

DISCOURSE ON: TREASURES HIDDEN IN THE SAND

Written 1887 C.E.

This is a clarification of the Law concerning the existence of the "Hillazon" even in our time. If we are able to obtain and to dye with it the "Techelet" in order to fulfill the "Mitzvah" of "Tzitzith" completely; so that we may learn to be in awe of G-d through the medium of sight, which arouses memory; the main function is in the seeing of the "Techelet", as is written in tractate Menachot 43b. Herein will be explained the place where it [the "Techelet"] is found, and its distinguishing features as derived from the words of our sages of blessed memory, the authors of the Mishnah and Talmud, and the early codifiers of the Law of blessed memory. As I raised it and prepared it in my poverty, the youth, humble among the thousands of Israel, Gershon Henoch, the son of my father and teacher, the Holy and brilliant Rabbi, our Master and teacher, Rav Yakov of blessed memory, of Izbica.

DISCOURSE ON: TREASURES HIDDEN IN THE SAND (INTRODUCTION)

IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL, GRACEFUL G-D OF
THE UNIVERSE, WHO AMONG ALL THE NATIONS MADE
HIS CHOICE IN US, AND GAVE US HIS TORAH, AND
SANCTIFIED US WITH HIS COMMANDMENTS, FROM
HIM SHALL I ASK FOR THE CORRECT ANSWER, AND HE
WILL PREPARE MY HEART AND OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY
MOUTH WILL RELATE HIS PRAISE, AND MAY HE NOT
REMOVE FROM ME HIS GRACE AND MY PRAYER.

From the depths of my heart, in the narrow places, I call out to G-d, who forms all forms. He will hear my prayer when I call Him in affliction, and He will make wide way for me and grant me for nought from His goodly treasure, and widen my heart to run in the way of His commandments, and to inform justice among the great multitude, and will guide me in the Eternal Path, so that I go on the wide way, and investigate His bidding so that I derive pure joy from His commandments in love and awe. May He strengthen me and preserve me to speak of His witness to the Kings, the Rabbis.

And indeed, who am I that I open mouth to relate His righteousness and teach His commandments among the great multitude, and instruct before the witnessing Holy Community? Do I not know the meagerness of my worth? For I possess not the understanding of a man; and do not know the knowledge of the Holy Ones. And I am a lowly person, of weak knowledge. Surrounded by hardships without number, driven unceasingly, walking in the depths of the abyss without dominion of power, Salvation is far from me, and how can I strive to express an opinion before those greater and better than me?

Truly the graces of G-d will support me and stand me up upon my high places. Indeed they are my consolation. For I placed to my heart the adage of King Solomon, praise be upon him, "My son, let them not depart from thy eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life to thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shalt not stumble, etc. For the Lord shall be thy confidence and shall keep thy foot from being caught." For the lain foundation in the words of Torah should not be turned aside from the eyes of man, even the lowest of the low.

For even the lowest of the low has a place in the words of the Torah, and can merit within it even more than what is in accordance with the boundaries and formations of the elements of his soul. And it is an inheritance to all the congregation of Yakov. And I too, the poor and lowly as dust and ashes, am included among them. As is written in the Midrash Vayikrah Rabbah (chapter 9), "'Moses commanded to us the Torah, the inheritance of the congregation of Yakov', (Deuteronomy 33). The inheritance of the congregation of Yanai is not written here, rather the congregation of Yakov". See there for yourself. May it be the pleasure of the Great Mother, that my words be accepted and that I dwell in His everlasting universal tent and that the merit of my Holy fathers who conducted themselves before Him shall stand and merit for me to be among those, who make the masses meritorious in the words of His commandments.

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May help cometh from the Lord, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

It is already many years since I placed my heart to the investigation of the commandment of "Techelet", which in our many iniquities was withheld from us. And this is one of the goodly matters withheld from us in our exile, in our man wanderings, and was forsaken from our good soul, and we are not able to arise up and see, and bow down to G-d in the temple, in the House of our chosenness. For this indeed is the main suffering of the exile, as we mention in our prayers. And as Isaiah the prophet said (chapter 63), "Lord, why hast Thou made us to stray from Thy ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear". And this also refers to the "Techelet", as is written in tractate Menachot 43b, "Rabbi Eliezer ben Yakov said, whosoever has "Tephillin" on his head, the "Tephillin" on his arm, the "Tzitzith" on his garment, and the "Mezuzah" on his doorpost, is in absolute security against sinning, etc." And it is also said there (Menachot 44a), "His four 'Tzitzith' came and grabbed him by the face," see there. This means that what we learnt in the Braitha (ibid 43b), "'That you may look upon it and remember (all the commandments of the Lord) and do them'; seeing brings to remembering, and remembering brings to doing," etc, see there. And the essence of the remembering of "Tzitzith" is brought by the "Techelet", which is likened to the Throne of Glory, as we have said (ibid 43b), "How is Techelet different from all other dyes? It is because Techelet is like unto the sea, and the sea is like unto the sky, and the sky to the Throne of Glory."

And Rashi, of blessed memory, explained, "And through the Techelet one is reminded of the One who sits upon the throne," see there. And see also the Midrash in Bamidbar Rabbah (Nasso 14 regarding the Prince of the children of Ephraim) and Talmud Yerushalmi Brachot (Chapter 1 law 2) and as it is written in the Holy Zohar (volume 3, page 175b), "(And this Techelet is) one string that is imprinted with a dye, and the dye comes from a fish which can be found in the Sea of Galilee (Kinneret) and is called "Kinneret". There was a Kinnor (lyre) which hung over the bed of King David. For sure, this Kinneret (the fish from which the Techelet is extracted) is actually the Kinnor (lyre) of King David which played of its own accord in praise of the Most High King. Therefore, the color of Techelet reaches unto the firmament, and from the firmament unto the Heavenly Throne.

And in this conjunction (i.e. the Techelet) the word "Commandment" is used. This is as it is written (Kings 2, chapter 18), 'It is the command of the King, why do you transgress the command of the King? For it is the command of the King (ie. the Schinah)'.

And we have learnt, that the foundation and the root are encrowned together in the Kingdom. This is the memory, the crown, and the entrance way to all the other crowns, as it is written (Psalm 118), 'Open up for me, the Gates of Righteousness,' and it is written (ibid), 'This is the Gate for G-d,' and regarding this it is written (Numbers 15), ' And you will see Him, (Hebrew "OHTOH" can be translated it or him), and remember all of the commandments of he Lord.' And to include in this One all the other crowns, "etc, see there. It is also known that the first gate to all the gates is fear and awe. And through it do the righteous come to all the gates, as it is written (Psalm 111), "The beginning of wisdom is fear of G-d."

This being so, even though one ought not to express wonderment at the beginning of something that was interrupted and was ceased from among us, i.e. the commandment of "Techelet", for we know that due to our many iniquities many tribulations passed upon us, and decrees, and we wandered from exile to exile, and because of the great rarity and expense of finding the "Techelet", due to our poverty and low position, it was not possible to obtain it. Indeed, it is certainly proper that in each generation, any one whose heart was touched by the fear of G-d, ought to contemplate and set his heart to searching to the greatest extent of his ability, and perhaps G-d will make him meritorious so that he be among those who make the masses meritorious, in returning the Service of the Diadem of Beauty, the "Techelet", to the people Israel. And since it is known that if our ancestors were like unto angels, we are like unto people; And if the ancestors were like unto people, then we are like unto donkeys, etc. And for this reason it would apparently be wondrous how our sages of blessed memory who came before us in any of the previous times from the interruption of the commandment of "Techelet" among Israel until now did not arouse themselves to return the Crown to its former Glory. And this in itself causes the slumber of laziness to descend, that prevents us from the work. And it also arouses claims to say that it is beyond the realm of possibility to return and fulfill this commandment as it was originally fulfilled. For this I saw fit to illustrate the objections that may be raised in this matter, and proclaim publicly:

The first claim is, being that it is known that due to our many iniquities, with the destruction of the First Temple, and with the destruction of the Second Temple, may they be rebuilt quickly in our days, Amen, many things were hidden and ceased from among us.

We may say so too did His Blessed Wisdom decree also regarding the "Hillazon" and its blood from which we dye the "Techelet", that they be hidden till the end of time.

