And so, Putin has crossed the line. During an Ubu-esque meeting in which he chastised his minions as though in a bad Ernst Lubitsch film, he recognized the independence of the separatist territories of Donbass.

And so here we have the West ridiculed; Ukraine defeated; and thousands of men and women who have fought for eight years to maintain the freedom of Luhansk and Donetsk, handed over to thugs.

In the fog of provocations and lies still to come, we must satisfy ourselves, for now, with recalling the following:

No. 1: Russia has no right to Ukraine. None. No right to amputate, and no right to dictate its alliances. Of course, geopolitics is an affair of power relations. But right remains right. This dictates that peoples are not pawns for the powerful in the Great Game of empires.

That the United States and Russia, when Ukraine renounced in 1994 its nuclear arsenal, formally took over guaranteeing Ukraine’s security. In violating borders, Putin has betrayed his word. He has revealed his true face. He has banished himself from the concert of nations.

No. 2: Ukraine, he said, has a common history with Russia. But, remember this: It was a colonization. And then, under the Bolsheviks, the strategy of the “iron sweep” to rid Odessa of its anarchists. Then, with Stalin, the Holodomor, the extermination by hunger, that made at least 4 million victims. The rest—the bad literature about the so-called “fraternity” of the Slavic peoples, the fable of the “Kievan Rus’” that would be, in the late ninth century, the cradle of a Russia yet to exist—just smacks of propaganda. Either Putin knows this and is playing the fool, or he is ignorant of it, and we should recommend he read Vasily Grossman, Isaac Babel’s Red Cavalry, or more recently, Anne Applebaum’s Red Famine. As for us in the West, we had one and only one task: As in Afghanistan, Kurdistan, and everywhere peoples strive to embrace democracy, help Ukraine unfetter these bonds of subjection, misfortune, and death.

No. 3: Putin, beyond the hour-and-a-half of verbal diarrhea he unleashed on us, has a goal. Only one. To weaken Ukraine. To bring it to its political knees. To break the democratic élan launched eight years ago by the citizenry assembled in Kyiv’s Maidan. His method was calumny, offense, the transformation into fascists of the hundreds of youths who died clutching the starred flag of Europe. And he had another method: sending the little green men of the FSB to Donbass with batches of Russian passports; the open mustering
of his army to stop an alleged genocide; then, in the days that followed, an occupation in the style of Prague or Budapest. He did both. It’s a historic crime against Ukraine and a frontal attack on Europe and the West.

No. 4: We hear this one a lot: The diplomats will have to be back on the scene to help Putin calm down, to stop him, to help him save face. Maybe. I don’t know. But one thing is sure. We should not reverse the roles and lose sight of the fact that it was Putin, and he alone, who broke the taboo over war in Europe. We must remember that it’s Ukraine, and Ukraine alone, that honor commands us to save from an atrocious and announced offensive. And, even if things end there and we can breathe a sigh of shameful relief, it behooves us to never forget how, well before today’s troubles, from last December and January, the Kremlin described Europe as a wide-ranging “theater of military conflict” (Alexander Grushko, deputy minister of foreign affairs); brandished the threat of a “preventive” nuclear strike of the kind Israel wields against Iran (Andrey Kartapolov, chair of the Duma’s Defense Committee); and let partisan and friendly media (Svoboda Pressa) announce that, in the case of an enlarged NATO, Russia would vitrify “all of Europe and two-thirds of the United States in thirty minutes.” No peace agreement could erase these staggering declarations, without precedent, which I assembled in a piece from Jan. 18. Or else, it would be a Munich-style peace.

No. 5: Does all this mean that we should not take into account Russia’s feeling of being surrounded, mistreated, humiliated? I think that this humiliation is a myth. I remember how NATO, since 1994, proposed to Russia a “partnership for peace.” How Russia was invited to join the Council of Europe and the G7. I remember the 2002 NATO-Russia summit in Rome. And Barack Obama’s July 2009 visit to Moscow, offering a reset of all nonconventional weaponry. And the self-imposed limits, up to and including Donald Trump and Joe Biden, on the number and reach of American weapons deployed in Europe (even while Russia violated its agreements). I can see no other example of a fallen empire that benefited from such sweet consideration from its adversaries. And I believe that the legend of Russian humiliation is the last trap that must be avoided.

This is what the next red lines should be, after the disaster in Donbass.

Beyond that would reign a diplomacy that, true to the etymology of the word, would consist of bowing obsequiously before force.

The same causes producing the same effects, it would be the return of the terrible 20th century.

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ARTS & LETTERS

The Professor of Apocalypse

Jacob Taubes’ deeply penetrating and profoundly mischievous thoughts on the evasions of liberalism and the irreconcilable nature of Messianic expectation strike a chord in the present moment.

BY BLAKE SMITH

The publication of Professor of Apocalypse, the first comprehensive biography of Jacob Taubes in English, seems likely to fuel a revival of the reputation of one of the most significant yet under-appreciated thinkers of the late twentieth century. In his day, Taubes was hardly obscure, as evidenced by his relationships with figures like Carl Schmitt, Gershom Scholem, Leo Strauss, Susan Sontag, Emil Cioran, and many luminaries he influenced or enraged. As his papers and correspondence are translated, the challenge of Taubes’ thought will only grow greater and more urgent, pressing uncomfortably on those who wish to hold onto both the promises of the God of the Bible and to our heritage of political liberalism.

A scholar of religious history, and the son of Zurich’s chief rabbi, Taubes was an expert on Jewish and Christian ideas about the end of the world, and a wide-ranging political thinker. His rootedness in core Western ideas about messianism and God made him an uncomfortable interlocutor for those who wished to burnish political liberalism by showing how it could be extricated from, or co-exist happily with, ideas about a divinity who would redeem mankind through a chosen messenger.

In a series of lectures to an audience of Protestant scholars in Heidelberg, Germany a few weeks before his death on March 21, 1987, Taubes argued that the most important political question is the question of Messiah. The pattern of our political and religious life together, and the meaning of our individual lives, depend on its answer. The question is not who, among the many candidates put forward by various communities of believers, he is—nor whether he has already come, is still alive, is yet to appear, etc. These questions will appear important only if we have already answered the question of whether, in the first place, we want Messiah. Against such a desire
stands all our yearning, often unspoken but constant and strong, for things to remain the same, our complicity with the powers of the present world.

