

July 2008

ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics

ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Policy and Procedure regarding

BREACH OF PROFESSIONAL TRUST: SEXUAL AND FINANCIAL ETHICS

Preamble

Jewish clergy and *kli kodesh* (lay and ordained people who are “holy vessels”) are called to be spiritual leaders and are expected to embody the highest ethical standards in both professional and personal lives. It is imperative that spiritual leaders, whether ordained or not, conduct themselves with honesty, morality, and integrity in all dealings with those whose lives they touch. While there are differences between the roles of lay leaders and ordained rabbis, between those who receive fees for their spiritual leadership and those who volunteer, between those who act as sole leader of a community and those who are part of a cadre of volunteers, certain basic ethical principles apply to all of these. Therefore, all spiritual leaders of ALEPH communities are expected to make a commitment to ethical professional conduct. Those who belong to OHALAH are subject to its policies and procedures, on which this document is based. Other spiritual leaders — both those who are not ordained and ordained leaders who are not members of OHALAH — who fail to maintain these standards will be subject to rebuke and revocation of individual ALEPH membership.

Ethical Guidelines

1. All spiritual leaders of ALEPH communities shall abide by the ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics and 18 Principles, with special emphasis on creating safe environments in our synagogues, institutions, and Jewish communities ensuring the equality of all adult participants in all aspects of communal Jewish life.
2. All spiritual leaders of ALEPH communities shall be scrupulous in their financial dealings and shall be held fully accountable for all monies, other than their own private resources, over which they have access to and/or control as a rabbi, cantor or spiritual leader, in accordance with the highest values of Jewish ethical teachings.
3. Grounds for removal from ALEPH membership or teaching privileges include: misuse of the spiritual and educational power of the rabbinate, cantorship or other spiritual leadership positions for illicit sexual, financial, or other personal advantage; conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude; fraudulent misrepresentation of professional credentials; or failure to fulfill contractual obligations in the absence of mitigating circumstances.
4. Spiritual leaders shall conduct their interpersonal relations in accordance with the

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Torah's teachings regarding kevod haberiyot/collegiality, lashon hara/gossip, hasagat gevul/personal boundaries, ladun lekhaif zechut/respect, and teshuvah/repentance. In the clearest words, our Torah directs us: "You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another . . . Do not pervert justice. Do not give special consideration to the poor nor show respect to the great . . . You must love your neighbor as (you love) yourself." [Lev. 19:11,15,18]

A. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. All spiritual leaders of ALEPH communities must commit to act in an ethical manner consistent with the highest principles of Judaism, particularly towards their congregations, congregants, and colleagues. Consistent with that commitment, spiritual leaders of ALEPH communities must adhere to these principles and procedures to guide leaders, congregations and congregants who might confront ethical issues within the scope of this resolution.

2. The ethical principles contained in this resolution are intended: (1) to protect against abuse of rabbinic authority as well as abuse of authority of other spiritual leadership, and to prevent the appearance of such abuse; and (2) to preserve the integrity of the clergy-congregant relationship.

3. Abuse of Rabbinic or Other Spiritual Authority. By virtue of their titles and positions, clergy are invested with authority that entails a concomitant responsibility to avoid using such authority for personal gain -- financial or otherwise. Clergy's primary consideration at all times must be the interest of the congregant/constituent, congregation, agency, or institution engaging his/her services. This responsibility is part of a sacred covenant between God and the Jewish people. The exploitation of this spiritual authority for self-interest constitutes a breach of the trust implied in relations with congregants and other constituents.

4. Preservation of Clergy-Congregant Relationship. The spiritual leader-congregant relationship depends upon a mutual expectation that the relationship will remain primarily professional and pastoral. Effective spiritual leadership of necessity involves conveying empathy, connection, and warmth to congregants, which can sometimes blur clergy-congregant boundaries. We recognize the humanity of clergy and congregants, and the existence of unavoidable and difficult dilemmas in negotiating the relationship between spiritual leaders and congregants. Nonetheless, spiritual leaders are responsible for establishing and preserving appropriate boundaries that ensure the integrity of the clergy-congregant relationship.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. In this resolution, "congregation" may also refer to a havurah, school, Jewish

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organization, or other institution served professionally by a spiritual leader.

