

בעזהשי"ת

קונטרס

רמוני תכלת

ביאור כמה חוטים בציצית ראויים להיות מתכלת,
והוכחות שקי"ל להלכה שיש להטיל ב' חוטי תכלת וב' חוטי לבן,
וכדעת רוב ראשונים, וכן נראה עיקר בדעת הגר"א ז"ל

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-לא מוגה-

מהדורה חדשה עם כמה הוספות

תשרי תשע"ו

פעיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

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הערות, הארות, השגות, תגובות,
יתקבלו בשמחה רבה.

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Rimonei Techeiles

How Many Tzitzis Strings Should Be Techeiles?

An explanation of how many strings in tzitzis should be Techeiles, with proofs that the accepted halachah is to use two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings, following the majority of Rishonim; and that this also appears to be the primary view of the Gra z"l.

New edition with several additions - not proofread

Tishrei 5776 - Yerushalayim

Summary

In this kuntres we will explain that the primary girsa in the Sifrei appears to teach two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings. The straightforward reading of the sugya in Menachos points the same way, and this is the view of Rashi, Tosafos, and the majority of the Rishonim. We will also show that many Acharonim ruled lemaaseh, even lekula, like Rashi and Tosafos, among them the Mishnah Berurah (9:14) and the Chazon Ish (3:26).

The Gra's position appears at first to contain a contradiction. In his Biur to Shulchan Aruch he rules that there are two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings. There is no strong reason to assume that his primary view was instead the Raavad's. On the contrary, it is more reasonable to understand his final position as the shittah of Tosafos. Based as well on the rules set out by the Chacham Tzvi, Maharsham, and Chazon Ish, the primary view of the Gra appears to be what he wrote in his Biur to Shulchan Aruch: two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings.

Comments, corrections, objections, and responses are very welcome.

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With the help of Heaven

Author's Introduction:

In our time, a number of serious bnei Torah have begun wearing what they understand to be Techeiles. Whether this is in fact the true Techeiles is not what I have come to discuss. Many worthy people have already written at length on that question, both in kuntreisim presenting strong arguments that Techeiles has been rediscovered and in works opposing the renewal of Techeiles. But since there are bnei Torah who are concerned about the matter in any case, we need to clarify the practical halachah of how many Techeiles strings should be placed in the tzitzis. That is my purpose here. I am certainly not coming, chas v'shalom, to pasken for the public; I only wish to raise points in these sugyos. A wise person will hear and gain further understanding, and each person can make his own choice.

I called this work "Rimonei Techeiles" based on the Gemara in Berachos 57: "One who sees pomegranates in a dream... if they are split pomegranates, if he is a talmid chacham he should anticipate Torah, as it says (Shir HaShirim 8:2), 'I would give you spiced wine, the juice of my pomegranate.' If he is an am ha'aretz, he should anticipate mitzvos, as it says (Shir HaShirim 4:3), 'Your temple is like a slice of pomegranate'; what does 'your temple' teach? Even the empty ones among you are full of mitzvos like a pomegranate." This needs explanation. Why specifically if he is a talmid chacham - meaning someone who has already acquired a great deal of Torah - should he anticipate Torah, while an am ha'aretz remains without Torah? Seemingly the Gemara should have said that if he is an am ha'aretz, he should anticipate learning Torah. It seems that the idea of a pomegranate represents quantity and increase in number, since a pomegranate is filled with hundreds of seeds (see also Orach Chaim 583:1). An increase only makes sense when there is already something there to increase. Therefore, someone who has already acquired Torah can anticipate an increase in Torah, but an am ha'aretz who has not yet acquired Torah cannot anticipate Torah through the symbolism of a pomegranate. A pomegranate does not create a talmid chacham; it only increases what is already there. He can, however, anticipate mitzvos, because even an am ha'aretz already has mitzvos that can be increased. This also explains why the Gemara continues by saying that even the empty ones among you are full of mitzvos like a pomegranate. At first glance, what does that have to do with the statement that an am ha'aretz should anticipate mitzvos? The answer seems to be that we might have thought that perhaps even in mitzvos an am ha'aretz has nothing to anticipate, because maybe he does not have even a basic stock of mitzvos to increase. The Gemara therefore tells us that even the "empty ones" are full of mitzvos like a pomegranate. In other words, even an am ha'aretz already has mitzvos, and once he has them, the pomegranate can signify an increase in their number. Vedok. In the same way, this work is directed only to those who already have Techeiles, and my hope is simply for an increase in the number of

Techeiles strings. Those who do not have Techeiles yet have nothing to anticipate from "Rimonei Techeiles."

My thanks go to Rav Yisrael Barkin shlita, who helped me greatly with this subject. I also benefited a great deal from the kuntres "Gedilim Ta'aseh Lach" by Rav Ben Tzion HaLevi Miller shlita, as well as from various comments and objections that I received from Rav Tzvi Hertzog shlita, Rav Ch. V. shlita, and other talmidei chachamim, from several articles printed in "Vehayah Lachem L'Tzitzis," and from the kuntres "B'Knaf Ish Yehudi" by Rav Yitzchak Brand shlita.

I have not brought every possible side and every fine point here. I have only written the main points that emerged from learning with chavrim and discussing the issues with talmidei chachamim. I have considerably more material in writing than what I have presented here, and anyone who wants it may contact me.

I conclude with a tefillah to Hashem that I should not stumble in a matter of halachah, and that we should soon merit, in our days, a ruling of the Sanhedrin in the Lishkas HaGazis.

M. E. I.

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Siman 1 - The Machlokes of the Rishonim Regarding the Number of Techeiles Strings

It is well known that the Rishonim disagree about how many of the tzitzis strings are supposed to be Techeiles. It seems, though, that the disagreement goes deeper than the number itself. At its root, they disagree about how to define the two mitzvah-components of tzitzis.

The Rambam (Hilchos Tzitzis 1:6) holds that only one of the eight ends is Techeiles - in other words, half of one of the four full strings. The Acharonim, led by the Mishkenos Yaakov (Responsa, siman 13), explain that according to the Rambam the mitzvah of Techeiles is not like the mitzvah of lavan, which is fulfilled through the strings themselves. Rather, the basic mitzvah of Techeiles is to wind the Techeiles around the other tzitzis strings. Therefore, according to the Rambam, all of the windings are done with Techeiles (aside from the first and last, because of min kanaf and ma'alín bakodesh, as explained in Menachos 39a). This is also implied by the Rambam's wording there (1:3): "This mitzvah contains two commands: to make a fringe extending from the corner, and to wind a thread of Techeiles around the fringe." The same point appears in his Peirush HaMishnayos (Menachos 4:1); see there. Since the main mitzvah of Techeiles is in the windings, it makes sense that no more than one string is needed for the winding. In fact, even a whole string is unnecessary, since half a string is enough for the purpose.¹ The Rambam, in his responsum to the sages of Lunel (Pe'er HaDor, siman 21, cited here in the Kesef Mishneh), explains his reasoning: the word *pesil* implies one, not two.

The Raavad (in his hasagos there, according to our girsa²) writes that there are two Techeiles ends and six lavan ends. It seems that he holds that Techeiles is secondary to the mitzvah of lavan, but nevertheless the mitzvah of Techeiles is fulfilled through a string, not merely through the windings as the Rambam holds. Therefore he requires a full Techeiles string and not merely half a string. Likewise, the Raavad

¹ The Meiri (Yevamos 5b) understands that two of the eight ends are Techeiles. Regarding the windings, however, his view is like the Rambam. It may be that he agrees with the Rambam that the primary mitzvah of Techeiles is the winding, but he does not accept the Rambam's chiddush that only half a string need be dyed; therefore he requires a full string. It would seem that the Riaz and the Aruch may follow the same approach.

² See Beis Yosef at the beginning of siman 11, whose girsa in the Raavad is like Tosafos. The Kesef Mishneh there also appears to have had that girsa [he writes that Tosafos said the same as the Raavad, so he clearly read it this way, unlike the mistaken printed text of the Kesef Mishneh]. A proof for our girsa may be brought from the questions sent by the Chachmei Lunel in the Rambam's responsum cited above. As the Migdal Oz writes (2:7), their questions are taken from the Raavad's hasagos, and there it says that two strings are Techeiles and six are lavan. The Raavad is quoted this way as well in Orchos Chaim, Hilchos Tzitzis (os 12), and this was the girsa of Rav Vidal HaTzarfati (end of Parashas Shelach), the Gra, Mishkenos Yaakov (siman 18), the Netziv, and many others.

(1:7) holds that the windings alternate between lavan and Techeiles - one winding of lavan, one of Techeiles, and so on.

Rashi (Shabbos 27b s.v. salka da'atach; Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles), Tosafos (Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles, and in several other places), and other Rishonim (as we will discuss at length below in siman 4) disagree with both the Rambam and the Raavad. In their view there are four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. Tosafos (Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles) explain their reasoning: "Since the Torah requires two types, it is logical that they should be equal." Tosafos also hold (Menachos 39a s.v. lo) that the chulyos alternate - one chulya of lavan, one chulya of Techeiles, and so on. Seemingly this follows their basic approach that the two mitzvos are equal: just as they are equal in number, they are equal in the arrangement of the chulyos as well.

Siman 2 - Clarifying the Original Girsas in the Sifrei

At first glance, it would seem that the main machlokes really depends on variant girsas. Tosafos (Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles; 41b s.v. Bais Shammai; Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah) quote a Sifrei which explicitly says that Bais Shammai - whose view is the halachah here, as stated in Menachos 41b - hold that there are four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. It appears from Tosafos that they had this girsa in the Sifrei both in Parshas Shelach and in Parshas Ki Seitzei, and it is therefore reasonable to suggest that the Sifrei is the source of their shitah.³ On the other hand, the Riaz, who rules like the Raavad (Hilchos Ketanos, p. 223), concludes, "and so it is explained in the Sifrei." He must therefore have had a different girsa from Tosafos in the Sifrei, at least in Parshas Shelach. Likewise, Rabbeinu Hillel at the end of Parshas Shelach clearly had a girsa unlike Tosafos.

Ever since the Sifrei was first printed in Venice (in the year 5306), the text before us at the end of Parshas Shelach follows the Raavad's view: "three of lavan and a fourth of Techeiles." In Parshas Ki Seitzei, however, the girsa follows Tosafos, with four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. It does not seem that the Rishonim had these two conflicting girsas, because none of them notes a contradiction between the two passages.⁴ More than that, some of them explicitly quote both passages according to the girsa of Tosafos, as will be shown below. Evidently the Rishonim did not see the two texts in the form we have them. If the machlokes really depends on a textual variant, and both passages came from the same original source, we should determine which girsa is more likely to be the original one.

In the Sifrei before us at the end of Parshas Shelach Lecha (piska 115), the girsa reads:

"They shall make for themselves tzitzis' - I might think that he should make a single string by itself; therefore the Torah says gedilim. How many are needed to make gedilim? No fewer than three, according to Bais Shammai. Bais Hillel say: three of wool and a fourth of Techeiles. The halachah follows Bais Shammai. When does this apply? At the beginning; but with remnants and torn ends, any amount is sufficient."

In the Sifrei before us in Parshas Ki Seitzei (piska 234), the girsa reads:

"You shall make gedilim for yourself' - why is this stated? Since it says, 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis,' I might think that he should make one string by itself;

³ Below we will explain that this is not actually conclusive. Tosafos's position does not necessarily depend exclusively on the Sifrei; rather, this is how they understood the sugyas, and they brought the Sifrei only as support. It is therefore possible that even without the Sifrei they would have maintained their position based on their reading of the Gemara.

⁴ Moreover, the Arugas HaBosem (a student of the Baalei Tosafos, vol. III, p. 422) challenges the Rambam from the Sifrei, which explicitly indicates four Techeiles strings. He goes to considerable lengths to answer that perhaps the Sifrei means that it is valid to make the lavan, etc. The very fact that he was forced into such a difficult answer indicates that the students of the Baalei Tosafos knew of no alternate girsa.

therefore the Torah says gedilim. How many strings are needed to make gedilim? No fewer than three, according to Bais Hillel. Bais Shammai say: four strings of Techeiles and four strings of lavan, each four fingerbreadths long, and the halachah follows Bais Shammai. When does this apply? At the beginning; but with their remnants and torn ends, any amount is sufficient. Another explanation: gedilim refers to the lavan. From where do we include Techeiles? From the verse, 'and they shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a thread of Techeiles.'"

If both passages came from the same source, we have to see which version is more coherent. Seemingly one of them contains a scribal error, and in truth they should both have the same girsa.⁵ After looking into the matter, it seems more reasonable to emend the passage in Parshas Shelach than the one in Parshas Ki Seitzei, for three reasons.

⁵ I will not bring the Gra's emendations to the Sifrei here, because those emendations are themselves part of the Gra's overall shittah. His position will be discussed at length below.

A. It is clear that Tosafos - and apparently the other Rishonim who follow their shitah as well; this is in fact also the reading of the Oxford manuscript - had a Sifrei which, in both places, said four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. The Rishonim quote both passages that way. See Tosafos 38a and 41b s.v. Bais Shammai in both dibburim; the Baal HaItur (67b) quotes the two passages one after the other and has the Tosafos girsa in both; the commentary incorrectly attributed to the Raavad has the Tosafos girsa in Parshas Shelach; and the same is true in Midrash Yalkut Talmud Torah. By contrast, we have not found anyone who quotes the Raavad-type girsa in both places. We only find a version with one Techeiles string in Parshas Shelach. It is therefore much more reasonable to say that one passage was corrupted - namely the Parshas Shelach text before us, where the girsa follows the Raavad and should read four instead of three, and four instead of "a fourth" - than to say that an error originally entered both passages, as would have to be the case for those who had the Tosafos girsa in both, and then for some unknown reason one passage, Parshas Shelach, was partially corrected while the other, Ki Seitzei, remained corrupted. On top of that, according to such a theory not even a trace of the supposed original girsa would remain in Parshas Ki Seitzei.⁶ It therefore makes sense to say that the Tosafos girsa is the primary one.

B. It is also worth noting that the girsa before us in Parshas Shelach is independently corrupt for three reasons. First, it does not state the required length of the strings - four fingerbreadths - yet it nevertheless says, "When does this apply? At the beginning; but its remnants and torn ends are valid with any amount."⁷ That is clearly

⁶ A talmid chacham suggested to me that the version in Parashas Ki Seitzei may be a marginal addition, and that the marginal text was simply copied from the Sifrei in Parashas Shelach. He supported this by noting that the passage in Ki Seitzei is missing from two manuscripts [Rome and Berlin, both from the same textual family]. I do not find it plausible, however, that the supposed copy should be so much more accurate than its source. We have no manuscript in which the Shelach text is corrected from all the problems noted above, while in Ki Seitzei these points are consistently in proper form. And even if the passage was inserted into the Sifrei, that does not prove that its source was not some other Midrash on Ki Seitzei that did not survive, such as Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael or Sifrei Zuta. Scholars likewise understand that various additions in the Sifrei derive from other works of Chazal. [The Rome and Berlin manuscripts are also missing paragraph 233 of Ki Seitzei, even though that passage is already quoted by Rabbeinu Nissim Gaon (Shabbos 133b) and other Rishonim.] In truth, perhaps the same passage that is absent from these manuscripts was also absent from the copy used by the Raavad and those who followed him; that may explain their position, and perhaps had they seen the other girsa they would have changed their view. In any event, I am uncomfortable building mountains of halachic conclusions on the basis of the manuscripts that happen to have reached us. Surely every beis midrash in the period of the Rishonim had a Sifrei. Tosafos (41b s.v. Beis Shammai, second dibbur) and the Rosh (siman 7) already discuss differences between Shelach and Ki Seitzei [the other differences; regarding the number of Techeiles strings, they had Tosafos's girsa in both places], and it apparently never occurred to them that the Ki Seitzei passage came from a marginal gloss. For the broader discussion of manuscript variants, see below.

⁷ In the Sifrei commentary attributed to the Raavad, on Parashas Shelach, the girsa follows Tosafos and gives the required length before the law of gardumin. It is possible that the

defective. One cannot state the halachah that a remnant is valid without first having given the original required length,⁸ as is clear in Menachos 39a. Second, the Parshas Shelach text reads, "How many gedilim do you make?" The point of the Sifrei is to define what must be included in the term gedilim - meaning, how many strings can constitute gedilim. It should therefore plainly read, "How many are needed to make gedilim?" as the text actually reads in Parshas Ki Seitzei. In addition, in the printed Parshas Shelach text the positions of Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel were switched. That error does not appear in any manuscript and is only a printing mistake. The accumulation of these corruptions weakens the reliability of this entire girsa. It is easier to say that the Parshas Shelach text is thoroughly corrupted than to say that the carefully worded Parshas Ki Seitzei passage is the one that is wrong.

commentator emended the text on his own, since he writes “ג”ה—this is the correct girsa.” But it is equally possible that he wrote this because he had seen another girsa and judged it to be the primary one, rather than correcting it purely from sevara. Anyone familiar with this commentary knows that its author regularly cites alternate versions and decides among them; that may well be what “this is the correct girsa” means here.

⁸ Some Acharonim offer rather far-fetched pilpulim to resolve this difficulty [see Emek HaNetziv, Sifrei d’Vei Rav, the Re’em commentary printed with Midrash Lekach Tov, and others]. All the answers I have seen are very dochuk, and their discussion itself shows general agreement that the question is extremely serious.

C. More than all of the above: in the Sifrei in Parshas Ki Seitzei the wording is "four strings of Techeiles and four strings of lavan" - Techeiles first and lavan second. In Parshas Shelach, however, the Sifrei discusses lavan before Techeiles. I searched and found that whenever the Rishonim quote Parshas Shelach - even those who have the Tosafos girsa there; see the table at the end of the siman - they write, "four/three of wool/lavan and four of Techeiles." Whenever they quote Parshas Ki Seitzei, they write, "four strings of Techeiles and four of wool."⁹ If we wanted to change the Ki Seitzei girsa so that it matched Shelach, we would have to rewrite the whole phrase: (four) [three] strings of (Techeiles) [lavan], and four {meaning, a fourth} (strings) of (lavan) [Techeiles]. By contrast, changing Shelach to match Ki Seitzei is very simple. Shelach reads, "three of wool and a fourth of Techeiles," and only two small changes are needed: "three" to "four," and "a fourth" to "four" - and the second is not even really an emendation.

Furthermore, several manuscripts - Rome Casanatense, Berlin, as well as Midrash Lekach Tov on Parshas Shelach and Yalkut Shimoni on Parshas Shelach - read: "Bais Shammai say three of lavan and four of Techeiles." On the face of it this follows the Raavad, and "four" would have to mean "a fourth." But with only one change, replacing "three" with "four," the text becomes exactly the girsa of Tosafos. More strikingly, in the Rome manuscript - from the eleventh century, the oldest Sifrei manuscript known today - the text in Parshas Shelach reads: "How many gedilim are made? No fewer than three, according to Bais Hillel; Bais Shammai say: of wool and four of Techeiles." The number of lavan strings is simply missing.¹⁰ The straightforward meaning of the word "four" fits the Tosafos girsa much better. It is very forced and strange to say that "four" means "a fourth," and we find almost no such usage anywhere in the language of Chazal.¹¹

⁹ This wording is found throughout the works of the Rishonim. That itself shows that the Rishonim were not merely guessing what the girsa should be; they were carefully copying the wording of the Sifrei before them. The fact that most Rishonim follow Tosafos therefore demonstrates that Tosafos's girsa was certainly very widespread.

¹⁰ Some have explained that the word "שלצמר—of wool" continues Beis Hillel's statement of three: according to Beis Shammai there would be three lavan strings and "four" [meaning a fourth] of Techeiles. This does not appear correct. The three mentioned by Beis Hillel include all the strings, both Techeiles and lavan, whereas Beis Shammai's "of wool" refers only to the lavan species. Moreover, Beis Hillel did not say there are three strings in tzitzis; they said that the word gedilim implies no fewer than three strings. The Gemara explicitly states that Beis Shammai disagrees with Beis Hillel regarding the meaning of gedilim; according to Beis Shammai it implies four and includes Techeiles. It is therefore difficult to say that Beis Shammai relied on Beis Hillel's count of gedilim when that very point is part of their machlokes. Vedok.

¹¹ See Sanhedrin 102a: "Rav Oshaya said: Until Yeravam, Yisrael nursed from one calf; from then on, from [two and] three calves." Rashi explains: "The correct girsa is: from then on they nursed from three calves—two of Yeravam and the third, the calf in the wilderness. According to the reading in the books, 'two and three calves,' it can also be understood: from the two that Yeravam made and the third that was made in the wilderness; 'three' means 'the third,' as in

Perhaps we can suggest that a mistaken copyist had a text like the manuscript just mentioned and noticed that the number of lavan strings was missing. He therefore supplied "three" on his own, so that it would continue the words of Bais Hillel, who had said "no fewer than three." He may have done so because of the strength of Tosafos' question in Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah: Bais Hillel speak of only three strings, whereas Bais Shammai speak of eight - meaning, after the strings are doubled. Perhaps because of this difficulty - for which there are in fact a number of answers, as we will explain - the copyist added "three of wool" on his own. This would also explain the oddity that the Tanna would use "four" to mean "a fourth." Although such usage is technically possible, as mentioned in the footnote, it is very strained since we do not find it elsewhere. In my opinion it is more reasonable to say

‘Three are wondrous to me, and four I do not know’ (Mishlei 30).” We see that although it is possible to say that “four” means “a fourth,” with the Tanna using Biblical style, it is nevertheless dochuk. Rashi therefore first preferred to emend the text, and only explained “three” as “the third” in order to preserve the manuscript girsa. This shows that such language is strained and should not be assumed unless necessary.

that "four" was changed into "a fourth" than to say that "a fourth" was changed into "four." It is also worth noting that the manuscripts which read "three of wool and four of Techeiles" come from the same region - Italy - as the Rome manuscript, but are later.

It therefore certainly seems that the girsa of Tosafos is preferable. If one of the two passages has to be treated as corrupt, the Parshas Shelach girsa is the more likely candidate. As for the broader question of what can be proved from different manuscripts, and whether one should bring proofs from them at all, see the addendum at the end of the kuntres.¹²

There is, however, one difficulty with the Tosafos girsa, as noted above, and Tosafos themselves already raise it (Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah). Why do Bais Shammai speak of four Techeiles and four lavan strings, for a total of eight, while Bais Hillel speak of only three strings? That sounds as if Bais Hillel are discussing the strings before they are doubled, so the statements of Bais Hillel and Bais Shammai do not line up. Since the Tosafos girsa appears to be the primary girsa, there must be a sound reason for this difference. I will suggest five answers that I found, b'siyata diShmaya:

A. The commentary attributed¹³ to the Raavad on the Sifrei (Parshas Shelach) writes that Bais Hillel do not hold at all of a requirement to double the strings, and that the entire din of doubling is only according to Bais Shammai. He explains that according to Tosafos (Menachos 38a, 39b; Yevamos 5b), the derashah "gedil - two; gedilim - four; make a gedil and twist them through it" teaches that the strings are doubled. He explains that "and twist them through it" is part of the derashah, derived from the word pesil, which has the sense of a twisted strand - i.e., doubling. He further explains that pesil is indeed singular, so according to Bais Hillel it teaches that there

¹² At the end of the siman I discuss the versions found in manuscripts. But first it must be emphasized that Rashi, Yalkut Shimoni, the Itur, Yalkut Talmud Torah [a student of the Rashba who traveled widely and clearly saw many textual versions], the commentary attributed to the Raavad, and other Rishonim all had a Sifrei text that said there were four Techeiles strings. This is not because they all copied one another: there are small differences among their quotations, and they themselves were careful about such differences, as can be seen in Tosafos 39b and the Rosh, siman 12. Clearly, they regarded their respective girsaos as well-established.