Indeed the removal of this claim is quite clear, being that we found no place in the Talmud that tells us that at any particular time that "Techelet" was hidden. For we do find at the end of tractate Sotah that they consider and mention those objects that were lessened and eventually ceased to be found after the destruction. And even those things that were to be found but whose abundance was greatly lessened were also mentioned, as it is written (Sotah 48b) "From the day that the First Temple was destroyed song and fine silk were abolished " and see Tosafot (Shabbat 20b Anan) but in any case they are (ie. song and fine silk) to be found, they are somewhat commonplace, see there. Also white glass is mentioned there, and see Tosafot (Baba Metzia 29b B'Zchuchit) but nonetheless they are still somewhat commonplace, see there. As so too, the flowing honeydew as is mentioned in tractate Sotah (ibid) that it ceased.

And yet in the Jerusalem Talmud (Peah, chapter 7 law 3) it seems that it was also found after the destruction. And if indeed the "Techelet" was hidden and ceased to be, the Talmud would certainly have mentioned it in this connection. And in any case, would not have failed to let us know about this anywhere in the Talmud. And from this it seems clear that it was not hidden, nor did it cease to exist and to this we need not even give a thought; for at no time was its existence changed, and it was always difficult to obtain, as tractate Menachot points out (43a) "And it was sold dearly," see there. Also an expert and artisan, one proficient in the making of the dye, was also needed, as is implied there (Menachot ibid). And now too after the destruction of the Temple, its acquisition is no more expensive than during the time of the Temple. And its location is ascertainable with Blessed Divine Help, through an expertly skilled artisan. And as for what is mentioned in the Sifre (Deuteronomy chapter 354) concerning the verse "'For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas' (Deuteronomy 33:19) Said Reb Yose: One day as I was traveling from Keziv to Tzur I encountered an old man, and greeted him with 'Peace'. I asked him 'what is your means of livelihood?' He told me 'the Hillazon'. I asked him, 'can it be found?' He told me 'By the Heavens, there is a place by the sea, situated among the mountains, and poisonous insects bite it (ie. the Hillazon) and it dies and it rots in its place.'

I said to him 'The Heavens are a remembrance hidden for the Righteous for the world to come.' 'The treasure'; this is the Hillazon," etc, see there. From this it may be implied that the Hillazon from which the Techelet dye was made, was hidden.

However, indeed that would be questionable, for during the time of the 'Tanaim' (1st-3rd century CE) one must have been able to acquire the Techelet since we find Techelet in use even in the days of the 'Amoriam' (3rd-6th century CE), as is mentioned in tractate Menachot (42b) "Abaye said to Rav Shmuel bar Reb Yehudah, this Techelet, how do you dye it?", see there.

I found in the work of the brilliant Sephardic Rabbi David Pardo of Blessed memory, in his precious book Sifre Deve Rev, who brings up the point in connection with the above mentioned Sifre and asks regarding the query of Rabbi Yose 'is it to be found, 'was it not found during the days of the Amoriam? And he answers that 'since the old man told him that his livelihood comes from the Hillazon, and did not say (that it comes from) the Techelet, it was implied that his work is not the dying of the Techelet or the selling of the Techelet, that he was always hunting the Hillazon itself, and it was from this that he made his livelihood. And this was Reb Yose's question; "How was he able to make a livelihood from the Hillazon," because this implied that he was able to track it down at any time; Is it so common? And the old man answered him "indeed it is not to be found except in a certain place, in the seas." And he explained there 'that only the choicest is hidden for the Righteous," see there. It seems that the meaning of this scholar's words, of blessed memory, that it is only because he (the old man) said that his livelihood was from the Hillazon, that Reb Yose asked, 'is it (so easily) found.'

This is in accordance with what is written (Menachot44a) that it (the Hillazon) surfaces only once in seventy years, see there. And since it only surfaces once in seventy years how can it be so common as to be captured at any time? However, the dye of the Techelet (on the other hand) was readily obtainable for although the Hillazon only surfaced once in seventy years, nevertheless, at the time that it surfaced, they prepared enough Techelet dye for seventy years. This seems to be the meaning of his words of blessed memory. And perhaps he himself said this explicitly, however his book is not in front of me now, so that I can look at it, I am merely quoting from memory. According to this it would apparently seem that it would be impossible in our day to search for the Hillazon from whose blood the Techelet dye comes, for we do not know the reckoning of the years that the Hillazon surfaces, in order to capture it.

However, it seems clearly the case that what was understood based on the Talmudic source just quoted 'that it rises only once in seventy years,' implies that it is not found at all, only during the time that it surfaces, and afterwards it is not to be found at all.

Yet, this is indeed doubtful, because we find in tractate Shabbat (26a) "But Nevuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left of the poorest of the lad to be vinedressers (kormim) and husbandmen (yogvim)' (Jeremiah 52:16). Said Rav Yoseph; the vinedressers refer to those who harvest the Balsam from Ein Gedi until Ramah, and husbandmen refers to the netters of the Hillazon from the promontory of Tzur until Haifa."

And Rashi, of blessed memory, explained that the word 'yogvim' (husbandmen) is etymologically related to the word 'yekavim', ie. large vats, wherein they spread out the Hillazon in order to extract its blood, as is mentioned in chapter 'Klal Gadol' (Shabbat 75a) "That Nevuzaradan left them be (ie. the vinedressers and husbandmen) for the sake of the garments of the King," see there. And if we go according to his understanding, of blessed memory, (of Rabbi David Pardo) that the Hillazon itself is only to be found at the time that it rises from the sea once in seventy years, and afterwards is not found at all, we would not be able to understand Nevuzaradan's having left them there for something that occurred only once in seventy years. Also, the expression 'the netters of the Hillazon' implies that that was always their occupation.

Thus it seems clear that the Hillazon itself was also always available and was always able to be netted. And regarding what it says 'that it surfaces once in seventy years' the meaning of this is that once in seventy years it surfaces and multiplies, but afterwards, although it is also found, it is not found in such great abundance. And if so, Rav Yose's question 'is it to be found' needs explanation. For although it is not found in such great abundance so that everyone can acquire it easily, still, it should be acquirable by skilled netters who are expert in the art of netting to capture it.

And it would also appear that from the answer given by the old man we can learn of the nature of the question of Rav Yose. What was the meaning of the fact that the old man elaborated in his answer 'By the Heavens, in a place by the sea, situated in the mountains, poisonous insects bite it and it dies, and is decicated in its place.' If we say that the simple meaning of Rav Yose's question 'is it to be found' is that he was questioning due to the fact that it was hidden away and is completely unavailable, would it have been sufficient for this for this old man to answer him briefly that he found a place in the sea where he can net it? Therefore it appears that indeed Rav Yose's intention in asking 'is it available' is not that it is not at all available, for in truth it is available and fishermen sometimes would come across the Hillazon by chance as is implied from that tractate in Shabbat (ibid) that Nevuzaradan left the netters of the Hillazon from the promontory of Tzur until Haifa.

But since the old man answered him regarding his livelihood that it comes from the Hillazon and he did not answer that he is a fisherman and his livelihood comes from what he catches, whether it be the Hillazon or any other type of fish, it is implied that the Hillazon by itself was his means of livelihood. And this was Rav Yose's question; 'is it so available without trouble' that it would be enough for him to always make his livelihood only from the Hillazon? For although it is found in the sea and in the swamps by the sea, as will be explained, that the essential harvest of the Hillazon is a t sea but only through great trouble in netting do fishermen occasionally come across it.

And also once in every seventy years does it rise up from the sea floor and multiplies on the mountains that are in the sea and near the sea as will be explained with G-d's help from Rashi's explanation of blessed memory. And also that it needs tracking down and takes much trouble to find as will be explained from Sefer Hakaneh Hakadosh that the nature of the Hillazon is to burrow itself and hide itself in the earth. And as the Sifre states regarding the treasures hidden in the sand that this refers to the Hillazon, if so how could he (the old man) have said that his livelihood comes only from the Hillazon? 'That by the Heavens there is a place by the sea near the mountains' and there is no need to bother oneself and to look for it in the sea and spread a net upon it and (furthermore) 'poisonous insects bite it and it dies, and is decicated in its place' and (therefore) it cannot burrow and hide itself in the ground.

And therefore he can always find it easily without any bother at all and he derives his livelihood from it. And regarding this did Rav Yose say 'By the Heavens it is a remembrance hidden for the Righteous in the world to come, 'in other words that this place is unique in that the Hillazon always surface there in abundance and it is easy to capture it without any trouble. Certainly such a place is hidden for the Righteous for the world to come. And only to this old man was a taste given as a result of his (meritorious) deeds in this world and the place was revealed to him. And as it is plain that normally it does not surface to the land and multiply but once in seventy years and then to it is not so easy to obtain because it burrows and hides itself in the earth, and the purpose of the Sifre bringing this incident in connection with its explanation of the treasures hidden in the sand that this refers to the Hillazon, etc. see there. And this is clear and correct due to the help of the Blessed Name.

