



Annual Report

for the August 2008 – June 2009

Academic Year

Annual Financial Report

for the year 2008

STICHTING ROBERT A. LEVISSON

Postadres: In De Wolken 45, 1186 BG Amstelveen, NL – contact@levisson.nl – www.levisson.nl

Tel.: 06-54 69 09 19, (020) 640 24 58 – Bankrekening: 40.03.78.213

KvK: 34178043 - ANBI nr. 8110.01.994

Introduction

The 2007-2008 Academic Year, that resulted in the festive conferring the semicha (certificate of rabbinic competence) on our first graduating class of rabbinic students, was a rather complicated one.

The year that now lies behind us was a year of reflection: after attaining the first and primary goal of the Institute some changes took place on the board and the academic committee. The Statutes of the Foundation were modified, and the board produced a working paper on our policy for the future to be discussed in the Verbond and in the boards of the various congregations. We now know what we are capable of but do we hold on to the original course of action dating from 2003 or do we need to bring changes to that also? And how are we to deal with the looming problem of financing?

The year under review, 2008-2009, was less difficult but no less challenging. The five graduated rabbis have found their places of work. Four went to Dutch Liberal congregations and one was approached and accepted to do post-graduate research for a project at London University, leading to a Ph.D.

The second goal in the original policy plan was realized this year. The first class of 15 cantors finished their training with a beautiful ceremony. During the National Union Oneg Shabbat a larger audience was able to hear and see what the graduates had learned. These former students are active (or have become more active) in their respective congregations. They perform in the services and often they teach.

We are entering the new year with four rabbinic students and with advanced plans for realizing our third goal, a two-year course to train teachers for Jewish religious instruction.

This report includes all the usual information about the past year. Further, a number of students will tell us about their experiences. In addition to the dry facts and many numbers we hope that this will help you feel the influence the training has had on individual students and what they will be able to pass on to all of us.

Leaf through the report at your convenience and read what you find interesting. We would appreciate your reactions and will be pleased to give more information in answer to your questions.



Robert A. Levisson was one of the great, liberal leaders in our country. He was an inspired speaker and writer and a champion for Israel. He passed away in December 2001
Yehi zichro baruch - יהי זכרו ברוך

Contents¹

Introduction	2
1 Academic Year 2008-2009	4
The semicha and the activities of the Levisson rabbis	4
Rabbi Tamarah Benima	5
The conclusion of the Cantorial training (<i>shelichay tzibbur</i>)	6
Eva Mogendorff-Hein	7
The special year program, two setbacks, one stroke of luck	8
Rabbi Marianne van Praag	9
Visiting lecturer	9
Tom Fürstenberg	10
Scientific research project	11
The Library and the cataloguing	11
The Website	12
Changes in the Board	13
Changes in the Academic Committee	14
Changes in the Statutes	14
Rabbi Albert Ringer	15
The Friends	15
Plans for 2009-2010 and beyond	15
2 The Finances	17
2008 annual accounts	17
Balance as at 31 December 2008	17
Notes	17
Profit and Loss Account for 2008	18
Notes	19
2009 Budget (Rabbinical training)	20
Cantorial training	20
Joint project Library cataloguing	20
Mirjam Ushpiz	21
3 Appendices	22
Appendix: Description of the scholarly research project	22
Rabbi Navah-Tehila Livingstone Shmuelit	23
Lies Müller	24

¹ ¹ For the sake of clarity, the personal contributions of the former students are presented in a different font.

1. The 2008-2009 Academic Year

The semicha and the activities of the Levisson rabbis

On the subject of conferring the semicha on our first group of students we can be brief. The festive ceremony in the presence of many noted personalities from here and abroad, from Jewish and non-Jewish circles, was transmitted live via the Internet. The complete recording can be seen on the Institute's website (www.levisson.nl, click on the English flag and then on Photos/Videos).



These five new rabbis are now members of the Dutch Rabbinical Assembly and its Beth Din. From time to time they also participate in the sittings of the European Beth Din.

Their areas of work and responsibilities are :

- Rabbi Tamarah Benima: PJG (Progressive Jewish Congregation) North Netherlands (Zuidlaren). In the meantime she has been appointed to the Academic Committee of the Institute.
- Rabbi Marianne van Praag: LJG (Liberal Jewish Congregation) Gelderland (Dieren) and LJG Flevoland (Almere).
- Rabbi Albert Ringer: LJG Rotterdam; chaplain to the Armed Forces; Pastoral Care worker at the Psychiatric Medical Center Parnassia in The Hague.
- Rabbi Navah-Tehila Livingstone Shmuelit: LJG Utrecht.
- Rabbi Kineret Sittig: University College, London University, Department for Hebrew and Jewish Studies: fulltime collaborator on the research project "Medieval Monographs on the Jewish Calendar" (Ph.D. position).
For a presentation of her work, see www.levisson.nl, click on the English flag and then on About us > Our ordained Rabbis.

Together with Rabbi Hetty Groeneveld in Brabant and Rabbi ad interim Kenneth Leinwand in The Hague, they have taken over the duties of the retired rabbis and of Rabbi Sonny Herman *ztz.l.* who recently passed away. May his memory and what he accomplished be a blessing.

