

Eighth Annual Semikha Ceremony **Rabbanit Jennifer Kotzker Geretz** **Core Semikha Class of 2020**



Orthodox. Female. Rabbi. For years I prayed for the strength and the opportunity to transform these disparate parts of my identity into a joyful, harmonious whole. My individual struggle was a small part of the larger eternal work of bringing the perfect Torah into an imperfect world.

אודך כי עניתני ותהילי לישועה

G-d, I praise you, for you have answered me and become my salvation.

The emergence of women Torah scholars, rabbis, and leaders in our day shows that we can rise to new spiritual heights by fulfilling Judaism's ancient mandate to respond to the cry of those who have been othered, disparaged and disenfranchised.

אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פנה

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

I owe a great debt to the learned, holy leaders and scholars who forged this path before me, and to my colleagues and friends who walked this path with me-

מאת ה' היתה זאת היא נפלאת בעינינו

Each one of you is the work of HaShem, and each of you is marvelous in my eyes.

I am grateful beyond words to the people with whom I am privileged to share a life - my husband and best friend, Rabbi Daniel Geretz and my children, who have given me love and support at every step, my teachers, colleagues and friends in the Maayan community and also at St. Barnabas hospital, who guide me and support me as I grow into my rabbinate. I thank the Holy Blessed One who formed me in the Divine image and sustained me to reach this milestone –

זה-היום עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו

This is the day the L-rd has made, let us exult and rejoice in it.