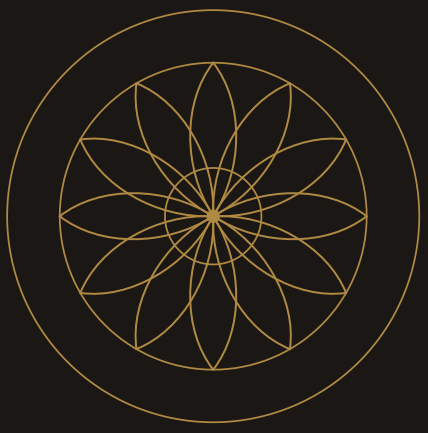


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Hare Krishna / ISKCON

Dharmic family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Hare Krishna / ISKCON in *The Sacred Divide*. It has 27 sections, the same 27 used for every tradition, so that any section can be set beside the same section for another. Every fact is sourced.

Before each section, a short note says what the section is built to show, so you know what you are looking at before you read the detail.

After each section, a note headed *Why this matters to you* points at the part of the section most likely to touch an ordinary reader: a member, a donor, a parent, a voter, someone thinking about leaving, or someone outside forming an opinion. It usually ends with a question. The questions are not traps. They are the ones a careful reader would ask anyway.

The hard questions in section 23 are set out one at a time: the question, why it is asked, and an example already documented in this record.

Where a note states a fact, the fact comes from this record's own tables and cited sources or, in a few places, from a well-known research finding named in the text. Corrections are logged, with their dates, in the last section, *What changed on this page*.

Contents

01 At a glance 10

Disclosure scorecard

02 A day inside 12

03 The forefront 15

The unanswered question · The widest gap between word and record · One cost of leaving, beside its denial · The strongest objection, answered

04 What healthy looks like here 18

05 History 20

Timeline · Moments in the room

06 Branches & variants 24

07 Structure 26

Size and shape · Authority · The top of the chain · Who holds what

08 Law & state here 31

Who can compel an answer

09 Money 33

Where it comes from · Follow the money · Pipelines this tradition shares · Money in numbers

10 Genealogy 37

11 Reach 40
Information · Children · Bodies

12 The 30 techniques 45
All thirty at a glance · Stage 1 · Idealize · Stage 2 · Hook · Stage 3 · Devalue · Stage 4 · Confuse · Stage 5 · Isolate · Stage 6 · Extract · Stage 7 · Discard · Stage 8 · Replace

13 The loops 86

14 Say versus do 97
What they say, what the record shows · Accountability or theatre? · Words used here

15 Cost & cover 100
What leaving costs · The ledger of exit · How the cost is denied

16 The ledger 104
Who benefits · Money out, leverage back · Who pays

17 Who gets hurt most 108
Where the weight lands

18 The middle tiers 110

19 Documented cases 111
Gurukula abuse litigation · New Vrindaban (United States, 1983–1996) · The temple two ISKCONs claimed (India, 2000 to the present)

20 Precedent 114
It has been broken before · Promises on the record · What would change this page

21 Voices from inside 117

22 Regional variants 119
United States · United Kingdom · India

23 The questions 121
In closing

24 Leaving safely here 126

25 Where to get help 127

26 Sources 130
Further sources

27 What changed on this page 134

How to read this

Every religion in The Sacred Divide is laid out the same way, in the same 27 sections, so that any section can be compared across religions. This file examines institutions, offices, money and power. It does not judge anyone's faith or the truth of any belief.

EVIDENCE GRADES

Each of the 30 techniques carries a grade for how it is established in this tradition.

- **CODIFIED** Written policy, published rule, contractual requirement, or a procedure the institution has confirmed in its own documents. The strongest grade and the hardest to deny.
- **DOCUMENTED** Established by court judgment, government inquiry, regulatory action, or financial filing. Not the institution's own words, but a body with subpoena power.
- **TAUGHT** Repeated leadership instruction from platform, publication, or curriculum, without a formal rule. Deniable as emphasis rather than policy.
- **CULTURAL** Community enforcement the institution neither mandates nor prevents. Real in effect, unattributable by design — the highest-deniability grade. A volume graded mostly Cultural has not been cleared of anything: it means the page names no document that makes the institution responsible. Cultural does not mean minor, and it is not a finding of absence.

- CONTESTED Occurs in some parts of the tradition and is actively opposed in others. Generalizing this grade across a whole tradition is a misuse of it.
- REFORMED Documented historically and materially changed since — policy withdrawn, practice ended, or independent oversight accepted. Recorded because omitting it would be dishonest.
- UNGRADED Present in the source material without a grade assigned yet. Read as an unverified pattern claim, not as a finding.

RECEIPTS

Bracketed labels such as [OFFICIAL POLICY] name the kind of source a claim rests on.

