



Seventh Annual Semikha Ceremony
June 17, 2019
Opening Remarks from
Abigail Tambor, Board Chair

Please Rise and welcome our students, Alumnae, board of directors and this year's esteemed graduates, as they accompany Yeshivat Maharat's sefer torah, generously donated by Tova Reich.

Rabbis, Rabbot, Maharats, Rabbaniyot, esteemed supporters and friends, it is once again my honor and privilege to welcome you all to Yeshivat Maharat's 7th Ordination Ceremony! For those who do not know me, my name is Abigail Tambor and I am the Chair of the Board of Maharat and the long time emcee of our graduation ceremony. In my sincere dedication to paring the speaking at this event down to the minimum possible, I agreed to take on the position of Chair– thereby ensuring that my words at graduation now serve a two-fold purpose, cutting down the speeches by one. You're Welcome!

In all seriousness, my purpose here tonight is simple. I am not here to provide words of Torah, those will come in abundance from others way more qualified. I am not here to charge our graduates, of whom we are all so very proud, for that will be my colleague and friend Zelda's job, and no one will do it better than she! I am here to tell you about the state of our Union and to let you know that our little Yeshiva is going strong. After tonight, we will have 34 women working out in the field with Orthodox ordination. They are teachers, pastoral leaders, chaplains and entrepreneurs. They are reaching people everyday and sharing their torah with the world. Every year we celebrate with awe and gratitude as the multitude, the Revava, that we envisioned, becomes more of a reality. I am thrilled to report that Yeshiva is also on strong financial and organizational ground. With many thanks to my predecessor, Ariel Groveman Weiner and her extraordinary work with Rabba Sara, we have continued to secure new institutional funding for our programs and transition our loyal donor base to multiyear giving, helping us think creatively and constructively about our programming and our future. We are extremely gratified by our most recent grants from the Jim Joseph Foundation and the Estate of Hilda and Seymore Kessler and their faith in our vision. We reinvisioned our Annual campaign this year, launching our Revava Campaign with great success! We continue to work towards better systems of Recruitment and community engagement, letting people out there know that we are here, what we do and about our vision of an Orthodoxy that is inclusive, warm and inviting. One that welcomes anyone who has Torah to share and a desire to live a life steeped in our multifaceted tradition. We have succeeded in putting women's leadership on the agenda. It is now a focal point of the communal conversation. Where this conversation will lead is still yet to be determined. That we have strong thought partners like YCT, the IRF, Hillel and so many schools and synagogues across the country and the world make our work feel all the more fitting and right. We are moving towards a more righteous and just communal and leadership structure.

And my last job is to introduce someone who truly needs no introduction. Certainly not within these walls. Please join me in welcoming Rabba Sara Hurwitz, my Rabba, my partner, my friend and tireless and fearless leader.