



JEWISH FIGURES

CZECH REPUBLIC

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### **JACOB BASSEVI (1570-1634)**

Born in Verona, Bassevi was a businessman respected by emperors who raised him to nobility and granted him a coat of arms. As such Bassevi enjoyed privileges and represented the Jewish community in the Bohemian Court. He was very charitable and donated money to the poor in Palestine.

### **DAVID GANS (1541-1613)**

Born in Lippstadt, Gans settled in Prague in 1564 where he became a scientist devoted to mathematics, philosophy and astronomy. He is the author of Tzemach David which contains the annals of Jewish history and general history, as well as cosmographic, astronomical, and mathematical books, works and treatises.

### **FRANZ KAFKA (1883-1924)**

Born in Prague under the Austro-Hungarian rule, Kafka is a renowned and highly influential author, though only a few of his works were published in his lifetime. The term Kafa-esque is used to describe surreal situations. Although it is unknown to people, he was deeply concerned with Jewish dilemmas.

### **RABBI JUDAH LOEW BEN BEZALEL (1520-1609)**

Known as MaHaRal (Moreinu ha-Rav Loew) of Prague, Rabbi Loew was a Talmudic scholar, a Jewish mystic and a philosopher who served as a leading rabbi in various cities. His famous work is Gur Aryeh al HaTorah, a commentary on Rashi's Torah commentary. According to the legend, the Maharal created the Golem of Prague, a creature made of clay that defended Prague's Jews from anti-Semitic attacks.

### **MORDECAI MAISEL (1528-1601)**

An extremely wealthy businessman and philanthropist who was a major benefactor of the Jewish community. He built the Jewish Town Hall and the Maisel Synagogue.

### **RABBI KAROL SIDON (1942- )**

Rabbi Karol Sidon was appointed Chief Rabbi of Prague and of the Czech Republic in 1992, after converting to Judaism in West Germany in 1983. He was a close friend of Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic.