



Introduction

1. Exodus 28:5, Numbers 15:38

And they shall take the gold, and the *techelet*, and the purple wool, and the red wool, and the linen
And they shall place on the *tzitzit* of the corners a *techelet* string.

2. Talmud, Menachot 43b

Rabbi Meir used to say: Why is *techelet* different from any other color? Because *techelet* resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the heavens, and the heavens resemble the Divine Throne, as it is written (Exodus 24:10), "And beneath His feet was a kind of paved work of *sapir* stone, and as it were the very heaven for clarity."

3. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 1:2

For the *techelet* resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the grass, and the grass resembles the heavens, and the heavens resemble the Divine Throne, and the Throne resembles the *sapir*, as Ezekiel 10:1 says, "And I saw, and behold, above the *rakia* over the head of the cherub was like a *sapir* stone, like the appearance of the form of a throne."

4. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (19th-20th century Poland), Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 9:12

Some years ago one person claimed that he had found the *chilazon* and had made *techelet* out of it, and he attracted a number of people to himself. However, he did not hear approval from the great people of the generation or from the Jewish people, and the project was nullified until our righteous Mashiach will arrive.

5. Halachah Meets Modernity: *Techelet* (Jan 2017) <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/870418/>

First: The disappearance of *techelet*

6. Midrash Tanchuma, Shelach 29

The mitzvah is to bring white and *techelet* threads and make the *tzitzit*. When? When there was *techelet*. Now we only have white, for *techelet* has been put away.

7. Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna (19th century Poland), Yeshuot Malko Orach Chaim 2

It happened during the days of the later Raveina, who passed away in the year 4234 (474 CE). Because the Tannaim disagreed whether the absence of *techelet* disqualifies white, and the law had not yet been established that it would invalidate the white, and there was danger in getting *techelet* as described in Sanhedrin 19...people endangered themselves to fulfill the mitzvah of *tzitzit*.

8. Difficulty of acquisition

- Romans prohibited wearing royal colours
- 628 Massacre of Jews by Christians
- 638 Destruction of *techelet* facilities by Muslim conquest
- Cost

9. Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12th century Egypt), Commentary to Mishnah Menachot 4:1

It is not found with us today, for we do not know how to dye it, for not every *techol* colour in wool is called *techelet*, but only a particular *tichlut* which is not possible today. Therefore, we only make the white.

10. Rabbi David ibn Abi Zimra (Spain, Egypt, Israel 16th century), Responsum 2:685

And perhaps it is around today, but we do not recognize it, or we do not know how to trap it.

The Radzyner cuttlefish: An example of modern discovery, and reaction

11. Rabbi Gershon Henoch Leiner (19th century Poland), Temunei Chol 3

And I, as well, in my poverty, set out and sent to the Mediterranean provinces, and the creature was brought to me. It is one of the species known as “fish of dye,” and in German *tint fish*. There are about nineteen such species, and it appears to me that in one of those species is found all of the signs.

12. Talmud, Menachot 38a

Techelet does not annul white, and white does not annul *Techelet*...This disagrees with Rebbe, for we learned, “The Torah says, ‘You shall see it,’ and so the absence of either part annuls the other, according to Rebbe. The Sages say that neither part annuls the other.”

13. Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna (19th century Poland), Yeshuot Malko Orach Chaim 2

He stated that it is a possibility [that the *techelet* is valid], and since one is possibly capable of fulfilling the mitzvah of *techelet* with it, therefore one must do so since the *techelet* will not harm the white. He wrote correctly... but since we don’t know with certainty that this is *techelet*, and many leaders are of the opinion that it has been stored away and we are not obligated in it, we do not abandon the certainty and rule stringently because of the doubt.

14. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch (20th-21st century England/Israel/South Africa/Israel), Teshuvot v’Hanhagot 1:26

For people imagine that they are definitely fulfilling a commandment, and they intend this, and there is concern for [the prohibition against] adding [to the Torah]...

15. Talmud, Menachot 44a

The *chilazon*’s body resembles the sea and its formation resembles the fish, and it ascends once in seventy years, and with its blood they dye *Techelet* – therefore its cost is expensive.

16. Three issues

The signs are incorrect	It isn’t like the sky It doesn’t endure in the fabric The dye is actually from synthetic additives
Why stir this up?	If white is kosher, who needs the controversy of restoring <i>techelet</i> ? The Ari z”l said there is no obligation for <i>techelet</i> in our time
A tradition is required	Earlier sages had access to the cuttlefish and did not use it Even without earlier access, a tradition is required

17. Cuttlefish, *murex trunculus*, *janthina* www.techelet.info



Round Two: The Murex Trunculus

18. Pliny, *Natural History*, Chapter 60: The Nature of the Murex and the Purple

Purples live mostly seven years. Like the murex, they keep themselves in concealment for thirty days, about the time of the rising of the Dog-star; in the spring season they unite in large bodies, and by rubbing against each other, produce a viscous spittle, from which a kind of wax is formed. The murex does the same; but the purple has that exquisite juice which is so greatly sought after for the purpose of dyeing cloth, situate in the middle of the throat. This secretion consists of a tiny drop contained in a white vein, from which the precious liquid used for dyeing is distilled, being of

the tint of a rose somewhat inclining to black. The rest of the body is entirely destitute of this juice. It is a great point to take the fish alive; for when it dies, it spits out this juice. From the larger ones it is extracted after taking off the shell; but the small fish are crushed alive, together with the shells, upon which they eject this secretion.

19. Evidence includes:

- Pliny (1st century CE) identifies the species and process
- Discovery of ancient dye production operations with murex shells
- Discovery of the murex on ancient coins
- Dye looks like plant indigo
- The Sages didn't warn against use of the murex
- No other creature produces such a colour
- Dye becomes blue with exposure to sunlight
- Colourfast
- It has a shell
- It is named in responsa from recent centuries
- It is found along the Mediterranean coast in areas that match the portion of Zevulun

20. Four issues

The signs don't match	<p><i>Techelet</i> was put away; we can't possibly have it The snail doesn't match the colour of the sea The blood is transparent, not black The snail doesn't look like a fish The snail doesn't surface once every seventy years The dye is not taken from the blood The dye is not taken immediately after the creature's death The description of the original process did not mention exposure to sunlight</p>
There is no duty to pursue new discoveries	Why wedge the murex into the signs of the <i>chilazon</i> ?
A tradition is required	A tradition is required
This is theory, not proof	<p>Pliny could have manuscript errors, and who says his murex is our murex anyway? The processing operation discovered could have been from another dye The actual <i>techelet</i> processing operations could have been destroyed Who says our indigo is the <i>kla ilan</i> fake? Maybe they didn't warn against murex because they didn't have it, or because it is expensive, or because its colour is obviously wrong How do you know that no other creature, past or present, produces such a colour?</p>