

Computers and other Creeping Things “Be on your guard against every form of greed...”

We were discussing how it seems that there are so many computers in the tribe, so many people with laptops, saying they need an upgrade to a higher-powered laptop...

ha-emeq — It's just the same in the tool realm. You have some very wonderful men who just need a tool box and they're such great workers and we want them to have tools that are going to do the job. But there are others who are just going to Home Depot and buying tools when what they have is really all they need.

Yochanan — Or like that brother in Europe who had the best, finest precision tools in his special wooden, velvet-lined box. He might use them maybe once every two years. It was just for the sake of having them; they weren't so much a need. But they matched up with the training he had had in the world.

ha-emeq — We just want our people to beware of all forms of greed, and then they can give us all the reasons why they really think they need a new computer or a new drill or a new pair of shoes. I remember with people's families asking, “Do all your children need new shoes? Just because you got \$50 from your parents? Don't you know that there are other people who don't have any shoes?” So that's where we always need somebody to prod our conscience every once in a while, asking, “Do you really need a new computer? Is it really a need?”

Then, if it's an honest man who is being honest with his conscience, he'll say yes or no.

Everyone will stand or fall by the choices they make, what they say at that moment. But if we keep bringing back to people's mind what that is that might be working in them, like Yoneq taught about exposing the enemies

*Greed is one of the enemies, especially in this society. It just drives us on to want something better and better and we don't even know what that unsettled feeling is that we have, just feeling like we *want* something. We justify it to ourselves that, oh, I really need it, and I couldn't actually be *greedy*.*

*When Yoneq taught about it in Plymouth it was so eye-opening to the people that you have to *name* the enemies and get rid of them or be destroyed by them. We can fool everybody all the time, but we'll still be destroyed in the end.*

*So the next week one brother confessed that he really saw that about enemies, and if we don't *name* them then we really can't even confess our sins. We just have these funny feelings and just overlook them or live through them, but we don't *name* them. So he really thought about it, and the next weekend there was an opportunity to go to Island Pond to a Bar Mitzvah and everyone was going, and he started having this feeling come to him. He wanted to go really bad and he was trying to figure out a way he could go. Then he realized that he was jealous of the people who were going, and he stopped right there and confessed his sin of jealousy and was totally liberated. Then he was totally happy to stay home.*

Some people were talking about the teaching in generalities, but he just brought it out with something specific that everybody feels but they hate to admit it.

*So if people could understand that *greed* might be entering in on this unsettled feeling that you have to get a new computer (or a new car, or a new pair of shoes, or whatever, but especially computers), then it could keep us from going off course. If we can just keep bringing it back to people, because it seems like the Evil One is figuring out a way to trick us in this area, because a lot of money is going into these things and we're suffering greatly financially right now. So if people could say, “Couldn't you wait for six months and we could use the money for the back electric bill?” then they might be able to judge themselves and identify that feeling, “Oh, yeah, I don't know why I just felt like I couldn't do anything else but get a new computer. I just felt like I couldn't go on if my e-mail didn't come in faster. I've just got to get it in a half a minute instead of a minute and a half!” But it's just a form of greed.*

David Zerubbabel — I think there's another thing connected to it that maybe can help us judge whether it's really a need or not. That is considering what the fruit is of faster and faster computers. Does our experience show that we have greater and greater productivity with these greater tools? I don't think that's generally true.

For example, when we were in Providence and in Island Pond — and I can credit Malachi with this because it's his resourceful way and sense of restraint in getting this greater thing — we didn't have the ability to buy much computer equipment. But when we were in Providence we increased in our productivity by scrounging for cast-

off computer equipment from the basement of the house we were living in, and things people would come into the Body with, things that the world would say was junky stuff, but we mixed and matched it together and got several computers working in the Print Shop. I think that we had greater productivity in producing freepapers then than we have in Cocksackie with all of our sophisticated technology. I think we got lost in our reasoning that, well, if we just get this, then it will enable us to do that... And it's not like the arguments were wrong, but we got caught up in something where everything justified the next thing.

So everywhere I go I see computers that people are using for e-mail that have ten times the power that we used to consider really amazing in the Print Shop, but now it's not amazing anymore.

ha-emeq — I guess there's two things in that, that all the workers have to deal with when it is judged that the person does need the new drill or the new car, or this and that... Then all the other workers look at it and say, "How come he got such a nice drill and I didn't get a nice one?" It's the same with computers. A new computer comes out on the table and everybody goes, "Woah! That's just what I was needing." And there's another enemy that rises up — the one in us to judge. "Thank you, Father, that you provided that for him. He really needs it, but I'm certainly satisfied with what you've given me." To be able to do that is incredible.

But we have to keep this thought before us... I know Yoneq keeps bringing it up, "What about all these computers? Where is all this money coming from?" Really, I think, regarding our national identity, if that Hungarian man were to walk in and say, "Look, here's the main people and they're just getting along with very small computers," rather than saying, "Well, here's the money of the community right here! Look, they've all got their brand new computers all set up in their rooms and everybody's in there on the Internet..." For a national identity you'd rather have him say, "Hey, they've figured out how to get along without the latest technology..."

Yoneq — In '79 we were going to do away with all the swine, weren't we?

ha-emeq — Yes, the phones! We were going to get rid of the phones! I thought about that again, that we might need to get rid of the phones because our next generation is always on the telephone.

Yoneq — It says of this generation that "knowledge will increase" (Dan 12:4), speaking of communication. 1 Cor 7:31 — We're supposed to use the world but not make full use of it, somehow. Are we making full use of it? I had to check someone not too long ago who was getting a business established on the Internet, what was it?

ha-emeq — Doing record keeping for doctors. When they get insurance claims, now doctors file them over the Internet and there are companies that make a business of receiving the claims and getting paid for them.

Someone thought it would be a very profitable business for us, to be the ones who would file the claims for the doctors and then get the money and pay the doctors. And this very wonderful person could not recognize that it would be something we wouldn't want to be involved in.

Kharash — Years ago Zerubbabel told me that if you're not sitting at a desk already doing something, then a computer is not going to help you. If you haven't been doing that and all of a sudden you're going to start sitting at a desk, it seems like it's going to take away from what you should be doing.

Yoneq — How many computers do you think we have in Yehudah? Where is it going to end? President Clinton wanted every child to have a computer. Maybe at their Bar Mitzvah we should give them a computer... They're certainly useful. What would we do without them? How did we used to exist without them? When Bachirah used to do my teachings, it seems like it was going a lot quicker than with computers...

David Yonah — Her electric typewriter never crashed once!