

## Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Book Award, 1989\*

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### Presentation of the Award

Nineteen Eighty-Nine was a banner year for Judaica reference books. This bounty of qualified reference books made our committee's decision doubly difficult. As the 25th anniversary celebration of the Association of Jewish Libraries takes place in Israel, it is only proper that this year's Reference Book Award be given to an Israeli author. It is especially appropriate that the award for the best Judaica reference book published in 1989 goes to Adin Steinsaltz, for the *Reference Guide* to the English translation of the Talmud that he edited.<sup>1</sup>

The Talmud is the foundation of post-Biblical Judaism, and Rabbi Steinsaltz's *Guide* makes this indispensable source more accessible to today's Jewish reader. The *Reference Guide* to Rabbi Steinsaltz's translation of the Talmud is an outstanding reference work, one that can both stand alone and be used as part of the set to which it belongs. It is an attractive, easy-to-use, and handy volume.

As chairperson of the AJL Reference Book Award Committee, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for a job well done. These are: Charles Cutter, Norman Gechlik, Adaire Klein, and Ann Masnick. Thanks, too, to Marcia Posner and Edith Lubetski, for assisting the committee in contacting tonight's award-winner, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, whose presence here lends our Association great *koved* [honor].

\* Based on remarks made at the AJL Banquet, held at the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, Jerusalem, July 1990.

### Acceptance Remarks

[Rabbi Steinsaltz, in accepting the award, delivered a very moving, extemporaneous speech, which was unfortunately not recorded or transcribed. In his speech, he evoked the special light of the holy city and its surroundings, an ambiance that residents of "Jerusalem the Golden" find conducive to Torah scholarship and its dissemination. The *Reference Guide* to the Steinsaltz Talmud edition is a prime expression of the city's special atmosphere. — ZMB]

### Funding of the Award

At last year's awards ceremony [June 1989], an announcement was made that Ivan Tillem, the compiler and publisher of the *Jewish Almanac*, had agreed to serve as donor for the Reference Book Award. Owing, however, to a tragic airplane crash in Ethiopia, in which Mr. Tillem and Congressman Mickey Leland of Texas were killed, it was necessary to seek another sponsor for the award. I would like to express the Committee's thanks to Esther Nussbaum for finding a donor, who wishes to remain anonymous.

In 1991, two awards will be presented: the AJL Reference Book Award and the AJL Judaica Bibliography Award. The second award will be funded by Marcia and Lou Posner. Marcia is one AJL president who has, during her tenure, truly gone above and beyond the duties of her office.

### Note

1. Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition: A Reference Guide*. New York: Random House, 1989. Includes sections on the nature and background of the Talmud; guidelines for Talmudic study; Mishnaic methodology; Talmudic terminology, hermeneutics, and weights and measures; halakhic concepts and terms; Aramaic; and Rashi script.

Zachary M. Baker, Head Librarian of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, NY, is President of the Research and Special Libraries Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries (1990-1992).

### Editor's Note:

See Zachary Baker's review of the 1990 AJL Judaica Bibliography Award Winner in the APPROBATIONS section of this issue. The 1990 Reference Book Award winner, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, was described in the preceding issue (vol. 5 no. 2, p. 232). The presentation and acceptance speeches for these Awards, which were presented in 1991, will be published in the next issue of the journal.

As we were preparing this issue for publication, we learned that the 1991 Reference Book Award Winner is *Where Once We Walked*, by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack, and that the Award is sponsored by the Eugene Garfield Foundation. The 1991 Bibliography Award Winner is *Jewish American Fiction Writers*, by Gloria L. Cronin, Blaine H. Hall, and Connie Lamb.