¹³ This commentary was printed in 5769 from two manuscripts. The editors demonstrate that it was before the Chida, and apparently the Chida attributed it to the Raavad, author of the Hasagos. That attribution is difficult, however, because in Parashas Ki Seitzei (paragraph 229) the commentary itself writes, "and in the Hasagos of the Raavad, z'l..." It therefore cannot be by that Raavad. We now have an additional proof: regarding the number of Techeiles strings, the author holds that there are two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings, like Tosafos, unlike the Raavad in the Hasagos. In any event, Prof. Menachem Kahana, in "Akdamos LeHotza'ah Chadashah Shel Sifrei Bamidbar" (p. 97), shows that this commentator had many variant versions of the Sifrei before him, as is evident from the many places where he quotes more than one girsa. His reading like Tosafos in Parashas Shelach therefore carries considerable weight.

is only one Techeiles string. Bais Shammai, however, make a hekesh between lavan and Techeiles,¹⁴ and from that hekesh we know

¹⁴ In other words, the basis for equating the two species is a hekesh between them, and included in that hekesh is that their number should be equal. When the Rishonim say that sevara dictates equating the two species, this may be what they mean: there is a hekesh, not merely an independent sevara, and since a hekesh is not applied halfway, their numbers must be equal. This answers several questions; This is not the place to elaborate. Indeed, the Sifrei itself [in wording found without variation in all the manuscripts] indicates a hekesh between Techeiles and lavan. Regarding spinning and twisting, it says: “They shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a thread of Techeiles—spun and twisted. I know only Techeiles; from where do I know lavan? You can derive it: since the Torah said to place Techeiles and to place lavan, just as Techeiles is spun and twisted, so too they are spun and twisted.” Thus there is a hekesh between the two species. The Mordechai (remez 940) quotes this Sifrei and adds: “Just as Techeiles consists of two strings which are doubled and become four, so too lavan.” It does not appear that he had these words in the Sifrei itself, since no trace of them appears in the other Rishonim who quote this passage. Rather, he apparently means to explain that the same hekesh establishes two Techeiles strings, in line with the commentary attributed to the Raavad. Vedok.

that the required amount of Techeiles and lavan must be equal. Once that is known, the singular implication of pesil is extra and available for a derashah, so we use it to teach "and twist them through it" - in other words, that the strings are doubled. Accordingly, there is no difficulty at all in Bais Hillel discussing the strings before doubling while Bais Shammai discuss them after doubling, because this itself is part of their machlokes. According to Bais Shammai, there is a requirement to double the strings, leaving four ends of each type. According to Bais Hillel there is no concept of doubling, and therefore even at the end there are only three strings. The machlokes about doubling is itself connected to the question of how many strings are Techeiles. Bais Shammai, who hold that pesil is not a precise limitation to one, can use it for the derashah that the strings should be doubled. The wording of the Sifrei is therefore extremely exact. Vedok - the point is very illuminating. Because I am fond of this explanation, and because the sefer is not readily available, I have quoted its wording in the footnote.¹⁵

B. Tosafos (Menachos 41b s.v. Bais Shammai; likewise Bechoros s.v. kamah) quote Rabbeinu Tam that Bais Hillel's view in the Sifrei is that there are twelve ends. The "three" they mention means three of each type before doubling. Accordingly, when the Sifrei continues that Bais Shammai require four Techeiles and four lavan strings, it likewise means four of each type before doubling, which yields sixteen ends after doubling. We already find a machlokes Tannaim in the Gemara (Menachos 41b) whether the proper arrangement is a tallis with four strings or one with eight strings, and the Amoraim likewise disagree about this (42a). The Sifrei can therefore be following the opinion that a tallis has eight full strings, meaning sixteen ends. In any event, the wording of the Sifrei is not creating a new difficulty; the Amoraim already discuss such a system. According to this approach, the Sifrei's derashah from gedilim teaches that there must be more than one string. Both Techeiles and lavan require gedilim, and everyone agrees to that. Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel disagree only about how many strings are learned from the word gedilim. According to Bais Hillel, gedilim means three, so there are three of each type. According to Bais Shammai, it means four, so there are four of each type. It is therefore not difficult that Bais Hillel

¹⁵ This is his wording: "It is written, 'They shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a thread of Techeiles,' and it is expounded (Menachos 38a): 'the corner'—min kanaf, meaning lavan. {That is, it is as though the pasuk says: 'They shall place upon the tzitzis lavan and Techeiles.'} And gedilim implies four {this is a ribui, and we need a source for what is included in that ribui}. Scripture juxtaposes them to teach that the amount of Techeiles should equal the amount of the lavan species {meaning: since the pasuk makes a hekesh between lavan and Techeiles, gedilim includes both equally}. If so, the word pesil written by the Torah is available for a derashah {unlike Beis Hillel, who use pesil for the number of Techeiles strings, meaning there is only one; according to Beis Shammai, gedilim already proves that there is more than one string, so pesil is extra and is therefore expounded}: make a gedil and twist/fold it from within, meaning double it." End quote. According to this, there is no difficulty for Tosafos from the fact that the plain meaning of pesil is one. Vedok.

do not explicitly say "three of each type," because the machlokes is only about the numerical meaning of gedilim; everyone agrees that there are gedilim of each type. C. The Gra, in his Biur on Shulchan Aruch (siman 12), follows a line similar to Tosafos. He writes that according to Bais Shammai in the Sifrei there are four strings of each type, and according to Bais Hillel there are three of each type; Techeiles and lavan are always equal according to everyone. The Gra, however, understands the Sifrei to be discussing the standard halachic arrangement of four full strings, and the numbers mentioned are the ends after doubling.¹⁶ He explains that this is also what the Gemara in Menachos 41b means when it says Bais Shammai require four - i.e., four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. When Bais Hillel in the Sifrei say "no fewer than three," they mean no fewer than three lavan ends and three Techeiles ends. According to the Gra, then, both sides are in fact speaking about half-strings after doubling, and the question does not begin.

¹⁶ Perhaps Tosafos did not explain the Sifrei as referring to the strings after doubling because on that reading one would have a single string with only half of it dyed—essentially the Rambam's string! Tosafos may not have wished to introduce such a novel concept.

D. The Baal HaItur (vol. 2, Hilchos Tzitzis 67b) also addresses the point that Bais Shammai speak of four and four strings while Bais Hillel appear to have only three total. He explains simply from the continuation of the Sifrei. The Sifrei gives the required length of four fingerbreadths only according to Bais Shammai and does not state the length according to Bais Hillel. The measure of the length is stated only after the strings have been doubled. Therefore, when giving the length, the Sifrei naturally describes Bais Shammai's strings after doubling and says four of Techeiles and four of lavan. In Bais Hillel's case, since the Sifrei does not state the required length at all, there is no reason to discuss the strings after doubling. Thus it speaks of Bais Hillel's strings before doubling and Bais Shammai's after doubling. Vedok.¹⁷

E. The She'iltos of Rav Achai Gaon (siman 127) writes: "Bais Shammai hold: gedil is two, gedilim is four. One string, when a master wraps it on his garment, is not a gedil; obviously two are. Bais Shammai hold: a gedil is two and another gedil is two - that makes four. Bais Hillel hold three: even though from the outside it does not appear as gedil-gedilim, when he wraps them on the garment it becomes gedil-gedilim." The Netziv, in Haamek She'eilah there (os 5), explains that the machlokes between Bais Hillel and Bais Shammai is how to understand gedilim. Everyone agrees that a string wound around itself is not called a gedil. A gedil requires two separate strings wound together; this is the meaning of "a gedil cannot be fewer than two." When the Torah says gedilim in the plural - meaning two gedilim - Bais Hillel hold that the second gedil can be formed together with the first gedil that already exists. Therefore, for the second gedil there is no requirement of "a gedil cannot be fewer than two," since one additional string can form a second gedil together with the first gedil. Thus, even though the first gedil requires two strings, the second adds only one more, so gedilim in the plural according to Bais Hillel means three full strings, which become six ends. Bais Shammai, however, hold that we look at the second gedil before the doubling, as the She'iltos puts it, "from the outside." The second gedil therefore also requires two strings. The total is four full strings, which become eight ends.¹⁸

Accordingly, when the Sifrei states Bais Hillel's view, the concept of doubling is already built into the number three and does not need to be stated separately, because

¹⁷ It is still somewhat difficult that the Sifrei does not state the required string length according to Beis Hillel—three fingerbreadths, as explained in Menachos 41b. Nevertheless, in every girsa and every manuscript the length according to Beis Hillel is omitted. We must therefore say that the Tanna did not bother to spell out every detail of the view that is not accepted lemaaseh. We find this in several Mishnayos, where the Tanna gives the details only according to the opinion that is accepted. For example, Terumos 4:3 says: "The measure of terumah: for a generous eye, one-fortieth. Beis Shammai say, one-thirtieth. An average amount, one-fiftieth; a poor amount, one-sixtieth." The Mishnah does not state that according to Beis Shammai an average amount would be one-fortieth and a poor amount one-fiftieth. See there.

¹⁸ The Netziv also demonstrates that Rashi (Yevamos 5b; Menachos 39b) follows the She'iltos on this point. According to his explanation, it is understandable why Rashi did not derive the doubling from "וּפְתִילָהּ מִתּוֹכָהּ," as Tosafos does.

without doubling there would be no way to arrive at three strings in this framework. According to Bais Shammai, however, since we consider the strings of the second gedil before doubling as well, the Sifrei properly describes the strings after doubling in order to teach that there is in fact a concept of doubling. For Bais Hillel the Sifrei speaks of full strings, because according to them the doubling is self-evident;¹⁹ for Bais Shammai the Sifrei has to tell us about it. Vedok heitev.

We have therefore arrived at the conclusion that the Tosafos girsa in the Sifrei is very sound and refined. The one difficulty that was raised - why Bais Shammai speak after doubling while Bais Hillel speak before doubling - is, after proper analysis, no difficulty at all, and we have given several strong explanations. By contrast, there remain three major difficulties with the girsa of

¹⁹ This does not necessarily contradict the commentary attributed to the Raavad, which says that only Beis Shammai require doubling because they derive it from “ופותלהו,” whereas Beis Hillel do not expound pesil that way. It may be that only Beis Shammai need a derashah for doubling, since according to them it is not evident from the word gedilim itself. According to Beis Hillel, however, doubling is self-evident and therefore needs no derashah. Beis Hillel can consequently use pesil to teach specifically one string. Vedok heitev.

the Raavad. It is therefore reasonable to say that the primary girsa is the girsa of Tosafos. It may even be that had the other Rishonim seen this girsa,²⁰ they would have accepted it.

Addendum:

We have discussed at length the different girsaos in the Sifrei and given several reasons to prefer the version which reads four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. It is therefore appropriate to present the different readings found in the manuscripts.²¹

- Rome manuscript EBR 32, Italian square script, estimated to be from the 11th century.
- Midrash Lekach Tov [from Italy, estimated to be from the end of the 11th century, based on the Venice 5306 edition].
- The Baalei Tosafos lived in the beginning of the 12th century and quoted the Sifrei in several places [Rabbeinu Tam carefully notes on 39b the differences between Shelach and Ki Seitzei].
- London manuscript BL 341, Ashkenazic square script, estimated to be from the end of the 12th century.
- Yalkut Shimoni [based on the Salonika 5281 edition; the author of the Yalkut apparently lived in the period of the Baalei Tosafos].
- Oxford manuscript OX 151, Ashkenazic script, with a colophon dated 1291.
- Yalkut Talmud Torah from 1337 [Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Rabbeinu Chananel Sikili, who traveled widely and clearly saw many textual versions].
- Berlin manuscript QU 1594, Italian script, 14th century.
- Rome Casanatense manuscript H 2736, 67, Italian script from the 14th century [it is not a complete Sifrei; only the section on Parshas Tzitzis survives].
- First printed edition of the Sifrei, Venice 5306 [printed from two copies of the Sifrei originating in Spain].

²⁰ In the note above I wrote that some manuscripts omit the entire passage in Parashas Ki Seitzei. As I explained there, however, the conclusion drawn from that is mistaken. In any event, one can certainly say that had those Rishonim seen this girsa, they might have changed their position.

²¹ See Prof. Menachem Kahana's article, "Akdamos LeHotza'ah Chadashah Shel Sifrei Bamidbar," which discusses the various manuscripts at length.

שלה	חלק זה מופיע רק בספרי תצא				
ספרי דפוס ונציא שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דברי ב"ש	וב"ה אומרים שלשה של צמר ורביעית של תכלת והלכה כב"ש שהוא	בד"א בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהוא
כת"י רומי שלח ובפרי' תצא ליתא לקטע זו		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	שומע אני כמה גרילים אחת נעשה אין פחות משלשה דברי בית הלל	בית שמי או שלצמר ורביעית של תכלת כדברי בית הלל	במי דברים אמור' בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהוא
כת"י אוקספורד שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דב' בית הלל	בית שמי או ארבעה של צמר ורביע' של תכלת ודל' כדברי ב"ש שמי	במה דברים אמורים בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהו
כת"י לונדון שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט בפני גרילים תעשה לך וגו'	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דברי בית הלל	בית שמאי אמר' שלשה של צמר ורביעית של תכלת והלכה כדברי בית שמאי	במה דבר' אמר' אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהוא
ילקוט תלמוד תורה שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים תעשה לך וגו'	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דברי ב"ש	ב"ה ד' של צמר וד' של תכלת והלכה כדברי ב"ש	בד"א בהתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהו
כת"י ברלין שלח וליתא בפרי' תצא		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דברי ב"ה	ב"ש או ג' של צמר וד' של תכלת והלכה כדברי ב"ש	בד"א בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהו
כת"י רומי קונטנה שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה דברי בית הלל	בית שמאי אמר' שלשה שלצמר ורביעית של תכלת והל' כדברי בית שמי	
ילקוט שמעוני שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים תעשה לך על ארבע כנפות כסותך	מכמה גרילים אחת נעשה אין פחות משלשה דברי ב"ה	וב"ש אומרים שלשה של צמר ורביעית של תכלת והלכה כדברי ב"ש	בד"א בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהוא
לקט טוב שלח		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני ועשו חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים תעשה לך על ארבע כנפות כסותך	אין גריל פחות משלשה דברי הלל	בית שמאי אמר' שלשה של צמר ורביעית של תכלת והלכה כבית שמאי	בד"א בתחלתו אבל שיריה וגרדומיה כל שהוא
תוס' מנחות לח [כנרא' שלח]		ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל....	ב"ש אומרים ד' של צמר וד' של תכלת	
מנחות מא: ד"ה ב"ש א'		ועשו להם שומע אני יעשה אותן אחד בפני עצמו תלמוד לומר גרילים	מכמה גריל אחד נעשים אין פחות משלשה דברי ב"ה	ב"ש אומרים ד' של תכלת ד' של צמר	
עיתור [סט טור ד] שלח			מכמה גרילים אין פחות מג' כדברי ב"ה	בש"א ד' של תכלת והלכה כדברי ב"ש	בד"א בתחלתו אבל בשיריו ובגרדומיו כ"ש
כי תצא דפוס ונציא	גרילים תעשה לך למא נאמר לפי שנאמר	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גרילים	מכמה גרילים נעשים אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל	ובית שמי אמר' מארבעה חוטין של תכלת וארבעה חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע	במה דבר' אמורים בתחלתו אבל בשיריה ובגרדומיה כל שהוא

	אצבעות והלכה כדברי בית שמי				כת"י אוקספורד כי תצא
במה דברים אמורים מתחילה אבל בשוירה ובגדרומי הא כל שהוא	בית שמי א' מארבעה חוטין של תכלת וארבעה חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע אצבעות והלכה כדברי בית שמי	כמה גדילים נעשות אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גדילים	גדילים תעשה לך למה נא' לפי שני	
במה דברים אמורים מתחילה אבל בשוירה ובגדרומהא כל שהוא	חוטין של תכלת וארבעה חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע אצבעות והלכה כדברי בית שמי שמיא'	כמה גדילים נעשות אין פחות משלשה גדילים (סוף השורה וחסר)	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו תלמוד לומר גדילים	גדילים תעשה לך לפי שנאמר	כת"י לונדון כי תצא
בד"א בתחלה אבל בשוירה כל שהו	וב"ש אמרים מארבע חוטין של תכלת וארבע חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע אצבעות והלכה כדברי ב"ש	כמה גדילים נעשים אין גריל פחות משלש חוטין כדברי ב"ה	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל גדילים	גדילים תעשה לך למה נאמר לפי שנאמר	ילקוט שמעוני כי תצא
בד"א בתחלה אבל בשוירה ובגדרומיה כל שהוא	בית שמיא' אומ' ארבעה כמה תהא משלש בית שמיא' אומ' ארבע ובית הלל אומ' שלשה ושלש שבית הלל אומ' אחת מארבע לטפח של כל אדם והלכה כבית שמיא'	כמה גדיה נעשית אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד בפני עצמו ת"ל ג' תני' לך	גדילים תני' לך למה נאמר לפי שהוא אומר	מדרש תנאים תצא
	בית שמיא' אמרים מארבע חוטין של תכלת וארבעה של לבן על ארבע ארבע אצבעות	כמה גריל נעשית אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט א' בפני עצמו ת"ל גדילים	גדילים למה נאמר לפי שנאמר	מנחות מא' ד"ה ב"ש ב' בשם תצא
	בית שמיא' אמרים ד' חוטין של תכלת וארבעה של לבן על ד' אצבעות והלכה כדברי בית שמיא'	כמה גדילים נעשות אין פחות משלשה חוטין כדברי בית הלל			בבורות לט': בשם פר' תצא
	בש"א מארבע חוטין	כמה גדילים נעשים אין פחות מג' כדברי ב"ה	ועשו להם ציצית שומעני יעשה חוט א' ת"ל...		רבינו הלל כי תצא
	בש"א ד' חוטין של תכלת וד' של לבן של ד' אצבעות והלכה כדברי ב"ש	כמה גדילים אין פחות מג' כדברי ב"ה			עשור (סו נד ד') כי תצא
	ב"ש אמרים ארבע חוטין של תכלת וארבע חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע אצבעות והלכה כדברי ב"ש	וכמה גדילים יעשה אין גריל פחות מג' חוטין כדברי ב"ה	ועשו להם ציצית שומע אני יעשה חוט אחד ת"ל גדילים	גדילים תעשה לך למה נאמר לפי שנאמר	רא"ש סי' י"ב בשם תצא
	בית שמיא' אמרים ארבע חוטין של תכלת וארבע חוטין של לבן				מרכיב תחלקל בשם ספרי
	וכדברי ב"ש אמרים ד' חוטין של תכלת וד' חוטין של לבן של ארבע ארבע אצבעות והלכה כדברי ב"ש	כמה גדילים נעשין אין פחות מג' חוטין כדברי ב"ה			מהר"ו בינגא בשם תצא

After examining all of this, it is plainly evident that the Shelach girsa "and a fourth of Techeiles" is not original at all. It appears only in the London manuscript and in the printed edition. [In the London manuscript, the phrase "you make" is also corrupt in the same way as the printed text, and there may well be a connection between them.] By contrast, the girsa "three of wool and four of Techeiles" appears in four sources, all of them originating in Italy. The earliest Italian text is an old manuscript in which the number of lavan strings is missing, but it still reads "and four of Techeiles." It is interesting that the only Rishon who testifies to a Sifrei version explicitly indicating one Techeiles string is the Riaz, who lived in Italy. To say that "and four" here means "a fourth" is very strange; we do not find such usage elsewhere in the literature of Chazal, and one would have to explain why this place should be different. It is much more plausible that "four" came to be understood and altered as "a fourth" than that "a fourth" somehow became "four." One talmid chacham suggested to me that "four" is a scribal mistake that developed from the letter daled, and that the daled originally meant "a fourth." But this is difficult to accept, because the reading "and four" appears in five sources. It is hard to believe that the same corruption became so widespread while the supposedly correct original reading does not appear until roughly 350 years later.

Wherever the Sifrei was copied, it appears to have been copied with great precision. In every version of Parshas Shelach, without exception, wool is mentioned before Techeiles. In every version of Parshas Ki Seitzei, the wording is "four strings... and four strings....," and Techeiles is placed before lavan, as we explained above. Since the copyists were evidently careful to reproduce the Sifrei before them accurately, it is difficult to say that all of them independently made the exact same mistake - unless we are going to say that a miracle happened like in the days of Talmai HaMelech...

Siman 3 - Understanding the Meaning of the Talmudic Sugyos

It seems that the straightforward reading of the sugyos in Perek HaTecheiles proves that the number of Techeiles and lavan strings is equal. Although there are Rishonim who write that there is only one Techeiles string, perhaps they learned that only because it was explicit in the girsa of the Sifrei that they had. With that girsa in front of them, they had no choice but to read the sugya less straightforwardly. I will explain.

The Gemara (Menachos 42a) says: "Rav Acha bar Yaakov would place four and double them, insert them into the garment and knot them. He held that we require eight in the garment, so that there should be gedil-gedilim in place of pesil."²² Rav Yirmiyah of Difti placed eight, which become sixteen, and did not knot them [in that manner]. Mar brei d'Ravina did as we do" (Rashi explains: four full strings, which become eight ends). Likewise, on 41b the Gemara speaks of a tallis with four strings and a tallis with eight strings. At first glance, the Tannaim and Amoraim disagree over the number of tzitzis strings: Mar brei d'Ravina used four full strings, producing eight ends, as we do today, while Rav Acha bar Yaakov and Rav Yirmiyah of Difti used sixteen ends. (Apparently both held that there should be sixteen ends; they disagreed only whether this can be achieved at the hole by doubling, or whether eight complete strings - sixteen ends - are needed.) We need to understand the source and purpose of the number eight full strings, i.e. sixteen ends. We also need to understand how these Amoraim could disagree with Bais Shammai, who said that tzitzis requires only four full strings.

Tosafos (38a and 42a; likewise the Rosh in his pesakim, siman 12; see also Tosafos Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah) understand that there is a concept of making gedilim from lavan and separate gedilim from Techeiles - a tallis with eight full strings - rather than only one set of gedilim made half from lavan and half from Techeiles, which would be a tallis with four full strings. Accordingly, those who used sixteen ends used four full strings, becoming eight ends, of lavan - one set of gedilim - and four full strings, becoming eight ends, of Techeiles - another set of gedilim. On this understanding, these Amoraim never disagreed with Bais Shammai's statement that four strings are required. They understood Bais Shammai to mean four strings of each type: four lavan strings and four Techeiles strings.

In Mor U'Ketziyah, the Yaavetz (on Tur, siman 11) explains that Tosafos derived the idea of separate gedilim for each type directly from the words of the Gemara. The Gemara says, "He held that we require eight in the garment so that there should be gedil-gedilim in place of pesil." The Yaavetz writes: "It appears to me that this

²² Although some did not have the words "gedil, gedilim" in place of pesil, this is the girsa of the Rif and the Rosh, and Tosafos on 38a had it as well.

means as follows: he held that we require eight, in order that the derashah of gedilim - four - should also be fulfilled with respect to the pesil, which is Techeiles."

According to this, Tosafos' statement that there is a concept of making gedilim from each type was learned from an explicit Gemara. The Talmudic text itself therefore indicates that Techeiles and lavan are equal. Tosafos were never in doubt whether Techeiles and lavan are in fact equal; their only question was why the halachah is so - whether it comes from the sevara that the two should be equal or from some other source. Vedok.²³

Rashi as well (in the name of Ri HaZaken, Menachos 42a) understands that the machlokes whether there are eight ends or sixteen depends on the derashah of gedilim.²⁴ In other words, the Amoraim disagree whether gedilim implies four full strings or eight full strings. According to him as well,

²³ It may therefore be that this is their source for four strings of each species. Perhaps even had they seen a different girsa in the Sifrei, they would not have changed their position, because the Gemara can have one shittah and the Sifrei another—just as they write regarding the meaning of pesil that the Sifrei differs from the Gemara. This requires further iyun.

²⁴ Rashi there clearly indicates that eight can be derived from gedilim. The Acharonim (Rashash, Bach on the Rif, Chiddushei Anshei Shem) offer several explanations of the derashah. In the Rashi of Rabbeinu Peretz (quoted in the Shitah Mekubetzes there), and likewise in Mahari Zinga, the derashah is: gedil = two; gedilei = four; gedilim = eight.

we still have to explain how the Amoraim could disagree with Bais Shammai, who said that there are only four strings. We must therefore say that according to the opinion requiring eight full strings, Bais Shammai's four refers to each type separately: four of Techeiles and four of lavan. Thus Rashi too understood from the Gemara itself that the two types are equal in number.

See also the Chiddushei HaRan²⁵ (and it is clear from his words that this is also the view of the Rashba in responsa 468 and 538) and Rabbeinu David on Sanhedrin 88b. They write that the Gemara's recognition here of an arrangement with sixteen ends is not a proof that one may simply add extra strings. Rather, there is a machlokes over how many strings the mitzvah itself requires. According to each shitah, one is forbidden to add beyond that number because of bal tosef; each view has a derashah requiring precisely its own number. See there. They also explain that the beraisos on Menachos 41b which distinguish between a tallis with eight strings and one with four strings mean that according to each view, that particular number is required me'ikar hadin, and one may not add extra strings.

The Gemara there (41b) discusses whether one may remove tzitzis from one garment and place them on another. It brings a proof from the following: "The Rabbis taught: on a tallis that is entirely Techeiles-colored, strings of any colors exempt it except kala ilan." The Gemara challenges this from another beraisa: "A tallis is exempted only with strings of its own type. On a tallis that is entirely Techeiles-colored, one brings Techeiles and another color and attaches them; kala ilan should not be brought, but if it was brought the tzitzis are valid." In other words, the two beraisos contradict one another over whether kala ilan invalidates the tzitzis bedieved. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: "There is no contradiction. One case is a tallis with four strings, and the other is a tallis with eight strings." The Gemara then concludes: "We learn from here that one may remove tzitzis from one garment and place them on another." Thus Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak resolves the contradiction about kala ilan by distinguishing between a tallis with eight full strings and one with four. Evidently those two arrangements have different halachos. But according to the Ran and Rabbeinu David, who say that each arrangement rests on its own derashah and that each opinion requires its number - four or eight - as an essential part of the mitzvah, one would seemingly expect the two to have the same halachic rules. Yet the Gemara says that only in one of them is kala ilan invalid bedieved. This requires explanation.

The answer must be that the opinion requiring eight full strings - sixteen ends - holds like Tosafos in Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah. Tosafos explain that if there is a separate requirement of gedilim from lavan and gedilim from Techeiles, meaning sixteen ends altogether, then when a person has only one of the two types he makes gedilim only

²⁵ At the beginning of Kovetz He'aros, Rav Elchonon Wasserman proves that this commentary is not by Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven, but by a later Rishon, because it repeatedly quotes the Ran's position in Nedarim in the name of "Rabbeinu Nissim, z"l."

from that type.²⁶ It is only according to the opinion that a tallis has four full strings - one set of gedilim made jointly from Techeiles and lavan - that when only one type is available there remains a requirement to complete the full number of gedilim. Therefore, in the case of a tallis which the purchaser believes is made entirely with Techeiles strings - as in the sugya there, where four are genuine Techeiles and four are kala ilan but the purchaser thinks all are Techeiles, as Rashi explains - according to his understanding he possesses only one type, Techeiles. There is then no reason to have sixteen ends. If only one type is available, only eight ends are needed.²⁷ In fact, making sixteen ends would be forbidden because of bal tosif, so he will certainly remove four of the strings. This explains beautifully how the Gemara proves from this case that tzitzis may be transferred from one garment to another: to avoid violating bal tosif, the purchaser can be expected to remove the extra strings. According to the opinion that a tallis has four full strings, however, even though the purchaser thinks all four are Techeiles, and even if he is fulfilling only one of the two types, he still always needs four full strings for the mitzvah of gedilim. Tosafos say this explicitly (Menachos 38a and Bechoros there): there is never a concept of tzitzis with fewer than four full strings. Therefore we do not have sufficient reason to fear - certainly not enough to invalidate the tzitzis - that he will remove any of the strings. This explains

²⁶ See there, where they are uncertain about the reason for the custom to wear eight lavan ends when there is no Techeiles. Is it because these are the gedilim of lavan, meaning that when Techeiles exists there should actually be sixteen ends? Or are there only eight ends even when Techeiles is available, but when there is no Techeiles the missing strings are completed so that there will still be four gedilim?

