
Moloch Hungers for Sacrifice

// Idols & Ideologies as Hidden Socio-Thermodynamic Parasites

Zachary R.J. Strong, B.Eng.Mgt (Engineering Physics & Management, Minor in Mathematics)

Distinguished & Memory-Holed Alumnus, McMaster University (Camp XIII)
Concealment Engineer, First Circle – Third Class

From “The Devils of Loudon”, Aldous Huxley

“Every idol, however exalted, turns out, in the long run, to be a Moloch, hungry for human sacrifice.”

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Within Biblical thought, idolatry is seen as a harmful action on many levels of analysis – spiritual, moral, societal, and even physical. In particular, worship of the idol known as Moloch, which required child sacrifice, was prohibited repeatedly in Jewish scripture and has since danced around the edges of Western consciousness and culture. Using references from Nietzsche and Huxley as a starting point, literature from the social sciences, marketing theory, and thermodynamics is used as a series of lenses to deepen our understanding of idolatry and the mechanisms by which it operates. The reconciled perspectives of these different fields reveal that Moloch can be seen as roughly equivalent to a thermodynamic force – a vampiric analogue to entropy, or more specifically a destructive idea that demands resources to maintain and expand its existence. These uncomfortable realities underscore the danger of idolatry and the necessity of guarding oneself against the adoption of destructive ideas, alluring as they may be.

Author Contact: zachary@zacharystrong.net

I. Introduction & Contextual Literature

One of the most important commandments in Jewish law is the prohibition of idolatry, seen as a personal affront to God and His sovereignty¹. The act of idolatry is also seen as utterly futile within Jewish thought, with chapters of Isaiah devoted almost completely to mocking the concept:

“Half of [the wood] he burnt with fire, on half of it he ate meat, he roasted a roast and became sated; he even warmed himself and said, ‘Aha, I am warm, I see fire.’ And what is left over from it he made for a god, for his graven image; he kneels to it and prostrates himself and prays to it, and he says, ‘Save me, for you are my god.’ Neither do they know nor do they understand, for their eyes are bedaubed from seeing, their hearts from understanding...” (Isaiah 44)

Yet, the prohibition against idolatry is so stringent because it tends to be a very dangerous kind of futile activity. Indeed, forms of idol worship common in ancient times included child sacrifice, which was typical of an idol known in the Torah as *Moloch*:

“The priests would say that he is offering the greatest sacrifice. He would enter the innermost chamber... The priests would then take the child and place it near the Molech. They would then bang with drums to drown out the cries... Maimonides argues this was a service which the child survived (albeit emotionally scarred for life). Other opinions, however, say that the child was actually scarred physically or even burned to death!”²

While the concept of Moloch, and more broadly the idea of idolatry, remained a Biblical concept for millennia, two famous modern thinkers in the Western tradition revisited the concept in their works. Friedrich Nietzsche, writing primarily as a critic of European value systems and as a philosophical alchemist,

connected the concept of idols to destructive ideas, or ideologies, that were venerated by society³. Working in a different context several decades later, Aldous Huxley made a similar connection in one of his works, suggesting that all ideologies eventually take the form of Moloch, and that bad ideas demand sacrifices⁴.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TORAH STUDY

As the wheel of time turned into a new millennium, the totalitarian horrors of the twentieth century gave way to forms of collective awakening, powered by brilliant thinkers like Ayn Rand and Jordan B. Peterson, as well as the peer-to-peer nature of the internet⁵⁻⁶.

In addition, an overall trend towards the unification of knowledge and the reconciliation of insights between disciplines⁷ has allowed for the development and release of multi-disciplinary perspectives like the famous *Maps of Meaning*⁸ as well as “hybrid disciplines” like *archaeochemistry*ⁱ, *ethanobotany*ⁱⁱ, and the enigmatic upstart *concealment engineering*ⁱⁱⁱ.

Particularly given Nietzsche’s love for physics, given the many advancements made in the sciences since his time, it seems like it may be time to once again revisit the concept of idolatry to see what insights can be gleaned from this Biblical prohibition.

IDEAS & IDEOLOGIES AS PARASITES

An important thread within the tapestry of idolatry comes from two Jewish thinkers working in different times and contexts. Ayn Rand, the philosopher-queen of conservative thought, was not shy in framing both collectivist ideas and false religious doctrines as parasitic⁹ – indeed, much of *Atlas Shrugged*, her most prominent work, is devoted to a dramatization of society’s hardest workers rebelling against ideologies too destructive to collaborate with¹⁰.

