

Hayom Yom: 5 Sivan, The Day Preceding Shavuos

Day 49 of the Omer

עָרַב חַג הַשְּׁבוּעוֹת תִּקְנִי"ז אָמַר רַבְּנוּ הַזֵּקֵן תּוֹרָה: וְקִדְשֶׁתֶם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר גּו'. וְקִדְשֶׁתֶם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר זֶהוּ מִלְמַעְלָה, אֲבָל וְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֵלוֹתֵם דָּאֵס דְאַרְף מֵעַן אֱלִיין. דָּאֵס אִיז גַּעֲוֹעֵן דִּי גֵאֲנַצֶּע תּוֹרָה. דְּעַר צָמַח צְדָק הָאֵט מִבְּאָר גַּעֲוֹעֵן: וְקִדְשֶׁתֶם אִיז גַּעֲזָאָגֵט גַּעֲוֹאָרֵן צוּ מִשְׁה'ן, און אַתְּפִשְׁטוֹתָא דְמִשְׁה בְּכָל דְרָא וְדָרָא, וואָס זײ קֶעֱנֶען הײַלִּיג מֵאֲכֶען דַּעַם הײַנִט און דַּעַם מֵאָרְגֶען, אָבֶעַר מִ'דְאַרְף דְּעַרְצוּ וְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֵלוֹתֵם – לְבוּשֵׁי מַחְשְׁבָה דְבוּר וּמַעֲשָׂה, וואָס דָּאֵס דְאַרְף מֵעַן אֱלִיין.

On the eve of Shavuos, 5557 (1797), the Alter Rebbe delivered a teaching [on G-d's command to Moshe Rabbeinu a few days before the people were to receive the Torah]:¹ “You shall sanctify them today and tomorrow [and they shall launder their garments].” He said: “‘You shall sanctify them today and tomorrow’ is granted from above, but ‘launder[ing one’s] garments’ must be done on one’s own.”

That was the entire teaching. The Tzemach Tzedek pointed out that the command “you shall sanctify” was directed to Moshe. Now, there is “an extension of Moshe in every generation”² – [and these tzaddikim in every generation] have the power to sanctify one’s today and tomorrow. In addition, however, “they [i.e., the people at large] must launder their garments” – that is, the [soul’s] garments – thought, speech, and action.³ And this, every individual must do himself.⁴
