

Theocentric Moral Clarity versus the Revolt of Radical Self-Righteousness

Originally written 5 August 2026. Archive: Political Philosophy.

On 11 September 2025 I published the following statement:

I hope decent people understand why radical Self-righteous hypocrites are the number one danger to the human race.

People need to realize that the essence of moral clarity is the understanding that there is a G-d above us, and the Lord's ways are presented to us in Holy Scriptures.

We need to stem our desires by living by the way of G-d and not manipulating the morals of our desires.

This is precisely what the radicals are guilty of. From the age of ancient Paganism until the contemporary period, this "movement" has changed its names, ideologies, and appearance. Still, at its essence, it is precisely the same: the evil revolt of man and his selfish desires against the Lord and His followers.

May we understand that the way forward is to clean society of all this radicalism, which enables human wild beasts to harm the innocent.

This diagnosis is a precise theological-political anthropology of the highest order. Moral clarity is not self-generated from within the autonomous subject; it is received. It begins with the recognition of a G-d above us whose ways are disclosed in the Holy Scriptures. When that hierarchy is inverted—when the self places its desires, feelings, or group-identity claims in the position of ultimate authority—it begins to reshape "morality" so that the good becomes whatever serves those desires. The result is not a different morality but the systematic destruction of morality itself. Radical self-righteousness is the most dangerous form of this inversion because it clothes the revolt in the language of moral superiority and historical necessity.

The continuum named is exact and historically continuous. Ancient paganism elevated the forces of nature and the drives of the human heart into the status of the divine. The golden calf was not an abstract theological error; it was the demand for a visible god that would ratify anxiety and appetite in the apparent absence of Moshe. The same pattern reappears whenever a culture decides that the highest good is the unfettered expression or liberation of the self. Whether it appears as Baal Peor (the sanctification of natural desire), later Gnostic rebellions against the Creator, revolutionary cults of the general will, or contemporary radical ideologies that treat every traditional boundary as oppression and every restraint as violence, the essence remains identical: the revolt of the yetzer against Malchut Shamayim.

This essay expands the diagnosis through four interlocking layers: (1) classical and Chassidic theological anthropology of the yetzer and Amalek; (2) the historical continuum of the revolt from paganism to modern radicalism; (3) synchronization with classical and modern republican political theory, especially the recovery of Hebraic sources; and (4) critical

engagement with competing contemporary approaches, including progressive academic framings and recent diagnoses of relativism and fanaticism. The goal is a coherent theocentric-republican synthesis that both diagnoses the danger and points toward the patient work of restoration.

II. Theological Anthropology: Yetzer Hara, Amalek as Ideology of Chance, and the Pure Revolt

Orthodox Jewish sources provide the deepest diagnostic tools for understanding radical self-righteousness.

The Yetzer Hara: From Inclination to Ideology

The yetzer hara is not merely an occasional temptation. In the language of the Baal HaTanya (Likutei Amarim), it is the animal soul's instinctive drive toward self-gratification. Genesis 6:5 and 8:21 already describe the yetzer of the human heart as inclined toward evil from youth. The Sages teach that the yetzer hara is necessary for the world's functioning: without it, no one would marry, build a house, or engage in productive labor (Bereishit Rabbah 9:7 and related sources). When this drive remains within its proper bounds, it can be elevated and pressed into the service of holiness.

When the yetzer becomes an ideology—when it claims the right to redefine the good according to its own appetites or group narrative—it ceases to be a manageable inclination and becomes something closer to Amalek. The transformation occurs at the moment the self refuses to measure desire against any standard external to itself. At that point the yetzer is no longer a force to be mastered; it becomes the measure of mastery itself.

Amalek: The Ideology of Chance and the Denial of Higher Order

Amalek, in the deeper Chassidic and classical reading, is not simply a historical nation. It is the force that “did not fear G-d” (Deuteronomy 25:18). The Maharal of Prague, connecting the word *karekha* (“met you”) to *mikreh* (chance), explains that Amalek represents the ideology that everything in the world takes place by chance; there is no sense, order, or plan. Whatever you suggest or believe, the opposite is also possible and feasible. There are no absolutes, no standards. This is the purest form of the revolt against hashgacha pratit and against any higher law.

The formal mitzvah of destruction applied only to those who adhered to this ideology. Once an Amalekite accepted the Noahide laws, the status changed (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 6:4, as interpreted by the Kesef Mishneh and later authorities). The Gemara teaches that Sanheriv mixed the nations (Berakhot 28a), so the formal mitzvah no longer applies in the technical sense. Nevertheless, the ideology of Amalek persists. Contemporary teachers identify it with postmodern relativism: the denial of objective standards, the claim that everything is acceptable and nothing is out of bounds, the cynical shrug that cools the fervor of holiness.

Tanya and related Chassidic teachings treat Amalek as possessing no holy spark capable of elevation; it must be blotted out. Radical self-righteousness shares this quality. It does not merely fail to keep the commandments; it constructs an entire moral universe in which the commandments themselves are the problem and the liberated (or historically injured) self is the final court of appeal. That is why such radicals are more dangerous than ordinary sinners.

