

BOOK REVIEWS

Responsa Emek Halaka, by RABBI YEHOSHUA BAUMOL with commentary by RABBI JOSEPH M. BAUMOL (Jerusalem: Tzur-ot Press, 1976, 2nd Edition)

Reviewed by
Isaac J. Bernstein

During my study of *Yoreh Deah* I had occasion to remark to my Rosh Yeshiva on the difference in style between the commentary of the "Shakh," which was brief and to the point, and that of the "Taz," which presented a broader and lengthier treatment of the subject matter. His reply was that the "Shakh" was a *posek* whereas the "Taz" was also a Rosh Yeshiva.

This observation came immediately to mind when studying Rabbi Baumol's volume. The author, a recognized *posek* both in Europe and this country, was also a Rosh Yeshiva in Vizhnitz at the turn of the century. It is not surprising, therefore, to note that in almost every responsum, we are given a clear and lucid *pesak*, based on a mastery of rabbinic literature, and are also guided through the relevant sources, resolving along our path difficult passages in both Talmudim and in the writings of the *Rishonim* and *Aharonim*.

The majority of the 125 responsa divided into two sections are *Halakhah Lemaaseh*, ranging over the entire field covered by the *Shulkhan Arukh*. Thus we move from a discussion on the acceptability of a lie detector in a *Bet Din* (Section II, Responsum 14) to one on the permissibility of a male contraceptive (sheath) (Section I, Responsum 66) to the problem of using an electric light for *Yahrzeit* (Section II, Responsum 52) to three responsa devoted to the case of a married woman who, while admitting to sexual relations with another man, insisted that she had been intoxicated at the

time (Section I, Responsum 21, 22, 23). In the many responsa devoted to marital problems one is aware at all times of the author's compassion. There are also included many responsa addressed to the author by the *gedolei hador* such as one from the Rogatchover Gaon on the question of embalming (Section I, Responsum 49).

There are also responsa that come under the heading of *Hilkheta Lemishikha* (e.g., may the death penalty be carried out on a person who became insane after the verdict and who consequently does not have the ability to recite the *Vidui*) (Section I, Responsum 32). Others are devoted to explaining difficult statements in the *Targumim* (Section I, Responsum 52) and to masterful replies to questions that have puzzled the great masters of the Talmud. Together they constitute a major contribution to Torah scholarship and a literary legacy of great stature. Two short examples indicate his mastery of Torah Literature as well as his exciting originality.

In Section I, Responsum 68, the author discusses the status of a child born through A.I.H., that is, whether it is "*Kivno lekhal davar* or not." As is well known, this problem revolves around the issue of *beambati ibra* (*Hagiga* 14), and the sources quoted are also well known—*Tashbats* Vol. III, Section 263, and the commentaries to *Even Haezer*, Chapter 1. Many halakhists have ruled on this problem, but Baumol brings new observations and a new dimension to it.

For example, there is a section in his

responsum where he poses a question not treated in most other responsa on the subject and certainly not with the same originality. It is simply this: "What precedent can be found in talmudic literature for the opinion held by the Taz to the effect that a child born *mikokho umeono* is not *beno lekhoh davar*?" Why should no filial relationship exist between a child whose mother *beambati ibra* and where the sperm was the father's? The author replies that the Taz must have likened the situation to the case of a child born to a Jewish father and a maidservant (*Yevamot* 22), where the Talmud rules that the father-son relationship does not exist. Accepting this premise and noting Maimonides' ruling (*Hilkhoh Mamrim*, Chapter 5, Halakhah 9) that a child born to a Jewish father and a "shifkha" is not culpable if it smites its mother, since it is not culpable if it smites its father, the author concludes that according to Taz the same rule would apply to a child born to Jewish parents through the *ambati* process.

This conclusion would allow us to answer a famous question raised on a statement in *Hullin* II. There the Talmud wishes to cite as proof that we go *batar rov* in the law of "*makeh aviv veimo*." We usually interpret this statement to mean that the only premise we have for assuming the husband to be the father is because "*rov beilot ahar habaal*." If so, why did the Talmud add "*veimo*?" The answer is that if the Torah did not go *batar rov* but also considered the *miut*, it would have entertained the possibility of "*beambati ibra*," in which case the child would be *patur* for smiting either parent. Hence the word *veimo* becomes an essential part of the proof.

