

# ORDINATION OF THE 100TH GRADUATE OF THE ISRAELI RABBINICAL PROGRAM

“ Israel is a country awash with rabbis. What difference can one hundred more make? A great difference. We find graduates of HUC-JIR’s Israeli Rabbinical Program at some of the most significant settings within Israeli society. They serve as leaders in informal and formal education; as school principals and directors of early childhood education systems. They run large institutions, and bring congregations to life around Israel. Their voices are heard in the corridors of

power, in print, broadcast, and social media, and in hospital rooms and family moments. They provide leadership, solace, support, and vision. They are part of a remarkable movement of Jewish renewal currently unfolding - alongside all the challenges and conflicts - in contemporary Israel. From the border with Lebanon to the shores of the Red Sea, in makeshift structures and impressive edifices, this first one hundred is preparing the groundwork for the hundreds to follow in their illustrious footsteps. They have established congregations and institutions,



## In the Footsteps of 11 Generations of Rabbis

**RABBI LEORA  
EZRAHI-VERED '17**

### EDUCATION:

B.A. and M.A. from Tel Aviv University

### LEGACY:

- Daughter of first woman to be ordained a rabbi in Israel, Rabbi Naamah Kelman '92, Dean of the Taube Family Campus, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem.
- Great-granddaughter of Rabbi Felix Levy '37, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis who helped overturn the anti-Zionist sentiments codified in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 with the passage of the Columbus Platform of 1937.

- Granddaughter of Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Executive Director of the Conservative Movement’s Rabbinical Assembly, who helped professionalize the American rabbinate and paved the way for the ordination of women.
- Close to her family’s large *haredi* contingent.

### LEADER:

- National Director of Noar Telem (Israeli Reform youth organization).
- Headed Reform *mechinah* in Jaffa.
- Officer in Israel Defense Forces.
- Community service in youth village for kids from Ethiopia and Russia.

### ISRAELI RABBINICAL PROGRAM:

“My classmates grew up secular, Orthodox, or religious Reform, are of different ages and from different places in Israel, but found their center in Reform ideology. I value the connection with the North American students worshipping and studying with us. It is very meaningful to form friendships with colleagues who will be leaders throughout Israel and around the world, so that our communities will one day become friends too.”

### PIONEER:

- Student rabbi at Beit Tefilah Israeli in Tel Aviv, the first liberal community to organize Kabbalat Shabbat and build a communal sukkah at the port of Tel Aviv, drawing over 50,000 Israelis.
- Rabbinical intern at Tzur Hadassah.
- Rabbi of Nigun Halev in Kibbutz Gvat in Emek Israel.

*“Being a congregational rabbi in Israel is an amazing platform to effect significant impact on our larger society.”*

written articles and books, infused communities with meaning, and organized social campaigns. Seventy years after the creation of the State, these men and women are taking an active role in the creation of a new language of non-Orthodox Jewish commitment and creativity.”

**Rabbi Michael Marmor, Ph.D., Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost**



The Ordination Class of the 100th Graduate of the Israeli Rabbinical Program: (from left) Rabbi Yair Tobias '17, Leora Ezrahi-Vered '17, Rinat Safania-Shwartz '17, and David Laor '17

#### **ACTIVIST:**

- Elected Councilwoman for her community of 8,000 residents.
- Created pluralistic public kindergarten, supported by Modern Orthodox residents, and helped them when they wanted to create their mikvah. “What we all do now will affect how our community will be when it grows to 20,000 residents in a few years. We are partnering with secular, Orthodox, Reform, and Modern Orthodox to build a pluralistic community.”

#### **VISION:**

“Being a congregational rabbi is an amazing platform to effect significant impact on individuals, a community, and the larger society. I want to change people’s opinions, have a say on everything in Israeli society from the economy and the Israel-Arab relationship to recreating Jewish traditions, widen pluralistic circles, and dispel the ignorant notion that there is only secular identity or Orthodoxy here. My family provided me with a model of pluralism in action – that’s my vision for the world.”

## FIGHTING FOR ISRAEL’S FUTURE

**Rabbi Noa Sattath '14**, Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) housed in the Rabbi Amy and Gary Perlin Offices at our Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem, exemplifies the impact of the 100 Israeli Reform rabbis ordained in our Israeli Rabbinical Program. She is guiding IRAC’s mission to:



- / Fight religious extremism and gender segregation in the public domain
- / Combat racism and advance a shared society between Jews and Arabs in Israel
- / Secure equal status for all streams of Judaism in Israel
- / Battle anti-democratic legislation in Israel
- / Contest policies and discriminatory benefits that discourage the participation of the ultra-Orthodox community in the Israeli workforce

“My work at IRAC allows me to dedicate my life to bringing the values of our Movement into the political reality of Israel. As I work to build partnerships with Arab activists, Orthodox feminists, Ethiopian and Mizrahi Jews, and the LGBT community, I demonstrate our profound commitment to fulfilling our mission. I believe that making our Movement and our values heard in the Israeli Supreme Court, in the Knesset, and in the streets, is always a victory.”