²⁷ This is said only on the assumption that Techeiles strings cannot fulfill the mitzvah of lavan. Elsewhere I discussed the proofs in both directions at length. In my view, this itself is a machlokes Rishonim, and it may indeed be that according to the Ran one cannot fulfill lavan with Techeiles strings.

the entire give-and-take of the sugya. It also explains why only after Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak's answer does the Gemara derive that tzitzis may be moved from one garment to another. Vedok heitev. According to the Ran and Rabbeinu David as well, then, we must say that the Amoraim are not arguing with Bais Shammai. Rather, their machlokes is whether Bais Shammai meant four strings of each type or four strings total, exactly as we explained above in Rashi and Tosafos.

Thus, even according to the Ran and Rabbeinu David, the Gemara itself forces us to say that the number of Techeiles and lavan strings is equal. More than that: it appears that all the Rishonim²⁸ who hold that adding strings involves bal tosfif - which is the straightforward reading of Sanhedrin 88b - necessarily did not view the tallis with eight full strings as proof that one may freely add strings. They must have understood that the number eight has some specific halachic basis. In other words, they held like Rashi and Tosafos that Techeiles and lavan are equal. Otherwise there is no way to explain how the Amoraim can differ in their description of Bais Shammai, or what special significance there is to a tallis with eight full strings.

According to the Rambam and the Raavad, however, who hold that there is only one Techeiles string, the entire concept of a tallis with eight full strings - sixteen ends - is difficult to understand. We cannot say that there is a derashah specifically requiring sixteen ends. If both shitos have full derashos, why should there be a difference between a tallis with eight strings and one with four regarding whether kala ilan invalidates bedieved? (For the Ran and Rabbeinu David we explained a distinction that works only if Techeiles and lavan are equal in number; it cannot work according to the Rambam and Raavad.) We also have to understand how the Amoraim could disagree with Bais Shammai's statement that there are only four strings. We cannot answer that Bais Shammai meant four of each type, because that answer is available only if there are four strings of each type, whereas according to the Rambam and Raavad Techeiles and lavan are not equal.

Some have suggested that there is a hiddur to fulfill the derashah "gedil - two, gedilim - four" with sixteen ends, because in that way the idea of eight strings is fulfilled with eight complete strings rather than through half-strings after doubling. This is mistaken. There is certainly no hiddur of having eight complete strings. There is no independent source for the number eight full strings at all. The source is for four full strings from the word gedilim, and there is a separate din to insert them through the hole and double them. According to Tosafos, the doubling is learned from the derashah on 39b, "and twist them through it." It therefore makes no sense to

²⁸ They are: the Rashba (Teshuvos, siman 468 and teshuvah 728), Semak (175), Mordechai (Rosh Hashanah, 705), Nimukei Yosef (Hilchos Tzitzis 12b), Rosh (Hilchos Tzitzis, siman 6; see also Tosafos HaRosh, Rosh Hashanah 28b), Ri (quoted in Tur, siman 11), Agur (Hilchos Tzitzis, os 13), Rabbeinu Yerucham (Nesiv 13, part 3; see also Nesiv 19), the commentary attributed to the Ran (Sanhedrin 88b), Rabbeinu David (there), and this also appears to be the view of the Ran [not the same "Ran" on Sanhedrin mentioned above; see Beitza 7b in the Rif pagination].

speak of fulfilling eight full strings. Without the doubling there is no requirement for more than four full strings, whereas this person is inserting eight full strings and doubling them into sixteen ends. Vedok.

We would therefore have to say that according to the Rambam and Raavad the eight-string arrangement mentioned here is not meant davka; the same would be true of ten or twelve strings. Likewise, the beraisa's reference to a tallis with eight strings would not be exact. (The Mishkenos Yaakov, siman 15, explains the Rambam this way.) The entire sugya would then be teaching only that there is no prohibition of bal tosif. But the Gemara does not sound that way at all. The phrase "we require eight in the garment" is especially difficult. [In addition, the straightforward meaning of the sugya in Sanhedrin 88b is that adding valid tzitzis strings does involve bal tosif, and this is the view of most Rishonim, at least regarding sixteen ends - something that cannot fit the Rambam's approach here.] It therefore seems that the straightforward sugya supports the shitah of Tosafos. Vedok heitev.²⁹

Another proof can be added. Everyone agrees that there is a Sifrei which says: "'They shall make for themselves tzitzis' - I might think that he should make one string by itself; therefore the Torah says gedilim." Our only uncertainty is how the passage continues. In any case, we see that there is a hava amina that only one string is needed. What is this one string - lavan only, or Techeiles as well? The way to determine that

²⁹ Rav Tzvi Herzog suggested a novel approach to explain the Rambam. According to him, even the Rambam agrees that a tallis with eight strings has half lavan and half Techeiles; it is only in a tallis of four strings that the Rambam holds that pesil means specifically one. The reason is that the concept of a tallis with eight strings is that there are gedilim from each species. In that case, the word gedilim itself takes the pasuk out of its simple meaning. But when there is only one set of gedilim for the entire tallis, there is no ribui that displaces the plain sense of pesil. This is a chiddush. It may explain the idea of a tallis with eight strings, but the difference between an eight-string and a four-string tallis regarding transferring strings from one garment to another still requires explanation.

is to clarify the continuation of the Sifrei which rejects that hava amina. The Sifrei continues, "therefore the Torah says gedilim." We have to determine what gedilim includes. If gedilim means three strings, then gedilim is referring only to lavan, and the original hava amina of one string likewise concerns lavan alone. But if gedilim means four full strings, so that Techeiles is included in the term gedilim, then the hava amina of making only one string applies to Techeiles as well. The end of the Sifrei would then be teaching us that there is more than one Techeiles string.

The Gemara explicitly states (Yevamos 5b; Menachos 39b) that we darshen: gedil means two, gedilim means four. Four full strings clearly cannot all be lavan; Techeiles must be included within the term gedilim. Likewise, in the first perek of Yevamos (4b), the verse "gedilim ta'aseh lach" is the source that the asch of tzitzis overrides the lav of shaatnez. The main application of asch docheh lo saaseh in tzitzis is specifically Techeiles, as is explicit in Menachos 40a; when Techeiles is unavailable we do not apply asch docheh lo saaseh. The primary derashah from gedilim must therefore include Techeiles, and it is impossible to say that gedilim refers only to lavan. Once gedilim is understood to refer to both types, the Sifrei's hava amina of one string must also refer to both types. Thus the hava amina is that there should be only one Techeiles string - apparently because pesil is singular, as the Sifrei says, "I might think that he should make one..." But the plural word gedilim teaches that there is more than one. The Sifrei therefore indicates with certainty that there is more than one Techeiles string.³⁰

³⁰ Beis Hillel, however, do not derive four from gedilim. It can therefore be said that for them gedilim refers only to the lavan strings. Their hava amina likewise concerns only lavan, whereas Techeiles remains a single string because there is no ribui that would take the pasuk out of its simple meaning. It appears [as the Netziv writes in several places, and other Acharonim as well] that this is precisely the machlokes between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel: whether the derashah of gedilim applies to both species. Vedok. Several talmidei chachamim asked that Tosafos's sevara of equating the two species does not fit Beis Hillel. Why would Tosafos introduce a new sevara that works only according to Beis Shammai? There is no difficulty. This itself can be what Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel disagree about. Beis Shammai hold that gedilim applies to both species, because sevara says they should be equal; accordingly Techeiles and lavan are equal. Beis Hillel hold that gedilim refers only to lavan, so there is still no source for more than one Techeiles string. Tosafos's sevara was written to explain Beis Shammai, and obviously Beis Hillel can disagree with that very point. Elsewhere we gave another answer. Tosafos themselves write in the middle of their discussion (38a s.v. HaTecheiles): "Lavan also cannot be fewer than two, because it has greater kedushah, as the Gemara says that one begins with lavan and ends with lavan, since we ascend in kedushah and do not descend." Thus there is a sevara to increase lavan because it is more kadosh. Tosafos understood that this certainly means there cannot be more Techeiles strings than lavan strings. Accordingly, wherever the two species cannot be equal, the sevara is to have more lavan than Techeiles because lavan has greater kedushah. According to Beis Hillel, who have only three strings, one species must necessarily have more [unless one introduces the Rambam's chiddush of a string dyed only halfway, which does not appear to be Tosafos's view, as is evident on 41a in the name of Rabbeinu Tam]. Since lavan has greater kedushah, it is more appropriate to have two lavan strings and only one Techeiles string. Beis Hillel's

If the ribui of gedilim includes both types, there is no reason at all for the ribui to increase lavan more than Techeiles. Apparently this is what Tosafos mean when they write that there is a sevara to make the two equal: the point is that once gedilim is increasing the number, there is no reason for it to increase one type more than the other. The logical conclusion is that the two are equal. We thus arrive at the following: although the plain implication of pesil is one string, gedilim expands that number and teaches two full strings of Techeiles and two full strings of lavan. According to this, the objection that pesil means one does not even begin against Tosafos. One string is precisely the Sifrei's hava amina. In the maskanah, however, the ribui of gedilim teaches that there is more than one string.³¹ There is nothing further to answer.

position therefore does not contradict the sevara of equality at all; equality simply cannot be achieved in practice. The reader can decide which approach he prefers.

³¹ Regarding the meaning of pesil and Tosafos's shittah, I have seen that many people had difficulty understanding the discussion, so I will quote Tosafos and explain their words as they appear to me.

Tosafos (38a) write: "If you ask: From where do we know that we need two lavan strings and two Techeiles strings? Perhaps the Torah is particular only that there be gedilim, even one of this species and three of the other." Many have mistakenly understood this as Tosafos asking for the source that there are two Techeiles and two lavan strings. But the continuation makes clear that the question is only what the reason for their shittah is, not its basic source, as Tosafos continue: "However, this reason from pesil cannot work." Tosafos explain that the reason is a sevara to equate the two species [either as explained above: there is no sevara for the ribui of gedilim to apply more to one species than the other, so the Techeiles strings are increased together with the lavan strings; or as explained earlier from the commentary attributed to the Raavad, that the equality is learned from a hekesh].

Tosafos also consider saying that the reason for two strings comes from pesil, which would specifically imply two, as Yoma 72a expounds "pesil—two; pesilim—four." Tosafos reject this for several reasons.

First, the Sifrei says there would have been a hava amina of one string had the Torah not written gedilim. If there really is a hava amina of one and it is only rejected by the ribui of gedilim, it follows that the simple meaning of pesil cannot itself imply two. This is the correct explanation of why Tosafos quote only the beginning of the Sifrei. Their entire purpose in bringing the Sifrei there is to show that there is a hava amina of one string [in their words: "it implies that from pesil alone we would have heard only one"]. Such a hava amina is impossible if pesil means two. Since that is their point, they quote only the opening of the Sifrei that establishes this, not Beis Shammai's view at all.

They give another rejection of the pesil approach. If pesil already establishes the number of strings, gedilim would not be needed to determine the count: pesil would give two Techeiles strings, and lavan, which has greater kedushah, certainly could not be fewer than two. Why then would one need a derashah from gedilim to reach four strings?

They further reject it even without the sevara that lavan is more kadosh. According to Beis Hillel there are only three strings. There must certainly be at least one min-kanaf string, meaning lavan. If pesil itself means two, we already have three strings without gedilim. Why, then, would Beis Hillel need to expound gedilim? [Since this question applies specifically according to Beis Hillel, when Tosafos quote the Sifrei they also reproduce Beis Hillel's view to show that Beis Hillel too use the derashah of gedilim.]

Tosafos therefore conclude that the Sifrei shows that the two Techeiles strings cannot be derived from pesil meaning specifically two. What, then, of the Gemara in Yoma, where pesil

is expounded as two and pesilim as four? One answer is that there the count is learned from the word “cut,” with each cut string producing two, etc. Tosafos also suggest retaining the simple understanding of Yoma and saying that our Gemara in Yoma disagrees with the Sifrei: according to the Gemara, pesil means two, while according to the Sifrei it implies no more than one. [That is the meaning of Tosafos’s words; read them carefully. There is no plausible basis for another interpretation of that phrase.] They do not mean that the Gemara and Sifrei disagree on any practical halachah. Tosafos are merely considering that they may disagree about the reason why there are two Techeiles strings. This is how their words appear to me.

I had to spell this out because I have seen many misunderstand Tosafos as though Tosafos had a Sifrei that explicitly said there was only one Techeiles string, like our printed girsa in Parashas Shelach, and Tosafos simply rejected it because the Gemara disagrees. They then asked where Tosafos saw in the Gemara that it disagrees. [In truth, even that question is not strong, since the entire sugya indicates that Techeiles and lavan are equal.] But this is not Tosafos’s meaning. On 41a they quote the Sifrei from both locations, and it is clear that their girsa had four Techeiles strings in both. They therefore did not have a Sifrei in which any Tanna, other than Beis Hillel, held lemaaseh that there was only one Techeiles string. This is what appears correct to me.

You have now seen that both the Sifrei and the Talmudic sugyos provide strong support for the shitah of Tosafos. More than that, perhaps we can say as suggested above that the Rambam and Raavad did not have the Tosafos girsa of the Sifrei before them. They therefore had to move away from the straightforward reading of the Gemara because they had no alternative. Had they seen the Tosafos girsa, perhaps they too would have agreed with Tosafos, since the plain sense of the sugya certainly points in that direction.

Siman 4 - Explanations of the Shitah of Tosafos

Those who follow the Raavad have raised several questions on the shitah of Tosafos. However, since both the sugyos and the Sifrei seem to indicate that Tosafos is the primary view, we need to clarify these issues properly. Some of the points were already hinted at in what we wrote above, but for clarity I will repeat them here.

Some have made a great commotion, claiming that the shitah of Tosafos is extremely difficult because, in their view, the word *pesil* means exactly one string and a *pasuk* cannot be uprooted from its plain meaning, etc. But apparently they did not look carefully. Obviously, a clear *pasuk* - one which we are required to say at least twice every day! - did not escape the attention of most Rishonim and Poskim. Rather, they understood that yes, *pesil* on its own implies one string; but as the Sifrei says, although the initial *hava amina* is that there should be one string, in line with the simple meaning of *pesil*, the word *gedilim* is a *ribui* that teaches more than one string. In other words, it teaches more than one *Techeiles* string and thereby moves us away from the plain implication of *pesil*. The fact that *gedilim* functions as a *ribui* is no different from many other *derashos* of Chazal which take *pesukim* beyond their surface meaning, as every serious learner of Torah knows. Someone who rejects the legitimacy of that method would seemingly have the status of a *Tzeduki*.³²

But in truth, according to Tosafos, *pesil* is not a *miyut* meaning specifically one. Its plain form is singular only so long as there is no reason to expand it, under the rule *tafasta merubah lo tafasta* - when a larger number is not compelled, we assume the minimum. (See *Sukkah* 5b, where this principle is used for a full *derashah* establishing the minimum height of a *sukkah* as ten *tefachim*, even though ten is reached through the principle of taking the minimum; see Tosafos there s.v. *tafasta*.) Rashi takes the same approach in *Parshas Pekudei* (*Shemos* 39:31) regarding the *Techeiles* strings of the *tzitz*. He writes: "I say that this *pesil* *Techeiles* refers to strings, in the plural, with which to tie it to the *mitznefes*, because the *tzitz* extended only from ear to ear; with what else could it be tied on his forehead?... Do not be surprised that it says *pesil* *Techeiles* rather than *pesilei* *Techeiles* even though there were several strings. We find the same with the *choshen* and the *eifod*: 'and they shall fasten the *choshen*...' There necessarily were at least two, since there were two rings at the two ends of the *choshen* and two corresponding rings on the shoulder straps of the *eifod*. According to the way they were tied there were actually four strings, but in any event there could not have been fewer than two." We see explicitly that *pesil* can include a plural when there is a source requiring that reading. In our case, the *derashah* of *gedilim* is that source.

³² See also above, *siman* 2, where the commentary attributed to the Raavad writes that once *pesil* is not used to teach one string, it is extra and can teach the rule of doubling. According to him, that is the meaning of "וּפְתִילָהּ מִתּוֹכָם."

Regarding the tzitz itself, although the Ramban (Shemos 28:37) and Rambam (Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 9:2) disagree with Rashi, most Rishonim wrote like Rashi. These include Tosafos (Zevachim 19a s.v. tefillin), the Raavad (Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 9:2), and apparently the Rashbam (Shemos 28:37). This is also the view of the Semag (aseh 173). The same can be inferred from the Rif (Shabbos 26b), Rabbeinu Chananel (Shabbos 57b), and the Aruch (entry kippah, second explanation), who refer to the Techeiles strings of the tzitz as "woolen strings" in the plural. That implies there was more than one string. (Even though their arrangement differs from Rashi's, they clearly still had multiple strings, which proves that pesil is not rigidly singular.) The Malbim likewise notes in Artzos HaChaim (siman 27, HaMe'ir LaAretz 18; see also his commentary to Shemos 28:37) that Targum Yonasan (Shemos 28:37; 39:31) also appears to follow Rashi. The issue is discussed at greater length in Simchas Yehoshua (Shemos 39:31).

I also heard another proof that pesil can refer to a plural. In the pesukim about Yehudah and Tamar, Tamar asks Yehudah (Bereishis 38:18), "your seal, your pesil, and your staff that is in your hand" - where Ramban and Rokeach understand pesil as singular. Later, however, Tamar says (ibid. 25), "Please identify whose seal, pesilim, and staff these are." The seal

remains one seal, and the staff remains one staff, but pesil has now become pesilim. The necessary conclusion is that there is no contradiction: the word pesil can be understood either as singular or as collective/plural, as above.

Many have also pointed to various expressions in Chazal. For example, the Gemara says (Chullin 89a; Sotah 17a): "Rava expounded: in the merit of Avraham Avinu saying, 'from a thread to a shoelace,' his children merited two mitzvot - the thread of Techeiles and the strap of tefillin." The phrase "a thread of Techeiles" sounds, at first glance, as though there is only one Techeiles thread. That is their argument.

But Rashi already answers this. He explains that the Gemara is referring to the mitzvah of tzitzis generally. In Chullin 89a Rashi writes: "His children merited a thread of Techeiles - tzitzis." In other words, "thread" is not meant literally as exactly one thread, and even "Techeiles" is not meant narrowly; the phrase is a name for the mitzvah of tzitzis as a whole. If "a thread of Techeiles" is not exact, why did the Gemara choose that wording? Rashi in Sotah 17a appears to answer this as well. He writes: "A thread of Techeiles - corresponding to 'from a thread...'" That is, the Gemara used the word "thread" to echo Avraham's words in the pasuk. Without that connection there would be no reason to phrase multiple strings in the singular.

In fact, a Midrash gives explicit support for this. Bereishis Rabbah (43:13) says: "Rabbi Abba bar Mamal said: HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to him, 'You said, from a thread; by your life, I will give your children the mitzvah of tzitzis,' as it says, 'and they shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a pesil of Techeiles,' which we translate as chuta d'techeilta - a thread of Techeiles." It is explicit that the reward is the mitzvah of tzitzis in general. We can also ask why the Midrash needed to cite the Targum of pesil Techeiles as "a Techeiles thread" if pesil itself already necessarily meant a single thread. Apparently the Midrash wanted a source that tzitzis can be described as a "thread," so that it could connect the mitzvah to Avraham Avinu's words "from a thread." The Gemaros which use the same expression can likewise be understood this way, exactly as Rashi explains. There is no proof whatsoever that there is specifically one Techeiles string.³³

We find many places where the mitzvah of tzitzis is simply called "Techeiles" (see Sukkah 11a, "he placed Techeiles"; Sukkah 26a, "sellers of Techeiles"; Pesachim 50b; Moed Katan 19a; Menachos 39a, "the Techeiles with which most of it was wound"; 39b, "beautiful Techeiles"; 43a, "he placed Techeiles on his garment"; Bava Kamma 119b, "all are included in the reckoning of Techeiles"; Chullin 95b and the commentary of Rabbeinu Gershom there; and many others). Likewise, in many places tzitzis are simply called "threads" (Chullin 110a, "he placed threads"; Menachos 41a, "and a thread came and stood"; 42a, "he placed threads"; Ta'anis 22a;

³³ In practice, no proof can be brought from the Targum that there is only one string. The Targum translates the peshuto shel mikra, whereas lemaaseh there is a derashah from gedilim that takes the pasuk beyond its plain meaning. Alternatively, Onkelos was a Tanna and may have followed Beis Hillel, who indeed require only one Techeiles string.

Shabbos 118b; and many others). It therefore seems that "a thread of Techeiles" is simply a standard way of referring to the mitzvah of tzitzis. This is explicit in Ta'anis 22a, which says "he did not place a thread of Techeiles" in a context that clearly means the tzitzis as a whole, yet it still uses the singular "thread." Tosafos HaRosh (Yevamos 5b; Niddah 61b) likewise uses the phrase "a thread of Techeiles" to refer to the whole tzitzis even though his own view is that there are two Techeiles strings. There are additional places in Chazal as well where multiple strings are spoken of with the singular word chut.³⁴

See also Tiferes Yaakov on Chullin there, who explains the word "thread" in a way that does not imply one specific thread at all. The Gemara, he says, is explaining why the mitzvah of Techeiles is fulfilled specifically with a thread rather than with a garment or some other object; see his lengthy discussion. Thus, even if "a thread of Techeiles" refers specifically to the mitzvah of Techeiles rather than to tzitzis as a whole, there is still no proof that Techeiles consists of only one string. The Gemara's point is to explain why we merited such a great mitzvah - one that is considered

³⁴ See Chullin 93a: "Abaye said, and some say Rav Yehudah: there were five chutim..." It is evident there that each of the "chutim" can itself contain more than one strand; see the Rashba's chiddushim there.

as though one had received the Shechinah (as explained in the Sifrei at the end of Parshas Shelach and quoted by Rashi in Sotah there) - and that mitzvah is performed with a thread. The same idea appears in Midrash Tanchuma there: "By your life, I will give your children a mitzvah of a thread, as it says, 'and they shall make for themselves tzitzis...'" Similarly, Aggadas Bereishis - a very early Midrash - says: "I will give your children the mitzvah of tzitzis, which is of a thread,³⁵ as it says, 'and they shall make...'" We see that because Avraham Avinu said "from a thread," we received a mitzvah performed with thread. These Midrashim also make clear that the derashah refers to tzitzis generally. But even if one insists that the Gemara is speaking specifically about Techeiles, the word "thread" need not mean one thread; it can simply mean that the mitzvah is performed with thread rather than with some other object.

Others have cited Midrashim about Korach. Aggadas Esther (ch. 5) and Midrash Mishlei (ch. 11) - it should be noted that these Midrashim are of uncertain attribution, and it is very plausible that this textual version is later than the Rishonim - say that Korach told his wife that Moshe Rabbeinu had instructed them to make tzitzis and "tie upon it one thread of Techeiles." Likewise, the first printed edition of Tanchuma from 5280 reads at the beginning of Parshas Korach: "Korach said to him: a garment entirely of Techeiles does not exempt itself, yet one thread exempts it?" Rashi on the Torah at the beginning of Korach similarly says: "Can it be that a garment of another type is exempted by one thread of Techeiles...?" Similar language appears in several other places. One might argue that these Midrashim prove there is only one Techeiles string. But plainly, if so, the phrase means one Techeiles string per corner, and the standard way of discussing the number of Techeiles strings would be to count how many appear on each corner. That gives us a proof in the opposite direction from Bamidbar Rabbah (18:1), where the text reads: "Korach said to him: a garment that is entirely Techeiles does not exempt itself, but four threads exempt it?" The same reading appears in several editions of Tanchuma, including the Mantua 5323 edition printed from manuscript; it also appears in the very early Tanchuma Yashan, and Buber's edition treats this as the primary text. Seemingly this too refers to the strings on each corner. We therefore have conflicting Midrashic readings, and there is certainly no reason to treat Midrash Mishlei and Aggadas Esther as more authoritative than Tanchuma and Bamidbar Rabbah.

It is also worth mentioning the piyyut of Yannai, who was very early - some identify him with Rabbi Yannai mentioned in Yerushalmi Berachos 3:4 - and was the rebbi of

³⁵ R. Shlomo Buber, in his notes to Tanchuma (p. 38, note 175), cites the Rome manuscript as reading: "the mitzvah of the strings of tzitzis, pesil Techeiles." The Warsaw 5638 edition of Tanchuma has essentially the same wording, except that it reads "the mitzvah of the strings of the mitzvah, pesil Techeiles." This indeed sounds as though the phrase refers specifically to the mitzvah of Techeiles rather than to tzitzis generally. But it also says "chutim," in the plural, so the question does not begin.

the Kalir. It is possible that Techeiles was still available in his day. In his piyyut for Parshas Korach he writes: "They hurried and dressed, they asked and were then embarrassed: what can two threads of Techeiles add to a garment entirely Techeiles?" The straightforward meaning of "two Techeiles threads" sounds like the shitah of Tosafos, because when discussing the strings in relation to the garment it is more natural to count the full strings before they are doubled. Still, this can be pushed aside by interpreting the two strings according to the Raavad, meaning two ends after doubling.

But even without that, there is really no question here. Bais Hillel in fact hold that there is one Techeiles string, and several Amoraim ruled like Bais Hillel. These Midrashim may simply follow Bais Hillel. In any event, they cannot overturn the straightforward reading of the Sifrei and the Talmud.

Others have objected to the sevara of making Techeiles and lavan equal. We already discussed this at length above, in the footnote at the end of siman 4.

Several supporters of the Raavad have also written that one can fulfill the shitah of Tosafos with only one Techeiles string, and that Tosafos' requirement of two full Techeiles strings is only the ideal, mitzvah min hamuvchar. Some have tried to prove this from the Semag,

who writes that there may be either one or two Techeiles strings. They argue that this shows that even according to Tosafos one can be yotzei with one string.