Finally, the author rules that a child born through A.I.H. is *kibno lekhoh davar* even according to the Taz, since he assesses the objection of the Taz to the *ambati* process achieving the filial relation on account of its complete passivity,

an element that is not present in A.I.H.

In Section II, Responsa 1, Baumol poses a classic question. The "Taz" in *Yoreh Deah*, Section II7 postulates that wherever the Torah has given explicit permission for a certain act to be performed, then Hazal cannot forbid it. Why, asks the author, does this statement not contradict the well-known dictum in the Talmud that Hazal have the power to prevent a person from performing a *mitsvah* of the Torah *beshev veal taaseh* (e.g., *lulav* and *shofar* on *Shabbat*)?

In reply the author refers us to Talmud *Shabbat* 23, where we learn that the mandate given to Hazal to legislate is derived either from *lo tasur* or *sheal avika veyagedka zekeneka veyomru lak*. Note that the phrase *lo tasur* is found in the section beginning *ki yipale*. Thus, concludes the author, mandate is only given to Hazal in the areas of Torah where initially we needed their guidance on the precise meaning of the text. But where there was no *sheela* (*sheal avika*) or no ambiguity (*ki yipale*) in those cases Hazal could not interfere with the Torah law. The "Taz" made his observation with regard to selling *nevelah* to a *nakhri* where it states "*o machor lanakhri*", a phrase concerning which we do not need the guidance of Hazal. This law is one that Hazal cannot legislate against. However, the section of the Talmud in *Yevamot* concerning which the rabbis have legislated, eg. *Shofar* and *Lulav* on *Shabbat*, are all *mitsvot* to which initially we require the interpretation of Hazal in order to understand the precise meaning of the Torah text, ie: where the elements of *She'ela* and *ki yapel* exist.

The entire volume reflects erudition and originality and is further enhanced by the commentary appended by the author's son-in-law who has also written a section at the end of the responsa on the lives and *Hidushe Torah* of his grandfather, father, and brother *z.t.l.*

Genetic Disorders Among the Jewish People, by RICHARD M. GOODMAN (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

Reviewed by
Larry Bregman

This is an authoritative and much needed reference book written by Dr. Richard M. Goodman, professor of human genetics at the Chaim Sheba Medical Center, Tel Aviv University Sackler School of Medicine, and it is the first comprehensive treatise on the subject. Although directed primarily to physicians and workers in the field of genetics, nonmedical readers will find much that is stimulating and interesting.

More than 100 inherited medical diseases known to afflict the Jewish people, as well as disorders with unproven inheritance and those with nonpathological traits, are described in detail. To better understand these disorders, the author provides fascinating background reading in the opening chapters on the origin and size of the world's Jewish communities, genetic heterogeneity and homogeneity among the Jewish people, family history and modes of genetic inheritance, and genetic disorders found in the Torah and Talmud. The disorders are then grouped into diseases that affect Ashkenzai, Sephardi, and Oriental Jews. The description of each disorder systematically includes detailed historical notes, clinical features, methods of diagnosis, basic physiologic and pathologic defects, genetic pattern, prognosis, and therapy.

Dr. Goodman pragmatically and scientifically clarifies the status of a number of disorders (obesity, hemorrhoids, and

diabetes, to name a few), not all with a definite genetic etiology, that were previously considered to be more prevalent among Jews than non-Jews. The author places these misconceptions into proper prospective and, in some instances, dispels deep-seated myths.

In the concluding chapters Dr. Goodman presents various general approaches to the prevention and management of genetic disorders as well as the ethical and moral issues they raise and deals with the genetic mechanisms known to influence the distribution and frequency of hereditary disorders in Jews because of certain features of Jewish history and culture. Dr. Goodman briefly discusses the unfortunate current trends in marriage patterns and family size among the Jewish people that, if unchanged, strongly support a decline in the number of Jewish children destined to be afflicted with one of the genetic disorders common to Jews. The appendix contains two excellent classifications of genetic disorders among the Jewish people according to (1) ethnic group and community, and (2) major anatomic systems involved.

