

Laws of Tzitzit, Chapter 2 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Shiur – Laws of Tzitzit Chapter 2

General Overview

Chapter 1 dealt with the order of the mitzvah of tzitzit – how one ties them, etc. Chapter 2 is primarily concerned with **techelet** – what it is, how one dyes it, and the laws pertaining to it.

Halacha 1 – What is Techelet

Rambam: "The techelet mentioned in the Torah everywhere – is wool dyed like the appearance when one mixes white into dark blue ink (kochol)... it appears to the eye like the purity of the sky."

Explanation

Techelet that appears throughout the Torah is wool that is dyed in a color similar to when one mixes white pieces into dark-blue ink (kochol), and it becomes a lighter blue – similar to the sky when it is clear (in the purity of the sky), not cloudy.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **Techelet is not just a color, but a material with a color** – The Rambam says "it is the dyed wool," techelet is wool that is dyed. It's not simply a color-name, but wool in a specific color.

2. **Two concepts: "techelet everywhere" vs. "techelet of tzitzit"** – The Rambam distinguishes remarkably between "techelet mentioned in the Torah everywhere" (priestly garments, other places) and "techelet mentioned in tzitzit." For tzitzit the Rambam requires a **"known dyeing that will remain in its beauty and not change"** – a special dyeing method that holds well and doesn't change. The question is raised: **Doesn't techelet everywhere (priestly garments etc.) also require known dyeing?** This is not clear from the Rambam. Rav Rabinowitz struggles with this – whether the Rambam means that techelet everywhere doesn't necessarily require known dyeing, which would be different from all the Tannaim, and this would be very unusual.

Halacha 1 (continued) – Invalidation of Dye That Is Not Dam Chilazon

Rambam: "And anything not dyed with this dyeing is invalid for tzitzit, even... such as if one dyed it with istis or other darkening agents."

Explanation

Even if one achieved the correct blue color, but one made it with istis (probably the same as what the Gemara calls "kala ilan") or other dark-dyeing materials – it is invalid for tzitzit.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **"Mashchirin" doesn't mean black, but dark** – In the context of dyes, "mashchirin" means materials that make a strong/dark color, not necessarily black.

2. **Two reasons why istis is invalid** – (a) It's not beautiful enough / doesn't hold; (b) Even if it looks exactly as beautiful, it's invalid because it must be from dam chilazon – it's a law in the **reality/quality** of the dye, not just in the appearance.

3. **[Digression: Is the chilazon indispensable?]** – It is suggested that the chilazon is not a "decree of Scripture" but rather a **matter of quality** – the chilazon gives the best, strongest dye. If one can make the same chemical product today without the chilazon, perhaps that's also good? But the conclusion is that **it must be from the chilazon** – it's not enough to buy just any dye in a dye-store.

Halacha 1 (continued) – Rachel Bat Ez

Rambam: Rachel bat ez – is invalid for techelet.

Explanation

A sheep that was born from a goat (two different species – sheep and goats) – its wool is invalid for techelet.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **What does "rachel bat ez" mean** – It is discussed whether this means an actual kilayim (that a goat mated with a sheep), or simply an animal that looks mixed. The Rambam's interpretation is that it only looks that way. The Gemara's reason: **It's not fitting, it's strange** – an animal that belongs to one family but looks like another, is not worthy for techelet.

Halacha 2 – The Process of Dyeing Techelet (How Does One Dye)

Rambam: "How does one dye techelet for tzitzit? One takes the wool and soaks it in lime, and afterwards washes it until it is clean, and boils it in aloe and the like as the dyers do so that it will absorb the dye."

Explanation

First stage (preparation): One soaks the wool in lime (chalk/chemical), washes it out until it's clean, boils it with "aloe" (another chemical) – as professional dyers do – so that the wool will be able to absorb the dye.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **The Rambam's approach: "as the dyers do" – go ask the professionals** – The Rambam doesn't give all the details of the dyeing process. He says several times "as the dyers do" – this means, go to the factory and learn it from the dyers. The Rambam's goal is to state the **halacha** (it must be dam chilazon, with this process), not to be a manual for dyers.

Halacha 2 (continued) – Dam Chilazon

Rambam: "And afterwards one brings blood of the chilazon, and it is a fish whose appearance is like the color of the sea, and its blood is black like ink, and it is found in the Mediterranean Sea. And one places the blood in a pot with spices... and boils them and places

the wool in it until it becomes like the appearance of the sky. And this is the techelet of tzitzit."

Explanation

Second stage: One takes blood from a chilazon – a fish whose external color is similar to the sea, and its blood is dark like ink. It is found in the Mediterranean Sea. One places the blood in a pot with spices, boils it, and puts in the wool until it gets the color of the sky. This is techelet of tzitzit.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **"Black like ink" doesn't mean black** – The blood is dark-bluish, not actually black. This fits with the fact that after mixing it becomes a lighter blue (appearance of the sky). It's not a contradiction to "its appearance is like the color of the sea" – the external color of the fish is blue like the sea, but the blood inside is much stronger/darker, and only after the process does it become lighter.

2. **"Mediterranean Sea" doesn't mean the Dead Sea in the Land of Israel** – That sea has a very high salt concentration and no living creatures live there. "Mediterranean Sea" means here the Great Sea (Mediterranean) or simply a salty sea. There are sources that "Mediterranean Sea" is used as a general name for salty waters.