These lectures were, in many ways, given under questionable auspices. Taubes had been invited to speak on the apocalypse, his area of expertise, for a conference on the theme “Time is Pressing.” He began by informing his audience that time was indeed “pressing, for me, because of an incurable disease.” Given that this would be his last chance to speak to an audience, he would, therefore, talk not so much about the apocalypse as about the Messiah, as understood by a thinker whom, Taubes insisted, exemplified Jewish messianism: Paul of Tarsus.

Taubes acknowledged both the presumption of “carrying water to the river” by telling a Christian audience about Paul, the most important Christian figure after Jesus, and the unusualness of claiming Paul as a Jew. He raised the stakes further by adding that he had been, as it were, commissioned to give these lectures by Carl Schmitt, the infamous Nazi jurist, legal theorist, and Catholic political theologian.

Taubes had visited Schmitt, with whom he maintained a long epistolary relationship, the year before the latter’s death in 1985. In that meeting, he and Schmitt had read together Paul’s letter to the Romans, debating whether the text founded—as Schmitt believed it did—enmity between Christians and Jews. Taubes argued against Schmitt’s interpretation of Paul, which seemed to give scriptural justification for the murderous antisemitism Schmitt had endorsed as the leading legal thinker of the Third Reich. He gave his own reading of the text, and “when I had finished explaining everything to him,” Taubes said, Schmitt insisted that Taubes must, before he died, reveal it to the world.

Obeying the wish of the eminent, dying Nazi, Taubes, now dying himself, would speak about Paul, “as a Jew, not as a professor, a title to which I don’t attribute much importance.” This was not to be a scholarly exercise, but an existential confrontation with the question of Messiah—and of his enemies. The latter, Taubes argued, are those who seek to “hold back” the end of the present world, who believe that it can get along for itself without a “living God” who appears unpredictably into history and into our lives. He calls these people, with contempt, “liberals.” Paul, he argued, was “more Jewish than all the liberal or reformed rabbis” who prayed only half-heartedly for Messiah.

Indeed, Taubes’ lectures represent one of the most powerful critiques of liberalism, understood not only as a political philosophy, but as a spiritual disposition, or rather a spiritual desiccation, by which liberals neutralize the radical promises of faith. His final lectures, published as The Political Theology of Paul, are a challenge both to those of us who, from whatever vantage, claim to desire Messiah, and those—often the same people—who seek to preserve political liberalism in an increasingly illiberal world.

Taubes’ polemic against liberalism emerged out of a complex triangular relationship with Schmitt, on the one hand, and, on the other, Gershon Scholem. Taubes admired and attacked both men. Through his relationship with Schmitt, partially documented in the collection To Carl Schmitt: Letters and Reflections, Taubes appropriated many of the Nazi jurist’s critiques of liberalism, while insisting—with an honesty of which many of Schmitt’s modern followers of the right and left are incapable—that at the center of Schmitt’s thought burned a hatred of Jews. But, precisely because of this hatred, Schmitt saw more clearly than other thinkers that politics turned on such hatreds, on the identification of friends and foes.

In such pre-war writings as Legality and Legitimacy and The Concept of the Political, Schmitt had argued that liberal regimes, like the Weimar Republic, then tottering under assaults from both extremes of the political spectrum, are premised on the idea that all conflicts can be resolved through rational discussion. Their leaders imagine that politics is merely a kind of debate club in which ideas are exchanged, secured by a framework of universal rights that applies neutrally to all. They are unable to see that some groups cannot be accommodated within this framework, and, demanding more than the mere right to be heard, pose a mortal threat to the regime. Politics, in essence, was about defending the “homogeneity” of the political community and eradicating its internal enemies—and for Schmitt, there were no greater enemies for Germany or Christianity than Jews.

In his post-war writings, Schmitt emphasized a different dimension of conflict, elaborating a vision of world history in which forces of anarchy and revolution had been held at bay by various forces of order, such as the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire (the Third Reich, he implied, had been their abortive heir). The latter were manifestations of what he called the principle of katechon, or the one who “holds back.” This concept, before Schmitt a minor aspect of Christian theology, was drawn from a verse in Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians, in which Paul had claimed that before Jesus could return to reign as Messiah, the Antichrist would appear, once the “one who holds back” his advent released him.

Christians, in principle, ought to be eager for the release of the Antichrist, insofar as that event hastens the return of the Messiah. Schmitt, however, saw the Antichrist not so much as the terrifying but necessary prelude for the messianic era, but as a principle of disorder, of which Marxism was the preeminent modern instrument. Advocating “counter-revolution,” Schmitt argued that preserving the world meant identifying the katechon of our times and supporting its struggle against evil.

Schmitt’s vision was inherently anti-messianic. He explained this to Taubes through the parable of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky’s novel The Brothers Karamazov. In this story, Jesus reappears on earth, but is arrested by the Catholic Church, whose agent,
the Grand Inquisitor, informs Jesus that his presence is unwanted and will only disturb the Church’s work. The Messiah is not desired as an immediate, living reality that overturns the known order of our lives, only as a continually deferred possibility for the sake of which ecclesiastical institutions rule over the faithful. Schmitt transferred that anti-messianic allegiance to the Catholic Church to a counter-revolutionary faith in the totalitarian state. Christians like Schmitt, Taubes claimed, “pray for the conservation of the state, because if the state is not secured, God forbid, then chaos begins, or, what’s still worse, the Kingdom of God!”

Taubes took from Schmitt the lesson that politics, and religion, are founded on our choice for or against God’s coming kingdom. Either we seek to preserve the existing order of things, siding with the Grand Inquisitor, or we insist that the promises of a better world made to us by the Scriptures are not mere metaphors or visions, but realities to which we must continue to aspire. There is an unavoidable conflict raging, not so much between our regime and its enemies, or between counter-revolution and revolution, but between those who fear Messiah’s coming and those who welcome it. Liberalism, for Taubes, is a misguided attempt to refuse that choice, to resist Schmitt’s dangerous truth that we cannot avoid making the distinction between friends and enemies—and that, more radically, we must declare ourselves friends or enemies of Messiah.

Taubes’ lectures represent one of the most powerful critiques of liberalism, understood not only as a political philosophy, but as a spiritual disposition.”