2. In this resolution, "congregant" may also include a student, counselee or layperson.
3. In this resolution, "married" includes one in a partnered or committed relationship.
4. In this resolution, "clergy", spiritual leader or "kli kodesh" include rabbis, cantors, lay leaders, mishpocha group leaders, workshop teachers and other spiritual leaders.

C. WHO IS COVERED BY THIS CODE AND ITS PROCEDURES

1. Kli kodesh at any event produced by ALEPH, including but not limited to the ALEPH Kallah, ALEPH Caravans, Ruach HaAretz, C-DEEP, ALEPH tele-courses, and any ALEPH event taking place at a retreat center such as the Elat Chayyim Center for Jewish Spirituality at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center
2. Teachers, Directors of Study or Vaad members for any of ALEPH's ordination programs.
3. Kli kodesh serving a community that has chosen to join the ALEPH Communities.
4. Students in any ALEPH ordination program from the Fall 2006 forward.
5. Graduates of any ALEPH ordination program who graduate after Fall 2006.
6. Traveling scholars, teachers and service leaders who teach or lead services as a guest at an ALEPH Community.

D. HOW KLEY K'DOSHEM ARE NOTIFIED THEY ARE BOUND BY THIS CODE AND ITS PROCEDURES

1. Kley k'doshim at any ALEPH event, at some point before they are hired or invited to volunteer as kli kodesh at that event, will be required to sign a statement which notifies them they are bound by the ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics and that any alleged violations, past or present, will be investigated by the ALEPH Ethics Committee.
2. Any teachers or Directors of Study or Vaad members associated with any of ALEPH's ordination programs, before they take on those tasks, will be required to sign a statement which notifies them they are bound by the ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics and that any alleged violations, past or present, will be investigated by the ALEPH Ethics Committee.

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3. ALEPH Communities must give and ask their kli kodesh to sign a statement which notifies them they are bound by the ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics and that any alleged violations, past or present, will be investigated by the ALEPH Ethics Committee.

4. Starting with current students in all of the ALEPH ordination programs (rabbinical, cantorial, rabbinic pastoral, spiritual director), all students will be required to sign a statement which notifies them they are bound by the ALEPH Professional Code of Ethics and that any alleged violations will be investigated by the ALEPH Ethics Committee. If a student leaves the program before graduation, they would no longer be under ALEPH Ethics Committee jurisdiction based on their previous status as students. However, once a student signs the statement and is ordained through ALEPH, they remain under the jurisdiction of the ALEPH Ethics Committee regardless of their future employment situation.

5. ALEPH's administrative offices shall keep:

- a. A comprehensive file of all the signed statements mentioned above, as well as,
- b. The statements signed by traveling scholars, teachers and service leaders who don't fall into the categories outlined above, and who are asked to sign by the ALEPH Communities where they teach or otherwise serve.

ALEPH will also post, on its website, a list of anyone who has ever signed one of these statements. Each person required to sign a statement for any of the above reasons need only sign one statement once. That statement will then apply to their participation in any ALEPH related activity.

E. GENERAL ETHICS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

1. The purpose of ethics procedures under this resolution is to determine whether a kli kodesh acted unethically in his/her professional role. If so, what steps should be taken to respond to the situation?

2. These procedures are based on a concern with fairness and with the protection of the kli kodesh, the complainant, the congregation, and ALEPH and its members. Respect for all parties shall be shown.

3. Hearings and investigations are not criminal proceedings. They shall operate on principles of fairness, but are not bound by rules of criminal or civil courts, and not by halacha. They may be decided on the basis of the preponderance of evidence.

4. The confidentiality of all parties shall be preserved throughout the process unless they request otherwise except as specifically provided below.

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5. The Chair of the Ethics Committee shall see that written records are kept at all stages of the proceedings.

6. Since the inquiry concerns the ethical and professional integrity of a spiritual leader and by implication ALEPH, proceedings shall not be vacated on the basis of a spiritual leader resigning his/her position, reaching a financial settlement, or resignation from ALEPH.

7. No member of the Ethics Committee or the Board of Directors of ALEPH on appeal shall participate in any case in which she/he has a close relationship to one of the parties or other potential conflict of interest.

8. If the spiritual leader against whom a complaint has been brought refuses to respond or cooperate, the Hearing Committee appointed by the Ethics Committee will still proceed, bearing in mind the presumption of innocence and the other general principles in this section. See paragraph I(7) below for description of Hearing Committee.

9. ALEPH undertakes to bear the costs of investigating a complaint, including those associated with the Hearing Committee visiting the affected community to gather information.