3. **Signs of the chilazon – the Rambam doesn't bring everything** – In the Gemara there are various signs (e.g. "comes up once in seventy years"), but the Rambam doesn't rule on all of them. This supports the point that the Rambam means one should identify it through tradition/practical knowledge, not through halachic signs. **Nowhere in the Rambam does it say "it must have these signs"** – the signs of the chilazon are only a direction where to find the correct techelet, not a law in itself.

4. **"Its appearance is like the color of the sea" – is this an indispensable sign?** – It's not clear whether the sign that the chilazon looks like the sea is a halachic condition or just a description. The conclusion is that it's more of a description – the main thing is that one should use the correct chilazon with the correct process.

Halacha 3 – Dyeing the Techelet Lishmah

Rambam: "The techelet thread of tzitzit requires dyeing lishmah, and if one dyed it not lishmah it is invalid."

Explanation

The dyeing of techelet for tzitzit must be lishmah – with intention for the purpose of tzitzit. If one dyed it not lishmah, it is invalid.

Halacha 3 (continued) – Invalidation of the Pot Through Testing

Rambam: "And a pot that has enough dye to dye a thread of tzitzit – if one took from it a bit of dye to test whether it is good or not, the entire pot is nullified and invalidated for tzitzit."

Explanation

If one takes out a bit of dye from the large pot in order to check if the color is good, the entire pot becomes invalid for tzitzit.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **A very great stringency** – A strong question is asked: Why should the entire pot become invalid? The entire pot was prepared for tzitzit – it's lishmah! When one takes out a bit to check, that's also in the context of making tzitzit. The Gemara's reasoning is that through the removal to test it becomes "not lishmah," but this is not understood – because the testing is also for the purpose of tzitzit.

2. **Perhaps the testing means on a piece of cloth** – It is suggested that perhaps the testing means that he tests on a piece of cloth (not on a tzitzit-thread), but this doesn't completely resolve the question. **This is a difficult thing to understand** and it has never been properly understood.

3. **The prestige and honor of techelet** – A approach is suggested that perhaps this has to do with the honor of techelet – one may not play around with a holy pot of techelet, one must treat it with respect and only use it for tzitzit. It is also suggested that perhaps if one would see the practical process of dyeing in ancient times, one would understand why the removal disturbs.

The Remedy – How May One Test

Rambam (in the name of the Gemara): Rather how should one do? One takes out a bit of dye from the large pot, places it in a small pot (eggshell), and there one tests. What remains from the testing must be thrown away (one pours out the dye in the vessel in which one tests), because it is already "impure" – invalid, already used for testing.

Halacha 4 – Purchasing Techelet from an Expert

Rambam: "Techelet has no testing except from an expert."

Explanation

One can only buy techelet from an expert – someone who is known as a professional.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **What does "expert" mean** – It is discussed what "expert" means. One side is that expert means an honest Jew whom one can rely on regarding lishmah. But it is explained that **expert means primarily that he does very good work** – he is "tested," one already knows that his product is good, like "a great expert" – he has a presumption of good work.

Invalidation of Not from Proper Dyes

Rambam: "And it became known that it was dyed not from [proper] dyes" – if one knows that the expert used other, cheaper dyes (to save money), which don't hold as long – it is invalid.

Novellae

Even though he is an expert and knows how to make it, it must be from the correct dyes. The expert-status alone is not enough.

Halacha 5 – Testing the Techelet

Rambam: "How does one test it? One tests it until one knows whether it was dyed according to law or not."

First Test

"One takes straw and saliva of a snail and mixes it in vinegar that has fermented forty days, and soaks the

techelet in it for twenty-four hours. If it stands in its color and does not fade — it is valid."

Explanation

One takes straw and saliva from a snail, mixes it with vinegar that has fermented 40 days, puts in the techelet for 24 hours. If the color remains strong — valid.

Second Test (if the first failed)

"One takes dough of barley that has been baked and makes from it moris" — a dough of barley that one lets mold, one bakes it with the techelet in an oven. "One removes the techelet from the bread and looks at it — if it faded or darkened it is invalid, and if it increased in beauty it is valid."

Explanation

This is a second, stricter test. If after baking the color becomes more beautiful — valid. If it becomes dark or faded — invalid.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **Two-step test** — To invalidate it must fail **both** tests.
2. **Has anyone done the test on today's techelet?** — It is asked whether anyone from the sages of the generation has done the test on today's techelet. It is acknowledged that there are complications — no one knows exactly how to do the test (what exactly is "moris," etc.), although one knows that there is a certain chemical involved.

Halacha 6 – Presumption of Validity at a Store

Rambam: If there is a "courtyard" (store/shop) that sells techelet, "and if they are presumed valid — one buys from them without specification," one can buy there without needing to make a special test.

Explanation

When a seller has a presumption of validity, one doesn't need to test each tzitzit separately.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **"Courtyard" means like a store/shop** — The main novelty is that **one doesn't need to test each individual tzitzit when there is already a presumption** — this is the power of presumption of validity.

Halacha 7 – One Who Deposits Techelet with a Non-Jew

Rambam: One who deposits techelet with a non-Jew — someone who leaves over dyed techelet-merchandise with a non-Jew, there is a concern lest he exchange it (the non-Jew will exchange it with a cheaper quality). It is permitted with a seal within a seal (two seals), but with one seal it is invalid.

Explanation

The law is like other things one leaves with a non-Jew (like meat) — one needs two seals (seal within seal) for it to be valid.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **Here we're not talking about a finished tallit with tzitzit** — Rather about a package of merchandise — dyed techelet-wool. The non-Jew has a motive to take the expensive merchandise for himself and exchange it with a cheaper one.
2. **A finished tallit a non-Jew will probably not exchange** — Because he doesn't know what to do with it. Even

finished tzitzit-strings — the non-Jew perhaps doesn't know what tzitzit is, why would he take it?

