

Suicide of the West

author: Jonah Goldberg

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Synopsis

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***NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER** — An urgent argument that America and other democracies are in peril because they have lost the will to defend the values and institutions that sustain freedom and prosperity.

Epic and debate-shifting. — David Brooks, *New York Times*

Only once in the last 250,000 years have humans stumbled upon a way to lift ourselves out of the endless cycle of poverty, hunger, and war that defines most of history. If democracy, individualism, and the free market were humankind's destiny, they should have appeared and taken hold a bit earlier in the evolutionary record. The emergence of freedom and prosperity was nothing short of a miracle.

As Americans we are doubly blessed, because the radical ideas that made the miracle possible were written not just into the Constitution but in our hearts, laying the groundwork for our uniquely prosperous society. Those ideas are:

- Our rights come from God, not from the government.
- The government belongs to us; we do not belong to it.
- The individual is sovereign. We are all captains of our own souls, not bound by the circumstances of our birth.
- The fruits of our labors belong to us.

In the last few decades, these political virtues have been turned into vices. As we are increasingly taught to view our traditions as a system of oppression, exploitation, and privilege, the principles of liberty and the rule of law are under attack from left and right. For the West to survive, we must renew our sense of gratitude for what our civilization has given us and rediscover the ideals and habits of the heart that led us out of the bloody muck of the past—or back to the muck we will go.

Reader's comments

comment 1: Emily Thompson

In 'Suicide of the West', Jonah Goldberg presents a compelling analysis of the current socio-political climate, arguing that Western civilization is in peril due to a collective abandonment of the principles that have historically upheld it. Goldberg's thesis is both provocative and timely, as he delves into the erosion of foundational values such as individual liberty, free markets, and the rule of law. His writing is incisive, blending historical insights with contemporary examples to illustrate how these pillars are being undermined by populism, identity politics, and a growing disdain for the Enlightenment ideals. While some may find Goldberg's perspective controversial, his arguments are rooted in a deep understanding of history and a genuine concern for the future of Western society. The book challenges readers to reflect on the cultural and political shifts that threaten to unravel the progress made over centuries. For those interested in the fate of democracy and the preservation of Western values, 'Suicide of the West' is an essential read that sparks necessary conversations about the direction we are heading and what can be done to alter course. Goldberg's work is a clarion call to action, urging society to recognize the importance of preserving the very ideas that have shaped our modern world.

â€”â€” Emily Thompson (2026-05-30 18:18:38)