Slowly getting up to speed

Does it make a difference? Yes, it does. Since July 4, 2009 I am the Rabbi of the Progressive Jewish Congregation North-Netherlands. In fact, there is not all that much difference. I have been working as a rabbi for four years. The first three as intern, the last year as if I were a rabbi with a semicha. The work is the same but it "feels" very different. Until July 4 Ruben Bar-Ephraim was the "really" responsible rabbi. Now it is up to me to lead the congregation, to teach, to support and to keep it together and make it blossom. With such a small congregation in such a vast (by Dutch standards) geographical area that will not be easy. But easy or not - I find it exciting.



My installation as rabbi in PJG-NN on 4 July 2009

The three provinces of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe are not the only areas where I work. I have conducted services in Utrecht and Arnhem and in LJJ Amsterdam I am a regular replacement for Rabbi Menno ten Brink to conduct services, funerals, shiva services, and training and supervising bar/bat mitzva students.

Another important duty was teaching giur-students and their partners (if any) in the Basic Jewish Knowledge course. Once a week a very mixed group came to listen to classes on Jewish history. It was a real pleasure to follow them in their development. It is so different from lectures throughout the country, which sometimes make me feel like a monkey in a zoo, who you come to watch and listen to with curiosity. The BJK-students truly strive to integrate the material that is presented to build their Jewish identity. For them it is an intellectual and emotional process. They share it with others in their conversations and through the presentations they have to give.

One of the most beautiful aspects of this work is arranging and leading funeral services. I feel privileged that relatives let me come close at such difficult moments and let me participate in their life. The same holds true for sitting on the Beth Din panel and helping people officially join the Jewish People.

Slowly, my life and work as rabbi are getting up to speed. Is it what I was expecting when I started my training? Yes. And more. I am very grateful to those who made it possible, in whatever capacity (even if I did not tell this to each of them personally). The training has been a blessing for me and I hope to increasingly be a blessing for others.

July 2009, Tamarah Benima

Conclusion of the Cantorial training (*shelichay tzibbur*)

The two-year training for cantors for our congregations was concluded on May 31, 2009. The closing ceremony took place in a festive atmosphere in the Amersfoort accommodation where the eight training weekends had taken place. A video report of this event can be seen via our website (www.levisson.nl, click on the English flag and then on Photos/Videos). There you will also find a photo gallery, an overview of the participants in the training and the manner in which they are now active within our Progressive Congregations.

On the same site you will find the photos of the National Union Oneg Shabbat held on June 6 in The Hague. The theme of the day was Dutch Synagogue Music. The program was put together and presented by the new cantors and their main lecturer Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer from Jerusalem. His fascinating lecture (in two parts) on “The History of the Dutch Synagogue Music” can be heard there.



The students, their guests and the attending Friends applaud and thank Prof. Schleifer for his dedication in the realization of this training.

The certificates were presented to the 15 cantors and the 3 teacher-students by the Dean, Rabbi David Lilienthal and Prof. Eli Schleifer. Here to Merav Barzel of LJJ Den Haag.



Cantor Gilad Nezer of LJJ Amsterdam participated in the training, both as teacher and as student. Here during the individual presentations of the music that had been studied.

In the summer of 2007 16 people stood across from each other in the Tulip Inn Hotel in Amersfoort, feeling somewhat out of place. The first study weekend of the training for Sheliach Tzibbur (cantor) had just begun. It was a varied group of students, mothers, consultants, doctors and other hardworking people, in the ages between 18 and 50+ with more or less experience in (Dutch) cantorial singing. They were all people with the same feeling I had, who all very regularly sing (portions of) services but don't always know exactly where the melodies come from. That first weekend was one of mixed feelings for everyone. There was the blind panic that overcame us by the quantity of material we had to master. But there was also much relief about the knowledge we all seemed to have. Under the inspired leadership of Professor Eli Schleifer, Rabbi David Lilienthal and the coordinator Bram Lagendijk, the tone had been set for two unbelievably educational and special, cherished, years.



Eli Schleifer came over from Jerusalem especially for these weekends. In the course of the second year of our training, he retired from his position as head of the cantorial training at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. He is member of a renowned team of specialists at Hebrew University who do research and publish books on Jewish music. His presence was invaluable to us. We not only learned the correct

musical notes but also the history of (Western European) chazzanut, the origin of the melodies, how to choose the correct melody and why one melody is better suited than another to a specific occasion.

The theme for each weekend was one of the holidays. We held morning, afternoon and evening services so that we could get a lot of practise . Two or three weeks ahead, David Lilienthal would mail us the tasks we had to fulfil in the services during the next weekend. Because of time constraints these services were always somewhat exotic. In one weekend we dealt with Shabbat, Pesach and Yom Kippur melodies. We celebrated Hanukkah in May and learned the correct way to use the lulav on a cold February morning. During workshops and lectures we studied the background and history of the melodies in depth. In two years, we learned the principles of leading a congregation in prayer.

On 31 May 2009, 18 people (including 3 teacher-students) full of emotions stood across from a group of invitees in the Tulip Inn Hotel in Amersfoort. After a special weekday mincha service (which actually took place on a midweek afternoon), in which all the students performed a part of the service, each of us received a beautiful certificate. During a number of special study days in the period that lie ahead, special attention will be given to further schooling as signal for a permanent education. All the subjects that could not be treated during the weekends due to lack of time, such as the life cycle, will be dealt with. For more information on the contents of all the study weekends and for the various melodies, you can consult the Levisson Institute website (www.levisson.nl).

Eva Mogendorff-Hein, from the Newsletter of PJG North Netherlands

The special year program, two setbacks and one pleasant surprise

As stated in the previous annual report and the interim update of February 16, 2009, it was discovered in the spring of 2008 that the Hebrew language level of the rabbinic students was insufficient to read and handle the texts they would be studying in the fourth year. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to insert an extra year. The only goal was to bring this knowledge up to the required level. The year went well but that did not solve all setbacks.

The first and heaviest setback concerned the student David Snuijf. He was involved in a car accident for which he was in no way responsible. The ensuing whiplash injury created so many physical problems that it was several months before he could slowly start working again. He will resume his studies at the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year. The accident therefore causes a delay in his studies. In the coming year he will have to make up the added year of Hebrew. To what extent he will be able to keep pace with his fellow students, remains to be seen.

A further disappointment is that the other two students, Clary Rooda and Joram Rookmaker are unable to cope with the required study load. This was one of the reasons for the insufficient level of Hebrew. After extended deliberation a new study program has been put together and approved by the academic committee. The contents of the remaining study program and the deadlines remain unchanged but the program will now be spread out over three years instead of two. This means that the total study, including the extra year of Hebrew, will take 7 years instead of 5. According to this plan, two students will, therefore, graduate in 2012 instead of 2010 as originally planned. The third student will probably graduate one year later.

It must immediately be added that all three students are determined to finish their course of study. Both the academic committee and the teachers are of the opinion that it makes sense to accommodate them in this manner. They have the right motivation and certainly the necessary capacities. In due time they will be a valuable addition to the Rabbinical Assembly.

All three will begin their active traineeship in the Fall and will help conduct services for the High Holydays. Joram Rookmaker will do this at LJG Utrecht and David Snuijf at LJG Flevoland. Both will become active in these congregations in the future. Clary Rooda received an extended contract as “substitute rabbi” in Beit Ha’Chidush; in addition she will do her first traineeship at LJG Gelderland.

The pleasant surprise is that a new student has presented himself. His name is Ira Goldberg, age 41 and of American origin. His wife works as prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (the Yugoslavia tribunal). They have two young children and have been living in The Hague for the last four years and are active within the LJG Den Haag.

Ira Goldberg has a solid Jewish background. He got his MA in Jewish Studies at the (Conservative) Jewish Theological Institute in New York in 2002. His professional career has given him a wealth of experience in leading Jewish organizations.

In the meantime, he has been accepted to the Rabbinic training. In view of his background a special, shortened program will be put together for him. It is expected that he will qualify and be granted a semicha in two years.

One year Rabbi

Since receiving my semicha, I have been gaining momentum. I am responsible for two congregations: LYG Gelderland and LYG Flevoland. On average I go to De Steeg (near Arnhem) twice a month and to Almere once. It is incredibly stimulating work and wonderful to work together with the people there. There is much need for a "rabbinic" presence. The work is varied and completely lives up to my expectations: leading services, lending assistance and support when needed and sharing in simches.

In addition to the work for "my" congregations, there are more general tasks. Leading "guest services" in other congregations, attending the monthly rabbis' meeting, talking with candidates for conversion, sitting on the Beth Din, standing in for absent colleagues and writing articles for various publications.



This year I have been getting much attention in the media, leading to many invitations to speak throughout the country. I think it is very important to accept these invitations, to show the beauty of Judaism to people who are interested, and to give color to it in this time when Judaism is less "on the map" in our society.

In short, a varied and stimulating existence. I am still happy and thankful every day that I had the opportunity to study at the Levisson Institute and to realize my big dream.

Marianne van Praag

Guest lecturer



From what has been stated above, it is obvious that we undertook few additional activities for the students in the year under review. We did have a much-appreciated visit by Prof. David B. Ruderman, who is professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Pennsylvania, and Director of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies there. He also visited us in 2007 to give a lecture for the students as well as a well-attended lecture on Shabbetai Zvi for the Friends of the Foundation.

This time, on March 1, 2009, he introduced the Friends to a way of studying history from old documents. His lecture was titled "*A Portrait of Two Jewish Families of the Middle Ages and their Relevance for Contemporary Jews - A reconstruction of two ethical wills of an ashkenazic and a sephardic family and reflections on their values and ultimate concerns.*"

The next day he gave a seminar for students, rabbis and a number of Friends, on two Italian Jewish texts from the 15th and 17th centuries. The first was written by Judah Messer Leon – his Hebrew justification of the Jewish study of rhetoric from the book *Nofet Tsofim*. The second text was the 16th chapter of Simone Luzzattos Treatise on the Jews of Venice. This is an Italian text explaining Jewish culture to non-Jews. The first text tries to explain to the Jews that the cultures in the surrounding general population can contribute to the enrichment of Judaism. The second one attempts to describe Judaism in terms that coincide with the norms of the Catholic society in which the Jews were living. It is interesting to compare the texts and discover that they are like each other's reflection, how the Jews saw and recognized themselves in the Other.

The last two years I had the privilege to be able to participate in the training for sheliach tzibbur, "shatz" for short, of the Levisson Institute. These were two unbelievably educational, inspiring years during which I learned, among other things, that chazzanut is more than (or actually totally different from) a sum of loose "songs". There are bigger structures and links, it is a whole.