3. **Practical application** — Today's people who buy techelet should put seals on their merchandise, so that one knows it hasn't been exchanged. The seal must be such that no one — a non-Jew or someone who is not trustworthy — should be able to exchange it.

Halacha 8 – One Who Finds Techelet in the Market

Rambam: One who finds techelet in the market — even if they were petukim (drawn out threads, similar to tzitzit), it is invalid. But if shezurim — if they are already braided, it is valid.

Explanation

When one finds techelet in the street: only drawn out threads — invalid (because one doesn't know where it comes from). But shezurim (braided) — valid, because this shows it was made for tzitzit.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **The issue of "asking" by tzitzit** — A major issue from previous chapters is touched upon: the Rambam said that one doesn't ask (one doesn't need to question/investigate) by tzitzit. The Raavad argues that one sees from this law that one does ask — because a simple patuk (drawn out thread) is invalid, which proves that one must investigate the source.
2. **The answer** — Not that one doesn't ask, but rather one makes tzitzit shezurim — the braiding itself is the sign that it is valid.
3. **Practical conclusion** — Today's techelet that comes already shezurim — perhaps one doesn't need to put a seal, because the braiding itself is a sign of validity.

Halacha 9 – One Who Buys a Fringed Tallit from the Market

Rambam: One who buys a fringed tallit from the market — from a Jew, it is in its presumption (valid). From a non-Jew — from a merchant, valid; from a commoner (regular non-Jew), invalid.

Explanation

If one buys a tallit with tzitzit from a Jew — valid. From a non-Jewish merchant — valid (because he buys from Jews and sells to Jews). From a regular non-Jew — invalid.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **The non-Jewish merchant is valid** — Because he is a businessman who buys from Jews and sells further — he didn't make the tzitzit himself, rather he sells what he received from valid sources.
2. **The regular non-Jew is invalid** — Because he may have made it himself, and tzitzit must be twisted lishmah — even tzitzit without techelet must have lishmah. A non-Jew cannot make tzitzit lishmah.

Halacha 10 – Dyeing White Threads

Rambam: A tallit that is entirely red or green or other colors — one makes its white threads like its color. One makes the white threads the same color as the tallit.

Explanation

By a colored tallit one makes the white threads in the same color as the garment, for beauty.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **Dispute whether one must or one may** – The language "one makes" sounds like one must, but it is also interpreted that one may. It is part of the beauty of the mitzvah.

2. **The Rama says that the custom is that one always makes white threads** (white threads), even by a colored tallit.

3. **Practically** – The custom is to go with a white tallit, so there should be no question – because according to the Rambam one would perhaps have to color the threads according to the color of the garment.

4. **A humorous note** – If someone has a "rainbow tallit" – must he make rainbow threads?

Halacha 10 (continued) – White Threads with Techelet Together

When one has techelet, one must make sure that the white threads should not be techelet-colored, so that one can distinguish between the white and the techelet. It shouldn't look like techelet – lighter colors.

Explanation

The white threads may not be made from dark colors that can look like techelet.

Halacha 11 – Severe Punishment for One Who Doesn't Put White

Rambam: The punishment for one who doesn't put white is more severe than the punishment for one who didn't put techelet. Why? Because white is available to all – white is easy to obtain, and techelet is not available to all – techelet is not everywhere and not always available, because it has no heavenly dye.

Explanation

The punishment for not putting simple white tzitzit is greater than for not putting techelet, because white is easy to obtain, and techelet is difficult/expensive/not available.

Novellae and Explanations

1. **An important principle in reward and punishment** – You would think that reward goes according to importance – techelet is more important (the Gemara calls it "the seal of the servant"), therefore the punishment for not putting techelet should be greater. But no – the punishment also goes according to the difficulty/situation. Something that is easy to do and one doesn't do it – the punishment is greater. A light mitzvah that one is contemptuous of – is worse than a difficult mitzvah that one didn't fulfill. The source is from Gemara Menachot.

2. **Why does the Rambam bring all the laws of techelet if it's not available?** – It is asked: If techelet is not available in the Rambam's time, why does he write all the laws? The answer: The Rambam writes a book forever – he cannot write "now there is no techelet" because that is a temporary reality. But he gives a hint through what he writes "it is not available in every place and at every time" – this is his way of saying that it's not always available, without making a temporal ruling.

[Digression: Does the Maggid Shiur Wear Techelet?]

The maggid shiur (Rabbi Yitzchak) mentions that he himself does **not** wear techelet on his tallit/tzitzit. He begins to explain his reasoning – that there was a dispute among the great sages of Israel.

A distinction is made: If the techelet lies right before your eyes and it fits with what the Torah says ("and they shall place on the corner fringe a thread of techelet"), and one doesn't know any contradiction – one should apparently take it. The question is only **when one must actively seek it**.

It is humorously noted that according to the "zealots" against techelet, one should perhaps not be allowed to go into the store either – but this is rejected.

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Laws of Tzitzit Chapter 2 – Laws of Techelet

Introduction

Alright, we are learning Laws of Tzitzit Chapter 2.

We have already learned how one makes tzitzit and the essence of the mitzvah of tzitzit, and there we also learned about the techelet, which is a part of the mitzvah of tzitzit. In this chapter, the Rambam is going to tell us how one makes techelet, how one dyes a woolen thread with techelet.

