

BETWEEN RENEWAL AND TRADITION
Liberal Jewish Liturgy in the Netherlands

Thesis for Ordination in the Rabbinate.

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by

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Introduction

Conscious living is the essence of a happy life. In Judaism, one is reminded of this fact throughout the year, day by day: saying *berakhot* and observing *mitzwot* is conducive to this consciousness and thereby, time and again, lends life its deeper purpose, for ourselves and for others. It ensures that we are conscious of history, that we know our own roots, and that we know ourselves, our own position in life and how we got there. All this is of prime importance to each and every one of us, in order to find and fill our own place within society.

To some extent, Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands has evolved culturally and religiously in its own particular way. Inasmuch as it did not drift on the waves of “general opinions” of German or British Reform movements, Dutch Liberal Judaism has managed to find its own way. In the process, as is always the case, culture was influenced by religion, and religion by culture. In the present paper I shall discuss religious developments, or more precisely the impact that they had on liturgy. Since, however, general cultural developments also had their influence on religious aspects, these, too, will be discussed. Originally, Liberal Jewish liturgy was rather short and concise, but it evolved throughout the years into a much more comprehensive corpus.

An example of just such a cultural and political development that had its impact on the evolution of liturgy concerns the place of the State of Israel within liturgy, and, more generally the attitude towards Zionism as reflected in liturgy. Until the early twentieth century, the original German Reform movement had been decidedly anti-Zionistic. By contrast, the Jewish leadership in the Netherlands, consisted partly of Zionists. Consequently, Zionism received its own place in Dutch liturgy from the very beginning.

Another example concerns the emancipation of women, which gradually emerged within Dutch Liberal Judaism. As a consequence, the question came up whether and, if so, how and to what extent women should be allowed to participate in worship. Although various answers to this question are given even today, women have gradually taken an altogether different position, to the effect that in liturgy women have acquired complete equality.

In addition, less conspicuous examples of how Jewish liturgy has evolved according to the spirit of the times could be adduced. For instance, one no longer prays for the reconstruction of the Temple. The reason is that this would imply that the sacrificial cult would be reinstated, which is something that Liberal Judaism is opposed to.

More generally speaking, it may be said that prayers clearly marked by cultural or religious customs that in the meantime were considered old-fashioned, that have ceased to be applicable or that have lost empathy, have been omitted or replaced by modern alternatives. An illustrative example is the use of the Hebrew language. Since the emergence of the State of Israel Hebrew has again become a living language, so that it is understood by many more people. As a result, its use in liturgy has increased.

Between 1930 – the beginning of Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands – and the present, numerous Liberal Jewish liturgical stencils, and a few Liberal *sidurim* and other publications for special occasions have appeared. Together they reflect the liturgical evolution of Dutch Liberal Judaism through the course of time.

The largely independent way of Dutch Liberal Judaism created a real need for rabbis and cantors with a personal background in the Liberal segment of Dutch Jewry. This need is enforced by the fact that Dutch Jewry suffered so greatly during the Shoah, that it requires rabbis who understand the after-effects from within. People with a command of Dutch and a knowledge of Dutch culture, who are prepared to handle religion in a more modern and liberal way, but who clearly proceed from a thorough knowledge of and respect for the foundation of Jewish history and the way our ancestors used to worship. In order to provide in this need of such Liberal Jewish officials in the Netherlands, a curriculum was installed in 2002, organized by the Levisson Institute, which was founded for that purpose.

In the present paper I shall endeavour to catalogue the various *sidurim* that appeared in the Netherlands since 1930. An analysis of the way in which Liberal Jews in the Netherlands evolved will help to understand and assess the present position of Liberal Judaism. This understanding may also prove instrumental in the use of the Liberal *sidur* that appeared in the year 2000: סדר טוב להודות¹. It makes clear what part of it is traditional and what has been adapted to the needs of the present time. It is also important, therefore, to give an account of the people behind these editions, since their personal views were instrumental in shaping the content of these *sidurim*.

I chose this subject because very few – even from among those who weekly attend the services – have an exact idea of what Liberal Judaism actually stands for. An awareness of the adaptations in liturgy is a prerequisite for the identity of Liberal Jews, to realize what they stand for and what is required from them during worship. Through this awareness it will be possible to reach more people and this helps in handing over tradition לדור לדור², from generation to generation.

¹ Seder tov lehodot.

² Middor ledor.

I dedicate this paper to my great example and wise counselor, Rabbi R.A. (Bob) Levisson LL.M. z.l. It is my hope that I shall be able to realize his spiritual lore and to pass it on to the next generations.

I also dedicate this paper to Rabbi D.L. (David) Lilienthal, who enabled me to live a great dream that I did not dare to dream, viz. to become a rabbi. For he was, and still is, the most important initiator and drive behind the Levisson Institute. He always supported us with so much wisdom, love and effort.

Also the name of my mother, Sonja van Praag-Hakker z.l., deserves to be mentioned here. For she has always been, as her epitaph says “Jewish in the true sense of the word”, the source of my inspiration on my way towards living this dream.

I should like to convey my profound appreciation of the way in which Mrs Chaya Brasz MA and Mr Bart Wallet MA supervised this paper. Their patience and constructive criticism enabled me to really enjoy working on it. I am also grateful to Rabbi Y. (Yehoram) Mazor, who supported and followed me and, whenever needed, was always ready for me with his “eitses”.

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Chapter 1. Liberal Judaism and its Development in the Netherlands

1.1 What is Liberal Judaism?

Orthodox and Liberal Judaism both issued from the Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century and the ensuing civil emancipation of the European Jews during the nineteenth century.

Before that time terms such as “Orthodox”, “Reform” or “Liberal” did not exist, even though Judaism had always known different varieties.

Due to the Enlightenment and the Emancipation Jews had to adapt to a new situation. They left the confinement of Jewish communities and became, as individuals, part of their non-Jewish environment. The situation changed most markedly in Germany. The term “Orthodox” is attested from 1795 onward. The Orthodox denomination made no change as regards the content of their religion. Adaptations in order to become “decent civilians” were restricted to matters of *decorum*: Rabbis started to wear robes, prayer was led by cantors and “sermons” were held in the vernacular.

Reform Jews, however, went much further. They abolished some Jewish traditions, did not regard *halakha* as binding and applied modern scientific and scholarly insights to the study of Judaism. The use of Hebrew in the synagogue was replaced by the vernacular, not only in sermons, as was the case in Orthodox synagogues, but also in prayers. Reminiscences of Zion and Jerusalem were removed from liturgy and choirs and organs were introduced.

Nineteenth-century Dutch Judaism stayed Orthodox and adjustments were only made in the *decorum*. Here too, bands and gown were introduced, the derasha was given in Dutch, wooden shoes and caps were no longer allowed³ and noisy ‘Hamankloppen’ on Purim and dancing with the *sifrei Torah* on Simchat Torah were also not permitted. Disorderly behaviour during services had to be stopped. In the services of some synagogues more order was introduced by choral singing, which meant: only male-choirs and without use of instruments.⁴

³ People had to come dressed up with shoes and fashionable hats.

⁴ Ch. Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov* (Amsterdam 2006) 14.

1.2 How did Liberal Judaism come into being in the Netherlands?

In the Netherlands, Liberal Jewish congregations were not established until the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Professor Dan Michman,⁵ one of the reasons behind this relatively late emergence of Liberal Judaism, especially in comparison with other countries, was that although some secularizing process had been going on, no real discussion about the beliefs, ideas and essence of Judaism had taken place. The educated and well-to-do class, who in other countries conducted these discussions, existed in the Netherlands only to a limited extent. Most Jews were penniless. Therefore many were already quite content with the changes made in the outer appearance. Most Jews with a potential interest in Liberal Judaism turned out to prefer assimilation. At the end of the nineteenth century their attitude towards Judaism can best be described as indifferent.

In The Hague, Levie Levisson (1878-1948) set himself apart from most members of this rapidly assimilating community, in that he did not share the general indifference towards the vicissitudes of Judaism in the Netherlands. He was constantly reminded of the chasm gaping between fossilized religious Judaism on the one hand, and social reality on the other. In 1929, during a business trip to London, a friend took him to the Liberal Jewish Synagogue at St. John's Road, where he saw that there were other ways to shape Judaism. He decided to introduce this form of Judaism in the Netherlands, an endeavour that he at first instance strove to realize under the wings of the Orthodox Nederlands Israëlietisch Kerkgenootschap (NIK). The NIK, however, vehemently opposed this new form of Judaism. Levisson got support from the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and the World Union for Progressive Judaism, that had been established in London some years before, in 1926⁶.

In the Autumn of 1930 the Genootschap voor de Joodsche Reformbeweging was founded, and approved by Royal Decree on April 13, 1931. The term "Liberal" was consciously avoided in view of its strong association with Liberal Judaism in England, which in Dutch eyes was too radical. The initiators of the Genootschap consisted of a small group of seven closely related people, among whom three women. They invited the Jewish population of The Hague to a first synagogue service on Hanukkah, Friday night, December 19, 1930. The Genootschap's chairman was Levie Levisson.

The Genootschap called for a rabbi, and through the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) the young Rabbi M.J. Lasker was invited. He, however, would only stay for half a year. After his departure, in Spring 1931, the Genootschap announced that no services would be held until a new rabbi had been found. In the meantime, however, the movement would extend to Amsterdam. A small group of like-minded people existed there, also belonging to the upper middle class. The existence of a

⁵ D. Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943* (Amsterdam 1988) 32.

⁶ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 12-15.

branch in Amsterdam entailed the need for an umbrella organization, of which The Hague and Amsterdam could be constituent members. Therefore, on October 18, 1931 the Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland was established, in “Hotel Americain” in Amsterdam. The fact that the term “Liberal” was no longer avoided had to do with the increasing orientation on developments in Germany, where, in contrast to England, the designation “Liberal” stood precisely for the moderate approach, while the word “Reform” came to denote the more radical view. Shortly after, on January 13, 1931, the Amsterdam branch of the Verbond was officially established⁷.

The start was difficult, but from 1934 Rabbi Ludwig Mehler from Berlin became active in the Amsterdam congregation. From 1938 onwards the congregation at The Hague was placed under the guidance of Rabbi Dr. Hans Andorn. Both rabbis had a German background. Especially the Amsterdam congregation took up many German refugees, who came to the Netherlands after 1933. The two branches together counted almost a thousand members in 1940. During the German occupation (May 1940 – May 1945) the vast majority of those members were killed.

1.3 Developments since 1945

After the war it turned out that only a handful of people had survived. On May 28, 1945 Dr. Maurits (Mau) Goudekot from Amsterdam paid a visit to Levie Levisson, saying: “I have come to ask when shall we restart the Liberal Jewish Congregation?” After a short survey the institutions of the Liberal Jews still proved to exist from a legal point of view, due to the fact that they had disobeyed the German occupiers’ order to report them. Therefore, the bureaucratic hassle of their re-establishment could be avoided. However, the much more difficult duty remained, to generate interest in membership, this time in a decimated Jewish community. Levisson and Goudekot published an advertisement that appeared in the Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad (NIW) on November 9, 1945 inviting people to get into contact with them. On Shabbat, December 29, 1945 at 15:00 hours the first postwar service was held in the Minervapaviljoen in Amsterdam-Zuid. For the first services a *sefer Torah* was borrowed from the Orthodox synagogue in the Obrechtstreet.

In The Hague at most fifteen members of the Liberal Jewish congregation had survived the war. Bob Levisson, a son of Levie Levisson and a young man of Mau Goudekot’s generation, had become a Zionist and consequently did not immediately take over his father’s endeavour. In the autumn of 1946 Mau Goudekot moved to Curaçao and in 1948 Levie Levisson died in The Hague. “For the second time in five years the Liberal Jewish Congregation in the Netherlands seemed to come to an end.”⁸

⁷ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 43-50.

Bob Levisson, who “inherited” all kinds of responsibilities from his father, including the management of the latter’s printing office, also took upon himself the chairmanship of the Verbond. In 1947 he met Jacob (Jaap) Soetendorp. At the time Soetendorp worked for the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*.

Before the war he had studied for the Orthodox rabbinate at the *Nederlands Israëlietisch Seminarium*, but left his studies before the last exam. Levisson and Soetendorp stayed in contact even after 1948, when Soetendorp and his family moved to Israel. In the summer of 1953 they came back to Holland and in 1954 Soetendorp accepted the position of leader at the Liberal congregation of Amsterdam. He finished his rabbinic education within the World Union for Progressive Judaism and in 1955 he was ordained by the leader of Liberal Judaism, Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck, well advanced in years, who lived in London after the war.⁹

In 1955 some people had gathered in The Hague in order to bring new life into the Liberal congregation, now that the Verbond had a capable Dutch rabbi. But they were too few in numbers and abstained from their plans for the time being. In 1958 Soetendorp, who was often ill, suggested to appoint Chaim Storosum, a musician he knew from Israel and who presently lived in Groningen, as *hazzan* and teacher. From that moment, Bob Levisson and Chaim Storosum led the services together and would not skip any Friday night service¹⁰. In 1968 Soetendorp’s son, Rabbi S.A. (Awraham) Soetendorp, was ordained in The Hague, where he would lead the congregation until 2008. In 1971 Rabbi D.L. (David) Lilienthal came to Amsterdam as assistant rabbi. In 1972 he took over the duties of Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp, who had resigned, and remained in function until 2004. In that year he was succeeded by Rabbi M. (Menno) ten Brink.

After the war the Verbond increased its membership to its present size with more than 3,000 individuals, on a total of circa 30,000 Jews living in the Netherlands, of whom 4,750 are affiliated with orthodox congregations. At present, there are nine Liberal congregations, in Amsterdam, The Hague, Arnhem (established in 1965), Rotterdam (since 1970), Twente (1972), Noord-Brabant (1981), Utrecht (1993), Flevoland (1998) and Noord-Nederland (2000). In 2006 the Verbond changed its name into *Nederlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom*. This adaptation was carried out in order to bring to the fore its connection with the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). “Progressive” is the umbrella term for various denominations of Liberal, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism in the world.

⁸ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 98.

⁹ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 86-99.

¹⁰ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 145-149.