There are also so many specific melodies and keys that belong to specific parts of the liturgy and the Jewish calendar. The weekends mainly consisted of lectures/workshops on the background, history, various traditions, structure and deeper layers of the siddur, the machzor, all the ins and outs of the holidays, special moments in the life cycle, etc. You had to study the melodies on your own between the weekends, via CDs, sheet music and mp3's on the Levisson site.



Thanks to this training I became a much better cantor. Not only because I learned more melodies but especially because I now understand much better what I am doing, which tradition I belong to. Before the training I just did my thing (with the best and most serious intentions, in hindsight). Last but not least, I was greatly inspired by the manner in which all this knowledge was transmitted and demonstrated by outstanding teachers. Before and during the training they performed an enormous amount of work to reconstruct our tradition. Unbelievable. Kol hakavod we todah rabbah!

Tom Fürstenberg, July 2009

Scientific research

At the time of the 75th Anniversary of the Union, a special Jubilee Book was published, “In the Tents of Jacob...”. During the preparations for the book, it became increasingly obvious that a void exists in the written history of Dutch Jewry. The writer of the book, the historian Chaya Brasz, was asked to perform scholarly research about the developments within (religious) Judaism in The Netherlands in the 19th and 20th Centuries and to write a book on her findings.

The Hebrew Union College Press in Cincinnati declared itself willing to do the final editing of the book and to publish it at their own expense. In December 2007, the Maror Foundation (formed by recently restituted monies for Jewish possessions stolen during the Shoa) made a pledge to supply part of the necessary funding and in June 2009 the Prins Bernhard Culture Fund pledged the same amount.

Together with a Fellowship that Chaya Brasz had received from the American Jewish Archives at the Huc-JIR in Cincinnati for the necessary research there – completed in February 2009 – 80% of the costs were covered. On the basis of the existing reserves for scientific research, and confident that the missing amount, approximately. €9,000, would also be found, the board decided to guarantee that amount so that the project could get started.

The research will begin on November 15, 2009 and take 2½ years. The publication of the book is expected around November 15, 2013. The first edition will appear in English. The aim is to publish a Dutch edition somewhat later, possibly in a slightly popularised version.

For a further description of the project, see the Appendix on page 24.

The Library and the cataloguing

The production of the digital catalog progressed successfully during the year under review even though the pace was slower than planned. This was due to the problems of accessibility to the warehouse in Weesp. The problem was solved by moving the book stock to Amsterdam Zuid-Oost.

The intention of the catalog is to combine three libraries, Levisson, Judith Druk (LJG Amsterdam) and Mira Rafalowicz (Yiddish Foundation). During the year the Yiddish Foundation decided to split their library in two and to house them elsewhere. The Dutch books went to the Crescas library and the Yiddish language collection to the Jewish Historical Museum. Nevertheless, these books will remain in the combined catalog, with a reference as to where the books are kept.



The temporary library in the “garden house” on the Stadionweg.

At the end of the year under review, July 2009, Irith Kisch had completed her assignment and catalogued more than 6000 titles. As the collection of books has grown in the last few years, the project was then still not completed. To do this, Mrs. Chava Pappie was hired for a period of 6 months. This means that the cataloguing and making the catalog accessible via Internet will be completed some time before the pending move to the new building of LJG Amsterdam.

The entire library committee (Leo Frijda, Sabine Frank, Ellen Schrijver, Jeta Leeda, David Lilienthal and Menno ten Brink) met many times with the Project Committee of the new building. They discussed the plans for furnishing the new library and the future location of parts of the collection in other areas of the building, such as the music section in the music room, liturgical books in the small synagogue.

A part of the music library is now available and can be consulted on the website of the Institute. This part is set up as one of the ways to provide material for the student cantors. It must, however, remain smaller than the joint music library at the LJG since copyrighted sheet music and recordings cannot be placed on the website.

On the other hand, the website collection contains a great number of recordings of the lectures and workshops given during the cantorial training. These contain lots of information on the music and the nusach and their use. All this is freely accessible. Members of the congregation and others who are interested can listen to the lectures and workshops and can study our musical tradition via numerous recordings and sheet music in PDF-format. The collection is still not complete but work on this also continues.

The website

The design and system for navigating the website were renewed in the Spring of 2009 to give it a simpler and more convenient layout.

Less visibly, the software has been modernized and become faster and more stable than before. We also changed hosting company to one which gives us much more memory space on the server for a considerably lower price than we previously paid.

This change was made necessary since the site had grown far beyond our original expectations and plans. This is mainly due to the many large music and lecture files now included. For this reason we also had to find possibilities to place the videos and photo galleries of both the semicha ceremony and the closing ceremony of the cantorial training on specialized websites, where this could be done at practically no cost.

In view of the statistics, the reactions, and the many questions, the website seems to be easy to find and the information offered is being used, also outside of our own circles. We hope that the use made of the site will continue to increase as soon as the complete library catalogue becomes accessible.

Changes in the Board

During the year in review we took leave of two board members who had contributed greatly to the shaping and the growth of the Institute from its beginning.