- **Official policy.** The institution's own written rule: handbook, canon, policy letter, catechism, trust deed, temple recommend question. The strongest evidence available, because it cannot be attributed to a rogue individual.
- **Court record.** Judgments, convictions, filings, and testimony given under oath. Adversarially tested, which is more than most religious claims about themselves have been.
- **Government inquiry.** Royal commissions, grand juries, parliamentary and state investigations with subpoena power. Where these exist they are usually the best record of what an institution did rather than said.
- **Regulatory action.** Findings and penalties from bodies like the SEC or consumer-protection regulators. Narrow in scope, unusually precise in what they establish.
- **Financial record.** Filings, audited statements, tax returns, disclosed compensation, property transactions. Frequently the only place an institution tells the truth about its priorities.

- **Leadership statement.** Recorded sermons, conference addresses, published letters. The institution in its own voice, to its own people, on the record.
- **Independent investigation.** Reports commissioned by the institution but conducted externally. Weaker than a court and far stronger than a press release — and notable when the institution publishes them in full.
- **Academic source.** Peer-reviewed history, sociology, and demography. Best for context, structure, and scale; weaker for specific institutional conduct.
- **Former member testimony.** Firsthand accounts from people who were inside. Indispensable and interested at once — graded as testimony, never presented as documentary proof.
- **Pattern observed.** A recurring configuration with no single document behind it. Labeled as an observation rather than a finding, and the weakest claim type in this codex.

METHOD

- Separation of targets. This codex analyzes institutional control patterns, never the worth of believers or the truth of beliefs. Theology is out of scope; behavior, money, and power are in scope.
- Pattern over anecdote. A tactic is attributed to a tradition's high-control expressions only where the mechanism recurs — one bad congregation proves nothing; the same architecture in a hundred proves the architecture.
- Evidence weighting. Every factual claim carries a bracketed source-type label and should carry a grade (A–D). Claims marked SOURCE NEEDED or PATTERN OBSERVED are analysis, not established fact, and must not be published as fact.
- Steelman rule. Every tactic section presents the institution's strongest defense before countering it. If the defense cannot be stated in a form its adherents would recognize, the counter is not yet earned.

- Asymmetry honesty. Similar tactic does not mean identical severity. A shunning policy that costs your entire family is not the same as a community that cools toward doubters, and the codex must never flatten that difference.
- The mirror rule. Any framework this powerful can itself be misused — to smear traditions, flatter one's own, or manufacture grievance. The self-audit and language guardrails apply to this project as much as to any institution it examines.

CITATIONS

A small raised number in the text links to the matching item in this religion's Sources, near the end. Every source was checked, and the date of the last check is shown at the top.

01 At a glance

BEFORE YOU READ

The whole page on one screen: how big Hare Krishna / ISKCON is, who sits at the top, how that person is chosen and whether anyone can remove them, where the money comes from, and what leaving costs. The disclosure scorecard underneath asks six yes-or-no questions any charity or public company would be expected to answer. Every later section expands one of these rows.

SIZE	ISKCON itself says it has about a million congregational members (devotees who live outside the temple and attend its programs) and about 10,000 temple members (full-time residents of ashrams, the temple communities where devotees live and serve) worldwide; this page found no independent count [20]. LEADERSHIP STATEMENT
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The Governing Body Commission (GBC), the collective council that governs ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness), has roughly thirty-plus members who have overseen the movement worldwide since the death of its founder, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, in 1977. It approves initiating gurus (gurus who give formal initiation to disciples) and, on the record, has suspended and removed them.
CHOSEN BY	Co-option by the GBC.

REMOVABLE BY	The GBC itself.
MONEY IN ONE LINE	Book distribution quotas (sankirtana, the public distribution of the founder's books) historically drove aggressive fundraising. The money also comes from temple economies, restaurant chains, festival revenue and donor cultivation, and unpaid devotee labor is the base asset. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	Leaving costs one's entire community and often years of unpaid labor with no equity. The 'bad association' doctrine (the teaching that contact with critics and former members is spiritually harmful) frames departure as spiritual death. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	The settlement with the former pupils of the gurukulas (ISKCON's residential boarding schools) acknowledged the harm in writing. Which of the structures that produced it were dismantled, rather than renamed?
EVIDENCE	1 of 30 techniques sourced to a named document; grades: Documented 1, Cultural 15, Taught 11, Contested 3
FAMILY	Dharmic — hinduism, hare-krishna, sikhism, jainism
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
PARTIAL	NO	YES	YES	YES	PARTIAL

Y Yes — established from a public source · **P** Partial — true of some parts of the tradition, or true in some jurisdictions · **N** No — not established from any public source · **?** Not assessable — no institutional apex exists to assess

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is "Co-option by the GBC", and to who can remove its holder, "The GBC itself". Read that as though it described the board of a pension fund holding your savings. Would you accept the arrangement there? The scorecard finds no public evidence of leaders' pay. It does find a public safeguarding policy, allegations going to police first and a written removal procedure, and that deserves credit. Each "No" is something the institution could publish tomorrow. Ask yourself why it hasn't.