The author deserves praise for a much-needed, accurately detailed, and handy source of reference for physicians, medical geneticists, genetic counselors, rabbis, families of affected individuals, health professionals working with similar problems in other ethnic groups, and anthropologists, sociologists, and others studying genetically determined ethnic traits.

Judaism and Tragic Theology, by FREDERICK S. PLOTKIN (New York: Schocken Books, 1973).

Reviewed by
Elliot B. Gertel

Judaism and Tragic Theology is an elo-

quent and erudite attempt to show that Judaism can stand its ground in the arena of modern thought. Few volumes in contemporary Jewish thought are as solid in

Book Reviews

their presentation. Most arise out of the author's desire to gain converts and not to confront philosophers. Yet Dr. Plotkin is obviously not concerned with pandering to a large audience. Although his book is an eloquent work—perhaps the most polished and syntactically precise philosophy of Judaism to be found in the English language—it is a most difficult statement of commitment to Judaism to read. Every sentence is clearly written and finely constructed from a grammatical point of view, but the book's philosophical affirmations, built on complex ideas and learned allusions, make it necessary to read it at least twice in order to understand the relationship between chapters and the flow of the argument (especially in the last chapters).

Plotkin's book is unique, as well, because he does not attempt to steer the reader under any particular ideological authority. As is apparent in his interesting epilogue, "The Problem of Secular Judaism," his chief concern is for the authority of Torah, which we affirm in assuming the "attitude of faith" (as opposed to the secular or "highly relativistic" attitude) "which declares that Jews did not make Torah a canon, but that Torah constitutes itself the canon because it has imposed itself upon Jews, and invariably does so." Indeed, Plotkin would seem to regard much of the quibbling among ideologies of Judaism over authority and authenticity of Torah (i.e., Jewish law) as "secularization," for "the more essential factor in regarding the Torah canonically has perhaps always been the adequacy of its witness to the revelation of God for the redemption of Israel. As in the Talmud and other major commentaries, so with regard to Torah, the written word suggests what is meant by revelation, but *the Word of God is the actual meaning itself*" (p. 169, italics mine). I find this latter assertion quite interesting and believe that it may prove a viable starting point for "ecumenical" dialogue between modern varieties of

Judaism. Perhaps our ideologues *do* argue too much about the authenticity of their respective interpretations and so overlook the fact that God's word is inherently meaningful to all of us together.

In order to pinpoint Plotkin's valid concerns and fertile insights, one must figure out whom he is addressing in addition to struggling with what he is talking about. Plotkin is not as kind to his readers as Arthur A. Cohen (who, provides an interesting but highly subjective and therefore not too helpful introduction to the book); in *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, Cohen devotes most of the book to specific critiques of chronologically and intellectually diverse Jewish philosophers. Yet Plotkin's concern is with general philosophy and, since it is "general," he assumes that his readers are familiar with it. Yet perhaps he assumes too much. He obviously fills his book with much of his reading into Biblical theology and general philosophy. He is excited about what he has learned and how it all makes sense to him. He becomes quite technical, and he is clearly overjoyed with each insight he shares with the reader. His book is not pedantic but passionately specific: he traces for the reader every maneuver of his successful wrestling with religion and philosophy. And yet he does compensate his readers for the difficulty of the subject with the courtesy of conciseness, which is perhaps more to be treasured than a tutorial presentation.

In this review, I would like to try to explain Plotkin's work with the hope that the reader, having been guided, as it were, through the rough spots, will turn to the book in order to see what he can get out of it (and it has much to offer people of diverse interests). Space does not allow me to capture all of the nuances of Plotkin's thought (I am not sure that I have caught them all even after three readings of the book). But I believe that only a brief excursus is necessary to guide the reader into a productive study of his

arguments; unlike most philosophers, Plotkin, who is a professor of English at Stern College, writes exceptionally well. Perhaps he writes *too* well. Most modern readers are not as inclined to decipher difficulties in thought with the tool of carefully constructed language as they are anxious to pick out familiar platitudes from glib and fragmented sentences.