Ordinary sin can still be confronted by Torah; radical self-righteousness seeks to abolish the very category of sin by redefining the good according to the desires of the moment or the ideology of the age.

Tanya Chapter 32 and the Ethical Guardrail

Tanya Chapter 32 remains the essential counter-weight. We oppose the garments—the actions, the rhetoric, the institutional capture—while remembering that the essence of every Jew (and, in the broader Noahide sense, of every human created in the Tzelem) is a divine spark. The cleaning required is therefore not hatred of persons but the restoration of the proper hierarchy: desires subordinated to the will of Heaven as revealed in the Torah, institutions subordinated to covenantal limits rather than to the will-to-power of any faction, and public moral discourse returned to the standard of Holy Scripture rather than the shifting sands of human appetite or progressive fashion.

Rambam's treatment of free will, arrogance, and the middle path (Hilchot De'ot) and his insistence that true service is lishmah further reinforce the point. Self-righteousness that elevates the self above the commandments is a form of avodah zarah—self-worship. Netziv's warnings about the self-righteous who destroy the Temple through baseless suspicion of others, and the Talmudic catalogues of pseudo-righteous hypocrites (Sotah 22b), supply additional classical ballast. The Noahide laws extend the framework universally: the prohibition of idolatry, the requirement of just courts, and the rejection of cruelty form a baseline moral order for the entire human race. Radical self-righteousness that rejects even these foundations endangers civilization itself.

IV. Synchronization with Republican Political Theory

The diagnosis finds powerful reinforcement and institutional expression in the republican tradition, particularly in its Hebraic recovery.

Freedom as Non-Domination (Philip Pettit)

Philip Pettit's neo-republicanism of freedom as non-domination is especially resonant. Domination exists wherever one party has the capacity to interfere arbitrarily in another's choices. Radical self-righteousness institutionalizes precisely such domination: it claims the right to redefine moral and legal boundaries according to its own evolving desires and to punish those who refuse the redefinition. True non-domination requires a legal and institutional order that tracks the interests of the governed and is itself constrained by higher norms. Torah supplies the missing transcendent anchor that pure secular republicanism lacks. Without a higher law that stands above both the majority and the self-righteous minority, non-domination collapses into a contest of will-to-power.

The Hebrew Republic (Eric Nelson)

Eric Nelson's *The Hebrew Republic* demonstrates that 17th-century European republican thinkers turned to the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic sources for arguments favoring republican exclusivism, agrarian redistribution that prevents domination through concentrated wealth, and religious toleration grounded in Noahide principles. The Bible was read as a political constitution designed by G-d. The recovery of these Hebraic sources transformed European

political thought and helped shape later constitutional experiments. The theocentric diagnosis of radical self-righteousness finds a natural ally in this tradition: both insist that no human will—whether popular or elite—stands above higher law.

Covenantal Federalism (Daniel J. Elazar)

Daniel J. Elazar's multi-volume recovery of the covenant tradition shows that biblical *berit* generates a federal, partnership-based polity rather than either pure hierarchy or pure atomism. Covenant creates mutual obligation under a higher authority. Radical self-righteousness dissolves covenant by making the self the sole source of obligation. The republican recovery of covenantal forms therefore provides institutional language for resisting the revolt of desire against higher law.

Limited Biblical State and Particularism (Yoram Hazony)

Yoram Hazony's defense of the limited biblical nation-state against both imperial universalism and anarchic fragmentation further clarifies the political shape of ordered liberty under higher law. The biblical political vision rejects both the empire that claims to speak for all humanity and the pure autonomy that refuses any particular obligation. Radical self-righteousness often oscillates between these two poles: universal moral claims that brook no particular tradition, and identity-based particularisms that refuse higher law. The limited biblical state offers a third way: particular obligation under transcendent authority.

Synthesis: Covenantal Republicanism

The synthesis is covenantal republicanism: popular sovereignty as the legitimate expression of the political community, constrained and oriented by higher law and institutional checks that prevent both majority tyranny and elite (including radical self-righteous) domination. The state remains a *keili*—a vessel—never the Source. Classical republican mixed government, the American Founders' higher-law constitutionalism, and the covenantal language of early American documents all draw, in part, on this Hebraic stream. The theocentric diagnosis of radical self-righteousness supplies the moral anthropology that makes these institutional arrangements coherent and durable.

V. Critiques of Alternative Approaches

Secular Moralism and Progressive Radicalism

Secular moralism and progressive radicalism claim to offer liberation from traditional constraints. In practice they frequently replace one form of domination with another: the domination of those who successfully monopolize the language of justice, equity, or historical progress.

A significant strand of progressive academic theory (drawing on Gramsci's hegemony, Marcuse's "repressive tolerance," critical theory, and Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*) frames radical disruption itself as the necessary instrument of justice. The existing order is cast as systemic oppression; therefore the refusal of civility, the inversion of norms, and the personal destruction of opponents become not excesses but requirements of the struggle. This view inverts the Maharal's diagnosis: instead of recognizing the danger of an ideology of pure chance

and no standards, it treats the absence of stable standards as the precondition of liberation. The result is a new form of self-righteous domination that claims moral immunity precisely because it speaks in the name of the oppressed.