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

One ordinary day, told from inside. The person is a composite built from documented patterns, not a real individual. The point is to make the structure visible at human scale: phrases like "removal mechanism" or "giving record" are easy to read past, but a Tuesday organized around them is not.

Radhika · A Tuesday in Kartik · A temple community in the American Midwest

Mangala arati (the dawn worship service) at 4:30. Sixteen rounds (sixteen circuits of a 108-bead string, reciting the Hare Krishna mantra once per bead) by seven. The kirtan (call-and-response devotional chanting) gets into her chest the way it has since 1994, when she was twenty and it saved her, actually saved her, from something she does not discuss.

She is fifty-one. She has cooked for the deities (the consecrated images of Krishna worshiped in the temple) and for the community for twenty-nine years. She has never been paid. She has a room, prasadam (food first offered to Krishna), and a community, and no bank account of consequence, no employment record, and no idea what a 401k is.

At nine she talks to Bhakti-lata's daughter, who is twenty-four and was in the gurukula in Alachua as a small child, and who is here for a wedding and has not been to a temple in eleven years. The young woman is polite. There is something behind the politeness that Radhika recognizes and cannot look at.

At eleven the temple president mentions the renovation fund and the target, and Radhika says of course, and then thinks about the fact that she does not know what the temple's income is, has never seen a statement, and has never asked in twenty-nine years.

In the afternoon she reads a book she has read many times. There is a passage about the intelligence of women. She reads past it, as she has read past it since 1996, and notices herself reading past it, which is new — that started maybe two years ago.

At night, prasadam on a steel plate, and she is entirely happy in a way she does not think her sister in Cleveland has been happy in thirty years. And then she thinks about the acknowledgment the movement published in

1998, which she read, and about the young woman at the wedding, and she thinks: we said it. We wrote it down. That is more than most. And then, in the dark: what did we actually give her?

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Did any moment in that day feel familiar: a cost nobody questions, a door nobody can see how to open? The section of this page that explains that moment is the one to read first. If nothing felt familiar, ask whether that's because it isn't your life, or because the patterns have become normal to you.

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

The page's thesis in one place. First, the single question the documented record could not answer. Then the widest gap between what the institution says and what the record shows, one cost of leaving set beside how it is officially denied, and the strongest objection to this whole page, answered rather than dismissed.

> You may have found something genuinely joyful here — the chanting, the food, the sense that devotion could be the whole of life. That is real. And your movement did something few institutions in this codex have done: it published an acknowledgment of what happened to its own children, with more candor than most have managed. Hold both while you read.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

The settlement with the former pupils of the gurukulas (ISKCON's residential boarding schools) acknowledged the harm in writing. Which of the structures that produced it were dismantled, rather than renamed?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Devotional service is voluntary.	Twenty-five years of full-time labor for room and board leaves a devotee with no savings, work history, or equity.	FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	A TYPICAL REPLY (COMPOSITE, NOT A QUOTED STATEMENT)
Community and identity	Yes	A devotee's whole social world is lost; leaving means losing everyone and, for ashram devotees, housing and income at once.	"Devotees are free to live as they wish."

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. You are dredging up the 1970s and ignoring forty years of reform.

What is true in it. The objection is substantially fair. The zonal guru era (the period after 1977 when eleven of Prabhupada's disciples each held initiating authority over a region; see section 5) ended, residential schooling was largely abandoned, a Child Protection Office was created, and the movement published its own acknowledgment of the abuse — more candor than most institutions in this codex have managed.

The answer. So the profile records those reforms (sections 5 and 20) and says so. None of the thirty techniques is graded Reformed, because the reforms changed the guru system and the schools, not the adult routines those entries describe. What remains unsettled is narrower: what reached the specific children, how many are still waiting, and what a devotee leaves with after twenty-five years of unpaid full-time service.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *The settlement with the former pupils of the gurukulas (ISKCON's residential boarding schools) acknowledged the harm in writing. Which of the structures that produced it were dismantled, rather than renamed?* If you can't, who could, and would asking them be welcome? How an institution reacts to a fair question often tells you more than the answer does.

04 What healthy looks like here

BEFORE YOU READ

What genuinely works in Hare Krishna / ISKCON, stated first and separately from any critique. That is a standing rule of this book: no tradition is reduced to its worst documented moments. Anything criticized later is measured against the best of what is described here.

> The International Society for Krishna Consciousness was founded in 1966 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It took Gaudiya Vaishnava devotion (the Bengali devotional tradition of Chaitanya, described in section 5) worldwide: chanting, vegetarianism, temple communities and book distribution.

- What healthy looks like here is congregational (non-ashram) membership, which is a lower-control mode; second-generation devotees reforming the movement from within; and transparent temple boards.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

A bias check before the critique. People tend to read criticism of their own group as an attack and criticism of other groups as simply true. Social psychologists call this in-group bias; it shows up even when the groups are assigned at random (Tajfel's "minimal group" experiments, 1971). If you belong here, did this section feel fair? If you don't, did anything in it surprise you? The surprise is a rough measure of what you had assumed.

