

2000 AJL REFERENCE BOOK AWARD AND AJL BIBLIOGRAPHY AWARD
Research & Special Libraries Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries

Rita Saccal

It is my great honor to present the 2000 Reference and Bibliography Awards of the Association of Jewish Libraries. Why do I say it is my honor?

Because Rick Burke, former R and S president, and David Hirsch, current president, have trusted me for this tenure despite my coming from a small community in a far away country.

Because in the country where I come from there are only two Jewish libraries in activity, and these very few libraries can barely survive because of a lack of funds. In the country where I come from, Jewish schools, except just for two, have no libraries. In the country where I come from, Jewish schools are closing their doors because the Jewish community is emigrating and leaving the country, or because their parents cannot afford to provide their children a Jewish education. In the country where I come from, the activity of a librarian is not taken very seriously, it is just a job. Jewish librarianship does not even exist. What may seem obvious and is taken for granted here in the States is an exception in my country, in Argentina.

And to stand before such a large number of Librarians, and to belong to the Association of Jewish Libraries, which annually gives an award to the best works written by Jewish authors, is a new and unusual experience for me, and certainly a privilege, because in the country where I come from recognition is not given so openly to Jewish authors.

And going back, I want to thank the Committee which assisted me in the election of this year's winners, made up of: Julia Bock, Peggy Pearlstein, Bob Singerman, Yisrael Dubitsky, Phil Miller, David Levy. And, of course, the very important help of David Hirsch.

I want to thank also the continuous support of Dr. Greta Silver and Eric Chaim Kline for these awards.

The winners are:

Mr. David Assaf for his bibliography book titled: *Bratslav: An Annotated Bibliography*. Hebrew Title: *Breslav: bibliyografy ah mu eret: Rabbi Nahman mi-Breslav toldatov u morashto ha-Sifrutit: sifre talmidav ve talmide talmidav: Hasidut Breslav v-sevivoteha*. Published by Merkaz Zalman Shazar.

And

Mr. Shimeon Brisman for his reference book titled: *A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, published by KTAV.

Unfortunately the authors have not been able to attend this convention to receive their awards. Therefore, we invite Mr. David Hirsch, who will be giving an introduction on Mr. Brisman's activities, and Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg, who will be representing Mr. Shimeon Brisman and accepting his award.

Afterwards, I will be back with you, providing a short introduction of Mr. Assaf's activities and Mr. David Hirsch will read his acceptance speech.

Thank you very much.

2000 AJL REFERENCE BOOK AWARD
Research & Special Libraries Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries
HISTORY AND GUIDE TO JUDAIC DICTIONARIES AND CONCORDANCES
by SHIMEON BRISMAN

Brisman, Shimeon. *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*. Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 2000. xxiii, 337 p. (His *Jewish Research Literature*, vol. 3, part 1). ISBN: 0881256587.

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO SHIMEON BRISMAN

David G. Hirsch

This year's Reference Award goes to Shimeon Brisman for his latest book: *A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, published by KTAV in Hoboken, NJ in 2000. This is a special honor for me as a UCLA librarian, because the awardee, Shimeon Brisman was Judaica librarian at UCLA from 1962-1988 and it is he who deserves the credit for building UCLA's Judaica collection. Unfortunately, I have never had the pleasure of meeting him.

Shimeon Brisman was born in 1920 in Suraz (Poland). He studied in Hebrew schools and rabbinic seminaries. He spent the years of World War II in Lithuania, Russia, Japan and Shanghai (China). During the same period he studied and received degrees in Rabbinics and Yiddish literature. He arrived in the United States in 1947. He worked in libraries in New York and in Los Angeles and engaged in the book business and in preparing and editing works for publication. He began his appointment as Near Eastern Cataloger in the UCLA Library August 1, 1962.

He eventually was appointed as Hebraica-Judaica Bibliographer and was the only full-time bibliographer at UCLA at that time who was also responsible for the cataloging of the books and periodicals which he acquired. Miriam Lichtheim, Near Eastern Bibliographer at the time,

considered Mr. Brisman a scholar and someone who did the work of two full-time professionals. She evaluated his skill in building up the Judaica-Hebraica collection as phenomenal.

Mr. Brisman's negotiating skills played a pivotal role when he was sent to Jerusalem to purchase the Bamberger & Wahrman Bookstore collection of 33,000 volumes of antiquarian Judaica, which became the nucleus of UCLA's Theodore E. Cummings Collection of Judaica and Hebraica. He was also instrumental in acquiring several important manuscript collections and early Italian Hebrew books.

