weeks before the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe on 24 Teives, which occurred during his 140-day flight from Napoleon.

The Alter Rebbe's opposition to Napoleon is well known. The Rebbe, in the sicha of Vayeishev 5752, characterizes the French Revolution under Napoleon primarily by its attribute of "*prikas 'ol*": overthrowing the leadership of the King and Queen, and "bringing a spirit of liberation, r"l,

from all matters of religion and faith". In contrast, the rulership of the Czars of Russia was characterized by strong-handed royalty and the firm establishment of faith in a Divine power.<sup>1</sup>

The Alter Rebbe's flight from the rule of Napoleon indicates that in his day this *klipah* was at its strongest, and attempting to refine it was, apparently, not an option. But its time would come, as we learn from the following incident, which the Rebbe brings in the sicha of Vayeishev 5752 (footnote 52):

*...the Alter Rebbe requested that they let him know the melody of the "march" with which the French crossed the Russian border. When they sang the niggun for him he sighed and said that this is a niggun of victory, and he concluded — after some long moments of "dveikus" — in the end the victory will be ours! (סוף כל סוף יהי' דידן נצח)*

From here we see that a *Didan Notzach* has been waiting to occur since the flight of the Alter Rebbe from Napoleon. Not only that, but this particular *Didan Notzach* is a matter of "in the end" סוף כל סוף — a matter pertaining to Geuloh.

### **The Nation of France, the Klipah of Napoleon**

This "niggun of victory" (known to us as Napoleon's March) has been sung by Chassidim for at least several generations, but this was never declared a *Didan Notzach* over the klipa of France nor Napoleon<sup>2</sup>. In the sicha of Vayeishev, 5752, the Rebbe describes that in fact there were stages in the refinement and "conquering" of France: visits by Rabboseinu Nessienu, the saying of Chassidus, the sending of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin to live there for 8 years, the establishment of Tomchei Temimim and numerous shluchim. Then, on Simchas Torah 5734, there was a major transformation: in the presence of Jewish guests from France, the Rebbe began singing the melody of the French national anthem ("The Marseillais") with the words of "Ho'aderes v'ho'Emunah", bringing it into the realm of *kedusha* (as the Rebbe explains). However, none of this was associated with a *Didan Notzach*. Important stages, perhaps, but not the ultimate victory.

At this point we can suggest that while the Alter Rebbe prevented the *klipah* of France (and Napoleon) from conquering Russia, this was only temporary — a little over 100 years later (at the end of the Rebbe Rashab's *nesius*) the *klipah* would in fact succeed in conquering Russia — what is called the Communist Revolution. It succeeded in bringing about Napoleon's goals: destruction of the Russian monarchy and opposition to all matters of religion and faith, r"l). During the very same years that the *klipah* of France was undergoing refinement, the situation of Jews in Soviet Russia (under the *klipah* of Napoleon, the outright war against belief in the Creator) was at its worst. Not only Jews, but in fact the whole world was endangered by this *klipah* and the threat of a nuclear conflict between the USSR and the United States<sup>3</sup>. Then something happened: the long-awaited *Didan Notzach*.

## **Didan Notzach and the End**

In Shevat, 5745, the thefts from the *Agudas Chassidei Chabad* library were first noticed. A month later, in Russia, the aging and sick Soviet Premier died, and was replaced by Mikhael Gorbachev. The court case regarding the ownership of the seforim in Federal District Court began in Kislev, 5746 and the ruling was brought down by the Federal Court judge<sup>5</sup> on the now-famous day of 5 Teives, 5747. Two weeks after the *Didan Notzach* of the seforim, Premier Gorbachev began the steps that would lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, this is exactly what the Alter Rebbe said: “at the very end” (סוף כל סוף) there will be *Didan Notzach*. In fact, following the *Didan Notzach* of 5 Teives, 5747 and the fall of the Soviet Union in the ensuing years (5749-5751), the Rebbe began to speak in new terms: “the buttons have been polished”, swords are being converted to plowshares, the work of refining the world — including France — is finished and thus the entire world is ready for Moshiach.

Perhaps most significant is the Rebbe’s repeated referral to the fact that “all the end times have passed” (כלו כל הקיצין), which gives us the basis to recognize in the words of the Alter Rebbe (“at the very end [literally: “the end of all ends”] there will be *Didan Notzach*”) and the connection to the events of our generation:

- **“Didan Notzach”** — The victory of the seforim on 5 Teives;
- **The defeat** — of the *klipah* of Napoleon/Sanheriv that opposed all matters of religion and faith — the fall of Communism; and
- **“The very end”** — the end of golus, as in the “end of all ends” (סוף כל סוף) recalls the Rebbe’s repeated announcement that “all the end times have passed” (כלו כל הקיצין).

The war to bring Moshiach began with the Alter Rebbe’s efforts to fulfill the words the Baal Shem Tov heard from Moshiach: that Moshiach will come “when your wellsprings spread outwards”. The *klipah* of France (and Napoleon) were bitter obstacles to bringing the Geuloh, requiring 175 years of refinement and *mesirus nefesh*.

But in our days the *klipah* was defeated, and even transformed. Thus, we stand at the end of Golus<sup>6</sup>, when there are no more wars left to fight — except, perhaps, the war against our own timidity. This timidity (our personal golus) hinders us from seeing, hearing and understanding what the Rebbe is saying: that the Geuloh is here and we need only to reveal it, the direct path is to learn about Moshiach and Geuloh and to accept the leadership of Moshiach Tzidkeinu!