Plotkin seems to regard Judaism as a "tragic theology" (although not in the Greek or Christian sense) because of its insistence that "the evil for which I cannot assume responsibility, but which I participate in every time that, through me, evil enters into the world for the first time" (p. 13). Because man is both pitied and judged by God, because he is both responsible and frail, he is "tragic." In the sense in which Plotkin defines the term, man can certainly be regarded as "tragic."

Plotkin asserts (quite accurately, I believe) that the problem in the Bible is "not suffering in general, but the suffering of the righteous." Evil cannot be explained away as part of a general plan when it seems unwarranted (see p.22). But, since we suffer *before* God, it follows that we can anticipate redemption *from* Him. And to admit the promise of redemption is to regard history as more than just the arena of human activity. In biblical thinking, history "is not, as in Greek literature, the scientific study of the past as a means of finding out the eternal laws which govern all events. Rather, it looks toward the future, to a divinely appointed goal. The prophets . . . pass judgment on the present, and drive home to the people their responsibilities in face of the future" (p.44). The Bible views history not so much in terms of ultimate redemption as in terms of human responsibility. Torah speaks of the present's participation in the *promise*, instead of the *process* of redemption. "Torah understands history in terms of crisis, not in terms of gradual development; to a large extent, the lines [of historical ups

and downs?] are perpendicular, not horizontal" (p. 51). Whatever happens in history, however unbearable for man, it is not too difficult for God.

So ends what I consider the first of two stages in Plotkin's argument (chapters 1-4): an interpretation of biblical thinking in its own terms. The rest, to paraphrase Hillel, is commentary—intriguing philosophical commentary or rather, a *defense* of many of the affirmations of Biblical thought. Plotkin posits that Judaism is characterized by a "centrality of the spirit" that is the "penetrative operative reality which determines the character of Jewish activity in all its layers." Plotkin's discussion of "layers" on p. 68 is enough to frighten most readers away (the metaphor is ill-chosen, but felicitously employed nonetheless), yet all that he is really saying is that *k'dushah* and "normal mysticism" (*Kadushin*) are so intrinsic to Jewish history that the problem of anthropomorphism is but the consolation prize of those who have forgotten how to relate personally to God in the unique Jewish way. The "natural order" is filled with the promise of God's redemption because it is filled with the promise of God's redemption because it is filled with God-consciousness, the counterpart (if not the sedative) for what Plotkin elsewhere describes as the "tragic-consciousness" (p. 16).

Modern science, with all its emphasis on rationalism and prediction, has created quite tenuous standards for prediction and explanation. (Note Plotkin's clever discussion of prediction and the stock exchange on p. 79, which every *baal ha - bayit* will enjoy. But science has not even created an adequate language to discuss simple human activity (pp. 81-86). In other words, "rationalism" will have to do better in its case against religion; but, since it cannot, it might as well come to grips with faith. Chapter 7 sets the stage for Plotkin's attempt to arrange some marriage between faith and reason. To be "full per-

sonalities," we must rectify scientific and religious commitment. God's will is the archetype of all reality; through "participation" in it, "everything is what it is and how it is" (p. 91). The remainder of the book expands on this not quite Platonic metaphysic. In his "Phenomenology of Religious Communication" (Chapter 8), Plotkin asserts that the "revelation of the numinous to the human consciousness" (p. 107), which enables a man to pray, is far too sublime to be dismissed as a psychological aberration. In prayer, rational and irrational phases coincide; "the constant labor of portraying the inconceivable, and grasping the unattainable" teams up with the "ardent yearning to transcend, under the pressure of the vital impulse, the boundaries which divide the finite from the infinite" (p. 116).