Chapter 2 Two Types of Reform in Liturgy

In the scholarly study of the liturgy of Liberal and Reform congregations in Germany, England and the United States a distinction is made between “Reform from within” and “Independent Reform”. In order to better understand the choices made in Dutch Liberal Judaism, I shall discuss the background of this distinction in this chapter and assess its impact on the Dutch situation.

2.1 Reform from within

The “Reform from within” produced prayer books to be used by (well-nigh) all Liberal congregations in a country, which is a marking difference with the ‘Independent Reform’ as we will see in a while.

In Germany appeared the influential *Einheitsgebetbuch für die liberalen Gemeinden in Deutschland (Gebetbuch für das ganze Jahr [Tefillot lekol ha-shanah]*. Bearbeitet im Auftrag des Liberalen Kultusausschusses des Preußischen Landesverbandes jüdischer Gemeinden. Von Seligman, Elbogen, Vogelstein, Frankfurt am Main 1929).

A predecessor of this sidur for an entire community was the *Union Prayer Book* in the United States. The *Einheitsgebetbuch* “reflects the influence of the American Union Prayer Book, in its arrangement strongly influenced by the American ritual.”¹¹ “The *Union Prayer book* (1895) was the first successful attempt by Jews in America to create a joint liturgical statement of Jewish identity that transcended congregational boundaries. The prayer book “stated the essence of liberal Judaism”, thus Lawrence Hoffman, professor of liturgy at New York's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion¹².

Rabbi Elliot Stevens further comments: “The 1892 version of the *UPB* was actually recalled, at considerable expense; its replacement, published in 1895 as the “first edition” of the *Union Prayer Book*, was more in keeping with the tenets of Classical Reform. ... the 1895 *UPB* had a universalist orientation — it rejected such traditional Jewish notions as peoplehood, chosenness, the personal Messiah, resurrection, and a return to the Land of Israel. It also deleted the *musaf* (“additional” Shabbat service) as well as any references to the priesthood and the sacrificial cult, ... also carefully noted when congregants should stand or sit, or read responsively. Moreover, fearing the cacophony of davening characteristic of Eastern European Jews and insisting instead on absolute decorum Rabbi

¹¹ J.J. Petuchowsky, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe* (New York 1968) 79.

¹² A. Engler Anderson, *Jewish News Weekly of Northern California*, January 12, 1996.

Kohler eliminated most opportunities for congregational participation and essentially entrusted the liturgy to the rabbi as reader and to a trained choir.”¹³

A predecessor of the *Einheitsgebetbuch* was the 1870 sidur by Abraham Geiger, one of the great foremen of the German Reform movement. This prayer book was meant for more than a single congregation. However, this sidur, too, appeared in two versions. One was according to the “German rite” used in Southern Germany, the other followed the “Polish rite”, which was practiced in Northern Germany at the time. It was difficult to achieve a generally accepted sidur, because German Jewish communities had a long history and had each developed their own rites, customs and liturgy¹⁴. In 1922 the prayer book commission decided to take the Hebrew text of Geiger's Prayer book as the basis for the new unified prayer book. Geiger's text had been adopted by the large congregations of Berlin, Breslau, Frankfurt am Main, and in the Westphalian congregations¹⁵. Later on, the *Einheitsgebetbuch* became the generally used sidur of Liberal Jewish congregations in Germany.

2.2 Independent Reform

The “Independent Reform” produced prayer books for specific congregations; it did not need to compromise and count with traditionalist sensitivities. They could freely follow their own radical inclinations, which most people actually did. This becomes apparent from a series of characteristics that will be mentioned below. It is a remarkable phenomenon that the general pattern in the liturgy of “Independent Reform” is one of a gradual return to more traditional forms and content. Whereas initially liturgy was used as a weapon in the battle for progress, in order to break through the rigidity of the established order, once this idea had sunk in, people realized that renewal for the sake of renewal is not the only alternative. Thus one returns to tradition, and as a result the distinction between the prayer books of the “Reform from within” and those of the “Independent Reform” becomes blurred. We will see that this process also took place in the Dutch case. The early Dutch sidurim belong to the “Independent Reform” and this is even true for those sidurim published in the nineteenth century. It is difficult however to make a similar statement about the latest sidur, published in 2000. This sidur looks much more like one of the “Reform from within”: it is meant for a whole and varied community of nine different congregations and on its pages we find traditional features like the musaph service, entered as an option.

¹³ Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens, “The Prayer Books, They Are A'Changin'”, *Reform Judaism*, Summer issue 2006 (reprinted).

¹⁴ Petuchowsky, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe*, 35.

Characteristic features of the Independent Reform are the following:¹⁶

1. The Shema no longer consists of three paragraphs. It merely contains the first paragraph and sometimes the end of the third one.
2. There is no Musaf service, with the occasional exception of the High Holidays. “Reform from within” adapts the wording and the meaning of Musaf, whereas “Independent Reform” omits it altogether.
3. No effort is made to retain the full 18 (or 7) berakhot in the Amida. “Reform from within” at least tries to retain the traditional number of berakhot, despite the fact that the wording needs reworking due to doctrinal convictions. “Independent Reform” rather prefers to omit than to adapt passages.
4. There is a lot of variation in the parts used for the various services e.g., one particular service on a certain erev shabbat, and another on another erev Shabbat, or due to the fact that different introductions are offered with one standard service.
5. Many prayers are not uttered in their original version, but in a translation into the vernacular.

¹⁵ תפילות לכל השנה *Gebetbuch für das ganze Jahr* (Frankfurt am Main 1929) xiii.

¹⁶ Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe*, 80-83.

Chapter 3 Inventory of Dutch Liturgical Publications, 1930-2008

In order to show how Liberal liturgy developed in the Netherlands, I will now give a schematic inventory of the liturgical publications that have appeared since 1930.

3.1 1930-1945

	Sidur, Machzor	Year and place of publication	Compiled by	External features	Languages
1.	Religious meeting held in The Hague led by Rabbi M.J. Lasker on Friday evening December 19, 1930 and Religious meeting held in The Hague led by Rabbi M.J. Lasker on Friday evening December 26, 1930	1930, 19 December, The Hague 1930, 26 December, The Hague	Rabbi M.J. Lasker Rabbi M.J. Lasker	Pamphlet, 19½ x 26½ cm, thin black Magen David in circle, 9 pages, like Dutch book from left to right, division of tasks described idem	Hebrew with Dutch text adjacent and underneath. More Dutch texts than Hebrew idem
2.	Joodsche Reform Genootschap [Jewish Reform Society], text for the prayers on Friday evening	1931	Rabbi M.J. Lasker	Pamphlet, 19½ x 26½ cm, thin black Magen David in circle, 8 pages, left to right, division of tasks described	Hebrew with Dutch text adjacent and sometimes underneath. More Dutch texts than Hebrew
3.	Prayers and hymns for the Friday evening service and Sabbath morning service	1931	Rabbi Dr. J. Norden, L. Levisson and R.J. Spitz	Pamphlet, like booklet folded double, 13½ x 19½ cm, thin black Magen David on the front. Friday evening service through page 14, Sabbath morning service through page 20, many different fonts in Hebrew, German and Dutch; left to right, division of tasks described	Hebrew, German and Dutch
4.	Prayers and hymns for worship on the Day of Atonement	1932	Rabbi Dr. J. Norden L. Levisson and R.J. Spitz	Left to right, 13½ x 19½ cm, thin light yellow cardboard cover, black letters in 3 different sizes, thin Magen David on the front, 59 pages, division of tasks described	Hebrew with Dutch text underneath, more Dutch texts than Hebrew
5.	Hagadah	1933	from <i>Nieuw Joodsch Leven</i> , vol. 1, no. 9 L. Levisson	8 pages, printed on both sides, various fonts	Dutch and Hebrew
6.	Prayers and hymns for the Friday evening service	1933	Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg, R.J. Spitz	Pamphlet, like booklet folded double, 13½ x 19½ cm, black letters, thin Magen David on the front, 19 pages, various Hebrew fonts	Hebrew and Dutch

7.	Prayers and hymns for worship on the New Year's days	1933	Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg, R.J. Spitz	Black book with thin cardboard cover, 13½ x 19½ cm, left to right, with gold-coloured imprint, Magen David centre front, 62 pages, division of tasks described	Hebrew with Dutch text underneath
8.	Prayers and hymns for worship on the Day of Atonement	1933, Netherlands	Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg, R.J. Spitz	Like 6; 98 pages	Hebrew with Dutch underneath, more Dutch texts than Hebrew
9.	Prayers and hymns for the evening services on the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day and the Joy Feast of the Torah	1933, Netherlands	Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg, R.J. Spitz	Like 6,7, and 8; 34 pages, different Hebrew fonts, (cut-and-paste work)	Hebrew with Dutch texts underneath
10.	Prayers and hymns for worship on the Day of Atonement, additions to the book of prayers, published in 1569-1933	1934, Netherlands, Amsterdam	L. Levisson, R.J. Spitz	Like 6,7,8 and 9; 70 pages, various fonts, no division of tasks	Hebrew and Dutch
11.	תפלות לכל השנה Einheitsgebetbuch [Unified prayer book]	1929, Frankfurt am Main	Editors: Dr. C. Seligmann, Dr. I. Elbogen, Dr. H. Vogelstein, introduced in the Netherlands by Rabbi L.J. Mehler in 1934	Black book with hard cover, 12 x 19½ cm, 124 pages, right to left, table of contents and preface	Hebrew and German
12.	הגדה של פסח A collection of prayers, stories and hymns, to be used for the Passover evening service both at home and in communal services	1938, Netherlands	L. Levisson	Like 6,7,8,9 and 10; 44 pages and 3 pages with musical notes, extensive introduction	Hebrew with Dutch underneath and many Dutch texts
13.	Prayers and hymns for the Day of Atonement, morning service	1939, The Hague	Rabbi Dr. H. Andorn, R.J. Spitz	Like 6,7,8,9,10 and 12; 42 pages, various fonts, no division of tasks indicated	Hebrew and Dutch underneath

3.2 1945-2008

14.	לקראת שבת לכו ונלכה, Prayers for the Friday evening service	1955, Netherlands	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson	Grey soft cover, 16½ cm x 20 ½ cm, right to left, simple black imprint in Dutch and Hebrew, no Magen David, 19 pages. Not everything is translated. Various Hebrew fonts. Clearly cut-and-paste work, division of tasks indicated	Hebrew, Dutch
15.	יוצר לשבת שבת יקר וגדולה ביום שבת Morning service of Sabbath	1955	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson	Like 12, 25 pages, with Magen David on the front, no division of tasks indicated	Hebrew, Dutch
16.	תפלות לשבת מנוחה Prayers for the Sabbath	1955?	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson	Grey book, soft cover, 16½ x 20½ cm, right to left, on cover: in classical cartouche ליום זה לישראל אורה ושמה, various	Hebrew, Dutch

				Hebrew and Dutch fonts, Jugendstil decoration below, 45 pages. Clearly composed of nos. 14 en 15 mentioned above, Friday evening service and Saturday morning service	
17.	הגדה של פסח, The story of the Exodus as told on the Passover Seder	1958	Rabbi J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson.	Light blue book, 16½ x 20 ½ cm, left to right, soft cover, pictures on the front, many different fonts, extensive introduction by J. Soetendorp, many illustration, 45 pages, for the first time at the end a Magen David with the letters LJG: Liberaal Joodse Gemeente	Hebrew, Dutch
18.	תפלות לראש השנה וליום הכפורים	1960, Netherlands	Einheits-gebetbuch	Yellow soft cover with grey square with Hebrew inscription, 11x19 cm, thin black Magen David, 512 pages, right to left	Hebrew, German, Gothic type
19.	סדר תפלות לשבת, Prayers for Friday evening and Sabbath	1961, Amsterdam, The Hague	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson,	Light blue, soft cover, 13 x 21 ½ cm, right to left, 44 pages, thin black Magen David on the front. On the first page a Magen David with letters LJG in it, various Hebrew fonts, but much neater cut-and-paste work. Extra texts only in Dutch	Hebrew with Dutch texts underneath
20.	סדר טוב להודות, Prayers for Sabbath and holidays	1964, Netherlands	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson	Dark green book, hard cover, Hebrew, 12 x 19 ½ cm, right to left, gold-coloured print, Magen David with letters LJG on the front, 256 pages, no division of tasks, one font both in Hebrew and in Dutch; divided into Service for Friday Evening, Service for Sabbath Morning, Evening Service for Holidays, Morning Service for Holidays, Readings from Torah and Prophets for Holidays, and Additional Prayers for the Services on Nine Av, Hanukkah and Purim	Hebrew with Dutch text underneath
21.	סדר טוב להודות, Prayers for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	1964, Netherlands	Rabbi J. Soetendorp, R.A. Levisson,	Dark green book, hard cover, 12 x 19 ½ cm, right to left, golden imprint, Magen David with letters LJG in it on the front, 569	Hebrew with Dutch text underneath

				pages, Evening Service for Rosh Hashanah, Morning Service for Rosh Hashanah, Evening Service for Day of Atonement, Morning Service for Day of Atonement, Commemoration of the Dead, Additional Prayer for Day of Atonement	
		1976		Exact reprint in 1976 in dark blue	
22.	ענג שבת וסדר ברכת המזון "Bensjboekje" [the "Bensh booklet"]	1976	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, on behalf of the Rabbinate	Brown book, soft cover, 14½ x 21 cm, right to left, thin Magen David with letters L J G in it on the front, 44 pages, texts also phonetic	Hebrew, Dutch; sometimes the Dutch and/or phonetic texts are on the page opposite the Hebrew text
		1982		Exact copy, even with the same preface. But now it is a yellow ochre book, 14½ x 21 cm, soft cover. Right to left, for the first time L J G logo appears on the front, black imprint: the L and J with a menorah in the middle, resting on the G	
23.	סדר שים שלום Evening service for the Sabbath (1 st provisional edition)	1989	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the cooperation of the L J G Rabbis	Light blue book with soft cover, 14½ x 21 cm, Provisional edition, reprinted with the permission of the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of America. L J G logo has been added.	Hebrew on right page, English and sometimes Dutch on left page
	סדר טוב להודות, Evening service for the Sabbath, 2nd provisional edition	1991	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, with the cooperation of the L J G Rabbis	Turquoise booklet, soft cover, 14½ x 21 cm, second provisional edition.	Hebrew on right page, Dutch and English on left page
	סדר טוב להודות, Evening service for the Sabbath, 3rd provisional edition	1995	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, with the L J G Rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Peacock blue book, soft cover, right to left, silver-coloured imprint, 14 x 21 cm, large L J G logo, 89 pages, contents, preface, indications in the form of a ● or a □, some texts also phonetic. Additions for the evening services on the first and last days of SUKKOTH, PESACH, SHAVUOTH and on HANNUKAH	Hebrew on right page, Dutch on left page