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated timeline and a few moments where the direction changed. Dates matter because they show that most rules had a beginning. A rule that began in a particular year, for a particular reason, is a rule that can be examined, and sometimes retired.

The movement began when the New York counterculture of the 1960s met a Bengali devotional lineage. Explosive growth was followed by a post-founder succession crisis (the zonal guru era) marked by documented abuses, and then by extensive litigation over child abuse in the gurukulas (the Turley case, settled from 2005 onward). COURT RECORD

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



Numbered markers match the timeline below; spacing is proportional to the years.

1 **1486–1534**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's bhakti movement in Bengal

It was a devotional tradition that emphasized chanting and explicitly rejected caste barriers to devotion.

2 **1896–1977**

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's life, his training in the Gaudiya Vaishnava line and his mission in the West

A single missionary carried the lineage to the West at the age of 69.

3 **1966**

ISKCON incorporated in New York

Recruitment from the counterculture brought people into a strict monastic-devotional discipline.

4 **1968–1977**

Rapid global expansion; gurukula boarding schools founded; book distribution campaigns

Growth outpaced safeguarding entirely.

5 **1970–1977**

Governing Body Commission created 1970; Prabhupada dies 1977

Succession was left to a committee plus eleven initiating gurus.

6 **1977–1987**

Zonal ācārya (senior teacher and guru) era: the eleven gurus assume near-absolute regional authority

The era saw documented abuses of power, expulsions, and in one case murder convictions (New Vrindaban). COURT RECORD

7 1980S–1990S

Gurukula abuse becomes known; reform of guru system; many second-generation members leave

The children of the movement paid for its structure.

8 1998

ISKCON publishes an internal acknowledgment of gurukula child abuse

This was a rare instance of an institution documenting its own harm in print. OFFICIAL POLICY

9 2000–2008

Turley litigation on behalf of former gurukula students; settlement following ISKCON bankruptcy filings

The litigation brought legal accountability together with financial restructuring. COURT RECORD

10 1990S–PRESENT

Child Protection Office established; congregational (non-ashram) membership becomes the majority mode

This structural reform reduced the highest-risk configuration.

11 2000S–PRESENT

Growth in India and among diaspora Hindus; large temple projects

The movement's center of gravity returned to India.

Moments in the room

1977–1987 — THE ZONAL ACHARYAS, AND THE COLLAPSE

After Prabhupada's death, eleven disciples assumed initiating-guru authority over geographic zones with near-absolute local power. Within a decade most had been removed, resigned, or fallen amid scandal, and the system was dismantled by the Governing Body Commission.

Why it matters. This is one of the very few cases in this codex of a religious body removing its own top rank, and it did so repeatedly. It happened only after catastrophe.

2000–2008 — THE GURUKULA LITIGATION

A lawsuit brought on behalf of former children of ISKCON boarding schools led to a bankruptcy-court settlement and formal acknowledgment of abuse in the movement's schools.

Why it matters. The reckoning was purchased in a courtroom, by the children it happened to, decades later. That is the honest sequence and this page states it in that order.

1990S–PRESENT — CHILD PROTECTION, BUILT AFTER

ISKCON established a central Child Protection Office with investigative and sanctioning powers over its own officials — a structure that did not exist when it was needed.

Why it matters. This is what reform under subpoena actually produces: something real, something partial, and something that arrived too late for the people who forced it.

Sources for this section: 1 3 7

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Pick one rule that shapes your week and look for it on the timeline. If it has a start date, it was decided by people at a particular moment, for reasons of that moment. Were you taught it as timeless? What would it mean for you if it turned out to be younger than your grandparents' grandparents?

06 Branches & variants

BEFORE YOU READ

Hare Krishna / ISKCON is not one bloc. This section maps the main branches and variants, so that nothing documented about one community is read as true of all of them.

The branches are ISKCON proper; the Gaudiya Math lineages (the older Gaudiya Vaishnava organizations in India) that it emerged from; and splinter groups, namely Gaudiya Vaishnava reform bodies and ritvik movements (which dispute guru succession).

BRANCH	WHERE	WHAT DIFFERS ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
ISKCON	ISKCON operates worldwide; it was founded in 1966 and has been governed by the Governing Body Commission (GBC) since 1970 [7]	Its initiating gurus are approved by the GBC; women gurus were approved in 2019 and 2021 and paused in November 2022; in February 2026 the GBC resolved that, until the question is satisfactorily resolved, qualified women be recognized as siksa-gurus (instructing gurus) only, with the exception of Narayani Devi Dasi, who remains diksa-guru (initiating guru) of her current disciples [6] [18]
Ritvik groups	Ritvik groups are found in India and elsewhere	They hold that Prabhupada's disciples should initiate only as his representatives, not as gurus in their own right. In the Bangalore dispute (section 19), ISKCON Bangalore, an independent registered society, took the view that disciples act as Prabhupada's representatives [10]
Gaudiya Math lineages	The Gaudiya Math lineages are found in India and worldwide	They are the older tradition that ISKCON came from [7]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Hare Krishna / ISKCON, you know one community. Most bad generalizations about a religion, and most unfair defenses of it, come from treating one branch as the whole. Which branch is the one you picture when you hear the name? Is that picture yours, or one you were given by news coverage or by the community itself?