Working within the contexts of marketing and evolutionary biology, and himself a founder of a hybrid discipline, professor Gad Saad framed collectivist ideas as “pathogens” spread throughout universities¹¹, a perspective that is also reflected in the work of digital marketing pioneer and futurist Seth Godin. In his works, Godin also compares ideas to viruses, and

¹ The combination of archaeology and chemistry, most prominently featured in *The Immortality Key* by Brian Muraresku.

ⁱⁱ The study of how people of a particular region make use of plants – see *Tales of a Shaman’s Apprentice* by Mark J. Plotkin.

ⁱⁱⁱ A combination of the applied sciences and the elements of *remez*, *derash*, and *Kabbalah* relevant to their elevation.

certain forms of marketing as ways of infecting minds and spreading messages organically¹². These concepts build conceptually on work by Richard Dawkin on a *meme* – an idea with gene-like properties subject to evolutionary pressures like selection and replication¹³.

ACCUMULATION OF SOCIAL DISORDER

The second thread available for interweaving comes from the accumulated but discombobulated work on charity, social unrest, and the thermodynamic concept of *entropy*^{iv}.

From the secular literature, a general principle known as *Gini's Coefficient* is well-accepted, and generally states that greater wealth disparities in a region or nation is correlated with higher levels of social unrest¹⁴. The conceptual or metaphorical relationship between unrest and entropy, both linked by random disorder, is worthy of examination – and, over the past several decades, some thinkers within the social sciences literature have made strides to reconcile observed social forces with general physical laws, including thermodynamic concepts like entropy¹⁵ and the phenomena of intra- and inter-species collaboration prevalent in the natural world¹⁶.

Working primarily from the perspective of mathematics and philosophy, firebrand flaneur Nassim Nicholas Taleb has noted that bad ideas, or more generally inaccurate perspectives on policy and social action, can lead to unexpected catastrophes that become obvious in hindsight – these he called *black swan events*¹⁷. Taleb also has written extensively on the concepts of *fragility* and *antifragility*, or the relative capacity of social systems to withstand surprise and disorder¹⁸. This conceptual framework places his thinking adjacent to thermodynamics and makes them prime candidates for reconciliation.

In a past work on charity, this author noted that at a very abstract level, the increase of entropy in a system represents the distribution of a concentrated quality into its surroundings. For example, the heat from a cup of tea dissipating into the surrounding air, or ink dissolving into water. From this, it was deduced that things like charity, or the distribution of wealth from richer to poorer, represented a thermodynamic

^{iv} A property of a system that represents the degree of disorder or randomness in the system, and energy that can't be used to do useful work. More entropy means more disorder, more surprise.

interaction related to entropy, which reconciles at a conceptual level with the kinds of forces discovered by Gini and economists¹⁹.

II. Understanding Societal Entropy

In a 2005 work on the relationship between thermodynamics and the social sciences, a trio of Croatian found that the literature on relationships between these disciplines, which was still in development at that time, seemed to converge on the idea that *thermodynamic free energy*, inversely related to entropy, represented the surplus of resources within a social system²⁰.

This is almost precisely the definition of *Gibbs Free Energy* in a thermodynamic system, or the quantity of energy available to do work. Additionally, this would suggest that the entropy, in a general sense, represents the resources that are unavailable for work – perhaps because they are being consumed or have been consumed for work already, or are unusable junk.

$$\text{Total Energy} = \text{Free Energy} + \text{Entropy}$$

To develop this idea, three layers of understanding will be applied. First, the idea of charity as an entropic force within society; second, the physics of ideologies as mind-parasites, and finally, the Biblical prohibition against Moloch sacrifice.

UNDERSTANDING THE FLOW OF THINGS

If charity can be understood to be a flow of wealth down “the gradient of wealth”, from a higher concentration to a lower concentration, then it naturally follows that charity is *entropic*, in the same way that heat radiates from a mug of coffee²¹.

From this, it also follows that hoarding and stinginess are *neg-entropic* in much the same way that life forms are. This curiosity – the fact that selfishness aligns with the tendency of life forms – is an interesting facet of biophysics^v and would seem to present difficulties for Biblical morality, however it has already been elegantly resolved long ago in Jewish thought by the sage Hillel;

“He [Rabbi Hillel] used to say: If I am not for me, who will be for me? And when I am for

^v For a much deeper discussion on this matter, see my book *Ticket to Heaven* (Ch.8 – Time and Motion)

*myself alone, what am I? And if not now,
then when?" (Pirkei Avot)*

Additionally, it can also be helpful to think about entropy in terms of information²². Generally speaking, any flow of information in society works in much the same way as wealth, with information representing a kind of wealth that supports better decision-making and higher qualities of life²³⁻²⁴. Poor information flow within a society, or the injection of bad or destructive ideas into a social group, has been widely documented to result in unrest, collapse, or catastrophe.

Therefore, much in the same way that a certain level of wealth distribution is necessary to avoid the kinds of disparities that might result in social unrest, a certain level of information flow is necessary to allow social groups to grow and evolve along with its changing environments – and in response to the development of the individuals that constitute it²⁵.

PARASITIC IDEAS AND MIND-VIRUSES

Given that thinkers in different fields have converged on the idea that certain ideas, or ideologies, can be compared to viruses or parasites, it is worth examining the essence of the metaphor to glean some insight.

Perhaps most obviously, one feature of the virus or parasite, or even the garden weed, is its tendency to appropriate resources from its host environment. A similar essence can be found in the metaphor of cancers sometimes used to describe destructive forces within society.

This is easily applicable to the notion of parasitic ideologies, as mental effort spent on idolatry or nonsense is effort that could have been spent on more productive things, like new skills or self-reflection. But, it is also relevant to the idea of *free energy* being related to available resources in a society.

$$\text{Total Energy} = \text{Free Energy} + \text{Entropy}$$

Because destructive ideas like ideologies require resources to maintain them within their society – such as things like propaganda and police forces²⁶ – they

can be seen to be inversely-related to free energy in much the same way that entropy is.

But here, there is a slight paradox – if something like charity is entropic and represents the distribution of resources and information within a society, then how can idols and ideologies also be entropic?

MOLOCH: A HIDDEN THERMODYNAMIC FORCE?

In a past work, this author related the concept of Moloch, and its doctrine of child sacrifice, to modern manifestations of child sacrifice practiced in more contemporary times²⁷. Now with the understanding that it is also a thermodynamic force that feeds from sacrifices gained from social environments, it would seem that a central thermodynamic equation – at least as it applies to social systems – requires a slight amendment to account for “Moloch” or M^* –

$$\text{Total Resources} = \text{Free Resources} + \text{Entropy} + M^*$$

An alternate expression of this equation, which is more common in thermodynamics, expresses these quantities in relationship to the *Gibbs Free Energy* or “free resources” in a society:

$$\text{Free Resources} = \text{Total Resources} - \text{Entropy} - M^*$$

Here, the deleterious effects of Moloch, or idolatry more broadly, can be more clearly seen. Given that idols and ideologies directly compete with more wholesome priorities^{vi}, while contributing nothing to the overall system, it seems perfectly reasonable to at least identify them as a subset of the entropic force.

Thus, the paradox between the similarity between charity and Moloch sacrifice can be resolved by understanding that these are *competing forces* that both demand resources from social environments.

III. The Allure (and Cost) of a Lie

The relationship between ancient Canaanite sacrifices to Moloch and modern instantiations of sacrificial practices can be better understood by attempting to empathize with the parent of a child being sacrificed to Moloch in an ancient context. Revisiting and expanding on a quote provided earlier in this

^{vi} In a Jewish context, this would mean Torah study, activities that support Torah study, and elevation of the material in service of God and sanctification of Him.

document allows it to be appreciated with a new perspective –

“The priests would say that he is offering the greatest sacrifice...Other opinions, however, say that the child was actually scarred physically or even burned to death! The priests would bang and clap to drown the noise from the child’s screams so that the father would not regret his decision.”²⁸

From the Sages’ teachings, as well as some basic empathy, it can be easily understood that child sacrifice was not necessarily a pleasant procedure. In the same way that World War One required a great deal of propaganda to bring men into the trenches, burning or mutilating your own child requires a tremendous amount of social pressure, as well as some kind of social reward system and metaphysical lie to make possible. Masking the effects of sacrificial practices, by confusing the senses with noise, is also a core feature of these practices in the modern day.

The sages also teach that worshipping and serving these idols, at least back in ancient times when magic was more prevalent, provided people with immense physical and spiritual highs comparable to party drugs²⁹. Modern-day cults that emphasize physical practices for high-like effects, like the Rajneeshis or devotees of breathing expert Wim Hof, can be seen as cousins of this phenomenon, as can the intellectual pleasures enjoyed by cerebrally-inclined narcissists.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL LIBERAL MOMENT

If one pays close attention to people who espouse liberal policies, a pattern slowly emerges whereby many people reveal conflicts between their personal best interests and the demands of their stated values.

One example of this would be a liberal who discovers that welcoming homeless encampments into their neighborhood park means needles in play areas and occasional thefts and trespasses. Another might be someone who supports transgender rights, but then finds the presence of female penises in women’s private spaces to be emotionally intolerable. Such “moments of truth” – or moments of sacrifice³⁰ – are sometimes used as cannon fodder by conservative pundits, many of whom ironically believe their ticket to the afterlife is an act of human sacrifice.