24.	סדר טוב להודות, Morning service for the Sabbath and weekdays, 1st provisional edition	1991	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the LJG Rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Light yellow book with spiral binding, black letters, 14½ x 20½ cm, large LJG logo	Dutch on right page, Hebrew on left page
	סדר טוב להודות Morning Service for the Sabbath and weekdays, 2nd provisional edition	1996	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the LJG rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Light green book, soft cover, right to left, silver-coloured imprint, large LJG logo, 14 x 21 cm, 275 pages. Indications in the form of a ● or an ○	Hebrew on right page, Dutch on left page
25.	סדר טוב להודות Afternoon and evening service in the house of mourners	1998	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the LJG rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Silver-coloured book, soft cover, right to left, dark blue imprint, large LJG logo, 14 x 21 cm, 64 pages. Indications in the form of an ○	Hebrew on right page, Dutch on left page
26.	ישמחו השמים, "Het Bentsboekje"	1998	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the LJG rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Dark green book, soft cover, right to left, silver-coloured imprint, large LJG logo, 14 x 21 cm, 119 pages, texts also phonetic	Hebrew, sometimes phonetic on right page, Dutch on left page
27.	סדר טוב להודות חול ושבתי	2000	Rabbi D. Lilienthal, ed., with the LJG rabbis and translators Ms. Manja Bakker and Prof. Dr. C.I. Dessaur	Blue book, hard cover, 14½ x 22 cm, 731 pages, golden imprint, spine also imprinted, with: סדר טוב להודות חול ושבתי, Weekdays and Sabbath, logo LJG	Hebrew on right page, Dutch and phonetic on left page

Chapter 4 The Persons behind the Liturgy

The persons behind the sidurim obviously played a decisive role in the development of liturgy. I will now therefore provide a brief description of who they were and the circumstances under which they worked.

4.1 The Prewar Compilers of Liturgy

1. **Rabbi M.J. Lasker**, born in Kiev on December 25, 1903, arrived in the Netherlands in December 1930. He was of East European origin and had emigrated with his parents to the USA at an early age. In the years 1921-23 he took a teacher training course at the (Reform) Hebrew Teachers College in Boston and also studied at Tufts College. He received his BA at Cincinnati University in 1927 and a year later was ordained at Hebrew Union College, also in Cincinnati. After these years of study he attended lectures for a year (1928-29) at the Hebrew University and the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. Right afterwards the WUPJ sent him to Poland where congregations with a somewhat old-fashioned German Liberal orientation existed but were not connected with the WUPJ. He tried to build up interest for the modern forms of Progressive Judaism and the WUPJ in assimilated circles but his attempts failed: “The most serious of the enlightened Jews were interested in Jewish culture and modern Jewish studies, but not in a Jewish identity that was essentially religious”.¹⁷ The board of the WUPJ, which appreciated and had utilized his qualities, thought this youthful and active rabbi the right person to put the The Hague group of Liberals on a firm footing¹⁸. Rabbi Lasker started to write propaganda pamphlets: *Een korte uiteenzetting omtrent de Joodsche reformbeweging* [A brief exposition on the Jewish Reform movement] and *Levend Gelooven* [Living Faith]. He oversaw the publication of two “sidurim”, an occasional sidur for the first and second meeting and for a regular Friday evening service. But these were no more than pamphlets. Rabbi Lasker used the so-called “Palestinian or scientific” pronunciation of Hebrew - a result of his stay in Palestine. While he was in the Netherlands the *Genootschap voor de Joodsche Reformbeweging* [Society for the Jewish Reform Movement] was founded. However, Lasker left within half a year of being appointed. This was not just due to “personal problems”, which were cited as the reason for his departure, but also because there was a wide gap in mentality between him and the new congregation as a result of his

¹⁷ M.A. Meyer, *Response to modernity* (New York, Oxford 1988) 340.

¹⁸ D. Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943* (Amsterdam 1988) 40.

background, which was so different from the specific Dutch-Jewish culture, and because he did not learn Dutch, so that he was e.g. unable to teach the children in the congregation¹⁹.

2. **Rabbi Dr. J. Norden** from Elberfeld came to the Netherlands for a few days every three weeks in the summer of 1931. He had gained broad experience in a German “Einheitsgemeinde” [united congregation] and had been exempted from his ordinary activities there for a period of two years.²⁰ Rabbi Norden tried to initiate cooperation with the Orthodox Chief Rabbi I. Maarsen in The Hague, but these talks failed. After these talks he published a brochure entitled *De Tijd van Overweging* [Time of Deliberation]. Under his leadership the term Reform, which in the German orientation of Progressive Judaism called up too many radical and anti-Zionist associations, was replaced by *Liberaal-Godsdienstig* [Liberal-Religious], for instance in the umbrella organization: the Union of Liberal-Religious Jews. He published a *Verklaring Algemeene Beginselen van Liberaal-Religieuze Jodendom* [Declaration of General Principles of Liberal-Religious Judaism], which contained a dozen points of faith and conviction²¹. In August 1932 the first two liberal chuppot took place under the supervision of Rabbi Norden²². Under his leadership a branch was established in Amsterdam in January 1932 and the journal *Nieuw Joodsch Leven* [New Jewish Life] was founded in April 1932. This journal was published until his departure in mid-1933, when the two-year term, granted by his congregation for his work in the Netherlands, came to an end.

3. **Rabbi Dr. Hans Hirschberg** came from the “Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums” in Berlin. He had graduated in Semitic languages and history. His learning was extensive. Hirschberg arrived as a probationer in the Netherlands in the summer of 1933. He quickly learned Dutch and oversaw the compilation of prayer books for the High Holy Days. The influence of the *Einheitsgebetbuch* was very clear. He soon published a number of his speeches in Dutch. “Hirschberg had set to work with great enthusiasm, but proved too Orthodox for both The Hague and Amsterdam congregations. A ‘too Orthodox’ rabbi from Germany, even an average Liberal rabbi from that country, must have disliked the existing Dutch habit of sitting together as families in the shul. The women concerned probably wanted even more latitude. With Hirschberg as rabbi this seemed impossible. So he had to go. What he left behind were the prayer books made under his supervision. In the following years they would remain in use.”²³

¹⁹ Ch. Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaakov* (Amsterdam 2006) 39-45.

²⁰ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaakov*, 47.

²¹ Michman, *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943*, 83.

²² Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaakov*, 53.

²³ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaakov*, 56.

4. **Rabbi Dr. H. Andorn**, Hattingen, August 7, 1903 – Bergen-Belsen, February 26, 1945, was the first rabbi to receive a permanent appointment from the Liberal-Jewish Congregation in The Hague as spiritual leader of this congregation. He came to the Netherlands after ‘Kristallnacht’, November 9, 1938. Andorn had studied at the “Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums” in Berlin and passed the rabbinical exam in 1932. Thereafter he received his doctoral degree in philosophy at the University of Giessen.

As a student, during a congress of the “World Union for Progressive Judaism”, Andorn had become acquainted with Levie Levisson from The Hague. The latter was already looking for a young, liberally orientated rabbi for the Liberal Jewish congregation in the Hague. When it became increasingly clear after 1933 that the situation for Jews in Germany was becoming untenable, and normal life in and for the benefit of the Jewish community impossible, Andorn got in touch with Levisson. Owing to the restrictive immigration policy in the Netherlands, Andorn did not succeed in moving to The Hague with his family until the autumn of 1938.

Contact between the new rabbi and the Board and Congregation members rapidly became closer, not the least because of Andorn’s great ability to adapt to the changed circumstances, and also because he was soon able to express himself well in Dutch.²⁴ In a short time he achieved much: weekly Friday evening services, first at the congregation’s regular address in the Van Dijk auditorium in the Hoge Nieuwstraat. And when, after the German invasion, this was no longer possible, at his home.²⁵ He gave courses on religious questions, Jewish history and Jewish sociology.²⁶ He compiled another prayer book for the morning service on the Day of Atonement. This was only used in The Hague. The occupier’s order that all foreign Jews should leave the coastal region suddenly put an end to his work in July 1940. A family member called Andorn to Zwolle. By sending written sermons and lectures, Andorn tried to stay in touch with his congregation in The Hague. In 1943 he, his wife and their child were deported via Westerbork to Bergen-Belsen. There he continued to give religious instruction to children and held services. He is known to have undergone the horrors of the camp period with dignity and faith in God. There, too, he tried to give as much spiritual support to his fellow human beings as possible by means of lectures and discussions. Dr. Andorn died on February 26, 1945, shortly before the liberation of Bergen-Belsen on April 15, 1945²⁷.

5. **Dr. Ludwig Jacob Mehler**, Berlin, February 4, 1907 - Bergen-Belsen, April 10, 1945, was certainly the most important prewar rabbi, even though he never published a liturgy of his own. The great Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck had recommended him and thus he arrived in the Netherlands in May

²⁴ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 65, 66.

²⁵ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 75-76.

²⁶ Michman *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943*, 122.

²⁷ H. Meyerfeld, ‘Lezikaron Rabbijn Dr. H. Andorn’ *Levend Joods Geloof* 12 (1955) 11, 43.

1934. Mehler started as rabbi in The Hague, but soon moved to Amsterdam.²⁸ He was a real and positive Liberal, who was not only well-acquainted with German but also with American Reform Judaism. Because of the enormous increase of German Jews in Amsterdam, he introduced the use of the *Einheitsgebetbuch* alongside the existing liturgy. The *Einheitsgebetbuch* became dominant in its influence and thus ended the development of a Dutch liturgy for the time being.

Mehler supported modern views on the status of women in Judaism. Mrs. Frieda Mehler-Sachs, his mother, who was herself a Berlin refugee, supported him in this and in his pursuit of equal rights for men and women in Judaism.²⁹ He was a Zionist and had plans to start a Liberal-religious faction in the Dutch Zionist League. Sadly he was not granted the time to do so. In his stimulating sermons – he soon spoke Dutch – he succeeded in inspiring and reaching many people. He was active for and with young people³⁰. His sermons were very powerful, and later in the war years full of comfort and encouragement. On the Sabbath he cycled to the shul and also when visiting the sick.

In the years 1942 and 1943 the personal sufferings of his congregation members consumed so much of his energy that the work of building up his congregation was no longer really possible, but he and his Boardmembers showed great fortitude in their support of German refugees and in providing comfort at the time of the deportations. They refused to go into hiding, so that they could continue to help congregation members. As a result none of them escaped the persecutions and they were all killed. When Mehler was deported, he was completely overworked.³¹

6. **Levie Levisson**, March 8, 1878 - December 10, 1948, printer, founder of the Liberal-Jewish Congregation in the Netherlands, was the fourth of seven children. He came from an Orthodox family. Because his parents were poorly off, he was taken in and raised by his grandfather. In 1902 he started a small printing business in The Hague: Drukkerij Levisson. Two years later, in order to increase the working capital, he converted his business into a public limited company: N.V. Elektrische Drukkerij previously Drukkerij Levisson.

In 1909 he married Amelia (Milly) Simons, who came from a prominent, partly Zionist family which also included Professor David Simons (a brother of Milly's father) and his son J.M. Simons, general editor of the Zionist weekly *De Joodsche Wachter* [The Jewish Watchman]. In the summer of 1913 Levisson became managing director of N.V. Nederlandsche Rotogravure Maatschappij in Leiden, which he built up into a front-rank printing business.

He was a member of the Orthodox congregation but not a great follower of Judaism. Only on *Yom Kipur* his company was closed. He did go to the shul on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but that was it. His brother, Salomon Levisson, was chairman of the Board of the local Orthodox Congregation

²⁸ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 65.

²⁹ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 68.

³⁰ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 73.

and Salomon's son Abraham studied at the Dutch Israelite Seminary in Amsterdam. In 1935 Abraham would become Chief Rabbi of Friesland.

Late 1929 Levie came into contact with the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London, which was a revelation to him: he found a different way of actively professing Judaism from that in the Netherlands. Early 1930, together with A. van Zwanenberg from Nijmegen, he brought Miss Lily Montagu to the Netherlands. She championed Progressive Judaism in England and through her leadership position in the WUPJ also worldwide. It was the beginning of the public debate on the introduction of the Reform movement in the Netherlands. With a group of like-minded people Levisson started to set up a "Society for the Jewish Reform Movement" in The Hague in 1930. The name referred to the moderate British Reform movement. In December that year the first service took place led by the young Rabbi Lasker. He had been paid by the WUPJ to get the new branch going. He stayed in the Netherlands for just six months. In the difficult early years of the organization of liberal Judaism in the Netherlands, Levisson traveled to England several times.

Levisson was also the moving force behind the foundation of the *Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland (het Verbond)* [Union of Liberal-Religious Jews in the Netherlands] in Amsterdam on October 18, 1931.³² As chairman of the Union he was an official member of the WUPJ during the annual meeting of its Governing Body on August 8, 1932, which was held in Amsterdam that year, and he became the official representative of the Verbond.

Through the years various prayer books were produced within the Verbond, compiled by the Rabbis Norden and Hirschberg with Levie Levisson and R.J. Spitz, a great expert on Hebrew and liturgy. Spitz made the translations, Levisson no doubt occupied himself with the contents, but above all with the printing of the books. Levisson did not like to move away from the Orthodox NIK as umbrella organization and constantly tried to find a way to function within the existing community. His aim was a "Grossgemeinde" [composite congregation] or "Einheitsgemeinde" [united congregation].³³ Until 1937, together with Rabbi Mehler, he tried to reach an agreement with the NIK. When this failed, he gave up his membership of the NIK. Because the large influx of German refugees in Amsterdam had also created a difference in orientation between the two Liberal congregations, he founded a separate *Liberaal-Joodse Gemeente (LJG)* [Liberal-Jewish Congregation] in both Amsterdam and The Hague. Levisson became chairman of both congregations and also remained chairman of the umbrella Verbond. As chairman of the Verbond he tried to cooperate with the Orthodox congregations in a "social, pedagogical and ethical respect".³⁴

³¹ M. Goudeket, 'Lezikaron rabbijn Dr. L. Mehler' *Levend Joods Geloof* 12 (1996) 11, 41.

³² Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 49.

³³ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 47.

³⁴ Michman *Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943*, 134-135.

By order of the occupier, Levisson had to resign as managing director of Rotogravure in March 1941. He survived the war by going into hiding together with his wife, first three years in Oegstgeest, then for a short time in Leiden. In autumn 1948 he died in The Hague. He was buried in Rijswijk, in the prewar cemetery of the Liberal Congregation in The Hague.³⁵

7. **R.J. Spitz**, Amsterdam, July 23, 1889 – Zeist, December 29, 1954. Raphael Jesaias Spitz was a late arrival in his family and a complete surprise.³⁶ The Spitz family lived in the “Rembrandt House” in Amsterdam, which also accommodated his father’s firm: a wholesale business in watches. They had a private synagogue. “Through the mystical atmosphere, orientated to the Holy Land, this private shul represented an entirely different world from the large synagogue of the religious community, where shul services in the late nineteenth century had been increasingly adapted to Dutch-Jewish ideas about dignity, decorum and devotion. This private shul radiated a special mystical atmosphere, nourished by the cabbalistic doctrine of Rabbi Jitschak Luria, of which the Spitzs were supporters.”³⁷

Spitz had studied for the rabbinate at the Nederlands Israëlietisch Seminarium (NIS) [Dutch Israelite Seminary] in Amsterdam. Outside of his familiar Jewish environment he took an interest in various non-Jewish movements, including Christian socialism. In these circles he met his wife Anna Hermina Wegerif, with whom he had three children: Judith, Herbert and Gideon. Because of this mixed marriage he could never become a member of the Orthodox congregation; he was a confirmed Liberal. The family led a more or less lonely existence with great financial worries. After taking a teacher training course in Dutch, he regularly taught, but was never very successful. “His wife started a publishing house, “De Zonnebloem” [The Sunflower], so that his love of the Dutch language could generate income in this way.”³⁸

He had a broad knowledge of Judaism and a phenomenal memory. He was an expert on Gemara, medieval philosophy, medieval Jewish poetry, and his specialism was: the history of the compilation of sidur and machzor. “With the true talent of a connoisseur, he found in every different nusach elements which glittered as an additional jewel.”³⁹ “Thus for instance the prayer books which he compiled with L. Levisson under the supervision of Rabbi Norden contain a version of the Modim paragraph in the Amida which he had probably drawn from a North African source. A very keen sense of language made Spitz into an extremely gifted translator. He taught us that piyutim are not just

³⁵ Rena Fuks-Mansfeld et al. (Pauline Micheels), *Joden in Nederland in de twintigste eeuw, een biografisch woordenboek*, (Amsterdam 2007) 185.

³⁶ Rebecca Kisch-Spitz, זכרונות *Herinneringen* (Amsterdam 1952).

³⁷ Gans, *Memorboek* (Baarn 1991) 356.

³⁸ Oral history, N.M. Spitz van Oss, daughter-in-law.

³⁹ R.A. Levisson, ‘Lezikaron R.J. Spitz’ *Levend Joods Geloof* 12 (1966) 11, 47

unintelligible and elusive Hebrew, but that there are superior and inferior ones, poetically sound and poetically worthless ones.”⁴⁰

One of the publications he left behind is “Dagen van Inkeer” [Days of Repentance], a selection from the prayers for the Jamim Noraim and Day of Atonement, introduced, translated and explained⁴¹. Spitz addresses himself to “the reader who knows little or nothing about Jewish liturgy and the religious traditions and way of thinking of Israel.” This publication shows that he was a deeply religious person and strongly anchored in his tradition, but highly conscious of the great mass of people who were no longer familiar with any tradition. Spitz had a regular feature, “De Torah en wij” [The Torah and we], in *Nieuw Joodsch Leven* [New Jewish Life], the precursor of *Levend Joods Geloof* [Living Jewish Faith], the journal of the ‘Verbond’ of Liberal-Religious Jews. In a polemic with Orthodoxy he defended the right of someone in a mixed marriage to be a member of a Jewish congregation and expressed criticism of the Kaddish prayer that was ‘pattered’ six times during a service. He also wrote about the death of the writer Frederik van Eeden, about William of Orange on the 400th anniversary of his death, about retaining ‘formulaic prayers’ and Hebrew in the service, about the Alenu and translations of psalms and piyutim.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he returned to teaching Dutch. Suddenly he started publishing original Dutch poems again, which he signed with the mysterious letters I.H.B. (which did not mean what the gossiping congregation made of them: “Ik Heb Berouw” [I Repent]). After the war Spitz occasionally published something in the “Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad” [New Israelite Weekly] under the same signature I.H.B. Spitz was a Zionist, as is also reflected in a lecture which he gave during the early beginnings of Zionism in the Netherlands. He spoke out there against the narrow minded Dutch-Jewish mentality: “I imagined that the western border of Klal Israel awareness in Europe was located at Vienna. But the Jewish community in the Netherlands, partly through the exclusiveness and limited scope of its language and language area, capped everything as regards isolationism and egocentricity.”⁴²

At the end of his life he translated Psalms.⁴³ “He was a believing searcher and a searching believer.”⁴⁴ “It is much to be regretted that of all Spitz’s great knowledge in the field of Judaism we have so little available to us in a palpable form.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Levisson, ‘Spitz’, 47.

⁴¹ R.J. Spitz, *Dagen van Inkeer* (Amsterdam 1941).

⁴² F. Püttmann eds., *Markante Nederlandse Zionisten, een halve eeuw zionisme in Nederland (1899/1948)*; R.J. Spitz, *Herinneringen aan het begin* (Amsterdam 1996) 9.

⁴³ Oral history, N.M. Spitz van Oss, daughter in law.

⁴⁴ Levisson, ‘Spitz’, 47.

⁴⁵ R.A. Levisson, ‘Een groot vertaler ging heen’ *Levend Joods Geloof* 1 (1955) 4, 6.

8. **Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp**, Amsterdam, July 5, 1914 - Frederikshavn (Denmark), July 28, 1976, was born in Amsterdam on the Rapenburg and as a boy moved to the Eilanden on Kattenburg, a predominantly non-Jewish environment, where he learned to associate with people beyond his own group. He came from a poor family. He went to a public school, but at home the family lived in the traditional manner. As a member of the youth association Betsalel the young Soetendorp was taught by Rabbi Meijer de Hond, who combined a mystical form of Orthodoxy with great social involvement. As a pupil of the Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary Soetendorp became more and more doubtful about his studies: for him the words of the prophets had a practical significance in the streets of Amsterdam. He left the seminary shortly before the last exam and became a pastoral worker at the Jewish Community of Amsterdam and Head of the Jewish school for advanced elementary education. He had socialist and pacifist sympathies and became a Zionist and member of Poalei Zion. Yet he was also an active participant in the shul services of the Orthodox and Zionist youth association Zichron Ja'akov. During the German occupation he urged people to go into hiding. He himself did this too, together with his wife. Their newborn son Awraham was housed somewhere else. After the war Jacob Soetendorp worked as general editor of the “Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad” [New Israelite Weekly]. In 1948 he moved with his family to Jerusalem. His search for a new form of Judaism which could inspire him after the Shoah, brought him into contact with the shul of the *mevakshe haderech*, the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism, in which the cultural element outweighed the religious. His curiosity about American Reform Judaism was increased by a journalistic working visit to the United States.

In 1953 Soetendorp returned with his family to the Netherlands and in 1954 he became leader of the Liberal-Jewish Congregation in Amsterdam. He would hold this position until 1972. In 1955 Soetendorp was ordained a rabbi by Dr. Leo Baeck, the German leader of Liberal Judaism, living in London. From 1957 he was also involved as a rabbi with the Liberal-Jewish Congregation in The Hague and after its official re-establishment in 1959 he was nominated rabbi of that congregation as well. Together with R.A. Levisson he published a Haggadah (1958), a new prayer book and a new machzor for the High Holy Days (1964). Soetendorp was an inspiring rabbi, who developed the small Amsterdam congregation of mainly German Jews into a large Dutch-Jewish community. But his activities were not confined to the Netherlands. He was chairman of the European Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Spreading knowledge about Judaism and building good relations with Christian groups were seen by Soetendorp as his most important tasks.⁴⁶

9. **Rabbi R.A. Levisson LL.M.**, December 27, 1913 - December 25, 2001. Bob Levisson, son of Levie Levisson and Milly Levisson-Simons, was given a sound Jewish upbringing at home, though the

family completely abandoned many traditional Jewish customs, including kashrut. As a boy he experienced the foundation of the first Liberal-Jewish Congregation in the Netherlands and later of the umbrella organization, the 'Verbond'. Levisson junior read Law at the University of Leiden.

During the German occupation he was arrested. He escaped from Westerbork and succeeded in reaching England via Spain. At the end of 1944 he returned to the Netherlands as lieutenant in the liberation army. At first he was not interested in being active within the Liberal-Jewish Congregation, but after the death of his father he "inherited" various administrative positions from his father, including the chairmanship of the Verbond.

Only in Amsterdam a Liberal congregation had been re-established after the war. It led a moribund existence and consisted mainly of German refugees. Rabbi Shlomo Rülff, a German-speaking rabbi from Israel who spent a year in the Netherlands in 1953 in order to try to rebuild the community, realized that a Dutch rabbi was necessary, and that much needed to be done for the education of the children born in the postwar baby boom. As a result, in 1954 Bob Levisson initiated the appointment of Jacob Soetendorp as rabbi of that congregation.⁴⁷ Thus the Liberal-Jewish Congregation in the Netherlands began to grow and gradually assumed a Dutch character.

In The Hague, services started again in 1959. Levisson was chairman and next to that he often lead the Services, although Jacob Soetendorp was the official rabbi of this congregation, until in 1968 a young Rabbi S.A. (Awraham) Soetendorp, son of Jacob Soetendorp, was appointed. Levisson was a convinced adherent of the radical Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London, and of Rabbi Dr. David Mattuck, with whom he regularly stayed before the war and who had consecrated his first marriage. This influence was also very noticeable in the 1964 sidur which he made together with Rabbi J. Soetendorp.

Levisson remained chairman of the Liberal Congregation in The Hague until 1976 and also functioned as rabbi when necessary. Together with other board members, he was actively involved in the ultimately successful endeavour to acquire the abandoned eighteenth-century Portuguese synagogue for his congregation. When in 1961 Dr. Maurits Goudekot succeeded Levisson as chairman of the Verbond, Levisson stayed on as vice-chairman. Together with Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp, Levisson produced a Haggadah and a new prayer book for the Verbond (1964).

Within the Verbond he occupied a radical position; he always wanted to shorten services and supported women's emancipation in the shul. From the foundation of the Verbond journal, *Levend Joods Geloof* (1954), till his death in 2001, Levisson published many articles in it, as he also did in the NIW and in the general Dutch press. In 1974 Levisson was the founder and first director of the Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI). At an advanced age he received the official

⁴⁶ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 104-116.

⁴⁷ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 102.

rabbinical qualification from the Liberal-Jewish Community. When the rabbinical training institute of the Liberal-Jewish Community was founded in 2002, it was named after him: the Levisson Institute.⁴⁸

10. **Rabbi D. (David) L. Lilienthal**, was born in 1944 in Göteborg, Sweden. In the maternal line, Lilienthal's Liberal Judaism stems from the founders of the first Reform congregation in Berlin, dating back nearly 200 years. In the paternal line of his family, he belongs to the sixth generation of Liberal Jews. The Lilienthal family already had ties with the Netherlands before the Second World War. Lilienthal's paternal uncle, his aunt, his small cousin and his grandparents were deported from the Netherlands. Lilienthal's grandfather was "Oberkantor" (principal cantor) in the large Michelsberg synagogue in Wiesbaden until Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass") on November 9, 1938. Together with his wife he fled to Amsterdam, where their eldest son lived, who was married to a Dutch Jewish woman. From there the family was deported to Auschwitz and killed. Lilienthal's father had fled from Germany to Sweden, where he married a Swedish woman of Russian-Polish-Jewish descent. Sweden was not occupied and thus, their part of the family survived the Shoah.

Culturally speaking, Lilienthal received a conscious Liberal Jewish upbringing. In terms of religion, this was much less the case. Partly inspired by his then future wife, Lilienthal decided to attend rabbinical training in England. During his time as a student there, he would occasionally visit Amsterdam as chairman of the Youth Section of the WUPJ. This led him to establish links with the LJG in Amsterdam, where he was eventually invited to come and work as a rabbi. Lilienthal's objective was, in his own words: "To enhance the possibilities for all Jews to experience their Jewishness and their Judaism in a positive and engaged way." In the course of time, he amply achieved this objective. At every opportunity he would successfully encourage the community to develop greater "self-reliance" with regard to using the liturgy, laying, reading haphtarah, with or without introduction, and giving derashot.

He gave the impetus for setting up a Dutch teacher training course that was supported by the Verbond. As it became clear that a high-quality educational institute was needed, the "Stichting Robert A. Levisson" [Robert A. Levisson Foundation] was eventually created. The Levisson Institute, which forms part of this foundation, offers both rabbinical training and training for shelichay tzibbur. Lilienthal made sure that, in addition to the sidur and the machzor of 1964, there was a booklet (the so-called "bensjboekje" or "Benshbooklet") for the "domestic liturgy" including the birkat hamazon, Friday evening and Shabbat morning kiddush, havdalah and the like. He also set up a sidur project, which aimed to create a new sidur: a "Kolbo", for use in all the Liberal Congregations in the Netherlands and at home, with rituals from the cradle to the grave. Furthermore, under the auspices of Lilienthal, a new machzor is in preparation for the High Holy Days and the Shalosh Regalim, the three

⁴⁸ Rena Fuks-Mansfeld c.s. (Chaya Brasz), *Joden in Nederland in de twintigste eeuw, een biografisch*

pilgrim feasts. Lilienthal is a Zionist, as evidenced, for instance, by the sidur of 2000. This is the most Zionist sidur that has appeared in Holland to date, and even compared to foreign sidurim within the WUPJ, it is exceptionally Zionist in orientation. In its text there are many references to the existence of the state of Israel as a reality, rather than as a dream for the future.