What have we mainly learned about? About how one ties it, right? The order of the mitzvah and how one ties it. But we have not yet explained what techelet is. The entire chapter – almost the entire chapter – discusses what techelet is. Interesting. White, everyone knows what it is, it's nothing. Techelet, one needs to know what it is.

Halacha 1: What is Techelet

The Color of Techelet

The Rambam says:

"Techelet mentioned in the Torah in every place" – techelet that is mentioned in the Torah, what color is it? **"It is the dyed wool"** – not color, what thing is it? Is techelet the material itself or is it the dyed thing? Yes, okay. **"It is the wool"** – ah, techelet is wool that is in a certain color.

"The wool dyed like the opening in indigo" – like, I translate as I have seen a translation, like when one mixes white pieces into a dark blue ink, and then it becomes more of a light blue color. It becomes more like a blue that looks similar to the sky, **"appears to the eye in the purity of the sky"**. If someone wants to make a picture that looks similar to the sky, he will take a dark blue ink and mix in white, so that it is a mixture of blue with white, and that is the color of the appearance of the sky.

The techelet is similar to the sky, and the sky is similar to the Throne of Glory. One must see it in the purity of the sky, when it is not cloudy. When it is cloudy, it is all white.

So this is a bit lighter, not terribly dark, almost like purple, but a bit lighter. That is the approximate translation.

Techelet Everywhere Versus Techelet of Tzitzit

Interestingly, the Rambam says that this is the techelet that appears in the entire Torah, by the priestly garments, by other places.

"But the techelet mentioned in tzitzit" – it seems from the Rambam that he is speaking of two different things, it's interesting. No, I mean that he says that by tzitzit it is not so. Tzitzit is apparently the same thing, and he says that it states **"a known dyeing"**, it must be however a certain way, a certain method of dyeing it, **"that will remain in its beauty and not change"**.

He says, that blue is simple, because that always means blue. But when one says "a thread of techelet" in tzitzit, besides blue, this also requires that one should do it in a certain way so that it should remain strongly beautiful blue. That is, to arrive at this blue one cannot take any indigo that one puts into a bit of white, one must find the chilazon, one must find the correct color. This he will say.

Question: Doesn't Techelet Everywhere Need Known Dyeing?

Until now he has not yet said it, and also he has divided – it's very strange – he divides, he says that techelet is the wool that one has colored in such a color, and techelet of tzitzit must be colored. What about techelet everywhere? Doesn't it need to be a known dyeing?

It's not clear. I have seen that he struggles, Rabbi Rabinowitz, whether the Rambam means to say that techelet everywhere doesn't need to be, unlike all the Tannaim, which would be very strange.

Okay, in general yes, we will carry everything. Yes. In general yes.

Invalidation of Improper Dyeing

"And anything that was not dyed with this dyeing" – wool that one wants to use for techelet and one did not do it with the known dyeing that the Rambam is going to explain, with the special kind of technique of dyeing in a good way... It's not just technique, he is speaking now mainly of the thing with which one colors. Look what he says for example.

Yes, it is invalid for tzitzit. **"Behold it is invalid for tzitzit, and even if there is no fraud"**, even if he succeeded in making the correct blue color that has no fraud, **"for example"** – for instance, he found a way to dye it **"with isatis"**, with a type of dye called isatis, **"or other darkening agents"**, or other dyes that make a dark color.

It seems that making a light color is not so difficult, there is still material for that. To make a strong color, like blue or other strong colors, there are certain ones. When he says "darkening agents", when one speaks of dyeing one means someone made a dark color, that's the kind.

Even if someone made a dark blue... What does dark blue mean? Black means dark. Yes, it can be dark, that dark is dark blue, true.

So the point is that he says even if you have the correct color, for example, what makes the correct color? Something called

isatis. I think that isatis is the same thing that the Gemara calls kala ilan. Could be. It is still invalid, because it must be the certain dyeing, it must be made with the certain thing which is dye.

So says the Rambam this halacha.

Rachel Bat Ez

The Rambam says another halacha about the wool. Does the Rambam say that the wool must be from an adult animal or what? Here it's not adult.

Rachel bat ez is invalid for techelet.

Rachel bat ez is something forbidden as kilayim, something that is... A rachel is a sheep, an ez is a goat, it's a different thing. It's a sheep... A goat that was created from a rachel – sorry, a rachel, that is a sheep, that was born from a goat.

They are two different species, sheep and goats, sheep and goats are two different species. And sometimes it happens, or through a wonder of kilayim, that the goat had a marriage with a sheep. I don't know if it's kilayim or it just means that it looks like that. He translates that it just looks like that.

It happens that sometimes such a goat looks like a mixed one, looks like a second one. It's an animal whose wool is not quality wool, it is invalid for techelet. The Gemara says because it doesn't fit. It's strange. I don't know about the quality, it's not a nice thing, it's something strange. You are born from the family and you look wrong, you don't fit in, it's not the thing.

Halachot 2-3: How One Dyes Techelet of Tzitzit

Now the Rambam says, the Rambam brings down the laws about wool. The Rambam says, it must be a known dyeing, it must be a certain kind of dye. He says, how does one do it? How? What is the kind of known dyeing?

How does one dye techelet of tzitzit?

Stage 1: Preparation of the Wool

The Rambam says:

"One takes the wool" – one takes the wool, **"and soaks it in lime"** – one soaks it in a type of chemical called lime. One says it's called sid, ah, chalk, whatever, paint.

"And afterwards one washes it until it is clean" – and afterwards one washes it out, that is, the lime cleans out the wool.

