



Annual Report  
&  
Financial Report  
for the year  
2021

STICHTING ROBERT A. LEVISSON

Zuidelijke Wandelweg 41 • 1079 RK Amsterdam • Netherlands

contact@levisson.nl • www.levisson.nl • Tel. +31 (0)20 54 00 133

Bank: 400378213 • IBAN: NL88ABNA0400378213 • KvK: 34178043 • ANBI: 811001994



Rabbi Robert A. Levisson (1913-2001) was one of the great leaders within the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism. He was the son of the founder of the Progressive Jewish movement in The Netherlands. After the Second World War he revived the Progressive Jewish Congregation (LJG) in The Hague and became one of the prominent Progressive Jewish leaders in our country. He was a wise man, a talented speaker and author, and a great advocate for Israel.

*Yehi zichro baruch* - יהי זכרו ברוך - Blessed be his memory

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The year 2021</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rabbinical Training</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Courses</b>	<b>5</b>
Shaliach Tzibbur course	
Refresher course Ba'al Tefilah	
<b>Rimon-Dutch Progressive Jewish Educational Center</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other activities</b>	<b>6</b>
David Lilienthal Lecture	
Library	
<b>Communication</b>	<b>6</b>
Website	
Newsletter	
Sidra of the Week	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>7</b>
Board	
Management Team	
Academic Committee	
Vocational Committee	
Confidential adviser	
<b>Finances</b>	<b>8</b>
Donors	
Bequest	
<b>Policy for the future</b>	<b>8</b>
Plans for 2022	
Policy plan for the coming years	
<b>Composition Board, Management and Committees</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Financial report for 2021</b>	<b>11</b>
Balance at 31 December 2021	
Profit and loss account 2021	

## Introduction

The activities of the Levisson Institute in the reported year 2021 were overshadowed by the Covid pandemic, as almost everywhere else in the world. Consultations were held digitally because we were not able to meet in person. The upside was that it saved much travel time. But I am still glad we are back to an almost normal situation in 2022, much like before the pandemic.

Two rabbinical students graduated at the Levisson Institute in 2021, dr. Annette Böckler and Asjer Waterman. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Annette in 2022. But fortunately Asjer was able to attend his classes, so in that respect, it was a good thing to have Zoom available.

As you will read in the report, we made the course Shaliach Tzibbur available for 15 students. Unfortunately only digital, which didn't any good for the dynamics of the course. We meant to have this course, lead by chazanim Josée Wolff and Avery Tracht, take place in the classroom, but for obvious reasons that was not possible. It was impressive to see how students and teachers did their best to cover as much as possible theoretical and practical knowledge to guarantee continuity in conducting services on Shabbat and Holidays in the Liberal Jewish Congregations and other progressive congregations in The Netherlands.

My greatest concern remains the succession of the current rabbis in the future. This is also a challenge because of the expansion of the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism with two Liberal Jewish Congregations, one in Alkmaar and one in center of The Netherlands. Religious, and especially inspired leadership is necessary if we want to consolidate and preferably also grow our Dutch congregations. There are many Jews in our country who could potentially become members of a Jewish congregation. We keep trying to attract young people in particular, by providing a meaningful interpretation of the rich traditions of Judaism, which can give us so much richness and strength. As a rabbi, you are the central person to pass on our Progressive Judaism to young people, families and those who are looking for a deepening of their Judaism.

I have made a call to action before to get kehillot to enthuse their own members to aspire a career as a rabbi. This will only be feasible if congregational boards make it possible financially and will invest in the future. But more than the money to offer rabbis a pay check is needed, we also need vision and enthusiasm to look for and find new leaders. Once they are found, the Levisson Institute will guarantee a solid education for them.

Internally we began to review in 2021 in what ways we can make the Levisson Institute more viable and evolve from the present to the future. I have an enormous respect and gratitude for the efforts of so many devoted to our small, but brave and hard-working institute.

Remember one of my mottos: "*al tifros min hatzibur*", "don't isolate yourself from the community" (Pirkei Avot 2:4). If we want to remain a Jewish community with traditions, knowledge, inspiration and a future, we need to keep educating Jewish leaders.

Rabbi Menno ten Brink, LLM  
Dean of the Levisson Institute

## The year 2021

Just like 2020, the year 2021 was unusual because of the Covid-pandemic. Work, all meetings and classes were done at home via Zoom. Only a few meetings were held in person, whenever the relaxation of Covid measures allowed for it.