Taubes decision to turn Schmitt on his head, using the Nazi’s attacks on liberalism not, as Schmitt intended them, to support antisemitism and counter-revolution, but to defend Jewish messianism, was also an extension and a daring inversion of the thought of Gershon Scholem, whom Taubes claimed as his “master.” Taubes had met Scholem early in his scholarly career, shortly after completing his dissertation, Occidental Eschatology, in which he argued that the very idea of history as a linear process, breaking with ancient worldviews that imagined time to be an endless rhythm of cycles, emerged out of Jewish and later Christian apocalypticism. He then, from 1951 to 1953, went to work at Hebrew University under Scholem, whose studies were restoring Kabbalah and the early modern messianism of Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676) to the mainstream of Jewish history, back from the margins to which scholars had relegated them as obscurantist, irrational deviations. Scholem, however, soon broke with Taubes, scandalized by his views and behavior.

After Scholem’s death in 1982, Taubes would write a series of papers attacking his former mentor. Scholem, he argued, had rightly seen Zevi and his right-hand man Nathan of Gaza—who announced Zevi’s messianic status in writings disseminated throughout Europe and the Middle East—as expressing longings fundamental to Jewish faith. But, Taubes argued in a paper given just after Scholem’s death, whatever could be said of Zevi and Nathan could also be said of Jesus and Paul.

Scholem had tried to distinguish Jewish and Christian forms of messianism, arguing that they had distinct characteristics. But his 1957 biography of Zevi is full of statements noting the obvious parallels between the lives of Jesus and Zevi; particularly, both purported messiahs’ spiritual careers were cut short in ways that initially baffled and horrified their followers (Jesus was crucified, Zevi converted to Islam), but were explained respectively by Paul and Nathan as paradoxical victories over evil. “Borrowing a metaphor from an earlier but in many ways analogous movement,” Scholem had written, Nathan of Gaza was the “Paul of the new messiah,” showing how an apparent humiliation for his believers was in fact a triumph. In Taubes’ eyes, Scholem had been too timid and conservative to take this thought to its logical conclusion, to see Christianity itself as an expression of Jewish messianism, and Paul as a Jewish thinker. “It is at this moment that little Jacob Taubes comes on the scene,” he said of himself, to “repatriate the heretic” Paul, reclaiming him for the Jewish messianic tradition.

This repatriation of early Christianity into the fold of Judaism was important for Taubes not (or at least not primarily) because it corrected the historical record or scored points in an intellectual rivalry with his mentor. Paul was, for Taubes, a model of messianic faith. He was a “fanatic, a Zealot, a Jewish Zealot... totally ‘illiberal’” who opposed what Taubes described as the liberal currents in the Judaism of classical antiquity. We do not often speak of ‘liberalism’ as a premodern phenomenon, but for Taubes, liberalism is a principle that can be found “in antiquity, in the middle ages, or in modernity.” Its essence is the pursuit of compromise between irreconcilable opposites through discussion, or indeed through dissembling.

The “liberal Judaism” of antiquity was embodied in the “Judaism of
“Liberals, in every era, are for Taubes those who cannot understand or admit that the God of the Bible is ‘living,’ that belief in him is irreconcilable to ‘law.’”

Alexandria,” where a large community of Jews, speaking Greek and educated Platonic philosophy, tried to reconcile the God of the Bible with the philosophical concept of law, nomos, an impersonal, rational, universal force that gave order to the universe. This Judaism, Taubes argued, was an attempt to convince Greeks, Romans and other gentiles that Jews did not believe anything incompatible with reason, as the pagans understood it, and therefore deserved toleration. Philo of Alexandria, “the court-lackey philosopher,” who gave elaborate allegorical interpretations of the Bible, was the leading figure of this movement, which, for Taubes, abandoned the key belief of Judaism: that God is a “living God.”

It is of crucial importance that the “God calls himself ‘the living God’” in the Bible, Taubes insisted. The term “living” is “a polemical” epithet, one that distinguishes the Biblical God from others. For God to be “living,” means that he can suspend “law.” The physical laws of the universe are suspended in miracles, and even the moral laws we might take to be the essence of religion are suspended when God makes shocking demands on those who believe in him. Abraham is commanded to kill his son, Hosea to marry a prostitute. That God is “living” also means that he can change his mind, can go back on his own commandments and covenants, can be appealed to in our desperation and bewilderment. If not, what would be the point of prayer? Finally, it is only insofar as God is “living” that he can create “a new heaven, a new earth” with the advent of Messiah.

Liberals, in every era, are for Taubes those who cannot understand or admit that the God of the Bible is “living,” that belief in him is irreconcilable to “law.” They wish instead to have a God who is compatible with Greco-Roman beliefs and domination; in the modern era, “reformed and liberal rabbis” in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany reshaped Judaism into something compatible with Protestant ideas of rationality and loyalty to the German state. But in every era, liberals are the same, trying to convince themselves that they can both believe in God and forget that he is “living,” active in history, and will send Messiah to undo the present world. They are the useful idiots of the katechon and the unconscious enemies of Messiah.

In the traditional Christian telling, Paul was opposed to the Pharisees, the Jewish religious leaders whom Christians imagine to have stuck to the “letter of the law,” fulfilling their religious obligations without “spirit.” Taubes, however, argued that Paul, and early Christianity generally, were not a reaction against the Pharisees or against religious law, but rather against the “liberal Judaism” of Alexandria that had given up on the possibility of a messianic event by which God would show himself to be living. It was important to recuperate Paul as a Jewish thinker because he, like the Sabbateans a millennium and a half later, refused to thus resign himself. Whether Jesus or Zevi were worthy candidates of such messianic irresignation was not the most important question—or rather, the question could only be important at all for those who hope for Messiah’s coming.

While he urged his listeners to seek Messiah without succumbing to the compromises of liberalism, Taubes also warned against thinking that we could influence the Messianic event. “The drawbridge” by which Messiah arrives, is raised; it can only be lowered “from the other side.” We cannot change the world by ourselves, “to liberate ourselves autonomously… when you’re at my age and in my condition, you can only be astonished that anyone, except professors, takes that seriously.” We must put our hope in God to lower the drawbridge, refusing in the meanwhile the temptations either to compromise with katechon and preserve the world as it is, or to imagine that human efforts have brought Messiah.

Some Jewish thinkers, such as Henri Bergson, have tried to reconcile messianism and liberal democracy, seeing liberal democracy as combining order and openness to prophetic revelation. Others, such as Benjamin Fondane, have argued that modern liberalism is worth preserving precisely because it is a kind of disorder in which we can encounter the living God. If it is possible to escape the dilemma posed by Taubes—the choice between Messiah and katechon, between a living God and liberalism—it will, perhaps, only be through a renewed attention to this neglected current of modern thought.