"And one boils it" – afterwards one boils it, **"with alum"** – another type of chemical, **"and the like, in the way that dyers do"** – as the dyers do, that first one washes very strongly the merchandise so that it should be completely clean, **"so that it will absorb the color"** – so that it will be able to absorb the color.

This is the preparation so that it will absorb the color.

Stage 2: Blood of the Chilazon

"And afterwards one brings blood of the chilazon" – and afterwards one brings blood from a chilazon.

What is the chilazon? The Rambam says:

"And it is a fish" – this is a type of fish, **"whose color is similar to the color of the sea"** – that looks like its color is

similar to the color of the sea. That is, it looks on the outside of the fish, when one looks at it, it is a blue fish.

"And its blood is black like ink" – and its ink, its blood, is dark like ink. Apparently he doesn't mean here black that it is black, it is bluish, but it is dark, a strong bluish. It's not the color of the sea, it's not like the color of the sea.

Yes, yes, this is not a contradiction. It could be that when it is still the blood it is stronger, and afterwards when one mixes it out it becomes bluer, who knows what.

Where is the Chilazon Found?

And where does the chilazon swim around? The Rambam says:

"And in the Mediterranean Sea it is found" – and the blood is found in the Mediterranean Sea.

But the Mediterranean Sea that we speak of here doesn't mean the Dead Sea that we know which is in the Land of Israel, because that one has a very high concentration of salt and no animals live there. But there are other sources that the Great Sea is called the Mediterranean Sea. Also salty water. Mediterranean Sea means logically ocean, a lake. The salty water is the translation Mediterranean Sea.

Stage 3: The Dyeing

And afterwards what does one do?

"And one puts the blood in a pot" – one takes the blood of the chilazon, one puts it in a pot, together with **"spices as is customary and the like"**. The Rambam lists one of the types of spices that can be good for this, **"in the way that dyers do"** – as the dyers do.

"And one boils them" – one heats it strongly, **"and one puts in it the wool"** – one puts in the wool, **"until it becomes like the color of the sky"** – until the wool receives the color like the color of the heavens.

"And this is the techelet of tzitzit" – and when this is finished, your piece of wool has become kosher techelet of tzitzit.

Distinction: Techelet of Tzitzit Versus Techelet Everywhere

This is the techelet of tzitzit. It's obvious that the techelet everywhere is perhaps not the same, perhaps yes, we don't know clearly. But the techelet of tzitzit must be made with the process, with the blood of the chilazon, with the process.

It's not clear to me whether one can look in the Rambam and discover what a chilazon means or what the process is. The Rambam tells you clearly, **"in the way that dyers"** – it seems the Rambam means, go ask the techelet makers, let them ask you how they do it.

Discussion: Identifying the Chilazon Today

About this, today what has been found, according to most people who are involved in techelet, the people do a whole investigation, they need to search for all the signs. There are various signs stated in the Gemara, the Rambam doesn't rule on all the signs that he brings. There is a strange Baraita, it states it comes up once in seventy years, the Rambam doesn't bring it.

And apparently also the Rambam, the Rambam mainly means to say the halacha that it must be made from the type, from the order. It's not simple that the Rambam will tell you halachically that it's not indispensable. He says the reason why it's not nice, but it also includes that even if the isatis is exactly as nice, it's also not good. It must be the quality, or it's something another reality the isatis from this.

But I just want to tell you that it seems from the Rambam that he describes to you something, go to the factory and go find it out. About this, if they are correct the people who have found the techelet, they have found archaeology or other books, sources, that this is how one used to make techelet in the past, it's obvious that this means the halacha, it means go there and find out.

It's correct, what is the meaning of similar to the color of the sea? I don't know, it's not a sign that is indispensable on all these things. That it must be the certain way.

Digression: Does the Maggid Shiur Wear Techelet?

There are students who want to know, is Rabbi Yitzchak particular about techelet?

I don't have techelet on my tallit, not on my tzitzit, I go in the course of the tallit, and I think this way: There was understandably a dispute among the great ones of Israel, but I think this way – if a person goes into a store...

Continuation of Discussion: Whether One Must Take Techelet in Our Time

Study partner A: If there is exactly as the Torah says – the Torah says **"and they shall put on the fringe of the corner a thread of techelet"** – and it lies exactly before his eyes, and you don't know any contradiction, you should apparently take it. The question is when you must search for it. Whoever doesn't take techelet should not go to a place where techelet lies before him.

Study partner B: I hear, I already know what you want to do – a prohibition according to the zealots who are against the techelet, they should also not be allowed to go into the store either.

Study partner A: I mean, most say that one should buy it. I'm afraid to make this into a prohibition.

Study partner B: No, I don't know if it's true. I know that probably if the people have researched it and found that this is how one used to make it.

Discussion: Is the Chilazon Indispensable?

Study partner A: One must actually truly understand in general – why is the chilazon indispensable? Is it something a quality? Apparently it is still a matter of quality. It's not a decree of the Scripture that one must find the chilazon. Apparently until this day, today one has all kinds of all sorts of things, who knows, but it still has a lot of importance, it makes it better.

Study partner B: If you don't have a better color than the – you know what fake things one makes.

Study partner A: It's not simple that it's indispensable that it should be something a holy decree called techelet. It means the original that. It's more apparently what they make is more or less that.

Study partner B: But as it is produced such a good product, should it really not have a law that it's similar to techelet?

Study partner A: I don't want to say that you go like the Torah's techelet. If it's made with a fish with the whole side – if you just buy a paint in a paint store, and who knows what, and you say that this is stronger – that I don't mean, because they know this is not.

