

Affiliation Q and A's

Costs:

1. What formula do you use in assessing affiliation dues?

First year: \$18 per household member (for full paying members—if you have some members who are not full paying, let's talk)

Every year thereafter, \$36 (same parenthetical as above)

For dually affiliated Congregations, its \$9 in the first year and \$18 every year thereafter.

2. What is the payment schedule for the dues?

Once a year-after Yom Kippor. If that is not possible, let's talk.

3. Are the dues increased periodically? If so, what is the probability of increases during the next year while we are considering affiliation?

Yes, dues will likely increase every 3-4 years.

Benefits

1. How do you assist a congregation in finding a Rabbi?

We can offer you information about our recent ordinees and those who are looking for positions.

2. What are the ongoing services that you provide to an affiliated congregation?

Individual member benefits include:

- Newsletter subscription (3 Kol ALEPH's a year) and eligibility to write for the newsletter
- Email subscription (you get our monthly news releases plus you are the first to know about Jewish renewal programs around the country like CDEEP workshops, Davenning Leadership trainings, ALEPH Caravans, Shalom Center events, etc.)
- Discounts on our catalogue items (you can see what's in the catalogue on our website: www.aleph.org)
- Teleconference course registration (non-members can't take the classes)
- Eligibility to teach, sell your Judaica, lead davennen at Kallah, and your membership dues are already paid (which can be a benefit of \$36 or more if

you are paying for 2 or more in your household because your entire household gets to be a member for \$36, and our individual member dues are \$36)

Community member benefits include:

- Free coaching by ALEPH staff on: membership building, rabbi searches, fundraising, board development issues
- Access to folks in your commuting area via our data base
- Listing on our web site, so folks who are traveling or new to the area can find you
- Hosting a Caravan at a \$1000 discount
- Eligibility to attend training events (like our fundraising training) where costs (except your travel) are paid by ALEPH
- Participation on a community rep e-list which enables you to discuss issues with your peers around the country and which gets information that nobody else within ALEPH gets about resources for things like advertising your events, and leading your community

3. What types of lay organizations, youth programs, summer camp program, etc. do you offer your affiliates

We have a one-week Kallah every two years which serves 700-800 attendees and has a stellar children's program. Ruach HaAretz has both adult and children's programs on the years when Kallah is not taking place, held on the west coast or in Colorado. Elat Chayyim, a sister organization located in upstate New York, has programming all summer long every year, also with a strong children's program. This year, ALEPH members who have not been to Elat Chayyim before get a 15% discount!

We have a relationship with a new retreat center in Traverse City Michigan, Or Tzafon that holds two retreats a year. Rabbi Shefa Gold's CDEEP has chanting and meditation retreats several times a year in New Mexico and a two year chant leadership training.

We periodically hold other events as well. Please look at our web site for current activities. This year we'll be holding a weekend retreat with Reb Zalman in Philadelphia, which we urge you to attend. www.ALEPH.org

Other questions that have been asked:

1. Would you impose any requirements on us in the following areas that might require changes in the way that we do things? If so, are there any timing requirements that we should be aware of?

- a. Liturgical

- b. Ritual
- c. Religious education
- d. Policy
- e. Bylaws/governance
- f. Kashrut
- g. Other

We would impose no requirements on you.

2. What type of support would you provide in order for us to achieve the desired changes?

If you had a change that you desired to implement for your own reasons, our professional staff would support you with consultation and resources (e.g.: new siddurim, tapes and Cds, by law samples, etc). It happens that on the list above we bring extensive experience and would be delighted to serve.

3. How do you define a Jew?

We do not define who is a Jew for our congregations. Each community reaches a decision for itself.

4. Do you have a policy or guidelines concerning a Rabbi officiating over a mixed marriage? If so, to what degree is this viewed as a decision for the Rabbi or the congregation?

Many of our rabbis do officiate at such weddings and it is absolutely viewed as a decision for the Rabbi and/or congregation that we support. However, we do not permit rabbinic students to officiate at intermarriages, as a matter of qualification. We want to make sure that people who officiate in such settings are able to explain to the couple exactly what they are doing and be able to support the decision fully. We want to make sure that people know how their decision will be viewed in all streams of Judaism, and this extends to decisions around liturgy, ritual choices, etc. We just want to make sure that couples are as educated as possible about a complicated life choice!

5. Do you have a policy or guidelines concerning a Rabbi officiating over a same sex marriage? If so, to what degree is this viewed as a decision for the Rabbi or the congregation?

We totally support same sex marriage and have issued a publication on all of the variables that should be explored when conducting such a wedding (e.g.: how does the couple contract with one another legally so they can reap as many civil benefits as a couple whose marriage is recognized by the state.) In fact, we want our rabbis to insist on the creation of civil equivalents to marriage to the extent possible. We take this seriously enough that we want to make sure that all

couples are taking on the same or similar obligations automatically assigned to heterosexual couples that choose to marry. The equivalent of a get is also required in the event that a relationship dissolves.

- 6. Do you have a policy or guidelines concerning a non-Jew being on the Board of Directors, instructing in the religious school or performing in any other congregational functions? If so, to what degree is this viewed as a decision for the Rabbi or the congregation?**

No policy on this. It is up to the individual congregation and its Rabbi.

- 7. Do you recognize a person as being Jewish based on patrilineal lineage?**

This is a decision for the individual and congregation to make. We don't make determinations on this.