Another very important Zionist activity of Lilienthal was the creation of “ARZA Nederland”. The abbreviation “ARZA” stands for American Reform Zionist Association. ARZA Nederland is a Liberal-Jewish Zionist organization, which, like thirteen other ARZA organizations elsewhere, is a member of ARZENU, the global federation of progressive Jewish Zionists. For 18 years, Lilienthal was a member of the Executive Committee of ARZENU, and for two terms he was its chairman. During all these years he was also the director of the World Zionist Organization and of the Jewish Agency. He was the founder of the European Progressive Bet Din.

Lilienthal was closely involved in the Sha’ar project, and as part of this project a foundation was created with funding from the Dutch government. The aim of this foundation is to translate study books and teaching material into Dutch. Lilienthal also played a role in the publication of the first Dutch bilingual (Dutch and Hebrew) Tanakh. Furthermore, Lilienthal has a seat on the board of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) Responsa Committee.⁴⁹ As a rabbi, he has played a leading role in educating the Dutch Jewish community and moving it forward with real vision, and bringing about a new generation of Liberal Jewish leaders.

woordenboek, (Amsterdam 2007) 186.

⁴⁹ Brasz, *In de tenten van Jaäkov*, 247-272.

Chapter 5 An Analysis of the Sidurim

This chapter shows how the contents of the Liberal liturgy has developed in the last seventy years, from the first cautious attempts to introduce a new kind of Judaism in the Netherlands to the mature and self-confident liturgy of the present day. To this end, a more detailed examination of the sidurim follows below. The same numbering is used here as in Chapter 3.

5.1 The Prewar Sidurim

1 and 2 Vrijdagavonddienst (*Friday evening service*), M.J. Lasker (1930). Lasker was the first to compile a sidur entirely in accordance with the principles of Reform Judaism, taking into account the general lack of knowledge. It is no more than a pamphlet. The foreword says that this “special sidur” “only contains those sections which give expression to certain fundamental ideals of the Jewish Reform Movement”. The traditional prayers are not literally translated here, to make it easier and “to interpret the original ideas in a way that corresponds with our own beliefs”. “Moments of quiet reflection” are also introduced, as real contact with God is not only achieved through prayer and longing, “but also through reflection”. Rabbi Lasker’s Hebrew pronunciation is the “scientific pronunciation corresponding to the Hebrew once again in use as a living language in Palestine”.⁵⁰ The order of service is shown. It is not known who did the translations. It is interesting to consider the translation from the first beracha before the Shema (III), *ברוך אתה יי המעריב ערבים*⁵¹: *Let us always be mindful of what Thou art* (instead of who). And in the introduction to the Kaddish, under number XI, it reads: *May those who mourn find consolation and be uplifted by the power of faith and sanctify the Idea of the Most High*. In the second pamphlet, two pages have been added after the foreword with “additions and alterations”.

3. Sabbath-Morgendienst (*Sabbath morning service*), J. Norden (1931). The foreword states that “use has been made of the Hebrew type and the German translation of the Israëlitische Gebetbuch, compiled by Rabbi Dr. C. Seligmann (published by the Jewish Congregation of Frankfurt am Main)”. “As the services will, in the nature of things, be attended by many guests from abroad, we have copied

⁵⁰ M.J. Lasker, ‘Een woord vooraf’, in: idem, *Godsdienstige bijeenkomst gehouden te 's-Gravenhage onder leiding van Rabbijn M.L. Lasker op vrijdagavond 19 december 1930* (Den Haag 1930).

⁵¹ Baruch atah, Adonai, hama’ariv aravim.

the German translation here, unchanged and untranslated.”⁵² This sidur was compiled with an eye to the international congress of the Governing Body of the WUPJ in the Netherlands. At the back of the sidur, there is an invitation in German, Dutch and English to a kiddush after the service in order to meet the foreign guests.

The Friday evening service is longer than the one in the previous sidur compiled under the direction of Lasker. Norden was the first to publish a Shabbat morning service. It is interesting to note here that this Shabbat morning service is considerably shorter than the one in the *Israëlitische Gebetbuch*. There are no introductory piyutim, religious poems, or berachot. The service begins with the Shema, which is immediately followed by the reading from the Torah with the accompanying berachot, then the haphtarah with only the prefatory beracha, whereupon the Torah is brought back to the aron hakodesh. There then follows a sermon, the kedusha from the Amida, the introduction to the Kaddish and the ayn kamocho. In short, they were trying as far as possible to help the inexperienced guests by making the services shorter and simpler. This also meant that it was easier to keep the attention of the congregation.

4. Grooten Verzoendag (*Day of Atonement*), J. Norden (1932). The foreword states that a literal translation has not been made in every instance. Rabbi Norden and Messrs. Spitz and Levisson were aiming at the style of the Old Testament and the “Hebrew prayer book”. They were trying not to make it “too mundane”. They were also aiming at a liberal-religious interpretation of the traditional text, in other words, an expression of the evolution of Judaism, while holding fast to the sacrosanct fundamentals. The order of service is given: reader, choir, congregation, one of the members of the congregation. Kol Nidrei is from p. 3 to 18, Yom Kippur from p. 19 to 59. The service is divided into three parts: the first part – a special Torah reading for the young followed by an address to them; the second part (a section from the Musaf); and the third part of the service: *Remembrance and Final Part of the Service with mainly Dutch texts*.

5. Hagada (1933). This was a supplement to the *Nieuw Joodsch Leven* [New Jewish Life] (the forerunner of the present-day periodical *Verbandsblad Levend Joods Geloof*) which was published during the term of office of Rabbi Norden in the Netherlands (1931-1933). The explanation and instructions are very clear, so that even inexperienced people could hold a Seder. The Seder closes with אדון עולם⁵³. It is not stated who was responsible for making this הגדה.⁵⁴ It was probably compiled

⁵² J. Norden, ‘Voorwoord’ in: idem a.o. eds., *Gebeden en gezangen voor den vrijdagavonddienst en sabbath-morgendienst* (n.pl. 1931).

⁵³ Adon olam.

⁵⁴ Haggadah.

by L. Levisson, as the Haggadah came with the magazine and Levisson was one of its regular contributors. Moreover, he liked to make Haggadot himself.

6. Vrijdagavond-dienst, (*Friday evening service*), H. Hirschberg (1933). On the front are the words “*Also for use during Evening Services on weekdays*”. This is the first mention of an evening service on weekdays. Here, too, the foreword says that the translations are not literal in every case. The compilers were trying to serve the interests of style, faith, tradition and Liberalism by not using “*any plain down-to earth Dutch*”. The foreword also states: *those prayers and hymns only used on Friday evening are marked with a **. Hirschberg’s “more Orthodox” slant is apparent, inter alia, from the longer Friday evening service which introduces further additions, such as a fuller version of the Amida and the Alenu prayer.

7. Nieuwjaarsdagen, (*New Year*), H. Hirschberg (1933). The typeface is the same as that in the *Einheitsgebetbuch*. The evening service for Rosh Hashanah is on pp. 3 to 15 and the morning service for Rosh Hashanah is on pp. 17 to 62. The services have been radically cut back. This foreword also mentions the translation. This edition follows the model of Rabbi Norden’s *machzor*: Hebrew text, with the translation immediately below. The order of service is also given. The Avinu Malkenu is printed in Hebrew and Dutch, line for line. A note in the machzor reveals how the service has been constructed from the machzor by Norden published earlier by the Verbond and from the *Berliner Gebetbuch*.

8. Grooten Verzoendag, (*Day of Atonement*), H. Hirschberg (1933), Service for the eve of Yom Kippur pp. 3 to 25. Morning service pp. 26 to 67. Text of the Torah reading Exodus 34:4-9 in Hebrew and Dutch, and the Haphtarah without berachot, and only in the Dutch translation. This is followed by the Prayer for the Nation, the Queen, the Government and the Congregation. The afternoon service is on pp. 68 to 74 with the Dutch version of the Book of Jonah. The “Remembrance” (maskir neshamoth) is on pp. 75 to 80. The closing prayer (ne’ila) is on pp. 80 to 98. The service finishes with Adon Olam after the blowing of the shofar.

9. Avonddiensten op het Loofhutten- en Slotfeest en het Vreugdefeest der Thora, (*Evening Services for the Feast of Tabernacles and Closing Assembly and the Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law*), H. Hirschberg (1933). It is noticeable that various Hebrew typefaces have been used, showing that the book has been put together by cutting and pasting. Under the foreword, at the bottom of the page, are the words “*The celebration of the Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law (Simchas Torah) takes place on the eve of the first Shabbat after the Feast of Tabernacles (Shabbath Bereshit)*”.

10. Aanvullingen voor Grooten Verzoendag (*Supplements for the Day of Atonement*) (1934). In all probability, the compilers were Levisson and Spitz. It appears from the foreword that the members of the Liberal Congregations wanted a more traditional service on the Day of Atonement, and felt that this service should last all day. These supplements included a complete Mincha service with a Torah reading. In the repetition of the central prayer (Amida), the anonymous authors were aiming at creating a logically constructed, balanced whole, and they used fragments of the Western Ashkenazi (customary in the Netherlands), Polish and Sephardic traditions. In addition, there are some fragments from old liturgical sources⁵⁵. There are constant indications as to which page to turn to in the first *machzor*.

11. Einheitsgebetbuch, C. Seligmann (1929, 1934). The German rabbi, Dr. Ludwig Mehler, who was installed in Amsterdam on May 15, 1934, was an inspiring leader. The congregation in Amsterdam rapidly grew in size due to the huge influx of German refugees, and they had brought the “Einheitsgebetbuch” with them. The role of Mehler is that he used the German *Einheitsgebetbuch* in addition to the existing sidurim and machzorim compiled by Hirshberg for the Dutch members. It meant a further move in the direction of the more conservative German Liberal Judaism.

12. הגדה של פסח (1938)⁵⁶ At the front of the Haggadah are the words: “*The Hebrew text has largely been set with typefaces from the printing press of the late S and J. Levisson, belonging to the company D. Proops Jzn., Amsterdam*”. The Hebrew letters are from the “Athias cupboard” containing the patterns and stamps and copper matrices, which the Jewish printing/type-founding dynasty of Proops and Athias had used for more than 200 years to make typefaces. Joseph Athias (1634-1700) was one of the world’s foremost Jewish printers. These typefaces were used to print thousands of Hebrew and Yiddish books in Amsterdam. The Athias cupboard passed from Athias’ heirs to the printing firm of Abraham, Jacob en Joseph Proops in 1761, and around 1855, to the printing firm of Israel Levisson, both businesses being located in Amsterdam. In the foreword, the compilers express their pleasure at the fact that a second edition seems to be required, and how you can use this Haggadah. *Printed by and available from N.V. Drukkerij Levisson in The Hague*. Then there is an introduction focusing on the historical context of the Pesach story. The book contains 48 pages, has a black cover with gold lettering surmounted by a מגן דוד⁵⁷. The last three pages have various melodies in musical notation.

13. Ochtenddienst Grooten Verzoendag (*Morning Service Day of Atonement*), H. Andorn (1939).

⁵⁵ Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland, *Gebeden en gezangen voor de Godsdienst oefeningen op den Grooten Verzoendag* (Amsterdam 1934) 1.

⁵⁶ Haggadah shel Pesach.

⁵⁷ Magen David.

This machzor was only used in The Hague. It contains only the morning service, and there is no foreword. The service begins with Psalm 51 in Dutch: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.”

Far more Hebrew is used, but all texts are translated into Dutch. Different fonts and sizes are used. It is clearly cut-and-paste work. Sometimes the translations are next to the Hebrew texts, which are printed in smaller type, but mostly they are below.

5.2 The Postwar Sidurim

14. Vrijdagavonddienst (*Friday evening service*), J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1955). According to a note by R.A. Levisson, this was the first Friday evening service book after the war. Up until this sidur was published, the *Einheitsgebetbuch* was used. This sidur is obviously an interim edition. The names of the compilers are not given. The pages – there are 19 – are not numbered. Different typefaces are used (cut-and-paste work). The order of service is given. At the end, after Adon Olam, are יגדל⁵⁸ and the מעוז צור⁵⁹. The booklet was very probably the work of Rabbi J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson. Their strong Zionist loyalties can be seen from the fact that this is the first Liberal sidur in the Netherlands to move further towards the use of Hebrew. Soetendorp included his own translations, as well as texts from other sidurim, like אהבתי מעון ביתך⁶⁰ for festivals, in the beginning between מה-טובו⁶¹ and לכו נרננה⁶², and Yigdal at the end.

15. Ochtenddienst van Sjabbat (*Shabbat morning service*), J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1955). According to a note by R.A. Levisson, this was the first publication for the Shabbat morning service after the war. This sidur is an example of “independent Reform” and Zionism. This is clear from the fact that before the Prayer for the Netherlands, the Dutch Queen, the Government and the Jewish Community, a Prayer for Israel is said (but not printed), and a quotation from Psalm 36:8-10: “for the מצוה⁶³” has been inserted (with no translation and unclear as to whether it is supposed to be said by or for the bar mitzvah).

מה-יקר חסדך אלהים

⁵⁸ Yigdal.

⁵⁹ Maoz tsur.

⁶⁰ Adonai ahavti me'on beytekha.

⁶¹ Ma tovu.

⁶² Ma tovu and en lechu neranana.

⁶³ Bar mitzvah.

ובני אדם בצל כנפך יחסיון
ירוין מדשן ביתך
ונחל עדניך תשקם
כי-עמך מקור חיים
באורך נראה- אור

(How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy House; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light).

It seems likely that the addition of the הלל⁶⁴ is attributable to J. Soetendorp, as he, more than Levisson, was a poet and a dreamer and the Halel expresses joy at the miracles of the past and trust in miracles yet to come. R.A. Levisson is much less likely to have included the Halel, as he was concerned to keep services as short as possible. This sidur is also printed like a Hebrew book, from right to left

16. Gebeden voor de Sabbath (*Prayers for Shabbat*), J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1955). This sidur is for קבלת שבת⁶⁵ and for the morning service. The name(s) of the compiler(s) is (are) not given. The pages are not numbered. The evening service runs to 19 pages, the morning service 25. It is clear that the two separate sections discussed under 14 and 15 have been combined. The cut-and-paste work is identical.

