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## 100 Years to Tekhelet Research

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I went yesterday to the Tekhelet conference in Jerusalem, celebrating 100 years of Tekhelet research. The occasion was marking the 100th anniversary of Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Halevi Herzog's doctoral dissertation on the topic of the Tekhelet.

I thought that at least a good part of the conference would be dedicated to revealing new studies, new proofs, discussing some of the old proofs regarding Tekhelet and the identification of the murex.

But it wasn't.

The conference was in part a commemoration of Rav Herzog, and a lot

about tekhelet - the history, the discovery, plans for moving forward, and a lot of halachic and hashkafic discussion based on the tekhelet, even if not directly connected. Topics such as renewal in halacha, issues of Torah and science, and the meaning of Tekhelet, among others.

MK Yitzchak Herzog spoke, relating and explaining that Tekhelet was not just a scientific enterprise or interest of his grandfather, but was completely part of his belief in the renewal of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael and it was an integral part of his Zionism. The study of the Tekhelet and bringing it back to the Jewish people was part of the growth and advancement of the Jewish people and its return to the land.

There were plenty of speakers. The strangest was, perhaps, on a panel of archaeologists and scientists of different sorts, one person was a linguist who studied ancient languages and he discussed and explained the history of the word "Tekhelet" and where it appears in ancient languages such as in Mesopotamian and its meaning. I was amazed that someone would turn that into a study.

I am personally a big fan of Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb and read his articles religiously in the Torah Tidbits. It was a pleasure to be able to meet him and to hear him speak. Rabbi Weinreb offered an analysis of the resistance to Tekhelet. He said something very interesting, saying that just like people repress bad, they also repress the sublime.

We heard from Dr. Zaidman, who has another Tekhelet research organization. He described some of the work and what is happening moving forward - plans for growing tekhelet in large amounts in pools, and other ideas. Other great speakers on different topics included Rav Avraham Steinberg, Supreme Court Justice Neal Hendel, there was a panel dealing with issues of how to deal with rabbonim when talking about new innovations in halacha - discussed by Rabbi Riskin, Rabbi Burshtein of Machon Puah and Rabbi Vitman... among others.

The event was capped off by Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveitchik who discussed the ideas of the blue with the white and what they represent, both are needed in our lives. The white represents the simple, what can be easily

understood, while the Tekhelet represents the mysterious and the outer limit of human understanding..

During the day we also heard from Dr. Baruch Sterman and Dr. Ari Greenspan, as well as from others associated with the Ptil Tekhelet organization.

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