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Members of the People’s Convoy, a movement organized by truckers to protest COVID-19 restrictions, will begin arriving in Washington, D.C., today, and the National Guard has been called up to meet them. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved the request from the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and the U.S. Capitol Police for additional support, mobilizing as many as 400 unarmed troops to “provide support at designated traffic posts, provide command and control, and cover sustainment requirements.” The protestors, inspired by the Freedom Convoy in Canada, say they are coming in peace but that they plan to occupy crucial roads and highways, such as the D.C. Beltway. “We’re going to have a shutdown,” one organizer said. The Freedom Convoy’s occupation of Ottawa, Canada’s capital, was forcibly cleared over the weekend, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau enacted emergency measures to suppress the protests.

Tweets sent out by the CEOs of Coinbase and Kraken, two prominent cryptocurrency banks and exchange sites, were flagged by the Ontario Securities Commission, who passed the tweets along to Canadian law enforcement for review. The CEOs tweeted advice to Freedom Convoy protestors on how to evade the emergency restrictions put in place by the Canadian government. The Emergencies Act allowed Trudeau’s government to freeze the assets of protestors and their financial supporters. The tweets from the two CEOs suggested that protestors hold their cryptocurrency in digital wallets, a technology that securely stores funds out of the reach of all third parties, including the government. Both Coinbase and Kraken will comply with the government’s orders to freeze accounts.

In a long, emotionally charged speech delivered Monday prior to sending troops into Eastern Ukraine, Vladimir Putin denied Ukraine’s independence and historical legitimacy and reiterated long-held complaints about NATO expansion threatening Russian security. Russians and Ukrainians are connected by “blood” and “family ties,” Putin said, declaring Ukraine “an integral part of our own history, culture, spiritual space” while also claiming that “modern Ukraine was entirely and completely created by Russia: more precisely, integral part of our own history, culture, spiritual space” while also claiming that “modern Ukraine was entirely and completely created by Russia: more precisely, Bolshevik, communist Russia.”

The Walt Disney Company has unveiled plans to build several utopian towns. The first of these “Storyliving by Disney” communities will be built in the Coachella Valley in California, just two hours from Los Angeles. Cotino, as the town is called, will have 1,900 housing units surrounding a 24-acre oasis with the “clearest turquoise waters.” The escape from reality promises home buyers “a place where world-famous Disney service makes moments more memorable.”

Stat of the day: This week the Student Debt Crisis Center updated its figure on the total cost of student debt—and the number is into the quadrillions: $1,882,899,321,008, to be exact.

Families of the 20 first-graders and six school employees murdered in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting have won a landmark $75 million settlement against Remington Firearms, maker of the AR-15 assault rifle used in the shooting, marking the first time a gunmaker has been found legally liable for a mass shooting.

In my efforts to understand the personal factors that led me to identify as transgender and eventually decide to mistakenly transition, I’ve always been struck by the overwhelming role the internet has played in my life. Online pornography has become virtually inescapable. Faster than we can even measure its impact, this new world of porn is drastically changing how young people form their perceptions of sexuality and adult relationships. In my own life, I can see how being inundated with pornographic imagery as a young woman, much of it violent, and being repeatedly told that this was normal and even cool led me instinctively to look for an escape from womanhood.

Alongside this ever-increasing normalization of pornography usage by young children, there has been an explosion in the number of teenagers identifying as transgender. Official British government figures from 2018 show that in less than a decade, the country saw a more than 4,000% increase in the number of minors being referred for gender treatments, including hormone injections. Most of the increase was driven by girls. As a young woman who both identified as transgender as a teen and grew up in a very online, pornography-influenced environment, I believe there is a profound connection between this new way of exploring sexuality and the identity confusion that we are seeing in so many young people today.

—Helena Kerschner
The rise and fall of rabbinical sermons

By Jenna Weissman Joselit

In the United States of the late 19th and 20th centuries, congregations highly prized rabbis who excelled at being “pulpit orators.” Where today we place a premium on pastoral rather than rhetorical skills, back in the day the rabbi’s “pulpit ministrations” reigned supreme, the mark of a decidedly modern synagogue rather than one fueled by the “momentum of the past.”

Even the architecture of the modern sanctuary was purposefully designed to give preaching an added boost. The systematic use of acoustic tiles, front-facing pews, elevated pulpits, and later still, mechanized sound systems and microphones ensured that the rabbi’s words would make their way, unimpeded and clear as a bell, from his mouth to his congregants’ ears.

He had much to say, after all, weighing in on topics that ranged from “Ten Commandments for Parents” to “The Courage to be a Jew,” and from “Woman’s Influence” to “Patriotism and the Jews.” Both preacher and auditor set much store in topics that ranged from “Ten Commandments for Parents” to “The Courage to be a Jew,” and from “Woman’s Influence” to “Patriotism and the Jews.” Both preacher and auditor set much store by the sermon, seeing in it an instrument to inspire, comfort, educate, and encourage, “to impart Jewish knowledge” and to “stimulate Jewish faith.”

A tall order, whose mighty expectations were often hard to satisfy, a successful sermon was one in which substance, style, acoustics, and, most especially, a very good command of English worked in sync. As far back as the 1870s, American Jewish congregants insisted on an English-speaking rabbi who could “articulate the vernacular of our beloved country as trippingly from the tongue” as any actor. As much a function of modernization as of theatrics, an English-speaking rabbi betokened the future; the absence of one pointed to the past. A clergyman who insisted on preaching in German or in Yiddish was said to be a “century behind and thousands of miles distant from his flock.”

Even so, traditional elements within the American Jewish community did not initially warm to either the notion of an English-speaking rabbi or to a regularly scheduled sermon in lieu of an occasional drash. By their lights, both resided far outside the pale of authentic Judaism. Digging in their heels, America’s Orthodox Jews stood firm in their opposition, insisting that the road to Reform, or worse still, out the door, was paved with the words of a sermon.

“Cold figures” compiled in the 1910s bore out the extent of communal resistance. A statistical study of synagogue life in New York City, much of it sustained by East European immigrants, revealed that a whopping 4 out of 5 urban houses of worship did not offer English-language sermons. Clearly, the study concluded with a gentle rebuke, they had not “reckon[ed] with the environment.”

