



בית של חסד

A Chessed Newsletter Courtesy of Pardes Psychological Services

Rejecting Hachnasat Orchim

"Jeff Grinspoon's 7,569-square-foot Chicago home has five decks and terraces outfitted with an outdoor theater and hot tub. There is a 900-square-foot gym, an oak-paneled library, and a barrel-vaulted penthouse for entertaining. Yet there are just two bedrooms—and that's by design.

"Honestly, we don't want a house full of guests," said Mr. Grinspoon, a 53-year-old real-estate developer. "

From article entitled "Some Luxury Homeowners Scale Back on Extra Bedrooms" - Wall Street Journal February, 2017

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Welcome to בית של חסד

Recently, my wife Hadassah and I, embarked on the complicated process of purchasing of a new home. We had many conversations about the location and size of our potential purchase and made plans for redecorating and enlarging our new home. Of course we discussed the financial considerations involved and differences in our personal tastes in decor and design. It dawned on us during the discussions that we neglected to think about the potential chessed opportunities that would be afforded to us in our new home.

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal brought home the need to discuss home-based chessed. The article entitled "Some Luxury Homeowners Scale Back on Extra Bedrooms" (See partial text of the article in the sidebar) explained that some homeowners are choosing to reduce the number of bedrooms in their homes to make room for more personal amenities such as home theaters and indoor gyms. One homeowner explained that "We don't want a house full of guests."

The article got me to thinking about one of the earliest lessons that we learn in Tanach. The Torah tells us that Avraham Avinu practiced the Mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim - welcoming guests. It seems that there is a trend in homeownership that rejects this basic concept. Some people today would rather enlarge their own personal space than provide space for others.

I got around to thinking about how we could design our new home to increase Hachnasat Orchim and other chessed opportunities. The addition of more (continued on next page)

The Bayit Shel Chessed Contract

How does your family change its style of behavior?

One way to achieve change is through a Family Contract. In the contract the family identifies changes that it wishes to make and creates a family action plan.

The Bayit Shel Chessed Family Contract is useful in motivating and reminding all family members to adhere to the concept of using the family home as a place where Chessed is modeled and activated.

The contract is especially useful in teaching our children that acts of Chessed are central to your family's life.

You are encouraged to visit our website at www.PardesPsych.com/Bayit to download a copy of this attractive contract that can be signed by all family members and displayed in a prominent place in your home.



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bedrooms to be able to invite the guests who are in town for a neighbor's simcha or a person or family who are feeling isolated and lonely. A larger kitchen to enable cooking for a simcha or to provide meals to those who are in need. An expanded living room/dining room that will allow for the hosting of community events or parlor meetings. All of these uses and more are the hallmark of a "Bayit Shel Chessed".

It is my hope that this newsletter will inspire us and provide ideas that will encourage the use of our most prized monetary possession, our home, to follow in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu.

Rabbi Mordechai Smolarcik, Psy. D.
Pardes Psychological Services

This is for All the Lonely People

While the most common definitions of loneliness describe it as a state of solitude or being alone, loneliness is actually a state of mind. This state of mind causes people to feel empty, alone and unwanted. People who are lonely often crave human contact, but their state of mind makes it more difficult to form connections with other people. Loneliness, according to experts, is not necessarily about being alone but rather a person's perception of being alone and isolated.

Loneliness has a wide range of negative effects on both physical and mental health. Health risks associated with loneliness include: depression and suicide, cardiovascular disease and stroke, increased stress levels, decreased memory and learning, antisocial behavior, poor decision-making, alcoholism and drug abuse and altered brain function.

The use of our homes to invite and therefore ameliorate loneliness in families and individuals in our community is not only a Mitzvah but in many cases can result in changing the emotional and physical state of those we invite. In some cases it can literally save someone's life!