At the end of 2008 Stephen Kahn resigned due to his impending marriage and move to England. As of July 1, 2009 Leo Frijda left the board after seven years to further develop his talents further elsewhere. As a lawyer, Stephen Kahn had made important contributions to the work of the board. However, Leo Frijda in his capacity of treasurer, carried the heaviest load during most of this period. His tasks encompassed not only the management of the finances but included, for example, writing of drafts for the initial policy plans and the business plan for the Institute as well as conducting the sometimes-complicated negotiations with the Maror Foundation.

As of January 1, 2009 Philip Minco took Stephen Kahn's place. He immediately also took over the treasurer's job from Leo Frijda, who remained on the board for half a year to finish some complicated tasks. Philip Minco had been treasurer of LJG Amsterdam for some time and as manager of a major pension fund he brought all the necessary financial know-how to the board.

It was, however, quickly apparent that the task of treasurer was considerably more complicated than he had expected – the worsening of the financial crisis made his regular work duties even heavier than usual. Some time before, Simone Haller had offered to become active for the Institute should the need arise. She was invited to join the board per March 30 to fill the vacancy left by Leo Frijda.



Simone Haller and Philip Minco

Simone brings wide experience in dealing with the complicated grant proposals necessary for the Maror Foundation. She offered to take charge of this part of the treasurer's task. During the collaboration between Simone and Philip both came to the conclusion that it would be better if Simone took over the entire function from Philip. She followed Philip as treasurer per September 1, upon which Philip resigned from the board to make room for someone who would be able to fulfil the required commitment.

Simone Haller-Albers has been a member of LJG Amsterdam for many years. She has been active as coordinator of the Amsterdam congregation Adult Education Study Center, board member and vice-chairman of the congregation. At present she is manager of the board of the foundation running the Orthodox Jewish Day Schools in Amsterdam. Her offer to do something significant for the Institute came forth from her conviction that education is the most important means to guarantee the continuation of Jewish life in The Netherlands.

From left to right:
Simone Haller (treasurer);
Yvonne van Ewijk-Cohn
(administrative assistant;
David Lilienthal (dean);
Henk Wagenfeld (chairman);
Leo Frijda
Front row:
Wilma Stein-Olman (secretary) ;
Marja Hené-Toncman



Changes in the Academic Committee

Two changes had to be made in the Academic Committee. Rabbi Ruben Bar-Ephraim permanently moved to his new Rabbinic position in the Jewish Liberal Congregation in Zürich as of July 1 and thus had to vacate his seat in the committee. In his stead — on recommendation of the Committee — the board appointed Rabbi Tamarah Benima, a recent graduate of the Institute. The Committee is happy that one of the former students now is part of the Committee. They expect that Rabbi Benima will have a special and different sort of input in the deliberations.

In the subcommittee Vocational Training of the Academic Committee we took leave of Dr. Fanny Heymann, who had chaired this very active group of experts from the beginning. We owe her many thanks for her commitment and wisdom displayed in the manner in which she led her team in building the program for this essential part of the rabbinic training. Her place will now be taken by Marianne Langhout MA, manager of training at the Hogeschool Utrecht, Institute for Social Work and first trainer for the Dutch Order of Lawyers.

Changes in the Statutes

Due to the recent name change of the Union (from Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland to Nederlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom (Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism)), it became necessary to change the Statutes of the Robert A. Levisson Foundation.

During the preparations for the alteration, the decision was taken to change the fiscal year of the Foundation so that it would run synchronously with the academic year instead of the calendar year, thus from August 1 to July 31. In some respects this is not practical but experience has taught us that the advantages will far outweigh the expected problems. As transition, it was decided that the first half year of 2009 would count as a shortened fiscal year, from January 1 to July 31.

Unfortunately, the financial figures for this shortened fiscal year will only be approved too late to be included in this report. For those who support us financially and are interested, the audit report will be available in October 2009. A summary will be included in the next annual report. In the future, the annual reports will cover the same period for the academic and the financial year.



At the installation of Rabbi Albert Ringer as Rabbi of LJJ Rotterdam, his (temporary) predecessor Rabbi David Lilienthal hands him the keys to the synagogue.

(Photo Jaime Halegua)

The Friends

We continue to owe much thanks to the Friends of the Foundation and the Institute, for their moral as well as financial support. Since we do not receive governmental subsidies, the continuity of our work and ambitions hinges on their preparedness to continue giving financial support. The goodwill we have repeatedly encountered makes us feel hopeful and stimulates us.

Our work basis, however, remains too narrow for us to feel that the future of the Institute is secure. The Levi Lassen Foundation and Makaria, Maror and the Harry Philips Foundation lay the basis for our work but the Friends play an important part. The Foundations are willing to support us because we get support from the community, as is apparent from the donations from Friends.

In our plan to consolidate the present activities of the knowledge center of the Verbond, which the Institute has become, we will have to extend the circle of Friends, especially outside of Amsterdam. This will be the case even more if we are actually able to extend our activities somewhat (see below). For that we need help from all of you and in the coming period we will pay more attention to that.

Plans for 2009-2010 and further

At the beginning of 2009 the board prepared a draft policy note which was discussed with the board of the Verbond and with the chairmen of our congregations. Everyone agreed in general terms that the Institute must continue and should extend its activities.

Around this time an update is being prepared of the inventory made in 2001 of the future needs of Rabbis in the movement and its organizations, an inventory that led to the founding of the institute. This update will examine the board's ideas for the future and the possibilities to finance the plans.

