



Nederlands Genootschap  
voor Joodse Studiën



rijksuniversiteit  
 groningen



## **Dutch Association for Jewish Studies Conference 2024**

### **Programme**

#### **Tefillah and Jewish Knowledge**

Keynote speakers:

Wout van Bekkum (Groningen)

Elisabeth Hollender (Frankfurt)

Hindy Najman (Oxford)

27 March 2024

Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana

University of Amsterdam

[Please register with this link](#)

This conference is generously sponsored by the Dutch Association for Jewish Studies and the European Association for Jewish Studies

# Tefillah and Jewish Knowledge

Nederlands Genootschap voor Joodse Studiën (NGJS)

Dutch Association for Jewish Studies

The NGJS annual conference aims to bring together researchers in the Netherlands in the field of Jewish Studies to share current research and to jointly reflect on current trends and issues in the field. It further aims to facilitate collaboration between researchers and to connect junior and senior scholars.

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Prayer is a key phenomenon and key concept in Jewish Studies. Sooner or later every topic in the field will bring researchers into contact with liturgy and/or prayer. The silent omnipresence of prayer in Jewish history is as discrete as it is enigmatic: precisely what is *tefillah*, what does it do, and how does it work?

Such questions are not always easy to answer, yet they have significant implications across the field of Jewish Studies and beyond. What is prayer and how does it work? Is it a substitute for (superior) Temple sacrifice, a format for communicating and striking deals with the divine, a form of social contract, a political instrument, an educational tool, or ...? What structures of knowledge are embedded in Jewish prayer? And how does prayer in its turn structure—Jewish and other—knowledge?

This workshop takes a multidisciplinary approach to these questions. Colleagues and students are invited to reflect on their own encounters with prayer and liturgy. Together we will look at *tefillah* and Jewish knowledge from the perspective of materiality, textuality, history, theory, philosophy, and theology. Guided by experts, we will explore manuscripts and printed prayer books from the rich collections of the Rosenthaliana library in Amsterdam. Lectures and short papers will offer a tour through centuries of Hebrew poetry and prayer while addressing fundamental questions relating to methodology, aesthetics, and the history of ideas. We hope that this workshop will generate new and fresh perspectives by looking across textual corpora, across historical periods—from antiquity to modernity—and across Jewish Studies disciplines.

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The programme will include three expert keynotes, twelve short papers, and a closing panel discussion on the theme of the conference and the implications of the presentations. The conference is bilingual (Dutch & English).

Contact: [NGJS2024@gmail.com](mailto:NGJS2024@gmail.com)

## Programme

9.00	Walk in	Registration, tea & coffee
9.30–10.00	Viewing 1	Rosenthaliana collection (Group 1) – WERKGROEP RUIMTE
10.15–10.30	Welcome	Opening – NINA VAN LEERZAAL Jan Willem van Henten (President of NGJS) Irene Zwiép (Chair Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Amsterdam)
10.30–11.15	Keynote	Plenary lecture – NINA VAN LEERZAAL Chair: Arjen Bakker (University of Groningen) Keynote speaker: Hindy Najman (University of Oxford) Title: <i>Knowing God and the Self through Prayer</i>
11.15–12.30	Viewing 2 & Lunch	Rosenthaliana collection (Groups 2 & 3) – WERKGROEP RUIMTE Lunch for all participants – ALLARD PIERSON RECEPTION ROOM
12.30–13.45	Short paper session 1	<b><u>Parallel panel sessions</u></b>  Panel 1: Sacrifice and Prayer – WERKGROEP RUIMTE Chair: Dylan Burns (University of Amsterdam) Jonathan Stökl (University of Leiden), <i>I will Live in the House of the Lord Forever' (Ps 23:6)</i> Mirjam van Willigen (University of Amsterdam/University of Groningen), <i>Presenting Prayer as Service of the Heart</i> Victor Kal (University of Amsterdam), <i>Het systeem van de mo'adim: een theologisch-politiek tractaat</i>  Panel 2: Prayer and Modernity – NINA VAN LEERZAAL Chair: Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah (University of Groningen) Judith Frishman (University of Leiden), <i>What is new in the new LYG high holiday mahzor</i> Ruben Vis (Nederlands-Israëlitisch Seminarium), <i>Investigations of the heart: origin and creation of a new prayer book for the Dutch-Ashkenazi prayer services</i> Channa Kistemaker (independent researcher), <i>The Jewish Prayerbook as a Ritual Object</i>
13.45–14.30	Keynote	Plenary lecture – NINA VAN LEERZAAL Chair: Bart Wallet (University of Amsterdam) Keynote speaker: Wout van Bekkum (University of Groningen) Title: <i>Poetry as Prayer: The Role of Poetry in Jewish Liturgy</i>

14.30–15.00	Break	Coffee & tea – ALLARD PIERSON RECEPTION ROOM
15.00–16.15	Short paper session 2	<p><b><u>Parallel panel sessions</u></b></p> <p>Panel 3: Prayer and Plight – WERKGROEP RUIMTE  Chair: Eric Ottenheijm (Utrecht University)  Marcel Poorthuis (University of Tilburg), <i>From rain to a mild death: the changing context of a paradigm prayer</i>  Daniella Zaidman-Mauer (University of Amsterdam), <i>A Doctor's Prayer and Remedies in Yiddish</i>  Katharina Wendl (Freie Universität Berlin), <i>Instagramming inspiration and support: Deracheha's social media discourse about women's prayer in light of war and terror</i></p> <p>Panel 4: Performance and Instrumentalization – NINA VAN LEERZAAL  Chair: Ortal-Paz Saar (Utrecht University)  Jan Willem van Henten (University of Amsterdam/University of Stellenbosch), <i>The Nexus of Prayer and Sacrifice in 2 Maccabees</i>  Willem Smelik (University College London), <i>Chanted Targum</i>  Ezra Engelsberg (University of Amsterdam), <i>Kneeling as Stage Direction: Prayer in German Drama, circa 1850</i></p>
16.15–17.00	Keynote	<p>Plenary lecture – NINA VAN LEERZAAL  Chair: Irene Zwiép (University of Amsterdam)  Keynote speaker: Elisabeth Hollender (Goethe University Frankfurt)  Title: <i>Liturgy as a Mirror of Jewish Cultural History</i></p>
17.00–17.45	Wrap up	<p>Panel discussion – NINA VAN LEERZAAL  Chair: Judith Frishman (Prof. em. Jewish Studies, Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion)</p> <p>Panel: Wout van Bekkum (University of Groningen)  Annette Boeckler (University of Bonn)  Elisabeth Hollender (University of Frankfurt)  Hindy Najman (University of Oxford)  Irene Zwiép (University of Amsterdam)</p>
18.00–19.00	Reception	For all participants – ALLARD PIERSON RECEPTION ROOM