## Rabbinical Training

Two rabbinical students graduated in 2021. There were no new applications.

Because of the pandemic, our sister organisation, Leo Baeck College in London, asked the Levisson Institute to facilitate the semicha of their Dutch rabbinical student in Amsterdam. Peter Luijendijk received his semicha in the Liberal Jewish Congregation of Amsterdam on July 4th, from the Dean of the Levisson Institute, Rabbi Menno ten Brink, on behalf of his colleague at the Leo Baeck College. Via live-stream connections with Oxford and Paris, a total of four international students of Leo Baeck College received their semicha. See also

<https://www.levisson.nl/en/photos-videos/semicha/>

## Courses

### Shaliach Tzibbur course

A new Shaliach Tzibbur course began late 2020. Its regular teachers are Josée Wolff and Avery Tracht, both former chazanim at the Liberal Jewish Congregations in the Netherlands and currently living in New York City.

The first weekend was planned for October 2020, but because of the Covid-pandemic there was only a digital introduction. Unfortunately, it was impossible to get together in person during the weekends in 2021, so all four weekends were conducted via Zoom. The last planned weekend was canceled because the participants and teachers were tired of only meeting digitally. The first weekend in 2022 was hybrid, part digital, part physical. The developments in the Covid-pandemic seem encouraging, so the Institute expects the remainder of classes can be held in person in 2022. The course started with 15 participants, among whom one rabbinical student, but in the course of time three participants dropped out.

### Refresher course Ba'al Tefilah

On Saturday night 9 January 2021, a Zoom meeting was held for the participants in the Ba'al Tefilah course. It started at Havdalah, about which Rabbi Menno ten Brink gave a lecture. Later that year, the participants compiled a photo book for one of the participants, who was terminally ill. She died early 2022.

## Rimon – Dutch Progressive Jewish Education Center



The role of Rimon as national education center for Liberal Jewish youth education had changed so much in 2020 that the Board of the Levisson Institute decided to return the task of coordinating Talmud Torah education in The Netherlands to the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism.

After intensive consultations between the boards of the Levisson Institute and the Dutch Union, the former requested that the latter take upon itself the oversight of Talmud Torah education.

The Levisson Institute made the final account of the (formerly annual) contributions of the kehillot for the activities of Rimon in 2021 and transferred the remaining sum to the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism.

## Other activities

### David Lilienthal Lecture

The annual David Lilienthal Lecture and opening of the new academic year was held on Sunday 31 October. The meeting was digital and was attended by 80 people.

Guestspeaker was Irene Zwiep, professor in Jewish Studies at University of Amsterdam and chair of the Academisch Committee of the Levisson Institute. She spoke about *Jewish Studie(s) in the Anthropocene. About the relevance of Jewish education in a time when the world is busy with other things.*

Her lecture and PowerPoint presentation (in Dutch) can be seen on the Levisson website:  
<https://www.levisson.nl/fotos-videos/david-lilienthallezing/>

### Library

As in previous years, many people wanted to donate books from inheritances or from their own collections. Only books which fit in the collection and are a good addition were accepted. The library is a joint library of the Levisson Institute and the Progressive Jewish Congregation of Amsterdam and is placed in its building in Amsterdam. See for the catalogue: [www.levissonbibliotheek.nl](http://www.levissonbibliotheek.nl) and [www.ljgbibliotheek.nl](http://www.ljgbibliotheek.nl)

## Communication

### Website



The website is an important means of communication to the outside world. It is frequently viewed, especially the music library. In the context of the Shaliach Tzibbur course, the music library is regularly supplemented. [www.levisson.nl/en/](http://www.levisson.nl/en/)

## Newsletter



One newsletter was published in 2021 as an announcement of the David Lilienthal Lecture on 31 October. The newsletter (in Dutch) is circulated by mail.

## Sidra of the Week

A commentary on the Sidra of the Week (Parashat hashavuah) is weekly sent out by email to subscribers. The coordination is in the hands of Channa Kistemaker. Michel Waterman is the editor and Dick Hage takes care of the sending by email. It is possible to subscribe to the (free) weekly commentaries via the website of the Levisson Institute.