So too, regarding the Aggadic portion of tractate Babaa Bathra (74b) "A Heavenly voice proceeded and told them 'What claim do you have in the crates in the house of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa out of which the Techelet dye will be caste for the Righteous in the World to Come '" , see there.

We can not derive from this that the Techelet is now hidden and abrogated, for aside from the esoteric and inner meaning of this as was explained by the commentaries of Mehorasha of blessed memory, we may also explain this simply by saying that being that at the present time (ie. during the time of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa) this (Techelet) is highly esteemed and is used in the dyeing of royal garments, as Rashi of blessed memory explained and as we quoted earlier in his name, and is therefore sold at high price, because it can only be found after careful and painstaking search, therefore it was said that in the World to Come this Techelet will be available to the Righteous without effort being expended in obtaining it.

This is the same as the (Talmudic) statement saying that in the Future the Land of Israel will yield (ready-made) delicate white bread and cloaks of fine wool. Although in the present time these delicate white breads and fine woolen cloaks are also available, albeit for a price corresponding to the labor required to produce them, in the Future Time, these things will be readily available to the Israelites without any labor. So too, although the Techelet is today obtainable only through painstaking laborious search after the Hillazon, it is still nonetheless obtainable, as it was also during the days of the Amoraim as indicated above.

Indeed in Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar (Parshat Shelach, chapter 17) and Tanhuma (ibid) we read: "And now we have only the white (strings of the Tzitzith), for the Techelet was hidden." Aside from the fact that this passage requires elucidation, based on our earlier statement, for how is it that we find no reference or indication in the Talmud to the effect that the Techelet was hidden, this passage is indeed perplexing, for we know that the Midrash was edited during the early period of the Amoraim, by Rav Tanhuma and Rav Ashya Rabbah, and we find explicitly indicated in the Talmud that the Techelet was to be found even among the later Amoraim as indicated in the previously mentioned passage in Menachot (42b) "Abaye asked Rav Shmuel the son of Rav Yehudah," see there. Also see (ibid 43a) "Mar of Meshke once obtained in the time of Rav Ahai some Techelet," see there. We know the opinion of some that Rav Ahai was of the Rabanan Savorai (the Rabbinic period following the Amoraim, sixth-eighth century CE) and in any case, we may derive from the Tosafot in tractate Ketubot (2b) that he was of the last period of Amoraim, for he lived during the time of Rav Ashi. If so, how did the early Amoraim say that the Techelet was hidden?

Even if we may conjecture that term 'hidden' as used in this Midrash was formulated by the Geonim, and did not come from the Amoraim, as we find many instances where the Midrash was augmented by the Geonim or the great Rabbis of a later period such as Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan, it is nonetheless perplexing to me, for it seems that the Techelet was also in use during the time of the Geonim, as we find in the glosses of Rashbad of blessed memory (on Maimonides, Laws of Tzitzith, chapter 1 Law 10) where he indicates that "Rabbi Natronai Gaon of blessed memory compiled the laws of Tzitzith based on the laws of Techelet" see there. Also, our Holy Teacher of blessed memory, the author of the Kesef Mishna (commentary on Maimonides,, *ibid*) indicates that the Gaon Rabbi Shimeon be Hofni compiled a work on the laws of Tzitzith in Arabic, based on the laws of Techelet, see there. We know that the Geonim compiled works only of laws applicable to their own time. Also, it seems that the author of the Aruch (dictionary) on the word 'Hillazon', implies that he saw the Hillazon and knew how to draw a picture of it, see there, as will be elaborated on later, with G-d's help.

We also observe with regard to Maimonides; although in his commentary on the Mishna, at the beginning of the chapter Hatechelet (in tractate Menachot) wrote that "we are not in possession of it (ie. the Techelet) presently, because we do not know how to dye it since not all blue dyes usable for wool are called by the proper name 'Techelet' only the specific 'Techelet', we therefore can not dye it at this time, and thus we use only the white (strings for Tzitzith)," and he repeats this in Responsum 46, that now we use only the white (strings), nevertheless, from his later work (Mishna Torah) it is implied that he eventually succeeded in finding the Hillazon and obtaining Techelet, for in Hilchot Tzitzith (chapter 2 Law 2) he provides a list of the distinguishing features of the Hillazon and its blood (as will be elaborated upon later at length) and also describes how it was extracted, and in the process he provides features that find no mention at all in the Talmud, which he would not have known unless he actually obtained it and saw it. Also from his responsum to the sages of Luniel, quoted by the Kesef Mishna where he explains the practical application of the law regarding the Techelet it seems evident that it was available to them and that they conducted themselves in accordance with the Mitzvah of Techelet (on the Tzitzith).

Therefore it seems clear that the designation 'was hidden', found in the Midrash does not mean that it was totally unavailable and not to be found at all, only that its use among the Israelites was interrupted due to the great expense and the tribulations and wanderings of the exile, it was unavailable to them, and although some great and esteemed individuals of the generations did succeed in obtaining it, it was referred to as 'hidden'.

So too, we must certainly say that in order to explain the passage of the Holy Ari of blessed memory in Pri Etz Haim (Sha'ar Hatzitzith) who associated the reason for the cessation of the Mitzvah of Techelet with the destruction of the Holy Temple, may it be rebuilt quickly in our time, see there the secret of the matter, the Secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him. Since it is clearly evident from many passages that the Mitzvah of Techelet was fulfilled after the Destruction, we must therefore say that his intention of blessed memory is to provide the reason why the mitzvah of Techelet is not so abundantly available for all of Israel.

Thus the abolition of the first claim that says that it is impossible for us to return and fulfill the Mitzvah of Techelet because the Hillazon was hidden is evident since from many examples it is indicated that it was not hidden at all, and that long after the Destruction during the days of the Tanaim and Amoraim, it was available to them, and it is possible indeed almost to the point of certainty, that Maimonides, of blessed memory, also had Techelet. And only afterwards was it forsaken among us due to the exile, which in our many iniquities has increased. And in the Eastern countries it became forbidden for anyone except Royal Nobility as it is written (Esther 8) "And Mordecai went forth from the presence of the King in Royal apparel, Techelet and white, etc." And perhaps Techelet was also forbidden to be placed in Tzitzith, as the lower officials were apt to make additions and be vigilant in all things. Later on I found corroboration to this in Nachmonides' commentary on the Torah (Exodus 28:3) and yet it seems that although after the destruction of the Temple, Techelet was available to only the treasured individuals of the generations during the time of the Tanaim and Amoraim, and also in the time of the Geonim, as was indicated, and the author of the Holy Sefer Hakaneh Hakadosh seems to have also been acquainted with the Hillazon and had acquired it, being that he gave distinguishing features as will be explained with the help of G-d, when we explicate on the distinguishing features of the Hillazon.

However it seems that at the end of the days of the Geonim that it had completely ceased and was not to be found even among the singled out individuals of the generation as appears from Maimonides of blessed memory, from his commentary on the Mishna, and from his Responsum (number 43) that he did not have Techelet because prior to this, since the time of the Destruction, even if the Israelites would become greatly impoverished, and the multitude of Israel was not able to afford to fulfill the Mitzvah of Techelet, nevertheless, the distinguished individuals of the generation were able to obtain the blood of the Hillazon for the Techelet.

Since the blood of the Hillazon was also used by the nations of the world, for the Techelet dye of their Royal apparel, for Royalty and Ministers, thus the netting of the Hillazon did occasionally occur. And although it was expensive, nonetheless, it was possible for the distinguished ones of the generation to acquire the Techelet for the sake of the Mitzvah. Because at that time there were Israelites to be found in the Land of Israel, and on the beaches of the Mediterranean where the Hillazon was caught, as will be explained. And afterwards, at the end of the period of the Geonim when the yoke of the exile of the Ishmaelites became heavier upon the Jews, and they were driven from exile to exile, also from the vicinity of the Mediterranean Sea and the Land of Israel as is explained in Nachmonides' epistle, where he of blessed memory, writes that he found the Land of Israel in desolation, with very few Jews living there. And also those left there who were living on the shores of the sea were not expert. And Techelet is only accepted from an expert.

And there were many decrees and forced conversions at that time. Add to this also the fact that the nations no longer needed to track the Hillazon for the Techelet dye, because they had begun to use other species to extract the Techelet colored dye. And since that period the Mitzvah of Techelet ceased to be fulfilled. And even among the distinguished ones they were not able to acquire the blood of the Hillazon for the Techelet. However, afterwards, during the days of Maimonides and his generation, after he had completed his commentary on the Mishna, the yoke of the exile became slightly unfastened, and there were during that time many Israelites close to the King, and Maimonides of blessed memory lived near the Mediterranean coast and would travel on the sea to search for the Hillazon based on the distinguishing features derived from the Talmud and Midrashim, as will be explained. And he managed to come across it and fulfill the Mitzvah of Techelet.

