

The Golem

By H. Levik

Play no. 4

Opening show: 11/05/1933

Creative team

Hebrew by: B. Caspi

Staged by: B. Varshilov

Music by: M. Milner

Musical Direction: Fordha Ben Zissi

Cast

Maharal: S. Finkel

His wife: T. Yudelevitz

Debora: A. Tal, D. Friedland

Tanchm: I. Banai, R. Klatchkin

Golem: A. Meskin

Elijah the Pophet: Z. Friedland

The Messiah: P. Perach, I. Efroni

Tadeush the Inquisitor: Y. Bertonoff

Don Pedro the Mon: R. Klatchkin, S. Bar-Shavit

The Beadle: S. Bruck

A Red Jew: S. Segal, A. Chizkiyahu

The Tall Man: I. Varshaver

The Sick Man: C. Amitai

The Blind Woman: T. Yudelevitz

The Old Woman: N. Shein

A Water-carrier: I. Bareket

Woman with child : S. Duer, Bat-Ami

Young Woman: E. Michaeli

ACT ONE

Maharal brings the Golem to his house. He names him Judah. The Golem's extraordinary strength seeks an outlet. He shakes the walls of the house. At the noise, Maharal's mother and granddaughter come in. Maharal conceals the real nature of the Golem, and introduces him as his servant, who has come to chop wood and carry water. The Golem is hungry. Food is brought, which he devours greedily. Maharal gives him an axe and tells him to try his strength in chopping wood.

Tanchum, the insane man, appears. His only son, Yochanan, was killed in the last riot against the Jews. As a result he went insane. He imagines that he is the ruler of the ruined house, and that he rides around them in a burning chariot. Like all the insane, he possesses keen intuition. He brings the news that Tadeush, the inquisitor, has visited the fifth tower of Prague, in which a number of homeless Jews are hiding. Who will save them from the impending danger? As Maharal stands deeply absorbed in thoughts, thinking out a plan for saving them. Tanchum goes out to spread the sad news.

The Golem, who is chopping wood, is attracted by the granddaughter of Maharal. He kisses her, to the extreme annoyance of the girl and the grand-mother. Maharal takes the Golem into the house and tells him to consider the true purpose for which he was created.

In his anger, he raises his stick. The Golem asks pardon, and Maharal calms down. He realizes that it is his duty, not the Golem's, to regulate his vast, blind strength. He sends the Golem to the fifth tower, where the refugees are hiding. They expect Tadeush to come any moment, leading a mob to attack them.

ACT TWO –At the fifth tower

In this long-deserted, ruined tower, the homeless refugees, whose houses were destroyed in former anti-Jewish riots, have taken shelter. The appearance of a huge stranger (the Golem) armed with an axe sends them into a panic. But Tanchum comes and relieves their anxiety. They lie down to rest, but cannot sleep, for fear of the approach of Tadeush.

Two wanderers appear – an old man and a young man. They ask permission to pass the night there. The young man tried out with journeying, falls asleep on a stone, while the old man watches over him. Tanchum is the only one who recognizes the wanderers. They are the prophet, Elijah, and the Messiah. He rebukes the Messiah for sleeping at the time when there is need of action. The other refugees to listen to his complaints against the Messiah. Mm Maharal appears. He calls the Golem, and orders him to be ready. The chanting of Elijah, which lulled the Messiah to sleep, attracts Maharal's attention. He also recognize he wanderers. He fears that they will spoil his plants of rescuing the refugees from death. Believing that they will instil the poison of doubt and in-activity into the homeless ones, he drives them out of the tower. The refugees do not understand why Maharal drove the strangers away, but they dare not dispute his will. Maharal goes out. The chiming of bells is heard. Tadeush and his men enter. He mocks the refugees. "We are tired of hating you", he says. The refugees do not defend themselves against his jeers. The constraint of the ghetto and of the long exile has numbed their power to fight. Tadeush drives them out of the tower. They leave without protest.

Then begins the vengeance of the Golem. He comes out of his hiding place. He bars all the doors and shuts all the windows. Then he lifts his axe and kills the followers of Tadeush.

ACT Three – The vestibule of the Synagogue

The Golem is sad and lonely. The Jews, whom he saved, gather around him rejoicing. But the Golem is depressed because he has no outlet, for his tremendous strength. He has been forgotten by Maharal. The beadle of the synagogue tells him to put on his shoes and enter the holy place, but the Golem demands to see Maharal. When Maharal at last comes in, the the Golem declares that he does not wish to be left to his own resources. He threatens Maharal With his fist. Maharal, angry, leaves him. Filled with rage and hatred, the Golem seizes his axe and breaks a window. He goes into the street, slaughtering people and destroying houses. A panic breaks out. Some seek shelter in the vestibule of the synagogue. Tanchum runs in, his head bleeding from a wound dealt him by the Golem.

After a long search, Maharal finds the Golem. He soothes the furious mob, and asks them to leave him alone with the Golem. He asks the Golem if he knows whose blood he has shed. "Jewish", replies the Golem. In despair Maharal cries out, "I am guilty of this blood of my people! I meant to rescue them, but I have destroyed them!" He utters blasphemy against God, who ordered him to create the Golem.

His grand-daughter, Deborah, comes to look for Maharal. The Golem approaches her and kisses her. Maharal orders him to let her alone. His former powers came back to him; he commands the Golem to the down in order that he may be turned back into clay. The Golem implores Maharal to let him live, but his plea is in vain. Maharal has decided that the Golem mst be out of existence. The Golem is turned into a heap of dust. Tanchum enters, crying out the unanswerable question. "Whence will come our salvation?"