

Eighth Annual Semikha Ceremony

Rabbanit Michal Kohane

Core Semikha Class of 2020



Pesach Sheni. My favorite holiday happens to be in this week's Torah portion, Beha'alotcha, The only holiday in the Torah not commanded by G-d, but created when people demand it in lieu of the Pesach offering they've missed. It's often explained as a model for us always getting "second chances", but that's exactly not what it's about, because otherwise, every holiday would have a second, and as we know, they don't.

Rather, Pesach Sheni is about us not waiting passively for things to happen through miracles, signs and wonders from "above", but instead noticing what's missing and seeing it as an opportunity; a space that was left for us to act positively; to add, repair and embellish the world around us from "below", with knowledge, care and, even a little bit of *chutzpa*.

Pesach Sheni is the only Torah holiday in the Hebrew month of Iyar, perhaps anticipating the future Israel holidays we recently celebrated, all humanly added with determination, purpose, love and hope. And it therefore may be no wonder that this is the parsha of our graduation, for Maharat, too, shares that spirit. Today, I am honored, proud and thankful to be counted in its legacy.

Speaking of which, a quick word of gratitude, too brief to express my feelings, to the Holy One, to my parents of blessed memory, and my children, not only for being such beautiful human beings, but for their incredible support of my journey.

Already when I was 5-6-7- years old in my father's shul, they'd call me the little rebbetzin. It was impossible to think that one day I'd be able to earn this title for myself, yet here we are today. Thank you.