As is clear from his Code of Law, for he provides additional distinguishing features to those explained in the Talmud. It is only afterwards, when in our iniquities the yoke of the exile became more powerful, to the extent that the Mitzvah of Techelet ceased among us and was completely forgotten. Therefore, even in our time, it is not impossible that after search, based on the distinguishing features mentioned in the Talmud and Midrashim of our sages of blessed memory and from the Geonim of blessed memory, and with the help of G-d, we shall be able to acquire it.

The second claim: Although it is explained that even now that the Hillazon did not cease to exist, we may still say that it is impossible for us to return and fulfill the Mitzvah of Techelet as we did originally because we may say that indeed that the color of the dye of the Techelet can be extracted from many types of squid and worms but that the fulfillment of the command of the Torah due to a hidden reason and Arcanum of the reasons for the commandments was that it would be from one specific species of the Hillazon that was known at that time. And since there was a period when the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Techelet did cease, it may be that the specific species of the Hillazon that the Torah demanded was forgotten among us, and therefore we can not return to fulfill this Mitzvah, unless we would have a prophet who would prophetically tell us in the name of G-d the specific species of Hillazon, so that we would be able to dye from its blood the color Techelet. For otherwise, how would we know that this is the Techelet which the Torah commanded.

Indeed the response to this claim is clear, that it would have only been the case if the Torah said explicitly that the Techelet had to be from a particular Hillazon, and thus it would have been proper to say that the fulfillment of the command of the Torah, would have been only through the Hillazon that was known then. And even if it would not have been explicitly said thus in the Torah, but we would have found among our sages of blessed memory any place that derived such an idea from their exposition of the Scripture that the Techelet can only be from (a particular) Hillazon.

Also we would be able to say that this was accepted as a Sinaitic edict to Moses that it was only from that species of Hillazon known at that time. However, we know that the "Hillazon" is not mentioned in the Torah at all, and also we do not find among our sages of blessed memory, that they derived the need for the Hillazon from the exposition of the Scripture and thus we can not say that they had a tradition for a Sinaitic edict to Moses because anything that is a Sinaitic edict has to be precisely derived from the Scripture as is stated in Jerusalem Talmud tractate Sotah (chapter 5 Law 22) that they know that the "third" is disqualified from trumah, and the "fourth" (is disqualified from) any Sanctified thing. And this is all derived in the Halachah, see there.

And this is similar to what Maimonides of blessed memory explained in the introduction to his commentary on the Mishna, that regarding the Ethrog and Lulov we have a tradition from Sinai that they are what is referred to in the verse in the Torah "The fruit of goodly trees and branches of palm trees" (Leviticus 23:40), but, they (the authors of the Mishna) wanted to show carefully how it is derived from the Torah, because all of the Halachot are included in the Torah and therefore in any event, that if an Halachah is not found explicitly in the

Torah, it is incumbent that it be derived from the (accepted) modes of derivation from the Torah, see there.

In order to explain the need for the Hillazon to obtain the techelet, that our sages of blessed memory necessitated for us in tractate Menachot (42b) "We obtain the blood of the Hillazon, etc," see there; for indeed why do we need it? The Torah only mentioned "techelet", which as clearly as the brightness of the sky, whatever it may be, is definitely a textile dye. And, indeed, the Rabbi, author of Tiferet Yisrael, in his forward to the order Nashim of the Mishna (in the pamphlet entitled 'Bigdei Kodesh') proposes to say that in truth we do not necessarily need that the techelet be derived only from the Hillazon.

However, we must not forget the long Braitha in Tosefta Menachot (Chapter 9) "Techelet is not kosher unless obtained from the Hillazon, if not obtained from the Hillazon it is disqualified", see there. Also, in explaining the reason for this, Maimonides of blessed memory, in the Laws of Tzitzith (chapter 2:1) stated "that this is because the dye used must be known to be consistent in its beauty and unchanging", see there. And the source of his words is Menachot (43a) "if its likeness departs it is disqualified, if its likeness does not depart it is kosher", see there. And because it is needed that the Techelet persist in its beauty and be unchanging, for this reason our sages of blessed memory, necessitated that specifically the blood of the Hillazon which is fit for these criteria be used for the Techelet dye, because our sages of blessed memory established that it is not possible that the dye of the Techelet would persist in its beauty and not change unless it be of the blood of the Hillazon.

This is to say that as is known, an article receives a dye in such a way that its color be sustained therein only if the article and the dye are compatible and of the same type, ie. inanimate object and a dye obtained from an inanimate object, or an article obtained from a vegetative source and a dye obtained from a vegetative source, or an article obtained from a sentient source and a dye obtained from such a source. In such instances they combine well and the color of the dye is sustained in the dyed object. However, if the dyed object is of an order higher than the (source of the) dye itself, ie. the object is sentient and the dye is derived from vegetative sources or if the object is of a vegetative source and the dye is derived from inanimate sources, the object does not combine well with the dye in such a way that the color is sustained, and this is because the object, which is of a higher order than the dye, overpowers the dye and nullifies its power, and therefore its (the color's) likeness becomes dulled as time goes on, and it deteriorates.

And at times, also when the dye is of a higher order than the dyed object they do not combine well and the object does not have the power to adequately receive the likeness of the dye. For example, regarding the Ishmaelite red (called Turkish red) dye it was not known how to dye cotton with it because the dye is very subtle (thin) and it derives from animal sources, whereas the object dyed (cotton) derives from vegetable sources and therefore they do not combine well.

However, the Ishmaelites possessed a secret process that enabled cotton to be dyed with this animal dye, and the Turkish Empire, whose expertise in dying has a long history, after long experimentation found a process whereby cotton, after being left for many weeks in sheep dung in order that the cotton receive within it the attribute of heat from animal product which contains within it the attribute of animal heat so that the dye and the object to be dyed would be of the same order and power so that they may adequately merge. Without such a process the cotton would not be able to receive the dye.

And in such instances where it appears that objects derived from animal sources are dyed with vegetable dyes or dyes that come from mineral sources and the dye is well received, as in the tanning of hides etc. (We do not regard this as) dyeing at all, rather it is actually a process like that of burning or deterioration or that it is a case of the dye being a "glued on" substance so that it does not combine with the object but is a "print", as it were, which contains many properties of a glue and through this it is received and sticks to the object. However, as for a clear and pure likeness, it is impossible the dyed object would sustain the dye so that it would not change, unless the dye and the dyed object are of the same order, as we have said.

Therefore, indeed up to this day, since the times that the dyeing of the Techelet from the blood of the Hillazon had ceased, we do not possess a Techelet dye derived from animal sources, and the dye derived from "Kla Ilan" (a vegetable source called India dye), although it possesses a deep hue, and within the dye are also substances that burn and cause deterioration, none the less it does not sustain itself well, and evidently, when a bright dye is made from it it does not sustain itself, and its changeability and fading over time is observable.

And since the Torah enjoined us that the Techelet dye must be sustainable over time so that it does not change, our sages of blessed memory necessitated that (the Techelet) be derived from the Hillazon for then it would certainly sustain its beautiful likeness and would not change.

It is true and I will not deny that also dyes coming from animals such as the known red dye, which comes from animal sources, it is impossible that it would not change, and its likeness fade with time as the sun would shine upon it many times. Indeed, it is not our intention when we say that the color of the dye is sustained, that it would not change under the conditions of an act that causes it to diminish and to remove the dye from that which is dyed, because his is something that is impossible for the senses bare witness that the nature of the light of the sun is to remove and diminish the material which forms the basis of all dyes as we actually see that even something that is covered with gold and is actually plated with gold, just that the plating is the thinnest if it stands many days in the light of the sun.

The domain of diminishment and loss would rule over it as is the nature of any matter existing that becomes diminished. And because of this its likeness would change. And so too, we know from experience that the smoke of sulfur removes and diminishes all colors even the colors that nature put into substances, as is known from experimentation that if something that is dyed well with a red dye that lasts is taken and placed inside a closed vessel filled with sulfur smoke, after its removed it would be white like snow. And so did we find in tractate Niddah (62a that soap also removes color, see there. Yet our intention when we say that the dye lasts is that in and of itself it does not change due to length of time without any other cause, and for this criterion the test through the various ingredients mentioned in tractate Menachot (ibid) would be the determinant. Because a dye that would not sustain itself in and of itself, and fade with the passing of time, would also fade and become ruined through the test mentioned there. And the dye that would in and of itself be sustained, and would not fade with the passing of time would also not fade through the method of testing mentioned there.