Mr. Brisman's working title was changed to Jewish Studies Bibliographer effective August 1, 1970. As Page Ackerman, Associate University Librarian, expressed in an item for the Library Newsletter, "He now functions not only as cataloger, but also as bibliographer, lecturer, and reference resource person in the general field of Jewish Studies."

Robert Vosper, UCLA's University Librarian, wrote in a memo to Vice Chancellor Saxon in September 1971 in which he was requesting approval for a research and study leave for Mr. Brisman for academic year 1972/73: "We brought Mr. Brisman here in 1962 ... In 1956 I understand we had only one Hebrew book in the collections, and by 1962 the growth had only been modest. As of today we are approaching 100,000 carefully selected volumes and do in fact have a solid basis for graduate instruction and research."

Mr. Brisman interpreted his main role to be the establishment of UCLA as one of the important scholarly resources in the world for the study of Hebraica and Judaica. He centered his activities primarily in the areas of acquisitions and cataloging. He was successful in the acquisition of a number of collections of special significance. He established the exchange of institutional materials with a number of major academic institutions. He had several academic leaves of absence in order to pursue scholarly endeavors and gather material for books published. He appeared in interviews and in write-ups related to UCLA's Jewish Studies Collection. UCLA made front page news with the Cummings Collection. In 1967, he proposed to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures that they establish classes in Hebrew Bibliography and Methods of Research for their graduate students. He was appointed lecturer of this program.

Nearly thirty years ago, in 1972, Mr. Brisman received a Sir Simon Marks Fellowship from the Los Angeles Jewish Community Foundation to spend a year in Jerusalem in order to work on his first book. The result of this one-year study was an "Experimental Edition" of his *Jewish Research Literature: History and Guide*. During the next several years he rewrote and expanded the volume and published it in 1977 under the title, *A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography*. This volume, along with his second work, *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*, are standard works for students and scholars interested in the field and are used in the training of Judaica librarians in this country and abroad, especially in Israel.

Mr. Brisman retired from UCLA on July 1, 1988 and moved to Brooklyn where he has continued his scholarly activities including the publishing of this third volume in the series, *Jewish Research Literature*. I will look forward to meeting him personally at a future award presentation.

I would now like to call upon Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg, Professor of Library and Information Science at St. John's University, who will accept this award on behalf of Shimeon Brisman.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF SHIMEON BRISMAN

Read by Bella Hass Weinberg, with Comments

When Shimeon Brisman asked me to deliver his acceptance speech for the Reference Book Award, I felt honored. I had been privileged to receive advance copies of several chapters of the award-winning book, *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, and I have cited it in several papers on the history of indexes (Weinberg, 1999; 2000a; 2000b).

Dr. Brisman sent me an acceptance speech consisting of two paragraphs, and authorized me to add to his remarks. The first paragraph provides the background of the series of which the award-winning book is part:

The publication of the *Jewish Research Literature* volumes has a history of about half a century. In order to collect materials pertaining to Jewish research and reference works, I began in the late 1950's a systematic examination of Judaic periodicals and monographs published in various languages during the last two centuries. The accumulated materials, gleaned from literally thousands of volumes, later became the basis of a course in Hebrew Bibliography and Methods of Research given to graduate students in the Near Eastern Languages Department of the University of California, Los Angeles. The enthusiastic interest expressed by the students at each offering of the course demonstrated convincingly the validity of my efforts. Thus came into being the idea of converting the storehouse of collected materials, the bits and pieces, into a homogeneous work divided into three volumes, each devoted to a single subject: Bibliography, Encyclopedias, Language Dictionaries.

The notes to volume 3 constitute an index to the multilingual literature on Jewish linguistic reference works. This brings to mind an observation that Dr. Brisman made on my draft manuscript on early Hebrew citation indexes (Weinberg, 1997). Writing for American information scientists, I had cited recent English-language sources to document points about the printing of the Talmud. Dr. Brisman gently chided me, "You should cite the original Hebrew sources," and I accepted his *mussar*.

The award-winning book is not a dry annotated bibliography; it is full of human interest. Here is an excerpt from the chapter on medieval Hebrew lexicography (p. 8):

Menahem's relationship with Hisdai came to an end during the 1960s. . . . According to Menahem, a group of people, instructed by Hisdai, entered his home on a Sabbath day, destroyed the house that he had inherited from his parents, tore up garments, and plucked his hair. He also alluded to being imprisoned by them.