Little by little, though, amid growing affluence and acculturation, many Orthodox Jews in prewar America relaxed their opposition to the sermon. They came to see the rabbinic display of English verbal prowess as a boon rather than a blemish, a drawing card rather than a symbol of declension. As one of American Orthodox Jewry’s greatest orators, Joseph H. Lookstein, put it, “in the modern synagogue, it is the sermons
delivered by the rabbi that afford a means of close contact with the congregation.”

Though it took a number of years before the sermon became a perquisite of the modern synagogue, it didn’t take long for congregants to become critics. There was no stopping them from caviling about this, that, and the other thing: The rabbi went on for too long or spoke too briefly; his demeanor in the pulpit was too hoity-toity or excessively chummy; the content of his remarks flew over their heads or underestimated their intelligence; his insights were too scriptural or not scriptural enough, too dense or too thin, too hard-hitting or too vacuous.

“Words, words, words,” was how one disgruntled American Jew described his rabbi’s verbose sermons in 1904. “Instead of putting me into the mood that a sermon should, they irritate me.” Another took exception to his rabbi’s repertoire of mannerisms, counseling him to refrain from wetting his lips while speaking or throwing back his head in the manner of a Methodist preacher, lest these gestures get in the way of his substance.

To ensure the congregation’s goodwill and sustain its “powers of endurance,” as a hard-pressed preacher wryly put it, aspiring rabbis were trained in homiletics, the art of preaching. “Thank God!” remarked a member of the laity in 1878 upon learning that Hebrew Union College had introduced homiletics into its curriculum. Since then, virtually every American rabbinical seminary across the denominational spectrum has instructed its candidates for the clergy in what to say and how to say it, when to “learn there’s a time to preach, but also a time to stop preaching ... And how hard is this lesson to learn!” said one frustrated practitioner skilled in “public persuasion.”

For all the training rabbis received, once on their own and in the field, the need for a helping hand to navigate the thicket of congregational critique gave rise to a new genre of American Jewish literature: guidebooks on what made for an effective sermon.

There were different ways to go about it. In some instances, rabbis whose public addresses were well received took to publishing them, hoping they might serve as a model for their more challenged colleagues. Israel H. Levinthal’s 1928 volume, Steering or Drifting: Which?: Sermons and Discourses, was a case in point. The beloved rabbi of the Brooklyn Jewish Center whose pulpit he occupied for over 60 years, from 1919 to 1982, Levinthal made sure to note how those in the pews took to his sermons, subsequently jotting down on the margins of his texts whether it was “hard to get attention,” or “excellent.”

At other moments, sermonic guidebooks were expressly didactic: more how-to than show-and-tell. Replete with useful asides, helpful pointers, and “sound advice,” Solomon Freehof’s Modern Jewish Preaching (1941) took that approach. Acknowledging that the role of the modern Jewish preacher “bristles with difficulties,” the longstanding rabbi of Pittsburgh’s Temple Rodef Shalom, a man widely celebrated as much for his eloquence and “beautifully crafted phrasing” as for his scholarship, sought to reassure his younger colleagues that with the right amount of preparation and sensitivity to the “specific moods and tastes” of their congregants, they, too, could come up with a sermon that “did good.”

Today’s rabbis, like their predecessors, also look for ways to connect with their congregants. In their mutual search for a more intimate, less performative encounter, they have rearranged the furniture of the sanctuary as well as the structure of the service, often substituting text study, or a d’var Torah for the sermon. Literally meaning a “word” of wisdom rather than a torrent—a succinct presentation, designed to frame the biblical text the congregation is about to read—this form of exchange has become more and more commonplace. The sermon, in turn, is increasingly associated with the High Holidays, an annual occasion rather than a weekly occurrence.

Some of us might miss hearing a sermon every Shabbat while others are content with its limited appearance. Everyone can agree that, in the end, its role in modern Jewish life says as much about us—our needs, our values—as it does about the Torah portion of the week or Anatole France.

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COMMUNITY

Jaffa’s Revolutionary Synagogue

A new congregation in an old space, Zichron Baruch blends Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions, drawing a mix of Orthodox and non-Orthodox, Israelis and immigrants

BY ANNE DUBITZKY

he entrance of the Zichron Baruch synagogue

It’s late Saturday morning in a compact urban park in Jaffa, in the neighborhood known as Noga. The azure sky and the warm midday sun make this winter day feel almost like summer. Children swarm on the slides and swings, while their parents stand around drinking coffee from paper cups and Thermos mugs. Other people, young and old, sit at tables outside the Urban Bakery café sipping lattes and savoring croissants.

In another corner of the park, several dozen people, mostly 20- or 30-somethings, stand around folding tables laden with flaky bourekas, a traditional Sephardic pastry, Yemenite jachnun, herring, kugel, and chamin—the Sephardic cholent. They are drinking single-malt whiskey, arak, and wine from flimsy disposable plastic cups, while toddlers roam at their feet. One boy, with side curls down to his shoulders, darts in and out on Rollerblades. The men—some dressed in jeans or Bermuda shorts and T-shirts, others in khaki slacks with white shirts—wear kippot on their heads. Some have the strings of their tzititzit hanging out from under their shirts. There is one in the crowd wearing a black kapota (coat) and a large black fedora. Another, in khaki slacks, a white linen shirt, and sandals, has side curls tucked behind his ears. The women—some in slacks or cute short dresses, others in ankle-length skirts and artfully wrapped, brightly colored headscarves—chat animatedly with the men and with one another while everyone tries to keep half an eye on the kids. A few of the men and women sport tattoos on their arms or ankles. Snippets of conversation can be heard in Hebrew, English, French, and Turkish. The proprietor of the adjacent pottery shop and some of his customers are invited to join in a l’chaim. As they raise their cups to their lips, the air echoes with the muazzin’s call to prayer from the nearby mosque.

This is the weekly kiddush after Shabbat morning services at Beit Knesset Zichron Baruch, a small synagogue off the beaten track, where a revolution is subtly happening in Tel Aviv.