However, this itself is in need of explanation: how do our sages of blessed memory know regarding the techelet mentioned in the Biblical Command that its beauty needs to be sustained and that it does not change? And we can not say that it is because the Torah mentioned Techelet, that we need the choicest of the class of Techelet, and this implies that the choicest of the class would sustain its beauty and not change because this is not the case. For although it is true that we definitely need the choicest of the class, this would only be the case in fulfilling the Mitzvah in its best way, but not that this criterion would stand in the way of fulfilling the Commandment. And like all of the other Mitzvoth of the Torah such as the Mitzvah of animal sacrifices and similar Mitzvoth, that we also need the choicest. This is only at the outset, in order to perform the Mitzvah in the best possible way, but no that it should disqualify the Mitzvah post facto. And why here do we say that if the Techelet does not come from the Hillazon it is disqualified?

Yet it seems that since the Torah commanded us to use Techelet in the making of the Tabernacle and the Priestly Garments, and we have established in tractate Zevachim (18b) that for that Mitzvah we need that (the materials used for the Tabernacle) should be new and if they are defaced or filthy they are disqualified, see there. If so, evidently, if the likeness of their dyed state is faded they would be considered defaced and would be disqualified. And therefore, necessarily, the commandment of the Torah regarding the Techelet for the Priestly Garments was that it should sustain its beauty and not change, for we can not say that indeed for the Techelet of the Priestly Garments it was not necessary that its beauty be sustained and not change. And indeed, as of when the likeness of the dye fades it becomes disqualified and new garments would be made, for this is not the case. For the Torah said (Exodus 29) "And the Holy Garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him." And indeed if the dye is not one that sustains its beauty, and it changes in and of itself, and fades, the fading would occur immediately from the beginning, and it would continue to fade. And indeed, we certainly need that the Techelet dye of the Priestly Garments be of a dye that sustains its beauty and does not change. And therefore we would say that wherever the Torah requires Techelet, it would need to sustain its beauty and not change. And therefore our sages, of blessed memory, required the Hillazon for the Techelet.

And although the Rabbi (author of) Tiferet Yisrael in his introduction (ibid) stated that it was quite clear to him that for the Priestly Garments and the Mishkan (Tabernacle), they did not have the Hillazon for the Techelet at all, and stated as a reference Jerusalem Talmud tractate Shabbat (chapter 7, Law 2), see there. Indeed, he had forgotten a long section in the Babylonian Talmud tractate Shabbat (74b) "Tying in the Tabernacle, where was it done? etc. Those who caught the Hillazon tied and untied," see there. Thus we see clearly that the Hillazon was in the Tabernacle. And although there is an indication from the Jerusalem Talmud to the opposite effect, we are not to forsake the simple meaning of the Babylonian Talmud in the place of the Jerusalem Talmud. And indeed, from the Jerusalem Talmud we can not really bring proof, for this is the quote from the Jerusalem Talmud, "One who captures the Hillazon and splits it open (on Shabbat) there are those who learn that you are obligated for two violations and there are those who learn that you are obligated for one violation. As for those who say two; one is for capturing, and one is because of taking the soul. The one who says one; the very thing is the taking of the soul." And he does not regard the prohibition of capturing, and goes according to what Rav the son of Rabbi Yosa, Rabbi Abahu, and Rabbi Shimon be Lahish in the name of Rabbi Meir said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, created a ritually clean animal for Moses in the desert.

After Moses used it for the making of the Tabernacle, it was hidden." And the Korban Edah says "He does not consider 'capture' because one is not in violation of capture because of the fact that it is not one of the main categories of principle acts in violation of the Shabbat because the occupation of trapping was not used in the construction of the Mishkan at all because certainly the Hillazon used for the Techelet was not found in the desert, since the Hillazon is only found in Israel, in the land occupied by the tribe of Zevulun. And the nation of Israel had Techelet from Egypt, and as far as the animals, ie. the rams needed for the skins, they did not need to resort to hunting.

As for the Tahashim, there are those who say that they needed to be captured, and there are those who say like the one who says that G-d created a ritually clean animal, etc. If so, for them you certainly did not need hunting. Since it was only created for Moses, and came to him. Therefore, there is no hunting. An alternative explanation; For "He does not consider hunting (the second opinion of the Jerusalem Talmud) because one does not violate the Shabbat Law, and he holds according to "...etc. In other words if we say "there is no capture with regard to the Hillazon", if so, in what instance was their capture in the construction of the Tabernacle? For among domesticated animals there is no capture, therefore we have to say that he holds according to Rabbi, and there was an undomesticated animal there (created for Moses) that needed to be captured."

And see who explains this (section of the Jerusalem Talmud) according to the first explanation of the Korban Edah but in a slightly different manner of explanation, see there. Now according to the second explanation of the Korban Edah, there is no indication at all from the Jerusalem Talmud that implies that they did not use the Hillazon for the Techelet in the desert, it is just that the Rabbi, author of Tiferet Yisrael, considered the first explanation of the Korban Edah as the essential one because through it we can answer the question of Tosafot, tractate Shabbat (75a, end of section "He who captures") who left the question with the remark "needs pondering" on the contradiction in the Talmud from the fact that here it is implied that capture was needed to obtain the Hillazon whereas in the Jerusalem Talmud it appears that one who captures the Hillazon is not obligated for the Shabbat violation of 'capture'. Now according to the first explanation of the Korban Edah, we can say that in actuality, also according to the Jerusalem Talmud, there is the instance of capture of the Hillazon and the fact that one does not violate the Shabbat at all with any type of capture, even the capture of undomesticated animals. Whereas it appeared according to the Rabbi, author of Tiferet Yisrael, of blessed memory, that one does violate the Shabbat by capturing according to the works enumerated regarding the 39 main types of work in constructing the Tabernacle. Nevertheless, how does he delete that which is stated in the Mishnah that one does not violate the Shabbat.

Therefore it appears to my impoverished state of knowledge that the correct version is that one does not violate the Shabbat with capturing. And it appears that when it is in the sea capturing applies to it, but when it emerges to the mountains it is captured and stands in one spot. And even though it is explained in the Sefer Chinoch that it is difficult to capture it because when it emerges to the mountains it is its way to dig its tentacles into the earth, nevertheless, capturing does not apply to it for it is captured while standing in one place. And according to the one who says in the Jerusalem Talmud that one who captures and punctures is only obligated for one violation of the Shabbat.

That is for killing, not for capturing, meaning to say that one is not obligated for the violation of capturing the chilazon even in a case where it is captured. The chilazon was miraculously found in the desert and was captured while on dry land and was not moving. Therefore since during the construction of the Tabernacle there was no capturing, therefore he is not obligated even when capturing takes place in the usual manner. For specifically, other creatures that were not needed in the construction of the Tabernacle one is obligated for their capture. We learn this from the capturing of the seal which was needed for the construction of the Tabernacle.

For even though it was created by Hashem miraculously for them in the desert but nevertheless it was necessary for them to capture it. For the miracle was only its creation, but the chilazon since it was used for the Tabernacle without capturing it, it is considered that any species of the kind is not considered to be captured, and we do not learn out the violation of capturing from the capture of the seal. And regarding that which is explained in the Jerusalem Talmud that we can learn out the capture of chilazon from the capture of the seal, for even though the chilazon stood still and was captured, nevertheless, capturing pertains to it and its capture is no worse than the capture of other creatures. This difference of opinion is in theory only and not in reality. Look into the Response of Ridbaz (chapter 685) and later on in our words regarding the nullification of the fourth objection.

And furthermore it is understood from the words of our sages of blessed memory that the techelet regarding that which the Torah has enjoined us must retain its original beauty and not fade in color, this can be learned from the passage in Exodus 28 where it is written 'completely techelet'. And when this color fades it is not completely techelet. And as Rabbi Chanina the son of Rabbi Gamliel expounded regarding a blemish which makes it inadequate for use (Menachot 42b).

And even though Rabbi Yohanon the son of Dahavai disagrees there and says that even the second appearance of the color of techelet is fit for use, that means only at the beginning of the dyeing process, but once it has been dyed for the Mitzvah and then it fades and continues to get lighter in color so then certainly it is not considered to be completely techelet and it must retain its original beauty and not change. For if its color is not one that retains its original beauty and does change then certainly it is not fit for use as soon as it begins to fade from its original color and changes. Therefore when the Torah states completely techelet then certainly it means that it must retain its original beauty and not change. For the techelet of the tzitzith is learned out from the techelet of the priestly garments, for all techelet mentioned in the Torah must retain its original beauty and not change. Therefore the sages of blessed memory needed the chilazon that was known to them, for the color of techelet from any other species does not retain its original beauty and fades.