I don't watch television, but it sounds like something straight out of *The Sopranos*! And if you think flaming was invented on the Internet, listen to this (p. 9):

Menahem was the older of the two but Dunash was lecturing him in the manner of teacher to pupil. He was accusing him in offering wrong biblical interpretations (“ . . . he corrupted the hearts of people . . . How well would it have been if he would have kept silent and would not have placed traps of thorns . . . at the feet of the students . . .”). He went so far as to urge the total destruction of Menahem's writings (“It would have been better for him to hide his books in graves”).

As I was reading this chapter, I said to my husband, “I would have liked to live in the 10th century, in the age of the Hebrew grammar wars.” Gerard responded, “One problem for you--there was no air conditioning then!” This leads to my theory of the invention of Hebrew vowel points, developed last summer in Israel. I believe that the Masoretes in Teveryah got the idea for Hebrew dots from the beads of sweat that fell from their foreheads onto their manuscripts. Hebrew vowel points could not have been invented here in San Diego with its perfect weather year-round.

Hebrew grammar is germane to Romanization. Zachary Baker (1989) observed in his review of volume two of Dr. Brisman's series (1987) that a popular Romanization scheme was employed. Perhaps because of Zak's review, Dr. Brisman switched to Library of Congress Romanization in volume 3. As I read through the draft chapters, I noticed a few errors in subtle points of LC Romanization, such as *patah genuvah*, as well as some English sentences that could be polished. I wanted to show my appreciation to Dr. Brisman by copyediting his manuscript. But it took me several months to get around to this, between my day job and editing *Judaica Librarianship*. After I finally sent off the edited chapters, Dr. Brisman wrote, “Thank you, but the manuscript has already been submitted to the publisher!” And so I feel responsible for any errors in Hebrew or English grammar that may remain in the book!

Let me take this opportunity to thank Dr. Brisman for serving as Consulting Editor for the APPROBATIONS column of *Judaica Librarianship* since its inception in 1983.

The second paragraph of his letter states:

The present volume, the third in the series, entitled *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, had to be divided into two parts due to the multiple topics covered in the work. It is my hope that Part Two will become available to the interested reader in the near future.

I am really looking forward to Part Two, because it will deal with Hebrew concordances, the subject of my current research, as well as citation indexes. I shared my findings on the latter genre with Dr. Brisman, and I am excited that he plans to include some of them in the book.

Let me remind you that volume 2, *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*, also won the Reference Book Award. You can retrieve Dr. Brisman's acceptance remarks as well

as Zachary Baker's review through the cumulative index to *Judaica Librarianship* (2000), in print and on the Web.

I'm sure volume 1 (Brisman, 1977) would have won the award as well, but it was published in 1977, before the Reference Award was established. If memory serves, I proposed this award at an AJL Council Meeting in the 1980s, by broadening Brad Sabin Hill's suggestion for a Bibliography Award.

I hope that the next volume in Dr. Brisman's series will also win the Reference Award, and if he asks me to read his acceptance speech, it will be my pleasure to do so again. Thank you.

References -- by Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg:

Baker, Zachary (1989). Review of: Brisman, Shimeon. *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*. *Judaica Librarianship* vol. 4 no. 2 (Spring 1988-Winter 1989), pp. 140-143.

Brisman, Shimeon (1977). *A History and Guide to Judaic Bibliography*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press. (Bibliographica Judaica, 7; *His Jewish Research Literature*, vol. 1).

Brisman, Shimeon (1987). *A History and Guide to Judaic Encyclopedias and Lexicons*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press. (Bibliographica Judaica, 11; *His Jewish Research Literature*, vol. 2).

Judaica Librarianship (2000). *Cumulative Index to Volumes 1-10*, under the direction of Bella Hass Weinberg, Editor. New York: Association of Jewish Libraries. Also available: http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/PUBLICATIONS_FILES/JL_FILES/JLIndex

Weinberg, Bella Hass (1997). The Earliest Hebrew Citation Indexes. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, vol. 48 no. 4, pp. 318-330. Reprinted with a postscript in *Historical Studies in Information Science*, ed. by Trudi Bellardo Hahn and Michael Buckland. Medford, NJ: Published for the American Society for Information Science by Information Today, 1998, pp. 51-64.

Weinberg, Bella Hass Weinberg (1999). Indexes and Religion: Reflections on Research in the History of Indexes. *The Indexer* vol. 21 no. 3, pp. 111-118.