In discussing the "Significance of Irrationality" (Chapter 9), Plotkin asserts that irrationality is a human affliction and does not have its origin in God. It arises from a human sense of "purposelessness," a word that is "merely a collective noun for an inexpressible multiplicity of individual things and individual appearances, which one and all follow a course to our disadvantage" (p. 126). The same humanistic self-centeredness that induces man to see the world as purposeless can also spur him on to regard it as necessarily logical and predictable (Chapter 10). Both extremes must be avoided, and *can* be avoided by exploring a "non-humanistic philosophy of Judaism," which "frees us from a Theism which is *merely inherited*, and also from the belief in so-called substance, and from any overestimate of the human ego which we refuse to elevate to a principle of creation" (p. 159).

Of course, Plotkin's thought is not without its problems, but his assertions are sophisticated and necessary to any cogent philosophical argument for the validity of Jewish belief. Especially problematic is Plotkin's view of revelation,

in which the "experience of the numinous" plays a central role in providing "a basic original complex by which the givenness of every revelation of the Divine which is subsequently perceived can be tested" (p. 108). Such experience of the numinous is preceded by an irrational "vital impulse which gives rise to those particular functions of religion and prayer which the simple experience of the numinous world would never have been able to obtain" (p. 108).

Yet Plotkin cannot speak of a *Jewish* concept of revelation unless he relates more directly his view of the numinous to the Biblical teaching regarding the word of God. He already acknowledges that Judaism claims that the events in which Torah is anchored are not only historically true, "but also that they are *the* truths of history" (p. 47). How does man's experience of the numinous relate to God's revelation of *law*? Plotkin is quite correct in observing that the Torah is not concerned with providing "mere mottoes for ethical societies" (p. 50). But I do not believe that it is sufficient to assert, as he does, that the chief aim of Torah is to provide "redemptive history" (p. 50). The Torah itself constantly harps on its laws and ordinances, its *hukkim u'mishpatim*. If Plotkin indeed assumes a "nonhumanistic" stance, and if he cannot affirm the ultimate morality in the "inward security of self" (pp. 28-29), is not the word of God necessary as a law as well as a promise? Plotkin must not make the error of philosophically defending every aspect of Judaism that suggests some degree of irrationality (God, prayer, miracles, etc.) except its *central* affirmation of a revealed law. He must not coldly suggest that in treasuring a law held to be Divine, Jews have pictured God in "the image of Torah" (p. 61). As far as I know, even among the most zealous devotees of the "four ells" of the *halakhah*, the Torah has *never* been apotheosized.

The other major problem I see in Plotkin's philosophy is his view of

history. How much of history belongs to man and how much to God, if "redemption and history coalesce" (p. 55)? And if history is the realm of *human* success and failure [See M. Granatstein, "Theodicy and Belief," *Tradition* (Winter 1973)], how can it be said to "belong" to God (p. 55)? Plotkin deserves a warm *yasher koach* for his insistence that Jewish theologians have been misguided in using "the substitute languages of moral gradualism and evolution with a religious fervor" (p. 49). But how does viewing history as a process of evolution betray the human and Divine roles any less than viewing history as a *process* of redemption? After all, Shabbatean theology believed all things "holy" because it affirmed that whatever men do in history is "redemptive." Surely Plotkin is not suggesting this. He must clarify his views regarding the "redemptive" nature of history.

Although I may be slightly off the mark, I have tried to trace Plotkin's arguments as faithfully as possible. In order to qualify as a *reviewer* of the book (and not merely a sympathizer with it), I have isolated a couple of its aspects that

trouble me. But I can hardly blame Professor Plotkin for a couple of loose ends, which I hope he will clarify in future writings. Neither should any of us who have struggled with his book blame him for our difficulties in reading it. He has not chosen to write vaguely, only philosophically. And if, as the Bible teaches (Proverbs 26:5), we must answer a fool according to his folly, then it stands to reason that, *l'havdil*, we must answer a philosopher according to his philosophy. Plotkin has felicitously appropriated the languages of the philosophical disciplines and effectively spars against those practitioners in the craft of thinking who would dismiss religious language as irrelevant.