The synagogue faces the park. From the outside, it is a simple storefront in a block of tastefully renovated apartment buildings with galleries and trendy shops on the street level. Inside, it opens into a well-lit room that looks like an old-time shul, with worn, dark wooden pews. A row of folding rattan screens down the center of the room forms the mechitza separating the men’s from the women’s side of the hall. A plaque in memory of the Jews of the Ukrainian village of Kamarna—most of whom were murdered by the Nazis in two aktions, in 1942 and 1943—dominates one wall. The synagogue was established in the mid-1950s by survivors from that village who had immigrated to Israel. They named it Zichron Baruch and resolved to revive the place as a house of worship on Shabbat and holidays. Unfortunately, there was no religious community in the neighborhood.

When he moved to Tel Aviv, Malka returned to his religious roots. On his way to Shabbat services in the adjacent neighborhood of Neve Tzedek, he passed the locked doors of Zichron Baruch and resolved to revive the place as a house of worship for the next decade. In the early 2000s, young Jews began moving into Jaffa, attracted by lower rents than in central Tel Aviv, the artists’ studios, cafes, and an increasingly hip vibe. One of them was a lawyer-cum-surfer named Shelly Malka, a secular Jew who was an unlikely revolutionary.

Malka, the son of a Moroccan father and a Yemenite mother, grew up in a Masorti (traditional) Jewish home in Hadera, in central Israel. Although both his maternal and paternal grandfathers were religiously observant, Shabbat was not strictly observed in Malka’s childhood home.

Over the years, the neighborhood declined; the population changed. By the early 1990s the synagogue was all but abandoned. However, in the late ’90s workers and shopkeepers in the neighborhood wanted a convenient place for mincha (afternoon prayers) during the workday. They cleaned up the empty synagogue to use for those prayers, breathing new life into the place. In the absence of congregants who lived nearby, the synagogue remained closed on Shabbat and on holidays. It was during this period that Adam Baruch, an Israeli journalist, editor and art critic, joined the congregation. He wrote about the Hasidim of Kamarna and feeling the presence of the rebbes of the now defunct Kamarna Hasidic dynasty in the synagogue when he prayed. It was as if he could see their scholarly and philosophical works written on its walls.

The synagogue continued as a weekday house of worship for the next decade. In the early 2000s, young Jews began moving into Jaffa, attracted by lower rents than in central Tel Aviv, the artists’ studios, cafes, and an increasingly hip vibe. One of them was a lawyer-cum-surfer named Shelly Malka, a secular Jew who was an unlikely revolutionary.

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As Malka was thinking about reopening the synagogue, he ran into Lotan Sher, an acquaintance who had just moved to Jaffa with his wife, Efrat Bzaglo. Sher had grown up in a religious
Ashkenazi home in the largely secular community of Kohav Yair, in central Israel. He, too, is another improbable leader of a revolution. At 37, Sher, an engineer by training, works for a commercial real estate firm. He and Malka committed to work together to fully reopen the synagogue.

The synagogue opened its doors as a full-time congregation in 2013, with services Friday evening and Saturday morning, in addition to the weekday mincha prayers. It was rededicated as Zichron Baruch, the same name it had originally, but this time also in memory of Adam Baruch, who had died in 2008. A small plaque in his memory now hangs on the wall opposite the memorial to the Jews murdered in Kamarna.

“In the early days after the synagogue reopened, I recruited my surfer friends to come to make the minyan,” Malka recalled. He or Sher would often stand out in the park opposite the synagogue trying to persuade passers-by to come in to be the 10th man. That era was short lived. Very quickly, word got around, and people began coming from surrounding neighborhoods: Florentin, Neve Tzedek, south Yafo, and beyond. “The spirit of the services spoke to people. They felt at home,” observed Malka. Now, the synagogue is filled to overflowing every Friday night and Saturday morning.

Buzaglo, a bubbly woman who looks younger than her 40 years, grew up in a Shabbat-observant Moroccan family in Netivot, in the south of Israel. “I’ve never had any doubt that the synagogue, and the Torah—they are the truth,” she asserted. Buzaglo refers to the shul as “our baby.” She and Sher used to wash the floors of the synagogue every Friday and make all the arrangements for the weekly kiddush. “Where food is served, Jews will come,” she observed with a smile.

Unlike most synagogues that follow either the Ashkenazi or the Sephardic tradition in the liturgy, Malka and Sher created a hybrid service that draws from both customs. For the most part, the text is the same. The differences come in the sequence of some of the prayers, the tunes, and which passages are sung or said aloud. The combination they came up with seems to have struck a chord. After reading the Song of Songs aloud, in the Sephardic tradition, the Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat service is one of joyful song, in the Carlebach style. Shabbat morning services may begin with Moroccan melodies and end with Hasidic nigunim, all sung with moving energy and authenticity.

As the congregation has grown, Malka and Sher have enlisted a few of the congregants to assist them as gabbais, who help organize and lead the services and other activities of the shul. This group includes, in addition to Malka and Sher and a couple of other “mainstream” Ashkenazim and Sephardim, a Bratslav Hasid and a Chabad rabbi. Each adds his own flavor to the services, without insisting that one tradition or another dominate.

During the height of the pandemic, when group prayer was only permitted outdoors, the leaders of the congregation got permission to use a courtyard of a commercial building near the synagogue for services. The singing and clapping during the services, particularly on Friday nights, caught the attention of neighbors passing in the street. Some were moved to stop and see what was going on. A number joined the services and have attended ever since, to the point that Friday night services are now routinely held outdoors. The synagogue building is simply not big enough to contain everyone.

When the synagogue reopened in 2013, most of the worshipers were singles or newly married couples. Now, the place teems with youngsters. It’s not uncommon for men to arrive Shabbat morning with a baby in a pouch strapped to their chests. And the men leading the prayers often have toddlers in their arms. Several of the young married couples at the shul met there. Many of them have moved to the neighborhood, attracted in part by its proximity to the synagogue.

The congregation includes native Israelis and recent immigrants, particularly Anglos and French. It’s a living example of kibbutz galut (the ingathering of the exiles). The Rabbanut sends candidates for conversion to Zichron Baruch, where they are warmly received. The converts have included people from France, Germany, Sweden, Ukraine, and even a local Arab. The shul is currently sponsoring four people who are in the process of converting to Judaism.

The success of Zichron Baruch bespeaks a quest on the part of young Israelis to connect to their Jewish roots, but to do so on their own terms. They want a community that will respect them for who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation, or whether they are fully observant or simply seeking an embracing environment.”
more families have mixed Ashkenazi and Sephardi roots. Yet most synagogues throughout the country continue to follow one tradition or the other. The Great Synagogue on Allenby Street in Tel Aviv is Ashkenazi, and the Sephardi Great Synagogue is on Shadal Street. Small neighborhood shuls are likewise either Ashkenazi or Sephardic. The unusual mélange of both traditions that characterizes the services at Zichron Baruch speaks to this new Israeli norm.