17. הגדה⁶⁶ J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson (1958). Meaning and history are explained already above. The content, hymns and harvest songs are taken into consideration. There are also illustrations. This הגדה has also been put together by cutting and pasting. The Zionist element is emphasized by the use of the התקוה⁶⁷ at the close. On p. 24, Soetendorp has inserted an extra couplet in the דינו⁶⁸:
אלו נתן לנו מדינה קטנה נתן לנו; דינו⁶⁹ (If he had only given us a small State, only a small State, it would have sufficed).

18. הכיפורים. תפלות לכל השנה לראש השנה וליום הכיפורים (1960 Gebetbuch für das ganze Jahr (*Prayer book for the entire year*) (Vol. II) (photo-offset of Vol II of the Einheitsgebetbuch, Hebrew and German 1960), Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland. This is the original *Einheitsgebetbuch* voor

⁶⁴ Halel.

⁶⁵ Kabbalat Shabbat.

⁶⁶ Haggadah.

⁶⁷ Hatikvah.

⁶⁸ Dayenu.

⁶⁹ Ilu natan lanu medinah ketanah natan lany: dayenu.

תפלות לראש השנה וליום הכיפורים⁷⁰, and only the cover has been changed. This was a makeshift solution until the new material was ready.

19. Vrijdagavond en Sjabbat (Friday evening and Shabbat), J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1961). סדר תפלות לשבת⁷¹ (dedicated to the father of R.A. Levisson, L. Levisson: Yehuda ben HaChaver Rabbi Abraham, on the occasion of the bar mitzvah of R.A. Levisson's son, Michael (ט ניסן תשכ"א), Nisan 9, 5721, March 26, 1961). The Friday evening service runs to 20 pages. After the אדון עולם⁷² comes יגדל⁷³ and then Adon Olam again, but this time with the music: a tune by L. Lewandowsky. The morning service runs to 23 pages.

This sidur is very similar to the earlier publications. The typefaces vary here and there, however. There are more Dutch texts. In the Amida, during the morning service, after the Kedusha there is a choice of three different texts (pp. 35-36). After the readings from the Torah and the Prophets, the text of the Prayer for the State of Israel appears in print for the first time. This new prayer was created in the early 1950s by the two Chief Rabbis of Israel, the Ashkenazi Rabbi Yitschak Izik Halevi Herzog and the Sephardi Rabbi Ben Tzion Meir Chai Uziel. The Israeli writer Shai Agnon subsequently improved the text. When the sidur Ha'Tefilot le'Shabbat, published by ha'Chugim le'Yahadut Mitkademet b'Yerushalayim in Augustus 1961 for the Har-El congregation (the oldest Liberal congregation in Israel, in Jerusalem) was compiled, the congregation's Liturgical Committee adapted the text to liberal ideas. This new prayer was combined with the existing prayer for the Netherlands and the Royal Family. In this sidur, the Prayer for Israel is given in both Hebrew and Dutch, and the Prayer for the Netherlands only in Dutch. Then there follows a line from Psalm 145 in Hebrew אשרי אלהינו (I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is without limitations) This is followed by the translation of the Psalm in its entirety. On p. 43, after the עלינו יהיה⁷⁵, על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה⁷⁵ has been added (And it is also said: And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day the Lord shall be One and His name be One.) The הלל⁷⁷ has been left out.

⁷⁰ Tefilot lerosh hashanah uleyom hakipurim.

⁷¹ Seder tefillot leshabbat.

⁷² Adon olam.

⁷³ Yigdal.

⁷⁴ Ashrei yoshvei veytekha, od yehallelukha selah, ashrei ha-am shekakha lo, ashrei ha-am she'Adonai elohav.

⁷⁵ Alenu.

⁷⁶ Kakatuv al yad neviékha vehaya Adonai lemelekh al kol-ha'arets beyom hahu yiheye Adonai echad ushemo echad.

20. Sidoer Seder Tov Lehodot, J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1964). This sidur contains the services for Friday evening and Shabbat morning as well as the evening and morning services for Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. Following these are some special passages which have been included for Tisha B'av, Hanukkah, and Purim.⁷⁸ This is the first hard-cover sidur. According to its editors, R.A. Levisson and Rabbi J. Soetendorp, the sidur rests on two pillars. The first is the liturgy composed before the war by Rabbi Dr. J. Norden (of Elberfeld, Wuppertal), Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg, R.J. Spitz and L. Levisson. The second pillar is the German *Einheitsgebetbuch* of 1929 (*Tefilot Lekol Hashanah - Gebetbuch für das ganze Jahr*).

These two prewar (primarily) German sources are supplemented, according to the editors, by the traditions of the Liberal Jewish communities of Amsterdam and The Hague. Special attention has been paid to restoring texts omitted by the *Einheitsgebetbuch*, comprising a prayer for the “joodse onafhankelijkheid in eigen land” [restoration of Jewish independence on its own soil] and a prayer for the State of Israel. An interesting feature is the interspersing of Dutch translation between the Hebrew texts as opposed to the general custom of reproducing the Hebrew on the right hand side of the page and the translation on the left hand side. The editors note that this lay-out follows the service of the *Liberaal-Joodse Gemeente* (the Dutch Liberal Jewish Community) in which the Hebrew is said out loud and allows those not sufficient literate in Hebrew to follow the translation more easily during the Hebrew readings. They were following this tradition set by Rabbi Lasker and Rabbi Norden. Thus while indicating that this *sidur* breaks with Liberal tradition and should be considered a Hebrew book, its editors admit that the translation is not of secondary but of primary importance, on equal standing with the original language.⁷⁹

21. סדר טוב להודות. Machzor Seder Tov Lehodot voor Rosj Hasjana en Jom Kipoer (*Machzor Seder Tov Lehodot for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*), J. Soetendorp en R.A. Levisson (1964). The foreword states that the compilers are very happy to present to the public the second section on the High Holidays. “May this serve its purpose as well as the first part”⁸⁰.

22. “Bensjboekje”, (*Bensh book*), D. Lilienthal (1976). This is the first booklet in a series of guides to performing rituals at home. It covers the celebration of Shabbat. It states that this is just the start and that it is hoped that a new edition will soon be needed, possibly with further additions. The booklet contains the berachot for lighting candles, the blessing over the children, an abridged version of אשת-

⁷⁷ Halel.

⁷⁸ סדר טוב להודות, May 1964.

⁷⁹ Judith Frishman, ‘Who we say we are’, in: M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz eds., *A holy people, Jewish and Christian perspectives on religious communal identity* (Leiden/Boston 2006) 308-313.

⁸⁰ J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson, ‘Ten geleide’ in: idem, סדר טוב להודות *Geboden voor Rosj Hasjanah en Jom Kipoer* (n.pl. 1964).

החיל⁸¹ (a woman of valour), קידוש⁸² for Friday evening and Shabbat morning, zemirot, ברכת המזון⁸³, a short version of birkat hamazon, and berachot over wine and bread, and for הברלה⁸⁴. The first version still has on the cover the same thin black Magen David which had adorned all publications since Rabbi Lasker's in 1930. The 1982 version bears, for the first time, the new LJG logo, the letters L and J with a menorah in the middle, resting upon the G. Otherwise, it is an exact reprint of the first booklet. The Verbond (the umbrella organization) had decided that there had to be a uniform logo for all Dutch Liberal Jewish Congregations in the country. Otto Treuman was the designer of this logo, which was in use until recently. Since the name of the Verbond voor Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland (Union of Liberal Religious Jews in the Netherlands) was changed in October 2006 to Nederlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom (Netherlands Union for Progressive Judaism), work has been going on to create a new logo.

The traditional conclusion of the birkat hamazon: "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread", from Psalm 37:25, is intended as a Messianic hope. After the war, Rabbi J. Soetendorp, who had great difficulty with these words after the Shoa, introduced an alternative text from Isaiah 26:4 and Psalms 9:11. This text, which is also entered in the machzor of 1964 (pp. 513-514) in the Closing Prayer for the Day of Atonement, speaks of the Rock Eternal who never abandons His People.

23. Seder Sim Sjalom, 1^e, 2^e en 3^e voorlopige uitgave (Seder Sim Shalom, 1st, 2nd, 3rd interim edition), D. Lilienthal (1989). This is the first step towards an entirely new sidur. It is clearly a "trial run" and only covers the Friday evening service. It is an adaptation of the American sidur of The Rabbinical Assembly 1985. Most of the translations are still in English, but, here and there, notes are printed in Dutch. It is clear that only the Friday evening service from the original sidur has been used: the page numbering has not been changed (the sidur begins with p. 252). Sometimes texts have been translated into Dutch. At the foot of the cover are the words "Avonddienst voor de Sjabbat (Evening Service for Shabbat) with the LJG logo and "Interim edition".

The second interim edition has the title סדר טוב להודות⁸⁵ on the front, with the LJG-logo. The Hebrew texts are on the right, and the Dutch and English texts on the left. The basis of this sidur is the *Tov Lehodot* sidur, supplemented with elements from *Forms of Prayer* of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, from *HaAvoda Shebalev* of the Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism, from *Sidur Sim Shalom* of the American Movement for Conservative Judaism and from *Mizmor Shir Leyom*

⁸¹ Eshet chayil.

⁸² Kiddush.

⁸³ Birkat hamazon.

⁸⁴ Havdalah.

⁸⁵ Seder tov lehodot.

HaShabbat of the Communauté Israélite Libérale de Belgique. This sidur includes a special song for a bat mitzvah. It had been written in 1960 by Rabbi J. Soetendorp, and it was already known in Amsterdam in mimeographed form.⁸⁶

The third interim edition for the Friday evening service has a completely different layout from the previous two. The translations have also been redone, and are closer to the Hebrew. In the piyutim (religious poems), the translation is free. In addition to the entire Board of Liberal Rabbis in the Netherlands, Manja Ressler and Professor Dr. C.I. Dessaur (Andreas Burnier) made major contributions to the translations. Manja Ressler had studied Philosophy, Linguistics, Dutch Language and Literature and Hebrew and went on to study Screenwriting as well. Andreas Burnier was a writer, philosopher, and criminologist, who, when she was in her late fifties, immersed herself in her Jewish heritage. ‘She studied Hebrew, Talmud, Kabbalah, and all the wealth of other halakhic, narrative, ethical, philosophical, scientific, poetic, and mystical mediaeval and Renaissance writings that are part of the rabbinic tradition.’⁸⁷

Their collaboration produced an emphatically “woman-friendly” quality. This sidur contains far more Shabbat songs and piyutim. The Hebrew song mentioned above especially for a bat mitzvah is also included in this edition. This also includes the beracha for the candles, more psalms, all three paragraphs of the שמע⁸⁸, and the complete תפלת שבע⁸⁹, with the possibility of opting for the emancipated version (אבותינו ואמותינו⁹⁰). In addition, this sidur also offers texts at the end of the Amida and space for personal prayers. It also includes the קדיש תתקבל⁹¹, the complete עלינו⁹² and special texts as an introduction for the קדיש יתום⁹³. After the אדון עולם⁹⁴ comes יגדל⁹⁵. At the end, there are additions to the evening services on the first and last days of Sukkot and Pesach, for Shavuot and for Hanukkah.

24. Seder Tov Lehodot, Ochtenddienst, 1^e en 2^e voorlopige uitgave (*Morning service, 1st and 2nd interim edition*), D. Lilienthal (1991). The first design for the Shabbat morning service. This sidur is also based on סדר טוב להודות⁹⁶ from 1964 and supplemented with prayers from *HaAvoda Shebalev*, the sidur of the Congregations of the Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel. The services have been

⁸⁶ From private conversations with Rabbi Avraham Soetendorp.

⁸⁷ Chris Rutenfrans, ‘Andreas Burnier/C.I. Dessaur/Wat een vrouw!’ *Trouw*, September 28, 2002

⁸⁸ Shema.

⁸⁹ Tefillat sheva.

⁹⁰ Avotenu ve'imotenu.

⁹¹ Kaddish titkabal.

⁹² Alenu.

⁹³ Kaddish yatom.

⁹⁴ Adon olam.

⁹⁵ Yigdal.

adapted in the sense that women can take an active part and that prayers relating to the Shoa and the existence of the State of Israel have been included. This sidur offers more alternatives. The Musaf prayer has been added. Also, the Hebrew and Dutch texts are once again given side-by-side instead of one under the other. The Hebrew text is on the right-hand page, following the example of the new American *Reconstructionist Prayer book*, making the book more convenient to use.

The second interim edition of the new sidur for the Shabbat morning service and weekdays differs very little from the first. There are additions to the daily prayers, both individual prayers and those for the shalosh regalim (The three “Pilgrimage festivals”: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot). The beracha after the Shema has had a new text added relating to the de Shoa (p. 75). The Amida (central prayer) has been given a contemporary Dutch interpretation. It includes a special Al Hanissim for Yom Ha’atsma’ut, just as for Hanukkah and Purim. The Torah service for weekdays is also included. The translations are completely new, as they are in the Shabbat Evening Service discussed under no. 23. ‘The directions for the services are on the page with the Hebrew text. The references to the sources of the texts and quotations are next to, and in, the translation.’⁹⁷ This sidur also contains instructions for use.

25. Seder Tov Lehodot, Middag- en avonddienst in het huis van rouwenden (*Afternoon and evening service in the house of mourners*), D. Lilienthal (1998). This booklet, which is for use at home, contains an introductory prayer for beginning the service during a shiva, Psalm 139, the mincha service, remembrance (הזכרה⁹⁸), Havdalah en Al Hanissim. In addition, it contains two translations of the second and third sections of the Shema and of the second and third berachot after the Shema (השכיבנו⁹⁹), one faithful to the original and one offering an alternative interpretation. The book ends with a poem by Alvin I. Fine about life and death.

