

## **'A Cohen-Levi Family Affair'**



***Kohanim and members of the tribe of Levi will gather in Jerusalem in July 2007 for a conference addressing "the importance of promoting and seeking peace among the Jewish nation."***

**Recent scientific research and DNA testing have shown that today's descendants of the biblical priesthood known as *Kohanim* are genetically related.**

**Although the descendants of Aharon, the brother of Moses, have spread throughout the world over the past 3,300 years, the members of this extended family are being invited to participate in the first "family reunion" held since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.**

**Participants from across the world will join tribe members for a stimulating and educational experience at the first-ever international gathering of Kohanim and the tribe of Levi, July 15-19, 2007 in Jerusalem. These dates coincide with the biblically noted date of Aharon the High Priest's death, the first day of the Hebrew month of Av.**

**"We are excited by the interest seen so far. This is not only the first family reunion of the Jewish priestly dynasty in nearly 2,000 years, it is an important conference which will inform, inspire and motivate," explains conference organizer Rabbi Yaakov Kleiman. "The research and information we will share will play an important role in appreciating and maintaining our unique and precious heritage."**

**The conference will address the importance of promoting and seeking peace among the Jewish nation. The program**

**will thus include a wide spectrum of speakers and activities in an effort to attract the interests and bridge the gaps among Jews from all backgrounds.**

**Kohanim are the priestly family of the Jewish people. The Torah describes the anointment of Aharon as the first High Priest. The books of Exodus and Leviticus describe the responsibilities of the Kohanim, which include the Temple service, blessing of the people and spiritual healing.**

**The Kohanim are a family of the tribe of Levi, the tribe that was chosen for holy service.**

**Molecular geneticists have recently discovered the "Cohen Modal Haplotype," which is a Y-chromosome DNA lineage signature shared by a majority of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Kohanim.**

**This indicates a direct patrilineal descent of present day Kohanim from a single ancient ancestor, genetically dated to have lived approximately 3,300 years ago, a time corresponding to the Exodus from Egypt.**

***Ynetnews.com***