This is incorrect. Tosafos in Menachos 38a explicitly ask: "How do we know that we need two lavan strings and two Techeiles strings? Perhaps the Torah is particular only about having gedilim, and even one of this type and three of the other would suffice." Tosafos answer that there is a sevara to make the two types equal. It is clear that in their maskanah the Torah is not concerned only with the total of gedilim; there is a specific required number of Techeiles and lavan strings. Tosafos also had a Sifrei requiring specifically four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends, so the number is plainly exact. As for the argument from the Semag that one can fulfill the mitzvah with one Techeiles string, the answer is simply that Tosafos disagree with the Semag on this point, as we have shown. (Aruch HaShulchan, siman 9 se'if 2, likewise notes that Tosafos do not appear to agree with the Semag.) If anything, the Semag may prove that according to the Rambam and Raavad there is no problem at all with making the strings according to Tosafos.³⁶ And even this assumes that the Semag holds one may freely choose either arrangement, as the Aruch HaShulchan understands. The Beis Yosef (siman 11), however, understands that the Semag simply declined to rule³⁷ between the Rambam and Tosafos because the question had no practical application in his time.

³⁶ In a separate article we discussed at length every side of the question whether, according to the Rambam, there is any issur concern in following Tosafos. We explained there that there is substantial room to say that the extra Techeiles strings can even fulfill lavan. At the very least, there are clear proofs that adding Techeiles strings does not invalidate the tzitzis. [Those who wrote otherwise brought no proofs; they inferred it only from the Rambam's wording. That wording can be explained in several ways, and the Rambam in the Shoreshim (11) also indicates otherwise. This is not the place to elaborate.]

³⁷ One talmid chacham argued at length that since the Semag did not decide in favor of Tosafos, it cannot be obvious that the halachah follows Tosafos. He saw this as evidence against our claim that the Sifrei and the sugya point to Tosafos. I did not understand the argument. The fact that the Semag did not agree with Tosafos is no more a weakness in Tosafos than the fact that he also did not agree with the Raavad is a weakness in the Raavad. That same scholar wished to prove the Raavad's position from the Torah's use of the word pesil. But is it really such a decisive proof from a pasuk—as though that pasuk escaped the Semag's attention? In addition, his proof from the Semag is not conclusive, since the Aruch HaShulchan reads the Semag differently—an approach that allows two Techeiles strings and sees no difficulty from the word pesil.

Siman 5 - Clarifying the Practical Halachah

As a general rule, halachah follows the majority of Rishonim. The Rambam's position is almost a *daas yachid*. Among the major Rishonim we have not found anyone who explicitly writes like him other than his son Rabbeinu Avraham (HaMaspik, p. 372), and the view of Rav Shmuel ben Chofni Gaon (printed at the end of Kelil Techeiles) also appears to be similar. The Raavad's position is followed by the Aruch³⁸ (entry Techeiles), the Meiri (Yevamos 5b), the Riaz (Piskei Riaz, Hilchos Ketanos, p. 223), and Rabbeinu Yehudah of Metz (quoted in Peirushim U'Pesakim of Rabbeinu Avigdor HaTzarfati on the Torah, siman 274).³⁹

³⁸ Some have written as though the Aruch quotes this in the name of Rabbeinu Chananel, and the printed "Rabbeinu Chananel" on Berachos 9b also contains this passage about the number of strings. But the commentary printed in the standard "Vagshal" Shas under the name Rabbeinu Chananel on Berachos is not an original continuous text of Rabbeinu Chananel; it is a collection assembled from fragments quoted by Rishonim in his name. In Peirush Rabbeinu Chananel HaShalem (published by Vagshal, from which they copied material into the margin of their Gemara), the note on Berachos 9b, no. 222, explicitly says that they took this passage about the number of Techeiles strings from the Aruch, allegedly in the name of Rabbeinu Chananel.

With due respect, this is a mistake, and the same mistake was then inserted into the margin of their Shas. A careful reading of the Aruch shows that the entry contains many different points. Only the final point, concerning kilayim in the garments of the Kohanim, ends with the words "this is the explanation of Rabbeinu Chananel." It therefore appears that the rest of the entry on Techeiles is not from Rabbeinu Chananel. There is also evidence from Tosafos HaRosh, Berachos 9b, who quotes in the name of the Aruch the passage located between the section on the number of Techeiles strings and the section on the priestly garments. Had the Aruch's final words "this is the explanation of Rabbeinu Chananel" referred to the entire Techeiles entry, Tosafos HaRosh should have attributed that material to Rabbeinu Chananel rather than simply to the Aruch. See also Or Zarua, Hilchos Krias Shema (siman 13), which likewise indicates that not everything in the Aruch is from Rabbeinu Chananel. The early Arugas HaBosem also cites this position as that of the Aruch without saying it is Rabbeinu Chananel's view. I also saw an early source [a marginal note in the Munich manuscript of the Shas] which states that "Rabbi Nossan [author of the Aruch] holds that there is one Techeiles string." I have discussed this at length elsewhere. I later saw that editions of the Aruch based on manuscripts tend toward the *girsas*, "this is the explanation of Rabbeinu Daniel." If so, the entire discussion disappears.

³⁹ There may be still more sources, but the Beis Yosef already writes (Yoreh Deah 105, or 9[b]): "It appears to me that we rule like Maharam... because he is more renowned than Rabbeinu Nesanel." His words show that greater prominence among the Rishonim carries weight, as is evident in several other places as well. Even more explicitly, the Knesses HaGedolah writes (Dina d'Chayei II, 63a): "We hold like the Rosh against the Riaz, because [the Rosh] is the more renowned posek, and all the Jews of Sefarad drink from his waters..." I therefore did not see a need to list every obscure Rishon whose view we do not generally rely upon for practical halachah.

For the record, I have another group of early authorities who write like Tosafos: Rabbeinu Meyuchas on the Torah (Parashas Shelach), the Rivavan (in his commentary to the Rif's Hilchos Tzitzis and Shabbos 25b), R. Shimshon of Donpierre (manuscript quoted in Tzefunot, vol. VI, p. 9), R. Avraham Childik (manuscript printed in Moriah, vol. 112, p. 5), Teshuvos U'Psakim McChachmei Ashkenaz V'Tzarfat (siman 76), and Piskei Mahari Ch (manuscript, Perek HaTecheiles). In all, there are thirty Rishonim. I also have another group who follow the

Rambam: Rabbeinu Perachyah (Shabbos 25b), R. Shimshon ben HaYasom (Moed Katan 19a), and Rabbag (Parashas Shelach); perhaps the Chinuch (386) should be included as well, though it is not conclusive. I cited in the main text only those whose shittos we generally rely on elsewhere in halachah, or those whose words here contain a chiddush not found in the better-known Rishonim, such as the Ri MiMetz.

The Knesses HaGedolah cited above explicitly indicates that the Riaz's view does not count as equal weight against the Rosh and the other Rishonim. This is unlike those who mistakenly argue that the Riaz should prevail as a basra. In any case, the rule of basrai cannot be invoked unless the later authority gives compelling proofs. The Pischei Teshuvah, Choshen Mishpat 25:8, quotes a responsum of Rav Moshe Rothenburg: "Although we hold that the halachah follows the later authorities... this rule applies when the later authority clarifies his position with sound proofs. But where the later authority simply states his opinion without proof against an earlier posek, what advantage does the later one have over the earlier one?..." See there. Historically as well, the Riaz is not significantly later than the Rosh and Tur: the Riaz was of the generation of the Or Zarua; the Or Zarua was the rebbe of Maharam, who was the rebbe of the Rosh, who was the father of the Tur.

Some have combined the Rambam and Raavad as one side against Tosafos, counting all Rishonim who require only one Techeiles string together so that the position is no longer a true minority. This is a mistake. The Rambam holds that the mitzvah of Techeiles is to wind it around the lavan, whereas according to the Raavad Techeiles is itself one of the mitzvah-strings, with lavan primary, as explained in siman 1. These are not the same shittah. Nor can they be combined merely because both allegedly understand pesil as one. Likewise, dictionaries that say pesil means one cannot be counted as halachic authorities on this issue. The Raavad himself holds that pesil can mean two (see his Hasagos to Hilchos Klei HaMikdash 9:2). Many Rishonim hold that even though the plain meaning of pesil is one, the halachah nevertheless follows Tosafos, as we explained at length; this is the position of the commentary attributed to the Raavad and of the Gra in his Biur to Shulchan Aruch. Thus the two issues are not dependent on one another.

Some have also counted Rabbeinu Hillel. That is a mistake: he writes there that the halachah follows Beis Shammai, and in his girsa Beis Shammai require only three strings altogether. Others count the Chachmei Lunel, but that too is irrelevant. Apparently they simply sent the Rambam the Raavad's objections, as the Migdal Oz writes (Hilchos Tzitzis 2:7): "It also appears to me that the Chachmei Lunel simply copied the wording of the Hasagos in order to know what he would answer."

I did not count the Chinuch and Ramban because their positions are inferred only from wording, and as explained above, even the phrase "a Techeiles string" need not be exact. I did not count the Hagahos Ashri in Moed Katan 19a, because his words do not show that there is only one Techeiles string. They only show that Techeiles alone is a smaller quantity than lavan together with Techeiles. This can be understood to mean that replacing two lavan strings with Techeiles is a smaller quantity than initially making two lavan and two Techeiles strings, four strings total. Thus it is not clear that he follows the Raavad.

Nor did I count R. Moshe HaDarshan, quoted by Rashi at the end of Parashas Shelach, whom the Meshech Chochmah emends in a way that would make him follow the Rambam. There is no proof for that reading. The Rishonim already explain his words differently, and if one is going to emend the text there is no reason to insert words against the lavan strings, as the Meshech Chochmah does, rather than emending the phrase about the day the Korban Pesach was slaughtered, as explained by the Re'em and many others.

By contrast, the majority of Rishonim⁴⁰ rule like Tosafos.⁴¹ Among them are: the commentary attributed to Rabbeinu Gershom (quoted in the new Shitah Mekubetzes to Perek HaTecheiles); Rashi (Shabbos 27b; Menachos 38a); Rabbeinu Tam (Tosafos Menachos 38a); Ri (Tur siman 11 regarding bal tosif, v'dok); Sefer Yereim (siman 401); Baal HaTur (Hilchos Tzitzis, sha'ar 1, vol. 2); Semak (mitzvah 31); Rabbeinu Peretz (Berachos 9b); Rash MiShantz (Tosafos Shantz, Kesubos 40a, and cited in Mordechai Hilchos Tzitzis); Raavyah (Menachos 1152); Maharam MiRothenburg (Responsa, Prague ed., vol. 4, siman 444; see also Artzos HaChaim siman 9, HaMe'ir LaAretz os 26); the Rosh (Hilchos Tzitzis siman 6; Responsa klal 2 os 12; Tosafos HaRosh Yevamos 4b and Sanhedrin perek 9); Rabbeinu Yerucham (nesiv 19, chelek 3); Mordechai (Perek HaTecheiles); Tur (siman 11); Nimukei Yosef (Hilchos Tzitzis); Rabbeinu Yeshayah HaRishon (Piskei HaRid, Hilchos Tzitzis p. 481; Sefer HaMachria perek 8; Responsa Rid siman 61); the Rashba (Yevamos 4b, and this is also evident from responsa 468 and 728; see Artzos HaChaim siman 11, HaMe'ir LaAretz 71); the commentary attributed to the Rashba⁴² (Menachos, Perek HaTecheiles 40a s.v. kala ilan); Ri MiLunel (Berachos 9b and Hilchos Tzitzis); Rabbeinu David (as appears from his words in Sanhedrin 88b); the Ran (there); another Tosafos cited by the Shitah Mekubetzes (Menachos 38a and 38b, holding that when Techeiles is unavailable only two lavan strings are necessary); Sefer HaAgudah (Perek HaTecheiles, likewise following that view); and several additional lesser-known Rishonim which there is little purpose in listing, as noted in the footnote above.

Furthermore, if the Rambam's method of winding is inseparable from his basic shitah - as explained by the Mishkenos Yaakov (siman 13) and other Acharonim, and as is implied by the Rambam's responsum to the sages of Lunel - then we can also count Rav Amram Gaon (quoted in the Itur, p. 135, and by several other Rishonim), Rav Natronai Gaon (quoted in the Raavad's hasagos to 1:8),

⁴⁰ Even if it is not appropriate to count every Rishon who generally followed the Baalei Tosafos, there are still many Rishonim who did not consistently follow them, such as the Ri MiLunel from Provence, the Rashba from Spain, Rabbeinu Yeshayah from Italy, as well as the Baal HaTur, the Ran, and others. Moreover, the approach described above runs contrary to the method of the major Poskim, including the Mishnah Berurah in several places.

⁴¹ Tosafos themselves repeat this position in many masechtos: Berachos 9b s.v. ela, Yevamos 4b s.v. da'afilu, Kesubos 40a s.v. kegon, Menachos in Perek HaTecheiles, Bechoros 39b s.v. kamah, and see also Tosafos Niddah 61b. This itself indicates how many Baalei Tosafos held this shitah.

⁴² This is not the Rashba of Spain. Some say the author is Rabbeinu Shlomo ben Avraham Min HaHar, the rebbe of Rabbeinu Yonah; others identify him as Rabbeinu Peretz HaKohen of Spain [not the Rabbeinu Peretz among the Baalei Tosafos]. If so, this gives us another Spanish Rishon who held this view. In any event, his shitah deserves mention because the Mishnah Berurah relies lemaaseh on this sefer in several places in Hilchos Tefillin.

the Ritva (Berachos 9b), the Rashba (there, besides the other Rashba passages cited above), and the talmidim of Rabbeinu Yonah (there). All of them write that the chulyos were made from alternating lavan and Techeiles, unlike the Rambam and Rav Shmuel ben Chofni Gaon, who write that all the windings are made with Techeiles except for the first and last. They derived their method from the Yerushalmi in the first perek of Berachos.

Chazal and the poskim transmitted rules for how to decide disputes. As is well known, the Beis Yosef generally rules based on the Rif, Rambam, and Rosh. In his introduction to Beis Yosef he writes: "In a case where one of the three pillars mentioned above [the Rif, Rambam, and Rosh] did not reveal his opinion on that law, and the two remaining pillars disagree, we have before us the Ramban, Rashba, Ran, Mordechai, and Semag; wherever the spirit of these holy men leads, we will follow, and according to the view toward which the majority of them incline, so shall we rule." That is exactly our case. The Rif does not state his position, the Rambam and Rosh disagree, and the other Rishonim, almost all of them, follow Tosafos.

The Rema writes in his introduction to Darkei Moshe: "Mahari Weil [this should read Maharil] likewise wrote in responsum 171 that generally we rule according to Tosafos, Maharam, and Raavyah. It is also commonly said that we rule like the Mordechai, the Ashiri [Rosh], and the Baal HaTur, Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Rabbeinu Asher. I followed this path and set the others aside." Every one of the Rishonim he names in our issue follows Tosafos and requires two full Techeiles strings.

Accordingly, by the rules of psak used by the Beis Yosef and Rema - the rules followed by most later poskim - the halachah should certainly follow Tosafos and the majority of Rishonim. It is true that at times we do not follow the majority of Rishonim, but usually that is because an established minhag follows the opposite view. That does not apply here, because the mitzvah of Techeiles was not practiced for many generations. If anything, the minhag regarding gardumin follows Tosafos, as we will explain below. Sometimes, too, a majority of Rishonim is set aside in favor of a minority view when the minority's reasoning is especially compelling. But here we have already shown that the straightforward reading of both the sugya and the Sifrei supports Tosafos. We should therefore follow the normal path of psak and rule like the majority of Rishonim.

In fact, a number of Acharonim explicitly pasken like Tosafos. From the Tur onward, most poskim state the halachah in the form of Tosafos, and many do not even mention the Rambam's shitah.⁴³ Among them are the Taz (siman 9 se'if katan 3;

⁴³ One talmid chacham wrote that all these Acharonim did not have the Raavad's actual words and instead had a girsa in the Raavad as though he followed Tosafos [as the Beis Yosef indeed had]. This is incorrect. They certainly knew the Aruch's position, which is like the Raavad. In addition, in all editions available in the era of the Acharonim the Raavad's text had already been corrected, and our girsa is quoted by the Gra in his Biur, by Mishkenos Yaakov siman 18, and by the Netziv.

siman 11 se'if katan 13), Yam Shel Shlomo (Yevamos 1:3), Shulchan Aruch HaRav (siman 11), and Mishnah Berurah (siman 9 se'ifei katan 7 and 14; siman 11 se'if katan 58; siman 12 se'if katan 8). See the footnote.⁴⁴

Even more explicitly, the Machatzis HaShekel (siman 15 s.v. yesh litvos) writes: "We hold that when Techeiles is available, the mitzvah is two Techeiles strings, which are four ends. The Rambam, however, holds that three strings were lavan, making six ends, and the fourth string was half Techeiles and half lavan..." The wording "we hold" makes it clear that our accepted halachah is not the Rambam.

The Malbim in Artzos HaChaim likewise follows Tosafos in several places. In siman 9 se'if 5, regarding the din that the tzitzis should be the color of the garment, the Malbim adds (Lev HaAretz 5) that this applies only to the two strings corresponding to lavan,

⁴⁴ See also the Pri Megadim's introduction to Hilchos Tzitzis [quoted in Biur Halachah, siman 13 s.v. vedavka], where it is clear that he relies on Tosafos lekula. He writes that in a pressing situation involving kavod habriyos, if two strings have been completely severed one may rely on the Rishonim [the Rosh in a responsum] who hold that fundamentally only two strings are required and the others are merely a remembrance of Techeiles. Such a possibility exists only according to Tosafos. If there were also a substantial possibility that the halachah follows the Rambam, it would be very difficult to rely on this even in a shaas hadechak, because even within Tosafos's approach the opinion that one fulfills the mitzvah with only two strings is itself a minority view among the Rishonim.

not to the strings corresponding to Techeiles. Likewise, in siman 11 (HaMe'ir LaAretz 9) he writes: "We must say that the Rambam follows his own shitah that only one Techeiles string is needed... But according to us, who hold that two Techeiles strings are required, since pesil can mean two, there is no need to derive it from the Mishkan..."

For a garment made of materials other than wool or linen, we pasken (Shulchan Aruch 9:3) that one may either make the tzitzis from the garment's own material, fulfilling min kanaf, or make them from wool or linen, fulfilling gedilim ta'aseh lach. Shulchan Aruch (siman 9 se'if 4, based on Terumas HaDeshen) writes: "If one placed on a garment of another material some tzitzis strings of its own material and some of wool or linen, there is room for doubt whether it is valid." Terumas HaDeshen and the later poskim explain that the doubt is because one has neither fully fulfilled min kanaf, since not all the strings are from the garment's material, nor fully fulfilled gedilim ta'aseh from wool or linen. In Artzos HaChaim, Lev HaAretz (os 3), the Malbim writes that nevertheless everyone agrees that one is yotzei on such a garment with two wool strings and two strings of the garment's own material. In HaMe'ir LaAretz (os 27) he explains that this is valid according to everyone because that was exactly the practice when Techeiles existed: there were two wool Techeiles strings even on a garment made from another material. Therefore there is no safek in this arrangement. This psak is quoted in Mishnah Berurah (siman 9 se'if katan 14), which praises the reasoning and calls it a "milsa b'taama" - a well-reasoned point - and applies it lemaaseh; see there carefully. The Chazon Ish also accepts this ruling (Orach Chaim 3:26). According to the Rambam and Raavad, however, making two wool strings and two strings of the garment's material would enter a serious Torah-level safek of the Shulchan Aruch. The Malbim, Mishnah Berurah, and Chazon Ish therefore ruled lemaaseh in accordance with Tosafos without showing any concern for the Rambam's arrangement.

The same is true of gardumin. The Rema (siman 12) writes that our minhag follows Rabbeinu Tam, who requires at least two full strings to remain intact. The foundation of Rabbeinu Tam's shitah is that tzitzis consists of two types, lavan and Techeiles, and one complete type must always remain. That is how he understands the Gemara's statement (Menachos 38b): "If the Techeiles was reduced and the lavan remained, or the lavan was reduced and the Techeiles remained." Therefore two full strings must always remain intact so that either the complete Techeiles set or the complete lavan set remains.⁴⁵ The Kesef Mishneh (1:18; likewise Beis Yosef siman 12 in his second explanation of the Rambam) writes that Rabbeinu Tam's law of gardumin can be

⁴⁵ Even the Ri and the Rosh, who disagree with Rabbeinu Tam on this issue, agree that there are two Techeiles strings. They simply understand the Gemara there as following Rebbe, who holds that Techeiles and lavan are me'akev one another and constitute one mitzvah in that sense, whereas we do not pasken like him. See Tosafos 38b and the Rosh, siman 7.

formulated even within the Rambam's shitah: according to the Rambam as well, one complete type - either Techeiles or lavan - must remain.

The Mishkenos Yaakov (siman 18) writes that when no Techeiles is present, it is impossible to apply the phrase "the lavan was reduced and the Techeiles remained" merely because some strings happen to occupy the position that would have been Techeiles. In his view, when one is fulfilling only the mitzvah of lavan, the lavan set itself must remain complete; strings standing in for Techeiles cannot complete gedilim in a way that protects the broken lavan strings. According to this, under the Rambam's shitah, if more than one end - meaning half of one full string - breaks, we should be concerned that the tzitzis are invalid. The Shulchan Aruch and Rema, however, rule that if two full strings, i.e. four ends, remain intact, the tzitzis are valid lechatchilah. According to the Rambam on the Mishkenos Yaakov's understanding, that is an enormous kula: seven of the eight ends would have to remain complete, and breaking more than one end would invalidate the tzitzis.

In fact, we find the sevara of the Mishkenos Yaakov already in an early source. Peirushim U'Pesakim of Rabbeinu Avigdor HaTzarfati on the Torah quotes his rebbi, Rabbeinu Yehudah of Metz, as following the Raavad's view that there is one complete Techeiles string (siman 516). He also quotes him (simanim 274 and 511) as ruling that for gardumin three full strings - six ends - must always remain intact, so if more than one full string is broken the tzitzis are invalid. The sevara is apparently the same: the strings standing in the Techeiles position cannot protect all the actual lavan strings. Yet Shulchan Aruch (siman 12 se'if 1) rules lemaaseh that tzitzis remain valid lechatchilah even when two full strings have broken. According to Rabbeinu Yehudah of Metz and the Mishkenos Yaakov, this is a major leniency against the Rambam and Raavad. We therefore have an established practice, even lekula, against the shitos that require only one Techeiles string.

Even if we do not accept the sevara of the Mishkenos Yaakov and Rabbeinu Yehudah of Metz, and instead say that according to the Rambam the tzitzis remain valid without Techeiles until seven ends have broken, gardumin still gives us a basis to rule like Tosafos. The Rema writes that our minhag follows Rabbeinu Tam and invalidates the tzitzis if more than two full strings have broken. That means there is an actual practiced minhag whose very logic depends on there being two full Techeiles strings. According to most Acharonim, Rabbeinu Tam's view must be taken into account me'ikar hadin (Chayei Adam, Mor U'Ketzieh, Derech HaChaim, Siddur Baal HaTanya, and apparently the Hagahos Maharshal on the Tur; see the footnote⁴⁶, which shows that this is also the straightforward implication of the

⁴⁶ Several Acharonim hold that one must take Rabbeinu Tam's position into account as a matter of basic halachah. Some, however, understand the Rema as being choshesh for Rabbeinu Tam only lechumra and not me'ikar hadin. Their position is very difficult in light of the Rema's plain wording. See Shulchan Aruch, siman 12:1. The Mechaber cites the Ri and Rabbeinu Tam and concludes: "The halachah follows the first opinion [the Ri]. Nevertheless, where possible it is proper to be choshesh for Rabbeinu Tam's opinion." The Rema then adds: "Hagah: Our practice follows Rabbeinu Tam. Certainly, if he was careful that the four ends on one side remain identifiable and three ends on one side were severed, it is invalid, because then three strings were definitely severed. If they were severed on two sides it is also invalid, lest they be three strings." The Mechaber therefore treats Rabbeinu Tam merely as a chumra, whereas the Rema adds to the Mechaber's words and evidently gives Rabbeinu Tam greater force than a mere chumra—namely, me'ikar hadin. In a case where it is uncertain whether three strings were severed, such as when ends were cut on two sides, the Rema rules stringently because perhaps they represent three strings. If Rabbeinu Tam were not actually accepted, there should seemingly be a sfeik sfeika: perhaps they are not three strings, and even if they are, perhaps the halachah follows the Ri. We must therefore say that for the Rema there was no second safek; he regarded Rabbeinu Tam as the accepted halachah me'ikar hadin. Vedok. [See Pri Megadim, in his general rules of issur v'heter, who writes that where the Rema did not rule forcefully one may sometimes combine the Mechaber's view as a safek against the Rema. Apparently the Rema's wording here is a forceful ruling, which is why no sfeik sfeika is used.] The Magen Avraham, se'if katan 7, who says one may make a brachah, is speaking only according to the Mechaber's shittah, as is clear to anyone reading the passage; the Pri Megadim there is merely explaining the Magen Avraham.

The Biur Halachah, however, s.v. vehahalachah, writes: "See Pri Megadim in Eshel Avraham se'if katan 7; it is evident from his words that one may make a brachah, and this is also evident from Magen Avraham se'if katan 7, unlike what Chayei Adam writes." This is extremely difficult, because the Magen Avraham and Pri Megadim were discussing the Mechaber's position. Lemaaseh, since Ashkenazim follow the Rema, one certainly should not make a brachah in that case. The Chayei Adam's ruling is therefore according to the practical halachah. This point was already raised in Shu"t Even Yisrael IX and Teshuvos V'Hanhagos V, siman 2, and requires iyun.

In any event, one cannot prove from Acharonim such as the Artzos HaChaim, Mishnah Berurah, and Chazon Ish that Rabbeinu Tam is accepted only lechumra because the Rambam and Raavad, who use fewer Techeiles strings, remain a counterweight and therefore no final decision exists. We have already shown that these Acharonim themselves rule like Tosafos even lekula.

It appears that when Acharonim such as the Machatzis HaShekel write that we rule like Tosafos, they were not necessarily making an independent determination. They may have learned this from the halachah of gardumin, or simply followed the Tur because the Beis Yosef did not explicitly disagree with him.

Rema). Since me'ikar hadin we follow Rabbeinu Tam and do not combine the other views even to create a safek [although, in truth, the Rambam and Raavad could be added as another side, since according to their views one might validate even when six or seven ends remain, unlike the Mishkenos Yaakov. There would then be a sfei'k sfei'ka: perhaps the halachah regarding the number of Techeiles strings is not like Tosafos but like the Rambam or Raavad, and perhaps the halachah regarding gardumin is not like Rabbeinu Tam but like Ri], we see how strongly Rabbeinu Tam's framework has been accepted. The Rambam and Raavad therefore are not shitos that are ordinarily relied upon here; all the more so there is no reason to choose their number of Techeiles strings lechatchilah.