Weinberg, Bella Hass (2000a). The Structures of Early Hebrew Reference Books: Canonical, Alphabetical, Classified. *Proceedings of the 34th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, Boca Raton, FL, 1999*. New York: Association of Jewish Libraries, pp.120-128.

Weinberg, Bella Hass (2000b). Who Invented the Index? An Agenda for Research on Information Access Features of Hebrew and Latin Manuscripts. Slide-lecture presented at the 66th IFLA General Conference, Jerusalem, Aug. 17, 2000. (The title page of Dr. Brisman's award-winning book is reproduced on one of the transparencies. Photocopies of the presentation

text and transparencies are available from the author. An electronic preprint of the paper is available at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/081-174e.htm>.)

David G. Hirsch -- President of the Research & Special Libraries Division of Association of Jewish Libraries, and serves as Jewish & Middle Eastern Studies Bibliographer, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.

Bella Hass Weinberg -- Professor in the Division of Library and Information Science, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York 11439, Fax (718) 990-2071.

2000 AJL BIBLIOGRAPHY BOOK AWARD
Research & Special Libraries Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries

BRATSLAV: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
By DAVID ASSAF

Assaf, David. *Bratslav : An Annotated Bibliography : Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, his life and teachings, the literary legacy of his disciples, Bratslav Hasidism in its context. [Breslav : bibliyografyah mu'eret : R. Nahman mi-Breslav, toldotav u-morashto ha-sifrutit, sifre talmidav ve-talmide talmidav, Hasidut Breslav u-sevivoteha]* Yerushalayim : Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-toldot Yiöraiel, c2000. ISBN: 9652271454

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO DAVID ASSAF

Rita Saccal

I will read a small introduction of the winner of the 2000 AJL Bibliography Book Award.

Dr. David Assaf is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at the Tel Aviv University.

Dr. Assaf was born in Tel Aviv in February 1956. He obtained his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. -- all in the Department of Jewish History, Hebrew University, Jerusalem -- all with the highest honors of Summa Cum Laude. He also has post-doctorates -- Jewish History Department, Tel Aviv University Council for Higher Education, and The Institute for Advanced Studies of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Research group on "Orthodoxy through the 19th Century."

As far as his academic and professional experience is concerned, Dr. Assaf is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History of the Tel Aviv University. He was Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History, also of Tel Aviv University. He was General Secretary of the World Union of Jewish Studies, and Secretary of the World Congress of Jewish Studies. He was

in charge of the development and editing of the course: *Polin: The Jews of Eastern Europe: History and Culture*, taught at The Open University of Israel. He was Editor of the annual *Jewish Studies*. He was Director of The Center for Research on the History of Polish Jewry, The Diaspora Research Institute, of the Tel Aviv University. He was a Member of the Board of the Historical Society of Israel

Among Dr. Assaf's major publications, we can find:

The World of Torah in Poland. Tel Aviv, The Open University of Israel, 1990, 110 pp.; Unit 5-6 in the course: *Polin - The Jews of Eastern Europe: History and Culture*. Russian Translation: Tel Aviv, The Open University of Israel, 1992, (85 pp.); 1995, pp. 97-238.

The Regal Way - The Life and Times of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin. Jerusalem, The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1997, 544 pp. (in Hebrew). English translation will be published by Stanford University Press, California.

What I have Seen... - The Memoirs of Yechezkel Kotik. Edited and translated into Hebrew from the Yiddish with an introduction, appendices and extended footnotes, The Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1998, 413 + IX pp. English translation will be published by Wayne State University Press, Michigan.

Bratslav: An Annotated Bibliography - Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, His Life and Teachings, the Literary Legacy of His Disciples, Bratslav Hasidism in Its Context, Compiled and edited by David Assaf, The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History: Jerusalem 2000, XXII+291 pp.

Dr. Assaf has written lots of articles, too many to name here.

He teaches in the following subject areas:

- The Traditional Jewish Society in Eastern Europe, 18th-19th Centuries
- The History of Hasidic Movement
- Family and Everyday Life in Eastern European Jewish Society

Dr. Assaf is currently on a sabbatical at Harvard University.