Study partner B: It must be the chilazon which is indispensable that.

Study partner A: Doesn't seem to me that it's indispensable. In any case, it doesn't state in any place in the Rambam or a place "it must have these signs". The signs are to give a direction – go to the market, ask about the techelet which is the one, not something else.

Study partner B: Okay. Anyway, let's go further.

Halacha 4: Dyeing for Its Sake

Study partner A: Let's learn how one must – laws of dyeing, yes? Until now the Rambam has told us what this is. Practically, now he will say laws of dyeing. Very important laws.

The Rambam says, it must be dyeing for its sake: **"Techelet of tzitzit requires dyeing for its sake, and if one dyed it not for its sake it is invalid."**

Invalidation of the Pot Through Testing

The Rambam says such a halacha: **"And the pot that has in it the dye, if one dyed in it a bit of wool to test it whether it is nice or not – the entire pot is invalidated."**

This is a great stringency. A person is going to want to test a bit of the dye, see how it succeeded, how it looks on a thread. If he took down a bit of the dye from the pot to check how it comes out, this is a big problem – with this the entire pot becomes invalid.

Discussion: Why Does the Entire Pot Become Invalid?

Study partner B: Why does the entire pot become invalid?

Study partner A: The reasoning is because it becomes not for its sake.

Study partner B: I don't understand this. Wasn't the whole thing cooked for tzitzit?

Study partner A: Something like that. So much, did you use the pot just for your desires?

Study partner B: No, no, no. If you are testing, I also planned to make tzitzit.

Study partner A: No. I agree, you're asking a good question.

Study partner B: And if there remains on the stuff a bit of residue from the dye, it also has the same thing – is that a problem because he didn't use the whole thing for tzitzit?

Study partner A: What?

Study partner B: If there will remain in the pot a bit of dye at the end?

Study partner A: No, perhaps that is afterwards.

Study partner B: Afterwards is afterwards, he's speaking of beforehand.

Study partner A: But I really don't understand. It seems to me a very great stringency that is stated in the Gemara – it states "the rule of techelet", well, it's a whole pot of techelet. I don't know, but it seems that it's a matter. The Gemara explains that it has to do with the topic of for its sake, but what

is really the simple meaning that the entire pot is invalidated – why does he want to taste it?

I'm with you that it's a difficult thing to understand, I have never understood it. If one of the people will send us a simple explanation and explain what the simple meaning of this is, he can tell me because I don't understand it.

Study partner B: It's interesting, because by regular dyeing with the advice of the Rabbis, that one is also kosher touch. If he says, he sees it's good – ah, he says, oh, it's a good color, and he prepares to dye – it's still kosher, the first tzitzit also.

Study partner A: Again?

Study partner B: Which first?

Study partner A: I say, he takes down a bit to test whether it's nice – if he does the testing on a tzitzit, the thread is also kosher.

Study partner B: Perhaps the testing doesn't mean for the tzitzit? Perhaps I can understand – he takes a little rag, he checks on the little rag the color, not on tzitzit, he doesn't want to make any tzitzit yet at all, but...

Study partner A: I don't know.

Study partner B: Yes, but simply, what the...

How One May Test

Study Partner A:

The Gemara says, if so, how should one check? **"Rather, how should one do it? He takes the dye from the pot in a small vessel, and places in it a little wool with which he checks"** – he takes down a bit of dye from the large pot, he puts it into a small pot, and there he checks it. The Gemara says in an eggshell, in a small pot.

"And he burns what he checked with, for it was dyed for checking" – and the rest, the remainder must indeed be burned, the rest that remains from the checking.

Study Partner B: Burning means also not using, burning is for them also – it seems a strong measure. That this should not be a loss.

Study Partner A: **"And he pours out the dye that is in the vessel with which he checked"** – the rest is tamei, tamei because it's already been used, and there is, he calls it tamei, it was tamei, it was checked, and it became invalid. **"And he dyes the techelet with the rest of the dye that was not damaged"** – until it is good in his eyes.

It seems like a great stringency. It could be that this has to do with prestige – the techelet must be with tremendous honor. Ah, don't play around, this is a holy pot of techelet, make it for tzitzit. One doesn't take to check, not the checking – one takes checking from external sources.

One must understand the reality of how it used to be. Presumably the answer to this sort of question is that if one would go to the dye company – perhaps today it's done differently, I don't know how it's done today – but if one would go even to the old ones, one would presumably understand why this round is something, or it doesn't work well for something.

Law 5: Purchasing Techelet from an Expert

Study Partner A: He says, since it is so important that techelet should be lishmah and all these rules, one cannot

simply buy techelet. Yes, **"Techelet may only be purchased from an expert."**

Study Partner B: Why? I already used Shem Shamayim for lishmah.

Study Partner A: An expert doesn't just mean that he is a great expert in what he does. He is a Jew whom one knows is an honest Jew, and he has no error in the method that lishmah always means only intention, not lishmah.

Study Partner B: No, no, on the contrary — an expert means that he does very good work. An expert is like "how expert" — it is verified, one already knows, the hechsher has a hechsher.

Study Partner A: Well, in short, he is the one who knows how to make techelet.

Invalidation Due to Improper Dyes

Study Partner A: **"And even though it was purchased from an expert, if it was checked and it became known that it was dyed with one of the other darkening dyes that do not last"** — if it's indeed from an expert, but one knows that it's taken from other dyes, because he saved his money, which doesn't last as permanently — **it is invalid.**

Study Partner B: Invalid. Because the explanation is not an expert.