In any event, it is certain that in the coming four years we will continue to give full attention to our first priority: educating rabbis. We call this the "top of the education pyramid": educating the educators of the next generation. Giving small groups the best possible schooling with the best possible teachers is an expensive proposition. But with the group that has already graduated we see that this in-depth investment has already paid off as expected. This stimulates us even more to continue.

Four rabbinical students are registered at this moment. We hope to find an additional small number in the years to come. On top of that we expect that in about 10 years time we will need at least an additional 5 rabbis.

Our further plans include a teacher training program for religious instruction in the congregations. The program will be worked out and executed in conjunction with Rimon, our Dutch Center for Jewish Education and the Centre for Jewish Education of the Leo Baeck College in London. Rimon is affiliated with the Center and has been working together with it for many years. Whether this plan comes to fruition depends on the number of students that registers, that is, that will be stimulated by the congregations to follow this course.

Matty van Eldik, one of the leaders of the planned teacher training program, was granted a royal knighthood in 2009 for her achievements in Liberal Jewish religious education in the Netherlands.



Plans are also being made for a suitable training for members of boards and committees of congregations and Jewish organizations. This will concentrate on the Jewish content of the task, what it means – content wise and ethically – to be a Jewish leader and what norms – possibly divergent from the surrounding culture – can be applicable to it. A new program designed by the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem is being examined for its suitability to this end.

2. The Finances

2008 annual accounts

The annual accounts for 2008 have been drawn up by JAN Accountants of Landsmeer (www.jan.ac). The details featured below are designed to serve as a summary. Those wishing to receive a complete copy of the accounts (which are only available in Dutch) are kindly requested to contact the Foundation.

Please note that on 11 February 2009 the Statutes of the Institute were officially modified so that the fiscal year now runs synchronously with the academic year August 1 to July 31 of each year. To bridge the gap, the period of January 1 to May 31 2009 will be treated as a shortened fiscal year.

Balance as at December 31, 2008

Assets		Liabilities	
Accounts receivable / prepayments	€ 1.351	Founding capital	€ 78.176
Cash	€ 308.859	Appropriated reserves	€ 102.069
		Advance receipts	€ 110.083
		Debts / deferrals	€ 19.882
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 310.210</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 310.210</i>

Notes

The appropriated reserves consist of four funds :

Students' fund	€29.912
Israel seminar fund	€15.000
Scholarly research fund	€ 9.000
Cantorial training	€48.157

The Students' Fund (€29.912) is designed to provide an allowance for costs directly linked to the studies for those students whose personal financial situation renders that necessary. The initial amount starting this fund was collected when the Dean retired as Rabbi of the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Community.

The fund appears to cater to a growing need. In 2008 allowances in the amount of €1.008 were granted. An amount of €6.000 was refunded by one of the students who was now able to return monies lent to her in the past. Thus, the Student's Fund has grown by €4.912 whereby there was no need this year to seek an additional amount.

The Israel seminar fund (€15.000) was set up in 2005 so as to facilitate the organisation of regular seminars in Israel without drawing on the regular budget.

In 2005 an amount of €10,000 was reserved for scholarly research, including the social sciences, primarily outside the Netherlands. In 2008 a payment of €1.000 was allocated from the fund, so that the reserve has decreased by that amount.

In August 2007 a two-year cantorial training of *shelichay tzibbur* started, from which 15 students graduated in May 2009. For this course a separate budget had been made that does not run synchronously with the calendar year. To increase the transparency it was decided to administer a separate appropriated reserve of the revenues and expenses of this training, to which end a separate bank account was opened. The expenses and receipts of the cantorial training have been specified in a separate appendix to the annual financial report. A summary follows.

In 2007 a start was made with the construction of a digital catalogue of the three libraries of the LJG Amsterdam, the Foundation Yiddish and the Levisson Foundation (see pages 11 and 20). For 2007 and 2008 subsidies for this were received from Maror; additionally a guarantee posted by a private fund was called upon. The request to Maror was filed by LJG Amsterdam on behalf of the three legal entities, but the Levisson Foundation manages these funds. A separate bank account has been opened to this end. The project can probably be finalized by March 1, 2010. The receipts and expenditures related to this project are published in an appendix to the annual financial report. A summary follows.

The level of advance receipts appears relatively high. This is a function of the lack of coincidence between the financial and academic years and the (fortunate) circumstance that both the institutions granting subsidies and several Friends paid part of their contributions in advance.

Profit and Loss Account for 2008

Receipts		Expenditure	
Friends and other Donations	€ 40.923	Dean / Administrative Support	€ 46.031
Grants	€ 70.000	Expenses for dean/Boards/ Advisory Bodies	€ 6.130
Tuition fees	€ 15.061	Lecturers and courses	€ 40.752
Interest	€ 5.601	Books and course materials	€ 4.198
		Communication	€ 4.008
		Semicha	€ 250
		Accountant/salary administration	€ 12.531
		Miscellaneous	€ 3.345
<i>Total</i>	€ 131.585	<i>Total</i>	€ 117.245

There is a positive balance on the profit and loss account of €14.340.

Notes

The positive balance of €14.340 is a consequence of lower expenses for lectures (€40.752) than had originally been budgeted (€70.000). There are two main reasons for this. The expenses for lectures for the students who graduated in 2008 (mostly thesis supervision) were lower than expected. Furthermore, the inserted year of Hebrew that turned out to be necessary for the rabbinic students that started in 2005, began in the second half of 2008. This inserted year requires fewer class hours than a normal study program. The previously planned and budgeted lectures were postponed by one year.