The shul is also a manifestation of another recent Israeli phenomenon. At a time when Jewish religious observance in the United States is imploding, the opposite is true in Israel. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the percentage of Israeli Jews who observe religious tradition has increased from 19% to 26%. Correspondingly, a smaller percentage of Jews define themselves as secular. Zichron Baruch, as an Orthodox synagogue that is open and receptive to all, provides an ideal landing place for formerly secular Israelis seeking a foothold in traditional Judaism.

Not everyone was enthusiastic about the reopening of Zichron Baruch. A group of owners of the condominiums in the building where the synagogue occupies some of the ground floor, objected strenuously. Claiming that the noise disturbed them, they sued the synagogue and the Tel Aviv municipality for permitting the synagogue. Such a lawsuit against a synagogue in Europe or the United States would immediately raise cries of antisemitism. Here, it’s Jews against Jews. As the judge said to the plaintiffs, “You would not have dared to sue the local mosque” whose muezzin’s call blares over a loudspeaker five times a day.

Although it appears the Zichron Baruch will prevail in the long run, the ongoing lawsuit has put substantial financial strain on the young congregation, which charges no dues and has no major financial backers. It is funded solely by contributions from the congregants. Ironically, the legal action, according to Malka, has galvanized congregants and strengthened the synagogue.

A weekday view of the park opposite the shul, where the kiddush takes place on Shabbat morning.

“Prayer is the anchor,” Malka explained. At no time is this more apparent than on Yom Kippur. The culmination of the holiday is the Ne’ila service at the end of the day of fasting and prayer. Zichron Baruch attracted so many people for the holiday that two services were held simultaneously, one indoors and the other outdoors. Hundreds of people packed into the courtyard for the concluding prayers, which were led by Akiva Turgeman.

Akiva, as he is known professionally, is a phenomenon. The son of a Yemenite rabbi, Akiva grew up in Dimona, a poor development town in the south. At 30, he is an accomplished singer and musician, whose star has risen fast in Israeli popular culture circles. Until they moved to Jerusalem this summer, Akiva and his family lived in Jaffa and were regulars at Zichron Baruch. Fortunately for the congregation, Akiva returned to lead the High Holiday services, with his velvet tenor voice filled with passion and devotion.

As the prayers built to a dramatic climax with the repetition of the words HaShem hu HaElohim (the Lord is God), hundreds more people stood on the streets of Noga surrounding the courtyard adding their voices to those of the people within. It was a sublime moment of unity and exaltation: Jews of all backgrounds and religious inclinations joined in prayer. Malka sees this as “another link in the chain of Am Yisra-el.” But, he added, “we are part of something much bigger.” Zichron Baruch is not the only new shul in Jaffa. In recent years young people have opened or reopened several synagogues throughout Tel Aviv. However, none of them offers the fusion of so many different strains that characterizes Zichron Baruch.

Saturday morning at 10:55: As the Cohanim stand in front of the congregation, their prayer shawls over their heads to give the priestly blessing, the members of the congregation are serenaded by the melodious chime of the carillon bells ringing out from Emmanuel Church next door to the shul. Zichron Baruch has become embedded in the colorful mosaic that is Jaffa.

This article was originally published on February 23, 2022.

STONE COLD TRUTH

think... Harry Potter is better in Yiddish... College is pointless... No one’s having babies, and it’s a problem... The vaccine-hesitant are not who you think... Harry Potter is better in Yiddish... College is pointless... No one’s having babies, and it’s a problem... The vaccine-hesitant are not who you think... Harry Potter is better in Yiddish... College is pointless... No one’s having babies, and it’s a problem...
Returning to the Person That I Used to Be

BY SARAH ERDREICH

My breasts will be removed in 10 hours. I stand naked in my bathroom, staring at my reflection in the mirror. There are three small, red puncture marks on my right breast, souvenirs of the biopsy that confirmed my cancer.

My husband comes into the bathroom and stands next to me. “Do you want me to take pictures?” he asks tenderly.

I shake my head, but don’t look away. I know that I’ll never want to look at pictures of what I once had: breast tissue, nipples, a softness and pliability that not even the very good implants I’ve chosen could replicate.

My husband and I had sex last week, and I’d assumed we would have it again before my surgery. We still could; I could kiss him and lead him into the bedroom, lower myself onto him and could kiss him and lead him into the bedroom, lower myself onto him and ask him to squeeze my breasts hard and then harder still because after tomorrow I won’t feel anything.

But if I do, all I’ll be able to think about is that it really would be the last time I’ll have sex in this body, and that seems unbearably sad. Instead, I hug my husband tightly, feeling my breasts flat against his torso, and cry.

I spent much of my adolescence thinking about breasts: specifically, my lack thereof. In eighth grade, one of the popular boys said to me, smirking, “Hey, Sarah, all of the other girls’ shirts stick out in front. Why doesn’t yours?” I stared at him, my face burning with shame as his friends snickered.

It took five more years but eventually, to my surprise and awed gratitude, I filled out a 34C bra. I reveled in wearing scoop-neck tanks and fitted sweaters and spent far too much money at Victoria’s Secret, buying bras and slips in shiny fabrics that made a series of boyfriends groan appreciatively. And I liked that, while my hair could be unruly and my skin was prone to breakouts, my breasts always looked good.

My breasts were also one of the few parts of my body that I could count on not to cause me pain. I have no memory of not being in pain; from my earliest childhood, my head and eyes hurt, a constant discomfort that was misdiagnosed as headaches and eye strain for decades. Shortly before my 30th birthday, a neurologist figured out that the problem was related to specific nerves, and I had two surgeries to decompress those nerves in my head and face. The operation on my head was a success, but one on my face failed to help, and the pain around my eyes persists.

When I was in college, my right wrist suddenly began to hurt. I endured years of misdiagnoses and failed treatments before an MRI revealed damage to the tendons and cartilage in my wrist. I’ve had eight operations to fix the damage, but my wrist aches constantly and will never function normally again.