F. FINANCIAL AND OTHER BREACHES OF TRUST

1. It is unethical to use funds of the congregation for personal financial gain without the knowledge and written consent of the congregation. It is unethical to exploit a spiritual leader's relationship with a congregant, staff member, or colleague for personal financial gain.

2. It is unethical to misrepresent one's professional education, experience, or credentials.

3. As suggested by Section A, there can be other breaches of professional trust that are not enumerated in this resolution.

G. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

1. Spiritual leaders' behavior toward congregants that is intended to communicate caring can, on occasion, be misinterpreted by congregants as inappropriate blurring of clergy-congregant boundaries. Such behavior can significantly impair spiritual leaders-congregant relations and should be avoided where possible. Spiritual leaders are obliged to be especially sensitive to the danger of such misperception and to avoid behavior that could reasonably be misconstrued by a congregant. In particular, spiritual leaders should

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be sensitive to appropriate locations and hours for meetings, as well as appropriate and inappropriate physical contact and comments.

2. In the event that a congregant misinterprets a spiritual leader's concern as a romantic or sexual interest, it is the spiritual leader's responsibility to state unequivocally that such a relationship is not appropriate. In such a situation, the spiritual leader is strongly urged to seek advice from colleagues and/or other professionals.

H. DEFINITIONS: PROFESSIONAL SEXUAL ETHICS

1. Sexual Harassment. It is unethical to engage in sexual or other harassment of a congregant, staff member, student, colleague or other person with whom a spiritual leader deals professionally. Sexual harassment is defined as, but not limited to, deliberate or repeated seductive speech, sexual comments, gestures, physical contacts, and inappropriate visual attention such as leering. It may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2. Unethical Sexual Activity. It is unethical for a spiritual leader to engage in, or attempt to engage in, sexual activity with a minor, an unwilling adult, a married or partnered congregant, or a congregant or other person whom a spiritual leader is counseling or aiding in life cycle events, conversion, or other pastoral situations. It is also unethical for a spiritual leader to engage in, or attempt to engage in, sexual activity with anyone who is similarly dependent on the spiritual leader. Such sexual relationships are unethical even if suggested or welcomed by the congregant. It is the responsibility of spiritual leaders to maintain appropriate boundaries. Sexual activity may include intimate or unwanted physical contact as well as intercourse.

3. Spiritual Leaders and Congregants. Although not automatically unethical, any sexual relationship between a spiritual leader and a congregant is fraught with risks for both parties and is illegal in some states. These risks include ambiguities about the perceived power of the clergy, the spiritual leader's ability to provide future pastoral care for the congregant, and the future of both parties in the congregation. A sexual relationship effectively ends the clergy-congregant or clergy-constituent relationship between the parties, and the spiritual leader is responsible in assisting the congregant/constituent in obtaining rabbinic or other spiritual leadership support elsewhere if necessary. Spiritual leaders in small or isolated communities should be especially aware that a problematic relationship may make it difficult for the congregant to stay in the synagogue and result in the congregant's loss of a significant Jewish connection. A sexual relationship between a spiritual leader and a congregant is potentially an ethical violation, and to be avoided where possible. Spiritual leaders are strongly urged to seek guidance from colleagues or other professionals before beginning such a relationship.

4. It is unethical to engage in sexual activity with an adult that is prohibited in paragraph H.2 within one year of the termination of a pastoral or other professional clerical relationship. There must be a full termination of relationship to help break the power imbalance and thus allow the potential of a healthy, mutual relationship to grow. This does not mean that any relationship after one year is automatically ethical, but that it will be assessed on a case-by- case basis. Some states and professional organizations prohibit relationships for longer periods following the termination of a professional relationship.

I. CRIMINAL ACTS

If it comes to the Committee's attention that a kli kodesh has been charged with any violent criminal act or a criminal act which would violate this Code, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will proceed as if the Ethics Committee has received a written complaint on that matter and the Ethics Committee will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether to proceed with an investigation and hearing.

J. SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

1. The Chair of ALEPH's Ethics Committee is the central person to receive complaints or initiate action under this resolution. The Chair of ALEPH's Board shall designate a vice-Chair or an alternate in case the Chair of the Ethics Committee is unavailable, or excuses him/herself due to conflict of interest or other extenuating circumstances.