26. "Bensjboekje" (*Bensh book*), D. Lilienthal (1998). This booklet is more comprehensive than its predecessors of 1976 and 1982. It begins with an explanation of the contents and a Shabbat poem by the poet Zelda. Other additions are: kiddush for the three Pilgrimage festivals and Rosh Hashanah, for sitting in the sukkah, hamotsi, various berachot at mealtimes, “sheva berachot” for the days after a wedding, and a quantity of zemirot for different occasions. The additions have mainly been made in order to bring the texts more into line with contemporary Progressive Jewish ideas, including those on equality between men and women, and on the traditional family and other types of relationships and ways of living. Thus, in addition to the song of praise to the righteous woman, Psalm 112 is also

⁹⁶ Seder tov lehodot.

⁹⁷ Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland, סדר טוב להודות (Amsterdam 1996) ix-x.

⁹⁸ Hazkara.

included as a song of praise to the man. Another text is included which can be read by men and women for one another שיר ידידות¹⁰⁰: “A lovable woman is held in high regard, a loving man will find happiness...” Lilienthal writes in this context: ‘In the last section on p.50 of the bensch-book, the names of our matriarchs have been added to those of our patriarchs. In contrast to the new sidur, their names are given before those of the patriarchs. After all, the three words בכלל מכלל כל¹⁰¹ denote three passages in בראשית¹⁰² in which the relationship of each one of them with God is named in connection with one of these words. By adding the four words הטיב טובת טוב טוב¹⁰³, by analogy with the reference to the patriarchs (Bereshit 12:16, 24:16, 29:19, 30:12) and respectively Bereshit 24:1, 27:33, 33:11 and BabaBatra 16b-17a), Torah texts are referred to in which the relationship between the matriarchs and God is cited.’¹⁰⁴

Israel figures more prominently here than in other editions. There are for example, prayers for the welfare of the soldiers defending the State of Israel, and for peace between the various sections of the population and between Arabs and Jews. A text has also been included for anyone, Jew or non-Jew, who is in need.

27. Seder Tov Lehodot, D. Lilienthal (2000). ‘As long ago as the seventies of the last century, there was talk of the need for a new translation and for a Sidur including texts for the service at home and the cycle of life.’¹⁰⁵ Looking at this latest sidur against the background of the wider development of the Progressive sidur in the Netherlands, it can be seen that this has been adapted in three ways.

a. Firstly, as regards the arrangement. This is a fully-fledged sidur, arranged traditionally so that it can be used anywhere in the world. This, like the introduction, indicates an educational element.

b. Secondly, as regards the formulation of the berachot. This is a theological statement. For example, that the Torah was given by God and interpreted by men; that there will be no appeals for revenge and/or the extermination of others; prayers have been adapted to modern times and outdated prayers have sometimes been omitted; texts have been made more woman-friendly and based to a greater extent on the equality of men and women. This is discussed in more detail below.

c. Thirdly, new translations of the Biblical texts, berachot and zemirot have been included. The berachot and the *Tanakh* texts have been translated to correspond as much as possible,

⁹⁹ Haskivenu.

¹⁰⁰ Shir yedidut.

¹⁰¹ Bechol mikol kol.

¹⁰² Bereshit.

¹⁰³ Hetiv tovat tov tov.

¹⁰⁴ D.L. Lilienthal c.s., *Bensjboekje* (Amsterdam 1996) 50.

¹⁰⁵ D.L. Lilienthal c.s., *ושבת חול להודות טוב סדר* (Amsterdam 2000) iii.

while taking into account the way in which the texts will be used in practice. The zemirot have sometimes been translated more freely. One example of this is the way that the lines of the מפי אל¹⁰⁶ have been arranged alphabetically in Hebrew according to the first letter of the first word of the line, and the Dutch translation has been adjusted so that the poem could be arranged alphabetically in the same way. (sidur p. 186).

This sidur is a “Kolbo”, i.e., one sidur for every day, for Shabbat and festivals and for use in the home. Three major changes have been made in the liturgy:

1. The Shoa is given its own place in the liturgy;
2. Zionism is given clear expression in the liturgy; the existence of the State of Israel is referred to as a reality, and no longer as a dream for the future, and
3. All the texts have been adapted to the equality of the status between women and men.

The most radical practical change is the jump on p. 56. from the usual שחרית לכל יום¹⁰⁷, the daily morning prayer, to p. 258, נשמת כל-הי¹⁰⁸, the specific beginning of the “Shabbat service”. Of particular interest are the additions from p. 400 onwards. Many extra texts have been added for various festivals, circumstances and situations. A wide choice of texts is on offer, so that one is required to reflect before doing anything. The Torah Trope (melody for laymen) is given in this sidur, also the Hatikvah, the Dutch national anthem, greetings and expressions, and an overview of the prayers in the service. In short, a complete, user-friendly and educational sidur.

The adaptations to the liturgy in this sidur can be classified into two categories. 1. pragmatic, and 2. intrinsically theological.

1. Pragmatic Adaptations:

- **the use of Dutch** has made it possible to include beautiful poems, poetic and actual prose, for example, for Yom HaShoa, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha' atsmat'ut and Tisha Be'av and for the Kaddish Yatom.

- **shortening the service:** this was a very important issue in the sidur of 1964. In the sidur of 2000, it was seen as being of far less interest. A great deal of material, both traditional and new, was included, and it is left up to the users of the sidur to decide for themselves on the length of the service.

- **the reading from the Torah:** this is divided over a three-year cycle for Shabbatot and holidays as was the custom in Palestine, as against the Babylonian tradition, where the whole Torah was read in the course of one year.

¹⁰⁶ Mipi el.

¹⁰⁷ Shacharit lechol yom.

2. Theological Adaptations: These adaptations are made explicit for the first time in adaptations to the prayers themselves and/or in the translations.

a. The Torah is not seen as being literally received from the Almighty, but as being inspired by God and interpreted (and to be interpreted) by man. See the translation of the hagbe in the sidur 2000, p. 304: ‘This is the Torah which Moses set before the Children of Israel, inspired by Eternal God, handed down by Moses (וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל על פי יי ביד משה)’. This contrasts with the translation of the hagbe in the 1964 sidur: ‘This is the faith which Moses set before the Children of Israel. At the command of the Lord, these words were brought by Moses’.¹⁰⁹

b. We do not pray for vengeance or destruction, but that hate and violence may vanish away. A more modern translation was made for twelfth beracha of the Amida of ולמלשינים¹¹⁰ (lit. telltale), than the more literal translation: ‘Let there be no hope for the blasphemers, may all bringers of disaster vanish directly away and may they all be swiftly destroyed; extirpate the evildoers root and branch, break them, bring them swiftly to ruin and humiliation in our time has been changed into Let all evil disappear and all enmity be swept away’ (p. 80). This translation follows the new translation from the second interim edition of the Morning Service for Shabbat and weekdays of 1996, in which the Amida is printed in its entirety in the Liberal liturgy for the first time.

c. Prayers relating to other eras and circumstances are omitted or adapted like those in relation to the Temple and the sacrificial services, modern prayers and berachot are interpolated (see De Levenscyclus [The Cycle of Life], p. 548). The beracha after the Shema, the Geula, has been adapted to our own times: there is *an ecological interpretation of the second section*, written by Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp. The beracha after the Shema has, first, a Dutch text about God’s role as protector and redeemer. It is followed by a text on the Shoa , and, finally, by one on the rebuilding of Israel. (p. 68, 274). In Holland the Shoa plays an important role in the thinking and consciousness behind the liturgy. The 17th beracha of the Amida (p. 82) has also been radically adapted to liberal ideas: the traditional plea for the restoration of the Temple service is replaced with: ‘May the service of Thy people Israel always be in accordance with Thy will. Be present in Zion and Thy servants will serve you in Jerusalem...’ ... In the התימה¹¹¹ (*conclusion of the beracha*), the word ועמו¹¹² (*and His people*) has been introduced, so that the text in the Dutch translation now reads ‘...and lets His people return to Zion’ (pp. 85, 228 en 288) instead of ‘that Thou in Thy compassion return to Zion’, which all at once gives it a Zionist character. Above the line in the Alenu (pp. 112, 246 and 360) is the

¹⁰⁸ Nishmat kol chai.

¹⁰⁹ J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson, סדר טוב להודות (1964), 75.

¹¹⁰ Velamalshinim.

¹¹¹ Chatima.

¹¹² Ve’amo.

traditional: שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות...¹¹³ (He has made us unlike the people of the world, and has given us a unique role among the families of the earth), and below the line: שבהר- בנו ליחד את-שמו וקרבנו לעבדתו ¹¹⁴ (He has given us the special task of proclaiming the oneness of His name and He has found us worthy to serve Him). This somewhat tones down the uniqueness of the Jewish people and thus modifies the difference with other peoples.

d. Equality between men and women: in the second morning beracha, the שעשני בצלמו¹¹⁵ (who has created me in His image) replaces the original text שלא עשני אשה¹¹⁶ (who has not made me a woman). In addition, not only the patriarchs are named, but also the matriarchs (both the traditional form and the adaptation are printed). In the 18th beracha of the Amida, the word: ואמותינו¹¹⁷ (and the matriarchs) has been added (pp. 84, 230 and 252).

The Friday evening ceremony at home also includes, in addition to the אשת חיל¹¹⁸ (song of praise to woman) Psalm 112 as a song of praise to man. It is also worthy of note that a text has been included which men and women can read to one another, שיר ידידות¹¹⁹, a song of friendship, on p. 384, which can also be used for homosexual relationships.

e. The Shoa and the State of Israel occupy an important place: texts have been included in the *Seder Tov Lehodot* concerning both Yom HaShoa on 27 Nisan, and the corresponding Dutch annual National Commemoration Day on May 4. In the *Tov Lehodot* life cycle, rituals have been included for Jews who, as a consequence of the Shoa, have been alienated from the Jewish community and who are returning to the Congregation.

The sixth beracha of Shabbat and the 19th beracha of the Amida לחול¹²⁰ for weekdays, is על הניסים¹²¹, about miracles; these have been adapted to Yom Ha'atsma'ut and made into a minor festival, like Hanukkah and Purim. The Al Hanissim of Yom Ha'atsma'ut includes: 'In the time of the second return to Zion, when the survivors saved from the hell of the great killing arrived, together with children of Your people from all corners of the Diaspora, strangers ruled over our Holy Land who closed the doors to them ...'¹²² A special misheberech is included for anyone going on Aliyah. It is

¹¹³ Shelo asanu kegoye ha'artsot.

¹¹⁴ Shebachar banu leyaged et shemo vekarbanu le'avodato.

¹¹⁵ She'asani betsalmu.

¹¹⁶ Shelo asani isha.

¹¹⁷ Ve'imotenu.

¹¹⁸ Eshet chayil.

¹¹⁹ Shir yedidut.

¹²⁰ Lechol.

¹²¹ Al Hanissim.

¹²² Y. Mazor, *Sidur Ha'avodah Shebalev* (Jerusalem 1982) 46.

also characteristic that the תבני חומות ירושלים¹²³ (and will build the walls of Jerusalem) at the beginning of the Torah service, has been replaced with בנייתה חומות ירושלים¹²⁴ (complete the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem).¹²⁵ This change was introduced by Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp after the 1967 war and is now part of the official text.¹²⁶

f. Prayers for the return to Zion have been made even more Zionist, but deal rather with a form of Messianism than a return to the old Temple tradition: for example, in the 14th beracha of the Amida for weekdays p. 82: וביתך שיקרא בית תפלה לכל-העמים מהרה לתוכה תכין¹²⁷ (May Thy house be called a House of Prayer for all Peoples and presently be founded therein), instead of the traditional וכסא דוד תכין¹²⁸ (And will swiftly establish the throne of David there once more). The existence of Israel has made Hebrew once again a living language. This has increased the use of Hebrew in the service considerably and it is assumed that though those who attend synagogue services may not be able to speak and understand Hebrew, they will often be able to read and pronounce it. The berachot before and after the reading of the Torah, the Gomel blessing and rituals for the home have been included in phonetic form in the text, so that everyone can say these texts in Hebrew.

g. The Messiah is seen as an era, not a person: in the 15th beracha of the Amida, (p. 82) the word עמך¹²⁹, 'Thy People', has been inserted, referring not to the משיח¹³⁰ (Messiah) but the people. In this way, 'Give Thy people strength through Thine aid' replaced 'May His glorious strength...'

¹²³ Tivne chomot Yerushalayim.

¹²⁴ Banita chomot Yerushalayim.

¹²⁵ J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson, *Seder tov lehodot* (n.pl. 1964) 74.

¹²⁶ From private conversations with A. Soetendorp and D. Lilienthal.

¹²⁷ Uvetecha sheyikra beyit tefilla lechol ha'amim mehera letocha tachin.

¹²⁸ Vekiseh David mehera letocha tachin.

¹²⁹ Amcha.

¹³⁰ Mashiach.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

At the beginning of the twentieth century most Jews in the Netherlands had more or less lost their bond with Judaism. Knowledge of Hebrew and of the religious contents of Judaism, too, had been lost to them. There was no other form of Judaism in the Netherlands besides Orthodoxy. The pioneers of Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands endeavored to involve assimilating Jews again into Judaism. They strove to reach them with a Liberal liturgy in which the Dutch language was amply used and only absolutely indispensable prayers were retained. This constituted a deviation from Liberal Jewish liturgical practice abroad. They invited Liberal Jewish rabbis from abroad to Holland and developed, in close collaboration with them, the type of liturgy they had in mind.

The sidurim that appeared since the beginning of Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands reflect the development that the movement went through in the course of time, within an initially particularly small group with an identity of its own. And no doubt, in turn, these sidurim themselves had their impact on the evolution of Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands, a movement that in the meantime has matured.

Before the war various rabbis from abroad were involved in compiling a specific liturgy for the young Liberal congregations: M.J. Lasker, dr. J. Norden and dr. H. Hirschberg. In the process, a constant factor in adaptation and translation were the Dutchmen L. Levisson and R.J. Spitz. At that time, the Hebrew language and liturgical content were gradually brought back. The development of a specifically Dutch liturgy was interrupted by the arrival of German refugees, who brought the Einheitsgebetbuch with them. After the war Rabbi J. Soetendorp and R.A. Levisson further shaped the sidurim. Later this happened under the editorial guidance of Rabbi D.L. Lilienthal, whose final product is the most recent sidur: סדר טוב להודות¹³¹ from 2000, which contains a full-fledged liturgy, starts off with a theological introduction, pleads for the abolishment of hatred and violence, contains “women-friendly” texts and in which the Shoa and the establishment of the State of Israel take pride of place, in which the Musaf is included, as well as many texts adapted to modern times.