This being so that the necessity of the Hillazon in the Techelet is not dependent on a passage in the Torah or the strict letter of the law or a law without reason (Halachah), but rather is derived and based on the theory that the color should remain in its state of beauty and be unchangeable; this being true, if after searching we would be able to find the blood of any kind of Hillazon that would enable us to properly dye the color of Techelet which would retain its original beauty and would not fade, then certainly we would be able to fulfill the commandment of Techelet without any doubt. For what is the difference if the sage of blessed memory were insistent on one particular Hillazon that was known specifically, we must say that it was understood by Chazal, our sages of blessed memory, that there is no other Hillazon in the world or for that matter any other creature that can be used to dye the Techelet in a way that its color would retain the original beauty and would not fade. Therefore the Hillazon we have found is the very same Hillazon that the sages of blessed memory intended; for we see that we are able to dye with its blood the color of Techelet and its color retain the original beauty and does not fade. And if this is a different Hillazon or creature than the one our sages of blessed memory spoke of we still must say that Chazal were not insistent on one particular kind of Hillazon that was known specifically but rather the law is that all type of Hillazon and snails that would enable us to dye with their blood the color of Techelet and would retain its original beauty and not fade is permissible, but to exclude the Hillazon which is not permissible, that it is that which grows (vegetable) or is inanimate, for the essence of the necessity of the Hillazon for Techelet is not based on a law without reason but rather is specifically based on the reason that the color will retain its original beauty and will not fade.

A proof for all this can be derived from the section in Tractate Menachot 42b. R. Itzhak the son of R. Yehudah used to test it (the Techelet) thus: He used to mix together liquid alum, juice of fenugreek, and urine of a forty day old child (or that had been kept for 40 days) and soak (The blue thread in it overnight until the morning, if the color faded it is invalid but if not it is valid. Now if the necessity of the Molusc in the Techelet is derived from a specific passage or is the Halacha (law) that it is a specific kind of Molusc that is known then what good is the test for even if it does not fade in color and is known that the color is not Klai Ilan (imitation techelet) perhaps the color is from the blood of a different Molusc and not the same Molusc that the Torah is stringent about. But surely the reason for the necessity of the Hillazon in the Techelet is derived from careful reasoning and theory as is mentioned above that the color should retain its original beauty and not fade away and therefore the test is an effective one, for even if the Sages of blessed memory were stringent regarding one particular Molusc that exists because in any other species of Molusc the color fades and does not retain its original beauty then the test proves that this is the Molusc which the Sages of blessed memory spoke of. And if this color comes from a different Molusc that the sage did not speak of we must say that the Sage of blessed memory did not specify one particular kind of Hillazon that was known specifically as we mentioned before. Therefore the second objection is rejected and with G-d's help will be further clarified with the rejection of the third objection.

The third objection. For even if we could attain any Hillazon that would enable us to dye with its blood the color of Techelet and as we have explained that since we are able to dye the color Techelet that retains its original beauty and does not fade away then certainly this is kosher for Techelet as we mentioned above. But how is it possible to know that this dye is a color that remain unchanged in its beauty and color. If this being the only proof that it is actually Techelet we must know for sure that this Hillazon is the one that the Sages of blessed memory spoke of that is that retain its original beauty and color.

There are two reasons we can reject this objection.

One: For it is possible to know this from the test which is explained in Tractate Menacot 42 B. R. Isaac the son of R. Judah used to test it thus: He used to mix together liquid alum, juice of fenugreek, and urine of forty day old child (or that had been kept for forty days) and soaked (the Techelet) in it overnight until the morning; if the color faded it is invalid but if not it is valid. Moreover, R. Adda stated the following test before Raba in the name of R. Avira. One should take a piece of hard leavened dough of barleymeal and bake it with the thread of Techelet inside. If the color improved it is valid but if it deteriorated it is invalid.

We must therefore say that one test supplement the other thus: if the test of R. Essau the son of R. Judah had been applied and the color had not faded it is certainly valid, but if the color had faded, we should test it by R. Addis' test by baking it in a hard piece of leavened dough; if its color improved it is valid but if it deteriorated it is invalid. A message was sent from Palestine/Israel saying. The test supplement each other and such the Halacha law is accepted according the Maimonides Rambam law of Tzizith (Halachos).

It is true that the Rav, the author of Tiferet Israel rejects this test mentioned in the Talmud and wrote that we are not expert enough regarding these ingredients that the Talmud mentions to test the unchangeability of the color. For the ingredients liquid alum, and juice of fenugreek which the Talmud mentions is the subject of debate by Rashi v. Rambam. Nonetheless while asking forgiveness from the honorable Tiferet Israel and his high level of Torah knowledge he reached it is wondrous that he says no one is expert in regard to these ingredients especially since none of the earlier sages ever said such a thing. Just because he was not expert in these ingredients is it fair to decree that no one else is. I in my humility have become expert in the names and their nature be it according to Rashi or be it according to Rambam.

And that which he wrote the Rashi and Rambam differ in regards to what liquid alum and juice of fenugreek is he forgot that they also have different opinions in regards to the second test mentioned in the Talmud. That is Rashi says it is hard leavening whereas Rambam says it is dough. But that still presents no problem for it is possible to do the test according to both opinion ie. Rashi and Rambam. And it can be said that these ingredients that I have found to be the true ingredient can be clarified form the abundant wisdom of our sages in other places. Therefore it is possible to verify regarding the Hillazon we have found it in the process of dyeing, the color retain its original beauty and does not fade and pass the test of mentioned in the Talmud. It too is a rejection to the second objection for even if the necessity for a particular Hillazon as explicitly mentioned in the Torah so certainly through the test if it proves positive then this must be the Hillazon regarding which the Torah enjoined us. For if it was not the test would not prove positive. That is the reason the test is mentioned in the Talmud, to clarify if the Techelet is from the blood of the Hillazon and therefore fit for use or from some other species and therefore unfit. And this is clear. It is all one reason.

Secondly even without testing at all it appears in my limited knowledge clear that if we were able to attain the Hillazon to dye with its blood the Techelet and there would be found in this Techelet all the signs and treasures that the Sages of blessed memory have given us regarding that Hillazon that they spoke of, then again, we not be at all doubtful that certainly this is the very same Hillazon the sages of blessed memory had intended. And the sage of blessed memory gave us signs regarding this Hillazon in Tractate Menachot 44. Our Rabbis taught: The Hillazon resembles the sea in its color (its essence ie. its blood) and in shape resembles a fish etc. And it seems clear that our sages gave us clear signs regarding the Hillazon for in their wisdom they saw that because of our exiles and the great expense in attaining it that it was almost certain that we would forget which is the correct Hillazon. Therefore they drew a clear picture for us and gave us all the sure signs of its identification so we would know how to search for it with G-d's help.

You should know that Rambam (may his memory be a blessing) in Mishnah Torah copied this Braitha - And it is a known thing that Rambam does not bring in Aggadic material unless it has relevance to the law. So we must certainly say that it is a law that we can depend on the reliability of these signs that this is the Hillazon whose blood is kosher fit for dyeing the Techelet. (And in our lowly state) we have found many more signs and treasures regarding the Hillazon which are scattered throughout the words of our Sages of blessed memory. And the Rambam of blessed memory expounded and found other signs that were not mentioned in the Talmud. From this I can assume and judge that Rambam recognized and saw the Hillazon as is mentioned above. From this it appears quite clearly that when we are able to attain the kind of Hillazon which has all the signs that with G-d's help we shall clarify that beyond a shadow of a doubt that even without doing the test mentioned in the Talmud, it is kosher.

The reason for the test is if we have a doubt whether this is really the blood of the Hillazon, but when it is clear to us that this is the correct type of blood there is not necessity for the test. This is also a rejection of the end objection for even if it was explicitly stated in the Torah the necessity for the Hillazon in Techelet and there was a stringency regarding a particular kind of Hillazon that specifically is known, so too if the Hillazon we find matches the correct sign this must be the very same Hillazon. And in truth from the Braitha what gives us the signs of the Hillazon it appears that actually any Hillazon which does not have these signs even if its possible to dye with the blood the color Techelet it is not kosher (fit for use). And we must say that Hillazon that does not have these signs, the blood used for that we can learn dyeing does not retain its original beauty and it fades away.

