

RESOURCES & CURRICULA  
COMMUNITY BUILDING  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
ORDINATIONS  
INTENSIVES  
RETREATS



ALEPH

# Alliance for Jewish Renewal





# OUR MISSION

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**ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal** is a worldwide effort to fully embrace a contemporary egalitarian Judaism as a profound spiritual practice and social transformer, reaching beyond denominational boundaries and institutional structures.

**ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal** brings spiritual vitality and passion into the daily lives of Jews through programs that empower leadership, build communities, and generate powerful experiences and practical resources.

## OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES

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### TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMS

- **The ALEPH Kallah:** International week-long biennial festival of joyous Jewish learning, adult and children's programming, music, art, drama with upwards of 800 enthusiastic participants.
- **Ruach Ha'aretz:** Alternate year Jewish Renewal "encounter" retreat with creative educational programming for adults and families.
- **Kol Zimra: Chant Leaders Training Program.** Sacred text becomes our modality for healing, community-building, deep inner exploration, the doorway into meditative states, cultivating *midot*, connection with the ancestors, with God and with our deepest truth.
- **Embodying Spirit, En-spiriting Body** awakens and expands participants' experience of the body as vehicle of the soul and as an expression of the Divine in all Four Worlds. Our core practice is allowing the somatic self to become the ground of prayer, learning, and teaching.
- **The Sage-ing® Mentorship Program** teaches participants to become Sages and to mentor others in the work of Spiritual Eldering®; to become wisdom keepers and teach others how to discover their life's wisdom; and to learn about the soul's journey and guide others in their own soul's progress.
- **Secrets My Grandmother Told Me: A Wisdom School** is a journey of re-discovery, continuing a transmission of wisdom taught to Reb Nadya by her Grandmother.
- **Graceful Transitions.** Learn to walk with people on their final journey. Acquire the skills and support necessary to care for yourself while giving the gift of compassionate companionship.
- Adult and Birthright excursions to Israel.

### TRAINING CLERGY & LAY LEADERSHIP

- **The ALEPH Ordination Program** is a full-scale seminary utilizing intensive residential and distance-learning modalities to train rabbis, cantors, rabbinic pastors (chaplains), and spiritual directors.
- **Beit Midrash Distance Learning Program** offers four levels of Hebrew instruction, Intro to Jewish Renewal and Reb Zalman's Thought, as well as a practical and conceptual introduction to a spectrum of traditional Jewish beliefs and practices.
- **Lay Leadership Certificate Program.** Grow as an educated, empowered, and inspirational lay leader in your Jewish community. Craft a mentored, distance-learning and retreat-based program unique to your calling – in liturgy and ritual, social change, teaching, the expressive arts... or something not yet imagined.

### OUTREACH & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Provide **support to renewal communities worldwide**, and offer renewal resources to all Jewish congregations and communities.
- Enter into **coalitions** with Jewish environmental and peace organizations.
- Publish the visionary works of **Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi** and other Jewish renewal-inspired teachers — books, pamphlets, videos, educational curricula, *siddurim*, music, art.
- **Create Renewal curricula** for projects that bring Jewish practice and *halakhic* (traditional) wisdom to ecology and sustainability endeavors.



An ever-growing number of both affiliated (Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative) and denominationally unaffiliated congregations, communities and *havurot* are joining ALEPH. Affiliation brings your community into a network of creativity, support, education, sharing and fellowship.

Learn more about congregational membership: visit [kolaleph.org](http://kolaleph.org) or call (215) 247-9700.

## WHAT IS JEWISH RENEWAL?

**Jewish Renewal is a phenomenon, not a denomination.**

It resembles Reform Judaism in some ways, Reconstructionism in other ways, and even Orthodoxy — especially Hassidism — in some important ways. But it is not a formal denomination with a formal hierarchy or structure. It is the ongoing creative project of a generation of Jews who are seeking to renew Judaism and bring its spiritual and ethical vitality into our lives and communities, and at the same time embrace a global vision of the role of all human beings and spiritual paths in the transformation of life on this precious planet.

Jewish Renewal is dedicated to revealing Judaism's inner spirit and nurturing the spiritual life of Jews. Jewish Renewal draws significant spiritual inspiration from the legacy of Jewish mystical and Hassidic traditions, which is expressed in the cultivation of traditional practices such as meditation, chanting, and davening and the study of traditional Kabbalistic and Hassidic sources to enhance both individual and communal practice.

Jewish Renewal seeks to transform and renew the *kavanah* (intention) with which Jews of all kinds practice Judaism.

Jewish Renewal is a “movement” in the sense of a wave in motion, a grassroots effort to discover the modern meaning of Judaism as a spiritual practice. Jewish Renewalists see “renewal” as a process reaching beyond denominational boundaries and institutional structures, more similar to the multi-centered civil-rights or women's movements than to contemporary denominations. This renewal process is happening in Jewish music, liturgy, midrash, education, politics, etc., in synagogues as well as *havurot*, and even in “secular” settings.

In a deep way, Jewish Renewal is built on the idea that we live in a transformative moment in time, in which a **new paradigm** for spiritual life is being developed. Jewish Renewal draws heavily on the thought of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, which is a loving critique of the limitations of traditional Rabbinic Judaism and a call to continue the ongoing renewal of Jewish life in our time, as the Talmudic rabbis did in theirs.

Jewish Renewal actively seeks a relationship with God as the immanent reality that suffuses all creation and from time to time calls to us from beyond creation as well. This changes how we view the earth, the human race, the Jewish people, the relationship of human beings to the rest of creation — everything.

Jewish Renewal is neither “*halakhic*” nor “anti-*halakhic*” but “**neo-halakhic**.” Just as Rabbinic Judaism involved transcending the *halakhah* of Temple sacrifice, so Jewish Renewal seeks to go beyond the limitations of traditional Rabbinic Judaism to forge a new *halakhah* in which Judaism is conscious of its place in an interconnected world. This new *halakhah*, for instance, includes expansion of the practice of *kashrut* to include ecological and ethical criteria, a new exploration of the concept of work as it applies to both the personal and societal Shabbat, and re-examination of intimacy and intimate relationships.

Jewish Renewal has long been committed to a **fully egalitarian** approach to Jewish life and welcomes the public and creative input of those who were traditionally excluded from the process of forming the Jewish tradition.

## In Jewish Renewal:

- women and men are fully equal & participatory in shaping the future of Judaism;
- those who have often been marginalized in Jewish life are welcomed and honored;
- there is respect for and often learning from other spiritual paths (e.g., Buddhism, Sufism, etc.),
- people seek to heal the earth and society through seeking peace, justice, and ecological wholeness;
- chant, meditation, dance, and drama are encouraged as ways of connecting with God & Torah;
- people desire to *embody* wisdom rather than etherealize or intellectualize it;
- people strive to personally sense God as suffusing the world with Divinity.



ALEPH  
envisions a  
joyous,  
creative,  
spiritually rich,  
socially progressive,  
and earth-aware  
contemporary Judaism.



This vision arises out of our search for a renewed personal connection to the God of our ancestors and the legacy of our tradition, in service of our highest dreams for the future of our world.

Renew your connection.

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