An assessment of Liberal Jewish sidurim that have appeared in the Netherlands in the course of time makes clear that some ideas behind the very first version have gradually become obsolete. That first version, which could not be called a sidur in the proper sense of the word but was rather a pamphlet for the Friday evening service on December 19, 1930, was made by Rabbi Lasker (nr. 1 in the table)

and aimed to reflect the main ideas of the Jewish Reform movement. The aim was “to unify the existing spiritual values of the Jewish tradition with a modern way of thinking and to express the spiritual and moral currents of Judaism in such a way as to fit within the framework of modern Jewish life”¹³², as Rabbi Lasker wrote in his preface. New to the first services was that the few Hebrew prayers that were used, were not translated literally, but rendered freely in order to fit them within the philosophy of the Reform movement. In Rabbi Lasker’s wording: “Here and there a new thought placed into an old prayer, without, however, deviating from its essence.”¹³³ Also the insertion of “Stille overdenkingen” [Silent meditations] was new. This was done “because the congregation not only gets into contact with the Divine through prayer and desire, but also through thought”¹³⁴.

The translation of the first paragraph of the Shema ran as follows: “Thou shalt keep them in Thy heart and before Thy eyes and they shall be written *as it were* on the posts of thy house”¹³⁵. The addition “as it were” illustrates that already at the beginning some phrases were taken less literally and interpreted in a wider sense. Also the rendering of the word “patriarchs” in the first blessing of the Amida was less literal and became in a wider sense: “ancestors”. In the second blessing of the Amida the phrase מְחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים¹³⁶ (He who brings the dead to life) was generalized to מְחַיֵּה הַכֹּל¹³⁷ (He who brings everything to life). In the fourth beracha, which is specially for Shabbat, it is no longer asked to take part in Torah, but to gather wisdom from Torah; wisdom that should make us into better people. In other words, here, too, we have a wider and hence more practical interpretation directed at the human individual. In addition, the translation of the seventh beracha of the Amida, which deals with peace, is different from those which preceded it and has a much more universal character, rather than being directed only towards the desires of the Jewish people.

In the introduction to the kaddish God is referred to as the “Idee van het Allerhoogste” [Idea of the Supreme]. Later, in the sidur of Rabbi Norden (nr. 3), God is referred to as “Hij die het Goddelijke is” [He who is the Divine].¹³⁸ In Rabbi Norden’s next machzor (nr. 4) God is referred to as “Levende, onveranderlijke God, die in Eeuwigheid bestuurder der wereld is” [Living, unchanging God, who

¹³¹ *Seder tov lehodot.*

¹³² “...de bestaande geestelijke waarden in de Joodsche traditie met de moderne denkwijze tot een geheel te maken en de geestelijke en moreele richtingen van het Jodendom tot uiting te brengen op een dusdanige wijze dat zij passen in het kader van het moderne Joodsche leven.”

¹³³ “Hier en daar een nieuwe gedachte gelegd in een oud gebed, zonder echter in wezen daarvan af te wijken.”

¹³⁴ “omdat de gemeenschap met het Goddelijke niet alleen via gebed en verlangen, maar ook door denken tot het Goddelijke komt.”

¹³⁵ “Gij zult het in u opnemen en voor oogen houden en het zal *als het ware* geschreven staan op den drempel uwer woning.”

¹³⁶ Mehaye hametim.

¹³⁷ Mehaye hakol.

¹³⁸ Norden, *Gebeden en gezangen voor den Vrijdagavonddienst en Sabbath-Morgendienst* (n.pl. 1931) 12.

governs the world in eternity] (p. 6). This illustrates that the expressions for God changed within a short period of time from an abstract idea into “Governor of the world”, something more concrete that people could easier relate to. In the same machzor by Rabbi Norden a phrase in the second blessing of the Amida is rendered as “God onzer Vaderen” [God of our Fathers]; p. 12). Before, Rabbi Lasker had translated this phrase as “God onzer voorouders” [God of our ancestors]. Here we see an example of how translations change over time, but not always in a more liberal direction.

After the war also the Zionist character of Dutch Liberal Judaism is expressed in liturgy. In the first place because the sidurim are read from right to left, just like Hebrew. New, poetical translations are added. In the sidur by Rabbi J. Soetendorp from 1955 (nr. 15) for the first time there appears an explicitly Zionist text, viz. in the second pre-beracha of the Shema, the אהבה רבה¹³⁹: “May Your blessing rest on the rebuilding of the Jewish land, where a free and happy Israel may live its calling without threat”¹⁴⁰. A prayer for the State of Israel already exists by that time, but it is not yet part of the sidur. The sidur “voor Vrijdagavond en Sjabbat” [for Friday night and Shabbat]; nr. 19) contains many new translations by Rabbi J. Soetendorp. For example, in this sidur there appears a phrase in the first paragraph of the Shema, which runs: “Yes, as a sign on your hand, such a bond they shall form and as a jewel they shall stand on your forehead”¹⁴¹. In all preceding sidurim this passage had been rendered, as quoted before, “They shall be, *as it were*, as a sign on your hand ...” Before this sidur appeared, the second beracha after the Shema contained the phrase עלינו ועל כל-עמו ישראל¹⁴² (over us and over all His People Israel). To this, Soetendorp added the word ועל ירושלים¹⁴³ (Who spreads the hut of peace over us and over all His People Israel, over all mankind *and over Jerusalem*). Furthermore, in this sidur we find for the first time a prayer for peace in the State of Israel.

In the 1964 sidur (nr. 20) a passage in the Alenu is translated as: “May all those who are created after Your image be aware that they are brothers, so that they be one of spirit and one in friendship forever united before You. *Then* your kingdom shall be established on earth and the word of your prophet shall be fulfilled”.¹⁴⁴ This translation creates a picture in which the coming of the Messianic age is not brought about by the arrival of the Messiah, but by mankind as a whole, a picture in which, for that matter, it is not only the Jewish community that bears responsibility in this respect, but where this constitutes a mission for all people. The same, more universal approach is apparent where Soetendorp

¹³⁹ Ahava raba.

¹⁴⁰ “Doe Uw zegen rusten op den opbouw van het Joodsche land, waar een vrij en gelukkig Israël onbedreigd naar zijn roeping zal kunnen leven.”

¹⁴¹ “Ja, als een teken op uw hand, zulk een band zullen zij vormen en als een sieraad zullen zij staan op uw voorhoofd.”

¹⁴² Alenu ve'al kol amo Yisrael.

¹⁴³ Ve'al Yerushalayim.

in his translation of the kaddish (p. 34) adds: “May He make peace for us and for all mankind”, instead of previous translations, which ran: “May He make peace over us and over all Israel”.

Also the position of women gradually acquired increasing importance in liturgy, even though it would still take quite some time before their position, even in Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands, could be called more or less equal to that of men, a development that even now has not lead to a fully acceptable and worthy result. In the “Benshbook” (nr. 22) women are mentioned for the first time. Albeit in connection with their traditional duty of kindling the candles on Friday night, but in addition to that a special blessing is added for a daughter (p. 6). Originally the Harachaman contained a translation that ran: “God ..., who may bless the lord of the house and his wife”¹⁴⁵. In this Benshbook (on p. 33) this is translated as: “The All-Good, may He bless my wife and ...”¹⁴⁶. In my opinion the phrase “the lord of the house and his wife” is an expression of the secondary position of the woman, derived from that of the husband, whereas in the second translation the husband asks God to bless his wife, as such, as someone he is emotionally attached to and with whom he finds himself on equal footing. That is, provided that the possessive pronoun “my” is not meant literally, but in the sense of “with whom I share the bond of matrimony”. In addition, the designation “my wife” also expresses the inclination towards a less formal and aloof, and a warmer approach, to which people happen to be more susceptible. This is also the case where a passage on the Messiah (p. 35) is translated as: “The All-Good, may He grant us the joy of experiencing the Messianic Age and the World to Come”¹⁴⁷. In this case there is not so much a reference to the Messiah, but to the Messianic Age, which for modern people is easier to relate to. And, to return to the Zionist element: we find the following addition: “The All-Good, may He give His blessing to the State of Israel and to all those who faithfully support the State”¹⁴⁸. For the first time, in the first preliminary edition of a morning service (nr. 24) the Hebrew text is adapted, too.

In short: In spite of his short stay in the Netherlands (cf. § 4.1), the American Rabbi Lasker was important since he was the first to introduce a Liberal Jewish liturgy, which at the time of his arrival in Holland was an entirely unknown phenomenon. This liturgy was however too radical and it had no lasting influence. The early foundations for the later Dutch liturgical development were subsequently laid by German rabbis: Rabbi Dr. J. Norden and Rabbi Dr. H. Hirschberg and by the Dutchmen R.J. Spitz and L. Levisson. The other foundation was constituted by the German *Einheitsgebetbuch*.

¹⁴⁴ “Moge allen, die geschapen zijn naar uw beeld, zich ervan bewust worden dat zij broeders zijn, zodat zij één van geest en één in vriendschap voor altijd verenigd zijn voor U. Dan zal uw koninkrijk op aarde gevestigd worden en het woord van Uw profeet zal worden vervuld.”

¹⁴⁵ “God ..., die moge zegenen de heer des huizes en zijn vrouw ...”

¹⁴⁶ “De Algoede, Hij zegene mijn vrouw en ...”

¹⁴⁷ “De Algoede, moge Hij ons het geluk geven de Messiaanse tijd en de komende wereld te mogen beleven.”

Important innovations that would follow are: the insertion of special translations, the descriptions of the Divine Name, the more universal character, followed after the war by the addition of themes such as Zionism, the Messianic Age, and, to some extent, a more positive attitude towards women. The translations get a special character because new (not necessarily Jewish) spiritual texts are added to the traditional ones. Subsequently a development may be discerned towards a more traditional service when the Amida regains its original liturgical place and prayers are adapted to a modern theological “Reform philosophy, the Hallel is placed at the end of the sidur (initially without translation; nr. 15) and the Musaph prayer returns. And finally possibilities are adapted to our modern time and conditions in life. Examples of this are: prayers for the safety of car drivers, after a miscarriage, concerning adoption, brit milah when the father is Jewish but the mother is not, zewed habat, for confirming the Jewish status of a child, for returning to the Jewish community, the departure meal for someone who is going on aliya, for a meeting, and the like.

We should realize, however, that every sidur, even the most recent one טוב להודות (Seder Tov *Lehodot*), to a high extent is the reflection of a certain period. At the time of the compilation of this latter sidur, there was no such thing as gay marriage, there was hardly talk of genetic engineering, of mixed burials, of a need for prayers for pets. It seems conceivable that these issues, and others, will have to be dealt with in future versions of the sidur.

In the course of time, Dutch Liberal Jews have developed their liturgy from the type we described as ‘Independent Reform’ to the type that is more in line with ‘Reform from within’. In the beginning a very limited liturgy was presented to Jews who had completely lost all knowledge of Judaism and Hebrew. The purpose was to bring even the most assimilated back to their Jewish identity. Over the years Dutch Liberal Jewish liturgy has grown and it adjusted itself to new situations (e.g. the existence of the State of Israel and the emancipation of women). It has become less radical and “more Jewish”, thus also reflecting the inner growth of the community. It should be mentioned here that this has happened in spite of the severe interruption of the Shoah, during which the community was nearly completely destroyed. Present-day Dutch Liberal liturgy includes traditions that were omitted in the more radical past, along with innovations that have meaning in the present life-style of modern Jews. Moreover, it serves a living community with nine congregations and over 3000 members. There is no doubt, that Dutch Liberal Jewish liturgy will continue to grow together with that community.

¹⁴⁸ “De Algoede, moge Hij Zijn zegen geven aan de Staat Israël en aan allen die in trouw de Staat ondersteunen.”

Epilogue

Although it is not customary to add a personal closing to a final thesis, I am doing so.

I am very grateful to have been able to follow and complete the study program at the Levisson Institute. Throughout my life I've been busy "being Jewish". A Jewish life based on tradition, emotion and love for what I perhaps intuitively felt was the way a Jewish life should be lived. This study program, with this final essay, has given me the theoretical basis to understand Judaism and *how it can be lived*. I am now more able to define and to formulate for myself, and for others, what is most essential.

Kavana, always *the* indispensable element as far as I was concerned, while still important, is not enough. The research that has gone into this final essay has convinced me that tradition must be coupled with new inspirations in liturgy. There are constantly new challenges to be met and it is vital that tradition be kept alive while ensuring that Judaism *functions and thrives* in changing circumstances. A good example is the special prayer for women after a miscarriage written by Rabbi Yehoram Mazor.

The remarkable aspect of dealing with Judaism in this way allows opportunities for creativity. Creativity which allows a central place for the human being, for doubt, for questions, for criticism. Kavana- when sincere and upright- will ensure that change is not misguided, and all the more when kavana has knowledge at its foundation.

Prayer is not philosophy, but according to Talmud "work of the heart". Our uneasiness with prayer sometimes leads us to our very first prayer, "God, help me to pray".

Someone once asked: "How can I learn to pray?" There is only one answer. "Just pray". Pray the prayers written by others. By reciting their words, the prayers become our own, with our intentions and our emotions. Let's not wait till we think we know how to pray or feel we want to pray. We may never feel we're truly ready.

I ask myself what kind of God would want people to always pray according to a 'prescribed method'. Each individual can reach the ultimate heights (God) via his or her own vantage point, perspective, experience, emotion. There are indeed many ways that lead to ...Jerusalem.

But each way is a very individual one. Each man's/woman's journey is his/her own. Prescribed prayer, a booster to help get started, like tradition as a blueprint, are important road signs to lead the individual toward his/her own prayer and unique engagement with tradition.

A student of the Tsanze Rebbe asked, "How do you prepare for prayer?" The Rabbi answered, "I pray that I have the strength to pray".

Writing this final essay has helped me to learn to appreciate the prayers of our ancestors, and to come to realize that these prayers are now also ours, enabling us to enjoy the beauty of being living links to a living tradition, a gift to us and those we meet on our way.

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