07 Structure

BEFORE YOU READ

The organizational chart: how many people and institutions there are, where authority sits, who holds the top office, and who holds what beneath it. The question to keep in mind is simple: if the person at the top got something badly wrong, what written procedure exists to correct or remove them?

Size and shape

Adherents	ISKCON itself says it has about a million congregational members and about 10,000 temple members (full-time ashram residents) worldwide; this page found no independent count [20]. LEADERSHIP STATEMENT
Regions	ISKCON's presence is largest in India (including major temple projects in Mayapur and Vrindavan). It is also present in the United States, the UK, Russia and the former USSR, Brazil, South Africa and Australia.
Trend	The congregational model has grown substantially while ashram residency has shrunk; Indian and diaspora Hindu participation now dominates.

Participation	The distinction matters enormously here: a congregational member attending a temple program on Sundays is in a very different structure from a full-time ashram devotee, and most documented harms occurred in the latter.

Authority

- Authority rests on the Governing Body Commission together with the initiating gurus. The guru surrender doctrine (the teaching that a devotee submits completely to the guru) meets committee governance, a hybrid with recurring accountability gaps. ACADEMIC SOURCE / FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY

The top of the chain

> This is a rare structure in this codex: a religious body that has actually disciplined its own top rank, after catastrophe and not before.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
The Governing Body Commission	It has roughly thirty-plus members overseeing ISKCON worldwide since Prabhupada's death in 1977; it approves initiating gurus and, on the record, has suspended and removed them.	The GBC chooses its members by co-option.	The GBC itself removes them.
The initiating gurus	Each initiating guru leads a network of individual disciples and operates under GBC law.	The GBC approves them.	The GBC can suspend them; it has done so, which is more than most pages in this codex can say.
The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust	Prabhupada founded it in 1972 to hold and publish his books; its stated purpose is to spend book-sale proceeds on printing his books and building ISKCON centers [21].	Prabhupada named its first trustees in the 1972 agreement; how later trustees are chosen is not recorded on this page.	Not recorded on this page. Prabhupada wrote in 1970 that its trustees are also GBC members but that its function does not depend on the GBC [21].

> **THE TELL**
>
> The zonal-acharya collapse and the gurukula settlement forced the reform of the guru system and the creation of the Child Protection Office. It is what reform under subpoena looks like: real, partial, and purchased at the children's expense.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
The Governing Body Commission	Collective authority	Co-opted commissioners	It holds global governance of the movement and oversight of initiating gurus.	It decides who may initiate you, and who answers for them.	OFFICIAL POLICY
Initiating gurus	Personal authority	Individually authorized gurus	They hold surrender relationships and personal donation flows with limited audit.	They receive your obedience and your dakshina (donations offered to the guru).	OFFICIAL POLICY / PATTERN OBSERVED
The zonal ācārya era	Historical governance failure	Eleven gurus assumed near-absolute regional authority after 1977.	The era left a record of documented abuses of power, expulsions, and in one community murder convictions.	It is proof that the structure, not the men, was the problem.	COURT RECORD
The gurukula system	Residential schooling	School administrations ran them.	They held children separated from their parents; abuse is documented in litigation and in the movement's own 1998 acknowledgment.	They affected a generation of the movement's own children.	COURT RECORD / OFFICIAL POLICY

Temple corporations and restaurant operations	Commercial-devotional	Temple presidents and boards	They hold property and revenue built on unpaid devotee labor.	They are built on twenty-five years of your work, with no equity to show for it.	FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
The Child Protection Office	Reform institution	Movement-appointed officers	It runs screening and safeguarding, a genuine reform worth naming as such.	It bears on whether the next generation is safer.	OFFICIAL POLICY

Sources for this section: 4 5 7

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

ISKCON is governed by the Governing Body Commission, about thirty-plus members who fill their own seats by co-option. It approves initiating gurus and, the record shows, has suspended and removed them. That is more than many movements in this book can say. The page calls it "reform under subpoena": real, partial, and "purchased at the children's expense." If you are a devotee, do you know who sits on the GBC for your region, and how you could reach them?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

What states actually do. That includes how they fund, protect, regulate or enforce the tradition, and which outside body, if any, can compel an answer from it. For most readers, this is where the institution meets their own passport.