I hope that my analysis and criticism of Plotkin's thought have rendered it more palpable. If you have tried to read his book and found it tedious, try again. Schoken Books is much to be lauded for publishing something with so much substance as to disqualify it immediately from the bestseller lists. The book deserves far more attention than it has received. We modern Jews have few philosophical statements of such a high order.

The Parnas, by SILVANO ARIETI (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

Reviewed by
Marc D. Angel

In January 1939, Silvano Arieti left fascist Italy to come to the United States. Arieti was then 24 years old, a recent graduate of the medical school of Pisa. He was among the several thousand Italian Jews who left during that period for the United States, Israel, South America, and other havens of refuge.

The small colony of Italian Jews in New York of which Arieti was part formed a closely knit group. Most of them were very well educated and confident of a bright future in America. A club for Italian Jews was established at the

Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, where many of them had found their spiritual home in this country. Arieti recalls an early meeting of this club at which the late Rabbi David de Sola Pool was the guest speaker. With a proud smile on his face, Arieti will repeat the message of Dr. Pool to the newly arrived Italian immigrants. This is a land of opportunity, but don't set your expectations too high. You cannot expect to become dramatically successful here. You are immigrants and this is a competitive country. You cannot plan to become a professor at Harvard University.

Arieti smiles when he repeats this story. His cousin, Dr. Jules Bemporad, is in-

Book Reviews

deed an associate professor of psychiatry at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center of Harvard Medical School. Two Italian Jews who came to the United States won Nobel Prizes: Emilio Segre in physics and Salvador Luria in medicine. The small Italian Jewish community has produced a significant number of doctors, psychiatrists, musicians, and artists. It was Dr. Renato Almansi who introduced electric shock therapy in psychiatry into the United States, a procedure he had learned in Italy. Vittorio Rieti and Castelnuovo-Tedesco distinguished themselves as composers of music. Robert Haggiag is a leading international film producer. Paola Sereni and Letitsia Pitigliani are talented painters. The list of Italian Jewish notables is long, and much larger than might have been expected from such a small group of people.

And then there is Silvano Arieti himself. Since the time of that meeting with Dr. Pool at the Italian Club of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Dr. Arieti has gone on to become perhaps the leading psychiatrist on the American scene. He is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the New York Medical College and Training Analyst at the William Alanson White Institute. He is editor in chief of the monumental six-volume *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, and he has also written a number of important books. His *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* (second edition, 1974) won the 1975 National Book Award in Science, the first psychiatric work to win this recognition. A prolific author, his recent books include the *Intrapsychic Self* (1967), *The Will To Be Human* (1972), *Creativity* (1976), and *Severe and Mild Depression*, written together with his cousin Dr. Jules Bemporad (1978).

That the Italian Jews who fled here from fascist rule succeeded so well may seem surprising to non-Italian Jews; but it was not at all surprising to the Italian Jews themselves.

Since the latter part of the nineteenth

century, Italy had provided its Jews with many advantages. Arieti believes that it can be said without hesitation that, after the unification of Italy during the second half of the nineteenth century, there was no other country in Europe or anywhere else in the world where Jews felt so well integrated into the general population. Anti-Semitism, if it existed, was minimal and confined to small circles. Since conditions were so favorable, Italian Jews prospered, many of them belonging to the upper bourgeoisie or to the intelligentsia.

Although Italian Jews probably never numbered more than 80,000, they exerted a considerable influence in Italian life, especially in Ferrara, Milan, Turin, Venice, Rome, and Trieste. Italian Jews were particularly recognized for their achievements in mathematics and can boast of names such as Tullio Levi, Civita, Giuseppe Peano, and Vito Volterra. Italy was the first Christian country to have a Jewish premier, Luigi Luzzatti, who held that office in 1910 and 1911.

Even in the early years of Mussolini's rule, Italian Jewry flourished. In August 1934 Mussolini had rejected racism as promulgated in Germany. Yet it was only 4 years later that he himself began to institute anti-Jewish policies. It was at this time that many Italian Jews, including Arieti, decided to leave Italy.