THE WEST’S SELF-IMMOLATION

Because of the slow progression of liberal ideas over the past several decades, as well as the profoundly aggressive response to Donald Trump’s upset victory in the 2016 American election, the contemporary West finds itself facing the utter corruption of almost all major government organizations, corporations, nonprofits, media channels, and other key facets of modern infrastructure.

While conservative thinkers and other sober intellectuals have correctly identified this phenomenon of some kind of cultural war, the more troubling reality is that many Western countries are now sacrificing themselves on scales unseen since the Bolshevik Revolution and Great Leap Forward. As many resources as possible are being funneled into ineffective-but-trendy social justice initiatives, often in violation of the laws of physics comparable to Marxism’s attempt to rewrite economics³¹. The militaries of Western nations are neglected; educational systems are utterly destroyed and may now be a worse use of time than unstructured play.

This corrupted focus will inevitably lead to catastrophes not foreseeable from within our social system, and the degradation of Western life for no good reason. But such are the demands of Molochs – parasitic forces that conceal themselves alongside our laws of physics; destructive ideas that feed on the resources, energy, mental effort, and souls in our societies.

It may be most useful to consider whether one’s individual efforts, or the collective efforts one contributes to, are overall rooted in the advancement or destruction of human life. If, upon a review of the immediate and future consequences of an action, it ultimately leads to destruction, then it is likely that one is serving a Moloch without realizing it.

THE FRAGILITY SPIRAL OF LIE-DEOLOGIES

Although societies can maintain certain levels of Moloch-sacrifice for a time, at some point it seems that the laws of physics – or perhaps the laws of Heaven – demand *measure for measure*³². However, until a social group experiences a “black swan event” or a rock-bottom catastrophe that forces some reflection, these Molochs often remain unaddressed.

As can be seen from the trends in countries whose populations have committed genocide, these kinds of human-driven calamities are characterized by a series of escalating tensions and breaks from reality³³. In modern times, genocides and mass hysterias are often driven by the media, and many of the worst crimes are reactions, in some way, to a perceived threat.

Even the problems that seem to be out of direct human control, like economic crashes, can be understood as hidden laws of nature, documented in the Psalms as “arrows” loosed from the “bowstring” of Heaven³⁴. The essence of the metaphor echoes the patterns of social catastrophe, with tensions escalating over time followed by a magnificent snapback.

As can be seen from the historical record and our contemporary context, the demands of Moloch ideologies are ever-increasing. The ideologies become more complex, more mysterious – a science is made out of them, or an art. There become levels and layers of enlightenment in the ideology. Flags are made, statues are chiseled. People begin making donations or other “soft sacrifices” to demonstrate their piety.

The spiral goes down, down, down – and eventually Moloch demands someone's child. Then, either they must admit it is all a lie and has been all along, or make the same mistake that humans have been making since they were barbarians living in mud huts.

IN THOSE DAYS...

Given these realities, it is no wonder that idolatry will cease to exist on the Earth in the days of the Jewish Messiah. This will mean no wasted resources on even individual levels, no mental effort spent on ideas that distract from awareness of the Creator, and other benefits of focus – better culture, better relationships, and perhaps even some good pop music

References

RELEVANT NOTES FROM "TICKET TO HEAVEN"

- Pg. 74: An idol is a false idea that demands human sacrifice – often of children.
- Pg. 75-76: Most Westerners are functionally illiterate and dependent on experts – savagery.
- Pg. 92: West went from metaphysics to ethics and overlooked aesthetics (choice of values).
- Pg. 94: The default idols of the West are progress and growth – everything optimized for this.
- Pg. 125-126: J.B. Peterson – humans respond to anomaly with curiosity/courage or fear/denial.
- Pg. 128: People adopt premade mental models (ideologies) to cope in complex surroundings.
- Pg. 130: The memes that constitute Western ideologies are similar to computer viruses.
- Pg. 130: Choice between courageous curiosity and tyrannical denial is line between good/evil.
- Pg. 169: Language is the medium and psychotechnology used to facilitate education, society.
- Pg. 172-173: Disrupting a language affects information flow, creates alternate realities.
- Pg. 188: The fear of becoming an anomaly (and a threat) prevents many from speaking out.
- Pg. 189-191: Offloading responsibility to systems and experts created social entropy for West.
- Pg. 192: Compliance with tyranny is largely due to fear – job loss, exclusion, persecution, etc.
- Pg. 198: Populations become genocidal when their accumulated delusions are threatened.
- Pg. 202: Nietzsche advocated for intuitive and authentic lifestyles, not systematized societies.
- Pg. 203: Courage, growth, and truth are three key values that emerge from human psychology.
- Pg. 292: Noahide Laws form the minimum standard of sustainable societies – laws of physics.

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