Study Partner A: Although the expert knows ostensibly how to make it as well as one can, nevertheless it must be from the proper dyes.

Law 6: Testing the Techelet

Study Partner A: Now he's going to say how one actually knows, how can one check a dye if it's strong?

He says: **"How does one test it to know whether it was dyed according to the law or not"** — if it's indeed a strong dye.

First Test

He says: **"One takes straw and snail saliva"** — one takes saliva from a creature called a snail — **"and urine that has fermented for forty days"** — that has fermented for forty days — **"and soaks the techelet in all of them for a twenty-four hour period."**

"If it remained as it was and did not fade" — if it lay in this for a twenty-four hour period and it didn't come down from the strong color of the blue, the techelet — **"it is valid,"** because it's a sign that it's strong.

Second Test

If it did become dim, one must do another step of the check. There is another way of checking:

"And if it faded — one takes barley dough that is molded for muris" — a dough of barley that one lets become moldy so that it becomes a food called muris — **"and places this techelet that changed in it"** — one uses it like a techelet that changed its form in the manner of checking in an oven — one bakes it, one makes something like a challah with the techelet.

"And one bakes the dough in the oven, and removes the techelet from the bread and looks at it" — **"if it faded from what it was — it is invalid, but if its color increased and it became darker than it was before the baking — it is valid."**

So this is a two-step — in order for it to become invalid it must fail both of these tests.

Study Partner B: One really must ask whether one of the sages of the generation has done this test on today's techelet.

Study Partner A: I know there are complications with this — no one knows exactly how to do this, one must find the ingredients, I don't know what, in short.

Study Partner B: True, there is a certain chemical that lies in this, not necessarily the ingredients, but in short — one must also know how the test works, what is the point.

Study Partner A: Okay. Let's continue. Be well. Let's continue.

Law 7: Presumption of Validity at a Store

Study Partner B: Besides those who sell techelet, if they are established in validity?

Study Partner A: I already know, one must really do the test.

Study Partner B: When for example an expert says, "I've been making it for fifty years, and all my customers for the whole fifty years it hasn't faded."

Study Partner A: You could ask, "How did the first fifty and more buy?" But it's further — the thing is further a sign.

Study Partner B: True, true. If one knows that this is a good type, and this is excellent chemistry, and this works well.

Study Partner A: Such a thing happens — there is a courtyard where techelet is sold there, **"and they were established in validity"** — and they are established in validity, Jews know that they are kosher — one can there...

Study Partner B: Courtyard means like a store basically, one stands in a courtyard...

Study Partner A: Yes, **"one may purchase from it without specification and it doesn't require checking"** — one can buy there. If someone needs checking, he doesn't need to check, he can buy tzitzit there without specification.

I'm also speaking here through the law of the same besides — if someone needs checking, one doesn't need to check each pair of tzitzit externally, there is already a presumption.

One Who Deposits Techelet with a Non-Jew

The Rema says: **One who deposits techelet with a non-Jew** — someone keeps with a non-Jew a dyed... he doesn't mean simply a whole tzitzit with a thread of techelet, he means here a package of merchandise dyed blue. Is there a concern lest he switch it, because this is good quality techelet, the non-Jew will grab it and give you cheap quality instead.

When that is the word, ostensibly I understand that a whole tallit he won't... he'll buy a tallit, yes indeed.

"And it is permitted with a seal, and if he has a seal or two seals" — this is the same law as other things that one leaves with a non-Jew, like meat. If it is a seal and it has two seals, then **a seal within a seal is valid, but with one seal it is invalid.**

I don't know exactly what he means. I wrote it this way, I thought that he's speaking of a seal on one, meaning even the same seal, or it's on one on two sides, not one on the other.

I saw that one must look — today's people who buy techelet should put some seals with things, so that one should know

that one hasn't God forbid...

Study Partner: Yes, but one must put the seal, so that a non-Jew can't come and put something else, or I don't know who, someone who is not trustworthy.

One Who Finds Techelet in the Market

Further, **one who finds techelet...**

No, about this I say — the concern of the non-Jew is presumably only when there is indeed a serious concern that he will take the techelet for himself. Therefore, if he has expensive merchandise he will take it, but if he already has a made tallit — what will the non-Jew do with a tallit?

Study Partner: But the strings are sold in the store, the techelet itself, for the... not with a tallit.

Even a string of tzitzit — perhaps he also doesn't know what tzitzit is, why would he use it? Today one must generally understand in today's times — I just want to know whether the non-Jews understand tzitzit, whether they even know what this is.

Study Partner: Okay. Yes.

Law of One Who Finds Techelet — Twisted and Spun

One who finds techelet in the market — someone finds techelet in the street, one must know... **even if they were twisted** — even if he finds... ah, it is indeed spun similarly to how one makes tzitzit — then **it is invalid. But if they are spun** — if it is however already braided, that is, in spun one sees that one has used it for this purpose, it's more than just a simple piece of thread — then **it is valid.**

Discussion: Asking About Tzitzit

Here there is a great matter. The Rav in the previous chapter brings in — there is indeed a concept, the Rambam said that one doesn't need to ask about tzitzit, one is not asking. The Raavad argues — it appears here that one does ask, because you see that one asks simply a piece if this is tzitzit.

So it's implied that it doesn't say this in the text — that not that one doesn't ask, rather one must, therefore one makes it indeed the tzitzit spun.

Innovation: Ah, it's like today's techelet that comes already spun — one doesn't need to put a seal, because it's already spun.