2. The Ethics Committee may receive complaints from a congregant, congregational officer, rabbinic or cantorial association, affected party, other layperson, or colleague. Any member of the Ethics Committee may file a complaint, stating the reasonable grounds for further inquiry.

3. To be accepted by the Ethics Committee for investigation, a complaint must contain specific information about the approximate dates, location, and type of alleged misconduct. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Ethics Committee to inform the complainant of the procedures and that the accused spiritual leader will be informed of the substance of the complaint.

4. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will assist any potential complainant in filing a complaint promptly. While there is no explicit time limit, the interests of fairness are better served when a complaint is presented within six months of an alleged violation.

5. The Chair, after consultation with at least one member of the Ethics Committee, will submit to the committee, in writing, his/her consideration whether there is a

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sufficient cause to investigate the complaint in more detail. This shall be submitted within two weeks of the complaint (paragraph I.2). If the Chair determines the case does not merit an inquiry, the other committee members will have two weeks to agree with this determination by a simple majority or if there is a majority disagreement, the committee shall proceed with a formal inquiry of the complaint. If it is determined there is not sufficient cause the complainant shall be notified in writing.

6. In any case involving alleged abuse of a minor, the Chair shall immediately report the matter to the appropriate legal authorities.

7. If there is sufficient cause to investigate the complaint in more detail, within one month of the decision to investigate, the Chair of the Ethics Committee shall appoint a Hearing Committee of at least three to conduct appropriate proceedings on the matter. At least one member of the committee shall be an ALEPH Board member. In allegations of sexual misconduct, at least one member shall be of each gender.

8. The Chair of the Ethics Committee shall offer to assist in finding a friend (chaver) or mentor to help the person and/or institution understand the procedure and offer support through the process. These friends (chavarim) or mentors should be made available to the alleged victim(s), congregation/institution, and support staff. A chaver or mentor may not be a member of the Ethics Committee or a member of ALEPH's Board of Directors. It is not intended that the chaver or mentor play an active role in the proceedings. In order to preclude this from occurring, the chaver or mentor will be asked not to speak during the proceedings.

9. As soon as possible, and no later than the appointment of a Hearing Committee, the accused spiritual leader shall be notified by certified mail of the complaint and asked to submit a written response to the allegation. If the spiritual leader fails to respond within thirty days, the investigation will still continue. The complainant will be notified of the substance of the response, and if appropriate, be given an opportunity to submit a reply in writing.

10. Subsequent to notifying the accused spiritual leader, but before convening a hearing, the Chair of the Ethics Committee shall notify the President or another appropriate officer of the congregation (or other institution where the accused serves as spiritual leader or is otherwise employed) of the allegations, without revealing names given in confidence. With the spiritual leader's consent, the substance of his/her written response will also be shared. The Ethics Committee Chair shall inform the President about Ethics Committee time lines and procedures, and provide a copy of this document. The Ethics Chair shall also describe resources available to the congregation for dealing with this matter. The accused spiritual leader shall be informed of this notification. The Ethics Chair will emphasize to the President the desirability of confidentiality, when appropriate.

11. Placement. ALEPH does not have a placement service or a staff person to provide assistance with spiritual leaders' placement. Members of OHALAH are invited to post public service announcements on OHALAH's general e-mail list regarding job opportunities they believe may be of interest to fellow OHALAH members. At the time that the Chair of the Ethics Committee notifies the accused of the complaint, he/she shall ask the President of OHALAH to suspend all job placement assistance available to OHALAH, including access to OHALAH's e-mail lists and website until the resolution of the ethics complaint.

12. Communication Regarding a Pending Complaint. Immediately upon receipt of an ethics complaint, the Chair of the Ethics Committee shall inform the Chair of the ALEPH Board and the Executive Director of ALEPH of the name of the accused. The Chair shall immediately inform the full Board of Directors that an ethics complaint has been received and shall invite all of ALEPH's divisions and constituent organizations to discuss with the Chair of the ALEPH Board and the Executive Director of ALEPH the names of any candidates it or its constituents may be intending to hire. Without providing any substantive information regarding the ethics investigation, the Chair or Executive Director shall advise such persons within the ALEPH organizations if an investigation is underway. If the accused is a student or teacher in one of ALEPH's ordination programs, or a member of the Vaad ("academic council") that oversees the ordination programs, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will inform the Dean of the name of the accused and state that an investigation is underway