COUNTRY	WHAT THE LAW DOES	WHAT HAPPENED
United States — abuse	Civil claims and bankruptcy law apply [3]	A suit filed in Texas in 2000 by 92 former gurukula pupils led, through ISKCON's Chapter 11 filings (US bankruptcy reorganization), to a $9.5 million settlement in 2005 covering about 450 victims [3]
United States — New Vrindaban	Criminal law applies [4 5]	A devotee was convicted of two murders: Charles St. Denis (killed 1983; convicted 1986) and Steve Bryant (killed 1986; convicted 1991) [4]; the community's leader pleaded guilty to one racketeering count in 1996 [5 23]
India — property	Society registration law and the civil courts apply [10]	The Supreme Court held in May 2025 that the Bangalore temple belongs to ISKCON Bangalore, not ISKCON Mumbai, after a 25-year dispute; Mumbai's review petition produced a split decision in November 2025, and on 17 August 2026 the Chief Justice said the Court would consider a fresh bench, so the review remains pending [10 11 19]
United Kingdom	Charity law applies [9]	Bhaktivedanta Manor files public accounts [9]

Who can compel an answer

Charity regulators can compel an answer from individual temples and national bodies. The courts can, and they are where the gurukula matter was resolved. The GBC can internally, and it is one of the few internal bodies in this codex with a record of actually acting against its own top rank.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Almost every structural change on this page came through a court. A suit by 92 former gurukula pupils in 2000 led, through Chapter 11 filings, to a $9.5 million settlement in 2005 covering about 450 victims. Criminal courts convicted a devotee of two murders at New Vrindaban. If you are a parent considering residential religious schooling anywhere, the lesson of this page is simple: ask who inspects it, and who a child can report to outside it.

Charity regulators can compel an answer from individual temples and national bodies.

09 Money

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the money comes from, how each flow is justified, how it can be used to control, and who benefits. Read it the way you would read any organization you give to: what is disclosed, what is not, and who decides.

Where it comes from

- Book distribution (sankirtana) quotas historically drove aggressive fundraising. The money also comes from temple economies, restaurant chains, festival revenue and donor cultivation, and unpaid devotee labor is the base asset. **FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Book distribution (sankirtana) quotas	The stated purpose is to spread Prabhupada's teachings.	Quota pressure historically produced aggressive and sometimes deceptive fundraising, including airport solicitation	The movement's expansion and individual temple presidents' standing benefit. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Unpaid devotee labor	The stated purpose is devotional service.	Devotees give full-time labor for room and board with no wages, pension, or equity, and this is the movement's economic base.	Temples and institutional assets benefit. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
Temple donations, life memberships, restaurant and festival revenue	The stated purpose is temple operations and outreach.	The revenue is substantial, with historically weak financial transparency to devotees.	Temple administrations benefit.
Guru dakshina and initiation relationships	The stated purpose is to support one's spiritual master.	Personal donation flows to individual gurus are subject to limited audit.	Initiating gurus benefit.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

Book distribution (sankirtana) quotas	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is to spread Prabhupada's teachings. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Quota pressure historically produced aggressive and sometimes deceptive fundraising, including airport solicitation	The movement's expansion and individual temple presidents' standing benefit. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Unpaid devotee labor	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is devotional service. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Devotees give full-time labor for room and board with no wages, pension, or equity, and this is the movement's economic base.	Temples and institutional assets benefit. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
Temple donations, life memberships, restaurant and festival revenue	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is temple operations and outreach. **HOW IT CONTROLS** The revenue is substantial, with historically weak financial transparency to devotees.	Temple administrations benefit.
Guru dakshina and initiation relationships	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is to support one's spiritual master. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Personal donation flows to individual gurus are subject to limited audit.	Initiating gurus benefit.

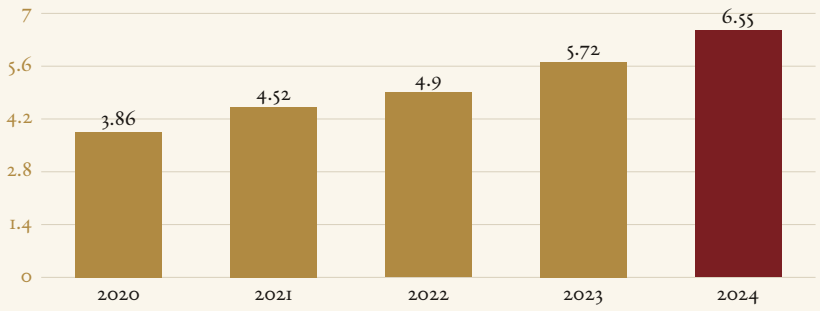
Not to scale. The table gives one figure, the German church tax of €6.75bn in 2025; the other flows are shown without amounts.

Pipelines this tradition shares

No shared pipeline cards are shown for this tradition. The four standard cards did not fit it, and nothing on this page sources them; the flows this page does source are in the table above and in the Bhaktivedanta Manor figures below.

Money in numbers

ISKCON BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR (UK): INCOME



£ million, years to 31 December — ISKCON's best-known UK temple; public because it is a registered charity. [9]

- **Bhaktivedanta Manor, 2024:** Donations supplied £3.88m of its £6.55m income, and £5.35m was spent [9].

