

## **A Message For The High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah - September 2007)**

**Jack Lynes, Trustee of RAPHAEL JEWISH COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### SHUT DOWN 1

This really was the end. Despite pressing every button on the keyboard and checking every plug, there was no response. I remembered that first time I had made acquaintance with my computer and how I had marvelled at what it could do. The information that could be brought up on screen was truly wonderful and to be able to send and receive Emails anywhere in the world, well, that was indeed a miracle. Later, with the advent of broadband, I wondered how I ever had the patience to wait those few extra seconds to load up a page and quietly cursed when the system went a little slower. And sometimes it would dare to freeze, a happening which really did draw my wrath. But this was not to be a final farewell after all. Despite having to go through the rigmarole of deciding which of six options to take, the telephone helpline assistant, speaking from some far off land, explained that although I might have pressed all the keys, they would have no effect unless I did so in a specific order. Carefully following her instructions, and for once not worrying about the mounting telephone bill as I did so, hey presto, I was back, up and running. Or at least, I thought I was. Certainly the screen had come alive and I was able to Google again. It was only when I came to send an Email that I discovered to my horror, all my addresses had been lost, as had my back-up of diary dates, phone numbers, and 'favourites', those bookmarks which store items for reference, and to cap it all, 'My Documents' too were missing. Sleeping this would have been a nightmare. But to me, after a pinch to reassure me that I was both alive and awake, it was a catastrophe. My only hope, and I must admit that I was not in the least optimistic, was to call in the expert. The story has a happy ending. He came. He fiddled. He put discs in and he took discs out. He shut everything down. He even unplugged the telephone. He admonished me for not arranging adequate back up. And two hours later my problems were at an end. Not only had my computer been restored but I too stopped taking for granted its usefulness and the technical wonder that it represents. And I resolved not only to ensure that I do keep proper back up in future but also that I remain aware of and grateful for the marvel that is.....a computer.

### SHUT DOWN 2

They told him to pull himself together. He had lost his job. They told her to get to grips with it. She had thought all was well and then discovered her son was up to no good. They said that he had nothing to worry about but he could only see himself as a failure. She was urged to put it all behind her but was constantly nagged by a fear of loneliness. He was ordered simply to lay off but despite his love, he continued to bully. It was suggested that they stop seeing each despite the fact that they were lonely and depressed when apart. A second generation holocaust survivor, she felt guilty and couldn't understand why. He was middle aged and daily feared the worst. She simply could never keep a job. He was miserly and deprived himself of food and heat. She was obsessed about what she ate and he simply could not relax. Calling in an expert for two hours would not resolve any of these and similar dilemmas. But a call to Raphael Jewish Counselling Service and arranging an initial consultation/assessment

with an intake counsellor might be a very good start. Raphael counsellors might help him or her or even him and her to find which buttons to press and the right order in which to press them. They certainly won't perform any miracles or tell anyone what to do, nor will they admonish anyone. But their professional confidential help might give him or her a good back up in the event of a future crisis and many a client who has been to them in despair is a silent witness to what is possible.

### SHUT DOWN 3

Our High Holy Days are above all, days of opportunity. The Jewish way of life regards prayer as an obligation and there is a blessing for well nigh every act that we perform throughout each day. Such demands are met by each individual according to his conscience but there is little doubt that those who seldom pray, when they choose so to do, are apt to find it more difficult. As to the three or four times a year Jew, when they do return to the fold, they may well find that the 'memory' needs to be re-awakened and the cogs oiled. It takes longer to 'boot up' when one has been 'turned off' for any length of time. Even so, it is true that a full congregation on these occasions does add something special for us all. For a while we are 'at one ment' with each other as well as with 'the One on High'. But as I prepare to bow out of office after five years as Chair of Raphael, I am increasingly aware of how so many of my fellow Jews, feel left out, physically alive but missing out on life. It is probably true to say that materially, 'we have never had it so good'. If only life were that simple. The New Year, we are told, is a time to reflect on what has been and to resolve our future. I would add a plea that as we do so we look with optimism, regarding the threats and often gloomy forecasts as challenges. We have to learn not to press all the keys at once when there is a temporary shutdown, but to press them in the proper order. Yes, I do believe that prayer can play a part, just as the plug must be switched on before we press the keys. The final success of Raphael Jewish Counselling Service will come when it is no longer needed. As it now reaches out to more clients than ever, from all sections of the community, that time, alas, is some way off. Please make us known to any fellow Jew whom you think might add to our work and let Raphael, the Angel of Healing be in your prayers.