Prior to Mussolini's overt anti-Jewish policies, Italian Jews generally seemed to have been sympathetic to fascism, not recognizing its latent menace. The Jews, in their anti-Communist zeal, thought fascism would provide them with the means to combat communism and thereby guarantee their continued freedom. As a youngster, Arieti himself, had made a speech at the Jewish club in Pisa in favor of fascism. His father, one of the few Jews to recognize the evil in fascism, was quick to correct his son's views.

Before leaving for the United States,

Arieti said goodbye to his relatives and friends in Pisa. Among those he visited was Giuseppe Pardo Roques, the parnas, or president of the Jewish community of the city. Pardo was an unusual man, combining great wealth with deep learning in Jewish and general fields. His house was a cultural center for Jew and Christian alike. His generosity knew no limits based on differences of religion. Arieti recalls the special place in the synagogue reserved for the parnas. Next to the altar was the seat of Rabbi Augusto Hasda; then the seat of Cantor Salomone Cassuto; then the seat of David Supino, who had been made a lifetime senator of the Kingdom of Italy. Next to Supino sat Pardo. These were the only members of the community to have chairs with arms.

In 1939 Pardo was 64 years old. Although he recognized the threat of fascism to Jewish life in Italy, he would not or could not leave his community. He encouraged Arieti to migrate and expressed confidence in the young man's future.

This Italian Jewish gentleman, Giuseppe Pardo Roques, was to leave a lasting impression on Arieti. Although he had clearly been one of the most respected men in Pisa, he was also an object of ridicule. Pardo had a certain mental illness that made him terrified of animals, especially dogs. To tease him, children would sometimes send a dog to chase him and would laugh to see such a great man run in terror from a harmless animal. As a young man interested in psychiatry, Pardo's illness fascinated Arieti, and he had hoped one day to be able to help his mentor conquer this mental illness.

Indeed, pondering over the condition of the parnas helped Arieti come to some startling and innovative theories in psychiatry. Arieti has written a great deal to show that a person who is mentally ill may have great insight or wisdom to offer. Mental illness sometimes hides a profound view of human life.

Arieti has written a book that he has en-

titled *The Parnas*. It was published in September 1979 by Basic Books. This short volume tells the dramatic story of Pardo—his greatness and his fears, his profundity and his mental illness. The story takes place in Pardo's home in Pisa in 1944. Throughout the various bombardments and deportations, Pardo and his guests had not been molested. Arieti's book describes the attitudes of these few people who had somehow been spared from destruction. During this period, Pardo suddenly realizes the source of his mental illness and conquers his fear. Yet the story does not have a happy ending. Shortly before the Americans crossed the Arno River in Pisa, driving back the Nazi forces, the German soldiers had broken into Pardo's home and had killed all the inhabitants, Jews and Christians.

The Parnas is an interesting book that sheds light on the Holocaust in Italy and on the inner workings of the human mind. The book is a monument to a Jewish leader who gave up his life at the hands of the Nazis, but who first redeemed himself from his irrational fears.

Arieti is quick to point out that Italian Jewry generally did not have the feeling of paralyzing helplessness that existed among Jews of other countries during World War II. Most of the Italian Jews in the final analysis did succeed in one way or another to save themselves. Of the approximately 40,000 Jews who had remained in Italy after the start of official anti-Semitism, 7495 were deported between July 25, 1943 and May 8, 1945. Of these, only 610 returned alive. Most of the other Jews were able to hide or find protection with Christian friends. Dr. Arieti's own parents were assisted by Christian clergy.

Most of the Jews who had left Italy during the period of fascism have not returned. At present, the Jewish population of Italy numbers about 35,000, most of whom are concentrated in Rome and several other large cities. The community in Pisa now numbers about 100 families

Book Reviews

and is finding it difficult to maintain its historic synagogue. Arieti has dedicated part of the royalties earned from his book on the parnas to the support of the synagogue in Pisa.

History has thus come full circle.

Giuseppe Pardo Roques, who for many years had been the mainstay of the community in Pisa, will have his name associated with the support of the community he served and loved even in death.

REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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