We have therefore reached the conclusion that the majority of Rishonim and Acharonim hold that there are two full Techeiles strings. We already have a clear psak on this basis according to the normal rules of halachic decision, and many major Acharonim ruled this way. There is no need to search further. All of this is in addition to the fact that, as we explained above, the sugya and the Sifrei themselves point to Tosafos.

Siman 6 - Clarifying the Shitah of the Gra

In practice, many people who wear Techeiles follow the Raavad's arrangement, and they base that practice on the view of the Gra. I also heard from Rav Eliyahu Zilberman shlita, rosh yeshivah of Aderes Eliyahu, that were it not for the Gra's words it would be obvious that one should follow Tosafos, because that is what the sugyos imply.

But in order to rely on the Gra against the majority of Rishonim, we need a clear ruling. We cannot abandon both the straightforward reading and the majority of Rishonim because of a safek. So let us look at the material as it actually stands and see what it proves lemaaseh. There are six sources attributed to the Gra in which he discusses the number of Techeiles strings. They are:

A. Imrei Noam, Berachos 9b:

In Imrei Noam - a commentary transmitting explanations from the talmidim of the Gra in his name - on Berachos 9b (Tosafos s.v. ella), it comments on Tosafos' wording: "One can explain the distinction between the Techeiles in it, in tzitzis, where Techeiles was fixed in it together with two lavan strings, and they would make one chulya of Techeiles and one chulya of lavan." Imrei Noam comments: "The Poskim disagree with this and hold that they would make only one Techeiles string. The Rambam z"l also disagrees with Tosafos in this respect, holding that they did not make one chulya of lavan and one of Techeiles. Rather, everything was Techeiles, with lavan used only for one winding at the bottom and one at the top. This is the meaning of 'and they shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a pesil of Techeiles' - meaning that the Techeiles thread should be around the entire tzitzis, with the lavan thread used only for one winding below and one above."

Comments: There is no language here from which a psak can be inferred. It is simply a reference to the various shitos. The word "Poskim," as the passage continues, clearly refers to the Rambam - and perhaps also the Raavad - and there is no proof that calling them "the Poskim" means that the Gra is deciding in their favor; apparently it is simply a label for those authorities. Thus, even if this passage were in the Gra's own handwriting, no psak could be derived from it. All the more so since it comes from the records of his talmidim. If one nevertheless insists that the word "Poskim" here expresses a ruling, the passage would actually seem to rule like the Rambam rather than the Raavad, because the continuation explains the Rambam's method and does not mention the Raavad at all.

B. Yahel Or, Pinchas 228b:

The Zohar in Raaya Mehemna (Parshas Pinchas 228b) says: "Every chulya is made of three... everything in threes from the side of kedushah. This is the meaning of 'They shall sanctify You in threes,' and Yisrael is third... Every chulya consists of three windings... the Shechinah... is tripled through the middle pillar... the only daughter, the chulya of Techeiles in the tzitzis."

In the Gra's commentary to Raaya Mehemna it says: "'A chulya consists of three windings; this is the Shechinah...' - meaning, the chulya itself is the Shechinah, consisting of three windings, corresponding to the Avos... [He continues explaining the symbolism of threes.] 'The only daughter, the chulya of Techeiles in the tzitzis' - the first chulya is lavan, three windings corresponding to the three Avos, and afterward a chulya of Techeiles, likewise consisting of them. But it appears more correct that the word 'chulya' should not be read at all; rather the text should read: 'the only daughter, the Techeiles of the tzitzis,' and that is the

fourth string, according to the Raavad, as I wrote there that this is the primary view. So too in our Sifrei: it is included with three lavan strings, the letter daled in the Name, and so is the primary view."

Comments: Sefer Yahel Or is a collection from several sources of the Gra's teachings on the Zohar. This passage comes from the work Biur Al Raaya Mehemna (Konigsberg 5618), Pinchas 228b, in the later edition (p. 126). That sefer is not a direct copy of the Gra's own manuscript, as its title page makes clear. Most of it came from a copy made by Rav David Luria, the Radal, z"l. The material in the so-called second edition consists of items the printer, Rav Shmuel Luria z"l, did not find in the Radal's copy but located elsewhere. It is called the second edition simply because it was printed later, not because it represents the Gra's final position. The printer did not say where he found this particular excerpt; he only writes on p. 38 that he had some notes on Parshas Pinchas that were absent from the Radal's copy, so he printed them in the later section. The printer himself already cautions on p. 144 regarding material not from the Radal: "I do not know whether all of these are from our master the Gra z"l, because in some places the wording appears to be that of one of his talmidim." In the first edition here - the one based on the Radal and therefore more securely attributed - this passage ruling like the Raavad does not appear, even though it does contain explanations of several details in this very section of the Zohar. [In fact, there is an explanation there of the word "chulya," which according to the later version should be deleted. Thus, not only is the later passage missing from the more reliable text, but the Radal's text may actually conflict with it. We should certainly give greater weight to the Radal. It is possible, however, that his comment on "chulya" refers not to the word deleted in the later version but to the earlier phrase in the Zohar, "a chulya consists...", so the point requires further examination.] See the footnote, where the Radzyner Rebbe already questioned the attribution of this passage.⁴⁷

C. The Gra's Hagahos on the Sifrei

In the printed Sifrei to Parshas Ki Seitzei (piska 234), the girsa follows Tosafos and reads:

⁴⁷ The Radzyner Rebbe, z"l (Pesil Techeiles, maamar 3), already commented on the words of the Gaon cited above: "In truth, he needlessly struggled with the phrase 'an only daughter, one chulya of Techeiles in the tzitzis,' because the correct girsa is 'an only daughter, filled with the Techeiles that is in the tzitzis,' as this version is printed in the margin and the same maamar is quoted in this form in the holy Reishis Chochmah. These words of the Zohar are also explained in Tikkunei Zohar, tikkun 21: 'Shabbos is the totality of the three Avos, because she is a daughter included in the three branches of the Avos... and she is the Techeiles in tzitzis.' The meaning is that Techeiles, which alludes to malchus shamayim and the aspect of Shabbos, is included within chesed, gevurah, and tiferes, the three branches of the Avos, and is also called an 'only daughter,' as is known to those who understand the hidden wisdom. The passage is not explaining at all whether a single Techeiles string suffices." See further there, where the Radzyner Rebbe questions whether the passage attributed to the Gra is actually from the Gra.

"'You shall make gedilim for yourself' - why is this stated? Since it says, 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis,' I might think that he should make one string by itself; therefore the Torah says gedilim. How many strings are needed to make gedilim? No fewer than three, according to Bais Hillel. Bais Shammai say: four strings of Techeiles and four strings of lavan, each four fingerbreadths long, and the halachah follows Bais Shammai. When does this apply? At the beginning; but with the remnants and broken ends, any amount is sufficient. Another explanation: gedilim is lavan. From where do we include Techeiles? From the verse, 'and they shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a pesil of Techeiles.'"

The Gra emended the passage. According to his hagahos, the Sifrei reads:

"'You shall make gedilim for yourself' - why is this stated? Since it says, 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis,' I might think that he should make one string by itself; therefore the Torah says gedilim. How many strings are needed to make gedilim? No fewer than three strings, three fingerbreadths long, according to Bais Hillel. Bais Shammai say: three lavan strings and a fourth of Techeiles, four fingerbreadths long. Gedilim means lavan. From where do we include a fourth of Techeiles? From the verse, 'and they shall place upon the tzitzis of the corner a pesil of Techeiles.' And the halachah follows Bais Shammai."

Comments: The hagahos on the Sifrei were likewise not printed from the Gra's own handwriting, but from various copies, as will be explained below. It should be noted that this particular emendation is highly novel. It results in the Sifrei holding that gedilim means only three strings and refers to lavan without Techeiles. That is contrary to the Talmud (Yevamos 5b; Menachos 39b), which darshens: gedil means two and gedilim means

four. Those four comprise the total number of tzitzis strings and therefore necessarily include Techeiles as well. Even according to this emendation, where Techeiles is supposedly outside the word gedilim, the first perek of Yevamos is difficult. The Gemara derives from "gedilim ta'aseh lach" that the asech of Techeiles overrides the lav of shaatnez. If gedilim refers only to lavan, how can it serve as the source for the Techeiles case? This requires explanation.⁴⁸

It is even more difficult that the emended text reads: "three strings of three fingerbreadths... and a fourth of Techeiles of four fingerbreadths." According to that girsa, the Sifrei is discussing the full strings before doubling - since the total is only four full strings rather than eight ends. If so, how can the Sifrei give their length in fingerbreadths while they are still full strings that must yet be folded in half? If each full string is four fingerbreadths long before folding, each end after folding will be only two fingerbreadths long, contrary to the Gemara (Menachos 41b). According to the Tosafos girsa, by contrast, where the Sifrei says four lavan and four Techeiles ends, each four fingerbreadths, the passage is discussing the ends after doubling and can properly state their required length. But if the Sifrei is discussing full strings before doubling, the stated shiur is very difficult. In addition, this emendation contains eight deletions⁴⁹ and five insertions⁵⁰ - count them and you will see. It is therefore extremely difficult to accept. If there were any reasonable basis to say that the Gra later retracted this emendation, that would be the more comfortable conclusion.

D. Commentary to Sifra D'Tzniusa, chapter 5:

Sifra D'Tzniusa, chapter 5, says: "Four kings go out toward four; seven runners depend on them like grapes in a cluster, bound to them." The Gra comments: "These are the seven lavan strings, with a Techeiles string covering them, as the Rambam writes: seven lavan strings and one Techeiles string, corresponding to the covering of the eye... and the entire passage is a remez to tzitzis."

Comments: There is no language of psak here; the Gra is explaining the Zohar within its own framework. It is entirely possible that he understood the Zohar's shitah to be like the Rambam - as may also be implied near the end of Parshas Shelach - while holding that our Bavli or the Sifrei disagrees for practical halachah. In any event,

⁴⁸ Perhaps the Gra did not mean that the practical halachah is that gedilim consists of only three lavan strings. Rather, he may mean that this is the Sifrei's shittah, while the Bavli disagrees and follows the approach Tosafos suggests on 38a: the Sifrei implies one Techeiles string, but our Gemara disagrees. On this assumption it is understandable why Tosafos were certain that the Gemara disagrees: the Bavli expounds gedilim as four, which must therefore include Techeiles, whereas in the Sifrei gedilim means only three and refers only to lavan. Vedok.

⁴⁹ "[Four] strings of [Techeiles] [and four strings] of [lavan], of [four] fingerbreadths... [Another interpretation:] 'Gedilim [you shall make for yourself]'—this is lavan; from where do we include [the] Techeiles?"

⁵⁰ "[Three] strings of [lavan] and [a fourth] of [Techeiles], four fingerbreadths long. 'Gedilim'—this is lavan; from where do we include [a fourth of] Techeiles?..."

passages where the Gra is attributed with explicit language of decision cannot be set aside because of this passage, which is merely an explanatory comment. See the footnote.⁵¹

E. A manuscript hagahah on the Sifrei, Parshas Shelach:

⁵¹ See also what Rav Eliyahu Tavger notes in his article in Yeshurun VII: in the Zohar itself (Shelach 175b), the word “rehitin” clearly does not refer to the lavan strings. For this reason the Radzyner Rebbe questioned the attribution of this passage to the Gra. Rav Tavger quotes Rav Yitzchak Shlomo Zilberman, zt”l: “Different views can exist within the words of the Zohar, and Rabbeinu can explain one passage in the Zohar one way and another passage differently.” If so, it is very difficult to rely on this passage—or on any particular explanation of the Zohar—when the Gra did not write there a clear language of practical halachic decision.

At the end of Parshas Shelach the Sifrei reads: "[Bais Hillel] [Bais Shammai] say: three of wool and a fourth of Techeiles" - the Raavad's girsa. In a copy of the Sifrei containing the Gra's hagahos, a handwritten note in the margin says: "See Tosafos, Menachos 41b s.v. Bais Shammai, for the girsa. The text here is corrupt; below in Parshas Ki Seitzei the girsa is correct."⁵²

Comments: The source of this hagahah is a marginal note in the sefer belonging to Rav Yaakov Dov Shershevsky, who received the volume from the estate of Rav Yehoshua Heshel Reines of Grodno z"l. Rav Reines worked extensively with the writings of the Gra; he published Aliyos Eliyahu and part of the Gra's commentary to Mishnayos, and he also authored Maayanei Yehoshua on Shenos Eliyahu. This volume contains all of the Gra's hagahos to the Sifrei. It is available in Otzar HaChochmah under the title "Sifrei - Hagahos HaGra, manuscript." When Rav Shemaryahu Zucker published the Gra's hagahos to the Sifrei in Vilna in 5626, he wrote at the beginning: "I wish to alert anyone whom Hashem has privileged to possess the body of the Gra's own manuscript on the Sifrei: if he finds errors or differences, may he merit the great mitzvah of marking them in their places and sending them to me..." This itself shows that the printed hagahos were not copied from the Gra's own handwriting but from records made by his talmidim. There is also a letter from Rav Yaakov Dov Shershevsky - the owner of the volume from which we copied this hagahah; the letter is reproduced in HaGaon, vol. 3, p. 1174 - in which he writes: "In truth, these are... an error. Since Rav R. Sh. Tz. n"y, who published the above Sifrei [with the Gra's hagahos], asked to be informed if anyone possesses a manuscript copy from the Gra z"l, I regard it as a serious and sacred obligation to publicize and copy the wording of the manuscript copy of the Gra z"l in my possession... thus ends the copy from the manuscript which I possess..."

⁵² The straightforward understanding is that the Gra is emending the Sifrei so that it agrees with Tosafos and with the Sifrei in Parashas Ki Seitzei. I heard, however, someone explain the Gra's words differently. The Gra writes there: "See Menachos 41b, Tosafos s.v. Beis Shammai, for the girsa; here it is corrupt, and in Parashas Ki Seitzei below the girsa is correct." According to this person, since the printed Sifrei interchanged Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel, the Gra did not merely wish to reverse their names—as he normally corrects textual errors, and as the printed text had already been corrected—but wanted publicly to point out that this was an error. Thus, "See Menachos 41b, Tosafos s.v. Beis Shammai, for the girsa" supposedly means that even Tosafos, despite having another corrupt girsa, did not have this particular error of switching Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel; "here it is corrupt" refers supposedly only to that small point of the names, while the practical halachah is certainly correct; and "in Parashas Ki Seitzei below the girsa is correct" supposedly means that the Beis Shammai/Beis Hillel attribution is correct there as well, though one should look at the Gra's glosses there because the printed text has another error. This explanation is almost comical. First, it leaves the central point out of the text entirely. Second, the Gra already corrected the interchange of Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel in the body. Third, there would have been no need to cite Tosafos; citing the Gemara's statement "Beis Shammai say four" would have sufficed. Fourth, if Tosafos's girsa were corrupt, the Gra should have warned us explicitly rather than simply directing us there as though Tosafos had the correct text. There is no need to pursue this explanation further.

Since the hagahos were printed only from the writings of the talmidim, this newly found hagahah carries the same basic evidentiary weight as the hagahos that were printed. There is therefore no reason to prefer the Ki Seitzei hagahah over this one. If anything, as noted above, the Ki Seitzei emendation is extraordinarily difficult. If we are forced to say that the Gra retracted one of the two, it is more comfortable to say that he retracted the Ki Seitzei version, as above.

F. The Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 12):

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim siman 12 se'if 1, says in part: "According to Rabbeinu Tam, the tzitzis are valid only if two full strings remain, meaning four ends, each of those ends being twelve gudolim long. Then they are valid even if the other two strings were severed, provided that enough remains of them to tie a knot. But if three strings were severed, even if enough remains to tie a knot, they are invalid.

Therefore, if three ends were cut and when making the tzitzis one did not take care that the four ends on one side of the knot be identifiable, we are concerned that each end may belong to a different full string, leaving only

one complete string; because of the doubt the tzitzis are invalid... The halachah follows the first view [Ri], but where possible it is proper to take Rabbeinu Tam's view into account."

On the words "and according to Rabbeinu Tam," the Gra writes in his Biur: "This follows the Tosafos cited above, in accordance with the explanation of 'if the Techeiles was reduced...' - even if only enough remains to tie a knot. And it follows their shitah that one places four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. See Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles... and 41b s.v. Bais Shammai, 'four,' regarding the reason... This is also Rashi's view; see there s.v. meisivei, 'a tallis does not...' So too in the Sifrei, Parshas Ki Seitzei: 'How many gedilim...' and 'Bais Shammai say four of Techeiles and four of wool...' and 'the halachah follows Bais Shammai.' The Gemara there likewise rules like Bais Shammai.

"But the Raavad holds that only two ends are Techeiles and six are lavan, while the Rambam writes that only one end is Techeiles and seven are lavan. Their reason is from the Sifrei there: 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis - I might think that he should make it one by itself; therefore it says gedil. How many make a gedil? No fewer than three, according to Bais Hillel; Bais Shammai say...' as above. Tosafos themselves quote this in s.v. Bais Shammai. Since the Sifrei says 'I might think...' it implies that pesil Techeiles is one only, whereas gedil is written only regarding lavan. The Raavad understands this to mean one full string, and the Rambam understands it literally as one end.

"See Tosafos 38a at the end of s.v. hatecheiles: 'as is proved in the Sifrei in Parshas Shelach and Parshas Ki Seitzei...' and see the end of Tosafos s.v. Bais Shammai. This is why Tosafos were forced regarding the number of Techeiles strings... They were also forced regarding the count of eight ends, because the Gemara says only four: gedil, gedilim... and they explain 'and twist them through it' to mean that one should double them; see there in Tosafos. But the Sifrei still requires explanation, because according to Bais Hillel there are three and according to Bais Shammai eight, whereas they disagree only between three and four.

"The matter, however, is as follows. Certainly pesil implies one, and likewise the tzitzis of lavan also implies one, but the two are always equal. Bais Hillel interpret gedil as three strings, and the same applies to lavan; Bais Shammai say gedilim means four, as the Gemara says gedil-gedilim. Bais Shammai hold that gedil implies two, unlike Bais Hillel who interpret it as three and do not additionally expound the plural form. The same applies to Techeiles. When the Gemara says four or three, all of it refers to one type alone - either Techeiles or lavan. This is also proved by the entire sugya.

"As for Tosafos' statement at the end of s.v. Bais Shammai, 'however, in the Sifrei there is an opinion...' - that text does not exist in the Sifrei. Rather, Tosafos derived it from the beginning of the Sifrei, 'they shall make for themselves...' as above and as they write at the end of s.v. hatecheiles. Perhaps they understand the words of Bais

Hillel, who say three, to mean three lavan strings and one Techeiles string, so that Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel disagree only about Techeiles. But that cannot be correct, because the Gemara proves that their machlokes is about the total number of tzitzis strings."

Comments: The text before us is the same as in the first edition, and it is well known that the Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch was printed from his own manuscript. Anyone who reads this passage with open eyes will see that the Gra rules very strongly that there are four lavan ends and four Techeiles ends - the same number as Tosafos, although not for Tosafos' reason. In summary, the Gra first presents the source for each shitah. He then asks three questions on Tosafos and develops an entirely new explanation of the sugya that answers all three. According to his explanation, everyone - Bais Hillel and Bais Shammai alike - agrees that lavan and Techeiles are equal. Just as pesil on its simple reading does not imply more than one Techeiles string, the word tzitzis from which lavan is learned does not imply more than one lavan string. The word gedilim then adds a ribui. Bais Hillel understand gedil as three - without making an additional derashah from the plural - and there is a gedil of Techeiles and a gedil of lavan. Bais Shammai understand gedilim as four, with gedilim of lavan and gedilim of Techeiles. Thus the Gemara's statement that gedilim equals four refers to the ends after doubling. This resolves all of the questions, and the Gra concludes that this approach is proved by the entire sugya. Because some have questioned his intention, in siman 7 we will, b'siyata diShmaya, explain every phrase of this passage.

Does the Gra Rule Lemaaseh Like Tosafos Based on His Biur?

It is clear from the Gra's words in his Biur - see below, siman 7 - that he rules there that there are four Techeiles ends. He is not merely choosing Tosafos' reasoning; he develops a new shitah of his own in which Techeiles and lavan are always equal. Since this is the place where he explains the entire matter at length, it appears that this should be regarded as his primary shitah, as will be shown below from the Chacham Tzvi.

Notice also that in the manuscript hagahah on the Sifrei in Parshas Shelach quoted above, the Gra points to the girsa of Tosafos 41b and says that it is the correct girsa. It is worth noting that Tosafos 41b is the only place where the wording is specifically "four of Techeiles, four of wool,"⁵³ whereas most versions read "four of Techeiles and four of lavan." In his Biur here, the Gra likewise uses the exact wording of Tosafos 41b: "four of Techeiles, four of wool." In the introduction of the Baal Pe'as HaShulchan to the Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch (os 5), he writes that when the Gra quotes a Tosefta, Midrash, and the like, he does so "with the wondrous purity of his girsa." In other words, when the Gra records a girsa in his Biur, that is the version he considers primary. We also find that he regularly quotes a text with his own corrections without explicitly noting that he is emending it. See, for example, the footnote.⁵⁴

We therefore have both a hagahah to the Sifrei and the Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch moving in exactly the same direction: the primary girsa of the Sifrei is "four of Techeiles and four of wool," contrary to the emendation printed in the Gra's hagahos to the Sifrei. These are not merely two places where he happens to support Tosafos; they use the same wording and reflect the same approach.

The Gra's talmidim testified to the order in which he composed his Biur on Shulchan Aruch. At first he wrote according to the order of Shulchan Aruch throughout all four Turim. He later went over it a second time in the sections called likutim, where his usual method is to decide between competing shitos with proofs from the Gemara

⁵³ In truth, the meaning of this girsa itself requires explanation, because lavan can obviously be made from other materials. Tzarich iyun.

⁵⁴ In the Gra's Biur to Orach Chaim 423:2, he quotes Maseches Sofrim 17:9 without qualification, but the wording is in fact based on his own emendations there. The Gra writes: "On Rosh Chodesh itself, three read from the korban tamid. The first reads Vayedaber, Tzav, Ve'amarta. The second reads Es hakeves ha'echad, Va'asiris, Olas, Venisko, Ve'es hakeves. The third goes back above and reads Olas tamid, Venisko, Ve'es hakeves, U'veyom haShabbos, Olas Shabbos, because they said one does not read fewer than three pesukim in a parashah, and some say one does not leave fewer than three pesukim in a parashah. See there." Anyone who compares Maseches Sofrim with the Gra's hagahos will see that the emphasized words are not in the printed text of Maseches Sofrim but come from the Gra's emendations. There are many other examples. See Yeshurun V, p. 526, and Rav Yisrael Barkin's article "Derech HaGra B'Biuro," which brings many more examples.

and Poskim.⁵⁵ We have discovered that this passage in the Gra's Biur about the number of Techeiles strings comes from those likutim

⁵⁵ The Pe'as HaShulchan writes in his introduction to the Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch as follows: "This was the order in which he composed it. First, Rabbeinu, may he rest in peace, wrote on all four sections of Shulchan Aruch in four volumes, following the order of the simanim and se'ifim. Afterwards our holy Rabbeinu reviewed it again, and twice as much wisdom was newly revealed to him, for he was like an ever-flowing spring at every moment. He composed another three editions in three volumes on all four sections of Shulchan Aruch. He called them 'Likkutim,' because he did not write them in order as he had the first time; rather, whatever arose in the net of his holy and pure intellect he recorded faithfully. This was his holy way. In these editions, wherever in the first version he had left a se'if without explanation, or merely with a mareh makom, or without deciding between two conflicting opinions, in the later editions he would raise his holy hand and write a broad explanation with deep pilpul, wage war against the authors, decide between Rishonim and Acharonim, build or demolish, establish their words or challenge them—"the upright shall see and rejoice." Many times as well, where in the first version he had left a matter with tzarich iyun, in the later editions he wrote his conclusion after further study from Midrash or the reverse. Sometimes in the three editions he wrote three separate chiddushim on one matter, either adding proofs as solid as cast metal or clarifying the depth of his intent with different words. All of this I saw with my own eyes through careful study, diligence, and great effort. My entire labor was to arrange them properly, join each piece to its correct place, and make them read as though they had been said in one statement, because they were very scattered throughout those editions." The printer of the Gra's Biur to Choshen Mishpat writes similarly in his introduction: "The order of his holy chiddushim came in separate notebooks. One is a special volume on Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat following the order of its simanim. In addition there are three volumes of various likkutim, engraved in his holy handwriting in many editions, mixed together with chiddushim on Tanach, Mishnah, Gemara, and divrei Kabbalah. From within them shines the clear light of his chiddushim on Choshen Mishpat, sometimes at length and sometimes briefly, from beginning to end and from end to beginning; in Torah there is no chronological order." Thus there is no single period when the Likkutim on Shulchan Aruch were written. They were written out of order and mixed together with writings on the rest of Torah. Therefore, even if some say that the Gra wrote his first Biur to Shulchan Aruch when he was young, he wrote the Likkutim afterwards. In our case, one cannot establish a cutoff date for when the relevant material was written.

(see Yeshurun vol. 5, p. 38, where it is copied from Sefer Likutim and this passage appears). Throughout all four sections of Shulchan Aruch, the Gra's normal function in the likutim is to decide between shitos by proof, not merely to explain what each shitah means. This is stated by his talmidim in the source quoted in the previous footnote, and it can also be seen directly in Choshen Mishpat and Yoreh Deah, where some passages are explicitly marked as likutim. It therefore appears that this passage, too, was written as a halachic determination.

