

Dear friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center,

Still shocked by the passing of Cantor Fuchs, I write these lines with words of comfort and strength for Lesley, Orit, Yuval, Rachel, and the entire family, which includes all of us, the extended Hillcrest Jewish Center family.

At the funeral I spoke extemporaneously, so I don't have a written eulogy. However, I would like to share with you highlights of it, with the hope that they will provide comfort for all of us and some insights on how to live a more meaningful life.

Cantor Fuchs taught us that "all you need is love." Cantor Fuchs was a beloved person and more importantly, a loving person. His love was unconditional, he showed interest in other people's lives and made each of us feel we and our stories were important.

Cantor Fuchs believed in the reality of Hashem. Hashem was not just a word in the prayer book, but a real presence in his life. The expression *Baruch Hashem*, the appreciation for God's blessings, was always present in his lips and heart.

Cantor Fuchs taught us that we have a body that goes back to the earth when we die, but we also have a Neshama, a soul, the essence of who we are. Our neshama is eternal and goes back to Hashem when we leave this physical world. Our soul then joins the souls of those who preceded us in life and keeps connected with all of us, here, in this world. In Hashem, Cantor Fuchs and all of us, are one.

Cantor Fuchs's love for the Jewish people and the State of Israel was unconditional and incommensurable. He rejoiced in Israel's achievements and suffered with its setbacks. We should all try to emulate him.

Cantor Fuchs reminded all of us throughout the many years we enjoyed his presence and his teachings, that when a person leaves this world, neither his possessions nor his loved ones accompany him. Only the mitzvot he performed, the acts of kindness he did, the compassion he showed to others, go with him. In the words of our Sages, when a person leaves this world, his spiritual shrouds are woven, so to speak, by all the lives he touched.

Finally, Cantor Fuchs taught us the power of forgiveness, of letting go. Life is difficult enough as it is, to add to it the heavy weight of grudges, resentment, bitterness, and complaints. As we are about to usher in the High Holy Days, we can all learn from Cantor Fuchs to be more forgiving, to travel lighter through life.

And speaking of the High Holy Days, let me conclude this message by wishing all of us and our loved ones a year of good news, a year of joy and peace, a good and sweet year.

Rabbi Manes Kogan