The item accountant/salary administration came out much higher than expected. We discussed this seriously with our accountant and agreements have been reached to curtail these expenses.

The item Semicha consists of a residual amount. It was possible to finance the cost of the closing ceremony on August 27, 2008, €22.500, almost entirely via special, designated gifts in the amount of €22.250. The Harry Philips Fonds was the main sponsor. In addition, donations were received from the Nettie van Zwanenberg Foundation and from the Foundation Maatschappij tot Nut der Israëlieten in Nederland, and other who wish to remain anonymous. We are grateful to all donors for their contributions for this day, that is so important to our institute.

In the Netherlands there are no funds and foundations that specifically aim to support educational institutions. Even a professional grant recruiter was not able to find any sources for such subsidies. Education is seen as a duty of the state. Due to its small size and limited target group, however, an institute such as ours does not easily qualify for state support.

We consider ourselves fortunate that in 2008 we again had the support of Maror, the Levi Lassen and Makaria Foundations, the Harry Philips Fund, the Verbond and several Liberal Jewish congregations, some private funds and the Friends of our foundation. We are grateful to all of them for their support. That support still makes it possible to have a solid financial base for our institute. It is, however, uncertain whether that will be the case in the future. The plans, which include a teacher training program and projects for permanent education for rabbis and cantors, cannot be financed solely from our subsidy sources. These plans will also impinge on the reserves that we still have available.

We are happy to add to the above the memorable fact that the Prins Bernhard Culture Fund has promised a subsidy of €20.000 for the scholarly project “*Van Adath Jeschurun naar Adath Jesjoeroen*” (see page 11 and 24), the same amount as previously granted by the Maror Foundation for this project. However, there is still a shortfall of €8,815 but we trust additional financing will be found to cover this amount.

Please note: we are looking for more Friends who are prepared to support our work with a yearly fixed contribution.

Our Friends are always kept up-to-date on the affairs of the institute and they are regularly invited to attend meetings, at which the developments are discussed and where we often get a lecture from a speaker from here or abroad.

Budgets

We submitted several grant proposals to Maror. One of them was for the rabbinic training for 2009 with the provision that we would not request a grant for the period January 1 to July 31, 2010. The budget for the rabbinic training for the entire year 2009 does not significantly deviate from the real receipts and disbursements in 2008, even though we had only asked Maror for a grant of €10.400. The estimated income comes out to the same amount as the expenses, which were budgeted at a total of €122.000.

For the coming years 2010/2011 we have submitted grant proposals to finance a two-year teacher training course and to finance projects for permanent education for rabbis as well as *shelichay tzibbur*.

Cantorial training

The two-year training of *shelichay tzibbur* that started on August 1, 2007 was completed in May 2009. The progress until the end of 2008 is included in an appendix to the annual accounts for 2008.

Expenses:	Realization until 31-12-08	Budget until 31-07-09
Coordinator	€ 12.767	€ 23.000
Lecturers	€ 14.314	€ 28.150
Cost weekends	€ 43.492	€ 58.480
Expenses coordinator	€ 2.972	€ 2.400
Other expenses	€ 1.335	€ 1.400
<i>Total</i>	€ 76.610	€ 115.030

This training was only partly subsidized by Maror up to the amount of €26.025. We received 80% of this in advance, according to normal procedure. Instead of covering costs for only the first year, Maror insisted on an agreement that the amount would cover both years of the training. The board of our foundation appealed against this decision, but finally agreed after another difference of opinion was resolved in our favour. The remaining funds consist of the contributions by the students, by private persons and by a couple of Dutch Liberal congregations. In this way sufficient funds have been raised to cover all costs for the training.

Joint project Library cataloguing

The expenditure of €45.883 for this project until 31 December 2008 consisted almost entirely of the remuneration for the catalografer. These costs were covered by the contributions of the three participating organisations, a subsidy by Maror and one from a private fund. The income from these sources totalled €48.034 till the end of 2008.

During the past two years I had the opportunity, together with 14 other students, to participate in the training for sheliach tzibbur. I found these two years very inspiring and enriching, thanks in part to the inexhaustible energy and interesting lectures and workshops of Professor Eliyahu Schleifer, Rabbi David Lilienthal and Dr. Annette Boeckler. I had been singing services on Friday evenings at LJC Amsterdam once in a while since 2002, on days when the regular cantor was unable to officiate. The melodies I used then were mostly those that I knew from this congregation that I had attended since childhood.

In the course of the training a world opened for me: I got a wealth of information such as the meaning and history of the various prayers and texts sung and read during the synagogue services. We learned much about differing minhagim (customs): every synagogue and every country has their own customs, texts and melodies. Which melody do we use in our shule (synagogue)? Some that used to be part of the Western European Jewish tradition have been lost in The Netherlands, but possibly we will be able to recover and revive them? We also got acquainted with many composers who wrote very beautiful music. Louis Lewandowski (c. 1821-1894) is often used in synagogue in the Dutch Liberal tradition, but we also dwelled on others, e.g. Salamone de Rossi Ebreo (c. 1565-1628), and in addition we studied modern American and Israeli composers. There is a treasure trove of music to choose from as sheliach tzibbur, always, of course, taking the wishes of the congregation into account.