One Who Buys a Fringed Garment from the Market

Good. **One who buys a fringed garment from the market** — if someone buys a tallit already with the tzitzit, then if he buys it **from a Jew** — **it has its presumption**, it has a presumption. If the Jew has a presumption of validity, it also has a presumption of validity.

If he buys it **from a non-Jew**, it is thus: **from a merchant** — if he buys it from a merchant — **it is valid.** Why? Because one knows that he buys from Jews and he sells further to Jews, so it is valid. That's what a merchant means, yes. And therefore one can trust even a non-Jew. It seems because he is a businessman, and his business is to... so it seems.

But a commoner — if however a non-Jew a commoner, simply a non-Jew — then **it is invalid.**

Discussion: Why Is a Non-Jewish Merchant Valid?

Study Partner: We don't have the gift of common non-Jews, with non-Jewish businesspeople, ah... it's a second thing, a businessman is a businessman.

No, the words of a businessman is to buy from another. The non-Jew himself cannot make it himself.

Study Partner: Right, right, the non-Jew cannot make it himself, because it must be spun lishmah or something.

Right, it must be spun lishmah even — even tzitzit without techelet must have lishmah.

Dyeing the White Threads

Further. The Rambam says further — what is the color of the threads that are not techelet, the white threads?

The Rambam says: **A garment that is entirely red or green or from other colors** — if someone has a colored tallit — then **he makes its white threads like its color**, one can make the white threads the same color as the tallit for beauty.

Study Partner: Must one make it?

No, one can. "He makes" — he makes. One can, one should make.

Study Partner: No, I mean he wants to bring out the importance of the techelet threads.

I don't know if one must, but if one must. It's beautiful, as they learned — likewise, one can also. It's part of the beauty of the thing, so scientific. They learned that even the white one makes, they begin with white because of this. And the Rambam says that one must.

I see that the neighbor has argued about this. We conduct ourselves — I mean, we generally have at least white tzitzit and tallit. But if someone has a colored one, then ostensibly according to the Rambam one must indeed.

Study Partner: If so, one should make it. One must make colored ones.

And the Rema says that the custom is that one always makes white ones. And because of this one indeed goes with a white tallit, so there shouldn't be any question, because perhaps according to the Rambam and according to others one had to color the threads according to the color of the garment. I mean that the custom is that one goes with white, and one doesn't have the problem.

If someone has the rainbow tallit that others have — one must know whether he must make rainbow threads also, I don't know.

White Threads on an All-Techelet Garment

If it was entirely techelet — the techelet was entirely techelet from Korach — then it is **not from other colors**, we make the white, we make indeed from a different color, so that it should be clear, one should see the... one should not be techelet.

One must make sure that the white should not be techelet, because otherwise I cannot know the difference between the white and the techelet. Something there is a word that the threads should be not from dark colors — not only from techelet should one not make, but it shouldn't look like techelet. It should be more light colors.

"And one wraps on all of it one thread of techelet" — and on this one places one thread of techelet, that is to say that it should be dyed at the time of spinning that is not dyed. Not like Korach who twisted.

Study Partner: So, but then one doesn't need to put any techelet, yes? The law is the law is the figure of Korach? This is indeed the reason?

Yes.

Study Partner: Why is this such a law?

Ahh, okay.

The Punishment Is Severe for One Who Doesn't Put White

And now the Rema brings — there is a piece...

So the Rema says: **The punishment is severe for one who doesn't put white more than the punishment for one who didn't put techelet.** The one who doesn't put simple tzitzit, white tzitzit, receives a greater punishment than the one who didn't put the techelet.

Why? **Because white is available to all** — it is much easier the simple tzitzit, the white tzitzit. **And techelet is not available to all** — techelet we discussed must be made a specific way, and it is not available. **Because it is not available in every place and at every time, because of the dye that we mentioned** — and we discussed that the techelet must be a specific dye, and not always and not everywhere is it available.

Therefore, when someone doesn't put it, one understands him that either because it came to him difficult, or he is not accustomed to this because it is not available. Or because it's expensive — let's say one can import techelet from Italy, it costs a thousand dollars, one must send someone with a guard. It's expensive, or one must work hard on it — therefore the Torah is not exacting about it.

But something that one can easily do...

Innovation: Reward and Punishment According to Difficulty

Here one sees an interesting thing, as the Gemara in Menachot — it's an interesting thing. You would have thought that an easier thing is an easier thing, a minor mitzvah. You see that since it is minor, one has more claims against you, because it's such a small thing — to buy white, it costs five cents. But techelet I understand — it costs fifty dollars, one must search for it, one must make sure that it's kosher, and if you don't do it...

But although on the other hand the techelet is more important — indeed because of this, the Gemara calls it "the seal of the servant" — but since it's a more important thing, the techelet is perhaps the main mitzvah, a part of the main mitzvah, it's not a small thing.

Study Partner: But the simple meaning is... yes, but the Gemara says the opposite.

You would have thought that the reward goes according to the importance — no, it also goes according to the difficulty, according to the situation, a great situation.

Discussion: Why Does the Rambam Bring All the Laws of Techelet?

Study Partner: And what does he say this piece? He himself innovated it, he thought up the Rambam's piece, he wanted that you should think that you are the only one who puts on Rambam, and one speaks that techelet is not available. How does it stand that the Rambam brings all the laws of techelet?

The Rambam says that you should know that even in all generations there is techelet. But the Rambam would have written a responsum for always — therefore he cannot write that "now there is no techelet". Presumably by the Rambam there was no techelet, but he cannot write so.

But he writes in the Mishneh to know that **"it is not available in every place and at every time"**.