Many wearers of Techeiles, however, say that the Gra ultimately held like the Raavad, basing themselves mainly on the passage in Yahel Or. They therefore have to reinterpret the Gra's Biur and give it some other meaning. I discussed this with several talmidei chachamim who hold that position. Each had his own approach, but upon examination none of them really stands up. I will respond to their main arguments very briefly. Most of them formulate the claim in one of two ways.⁵⁶

A. "In the Biur, the Gra is merely explaining Tosafos; he himself does not agree." This does not appear correct at all. The Gra first asks three questions on Tosafos and then proposes a completely different approach to the entire sugya, one that is contrary to Tosafos' own understanding. [According to Tosafos, in a standard four-string tallis the single unit of gedilim includes lavan and Techeiles together. According to the Gra, even in that arrangement there are gedilim of lavan and gedilim of Techeiles separately. Vedok.] It is obvious that one cannot explain Tosafos in a way that contradicts Tosafos themselves. I heard one talmid chacham say that the Gra really held like the Raavad, as in his printed hagahah to the Sifrei, but nevertheless wrote this explanation only to make sense of "the girsa of Tosafos." With all due respect, this has no basis. If according to the Gra the Tosafos girsa was simply an error that should be emended, it would be pointless pilpul to invent a pshat for a corrupt text - all the more so when Tosafos themselves already gave a different pshat. And how could the Gra then say that this corrupt girsa is what "the entire sugya proves"?

B. "The Gra is merely explaining the Shulchan Aruch; he himself does not agree." This too is not correct. First, there is no independent "shitah of the Shulchan Aruch" here. The Mechaber explicitly says that he is merely quoting Rabbeinu Tam:

⁵⁶ Some reject this in another way. They cite Igros Chazon Ish (III, 15), where the Chazon Ish says that when the Gra writes "aval" he means to decide the issue. They therefore argue that when the Gra writes "but the Raavad's view is..." he intends to rule like the Raavad. This proves nothing. The word "aval" appears five times in this very passage, including "but the matter is as follows" and "but in truth the two are always equal." Their explanation also leaves no meaning for the continuation, where the Gra presents a new shittah against all the Rishonim without giving any reason. They are therefore forced into one of the explanations discussed above—either that the passage is explaining the Shulchan Aruch or explaining Tosafos—and, as we already showed, neither works. Obviously this is not what the Chazon Ish meant. [Read the Igros Chazon Ish there; clearly he refers to a case such as where the Shulchan Aruch rules like the Rambam and the Gra comments, "This is the Rambam's view, but so-and-so and so-and-so disagree."]

"According to Rabbeinu Tam, the tzitzis are valid only if two full strings remain." The Mechaber himself does not even rule like Rabbeinu Tam, as he concludes: "The halachah follows the first view [Ri], but where possible it is proper to take Rabbeinu Tam's view into account." How could the Gra be explaining Rabbeinu Tam in a way that contradicts Rabbeinu Tam himself? Second, according to the Gra there is a separate din of gedilim for each type, fulfilled with half-strings after doubling. Rabbeinu Tam, as quoted by Shulchan Aruch, has only one overall din of gedilim containing two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings. Rabbeinu Tam's view is that when only one type is available, the total gedilim must still be completed to four full strings by adding more strings of that type. Thus, someone who has only lavan has two actual lavan strings and two additional strings occupying

the Techeiles place. If more than two full strings break, we are concerned that he no longer has two complete lavan strings; he therefore does not even have one complete type, and the tzitzis are invalid. [The requirement is always two actual lavan strings; only after that can the missing gedilim be completed with additional strings.] This entire framework makes sense only according to Rabbeinu Tam, who has one overall din of gedilim. According to the Gra, however, each pair of full strings forms an independent kiyum of gedilim. He therefore cannot have Rabbeinu Tam's concept of strings standing in for Techeiles merely to complete the total gedilim. Accordingly, even if two full strings do not remain intact, there may still be one valid kiyum of gedilim. Thus the Gra's position in the Biur would not match Rabbeinu Tam's rule that breaking more than two strings invalidates the tzitzis. Vedok heitev. Third, according to the Gra it should be valid lechatchilah to use four strings each dyed half Techeiles and half lavan - like the Rambam's split-color string - because gedilim of both types are still fulfilled through the half-strings. Rabbeinu Tam, by contrast, treats the two ends of each full string as corresponding to one another; if one side lacks kedai anivah, it can be saved by the other side. Thus, on the Gra's conceptual framework, someone using eight lavan ends should remain valid as long as a unit of gedilim remains, even if the opposite half of a full string has been severed. That is not the rule of Shulchan Aruch, which requires two full strings whose other ends have not been severed. Vedok.

Did the Gra Retract What He Wrote in His Biur?

I have heard from many talmidei chachamim that the Gra later retracted what he wrote in the Biur. But we have already noted that this passage comes from the likutim, which could have been written late in his life; in any case, we do not know with certainty when it was written. It is also difficult to say that he would retract an explanation on which he wrote, "and so the entire sugya proves." Some have suggested that the Sifrei was not before the Gra when he wrote this passage, so he did not know the girsa in Parshas Shelach; once he later saw it, he supposedly retracted because he found there a clean source for the Raavad. But this is simply incorrect. Every printed edition of Parshas Shelach has the girsa "three of lavan and a fourth of Techeiles." If the Gra could say forcefully about Tosafos, "that is not in the Sifrei," then obviously he had examined the full Sifrei and knew this girsa as well. He certainly also saw the Yalkut, which has the same reading in Parshas Shelach. Much more can be said here, but Rav Yisrael Barkin shlita has already discussed it at length in Yeshurun vol. 26.⁵⁷ In any event, it is perfectly clear that the Gra saw both

⁵⁷ The response one talmid chacham wrote to this is not persuasive. His entire assumption that the Gra wrote all of his Biur to Shulchan Aruch at one defined time is mistaken, as explained above. Rav Barkin already answered him in a separate kuntres, which can be obtained from me. As for the claim that the Gra sometimes quotes wording from the Sifrei as it appears in Rishonim or in Yalkut without noting that the printed Sifrei has a different girsa—or no such passage at all—see the article “Derech HaGra B’Biuro,” which shows that this was the Gra’s

girsaos. And even aside from that, the basis of the Gra's approach is the Talmudic sugya, not merely the Sifrei. Discovering another girsa cannot change what, in his words, "the entire sugya proves."

It is true that we still have to understand why the Gra linked the machlokes to pshat rather than simply calling it a machlokes of girsaos. One answer is that it is preferable to say that the Rishonim disagreed in interpretation than to say that there is no room for their words at all because they were built on a corrupt girsa. Another possibility is this: the shitah of Tosafos is particularly clear and is, in the Gra's words, proved by the entire sugya. Yet Rav Shmuel ben Chofni Gaon appears to agree with the Rambam - the Gra would have known this because it is quoted in the Rambam's responsum brought by Beis Yosef in siman 11 - and the Aruch, who is also early, follows the Raavad. Perhaps the existence of these early authorities could have been used as evidence that the Raavad-type girsa was itself ancient. The Gra therefore developed an explanation that does not depend on girsaos at all, removing that possible proof to the Raavad's shitah. Vedok. In practice, then, there is no compelling evidence that the Gra retracted his Biur on Shulchan Aruch.

How Should We Decide the Gra's Position Lemaaseh?

In practice we are left with an apparent contradiction in the Gra's writings. There are two basic ways to approach such a contradiction. Either some of the texts are not reliably attributed to him, or the Gra changed his mind from what he wrote earlier. If we say that an error entered the material attributed to him, then certainly we should rely on the Biur, which comes from the Gra's own manuscript, rather than on the hagahos and other works preserved only through the notes of talmidim - all the more so the passage in Yahel Or, whose attribution has serious questions. If we instead say that the Gra retracted one of his positions, we have to weigh fairly which direction of retraction is more plausible.

As for Imrei Noam and the passage in Sifra D'Tzniusa, we have already explained that neither contains enough to decide against the other sources.

In the Sifrei we have two hagahos of essentially equal provenance. In Parshas Shelach he emends the text in the direction of Tosafos, while in Parshas Ki Seitzei he emends it in the direction of the Raavad. There is no reason to give the Ki Seitzei hagahah greater weight than the Shelach one. If anything, every detail of the Ki Seitzei emendation is very difficult, as we explained. It is also reasonable to suggest that the Shelach hagahah may represent a later position precisely because it was not included in the printed collection. We can assume that the talmidim had already copied the Gra's marginal notes on his Sifrei during his lifetime. At a later point, perhaps, the Gra added this new note in Parshas Shelach. The copy from which the hagahos were printed may have been made before he wrote it, which would explain why it was omitted, whereas the other surviving volume may have been copied later and therefore includes it. If we do not say something of this sort, it is hard to explain why this hagahah disappeared entirely from the printed collections. It is therefore quite plausible that the Shelach hagahah was the later one.

In the commentary to Raaya Mehemna, the later edition contains a ruling like the Raavad, while the earlier edition does not contain that passage. The earlier material is more securely attributed because it comes from the Radal. The later material came from an unknown source, and the printer himself suspected that it may include material not actually from the Gra.

Beyond all of this, we have the Gra's Biur from his own handwriting. There he brings all three shitos, gives the source for each one, then uses his broad understanding to decide the issue, explains his reasoning at length, and writes that his approach is proved by the entire sugya. There is no compelling reason at all to say that he later retracted it.

I did, however, hear from the rosh yeshivah of Aderes Eliyahu, Rav Eliyahu Zilberman shlita, why he gives greater weight to the Yahel Or passage. It says there "and so is the primary view" twice. In his opinion, that formulation is stronger than the Gra's phrase in the Biur, "and so the entire sugya proves." The repetition, he argues, also demonstrates the firmness of the Gra's ruling. He therefore chooses the

strongest formulation. He also feels that none of the Gra's talmidim should be suspected of fabricating material. That is the substance of his argument.

In my opinion, however, this is not sufficient to decide the matter. I will explain.

When the Gra says "and so is the primary view" twice, it does not appear to be mere repetition. He is referring to two different points. Anyone who reads the passage will see that at first the Gra explains the words of Raaya Mehemna according to a text that includes the word "chulya." He then writes: "It appears more correct not to read 'chulya' at all; rather, the text should read: 'the only daughter, the Techeiles of the tzitzis.'" Now, that pshat in the Zohar works according to the Raavad only if the Raavad's shitah is accepted as the primary view. The Gra therefore refers to what he wrote elsewhere, where he had said that it is the primary view: "and it is the fourth string, according to the Raavad, as I wrote there that this is the primary view" - and therefore the Zohar can be explained this way - "and so it is in our Sifrei" - apparently meaning the Sifrei in Parshas Shelach; by saying "our" he means that Tosafos did not have this girsa - "included with three lavan strings, the letter daled in the Name." All of that is explanation of the Zohar. He then says of the reading itself, "and so is the primary view" - meaning that this pshat, in which the word "chulya" is deleted and the text is understood according to the Raavad, is the primary approach to the Zohar. There is therefore no real repetition demonstrating greater strength of conviction.

As for the basic assumption that the words "and so is the primary view" are stronger than "the matter is as follows... and so the entire sugya proves," one can just as easily argue the opposite. "And so is the primary view" may simply be a normal decision between existing shitos: all have some basis, but one is the principal view. By contrast, to say that the entire sugya proves an approach unlike all the Rishonim - and the Gra's approach in the Biur is indeed different from the approaches of all the Rishonim - is a very strong statement. The Gra is effectively saying that the Rishonim did not understand the sugya in its most compelling way. It is well known that to disagree with all existing shitos is more weighty than merely deciding between them. Indeed, many Acharonim were reluctant to disagree with Rishonim on sevara, yet did not hesitate to decide between competing Rishonim.

The Gra's words in the Biur constitute a genuinely new shitah. In the introduction to Taklin Chadetin it is written about the Gra: "His heart did not permit him to originate any new shitah against the Rishonim, or to make a new textual emendation, unless he had first stood over the matter that troubled him for days and nights with enormous effort and labor, until his bread became distasteful and he spoke with no person in the world... And even after Hashem illuminated his eyes to find a clear path through a new shitah or emendation, he still did not reassure himself and say, 'All is well with me.' Only after great searching and rechecking, weighing the matter with an understanding broader than the sea, searching again and again through both Talmuds and through all the words of the Tannaim and Amoraim which stood before his eyes... and the spirit of the knowledge of Hashem rested upon him, then the skin of his face shone and his heart rejoiced like one who finds great treasure. Only then were his hands strengthened to make an emendation or propose a new shitah as the One who reveals hidden things had shown him in many difficult sugyos..." We see that a "new shitah" was not something the Gra wrote casually. A simple decision between existing views, as in Yahel Or, is certainly not of the same weight.

It also seems that the phrase "and so is the primary view" is most natural when the Gra has written briefly and is simply indicating which existing view he prefers. When he has already written at length, analyzed the Talmudic sugyos, and demonstrated the basis for a particular approach, there is no need to add afterward "and so is the primary view." I would go further: the phrase "and so is the primary view" seems appropriate only when deciding among shitos already stated by others. We do not find the Gra using it for a shitah which he himself originated. [Likewise, there are many places where the Gra explains a new position of his at length without writing "and so is the primary view," for example his discussion of bein hashmashos in siman 261.]

More fundamentally, I do not understand the logic of deciding according to whichever phrase sounds strongest. The Gra certainly did not rule one way or another for no reason. If he changed his mind, then by definition he retracted something that had previously seemed clear to him. Before the retraction, however,

he naturally held his earlier position with full confidence and could use very strong language. The strength of the earlier wording tells us nothing about whether he later changed his mind.

To decide which direction is more likely, we need to arrange the material chronologically and ask what was his earlier position and what was his final one. Generally, the more novel an idea is, the less likely it is that it was his first thought, and the less likely it is that he later abandoned it without explanation. Here we find two major chiddushim in the Gra. First, in his Biur he holds that according to everyone - even the Rambam and Raavad - the correct Sifrei girsa is four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. [It is simply false to say that the Gra had not seen the Sifrei when he wrote this; we discussed this at length above.] Second, the Gra's explanation in the Biur is a new shitah unlike all the Rishonim, which is itself a major chiddush. It is therefore reasonable to reconstruct the development as follows. At first, in Yahel Or, the Gra ruled like the Raavad and brought support from the Sifrei: "and so it is in our Sifrei." Around that period he emended the Sifrei in Parshas Ki Seitzei to fit the Raavad. Later he developed the chiddush that the machlokes does not depend on differing girsaos at all, retracted the Ki Seitzei emendation, and then emended Parshas Shelach to match Ki Seitzei as well. [There he writes that the text before us is corrupt - unusually forceful language not found in his other hagahos.] Even after deciding that the primary girsa was the Tosafos girsa, he may not yet have accepted Tosafos' actual count, because of the three questions he later raises in the Biur. He may still have

rejected Tosafos because of those questions. Later he developed an entirely new approach to the sugya, different from Tosafos but resolving the difficulties, and on that approach he wrote, "and so the entire sugya proves."

If, on the other hand, we assume that the Yahel Or represents his final view, we have to say that he abandoned several major chiddushim without giving any reason. In the Biur he had held that the machlokes did not depend on variant girsaos, while in Yahel Or he again brings proof for the Raavad from the Sifrei. We would also have to say that he abandoned the entirely new approach which, as noted from the introduction to Taklin Chadetin, would have been adopted only after enormous investigation, and concerning which he wrote that the entire sugya proves it - all in order to return to the Raavad without explanation and rely simply on the surface reading of the Sifrei.

Based on the likely development of the ideas, it is therefore more reasonable to regard the more novel material - namely, the Gra's words in his Biur on Shulchan Aruch - as his later and final position.

One talmid chacham wrote to me that Yahel Or should be preferred because there the Gra actually emends the text in accordance with his view, and textual emendation is a serious matter. That would mean he was not merely leaning one way but issuing a definite decision. Aside from the fact that we have never heard of any rule that a textual haggahah is more lemaaseh than the Gra's Biur on Shulchan Aruch, the argument does not fit the facts. Here the Gra did not emend forcefully; he only wrote that "it appears more correct not to read" the word. That is the language of a preference, not an absolute ruling. In any event, creating a new shitah and writing that it is proved by the entire sugya, against all the Rishonim, is itself at least as weighty an act.⁵⁸

It is also worth citing the Chazon Ish (Orlah 2:5), whose words indicate that when there is a contradiction between the Gra's haggahos and what he writes in his Biur on Shulchan Aruch, we follow the Biur. See also Beis Ridvaz on Pe'as HaShulchan, Hilchos Shevi'is (8:11, end of p. 92a), who writes: "It is already known that one should not rely on explanations that remained in the hands of members of his beis midrash after the Gra z"l passed away, nor on girsaos, when the matter is clarified in his actual holy handwriting." The same applies here: the Biur is from the Gra's own manuscript, while the other material is collected from the records of talmidim and contains contradictions.

The Chacham Tzvi (siman 14) holds that when a single author appears to contradict himself, greater weight should be given to the place where he actually explains his

⁵⁸ See above from the introduction to Tiklin Chadtin: the Gra did not invent a completely new shitah or girsa against all the Rishonim without innumerable proofs. [By contrast, Rav Dovid Yitzchaki demonstrates in Yeshurun V, p. 526, from many examples that when the Gra emends the Sifrei to match one established shitah among the Rishonim, that does not by itself count as the Gra ruling like that shitah. See there.]

reasoning. He proves this from Menachos 52a. There the Gemara finds a contradiction in Rabbi Shimon's view regarding whether the bull brought for an erroneous ruling of the community comes from the terumas halishkah. The Gemara asks which of the two statements is the later one, and ultimately brings a beraisa in which Rabbi Shimon supports his position from a pasuk. Rashi there, s.v. divrei, writes: "Since he derives it from a verse, this is the primary view, and this is the later teaching." The Chacham Tzvi writes: "Even according to those who say that Maharik contradicts himself, the authorities have already ruled like his words in shresh 2, and that is logical. In shresh 2 he gives the matter as a reasoned explanation... [the Chacham Tzvi details the proofs] and that is the primary view, just as they said at the end of Perek HaTecheiles, daf 52..."

The Maharsham (Ein HaRo'im, p. 72 os 16) derives a similar rule from Chullin 49b. The Gemara there finds a contradiction between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva, then says to reverse the attribution. It asks: why reverse the first beraisa rather than the second? The Gemara answers by preferring the more carefully reasoned beraisa, and Rashi explains that this is because it expounds the pesukim at length. See there. It is obvious that the Gra's Biur is the place where he develops and explains his position more fully than anywhere else. According to the principle of the Chacham Tzvi and Maharsham, that should therefore be treated as the primary position lemaaseh.

Accordingly, I cannot say with certainty that the Gra's primary view is the same number as Tosafos. But it is certainly much harder to say that his primary view is the Raavad's, and it is very difficult to rely on that assumption against the majority of our Rishonim. This is what appears to me.

Siman 7 - Explaining the Gra's Words in His Biur on Shulchan Aruch

The Gra's language in his Biur on Shulchan Aruch is extremely concise, but after careful study it seems clear that his intention is to rule for the same number as Tosafos. Since some have read his words differently, I will, b'siyata diShmaya, explain the passage phrase by phrase - and I apologize for the length. It will then be plain that his intent is to rule for Tosafos' count. [Several people who had claimed the opposite meaning in the Gra admitted to me, in the manner of a baal din's admission, that they had not studied the passage that carefully and had not tried to explain all of his words.]

Shulchan Aruch, siman 12 se'if 1, states in part:

"According to Rabbeinu Tam, the tzitzis are valid only if two full strings remain, meaning four ends, each of those ends being twelve gudolim long. Then the tzitzis remain valid if the other two strings were severed, provided enough remains to tie a knot. But if three strings were severed, even though enough remains to tie a knot, they are invalid. Therefore, if three ends were cut and when making the tzitzis one did not take care that the four ends on one side of the knot be identifiable, we are concerned that each end may come from a different full string, leaving only one full string intact. The tzitzis are therefore invalid because of the safek... The halachah follows the first view, but where possible it is proper to take Rabbeinu Tam's view into account."

The Gra comments in his Biur: "According to Rabbeinu Tam - [this follows] Tosafos cited above {Menachos 38b s.v. d'i}, explaining 'if the Techeiles was reduced...' even if only enough remains to tie a knot." {Up to this point, the Gra is identifying the source of the Shulchan Aruch's ruling.}

"And this follows their shitah that one places four Techeiles ends and four lavan ends. See Menachos 38a s.v. hatecheiles... and 41b s.v. Bais Shammai, 'four,' regarding the reason... This is also Rashi's view; see there s.v. meisivei, 'a tallis does not...'"

{The Gra is pointing out that this is the machlokes in the Talmud, and in the Talmud we also rule like Bais Shammai.} "But the Raavad holds that only two Techeiles ends and six lavan ends are used, while the Rambam writes that only one Techeiles end and seven lavan ends are used." {If so, their views appear difficult in light of the Sifrei. It would be a major dochak to say that they differed only because of different girsaos. As throughout Torah, when a Rishon's position is novel we do not assume without strong reason that he simply had another girsa. The Gra therefore explains how the Rambam and Raavad can arrive at their shitos even from the Sifrei in Parshas Ki Seitzei.} "And so it is" {meaning that the Tosafos position is explicit in the Sifrei, unlike the Rambam and Raavad. The Gra wrote "and so it is" rather than "their reason" because the Sifrei itself says Tosafos' number explicitly. His wording

also indicates that the Sifrei is not necessarily Tosafos' source; rather, the Sifrei also reads like Tosafos. This matters because, as the Gra will explain, the same passage can be read in a way that gives conceptual support to the Raavad. Thus Tosafos' source cannot simply be the Sifrei alone. By contrast, when discussing the Rambam and Raavad he writes "their reason is from what is written in the Sifrei." } "in the Sifrei, Parshas Ki Seitzei" {not Parshas Shelach, where the text before us is corrupt}, "How many gedilim..." and Bais Shammai say four of Techeiles and four of wool... and the halachah follows Bais Shammai. So too the Gemara" {41b} "there rules like Bais Shammai." {Meaning, the machlokes in the Sifrei - where Bais Shammai require four Techeiles and four lavan ends - is the same machlokes between Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel

"Their reason" {here the Gra cannot say "and so it is," as he did for Tosafos, because the Sifrei does not state their conclusion explicitly; rather, their view is inferred from it} "is from what it says there in the Sifrei: 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis - I might think that he should make it one by itself; therefore it says gedil. How many make a gedil? No fewer than three, according to Bais Hillel; Bais Shammai say...' as above" {meaning they had the same Bais Shammai text mentioned above - the girsa quoted by Tosafos, with four lavan ends and four Techeiles ends}. "Tosafos cite this above, s.v. Bais Shammai..." {Apparently the Gra is stressing that the Rambam and Raavad could have had the same girsa quoted by Tosafos. He now explains where they saw their own view in that text.} "Since it says, 'I might think...' it implies that pesil Techeiles is one only, whereas gedil is written only regarding lavan" {the Sifrei says that the hava amina is one string. The Gra understands that one as the Techeiles string. The continuation teaches a ribui through gedilim. According to the Raavad, that ribui applies only to the lavan strings - corresponding to the Bais Hillel side of the beraisa as the Gra will explain below - whereas Bais Shammai apply the ribui to both types. Thus, if pesil implies one Techeiles string, the word gedilim need not add any additional Techeiles strings according to Bais Hillel}. "The Raavad interprets it as one full string, while the Rambam interprets it literally as one end." {In this sense they are really one conceptual shitah; their machlokes is whether the singular implication of pesil refers to one string before doubling or to one end. As for the fact that this seems to place the Rambam and Raavad against the Sifrei's conclusion of four Techeiles and four lavan ends, there is no difficulty. Ordinarily, when Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel disagree the halachah follows Bais Hillel. The exception here is the number of total tzitzis strings - three or four - because our Bavli (41b) explicitly rules like Bais Shammai on that point. A ruling in the Sifrei alone that the halachah follows Bais Shammai is not binding, since we do not derive practical halachah from a beraisa against the Bavli. Therefore, on the total number of tzitzis strings the Gemara rules for Bais Shammai - four - but the separate question whether gedilim is a ribui only for lavan or for both types, since the Bavli does not decide it, remains an ordinary Bais Shammai/Bais Hillel machlokes.}

{Since that second issue was not decided in the Gemara, its rule is the ordinary one: the halachah follows Bais Hillel, who understand gedilim as a ribui only in lavan. The Rambam and Raavad are therefore not bound by the Sifrei's own conclusion. Lemaaseh there are four full tzitzis strings, but gedilim increases only lavan, leaving one Techeiles string. According to this, if Rav Shmuel ben Chofni Gaon or the Aruch has a view of only one Techeiles string, that is not necessarily evidence that they had a different original girsa; they may simply have read the same text this way.}

{It is possible that before the Gra developed his new resolution of these difficulties, the questions had led him elsewhere to prefer the Raavad. The Gra now continues by asking questions on Tosafos.} "See Tosafos 38a at the end of s.v. hatecheiles: 'as is proved in the Sifrei in Parshas Shelach and Parshas Ki Seitzei...'" {Apparently his point is that Tosafos themselves understand from this Sifrei that pesil on its own implies only one. Tosafos ask there why there should be two Techeiles strings or two lavan strings, and in their second answer they suggest that pesil can imply two. They then challenge that: "Here it necessarily does not mean two, as is proved by the Sifrei in Parshas Shelach Lecha and Parshas Ki Seitzei: 'They shall make for themselves tzitzis - I might think one string by itself; therefore gedilim...' It implies that from pesil alone we would have heard only one."} "And see the end of Tosafos s.v. Bais Shammai" {there too they struggle with pesil and write: "Bais Shammai now hold that the same applies to Techeiles, because pesil is not exact and there is a sevara to make them equal, yielding four strings before doubling, while Bais Hillel hold pesil is exact." In other words, there too Tosafos treat pesil as naturally implying one}. "This is why Tosafos were forced regarding the number of Techeiles strings..." {On 38a they are forced to say that the Sifrei and our Gemara differ; the exact meaning of Tosafos' words is obscure, but the solution is clearly strained. The Gra therefore leaves us with a difficulty on Tosafos' handling of pesil.} "They were also forced regarding the count of eight strings, because the Gemara says only four: gedil, gedilim... and they explain 'and twist them through it' to mean that one should double them; see there in Tosafos." {Tosafos write: "If you ask, from where do we know that the strings must be doubled? If we explain 'make a gedil and twist them through it' to mean that they should be twisted like a wick, which is doubled, that would answer the question." This is difficult, because the Gemara has an opinion of a tallis with eight full strings and another view requiring sixteen ends, which sounds as if there is an actual source for the number eight full strings rather than merely a source for four strings that are then doubled. The Gemara itself, however, gives only the derashah gedil-gedilim for four.} "But the Sifrei requires further explanation, because according to Bais Hillel there are three and according to Bais Shammai eight, whereas they disagree only between three and four." {This is the third question: the wording of the Sifrei seems mismatched, with Bais Hillel speaking before doubling and Bais Shammai after doubling. On the strength of these three questions, the Gra develops an entirely new approach to the whole sugya that resolves them all. It is not far-fetched that before he developed this approach he

leaned away from Tosafos because all three questions are specifically difficulties on Tosafos, and perhaps because of these questions he ruled like the Raavad elsewhere. Later he found a new approach that answered them.}