All comments (in Dutch) are also published on the website:

<https://www.levisson.nl/toralezingen/sidra-van-de-week/>

## Organisation

The Board, the Management Team and all committees reviewed the organisation of the Institute during the reported year. After an earlier restructuring in 2012 the need was felt to review the structure of the organisation. The content of the curriculum will also be updated.

### Board

The Board met seven times in the reported year. The second term of two board members ended in the fall of 2020. The two resigning board members remained as consultants, until their seats were filled by new board members in 2021.

Because of a change in by-laws, board members can from now on remain for two terms of each four years. In the past those were two terms of each three years.

### Management Team

Next to the daily work of running the Levisson Institute, the Management Team was busy with the rabbinical training, the Shaliach Tzibbur course, the revision of the study guide and of the organisation, and the situation at Rimon.

The Management Team meets once a month. It is represented at the meetings of the Board, Academic Committee and Vocational Committee. It also maintains contact with the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism and the boards of the affiliated congregations.

The General Director is in the office three days a week in the Levisson Room in the building of the Progressive Jewish Congregation of Amsterdam and can be reached by email during the rest of the time ([contact@levisson.nl](mailto:contact@levisson.nl)).

### Academic Committee

The Academic Committee did not meet in 2021. The chair of the Academic Committee and a few members were consulted on a regular base about the changes in the organisational structure, the rabbinical training, and changes in the academic curriculum.

## **Vocational Committee**

The Vocational Committee had a turbulent year. The Annual Report for 2020 already mentioned the problems. In the current reported year it appeared that the Vocational Committee should have had a different place in the organisational structure.

The members of the committee are reviewing the curriculum of the pastoral element of the rabbinical training.

Two members of the committee have resigned and it was decided that the vacancy would only be filled after changes in the organisational structure will be made.

## **Confidential adviser**

The confidential adviser of the Levisson Institute, Marion Alhadeff, had no reports during the year under review.

She is independent and not accountable. The appointment of such an adviser is a measure designed to promote the organisation's integrity.

A confidential adviser is a specially designated individual in whom anyone connected to the Levisson Institute can confide. See for more information about the role of the confidential adviser: [www.levisson.nl/en/about-us/confidential-advisor/](http://www.levisson.nl/en/about-us/confidential-advisor/)

## **Finances**

### **Donors**

The Levisson Institute thanks its loyal donors and also its new ones who donated to the Institute in 2021. The number of donors who committed for a number of years has increased. We owe them much gratitude.

We owe thanks to the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism, the Stichting Collectieve Marorgelden, Kiwi Stichting and Paula Salomon Stichting.

We still need your help. We hope to find more donors, foundations and funds who are willing to support us financially to keep this training center of Liberal Judaism in The Netherlands alive and active.

### **Bequest**

The Institute received a bequest in 2021. It will be paid one year after the decease of the partner of the deceased.

## **Policy for the future**

### **Plans for 2022**

Our plans for the year 2022 are a continuation of the current policies:

- The review of the organisational structure will be concluded.
- The rabbinical training remains priority. The curriculum will be revised.
- A new study guide for the rabbinical training will be published.



- The course for cantors (Shaliach Tzibbur) will be continued and concluded in 2022.
- The David Lilienthal Lecture will be held in the Fall, coinciding with the opening of the academic year.
- There will be a refresher course (one day) for Ba'alei Tefilah.
- There will be a refresher course for Shlichei Tzibbur who were trained in the past.
- The Liberal Jewish Congregations will be consulted for their opinion on the future of the rabbi in the context of rabbinical training.

### **Policy plan for the coming years**

The Levisson Institute received a grant in 2019 from the Amsterdam Leasehold Fund. This money will be spent on three projects which will be implemented over the next five years: rabbinical training, a course for cantors (Shlichey Tzibbur) and a Ba'al Tefillah course.