In my early 30s, muscle spasms began to wreak havoc on my shoulders and neck. As with my other chronic pain, the muscle spasms began spontaneously and have proven difficult to successfully treat. One file cabinet in my office is full of paperwork related to my health: consult notes, surgical reports, invoices for experimental treatments, lists of medications, and films from an alphabet soup of exams: MRIs, CTs, X-rays. Forty-three years of damage takes up a lot of space.

In contrast, everything associated with my breast cancer is confined to the slim folder that my breast surgeon gave me at our first meeting, the name of the hospital emblazoned on the front.

My breast cancer was discovered during a routine mammogram. It was caught early; I was diagnosed as stage 0. I didn’t even know it was possible to be a stage 0 cancer patient until my breast surgeon explained that it meant that precancerous cells had been found in the ducts of my breast. The cells were so widespread that she recommended a mastectomy.

The surgeon also said that although I could keep my left breast, I might want to consider removing it, too. It wasn’t just about lowering the odds of a recurrence, she explained; there was also my chronic pain to consider. If I kept the healthy breast, my oncologist would want me to take Tamoxifen, an anti-estrogen medication used to help prevent a recurrence, for five years. But my muscle spasms were affected by hormones; they became much worse when I had my period. Because of that, neither the surgeon nor the oncologist thought that I’d be able tolerate Tamoxifen well.

A lifetime of living with chronic pain had made me comfortable with making big medical decisions quickly and having no fear of aggressive treatment. While having a bilateral mastectomy after being diagnosed with stage 0 breast cancer felt a little bit like using a hammer to kill a fly, it also made complete sense to me. I returned to that feeling of certainty often in the days leading up to my surgery, the knowledge that I was doing the right thing in the face of so many unknowns.

A week after my surgery, I received the pathology report. Several small
invasive tumors had been found, and there was a chance that cancerous cells were still in the scant amount of breast tissue that remained. My diagnosis was changed to stage 1 breast cancer, and I had to have 33 radiation treatments.

For six and a half weeks, I woke up early and drove to the hospital for treatment before work. Radiation laid waste to my skin, which became discolored, peeling, and blistered. I coated my skin in burn cream, swaddled it in gauze, learned how to breathe through the exquisite pain of nerves regenerating and skin patching itself back together.

The first time my husband hugged me during my radiation treatment, I flinched. His touch was gentle but it didn’t matter; pain still radiated through my chest, my skin too raw for comfort. I saw the guilt and shock in his eyes as I jerked away. After that, we avoided anything more intense than holding hands. I missed our physical contact, especially spontaneous embraces, but my body was instinctively, perpetually hunched slightly forward, guarding against unexpected touch. It wasn’t just the pain that I feared, though; I didn’t know how to share my new form with my husband until I knew how I felt about it myself. So many people looked at my naked torso every week during my treatments, but I had never felt more removed from my physical self.

It was during this time that I began to think about niddah, a Jewish practice that forbids sexual relations for women following menstruation, until they have immersed in a mikvah. I was raised Reform and now belonged to a Reconstructionist synagogue, so I didn’t have any firsthand experience with the ritual, but I knew a little about it. And what I knew, I didn’t like; it struck me as deeply misogynistic to consider a woman “impure” when she had her period, which was such a natural biological process.

I read more about niddah when I was undergoing radiation. Most of what I learned reinforced my initial distaste for the practice, but the physical separation that niddah caused resonated with me in an unexpected way. Indeed, I felt a kind of kinship with the women who observed niddah and wondered if they, like me, found the enforced distance a time to reconnect with their own bodies. I wouldn’t have chosen any of this—the cancer, the radiation, the fact that my husband and I were experiencing the longest physical separation of our 17-year relationship. As much as I mourned my old body and missed the ease I’d had in my body and with my husband, I also knew intuitively that this was a time that I needed to create a space for myself, a bubble in which I could heal and adjust alone. It felt like I had stumbled into a different kind of niddah, if such a thing could exist: a cessation of physical contact due to a biological process gone awry, but one without a definitive end point.

One of the pieces I read about niddah was Merissa Nathan Gerson’s “Lessons From Jewish Sexual Law (in a Sexless Pandemic),” which introduced me to the concept of kavannah—intention. In that, too, I found a resonance that was not what the rabbis and mystics had perhaps intended, but felt right all the same: that until I could have sex with the pure intention and focus kavannah demanded, I wasn’t ready to have sex. Kavannah gave me a spiritual end point, a framework in which to think about my healing as something that would happen not just physically but emotionally, too.

Before undergoing radiation, the most I’d thought about Orthodox traditions had been when I watched Unorthodox, so it initially felt odd to find clarity and comfort in these notions. But my cancer treatment caused other beliefs I’d held to be turned upside-down: that my breasts would never cause me pain, that distorting and burning my body was the best way to save it, that I’d embrace those changes because they’d increase my chances of a good outcome. The more I thought about niddah and kavannah, the more it made a perverse kind of sense that these rituals, which were so different from the kind of Judaism I knew, would provide a blueprint to lead me out of this jagged time.

The night I decide to have sex again is at the end of an unremarkable day a month after radiation ends. My husband and I are in our bedroom, the yellow glow of the streetlights leaking around the edges of our closed curtains. Our lower bodies press close together, my husband careful to keep his chest from touching mine. My pectoral muscles are still tight and the implants feel like smooth stones resting on top of my torso.

I close my eyes as my husband moves on top of me, intent only on what I can physically feel: the cool sheet under my back, the minty scent of my husband’s breath, the familiar rhythm that I missed for so long. And then I am overcome with relief, the emotion so strong it brings tears to my eyes: relief that I am returning to the person that I used to be; that our physical isolation, necessary as it was, is over; and that I am still here, in this altered body, with this life yet to live.

This article was originally published on February 24, 2022.
Pasta Kabbalat Shabbat

BY JANNA GUR

INGREDIENTS

9 oz (about 1/2 package or 250g) spaghetti or macaroni, cooked and chilled
2 eggs
4 ½ oz (120g) feta, coarsely crumbled
4 oz (100g) kashakaval or aged mozzarella, coarsely grated
¾ cup sour cream
10 Kalamata olives, pitted and quartered
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

PREPARATION

Preheat the oven to 350. Whisk the eggs in a medium bowl, add the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Spread the mixture in a 12-inch (30 cm) ovenproof pan or a shallow round baking pan. Bake for 40-45 minutes, until deep golden. Serve promptly.

Variations: Add 1 small chopped onion and/or 2 tablespoons of chopped preserved lemon.

Yield: Serves 6 to 8

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