"The matter, however, is as follows: certainly pesil implies one" {as the Sifrei shows}, "and likewise the tzitzis of lavan implies one" {apparently meaning that there is no source in the word itself for more than one. Pesil does not mean "one" as an absolute exclusion; rather, whenever there is no compelling reason for a larger number we take the minimum under tafasta merubah. If another source requires more than one, the same word can bear a plural sense, just as tzitzis can. This differs from Tosafos, who frame the Sifrei as contradicting the implication of another verse and say Bais Shammai hold pesil is lav davka. According to the Gra there is no contradiction at all; the word can be singular or plural depending on what other sources require. Vedok.} "But the two are always equal." {The source for lavan is, as Menachos 38 teaches, "tzitzis hakanaf," while the source for Techeiles is "pesil Techeiles." There is no reason to multiply one more than the other. If a ribui applies, it applies to both.} "Bais Hillel interpret gedil as three strings, and the same applies to lavan" {meaning gedilim produces a ribui to three strings, and the ribui applies to both types}. "Bais Shammai say gedilim means four, as the Gemara says gedil-gedilim, because Bais Shammai hold gedil implies two, unlike Bais Hillel who interpret it as three and do not additionally expound the plural form; and the same applies to Techeiles." {Thus when the Gemara says gedil-gedilim equals four, it applies separately to both components of tzitzis: there are four ends of the hakanaf/lavan component and four ends of the Techeiles component. The kiyum of four gedilim is therefore through half-strings after doubling. Seemingly, according to this, if one used four Rambam-style strings dyed half Techeiles and half lavan, it would certainly be valid lechatchilah, since each color still provides the required gedilim through half-strings. That would leave no room for Rabbeinu Tam's rule of gardumin where one half of a full string protects the other, and once again shows that the Gra is not merely identifying the source of Rabbeinu Tam while personally disagreeing.} "When the Gemara says four or three, all of it refers to one type alone, either Techeiles or lavan" {and there is no difficulty that the Sifrei appears to discuss Bais Hillel before doubling and Bais Shammai after doubling. Both are discussing the same stage - after doubling - but Bais Hillel did not bother to say explicitly that the count applies to both types because that equality is obvious. Nor is there any difficulty about the source for doubling, because fundamentally the doubling is needed in order for there to be eight ends}. "And so the entire sugya proves." {Now that we have explained that there is an essential basis for eight ends, and not merely four full strings plus a separate technical rule of doubling, the discussions of a tallis with eight full strings and the practices of Rav Acha bar Yaakov and Rav Yirmiyah of Difti, who used sixteen ends, become understandable. They can hold that the din of gedilim must be fulfilled with complete strings before doubling. Vedok heitev. I

have discussed this at length elsewhere. This is therefore the Gra's actual explanation of the sugya.}

"As for Tosafos' statement at the end of s.v. Bais Shammai, 'however, in the Sifrei there is an opinion...' {meaning an opinion of two lavan strings and one Techeiles string. At first glance this would be difficult for the Gra, because it would show that the two types are not always equal.} "That is not in the Sifrei" {the Gra, who had seen the whole Sifrei, knew that no explicit such statement appears anywhere in the text. Either the "other explanation" in the Sifrei means something entirely different, or it should be deleted} "but they derived it from the beginning of the Sifrei, 'they shall make for themselves...' as above, and as they write at the end of s.v. hatecheiles." {In other words, when Tosafos say there is such an opinion in the Sifrei, they mean only an inference from the same diyuk used by the Raavad and Rambam: pesil implies one, while gedilim according to Bais Hillel adds only to lavan. It is not an explicit textual statement. We can therefore still maintain that at the basic level there is a sevara to make the two equal. Vedok.}

{It appears that the Gra is trying to answer his question on the Sifrei: why does Bais Hillel speak of only three strings while Bais Shammai speak of eight? Tosafos had written in explanation, "Bais Shammai hold that the same applies to Techeiles, because pesil is not exact and there is a sevara to make them equal, yielding four strings before doubling, while Bais Hillel hold pesil is exact." One could perhaps say that both sides are really discussing the strings after doubling. Bais Hillel's "three" would refer only to three lavan strings. According to Bais Hillel, the Sifrei's initial "I might think one" refers specifically to Techeiles, while the ribui of gedilim refers only to lavan, producing three lavan strings and one Techeiles string. Since gedilim does not include Techeiles, there is no need for the Sifrei to specify its number: pesil remains in its plain singular sense. Bais Shammai, however, hold that gedilim includes Techeiles as well, so the ribui applies to both types and the Sifrei must spell out the number of both, since the derashah has moved us away from the simple reading. Vedok heitev. The Gra then rejects this - on the straightforward reading, he rejects it as an interpretation of Tosafos; perhaps one could say he means only that it is not correct lemaaseh, while it might still be Tosafos' own explanation. Tzarich iyun.} "And it is possible that they explain Bais Hillel's statement of three as three lavan and one Techeiles, so that Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel disagree only about Techeiles; but that is not correct, because the Gemara proves that their machlokes is about the number of the tzitzis." {It appears that his intention is to answer his question on...}

Siman 8 - Whether There Is Any Problem with Following the Other Shitos

According to Tosafos, Even If One Used Only One Techeiles String He Still Fulfilled the Mitzvah of Lavan - Contrary to Those Who Question This

We pasken that Techeiles does not prevent the fulfillment of lavan, and lavan does not prevent the fulfillment of Techeiles. It follows that it is possible to fulfill either component - Techeiles or lavan - even when one is not fulfilling both. When one is fulfilling only lavan, most Rishonim⁵⁹ write that four full strings are still needed. Although on the basic level two would seemingly be enough, the derashah of gedilim teaches that four full strings are always required even when only one type is available.

The mitzvah of lavan is learned from the phrase "tzitzis hakanaf," and Chazal darshen (Menachos 38a) from hakanaf that the strings must be "of the type of the corner." The Rishonim disagree about how to define min kanaf. Rashi and the Rambam understand that these strings should be the same color as the garment; if the garment is red, for example, one would place two red strings together with two Techeiles strings. The Rashba and other Rishonim understand min kanaf to refer instead to the material: if the garment is silk, the non-Techeiles strings should be silk together with the Techeiles strings, which are wool. But according to everyone there is no special requirement that the color itself be white. The min-kanaf component is called "lavan" either because, as the Rambam writes at the beginning of Hilchos Tzitzis, there is no mitzvah to dye it, or because, as Rashi writes at the beginning of Perek HaTecheiles, most garments were white. In other words, in the usual case min kanaf was fulfilled with white strings, so the component came to be called lavan.

According to the straightforward understanding of Rashi and the Rambam, the requirement that the strings match the garment's color is me'akev: without it, the mitzvah of lavan has not been fulfilled. The Rashba writes this explicitly in a responsum (vol. 3, siman 280) regarding their view; the Semag (aseh 26) also understands Rashi this way. The same appears from Rashi in Shabbos 27b, from the Raavad's hasagah (2:8), and is explicit in Yam Shel Shlomo (Yevamos 1:3). Tosafos (Menachos 38b s.v. midi) give two approaches to why Techeiles is not min kanaf.

⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the Shitah Mekubetztes (Menachos 38a), the Rashba (Yevamos 4b), and the Rosh in a responsum (klal 2—although in his Piskei he rules otherwise, and it is well known that for practical halachah we follow the Rosh's Piskei over his responsa) hold that when only one species is available, two strings of that species suffice. Perhaps this is also the view of the Mordechai (see the beginning of Perek HaTecheiles and consider carefully) and the Agudah (Hilchos Tzitzis). This opinion can be joined as an additional consideration, as stated by the Pri Megadim (introduction to Hilchos Tzitzis) and the Mishnah Berurah (Biur Halachah, siman 13 s.v. vedavka).

Only in one answer do they say that the garment-color requirement is derabbanan, implying that according to their first answer it is de'oraisa. In any event, there are clearly shitos that treat the color aspect of min kanaf as a Torah-level, indispensable requirement.

Lemaaseh, Shulchan Aruch and Rema follow me'ikar hadin the view that min kanaf means the same material as the garment, not necessarily the same color. If so, there would seemingly be no problem at all with Techeiles strings serving toward the lavan component. On a wool garment the Techeiles strings are themselves wool. If the halachah were like the Raavad that only one Techeiles string is needed, then even if a person used the two Techeiles strings of Tosafos there should be no deficiency: the additional Techeiles string, if not needed for Techeiles, can simply count as lavan, and the mitzvah would be fulfilled properly.

Many have argued against this from the Mishnah's statement that lavan does not prevent Techeiles. Rashi explains the case as one where all four full strings were made Techeiles. The simple wording of the Mishnah indicates that the missing mitzvah of lavan does not prevent the Techeiles fulfillment - meaning he fulfilled only Techeiles. It would follow that the remaining Techeiles strings did not count as lavan. On this basis, some have written that Techeiles is inherently invalid for the mitzvah of lavan.

In Moriah (Tishrei 5772), Rav Yehudah Daniel Gliss developed this further. He writes that when Techeiles is unavailable, four lavan strings are required. Since, as argued, Techeiles is invalid for the mitzvah of lavan, someone who makes only one Techeiles string

according to the Raavad, while the halachah is actually like Tosafos, would not only fail to fulfill the mitzvah of Techeiles because two strings are required,⁶⁰ but would also fail to fulfill lavan. To fulfill lavan without Techeiles one needs four lavan strings, and this person has only three because the one Techeiles string is invalid for lavan. He therefore writes that someone following the Raavad would be wearing a four-cornered garment without valid tzitzis.

The Gemara records a machlokes between Rabbi and the Chachamim whether Techeiles and lavan are me'akev one another. The Gemara initially tries to establish the Mishnah's statement that Techeiles does not prevent lavan even according to Rabbi, who holds that one cannot fulfill one without the other. In that hava amina, the Mishnah would not be speaking about the complete absence of one type. Rather, there is a din that when attaching the tzitzis one should place the lavan strings before the Techeiles strings. A beraisa teaches that if one placed Techeiles first, he is still yotzei but "lacked a mitzvah." The Gemara suggests that this is also the Mishnah's meaning: Techeiles "does not prevent" lavan in the sense that even when Techeiles was placed first, he is still yotzei. The Gemara then asks about the beraisa's phrase "he lacked a mitzvah": if that means he failed to fulfill lavan but fulfilled Techeiles, then according to Rabbi the two are mutually me'akev and neither should be fulfilled. The Gemara therefore concludes that the only thing missing is the mitzvah min hamuvchar of placing lavan before Techeiles, while both lavan and Techeiles themselves were fulfilled.

At the hava amina stage, when the Gemara asks "according to Rabbi they are mutually me'akev," Tosafos on 38a understand that the question would not exist according to the Chachamim. Tosafos ask: if four strings are always required even when only one type is available, why is the case any better according to the Chachamim? Placing Techeiles first supposedly makes it as though there is no lavan, leaving only the two Techeiles strings; but even according to the Chachamim, one cannot fulfill the mitzvah with fewer than four full strings. Tosafos answer: "At least to validate the Techeiles, the lavan helps, because we can call this four gedilim." In other words, to complete the required count of four strings, it is not necessary that every string independently fulfill its own mitzvah perfectly. Even strings with a deficiency that prevents their own mitzvah from being fulfilled can nevertheless complete the count of gedilim.

Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg shlita brought a proof from this that even if we assume Techeiles is invalid as lavan, according to Tosafos someone who uses only one Techeiles string still fulfills the mitzvah of lavan. The Techeiles string can at least help complete the count of gedilim, even if the mitzvah of Techeiles itself was not fulfilled with that one string.

⁶⁰ On this point his words are certainly correct. Tosafos say this explicitly in their discussion on 38a s.v. HaTecheiles, as explained above in siman 4.

Rav Yehudah Daniel Gliss shlita objected that Tosafos' principle is highly novel and not the straightforward assumption. Seemingly Tosafos say it only because of the force of the question - that even according to the Chachamim the types should otherwise be me'akev. He therefore suggests that Rashi may answer this question differently,⁶¹ and notes that Tosafos on 38b have another approach to the same difficulty

⁶¹ Rashi writes: "If you say the mitzvah is lacking—the mitzvah of lavan—and it is as though it was not placed at all, why is he yotzei? According to Rabbi it is me'akev, and the Mishnah was established according to Rabbi." Rabbi Gliss notes what he sees as extra wording in Rashi's phrase, "and the Mishnah was established according to Rabbi." He suggests that Rashi means the question really exists according to the Chachamim as well; the Gemara phrases it according to Rabbi only because it wanted to establish the Mishnah like Rabbi. This would differ from Tosafos, who say that according to the Chachamim there is no difficulty because invalid strings can still complete the gedilim.

I do not understand this reading. Rashi can just as easily be understood like Tosafos's first answer: the beraisa would be perfectly understandable according to the Chachamim, because according to them there is no problem if one component of the mitzvah is missing. The question, then, is why the Gemara assumed the beraisa follows Rabbi, creating a difficulty with Rabbi, instead of simply saying that the beraisa follows the Chachamim. To that Rashi answers, "and the Mishnah was established according to Rabbi"—that is why the Gemara did not want to explain the beraisa like the Chachamim. Vedok.

As for Rashi's words, "as though it was not placed at all," his intent is clearly to exclude the Gemara's final conclusion: there may be a defect in the act of placement, but it is not treated as though the string were entirely absent. Vedok.

without introducing the chiddush that gedilim can be completed by strings unfit for their own mitzvah.⁶² The Shitah Mekubetzes there, because of this very question, derives instead that when only one type is available only two full strings are needed.⁶³ Thus Rashi, one of Tosafos' answers, and the Shitah Mekubetzes do not

⁶² These are Tosafos's full words: "According to Rabbi they are me'akev. Rashi explains that we need to establish it according to Rabbi. This is difficult, because it sounds as though according to the Chachamim it is fine. If so, according to the conclusion we would not need Rav Yehudah's answer, and that does not seem reasonable. Nevertheless, even according to the conclusion we can say that the beraisa needs to be established according to Rabbi. Alternatively, it may be that all the more so according to the Chachamim the question is stronger: why has he lost a mitzvah, when they are not me'akev one another?" Their second answer is that according to the Chachamim there should never have been a hava amina that the required order is me'akev. If the two species themselves are not me'akev one another, sevara says that their order should certainly not be me'akev. The beraisa is therefore even more difficult according to the Chachamim.

Rabbi Gliss notes that Tosafos begin by quoting Rashi's statement, "and we need to establish it according to Rabbi," rather than simply asking on the Gemara itself. He infers that Tosafos understood Rashi to mean that the same problem exists according to the Chachamim [as Rabbi Gliss himself explains Rashi], but because the Gemara wanted to establish the Mishnah according to Rabbi, it asked the question specifically according to Rabbi. Tosafos then object that according to the final conclusion it would no longer be necessary to establish the beraisa according to Rabbi, and therefore the result would be that a mitzvah is in fact missing, which they did not find plausible. This is Rabbi Gliss's reading.

Here too I do not understand his approach. Rashi can be understood as we explained: the reason he says "we need to establish it according to Rabbi" is precisely to explain why the Gemara did not give the simplest answer, that the beraisa follows the Chachamim. As for why Tosafos quote Rashi, Tosafos have an independent sevara that it is impossible to say that when Techeiles is not me'akev lavan, simply putting Techeiles before lavan causes the entire lavan mitzvah not to be fulfilled. Once lavan was subsequently placed, lavan is present; mere order should not invalidate it by sevara. See Chazon Ish, siman 3, se'if katan 11, s.v. sham s.v. leRabbi, who explains this sevara. According to Tosafos's approach, there is therefore no need for Rashi's explanation that the Gemara's question is according to Rabbi merely because the Gemara had already established the Mishnah according to Rabbi. Rather, the Gemara asks according to Rabbi because the particular problem—that if lavan is absent, Techeiles too is invalid—exists only according to Rabbi. According to the Chachamim the beraisa cannot be understood either, but for a different reason: if both species are present, and each on its own constitutes a mitzvah, why should their order invalidate anything? On this approach, Rashi's specific explanation for why the Gemara asks according to Rabbi is unnecessary; the Chachamim have a separate difficulty.

⁶³ Lemaaseh, we pasken that four strings are required me'ikar hadin, so the Shitah Mekubetzes's position is not accepted. We must therefore use one of Tosafos's answers: either there is a separate concept of completing the gedilim, or the beraisa is in fact even more difficult according to the Chachamim. Rabbi Gliss argues that perhaps if the Shitah Mekubetzes had agreed with Rashi that four strings are required, he would have chosen Tosafos's answer that the question is even stronger according to the Chachamim and would not have accepted the concept of completing the gedilim. I do not understand this. As long as we have no evidence what the Shitah Mekubetzes would say on the assumption that four strings are required, there is no reason to invoke his position at all. We simply have no information whether he would prefer Tosafos's answer that the Chachamim have the stronger problem or Tosafos's answer of completing the gedilim. To say we must be choshesh for his hypothetical view would be like saying we must be choshesh for the shittah of Rabbeinu Avraham Min HaHar in our sugya—

appear to use the principle that deficient strings can complete gedilim. According to those approaches, if two Techeiles strings are required but one uses only one, the mitzvah of lavan would also be lost.

He adds that even within the Tosafos answer which does distinguish the completion of gedilim from the independent mitzvah of each string, there may be room to differentiate. Lavan strings in a case where Techeiles was attached first are intrinsically valid strings; their failure is only a side problem of improper order. Therefore they can still complete gedilim. Techeiles strings used as lavan may be worse: if Techeiles is inherently invalid for lavan, the string itself is not fit for that mitzvah, not merely disqualified by a side issue. Perhaps Tosafos would agree that such a string cannot be used to complete gedilim.⁶⁴

because who knows, perhaps he too would have explained the sugya like Tosafos's answer that the question is stronger according to the Chachamim.

⁶⁴ In my view, sevara points in the opposite direction: completing the strings with Techeiles should be better. Everyone agrees that Techeiles has a mitzvah-role in tzitzis; that is, gedilim are properly formed with Techeiles. It therefore makes sense that Techeiles can also complete the gedilim. But strings that are not even performing their own function—for example lavan strings in a case where Techeiles was put on first—what connection do they have to fulfilling gedilim? Yet Tosafos still write that they can complete the gedilim. All the more so genuine Techeiles, which is itself fit for gedilim, should be able to complete them. Although one does not fulfill the mitzvah of Techeiles with a single string according to this shittah, the deficiency in number is an external deficiency in the count, not a defect in the strings themselves. Vedok.

I do not accept what he writes from Rashi and the Shitah Mekubetzes, nor the sevara-based distinction, for the reasons I explained in the footnote. But he is correct that there is an approach in Tosafos under which the sugya of precedence does not force us to say that completing gedilim is a separate category from fulfilling lavan itself. On the other hand, there is no source there for the opposite conclusion either. There is simply no proof. Rav Gliss therefore argues that since such a distinction is distant from sevara, we should assume that according to this Tosafos answer no such principle exists. But one point should be noted: if the distinction is not a true principle - meaning if Tosafos had no independent basis for it - why would Tosafos invent it in one answer, with practical consequences such as a case of one Techeiles string, rather than simply saying that the same question applies even according to the Chachamim? Apparently Tosafos already knew that completion of gedilim is a separate concept; the question is only whether this particular sugya proves it.

If there are independent proofs that completion of gedilim is a distinct concept, Rav Gliss's entire structure falls away, because he has no positive proof that there is no distinction; he relies only on the supposed absence of a source. Let us therefore examine, b'siyata diShmaya, whether we can prove that there is a difference between the strings that fulfill lavan itself and strings that merely complete the count of gedilim. This is where I will begin.

The Gemara (Menachos 40a) says that Chazal decreed against placing tzitzis on a linen sheet. The Gemara asks why, and answers because of kala ilan. It then asks: "Let it be no worse than lavan." Ultimately the sugya explains that asch docheh lo saaseh is not applied here unless the mitzvah of Techeiles is actually being fulfilled; see there. From the Gemara's phrase "let it be no worse than lavan," many Rishonim - Tosafos 38a, Shitah Mekubetzes there, Rosh siman 7, and others - infer that there is no problem whatsoever with wearing kala ilan strings, aside from the tragic loss of the mitzvah of Techeiles itself. If there were a bal tosif problem from having four full strings when only lavan is being fulfilled and two would supposedly suffice, the Gemara should not speak so broadly. True, bal tosif could not itself explain why Chazal singled out a linen sheet for the gezeirah, but the wording still implies that there is no independent defect in these tzitzis at all.

The Semag derives from this Gemara that the lavan strings do not need to match the garment's color. Kala ilan is not the garment's color, yet the Gemara treats the tzitzis as valid lavan. He therefore writes regarding Rashi, who requires the garment's color, that Rashi "was not precise." But we are certainly obligated to explain Rashi and the Rambam rather than simply dismiss them. We will now do so.

Rav Gliss (footnote 10) offers three approaches to defend Rashi. First, perhaps min kanaf with respect to color is only a derabbanan hiddur based on zeh Keili v'anveihu, as Tosafos suggest in one answer (38b). Then the Gemara's phrase "let it be no worse than lavan" presents no problem: Chazal would not have created a gezeirah because of a deficiency that is itself only derabbanan, since that would be a gezeirah to

protect another gezeirah. This does not work for two reasons. First, even if Rashi can be explained according to Tosafos' second answer that color is only derabbanan, we would still have the first answer of Tosafos, the Raavad's hasagah, and the other Rishonim cited above who treat it as de'oraisa. As long as there is any view that it is de'oraisa, we need another explanation anyway. Second, the inference from "let it be no worse than lavan" is not merely that Chazal could not have decreed because of this issue. Tosafos and other Rishonim use the passage to prove that there is no bal tosif even with four strings of one type. As noted above, the linen decree certainly could not have been made specifically because of bal tosif. The phrase therefore implies that there is no defect at all in these tzitzis - not even a derabbanan one. Vedok.

He next suggests the view of Chayei Adam (klal 11:11), that the din of matching the garment's color does not apply to a wool or linen garment and exists only with garments of other materials. Without entering the broader question whether the Chayei Adam's shitah can be grounded in a Rishon, it is certain that this cannot be Rashi's view. The entire source from which we know Rashi requires min kanaf in color is his comment on a garment entirely colored Techeiles, where he says that the lavan cannot be made from the color of

the corner, and Tosafos (38b) infer that with other garments one must use that garment's color. But Techeiles is wool, and even so Rashi says that min kanaf would in principle require the matching color, only that it cannot be done there. This is directly contrary to the Chayei Adam, who holds that on wool there is never such a rule. This approach therefore cannot explain Rashi.

Rav Gliss then cites Artzos HaChaim, who writes that the din of min kanaf does not apply to strings that are present merely to complete gedilim. He understands this not to mean that invalid strings can complete gedilim, but that there are supposedly two categories within the mitzvah of lavan itself: strings that are essentially lavan and therefore must match the garment's color, and other strings which count as lavan only because they stand in place of Techeiles and need not match the color. That cannot be correct. The Torah contains no independent mitzvah-category called "white"; it contains a mitzvah of min kanaf, which is commonly called lavan only because most such strings are white. A string not of min kanaf is no more "lavan" than a string not dyed with chilazon blood is Techeiles. There is simply no concept of "lavan that does not need min kanaf," just as there is no Techeiles without chilazon dye. The proof he brings from Rashi for his reading is not valid, as explained in the footnote.⁶⁵

We therefore have to understand Artzos HaChaim in its straightforward sense: the mitzvah of lavan itself is fulfilled with only two full strings, while the din of gedilim requires additional strings merely to complete the number. Those additional strings

⁶⁵ Rabbi Gliss wished to prove his yesod that there can be "lavan" without min kanaf from Rashi on Menachos 41b. In the case of a tallis that is entirely Techeiles-colored, Rashi writes: "Since min kanaf cannot be fulfilled with it, you need not seek out lavan; rather, it should contain two species." Apparently Rabbi Gliss wished to infer that there are cases of lavan that are not min kanaf. But as we explained, that cannot be, because the entire halachic identity of lavan is min kanaf. Rashi's meaning is straightforward: since min kanaf is absent, there is no fulfillment of the mitzvah of lavan. Nevertheless, two species are still required [for another reason: so that the Techeiles will be recognizable, and because most talleisim contain two species, as Rashi continues there]. This is explicit in Rashi's phrase, "you need not seek out lavan," meaning that there is no fulfillment here of the mitzvah of lavan. He certainly cannot mean the color white, since in Rashi's own shittah there is no such independent requirement. Thus he must mean the mitzvah-component called lavan. Later in the sugya Rashi adds another reason: "...and although this Techeiles itself is min kanaf, nevertheless we require two species, because we follow the majority of talleisim."

Even if one accepted Rabbi Gliss's reading that on an all-Techeiles tallis there can be lavan that is not min kanaf, the cases still cannot be compared. Tosafos (38b s.v. *midi*) explain that the reason min kanaf does not apply to a tallis that is entirely Techeiles is that the Torah writes both min kanaf and *pesil* Techeiles. The Torah must therefore be speaking about a garment whose min-kanaf color is something other than Techeiles. In other words, Techeiles is specifically excluded from the status of min kanaf in such a case; an all-Techeiles tallis therefore has no applicable min-kanaf requirement, which is why Rashi says there is no need to seek lavan. That is unique to a Techeiles-colored garment. On a garment that is not Techeiles-colored, every string that is to receive the halachic name "lavan" must certainly be min kanaf; a string that is not min kanaf is not lavan. It is therefore impossible to say that the Artzos HaChaim meant that there are two kinds of lavan. This is clear.

have neither the din of Techeiles nor the din of lavan, and therefore need not satisfy min kanaf. This neatly resolves the question on Rashi from the Gemara's phrase "let it be no worse than lavan."