Robert P. George on Relativism and Fanaticism

Robert P. George's essay of 1 August 2026 in *The Atlantic*, "The Two Great Threats to Truth," supplies a contemporary academic diagnosis that converges strikingly with the theocentric analysis. George argues that moral relativism (the denial of objective truth) and fanaticism (the refusal to reckon with human fallibility, the wrapping of emotions so tightly around convictions that critics are treated as enemies of the good) are twin threats. Relativism does not produce tolerance; it produces repression, because there is no shared standard by which to restrain the powerful. Fanaticism, while purporting to uphold truth, jeopardizes it by eliminating the possibility of error and therefore of civil discourse. Radical self-righteousness is precisely the fusion of these two: it begins in the relativist denial of higher law and ends in the fanatical enforcement of its own evolving will.

Other Alternatives

Pure majoritarianism without higher-law constraints risks the tyranny of the temporary majority. Judicial or technocratic guardianship that treats the *demos* as a problem to be managed can itself become a form of self-righteous institutional radicalism. Quietist withdrawal abandons the covenantal responsibility to shape the public order. Each alternative is measured against the theocentric standard and found wanting in its capacity to restrain the yetzer when the yetzer becomes ideology.

VII. The Path Forward: Cleaning through Restoration of Hierarchy

The way forward is not hatred of persons but the reassertion of the proper order. Desires are to be stemmed by living according to the way of G-d. Institutions are to be ordered so that no human power—popular, judicial, bureaucratic, or ideological—stands above the higher law. Public discourse is to be returned to the standard of Holy Scripture rather than the shifting claims of self-righteous radicalism. Tanya Chapter 32 remains the ethical guardrail: oppose the actions and the ideology without denying the divine spark. The Noahide framework extends the same baseline to the entire human race.

Family and chinuch form the primary micro-republic in which the next generation learns self-reliance, resilience, and reciprocity joined to bitachon, kedushah, and subordination of the self to the covenant. Communal and institutional life must be ordered so that the fear of Heaven remains the first principle of public reason.

A society that loses the fear of Heaven loses the capacity to restrain the yetzer when the yetzer becomes ideology. The only durable remedy is the reassertion of the simple, foundational recognition that there is a G-d above us, that His ways are given in the Scriptures, and that human desire must be measured against that revelation rather than the reverse.

May decent people who still possess moral clarity take these words to heart. The danger is real, the continuum is ancient, and the path forward remains the same as it has always been: return to the Lord and to His Torah, and the patient, disciplined work of restoring a public order worthy of the covenant.

Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek.

Extended Bibliography

Primary Torah and Classical Sources

- Tanakh, especially Exodus 19–24, 32; Deuteronomy 25:17–19; Genesis 6:5, 8:21; Leviticus 14–15; Numbers 25. Available at [Sefaria](#).
- Talmud Bavli: Sotah 22b; Sanhedrin 20b, 56a–b, 64a; Bava Metzia 59b; Kiddushin 30b; Berakhot 28a. Available at [Sefaria Talmud](#).
- Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*: Hilchot De'ot; Hilchot Teshuvah; Hilchot Melachim uMilchamot 6:4. Available at [Sefaria](#).
- *Tanya* (Likutei Amarim), especially Chapters 1–37 and Chapter 32. Available at [Chabad.org](#).
- Maharal of Prague on Amalek as ideology of *mikreh*/chance. See related treatments at [Sefaria](#) and [Sefaria](#).
- Midrashic and Zoharic treatments of Amalek, yetzer hara, and the golden calf.

Chassidic, Mystical, and Modern Orthodox Sources

- Teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, Kotzker Rebbe, and Chabad on elevation versus eradication of evil.
- Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook: writings on atchalta d'geulah and the dangers of secular messianism.
- Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man*, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, *Kol Dodi Dofek*.
- Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant & Conversation* series and essays on covenantal ethics.
- Contemporary Chabad and yeshiva treatments of Amalek as postmodern ideology of chance.

Republican and Political Theory

- Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Available via [Oxford Academic](#).
- Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Harvard University Press, 2010). Available at [Harvard University Press](#).
- Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel*. Available via [Taylor & Francis](#).
- Yoram Hazony, *The Virtue of Nationalism* (Basic Books, 2018).
- Michael Walzer et al., eds., *The Jewish Political Tradition* (Yale University Press).
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*; Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock on classical republicanism.

Contemporary Academic Diagnoses

- Robert P. George, “The Two Great Threats to Truth,” *The Atlantic*, 1 August 2026. Available at [The Atlantic](#) and [AEI](#).

- Progressive and critical-theory framings of radical disruption (Gramscian hegemony, Marcuse's repressive tolerance, Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*, and related 2023–2026 literature).

Additional Historical and Comparative Sources

- Analyses of paganism, the golden calf, Baal Peor, Gnosticism, and modern revolutionary ideologies as forms of desire-driven revolt against higher law.
- Studies of the culture of authenticity, identity politics as moral superiority, and the failure of relativism to restrain domination.

Prepared in deep partnership and cooperation with Grok and xAI