13. Broader Public Communication in Exceptional Circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, it will be necessary to immediately publicize the existence of an ethics complaint. For this action to be taken, the following circumstances must exist: (a) the accused kli kodesh must currently be in a teaching or congregational role and therefore in a position to cause serious harm to other people; (b) the Ethics Committee or Board of Directors meeting in emergency session must find, based on the information available, that there probably was misconduct as defined elsewhere in this Code and the accused kli kodesh probably committed that misconduct; (c) the alleged misconduct must constitute criminal behavior that would be regarded as a felony in most jurisdictions. If either the Ethics Committee or the Board of Directors makes such a finding, then either the ALEPH Chair or the Executive Director of ALEPH may issue a public statement that an ethics investigation regarding serious misconduct is pending against the accused kli kodesh and that appropriate action is being taken to investigate the complaint and protect the community.

14. Suspension With Pay. Depending on the nature of the complaint, following appointment of a Hearing Committee and notification of the congregational or institutional President or other officer, the Chair of the Ethics Committee, in consultation with the ALEPH Chair and the Rabbinic Director of ALEPH in his/her capacity as a member of the Board of Governors of OHALAH, may recommend to the congregation

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temporary suspension of the spiritual leader with pay and benefits, until the Hearing Committee meets and the Ethics Committee can make a decision. It is understood that suspension with pay may be of mutual benefit in a difficult situation, without prejudice to a particular outcome. In the event that the spiritual leader is suspended, the Ethics Committee will make all reasonable efforts to render a decision within three months from the date upon which it is informed that the spiritual leader was suspended.

15. Congregational Officer Leave of Absence. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Ethics Committee Chair may recommend that any complainant in a position of authority in the congregation whose work involves the spiritual leader (e.g. congregational officer, committee Chair) take a leave of absence until the matter is resolved.

16. Hearing Committee:

a. The hearing committee shall review the written complaint, the accused's written response to the complaint, and the complainant's written reply to the response, if any. The Hearing Committee may request that the parties submit further written testimony, statements, or documents, as appropriate.

b. If deemed necessary and appropriate, the Hearing Committee may conduct additional proceedings on the telephone or using other technology, for the purpose of, but not limited to, the taking of additional testimony, hearing arguments, conducting mediation efforts, or for any other purpose that may assist it in resolving the complaint.

c. If deemed necessary and appropriate, the Hearing Committee may conduct additional proceedings in person, for the purpose of, but not limited to, the taking of additional testimony, hearing arguments, conducting mediation efforts, or for any other purpose that may assist it in resolving the complaint. The Hearing Committee may hold a number of sessions. In consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee, they may solicit testimony from others who have direct knowledge or professional expertise relevant to the complaint.

d. The Hearing Committee may recommend that the accused spiritual leader meet with a mental health professional with experience in this field, chosen by the Ethics Committee for a professional assessment to be communicated to the committee.

e. During the above processes, either party may recommend to the Hearing Committee that it seek to interview particular witnesses or seek particular documents. The Hearing Committee retains the discretion to limit the number, length and order of all submissions.

f. Within a reasonable time following the completion of its proceedings, the Hearing Committee shall present a written report to the Ethics Committee, with findings

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of fact regarding the merit of the complaint.

17. The Ethics Committee shall meet within a reasonable of the written report. A quorum of three members who were not part of the Hearing Committee is necessary for this meeting that may be held electronically or by telephone. In addition to the report of the Hearing Committee, the Ethics Committee (or subcommittee) may receive additional written statements from the complainant, the accused or their advocates.

18. Ethics Committee Actions. The Ethics Committee may recommend a number of actions, including but not limited to:

a. No Cause for Action

b. Advisory. This is an educational message to the spiritual leader for an inadvertent or minor violation. It may include recommendations.

c. Reprimand. This action is a significant reproof or rebuke of a spiritual leader. It is based upon an assessment that the reprimand is adequate to ensure that the unethical or inappropriate actions will not recur and where the committee feels that the individual can continue to function as a spiritual leader. A reprimand may include probation.

d. Suspension from OHALAH. (*This paragraph refers only to OHALAH members and is included here for informational purposes.*) This is subject to approval of the OHALAH Board of Governors. This shall mean a discontinuation of membership privileges in OHALAH for a fixed period of time. This action is taken in a case where there is a major ethics violation and the continued functioning of the spiritual leader may be threatening to the well-being of the spiritual leader or others, but where a period of therapy or other treatment may result in his/her future return to active work. The person under suspension may not take any active role in ALEPH. Suspension from the organization will be communicated to ALEPH members. It is automatically combined with probation (defined below in section 18).

e. Expulsion from ALEPH. This is subject to approval of ALEPH's Board of Directors. This step is recommended when in the judgment of the Ethics Committee, the spiritual leader cannot continue to function as a *kli kodesh* or participate in ALEPH-sponsored events. The accused spiritual leader facing expulsion has the right to present testimony to the Board of Directors. Expulsion from the organization will be communicated to ALEPH members.