David Hirsch will accept Dr. David Assaf's award.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF DAVID ASSAF

Read by David G. Hirsch

Some Words From An Outsider

It is my honor and privilege to have been nominated by the AJL for the award of the year 2000, for my book *Bratslav: An Annotated Bibliography*. I would like to share with you some thoughts, which accompanied me through my work and after. But first allow me to confess to

you all: I am neither a bibliographer nor a librarian, but a historian, whose main interest is the history of Hasidism in Eastern Europe during the 19th century. As an historian I became aware, quite a long time ago, how poor is the state of the hasidic bibliography, especially of the 19th and 20th centuries, and how much we still need basic tools and facts, such as a systematic bibliography of a certain subject, so that we do not attempt to construct theories out of thin air.

My way to the bibliography began as a result of an article I had published in 1994 on the persecution of Bratslav Hasidim during the 1860s. I found that in this small but still very influential and famous hasidic sect, there is an unbalanced situation between the enormous amount of writing on Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, the founder of this sect who died in 1810, and his heritage (especially his acclaimed tales), and the poor state of the writing of any kind about the later periods of Bratslav Hasidism, which I found equally fascinating. I decided to keep the bibliographic material I had collected during my research and gradually the list grew bigger and bigger. Soon I found myself in an irreversible situation: I had gathered too much to give up, but there was still much work to be done...

In my work I walk in the footsteps of the celebrated scholar of Jewish mysticism, Professor Gershom Scholem, who also published significant and pioneering studies in Jewish bibliography, such as his *Bibliographia Kabbalistica* (Leipzig 1927). A year later, in 1928, Scholem -- then already in Jerusalem -- presented a special birthday gift to his friend and colleague Martin Buber. It was a small booklet, entitled *Eleh Shemot* (=These are the Names), and in fact it was a comprehensive bibliography of the writings of Bratslav Hasidism: Rabbi Nahman and his disciples. This list comprised only 156 entries, including various editions of the same book. All the books listed by Scholem were Bratslav publications, written from within the sect, by the Hasidim themselves. In my book, however -- seventy years later -- one can find about 1,100 entries, which does not include different editions of the same book. I took upon myself as well the task of listing, classifying, and annotating not only the internal writings of the hasidim themselves, but also all the "external" writings, namely the writings **on** Bratslav, including not only the academic writings but also the popular and journalistic writings, as well as all documented influences and impacts of Bratslav upon belle-lettres, poetry, film, theater, etc. Even a quick glance at the bibliography -- which is multilingual, though the framework and most of the entries are in Hebrew -- will surprisingly reveal how many writers and poets -- even secular and non-Jews -- made use in their writing of elements from the Bratslav legacy.

The last generation has witnessed a huge growth of hasidic writings, especially in the two sects of Lubavich and Bratslav. These two famous hasidic groups, which are far removed from one another in so many ways, do share some common features, notably the unprecedented amount of writings and publications. The field of the history and culture of Hasidism needs reliable annotated bibliographic tools, which will enable scholars to efficiently control these treasures. I hope that my book was a step forward in this endeavor.

Let me conclude with a short quote from a letter the young Gershom Scholem wrote to his mother in 1928, the week his bibliographic booklet on Bratslav was published: "Another book of mine was just published this week. It is small but sweet. Two and a half print sheets in a very fancy printing. It is a bibliography book, and that is why it is not readable for normal people."

Is the bibliography targeted just for the insane, not meant for normal people? It was of course Scholem's cynical sense of humor. As for myself, I can only say that the pursuit after rare and unknown books as well as articles in journals and newspapers of all languages from the world over, provided me an unusual experience. This was a journey where old and new, holy and secular intermingled, and roads which had originally been paved only to Uman, Lublin, or Warsaw split into unexpected directions -- to Berlin, Moscow, Paris, New York, and Buenos Aires from one side, and to Jerusalem, Safed, and Bnei Brak from the other. This journey was a fascinating experience and I am happy that you found my fruits mature and tasty enough to reward them.

Thank you very much.

Bibliography and Reference Award Committee
Research & Special Libraries Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries

Chair:

Rita Saccal -- Vice President of the Research & Special Libraries Division of AJL. She serves as Director of Biblioteca, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano "Marshall T. Meyer," in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Committee Members:

Julia Bock -- Librarian, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, NY.

Yisrael Dubitsky -- Public Services Librarian, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, NY

David Levy -- Reference Librarian, Humanities Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD.

Philip E. Miller -- Librarian, Klau Library, Hebrew Union college-JIR, New York, NY.

Peggy Pearlstein -- Area Specialist, Hebraic Section, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Robert Singerman -- Librarian, University of Florida Libraries, Gainesville, FL.

President of the AJL Research & Special Libraries Division:

David G. Hirsch -- Jewish & Middle Eastern Studies Bibliographer, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.