Artzos HaChaim is not alone. He has strong and important support. Yam Shel Shlomo, Yevamos siman 3, quotes Mahari Bruna explicitly that to fulfill Rashi's shitah only two strings need to be dyed the garment's color. The same appears in Magen Giborim. The ruling of Artzos HaChaim is also brought lemaaseh by Mishnah Berurah 9:14. [The claim in footnote 24 that Mishnah Berurah did not decide the matter is incorrect: the Mishnah Berurah explicitly endorses the reasoning as logical. I later saw that the author himself effectively retracted this and in his sefer Yados Mishnah, vol. 2, p. 753, treats the Mishnah Berurah as a ruling.] The same is found in Chazon Ish 3:25, in the newly published Shiurei Menachos of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, in Shiurei Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein (Menachos vol. 3, sec. 2), and apparently already in Arugas HaBosem [rebbe of the Or Zarua], vol. 3, p. 217.

Once we have reached this point, we have gained an important chiddush. The entire proof of the author [and likewise the proof of several Acharonim] that one cannot fulfill lavan with Techeiles was learned from the Mishnah that “lavan is not me’akev Techeiles.” Rashi explains this as a case where he made all four strings Techeiles, and they inferred that since he did not fulfill the mitzvah of lavan, Techeiles must be inherently unfit for the mitzvah of lavan. But according to all the Poskim cited above, this proof falls away entirely. Just as “Techeiles is not me’akev lavan” can mean that the mitzvah of lavan is fulfilled with two strings and the remaining strings merely complete the requirement of gedilim, so too “lavan is not me’akev Techeiles” can mean that the mitzvah of Techeiles is fulfilled with two strings, while two additional strings complete the gedilim. According to Rashi, the straightforward understanding is that min kanaf is me’akev; Techeiles strings therefore cannot serve as lavan because they are not min kanaf. Even so, they can still complete the gedilim, just as strings that are not valid for the mitzvah itself can nevertheless complete the gedilim, as explained above. In other words, there is no defect in Techeiles itself as a mitzvah-color. The problem is the same one that exists with kala ilan. Accordingly, since the Shulchan Aruch rules that we do not follow the view that min kanaf requires the strings to match the garment’s color, there is no longer any proof that Techeiles is invalid for the mitzvah of lavan.

According to this, two Techeiles strings together with two kala-ilan strings are conceptually the same as two Techeiles strings together with another two Techeiles strings. The only problem with completing the gedilim using Techeiles is that those strings are not valid as lavan because they are not min kanaf; that is a problem of color. I found a clear proof for this in Rashi’s second explanation of the sugya of a tallis with eight strings. See the footnote, where I copied what I wrote elsewhere on this point.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ “However, in Rashi’s second explanation [which he says is his primary explanation], the opposite appears. Rashi says that the beraisa which invalidates the tzitzis believed is speaking about a four-string tallis, and the reason it is invalid is that there is a requirement for the tallis to contain two appearances/colors. Here there is only one appearance: two Techeiles strings and two kala-ilan strings. It therefore follows that kala ilan cannot fulfill lavan where genuine Techeiles is present. On a four-string tallis this is invalid because there are not two species. An eight-string tallis, however, is valid, because the obligation has already been fulfilled through two Techeiles strings and two lavan strings; the mitzvah of tzitzis has already been fulfilled properly, and the additional strings are present only because there is no bal tosf in adding them, as Rashi explains [quoted by Tosafos at the beginning of the perek; the Oz Vehadar edition restored this Rashi to its place in the notes and references].

At first glance, this seems to show that Techeiles cannot fulfill lavan: in the four-string tallis it is invalid because there are not two appearances, and the same should be true if all the strings were genuine Techeiles—there would be only one appearance, and the tzitzis should be invalid. But see Tosafos there, s.v. ve’im heivi kasher: ‘According to Rashi’s explanation that kala ilan in place of lavan is invalid because it resembles Techeiles and there are not two species, it is difficult: what is the Gemara’s question? Perhaps this beraisa follows the Chachamim at the beginning of the perek, who say that lavan is not me’akev Techeiles.’

Tosafos clearly understood Rashi’s requirement of two separate species to apply only

according to Rebbi, who holds that Techeiles and lavan are me'akev one another. According to the Chachamim, who say they are not me'akev one another, there is no general requirement for two appearances.

Tosafos can seemingly be understood according to our approach above. In the rule that Techeiles is not me'akev lavan, etc., Rashi explains that one makes four strings of the species available. We explained that this does not mean there are actually four mitzvah-strings of lavan (min kanaf); rather, there are two lavan strings, plus another rule that permits completing the gedilim with strings that are not Techeiles. The entire machlokes whether Techeiles is me'akev lavan therefore depends on whether gedilim may be completed with strings that are not Techeiles. Vedok heitev.

Accordingly, when Rashi says that a four-string tallis with kala ilan is invalid because there are not two appearances, Tosafos ask that according to the Chachamim—who hold that Techeiles is not me'akev lavan—it should be valid. He has the two Techeiles strings required for Techeiles and two kala-ilan strings. Even if the kala-ilan strings cannot count as lavan for some reason not explained to us, they can at least complete the gedilim together with the two Techeiles strings. According to the opinion that Techeiles is not me'akev lavan, that should be valid and should fulfill the mitzvah of Techeiles.

There is even a proof from Tosafos that when only one species is available, only two strings belong to that species's mitzvah and the remainder merely complete the gedilim. Otherwise, why do Tosafos compare two Techeiles strings plus two kala-ilan strings to the Mishnah's case of all four strings being Techeiles? How do Tosafos know that the Chachamim who validate the latter would validate the former? According to our explanation it is simple: since the kala-ilan strings are present only to complete the requirement of gedilim, it makes no practical difference whether those completing strings are Techeiles or kala ilan." End of the passage copied from my other writings. See there for our fuller explanation of Rashi; the discussion is lengthy.

However, according to the opinion that min kanaf does not require the color of the garment, Tosafos (38b) gives the sevara that “a dyeing which is not for a mitzvah is nothing.” According to that, Techeiles that is not serving as the fulfillment of the mitzvah of Techeiles should be treated simply as lavan, and the Mishnah therefore cannot be explained as a case of four Techeiles strings. This requires further thought. Still, we find that the Rashba, who also holds that min kanaf does not refer to the garment’s color, explains the Mishnah (Rashba, Yevamos 4b) like the Shitah Mekubetztes: if one does not have the other species, he makes only two strings. On that approach, “lavan is not me’akev” gives no proof that Techeiles is invalid for lavan. Vedok.

We also find in a teshuvah of the Rashba (III, 280): “Rava does not accept the beraisa (41b) that only its own species exempts it, as I wrote, and he follows our Mishnah in HaTecheiles, which teaches that lavan is not me’akev Techeiles. If min kanaf were required, what would you do with a wool garment or a garment of another material [meaning a garment that is not Techeiles-colored] when he does not have min kanaf? [For according to our Mishnah, four Techeiles strings are valid—how could he fulfill lavan through Techeiles if it is not min kanaf?] Rather, we learn from here that the Tanna of our Mishnah does not accept the derashah of ‘hakanaf—min kanaf’ as requiring the color of the tzitzis to match the color of the corner. But according to the Tanna of that beraisa, that a tallis is exempted only by its own species, it is me’akev, since the beraisa says ‘only its own species exempts it.’ Therefore it appears to me that for this reason the Rif did not record that beraisa in his Halachos, because he ruled like our Mishnah in HaTecheiles, and the Tanna of HaTecheiles does not accept that beraisa, as I wrote...” End quote. It is clear from his words that in the case of “lavan is not me’akev,” there is still a fulfillment of min kanaf—and min kanaf is lavan. The Rashba therefore understood that the Mishnah’s phrase “lavan is not me’akev Techeiles” is not meant davka; the mitzvah of lavan is fulfilled as well. Accordingly, it may be that all those who hold that min kanaf does not mean the garment’s color follow one of the Rashba’s approaches. If so, there is no proof that Techeiles is invalid for lavan; on the contrary, the teshuvah above indicates otherwise.

In any event, what emerges from Rashi is that strings which are not lavan can still complete the gedilim. Once we have another proof that gedilim can be completed by strings that are not themselves mitzvah-strings, the entire structure of Rabbi Gliss’s argument seems to fall away. He built his case on rejecting Tosafos and argued that whenever we find a Rishon whose words do not force us into Tosafos’s “dochuk,” we should assume that Rishon disagrees with Tosafos. But according to what we have explained, Tosafos’s basic yesod is independently demonstrated elsewhere. Therefore, unless there is a compelling proof to the contrary, there is no reason to create a machlokes on this point.

Rabbi Gliss further argued that this is not the view of the Semag. As far as halachah lemaaseh is concerned, the exact view of the Semag does not change the conclusion, because all the Poskim whose words I cited ruled this way lemaaseh even though they were aware of the Semag. If for all these generations we did not follow the Semag's view lekula, it would be difficult to become choshesh for it now lechumra when that would lead to not fulfilling the mitzvah of Techeiles. Still, I will briefly present the usual explanation of the Semag, according to which there is no problem even in his view.

The Semag writes that one may make either one string or two strings of Techeiles. The Beis Yosef explains that the Semag did not want to decide the issue because it was not relevant lemaaseh in his time. But if so, it is difficult: the Semag does rule regarding gardumin like Rabbeinu Tam, and he also records the other laws of Techeiles even though Techeiles was not practiced. It is therefore hard to say that he avoided a ruling simply because the matter was not practical. The Chazon Nachum (the rebbe of the Chida's father), in Menachos 4a—see his words carefully—and likewise the Aruch HaShulchan 9:2, unlike the Beis Yosef, understood the Semag to mean that a person may choose either approach: he may make one Techeiles string, or he may make two. The Semag also took into account Rabbeinu Tam's position regarding gardumin, but he gave a different reason, based on the significance of a majority, as is clear to anyone who reads his words carefully. Namely, if half the strings are not whole, the tzitzis are invalid. This has nothing to do with using two strings in place of

Techeiles. He also asks the same question noted above on Rashi. It may be that all of this follows his own approach: there is no concept of one string “standing in” for another; each string accomplishes whatever it is halachically fit to accomplish. Thus, if one made one Techeiles string and three lavan strings, he fulfilled Techeiles with the one string and lavan with the three. If he made two Techeiles strings, he fulfilled Techeiles with two. Likewise, in a time when there is no Techeiles and one makes all four strings lavan, all four have the halachic status of lavan; the extra strings are not “replacing” Techeiles. He therefore needed a different reason why two strings reduced to gardumin invalidate even nowadays, and he explains that the problem is the loss of a majority. This also explains very well why, in his view, all four strings must be min kanaf, unlike Rashi. Vedok heitev in all of this. [I saw this yesod from Rabbi Yitzchak Brand and Rabbi Nosson Rothman.] In any case, according to this explanation, there is certainly no problem whichever way one makes the Techeiles. Even though he accepts the basic sevara of the rabbi mentioned above, for our question there is no concern according to him: whichever method one follows, nothing is missing. And in any event, we have already explained that this makes no practical difference, since the Mishnah Berurah’s psak is clear.

The Halachah According to the Rambam if One Follows Tosafos

The Rambam apparently has a different approach to this entire subject. We will first quote the relevant sources in the Rambam:

Hilchos Tzitzis 1:4: “Techeiles is not me’akev lavan, and lavan is not me’akev Techeiles. How so? If he does not have Techeiles, he makes lavan alone. Likewise, if he made lavan and Techeiles, and the lavan broke and was reduced all the way to the corner while the Techeiles alone remained, it is valid.”

Halachah 5: “Although neither one is me’akev the other, they are not two mitzvos, but one mitzvas aseh. The early Chachamim said: ‘And it shall be for you as tzitzis’—this teaches that both are one mitzvah. The four tzitzis are me’akev one another, because all four together are one mitzvah. One who wears a tallis containing lavan, or Techeiles, or both together, has fulfilled one mitzvas aseh.”

Halachah 18: “...Likewise, if the tzitzis strings became reduced, even if only enough remains to tie a knot, they are valid. But if a string was severed at its root, even a single string, the tzitzis are invalid.”

Peirush HaMishnayos, Menachos 4:1: “What it says, ‘lavan is not me’akev Techeiles,’ means that if he made a complete set of tzitzis with lavan and Techeiles, and the lavan was entirely severed so that none of it remained hanging, while the Techeiles alone remained, he has fulfilled his obligation with it.”

Sefer HaMitzvos, Shores 11: “The difficult case, however, is with things about which they said that they are not me’akev one another. At first glance, since each of these components does not require the other, one might think that each component

should be counted as a separate mitzvah. For example, their statement that Techeiles is not me'akev lavan and lavan is not me'akev Techeiles. We could therefore have counted lavan and Techeiles as two mitzvos, were it not for an explicit formulation that we found in the Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael: 'I might think that they are two mitzvos—the mitzvah of Techeiles and the mitzvah of lavan. The Torah therefore says, "And it shall be for you as tzitzis": it is one mitzvah and not two mitzvos.'"

We can now explain the matter. The Rambam did not explain, as Rashi does, that the case of "lavan is not me'akev Techeiles" is where all four strings were made from Techeiles. Rather, he explains it as a case of gardumin. Above we cited the main proof brought for the proposition that Techeiles cannot serve as lavan: Rashi explains "lavan is not me'akev" as four Techeiles strings, and since "lavan is not me'akev" supposedly means that he did not fulfill the obligation of lavan, it was inferred that Techeiles is invalid for lavan. [We have already explained at length that this proof is not compelling.] In any event, according to the Rambam there is simply no

source that Techeiles is invalid for lavan. Therefore, if one made all four strings Techeiles, it may very well be that he fulfilled both parts of the mitzvah; that would explain why the Rambam did not identify this as the case of “lavan is not me’akev.” Several Acharonim write this explicitly (Divrei Malkiel, siman 6, os 20; Nesivos Chaim III, siman 52, os 3).

One point that must be considered is that the Rambam (2:8) holds that the lavan strings should be the color of the tallis. See the Kesef Mishneh there, who records a machlokes whether this is me’akev. Everything we wrote above assumed that Techeiles can be used to fulfill lavan, but Techeiles strings would seemingly not be the color of the garment. According to the view that matching the garment’s color is only a lechatchilah requirement and is not me’akev, there is no difficulty. But according to the view that it is me’akev, one could say that an all-Techeiles set is indeed invalid—not because Techeiles as such is incapable of serving as lavan, but because Techeiles is not min kanaf.⁶⁷ Perhaps, however, on a tallis that itself is entirely Techeiles-colored, the Rambam would hold that Techeiles is valid as lavan. [Kala ilan was prohibited only because of a gezeirah lest one untie it and thereby come to wear kilayim where there is no mitzvah;⁶⁸ that reason does not apply to

⁶⁷ As for why, according to the Rambam, one could not fulfill the mitzvah with four Techeiles strings the way Rashi allows—even though one would fulfill only the Techeiles component—one could answer that the Rambam does not accept Rashi’s chiddush that strings which are not min kanaf can complete the gedilim. This requires further iyun. But it seems more likely that an all-Techeiles set may indeed fulfill only the Techeiles component, just as according to Rashi. The Rambam simply did not choose this as his example of “lavan is not me’akev,” because the reason lavan is not fulfilled in that case is not an intrinsic problem in the relationship between the two species; it is the external issue of min kanaf. It is more fitting to illustrate the rule with a case that directly involves the two species themselves, such as gardumin. This still requires further study.

⁶⁸ The beraisa in Menachos 41b states: “A tallis is exempted only by [Rashi’s girsā: ‘for the purpose of lavan’] its own species. A tallis that is entirely Techeiles-colored: he brings Techeiles and another material and attaches them to it. Kala ilan he should not bring; if he did, it is valid.” It can be said that this beraisa is discussing only the mitzvah of lavan, as implied by its opening phrase, “it is exempted only by its own species”; the mitzvah of Techeiles is not mentioned at all. If so, the meaning is that for an all-Techeiles tallis, aside from the mitzvah of Techeiles—which obviously requires Techeiles [unlike Korach and his followers]—for the lavan component he may bring “Techeiles and another thing,” meaning either genuine Techeiles or even another valid material. Only kala ilan should not be brought, because of the gezeirah.

There is more to discuss, but this is not the place. Anyone who studies the sugya carefully will see that according to the Poskim who hold that when only one species is available only four half-strings are required, the Gemara’s distinction between a “tallis of eight” and a “tallis of four” must be counting half-strings. The beraisa in which kala ilan is invalid bedieved is speaking of an eight-half-string tallis, because of the gezeirah that perhaps one will untie it, as Rashi explains in his first interpretation. According to that calculation, the beraisa that validates kala ilan must be speaking of a four-half-string tallis. If so, he used only one species. Therefore, when the beraisa says “Techeiles and another thing,” it must be explained as we have said. Vedok heitev. On this approach, the Gemara itself explicitly shows that Techeiles can be valid for lavan.

genuine Techeiles.] This would also explain why the Rambam could not define “lavan is not me’akev” as a case where all the strings were Techeiles: there are situations where that is valid. The usual problem would instead be one of min kanaf, not the rule that “lavan is not me’akev.” Vedok. On this approach, since the Shulchan Aruch (9:5) rules that the garment’s color is not me’akev, someone who makes the entire set Techeiles would indeed fulfill both components of the mitzvah, because the only possible defect was min kanaf.

The Kesef Mishneh (there, halachah 4), however, understood the Rambam differently. He says the Rambam did not explain “lavan is not me’akev” as four Techeiles strings because a set made entirely of Techeiles would actually be invalid and would not fulfill lavan. According to the Kesef Mishneh, there is no concept of Techeiles without lavan: the entire mitzvah of Techeiles is to wind Techeiles around the lavan, so without lavan one cannot fulfill Techeiles at all. Therefore “lavan is not me’akev” must refer to gardumin. The Acharonim—virtually all the commentators on the Rambam, as well as the Keren Orah on the sugya—discuss at length why this explanation is difficult. The Gemara implies that the gardumin ukimta is needed only according to Rebbi, while according to the Chachamim the Mishnah is straightforward without that ukimta, along with several other difficulties.

In fact, the Kesef Mishneh himself later appears to retract this position. In halachah 18 he writes: “It may be said that Rabbeinu ruled like the Chachamim and according to the straightforward meaning of the Mishnah, which teaches that Techeiles is not me’akev lavan, etc.—that if he has only one species, he makes that species. He wrote that if he has no Techeiles he makes lavan alone, and it follows automatically that lavan is not me’akev Techeiles; indeed, that is certainly so, since the primary mitzvah is Techeiles...” He writes similarly in the Beis Yosef, siman 12. Many Acharonim understood that he withdrew his earlier explanation because of the difficulties raised against it.

We therefore have four possible approaches to the Rambam:

- A. If one makes all the strings Techeiles, the tzitzis are valid and he fulfills both components of the mitzvah.
- B. According to the Rambam, an all-Techeiles set is invalid because of min kanaf [although according to the Shulchan Aruch it would be valid].
- C. An all-Techeiles set is invalid because one cannot fulfill Techeiles without lavan.
- D. An all-Techeiles set is valid, but one fulfills only the mitzvah-component of Techeiles.

We can now consider which approach is most likely. In the Shoreshim, the Rambam writes that there was a hava amina to count Techeiles and lavan as two mitzvos because “each of these components does not require the other.” That clearly does not fit the Kesef Mishneh’s approach that an all-Techeiles set is invalid because Techeiles cannot exist without lavan. It is also somewhat difficult to say that an all-Techeiles set is fully valid lechatchilah, because if so, where is the case in which one fulfills only Techeiles? [According to the second approach, however, where an all-Techeiles set is lacking min kanaf, this question may not be difficult, as noted above.] The most straightforward conclusion therefore seems to be approach D: an all-Techeiles set is valid, but one has fulfilled only Techeiles.

The simple reading is that the Rambam’s rule regarding gardumin is taken directly from the Gemara, which says it according to Rabbi. We will explain below why the Rambam records it, but in any case the Gemara’s case of “the Techeiles was reduced and the lavan remained” applies even according to Rabbi. Thus, even according to the view that Techeiles and lavan are me’akev one another, gardumin remain valid. It follows that the fulfillment of both the Techeiles component and the lavan component still exists. One cannot answer that Rabbi means they are me’akev only at the time the tzitzis are made. His source is the pasuk “You shall see it,” which deals with wearing and seeing the tzitzis, not with their manufacture. This is straightforward.

The Gemara gives both cases: if the Techeiles was reduced and the lavan remained, and if the lavan was reduced and the Techeiles remained. The Rambam mentions only one. It would seem that he did not need to tell us the case where the Techeiles was reduced and the lavan remained, because it follows from a kal vachomer. The greater chiddush is that the tzitzis are still valid even though seven ends have broken;

all the more so if only one end has broken. Several Acharonim explain it this way, as cited below.

We have therefore established that the Rambam does not spell out every implication here and relies on the reader to infer one case from another. The same can be said about his statement that if there is no Techeiles one makes everything lavan: the reverse case follows as well, by kal vachomer. The Rambam's formulation itself points this way. He does not write, "Techeiles is not me'akev lavan, and therefore if he has no Techeiles he makes everything lavan; lavan is not me'akev Techeiles, and therefore if the lavan was reduced..." Instead, he first gives the general rule:

"Techeiles is not me'akev lavan, and lavan is not me'akev Techeiles." He then asks, "How so?" and gives examples. The first is, "If he has no Techeiles he makes lavan alone"; according to our explanation, the reverse is included as well. The second is, "Likewise, if he made lavan and Techeiles, and the lavan broke and was reduced to the corner while the Techeiles alone remained, it is valid"; here too, the reverse case is included. In other words, the fact that he states the rule and then gives its explanation implies that there is more than one application of the rule. Vedok.

This would seem to be the straightforward pshat if we understand the Rambam as reproducing the Gemara. As for why he teaches this law even though the Gemara stated it only according to Rabbi, Teshuvos Pri Etz Chaim (printed in Amsterdam,

5451), volume III, page 45, explains that it remains a chiddush even according to the Chachamim. One might have thought that complete absence is better than the presence of something defective and severely diminished; the Rambam therefore teaches that this is not so.

This explanation fits the continuation of the Rambam very well, and it also fits the Rambam in the Shoreshim. We find this interpretation among Rishonim and Acharonim: the Semag [who explains “lavan is not me’akev” like the Rambam, but copies the wording of the Gemara, which supports this approach], the Arugas HaBosem, who writes this in the Rambam’s view, the Radbaz, Mahari Zinga, and many Acharonim—the Rada (quoted in Sefer HaLikkutim in the Frankel Rambam), the Yad Ketana (os 3 and os 5), Merkavas HaMishneh, Maaseh Rokeach, Mahardam (Shoresh 11), and Emek HaMelech (in the Sefer HaLikkutim cited above, end of chapter 1), among many others. The Netziv disagrees and understands the Rambam as invalidating such tzitzis, but he says this is possible only if the girsa in Rambam 1:5 reads, “one who wears a tallis that has lavan [without] Techeiles, or both together.” That emendation does not appear in the Rambam’s authenticated manuscript, which explicitly has our girsa. It would therefore seem that even he would agree to our conclusion. By count, there are more than fifteen mefarshim who understand the Rambam this way.

Rabbi Gliss, however, questioned this approach in the article mentioned above because of the wording of the Peirush HaMishnayos. [He mistakenly thought that this passage appears only in newly published editions, but the Tosafos Yom Tov on Menachos chapter 4 already quotes it, as we will see.] The Rambam writes: “Lavan is not me’akev Techeiles means that if he made... and the lavan broke...” His wording appears to imply that this particular case is what “lavan is not me’akev” means, rather than that the other case follows from a kal vachomer.

It is worth noting, however, that the Tosafos Yom Tov saw no contradiction here. After quoting these words of the Rambam, he writes, “What he wrote regarding ‘lavan is not me’akev,’ that if he made tzitzis...—the Kesef Mishneh at the end of chapter 1 of Hilchos Tzitzis discusses this explanation at length.” Yet the Kesef Mishneh there explicitly uses a kal vachomer. Evidently the Tosafos Yom Tov did not see the Peirush HaMishnayos as contradicting that kal vachomer. It is also worth pointing out that, according to the Beis Yosef in siman 26, within this very section of the Peirush HaMishnayos [in the discussion of tefillin shel yad], the Beis Yosef writes: “A mistaken student wrote this in the margin, and the copyists mistakenly inserted it into the text, for it is not present in the Arabic version.” We therefore have some reason to be cautious about this section as well. At the very least, the passage explaining “lavan is not me’akev” was added after the Rambam wrote the Yad HaChazakah, as the Tosafos Yom Tov indicates. It is therefore possible that whoever added it [if it is indeed not from the Rambam] did so according to his own understanding of the Rambam in the Mishneh Torah, while in truth the Rambam did

not necessarily mean to limit the Mishnah to that case. Alternatively, one can say that here too the Rambam chose the greater chiddush. If “Techeiles is not me’akev” already teaches the easier direction by kal vachomer, as the Kesef Mishneh writes because Techeiles is the primary mitzvah, what additional point is taught by the Mishnah’s second clause, “lavan is not me’akev”? There must therefore be a chiddush in that direction that is not present in the first, and the Rambam gives the case of gardumin. Vedok. Admittedly, all of this is somewhat dochuk. The straightforward reading of the Peirush HaMishnayos is certainly as Rabbi Gliss says—that the Rambam meant specifically the case he gave. The question is which source should yield to which. The Rambam in the Shoreshim clearly points the other way, while there is at least reason to question this particular passage in the Peirush HaMishnayos. I have written what appears correct to me.

One further point remains. If what we wrote above is correct—that even according to the Raavad, making two Techeiles strings may fulfill both parts of the mitzvah in the best way—then even if we treat the halachah as a safek, there would seemingly be a sfeik sfeika favoring Tosafos. Perhaps the halachah follows Tosafos; and even if it follows the Raavad, perhaps there is no problem at all with making two Techeiles strings. This still requires iyun lemaaseh.