- **The gurukula settlement:** The settlement was $9.5 million for about 450 victims (2005), with individual payments from $2,500 to $50,000 [3].
- **Book distribution and temple economies** are described under Money above.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The movement's base asset, the page says, is unpaid devotee labor, alongside book distribution, temple economies, restaurants and festivals. Book-distribution quotas historically drove aggressive fundraising. If you have eaten at a Govinda's restaurant or bought a book at an airport, you have taken part in this economy. If you are a devotee, what have you built, and who holds the title to it?

10 Genealogy

BEFORE YOU READ

Rules with a history. Each card asks the same three questions: what was this rule originally for, has that reason expired, and who benefits from the rule continuing anyway?

GURU SURRENDER AS INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

Origin. It began as the traditional Gaudiya Vaishnava guru-disciple relationship and was radicalized after 1977, in the zonal ācārya era, when eleven gurus assumed near-absolute regional authority. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It was for personal apprenticeship in a devotional lineage, in a village-scale setting where the community could observe the relationship.

Why that reason expired. Scaled to global organizational authority, surrender to the guru became surrender to a corporate officer. The zonal era produced documented abuses of power, expulsions, and in one community, murder convictions. COURT RECORD

Who benefits now. Initiating gurus and institutional office-holders benefit. The tradition's own reforms narrowed this — which proves it was structural, not scriptural.

GURUKULA RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING

Origin. The gurukulas were founded in the movement's first decade, drawing on an ancient Indian model of residential education. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. They were for devotional education from childhood, in a movement that believed it was building a new civilization.

Why that reason expired. Children were separated from parents into institutions with no safeguarding, minimal secular education, and, as documented in litigation and in the movement's own 1998 acknowledgment, extensive physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. COURT RECORD / OFFICIAL POLICY

Who benefits now. No one benefits now; the model was largely abandoned and a Child Protection Office was created. The cost fell on one generation of children, and that debt is not settled by structural reform.

BOOK DISTRIBUTION QUOTAS

Origin. It began with sankirtana campaigns in the 1970s, with quotas driving distribution numbers. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

What it was for. It was for spreading the founder's translations, which was genuinely his central instruction.

Why that reason expired. Quota pressure produced aggressive and at times deceptive fundraising, including airport solicitation, with temple presidents' standing tied to numbers. When a spiritual practice is measured in units, it becomes a sales target.

Who benefits now. Institutional expansion and the internal standing of local leaders benefit. The devotees doing the soliciting were unpaid.

UNPAID DEVOTEE LABOR

Origin. Ashram life has involved, from the beginning, room and board in exchange for full-time service. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY

What it was for. It was for a renunciate community (one built on giving up personal possessions), in which nobody owned anything and everyone was fed.

Why that reason expired. A renunciate owns nothing and the order owns nothing either. Here the organization accumulated substantial temple and property assets while devotees who gave decades left with no savings, no work history, and no equity.

Who benefits now. Temple administrations and institutional assets benefit. This is the mechanism that makes exit after twenty years economically catastrophic.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The expired-reason test works on any rule. Take one you follow or enforce, name what it was originally for, and ask whether that reason still exists. If it doesn't, and the rule survives anyway, the section's last question is the one that matters to you: who benefits from it continuing?

11 Reach

BEFORE YOU READ

How far the institution's authority extends into three private areas: what members may read and hear, how children are raised and schooled, and decisions about their own bodies.

Information

- The 'bad association' doctrine discourages contact with critics, ex-members, and outside interpretations of the scriptures. OFFICIAL POLICY / FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
- In some teaching, guru authority is framed as non-different from scripture, which turns criticism of a guru into criticism of God. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Countervailing fact worth stating: ISKCON published its own acknowledgment of child abuse and created a protection office — more institutional candor than most bodies in this codex have managed. OFFICIAL POLICY

Children

- Gurukula boarding schools separated young children from parents; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse is documented across multiple locations and was the subject of major litigation. COURT RECORD
- Children were raised on the assumption of lifelong devotional service, with limited secular education in the early decades.
- Reform through the Child Protection Office, background screening, and a shift away from residential schooling substantially changed the risk structure. OFFICIAL POLICY

Bodies

- Prabhupada's recorded statements on women's intelligence and status remain in the movement's canonical literature and are a live internal dispute. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- Women's roles in temple leadership and initiation authority have expanded but remain contested; the female diksha-guru (initiating guru) question has been a major recent controversy — approved by the GBC in 2019 and 2021, paused in November 2022, and in February 2026 limited by a GBC resolution: until the question is satisfactorily resolved, qualified women are to be recognized as siksa-gurus (instructing gurus) only, with the exception of Narayani Devi Dasi, who remains diksa-guru (initiating guru) of her current disciples [18]. OFFICIAL POLICY
- The movement practices arranged marriages, expects celibacy of unmarried devotees, and strictly regulates sexual life (procreation-only in strict practice).
- Sexual misconduct by senior figures with devotee women is documented. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / COURT RECORD

Sources for this section: 1 2 6 8 18

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a parent, this is the section about your children: what they may read, what they are taught about their bodies, and who else has a say in their schooling. Ask what your child would need to do at sixteen to hear the strongest case against what they were taught. Would they be allowed? Would they know it existed?