The fourth objection: Why should one search in vain for the Hillazon without benefit for even if we would attain this way Hillazon that the Sages of blessed memory intended and we could recognize it according to its signs that is with all certainty the correct Hillazon we still would not be able to use its blood to dye the Techelet, because the Sages of blessed memory have already said in Tractate Megillah (6a) that everyone needs you (Zevulun) because of the chilazon. Judges (5) What is the reason because Naftali received as their portion in the land of Israel the high places of the fields. Zevulun said before G-d, Master of the Universe you have given unto my brother the fields and the vineyards and unto me you have given mountain valleys. To my brother you have given him lands and unto me you have given the seas and the rivers. G-d answered him saying, Because of the Hillazon everyone needs you as it is said in Devarim(33).

The nations will call upon the mountains and the hidden treasures of the sand. Rav Yosef taught the "hidden is the Hillazon and the treasures are clear glass (crystal). Zevulun said before G-d 'Who will make it known to me that this is true. Hashem answered him and said There they will offer their righteous sacrifices (ibid). This will be your sign 'Whom takes from you without payment will not be successful in his business - and Rashi explains that if he takes the amount of Hillazon which is worth a Prutah (a small coin) without remuneration for it the color will be ruined and will not be of any benefit at all, Therefore even if we could attain the proper Hillazon we would be taking it without paying for it to the tribe of Zevulun for we have been exiled from our land and Zevulun is not in their inherited place that we are able to pay them therefore the color will be of no benefit and why should we toil in vain. Therefore even if it seems to us (to the naked eye) that we would be able to dye with its blood the color of Techelet we must be forced to say that we are mistaken for certainly the words of our Sages of Blessed memory are alive and everlasting.

Nevertheless, this objection is overruled: First of all after the destruction of the Holy Temple during the time of the Tannaim (the sages of the Mishnaic era) and the Amoraim (the sage of the Talmudic era) and the Gaonim (the sage of the post Talmudic era) Techelet was found. And at that point we were already exiled from our land and it was impossible to pay the tribe of Zevulun for the Hillazon, so therefore only when Israel were dwelling on their land and each tribe was living on their appointed portion and the Hillazon was in the portion of Zevulun and then if one took the Hillazon without the knowledge of Zevulun and without payment it was considered as theft, it was during that period of time specifically that the promise was made as can be learned from the text, there they will offer up the sacrifices of righteousness (that is regarding theft).

But because of our transgression, since we have been exiled from our land and the nations have gained a foothold in all of the land of Israel until the end of days when He will return us and have compassion upon us and bring us back to Zion with exultation speedily in our, time this promise is not pertinent for the tribe of Zevulun does not dwell there but we can say its theft. And furthermore even when Israel was dwelling on their land only if the Hillazon that went up to the mountains in the portion of Zevulun was taken without payment then the dyeing process would not work and would be of no avail for it would be considered as theft.

But in truth the Hillazon is found in all the western and Mediterranean seas but can only be caught with difficulty, Whereas in the portion of Zevulun the Hillazon rose from the sea unto its mountains that sloped to the sea and there would multiply and would easily be caught as well be explained with G-d's help. It appears that certainly if the Hillazon would be caught from the sea even in the portion of Zevulun without payment the dye would not be ruined. and this is what Rashi explains (ibid). Everyone will need you, all your brothers will need you for the Hillazon that rises from the sea unto the mountains, the nations will call out to the mountains. From all the tribes they will gather together on your mountains to bury the Hidden Treasures of the sand. This is said only regarding the rest of other tribes that the Hillazon was found in the portion of Zevulun because they would go up to his mountains or we mentioned above, and all the tribes needed him to buy from him the Techelet. But certainly the Techelet was found in all the western and Mediterranean seas and all the nations that encamped by the sea had the Hillazon and is written in the text in (Yechezkiel 27) Techelet and argamon are from Islands of Alisha etc.

The majority of Techelet was from the island of Alisha and the merchants of Shva, Asher and Kalmud-- and was not considered part of the land of Israel's Techelet. For in truth they only had enough to supply themselves with garments for the royalty, princes and priests and for the fulfillment of the precept of Techelet but they did not have enough Techelet to sell to the outside world. If this being so how is it that the dyeing process was successful if they took the Hillazon without paying for it and did not offer it from the tribe of Zevulun, but certainly we mentioned above that where was trapped within the portion of Zevulun would not be ruined.

And it also appears from what is learned in Tractate Sotah (46B) regarding the following passage in (Judges 1) And the man went to the land of the Chittim and he built a city and called its name Luz and this is its name till this very day. The Midrash in Breshit Rabba explains that Luz is where the Techelet was dyed.

The city in the land of the Chittim appears to not have been inhabited by the Jews for it is not part of the land of Israel and it was a place where the Techelet was found and the dyeing process successfully done. Even though they did not pay the tribe of Zevulun for it that is as mentioned above because it was not taken from his portion and all this is clear and correct.

I have found support for all we have said from our teacher the Ridbaz, may his memory be a blessing in responsa #685 and this is his holy language.

The question arose as we have learned in Tractate Sabbath that the trappers of the Hillazon tied the nets and untied them to trap them. You have asked from where did they have Hillazon that they were able to trap, was it not found only in the portion of Zevulun and was it possible to come to the land of Israel to trap it.'

The answer is this is not necessary for the Hillazon that was found in the sea and in the portion of Zevulun would emerge by itself from the sea to dry land and then they would gather it. And after Israel was exiled the Hillazon would not emerge and --- left in Israel from the impoverished of the nation to trap the Hillazon which means that trapping was a necessity. So too in the making of the Tabernacle they were close to the Red sea for from Mt. Sinai to the Red Sea was a short distance and they would go the Red sea and would trap the Hillazon for it was found there. It's not necessary to say the same thing regarding the Hillazon as we said about the seal skin that is was not to be found for the chilazon is to be found and it is possible that till this very day it is found but we do not recognize it or we do not know how to trap it. Also because we do not need it because the color that resembles techelet can be found in abundance that is the color ' Astis' which is called in Arabic 'nil and they dye it professionally that even ironing does not fade it. Till here his holy words.

This is certainly support to our words from the great scholar the Ridbaz.

And we who can not compare to the greatness of the Rabbis in the previous generations do not be amazed at all that they did not arouse themselves to search for the chilazon. For we have found in the book of Kings (2,18) that the brass serpent that Moses made was destroyed for until that time the children of Israel were sacrificing unto it and called it Nechushtan.

Regarding this it says in tractate Chullin (6b) Is it possible that Asa came and did not annihilate it, that Yehosafat came and did not annihilate it and yet all the other forms of idol worship in the world Asa and Yehosafat annihilated. Yet G-d did not arouse these great righteous men to annihilate it even though it was a great stumbling block to the Jews so that Ch----- could come and be on guard against it and it was hidden from them that it is permitted to destroy the brass serpent as it is written in the Tosafot ibid 7. So too even more so it can be derived from a fortiori reasoning in our case when we are speaking only of the prevention of doing one positive mitzvah that we can say that it is from G-d that it be hidden from the giants of the previous generations the possibility of finding the chilazon in our time in order to leave place for the one who is ready to actualize this potentiality and to be on the guard regarding it.

G-d gave a boundary for everything saying till here you shall approach and G-d in his abundant mercy left place for even the least of the least to gird themselves and make fences as the holy Rabbi, Reb Yehudah Hanassi said in the tractate Megillah (28) those that come after you shall lead the flock. For if the whole of the Torah was revealed only to the earlier sages there would be no room left for the later generations to be innovative in the Torah of G-d. And since I have seen that it has come to me without specifically planning it through many different reasons to be aroused regarding this subject and I saw that it is from heaven that it can be revealed to us for there is hope that we can return to fulfill the Mitzvah of Techelet as was done originally, I said perhaps G-d has left place for even the least of the least like me to bring me merit regarding this commandment that will bring merit to the many through me and I will be amidst those who bring merit to the many.

Therefore I girded my loins to search for the hidden treasure in the sand. And I said first I will search and seek out to expound to understand in our Holy Torah since all the hidden treasures are all hidden in the Torah. And as we have found that even the end of the Babylonian exile was hidden in the Torah as is written in Tractate Megillah (12a) as he said I understand but was actually mistaken and only if that exact moment that G-d had appointed only then was it revealed and also the place of the Holy Temple was hidden in the Torah in the book of Joshua until David came and it was revealed to him as is explained in Tractate Zevachim 54B . And also regarding the building of the second Temple it says there ibid (62a) regarding the altar the Men of the Great Assembly expounded and Solomon did not understand to expound upon it and also the light of the sixth day of creation that was hidden in the Torah was hidden as is explained in the Holy Zohar and the Sefer Habahir 6B.