## **Composition Board, Management and Committees**

### Board

Ella Wijnschenk-Oesterman, chair

Prof. dr. Juliette Walma van der Molen, vice-chair (adviser till 1 March 2021)

Helma Blankman, MA, vice-chair (from 1 March 2021)

Leopold I. Hertzberger, MA, treasurer

David Allick, LLM, secretary (adviser till 15 May 2021)

Anita van Leeuwen, LLM, secretary (from 15 May 2021)

Liane van Dantzig, MA, member (on behalf of the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism)

### Management Team

Rabbi Menno ten Brink, LLM, dean

Rabbi Marianne van Praag, head Vocational Program

Francine Püttmann, MA, director General Affairs

### Academic Committee

Prof. dr. Irene Zwiep, chair

Rabbi Tamarah Benima, member

Carolyn Levisson, MA, member

Ernst Numann, LLM, member

Dr. Ortal-Paz Saar, member

Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, member

Rabbi Menno ten Brink, LLM, dean

Rabbi David Lilienthal, honorary dean

Ella Wijnschenk-Oesterman, chair of the board

### Vocational Committee (CBV)

Jorien Tamse, chair (till 1 May 2021)

Rabbi Marianne van Praag, head Vocational Program

Judith Goudsmit, member (till 1 May 2021)

Ella Wijnschenk-Oesterman, hearer

Francine Püttmann, MA, hearer

Subcommittee Admissions

Prof. dr. Irene Zwiep, chair Academic Committee

Rabbi Menno ten Brink, LLM, dean

Carolyn Levisson, MA, chair Vocational Committee (till 2 November 2020)

Confidential adviser

Marion Alhadeff

Webmaster

Francine Püttmann

Librarian

Francine Püttmann

## Financial Report for 2021

The annual account 2021 was drawn up by the Board on 23 March 2022 and afterwards confirmed by accountant Kuhlman. What follows is a summary. If you would like to receive the complete annual account, please address your request to [contact@levisson.nl](mailto:contact@levisson.nl)

### Balance at 31 December 2021

<i>Assets</i>		<i>Liabilities</i>	
Investments	€ 86,088	Foundation capital	€ 264,016
Receivables	€ 6,308	Earmarked reserves	€ 62,768
Liquid assets	€ 383,569	Subsidies and contributions	
		paid in advance	€ 143,108
		Taxes	€ 415
		Debts/deferrals	€ <u>5,658</u>
Total	€ 475,965		€ 475,965

The *earmarked reserves* comprise five funds:

Student Fund	€ 23,958
Israel Seminar Fund	€ 15,000
Academic Research Fund	€ 8,841
Training Fund	€ 14,969
Rimon	€ 0

The Student Fund, a farewell present for Dean Rabbi Lilienthal, is intended for allowances for students who need them on ground of personal circumstances to be used for expenses directly linked to their studies. In 2021, a payment of € 944 was made to one student.

The Israel Seminar Fund was founded in 2005 with the goal of regularly organising seminars for students in Israel. No use was made of this in 2021.

In 2005 € 10,000 was reserved for academic research. The last payment was made in 2016.

The Training Fund consists of unused portions of various grants for training that the Kiwi-Tielens Foundation has given Levisson over the years. The board has allotted the reserves for all courses and training programs. No use was made of this in 2021.

Since 2013, Rimon, the Dutch Progressive Jewish Educational Center has been under the care of the Levisson Foundation. The annual contributions from all congregations affiliated with the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism have been added to the Rimon earmarked reserve. In 2021, no contribution was requested from the congregations, given the situation surrounding Rimon (see above). It was decided that Levisson would cease its activities with regard to Rimon and transfer it to the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism. The amount that was reserved for Rimon (€ 11,975) was transferred to the Dutch Union in 2021.

## Profit and loss account 2021

<i>Receipts</i>		<i>Expenditures</i>	
Donors	€ 15,195	Salaries staff	€ 28,451
Subsidies	€ 25,825	Instructors	€ 34,429
Tuition fees	€ 2,280	Board/MT/Committees	€ 1,392
Shaliach Tzibbur course	€ 1,425	Semicha	€ 565
Ba'al Tefilah	€ 0	Rimon	€ 0
Investments results	€ 16,198	Library	€ 0
Interest	€ 0	External communication	€ 1,472
		Accountant/bookkeeping	€ 3,812
		Miscellaneous	€ 815
		Net result	./ € 10,013
Total	<u>€ 60,923</u>		<u>€ 60,923</u>

We are grateful to all our donors and supporters. It is impossible to mention all of them, but we are happy to mention the Verbond (Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism) and the individual donors, who have generously supported. We welcome new donors who want to keep the Levisson Institute financially healthy. Your donation is fully tax deductible because of our official ANBI charity status.

Leopold I. Hertzberger  
treasurer