Palestinians, Jews share common genetic lineage

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Confronted by the violence sweeping over Israel, it can be easy to overlook the things that Jews and Palestinians share: a deep attachment to the same sliver of contested land, a shared appetite for hummus, a common tradition of descent from the patriarch Abraham, and, as scientific research shows — a common genetic ancestry, as well.

Several major studies published in the past five years attest to these ancient hereditary links. At the forefront of these efforts are two researchers: Harry Ostrer, professor of pediatrics and pathology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York, and Karl Skorecki, director of medical and research development at the Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa. Back in June 2010, and within two days of each other, the two scientists and their research teams published extensive analyses of the genetic origins of the Jewish people and their Near East ancestry.

“The closest genetic neighbors to most Jewish groups were the Palestinians, Israeli Bedouins, and Druze in addition to the Southern Europeans, including Cypriots,” as Ostrer and Skorecki wrote in a review of their findings that they co-authored in the journal Human Genetics in October 2012.

Ostrer’s research on “Abraham’s Children in the Genome Era,” published in The American Journal of Human Genetics, sampled 652,000 gene variants from each of 237 unrelated individuals from seven Jewish populations: Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian, Italian, Turkish, Greek and Ashkenazi. These sequences were then compared with reference samples from non-Jews drawn from The Human Genome Diversity Project, a global database of genetic information gathered from populations across the world.

Read full, original post: Blood Brothers: Palestinians and Jews Share Genetic Roots