Therefore I have put it in my heart before anything else to find all the signs regarding the Hillazon in the writing of the Sages of Blessed Memory. And through their words there will be place before one of my lowly state or to all those that the King of the world whose name is blessed desires to bring merit to the many through him to search for it. And when there will be found a creature that has all the signs it will be already known that this creature is certainly the Hillazon. May it be his will that I shall not stumble in the way of the Halacha (law).

The Explanation of where the Hillazon can be found

Even though it appears from the first outlook that the place the Hillazon is found is in the mountains so is stated in Tractate Sanhedrin (91a) 'He went up to the mountains and saw that today there was only one Hillazon, the next day it rained and the mountain was filled with Hillazon. And in truth in Tractate Menachot (44a) it says they emerge once in seventy years - Rashi explains: it emerges from the land and only in the mountain in the territory of Zevulun.

Yet we find that Rashi of Blessed Memory himself explain in Tractate Megillah (6a) that the Hillazon emerge from the sea unto the mountains and also explained in Tractate Sanhedrin (91a) and Tractate Chullin 99A regarding that which is said that Techelet resembles the sea that Rashi explain that the Hillazon arises from the sea. And so it is explained according to Rambam (Maimonides) of Blessed Memory. The laws of Tzizith Chapter 2 Halacha II and this is his language. And it can be found in the Dead Sea. And it appears that they learned to say this from the words of the Midrash which states that there is a place in the sea which is amidst the mountains, we learn from this that the Hillazon is from the sea but it emerges from the sea to the mountain amidst the sea. And we have said previously in (refutation to the 4th objection) that its place is in all the western sea and the Mediterranean but in the portion of Zevulun it would emerge from the sea to its mountains that sloped towards the sea and would multiply these. And that which Rashi says in Tractate Menachot that it emerges from the land that means to say that there when it emerges from the sea to the mountain it multiplies.

And the Torah of Truth was upon their lips for it is explained in the Zohar (Beshalach 48B) that the Hillazon is found in the sea.

The fact that Rambam calls in the Salt sea which is certainly not in the portion of Zevulun can be answered simply by saying that this is the name the Rambam call all the seas that are salty.

The signs of the Hillazon

1. The color of the body of the Hillazon resembles the color of the sea as the Rabbis in Tractate Menachot (44A) taught that the color of the Hillazon resembles the color of the sea. Rashi explains that the Hillazon emerges from the sea and the Techelet resembles the sea, that is to say that the sea it is found in and that it emerges from is the cause of its color.
2. The Hillazon which has a soft flesh and moves above the water by way of its fins resembles a fish but since it can multiply on dry land it is not considered to be a fish. It has characteristics that resemble the fish but cannot be considered to be an actual fish.
3. The Hillazon has veins and bones as is proved from the Jerusalem Talmud in Tractate Shabbat Chapter I, Halacha III.
4. The Hillazon has a hard shell and covering that grows with it. The reason we know that the shell is hard is because the expression to wound is used regarding it and only that which has a hard shell can we use the expression to wound.
5. The Hillazon has coming out from its head bent threads like hooks that are put on chains so long them on the wall. That is the reason that these very same bent hooks are called Hillazon. There is evidence to this, so the Aruch in the first book he wrote, drew a picture of the Hillazon. It can be understood from this that he knew what it looked like and he knew that the threads coming out of the head are like bent hooks on the top of the chain.
6. There must be found in the Hillazon organs or fringe like extensions that resemble the snake. Upon the organs there are red flesh-like blisters. This is the reason that the red blister in the eye are called Hillazon and Snake.
7. The Rambam in the laws of Tzitzith Chapter II Halacha II gives in the sign to recognize the Hillazon and this is his holy words. Its a fish whose color resembles that of Techelet and whose blood is black as ink. I have found no source in the Talmud in support of Rambam words that its blood is black as ink. And it appears from this that after Rambam wrote his commentary on the Mishnah he toiled and labored until he found the Hillazon according to the signs mentioned in the words of our Sages of Blessed Memory and fulfilled the Precept Mitzvah of Techelet. Then he proceeded to enumerate other signs that could be found in it such as its black ink like blood. He though that perhaps it would be forgotten this would make it easier for one who desired to search for it and be able to

find it without giving up. For if Rambam did not make it known to us (regarding its black blood) we would search for it relying solely on the signs in the Talmud. And even if we would find it we would lose hope saying that since its blood is black this is certainly not the Hillazon needed to dye the Techelet, Therefore he made it known to us that in truth its blood is black and only by adding of the substances is it possible to dye it the color of Techelet.

Rashi in Tractate Chullin (89A) seems to disagree with this Rambam for the sages that the appearances of its blood resembles the sea and we see that the sea resembles the firmament. Its probable to say that Rashi did not recognize nor see the Hillazon but rather deduced it theoretically. But still it is amazing to say that even though a theoretical deduction he did not arrive at the truth. Therefore it appears that in truth Rashis intention is not regarding the blood itself, but rather the color that appears from dyeing with the blood. That is to say that Rashi was careful with the use of his holy words when he said the appearance of its blood and did not say just its blood resemble the sea, for in truth its blood is black as ink and does not resemble the sea.

8. It has been explained already that the Hillazon emerges from the sea to the mountains. And it is written in the holy book before Hakaneh in the laws of Tzizith, that immediately upon emerging it is entrenched in the earth and there it procreates. And he concludes by saying that it is rooted there and its head is outside. It can be understood from this that it is the way of the Hillazon to dig and to bury itself in the earth. Rashi in Tractate Megillah (6A) who wants us to understand each word the Talmud explains according to the order of the words in the passage explains the word S'funei as importance rather than buried which fits in both according to the simple meaning of the passage.
9. The Hillazon has two kinds of blood one which exudes from it and one which is contained in its organs.
10. In essence the Hillazon is found in the sea but it also emerges to dry land upon the mountains the slope into the sea and is able to survive there. When it is in the sea it must be trapped but when it emerges on dry land it is trapped and just stands there, and this is explained according to the explanation of the refutation of the second and fourth objections.

The appearance of the Techelet

According to Rashi of Blessed Memory the color of Techelet resembles the firmament as it blackens towards evening which is in agreement with Rambam of Blessed Memory who says that the Techelet must lean towards and have a fringe of blackness.

And behold, since G-d whose name is blessed has helped us to clarify the signs through which the Hillazon can be recognized, and I have spoken with many of the Sages of the Torah and spiritual giants of Israel and they have agreed with my words, it is incumbent upon all those who have strength to search for it, to bring merit to the nation of Israel with the precept (Mitzvah) which has been forgotten from Israel many hundreds of years.

And anyone who merits to this will be blessed by the Lord, the G-d of Israel. And I in my lowliness have begun this process and have sent to the shores of the Mediterranean sea. This creature has been brought to me and it is of the species that are called inkfish what include 19 different kinds. It appears to me that in one of these species can be found all the signs that are mentioned previously as explained according to the words of our sages of Blessed Memory also its blood which is black as ink is under my hand. Nevertheless all the chemists have not been successful in extracting its blood.

And if G-d will help me to come to the shores of the Mediterranean sea and be able to attain it unlike it is still alive if G-d so desires I will try with the help of G-d who is blessed to extract from it the color of Techelet.

And I will pray to G-d who is blessed, that just as he has given me merit to living merit for Israel with words of Torah whose expositions are few, these being the remnants that occupy themselves in the order of Teharoth (laws of ritual impurity) and with the help of G-d due to the merit of my fathers I have set in order the entire order of Teharoth - And with the help of G-d I have published the Tractate of Kelim (laws regarding ritual impurity of vessels) which has been favorably received amidst the great sages of Israel and the wise men of the Torah, so too I shall pray with G-d and that he helps me complete the entire order and publish it, and I shall dwell in his tents forever. And so too regarding this Mitzvah of Techelet which has none that seek it out, may G-d help me to bring merit to the many and may it stand for me and my children and my children's children that the words of the Torah vanish not from my lips and the lips of my children and the lips of my children's children so says G-d from now until forever.

**I have completed this honorable treatise on the 11th day of
Marcheshvan, Tuesday, the Torah portion of Vayera, 5648 (1887), here
in Radzin.**

Translation:	Menachem Kalish and David Herzberg
Transcription:	Reuven Prager
Typist:	Tamar Seigel
Additional Formatting Edits from Original Source Material Found on the Web	Jonathan Hirshon