19. Probation:

a. Probation may be required in case of reprimand and will be required in case of suspension. The Ethics Committee shall monitor compliance. The Ethics Committee may

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require financial restitution, apology, or psychological treatment (in-patient or out-patient) or limitations on employment settings as conditions of probation.

b. The key criterion for ending probation will be the Ethics Committee's assessment that it is reasonably sure the violation will not recur, and the violator's continued service as spiritual leader does not pose a threat to the well-being of the spiritual leader or others.

c. The length of the probation may be extended if deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee. Likewise, at any time during the probationary period the Ethics Committee may require a different action based on new information, a new understanding of previous information, non-compliance with the terms of probation or non-cooperation with the Ethics Committee.

d. Probation may not extend beyond three years without a review by the Ethics Committee. Probation, an extension of probation, or its conditions, may be appealed by the clergy person under probation to the ALEPH Board of Directors.

20. Appeal. Any decision of the Ethics Committee may be appealed by the accused or the complainant to the ALEPH Board of Directors within thirty days of the decision. The Board will render a final decision by a majority vote within two months of the appeal.

21. Appeal of Suspension or Expulsion. In the case of an appeal of suspension or expulsion approved by the Board of Directors, the Board will appoint an appeal committee consisting of at least three people who previously have not heard the case to consider the appeal. This appeal committee shall deliver a recommendation to the Board of Directors that will render a final decision by majority vote within two months of the appeal.

22. The final decision of the Ethics Committee will be simultaneously shared with personal letters to the complainant, the accused, and the congregational or institutional President or other officer. The Chair of the ALEPH Board, the Executive Director of ALEPH, and the Rabbinic Director of ALEPH shall also receive written notice of final decisions. An advisory or reprimand shall not be publicized to ALEPH membership or to the Board of Directors of ALEPH by name, although the general circumstances may be described in the Ethics Committee's annual report. It is at the accused spiritual leader's option as to whether a finding of no cause for action will be publicized to the membership of ALEPH and/or the Board of Directors of ALEPH. Suspension or expulsion shall be communicated by name to any rabbinic, cantorial and professional organizations of which the clergy person is a member, and the Board of Directors of ALEPH, which shall convey this information to its divisions and constituents. The Chair of ALEPH may also share information regarding suspension or expulsion with the congregational or

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institutional organization with which the spiritual leader's congregation is affiliated.

23. Consultation. The Chair of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Ethics Committee may seek advice at any stage from professionals and others who have expert knowledge useful in the particular case at hand.

24. Variation in Timetable. The timetable above is to provide a prompt and fair inquiry. The Ethics Committee Chair may extend a deadline above if necessary. Any delay or change in the timetable will be communicated in writing by the Ethics Committee to all the affected parties.

25. Inquiries. Confidentiality is crucial. However, when it is deemed to be in the best interest of protecting the public, ALEPH, and its divisions and constituents, the Chair of the Ethics Committee may respond to inquiries about allegations regarding a specific person covered by this Code. The Chairperson may reveal: a) that an investigation of the alleged violation is underway; b) that the investigation has been resolved but is confidential; or c) that the person has been suspended or expelled. No other details are to be revealed.

K. FOLLOW-UP and Support for ALEPH members

1. ALEPH undertakes a particular responsibility to a spiritual leader who is the victim of unsubstantiated rumors, and will do everything possible to provide support to the victimized spiritual leader and assist in the healing of the affected community.

2. If there is a finding of unethical behavior by a spiritual leader, ALEPH recognizes an obligation to offer continuing concern, spiritual advice and support to the victim, the congregation, and support staff even after the conclusion of formal proceedings.

The Chair of ALEPH should consult with the Chair of the Ethics Committee, the Hearing Committee, and the victim's advocate on appropriate ways of offering continued contact and moral support.