

Alpha Epsilon Pi Groundbreaking
November 7, 2009 - Austin, Texas
Rabbi David Komerofsky

In Parashat Vayera we learn that Abraham and Sarah's tent was open on all four sides to welcome visitors. Theirs is the paradigm of hospitality. Our first Jewish ancestors modeled friendliness, warmth and the importance of family - the family into which you are born and the friends that you make throughout your life. The brothers of this AEPi chapter are a family of seventy years. You share strong bonds, evidenced by an ongoing commitment to support the organization that has given so much to each of you.

When this chapter was founded by a small group of Jewish students, other children of Abraham and Sarah were suffering thousands of miles away in Europe. How fortunate they were, and we are, to be living in freedom, with unlimited potential to fulfill our dreams through the pursuit of higher education. How blessed we all are to build on what they envisioned.

Over the decades many brothers of AEPi have risked and sacrificed their lives so that others might have this kind of opportunity. As we dedicate this ground today, let us pause to think especially of one current member - Sam Ellison - who we pray will return soon and safely from Afghanistan to his friends and family here.

May this new structure be a *sukkat shalom* - a peaceful shelter - for the students who will live here. May you find here a permanent sanctuary of brotherhood, friendship and warmth.

May the brothers of AEPi and their families and friends build this house for the sake of community, and carry on what Abraham started - continuing to create a family that values kindness and justice, and has a keen sense of responsibility for each other and all humanity.

The psalmist wrote:

אִם-יְהוָה, לֹא-יִבְנֶה בַּיִת -- שֹׁנֵא עֲמָלוֹ בּוֹנֵיו בּוֹ

"Unless the Almighty builds the house, its construction is a labor of vanity." (Ps. 127:1)

This site is now consecrated for the sake of heaven. You will build this house with your hands, but you will make it a home with your hearts.

Please join me in the words that our people speak to mark moments of achievement and great joy, the shecheyanu prayer.