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד! י

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1) This recalls the statement of the Baal Shem Tov that there is more hope for rectifying a gentile who worships idols than for those who completely deny G-d. (Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos, 163). שיותר יש תיקון לגוי עובד עבודה זרה מן האפיקורסים.

2) In ois 5 of the sicha, it seems that the Rebbe is implying that there are two distinct aspects to the *klipah*: “this *klipah* of the kingdom of France (and Napoleon)...was not a only a temporary matter, etc., but rather something which pertains to all times and the generations after that.” זה “וקליפה זו של מלכות צרפת (ונפוליון)...לא היתה רק ענין זמני כו', אלא הדבר נוגע לכל הזמנים והדורות שלאחרי זה.” When describing France alone, the Rebbe says that “the situation in France was not so amenable to Yiras Shomayim, etc.”, which is a much softer description than when also mentioning Napoleon: “the hardcore of the *klipah* and harsh judgement...eliminating [belief in Divine] Providence and belief and trust in G-d (in the manner of Sancheriv).”

3) The Rebbe addressed a *Yechidus klolis* on 13 Shevat, 5744, saying that the world was in a very dangerous situation (“העולם כולו”) — *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 894). A month after the Rebbe said this, the Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov died, replaced by Konstantin Chernenko who held the position for about a year until his death, and was replaced by Mikhael Gorbachev, as will be mentioned.

4) We can ask: if we are speaking about a *Didan Notzach* over the *klipah* of Napoleon, why did the *Didan Notzach* happen in US Federal Court? Perhaps there is room to speculate: The Rebbe is quoted as saying that the entire case was really about the Rebbe's *nesius*, which means a battle to, ch'v ch'v, depose the King who himself embodies and empowers belief in Hashem — both of Napoleon's goals in one.

Since Napoleon is compared to the *klipah* of Sancheriv, then let us note that Sancheriv's desire was to conquer Yerushalayim. The physical Napoleon also attempted (and failed) to conquer Eretz Yisroel (13 years prior to invading Russia, when he ferociously pursued the Alter Rebbe). In 5687 (1927) this *klipah* (in its Soviet incarnation) attempted to ch'v ch'v eliminate the leader of Yiddishkeit— but nonetheless it did not challenge the fact that the Friedicker Rebbe was in fact the leader.

In the events of the seforim case in 5745-47, the *klipah* came as close to Yerushalayim as possible: acting through a grandson from the royal family, and actually entering 770 (“Yerushalayim” in the time of golus) in order to bring about a challenge to the Rebbe's leadership itself! And being that Lubavitch is now located in the United States, the legal (and spiritual) victory of the Rebbe's leadership was declared— “in the eyes of all the nations” — by the US Federal court (the most distinguished branch of the US legal system, more so than the state court systems).

(Perhaps it is noteworthy that the United States was established after a revolution that took place only a few years before the French revolution. In both cases they were based on principles of democracy and freedom and eliminating the rule of the King — except for the decisive difference that in the case of the United States it was founded on *belief* in G-d and not the opposite.)

*We should point out that the Rebbe says that what brought down the Soviet Union was imprisonment and miraculous release of the Friedicker Rebbe in 5687 (on 12-13 Tammuz), even though it took 60 years to occur. (Sicha, Shabbos parshas Korach, 5751)*

5) “At the January 28–30, 1987, Central Committee plenum, Gorbachev suggested a new policy of *demokratizatsiya* throughout Soviet society. He proposed that future Communist Party elections should offer a choice between multiple candidates, elected by secret ballot.... Gorbachev also radically expanded the scope of *Glasnost*, stating that no subject was off-limits for open discussion in the media. On February 7, 1987, dozens of political prisoners were freed...” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution\\_of\\_the\\_Soviet\\_Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union))

6) Note that the Rebbe likens the *klipah* of France (and Napoleon) to the *klipa* of Sancheriv. “גאות והתנשאות לתלות ולסמוך על כוחו וגבורתו כו' לומר כוחי ועוצם ידי ומסלק ההשגחה ואמונה ובטחון באלקים כו'” (בדוגמת קליפת סנחריב). Our sages tell us (Sanhedrin 94a) that the Holy One wanted to make Hezekiyahu Moshiach and Sancheriv Gog uMagog — a further hint that overcoming the *klipah* of France (and Napoleon) is related to the Geuloh. Thus, it is not surprising that the Rebbe concludes the sicha of Vayeishev, 5752, by emphasizing the need to thank Hashem and publicize the miracles because it was due to failure to thank Hashem that the attribute of Justice opposed making Hezekiyahu Moshiach.\*

\* And the gemara (Rabbi Tanchum in the name of Bar Kappara) brings this discussion in answer to the question why in the prophecy of Yeshaya (9:6) the word למרבה is uncharacteristically written with a final Mem (closed on all 4 sides) in the middle of the word? The answer: the attribute of Justice “closed” this letter Mem in his opposition to making Hezekiyahu Moshiach. The Rebbe notes that *Tzarfas* (France) is the same letters as the word “*Ufaratzta*” (spreading out in all directions) — the exact opposite of the closed Mem.