The biggest challenge for me as student was practicing the nusach. There are certain prayers that, in addition to the usual composed melody, can be sung as nusach (which, to me, is a form of recitation). Within a specific shtaiiger (the special Jewish scales) one can improvise. However, every holiday and parts of the Shabbat service have their own shtaiiger. We dealt with all these shtaiigers and practiced them.

In addition to occasionally singing a Shabbat evening service in Amsterdam, I had the opportunity to put into practice what I had learned in various Liberal congregations in The Netherlands. I sang Friday evening and Shabbat morning services in The Hague, Utrecht, Zuid Laren, Almere and De Steeg in Gelderland. I want to thank all the people who gave me feedback: Bram Lagendijk, Petra Katzenstein, Ken Gould and Moshe Lewkowitz.



Also, I want to thank all the other students with whom I spent these instructive two years. Thanks to the good and warm atmosphere, the humor, the enthusiasm and the good cooperation, it was a great success!!!

Miriam Ushpiz, July 2009

Appendix

Description of the scholarly research project: Jewish religious developments in the Netherlands

(What follows is a summary of the 3½ page long detailed description in the Dutch original annual report.)

As of mid-November 2009 the first scholarly research project of the Institute has started. This will hopefully lead to a book of some 500 pages, to be published no later than November 2013. The research and writing will be done by the historian Chaya Brasz from Jerusalem, with the guidance of an academic supervisory committee. As yet there is no comprehensive English translation of the description of the project; for the Dutch version, see the website www.levisson.nl.

The project has been named “*From Adath Jeschurun to Adath Jesjoeroen*”. It is intended to reveal insights into the religious developments in Dutch Jewry in the 19th and 20th centuries and to place these developments in general Dutch cultural patterns and in the interaction with other European Jewish cultural patterns.

The name of the project refers in a symbolic fashion to the period between – on the one hand – the ‘enlightened’ Jewish congregation ‘Adath Jeschurun’ (1797-1808), which existed separately from the original Ashkenasi congregation, but was forced by the state authorities to rejoin it, and – on the other hand – the Liberal Jewish Congregation that was founded in Arnhem in 1965. The latter goes by the same name as the former, but in a modernised Dutch spelling. This congregation in Arnhem belongs to the Dutch Union of Liberal-Religious Jews in the Netherlands, founded in 1931. After a recent change of name this Union is presently called the Netherlands Union for Progressive Judaism.

In between these two enlightened congregations, a third Jewish congregation, also called ‘Adass Jeschurun’, had a considerable influence on late 19th and early 20th century Dutch Judaism. This was the neo-Orthodox congregation of Rabbi dr. Samson Raphael Hirsch in Frankfurt am Main, a leading opponent of each and every expression of a tendency towards Reform or Liberal Judaism. His influence lasted till deep in the 1930s.

How did I become a young singing rabbi?

My motto: I sing for the Eternal One my whole life long (Psalm 104:33)

Or, I sing for the Eternal One WITH my life.

I am the oldest of the five students who received their semicha one year ago (August 2008). With music as my first love it was then six years since I had been accepted for the rabbinic training at the Levisson Institute.

The study of Torah was my other love. As a woman, I had been allowed to study music from the age of 4. To study Torah I had to wait almost half a century. The Gates of Torah that were closed to women in my youth had finally opened.

And so I stood in the snoge in The Hague on August 27, 2008 and was able to receive my semicha together with a blessing from our Dean, Rabbi Lilienthal. For me, it was just like a wedding. Finally, I was able to combine my singing and Torah and so I became a young singing rabbi. Why young? Because I still have so much to learn; I am a rabbi who has just embarked on her third career, now as part-time Rabbi of LYG Utrecht.



It is now almost a year later and I am still a young rabbi. But I notice how much I am growing and how much I enjoy rediscovering and putting into practice so much of the rich baggage I was able to take with me in those five difficult years of study.

For me, this is enough reason to sing for the Eternal One my whole life long.

Rabbi Navah-Tehila Livingstone-Shmuelit, July 2009

I still remember very well how I came home after our first study weekend, two years ago. I was stunned by the intensity of the program and did not know it would be so prestigious! I came home with the feeling that I would not be able to cope with it and that is not my average reaction to a challenge. But I started studying and quite soon I had found a sort of continuity and structure. Studying became a daily routine for me, insofar as my other obligations allowed.

They were two fantastic years! The constant pressure I felt because of all the things I knew I had to learn, was heavy. The weekends were tiring and difficult, due to the full schedule. But it was also extremely interesting and fun. And amazingly well-organized for a first cantoral training! Our lecturer Prof. Eli Schleifer, who we called our "walking music library", the fact that everyone had a personal mentor and the on the job work experience throughout the country were toppers! David Lilienthal as lecturer and Dean, Annette Boeckler's PowerPoints and our general organizer Bram Lagendijk were also indispensable.

Now that the most important and heaviest part is behind me, I feel very satisfied about the



total and very connected with my fellow-students. But I also feel a new bond with the other Jewish congregations in the country, that I got to know through the on-the-job experiences and where I hope to be able to lead services in the future.

The only drawback is the fact that I worked so hard and learned so much and now have the feeling that I know so little!

Lies Müller, July 2009