- 8. Would you address theological, ritual or any other important differences, as you see them, between Reform, Reconstructionism and Jewish Renewal?**

Below are ALEPH's mission and principles. We require communities who affiliate with us to comply with certain policies, and they are all captured in the principles below. We would be happy to discuss these with you further.

ALEPH's Mission:

Aleph: Alliance for Jewish Renewal is an organization of those who are dedicated to reclaiming the Jewish people's sacred purpose of partnership with the Divine in the inseparable tasks of healing the world (tikkun olam) and healing our hearts (tikkun halev).

ALEPH catalyzes, supports, strengthens and grows the worldwide grassroots movement for Jewish Renewal.

ALEPH organizes and nurtures communities, develops leadership, creates new liturgy and other resources, and works for social and environmental justice.

ALEPH's Statement of Principles

Jewish renewal is a worldwide, transdenominational movement grounded in Judaism's prophetic and mystical traditions.

Jewish renewal carries forward Judaism's perpetual process of renewal.

Jewish renewal seeks to bring creativity, relevance, joy, and an all-embracing awareness to spiritual practice, as a path to healing our hearts and finding balance and wholeness—tikkun halev

Jewish renewal acts to fully include all Jews and to respect all peoples.

Jewish renewal helps to heal the world by promoting justice, freedom, responsibility, caring for all life and the earth that sustains all life —tikkun olam

FOUR WORLDS, EIGHTEEN AFFIRMATIONS, ONE COVENANT: ALEPH STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal strive to open ourselves to awareness of the sacred in all of existence. We strive to create Jewish paths of prayer and meditation, study, communal life--practice, and public action that embody this outlook.

We see ourselves in a crucial position at these times of paradigm shift and are committed to help develop a spirituality through which Judaism can transform itself to continued viability in the service of tikkun olam -- the healing and balancing of this planet. Together we affirm principles and values that flow together from the Four Worlds of Being, Knowing, Relating, and Doing:

In the world of Atzilut, Being:

1. We are committed to the search for a deeper and higher understanding of the spiritual realities in our lives and of our cosmic purposes.
2. What/Whom the traditions experienced as transcendent God we meditate on and worship in ways that honor both the tradition and our intuition as to how we are addressed by that God in the present.
3. We see the human spirit and the Divine as one evolving process that calls upon us all for the interaction we call Godwrestling ("Yisrael") and "Gathering the Sparks."
4. We intend to open ourselves to the transformation of consciousness and action that is resulting from our living in a time when the Feminine is emerging.

In the world of Briya, Knowing:

5. In the sacred texts of the Jewish people and the writings of Jewish spiritual teachers of previous generations we find enormous wisdom and insight that draw on Eternal truth and continue to have great potential to aid human beings in their quest for personal growth, empowerment, and healing -- as well as those elements that are historically limited and need to be transcended. We will study,

teach, and make accessible these texts and writings with all those who wish to encounter them, wrestle with their content and meaning, and decide what to draw on and what to leave behind.

6. Among our guides to interpretation of Torah are the Prophetic, Kabbalistic, and Hassidic traditions as they are now being transformed in the light of contemporary feminist spirituality, process theology, and our own direct experience of the Divine.

7. We are committed to consult with other spiritual traditions, sharing with them what we have found in our concerned research and trying out what we have learned from them, to see whether it enhances the special truths of the Jewish path.

In the world of Yetzira, Relating --

8. We are committed to foster a safe environment for spiritual growth in which what we are learning about the human psyche and spirit is honored, and through which we enable the self to embody the Presence.

9. Our communities strive to be collective and egalitarian in leadership and decision-making.

10. Women and men are full and equal partners in every aspect of our communal Jewish life.

11. We recognize respectful and mutual expressions of adult human sexuality as potentially sacred expressions of love, and therefore we strive to create communities that include and welcome a variety of constellations of intimate relationships and family forms -- among them gay, lesbian, and heterosexual relationships as well as single life-paths.

12. We will reach out toward including all who seek but have not yet found a spiritual home in the Jewish community or a satisfying connection to the Jewish people and its traditions and teachings.

In the world of Asiyah, Doing:

13. In order to heal the world, we seek to re-balance the power relationships among human beings and all other species and aspects of the Earth, as well as among races, peoples, faith-communities, classes, genders, age groupings, and other human groups so that each can live in shared peace and dignity. We will ourselves treat with respect and open-mindedness those who belong to other peoples and walk other paths than our own, even if we feel compelled to oppose their actions in the world. These efforts we view as integral to Jewish spirituality and action.

14. We believe that the healthy expression of Jewish people requires a vital self-governing Jewish community in the Land of Israel (which in our generation has taken the form of the State of Israel); Jewishly vital, varied, and creative communities in many places throughout the world; and a continuous and open-hearted interchange between all these communities. We will try to embody such connections in our individual lives and in building the networks of our communities.

15. We welcome with surprise and excitement the discovery that God's will for our generations of Jews is that we learn to live in what we understand as the Land of Israel face to face with our cousins the children of Abraham and Hagar through Ishmael. We support every effort to do so in mutual recognitions of each other's right to freedom, self-determination, security, and peace --- as part of our own share in the task that all peoples face in this generation, of learning to share in peace and freedom the great unboundaried earth.

16. We intend to treat with respect other Jews and other Jewish communities whose approaches to Jewish life differ from our own, even if we feel compelled to oppose their statements or their actions.

17. We are committed to applying all of these values and principles to the renewal and revitalization of our personal and communal ceremonies, liturgies, rituals, life-paths, and spiritual practices, and to our processes for collective decisions-making and collective actions.

18. We will help in the formation of communities based on these values and principles.