

The Binding Of Yosef

By Yoram Kaniuk

Play no. 256

Opening show: 21/11/1970

Directed by: Yoram Kaniuk

Lightning by : Michael Liberman

Music arrangement and Director : Poldi Shaetzman

Original Music: Kobi Ashrat

The Cast

Drummer: Rafi Goldwasser

Singer: Michael Noi

Yosef: Alecs Klazkin

Sarah: Naomi Grinbaum

Naaman: Asher Tsarfati

Mrs. Paskal: Pnina Geri

Yitzhak: Yitzhak Kluger

Jalal Bey: Pinchas Goldberg

Soldier 2: Avraham Selektar

Soldier 1: Rafi Natan

Girl from Jerusalem: Michal Noi

Interpreter: Avraham Selektar

Young man of Zichron – A: Rafi Natan

Young man of Zichron – B: Rafi Goldwasser

Mughtar: Yitzhak Kluger

Sarah's Father: Yitzhak Kluger

Woman A: Pnina Geri

Woman B: Michal Noi

Meir: Avraham Selektar

Tanchum: Rafi Natan

Zvi: Yitzhak Kluger

Bella: Pnina Geri

Shmuel: Rafi Goldwasser

Arab Woman: Naomi Grinboim

Mrs. Paskal's daughter: Michal Noi

Fingenbaum: Avraham Selektar

The Play

Palestine – 1917. The British Army is preparing to conquer the country, which is groaning under the excesses of the Turkish regime. A group of Jewish farmers from Yehuda and Shomron under the leadership of Aaron Aronson (himself in Egypt at the time), is gathering information for the British army, the arrival of which is delayed. The Jewish population, brought to the brink of despair by the banishments and confiscations of the Turks and by the prevailing famine, is unsympathetic to the aims of Nili, yet induced to cooperate by the hope of being supplied with food purchased with gold put at Nili's disposal by the British Army, and deposited with Meir, head of the immigration committee.

The Turks intercept a carrier pigeon sent with a coded message from Nili head quarters in Zichron Yaakov. This gives the first indication to the Turks of the existence of a Jewish spy ring working for the British. Yosef Tubin, who arrives from Egypt, where he had gone with Absalom, is given joint command of Nili, together with Sarah, Aaron's sister. His comrades do not accept him, as he is an outsider, and has come from the "Shomer", Sarah befriends him and together they head the group. Yosef's arrival awakens fear and suspicion among the members of the group; Absalom, the founder and the beacon of Nili has disappeared. Yosef, obeying Aaron's orders, does not reveal to the members of Nili that Absalom is dead. Sarah knows but keeps silent. Naaman, Absalom's cousin, refuses to obey Yosef, decides to go to Egypt, is caught by the Turks, in the desert, and after being plied with drink and having been drugged, he breaks down and confesses.

The end draws near. Jallal Bey, the Turkish commander leads his men against Zichron Yaakov. On Sarah's orders Yosef flees, but Sarah is caught and arrested. The Mughtar of Zichron and the members of the settlement take an oath to find and deliver Yosef to the Turks, so that the settlement should not suffer the same fate as that suffered by the American villages over which hovers the horror of their destruction. Sarah, who does not break down under the tortures, takes her own life.

Yosef meets some members of the "Shomer" and begs them to give him shelter in their cart, not knowing that they have been to Petach Tikva to confiscate the gold that Nili had left in Meir's safekeeping, and that the gold is actually in the cart which is taking him to the "Shomrim" village. The members of the "Shomer", who despise him from the days of his candidacy of their movement, are unwilling to take him, but Zvi, his former friend, persuades them to do so. In the meantime the search for Yosef threatens the whole Jewish community and the members of the "Shomer" with whom he has found refuge. They decide to kill him in order to save everyone else's life, but Yosef manages to escape. After wandering through fields and vineyards, he reaches the house on Mrs. Pascal, a friend of Yosef's and of Nili, who hides him for one night. Dressed as an Arab woman Yosef leaves the house beaten and full of despair having heard of Sarah's death. He is captured at Nebi Rubin and taken to jail, where he finds Naaman.

Meir, in the name of the Jewish community, refuses to pay ransom to the judges. The fate of Yosef and Naaman is sealed. While the members of the "Shomer", who have also been caught, are given only light sentences. Yosef and Naaman are put to death by hanging.