

Kol Nidre Appeal for Jnetics – *L'dor V'dor*

On Kol Nidre night, we are deeply aware of our place in the **chain of Jewish life** — bound to the **generations** who came before us, and **responsible** for those who will come after us.

Each prayer we say tonight carries the weight of memory and the **hope of legacy**. We stand together as a community, not only to seek forgiveness, but also to affirm that Jewish life — **strong, healthy, and enduring** — will continue beyond us.

I can't help but think to the Marranos, the secret Jews of Spain about whom it was believed created the Kol Nidrei prayers to annul their public Christianity. It turns out that this isn't true, but why let the truth get in the way of a good point.

These Marranos encapsulated so many of the most important aspects of Judaism and the Jewish people. The vow that our culture, our people must endure and continue regardless. It doesn't matter what we look like, where we are, what our practise is. It is who we are that matters. And our DNA is a massive part of that.

This is why **supporting Jnetics matters so deeply**.

Jnetics enables young Jewish people to take simple, preventative steps to protect the health of future generations – utilising modern technological advances. By offering life-changing education and genetic screening specifically for people with Jewish ancestry, Jnetics ensures that children yet to be born will be spared devastating genetic disorders. In addition to the recessive testing that Jnetics offers people prior to starting a family, we are proud to also be the engagement partner for the NHS Jewish BRCA Testing programme. Which has now had over 37,000 people register for testing, and has found over 500 BRCA 1 and 2 mutation carriers. People that would otherwise be oblivious to their increased cancer risk.

It is an act of profound responsibility — a mitzvah — to give the gift of health and security to the next generation.

The work that Jnetics does is involved directly in the generations across centuries and in many ways is a footnote to our history. The conditions that we test for have been present in the community for generations – Tay Sachs, which 1 in 27 of us carry first arose in the 8th century. It has come with us, through all of the movements, the persecutions and the growth that our ancestors have experienced over generations.

To put this in context for another gene, a medieval Jewish cemetery was found in a small town in Germany called Erfurt, with 350 remains. The DNA was extracted and analysed from 30 individuals. The 3 founder mutations in BRCA, that 1 in 40 of us carry were in those 30 people. The 10 million Ashkenazim globally are directly connected to this group in the 13th century, as they were to the generations that preceded them.

Just as our ancestors prayed for us without ever knowing our names, so too we can act now to safeguard those who will come after us, whose names we do not yet know.

Tonight, as we reflect on our vows and renew our commitments, let us also commit to Jewish continuity — strong, flourishing, and full of hope.

Firstly, if you haven't yet done so - please sign up for testing BRCA via jewishbrca.org (which ends closes on the 31st October), or tell family and friends of the recessive screening and please give generously to Jnetics this Kol Nidre. In doing so, you honour the past and protect the future.

May our acts of compassion tonight help seal all of us, and our children's children, in the Book of Life.