The 'bad association' doctrine discourages contact with critics, ex-members, and outside interpretations of the scriptures.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

1	11	15	3
DOCUMENTED	TAUGHT	CULTURAL	CONTESTED

STAGE 1 Idealize	1 Love Bombing CULTURAL	2 Weaponized Generosity CULTURAL		
STAGE 2 Hook	3 Future Faking TAUGHT	4 Hoovering TAUGHT		
STAGE 3 Devalue	5 Devaluation TAUGHT	6 Gaslighting TAUGHT	7 Double Bind TAUGHT	
STAGE 4 Confuse	8 Intermittent Reinforcement CULTURAL	9 Moving the Goalposts CULTURAL	10 Strategic Ambiguity CULTURAL	11 Projection CULTURAL
	12 DARVO CULTURAL	13 Normalization / Desensitization CULTURAL		
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation CULTURAL	15 Triangulation CULTURAL		

STAGE 6 Extract	16 Flying Monkeys **CULTURAL**	17 Smear Campaign **TAUGHT**	18 Silent Treatment / Stonewalling **CULTURAL**	19 Manufactured Consent **TAUGHT**
	20 Trauma Bonding **TAUGHT**	21 Learned Helplessness **TAUGHT**	22 Benevolent Control **TAUGHT**	23 Infantilization **CONTESTED**
	24 Identity Erosion **TAUGHT**	25 Spiritual Bypassing **DOCUMENTED**	26 Financial Control **CULTURAL**	
STAGE 7 Discard	27 Manufactured Crisis **CONTESTED**	28 Discard **CONTESTED**		
STAGE 8 Replace	29 Replacement **CULTURAL**	30 Plausible Deniability **CULTURAL**		

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle.

BEFORE YOU READ

A fixed checklist of thirty influence and control patterns from research on coercive control and social psychology, applied here to institutions rather than to individual people. Every entry carries an evidence grade. The grade matters more than the name of the technique: Codified or Documented means there is a paper trail; Contested means the claim is disputed.

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle. Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition.

Stage 1 · Idealize

You arrive with a need and are met with more warmth than you have had in years.

The welcome consists of chanting, dancing, prasadam, festival color, and the message that Krishna has been waiting for you personally. It is immersive and it is generous.

What it asks of you: The joy was real. It also arrived before the regulations did.

1 · Love Bombing

Overwhelming affection on arrival to create emotional dependency before terms are revealed.

How it shows here

- Newcomers are drawn through chanting, dancing, prasadam, temple meals, colorful worship, music, community, and the promise of joyful devotion.
- The love is immersive: people chant with you, feed you, give you books, invite you to festivals, and tell you Krishna has been waiting for you.
- The stricter demands often arrive after attachment: regulated chanting, dietary rules, sexual restrictions, guru loyalty, devotional service, donations, and separation from "materialistic" life.

The strongest defense. Feeding people and chanting God's names are acts of devotion, not manipulation.

The counter. Free food is beautiful. But if the meal leads into a system where love increases with surrender and decreases with independence, the plate was also a recruitment tool. The sweetness is real. So is the hook.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The welcome the entry describes is ordinary devotional practice at temples; that the stricter demands arrive after attachment is a reported pattern, not a documented one.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- ISKCON often offers prasadam, chanting, festivals, music, temple community, books, spiritual friendship, and a joyful devotional atmosphere.
- Free food and ecstatic chanting can make the temple feel like refuge, especially for lonely seekers or people disillusioned with material life.
- The obligation may appear through expectations of chanting rounds, dietary rules, sexual restrictions, devotional service, book distribution, donations, guru loyalty, and separation from "materialistic" society.
- The person who came for food and song may slowly become a laborer for the mission.

The strongest defense. Prasadam is sacred food distributed freely as devotion. Feeding people is not manipulation.

The counter. Feeding people is beautiful. But if the food opens the door to a system where surrender is praised and independence is treated as material contamination, then the meal is doing institutional work. The sweetness is real. So is the strategy.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Free food, chanting and festivals are ordinary temple practice; that they carry an unspoken obligation is the pattern this entry describes, not a documented finding.

Stage 2 · Hook

You are given a future that cannot be verified, and a rope for whenever you drift toward the door.

The future offered is Krishna consciousness, liberation from the material world, and eternal service in a spiritual realm, all of it undated and unverifiable. Retrieval comes through festival, prasadam, and the assurance that Krishna never abandons anyone, and neither does the temple.

What it asks of you: You were told Krishna was waiting for you personally. Ask who was standing beside him holding the schedule.

3 · Future Faking

Promising a future that keeps you invested but never has to arrive.

How it shows here

- ISKCON future-fakes through Krishna consciousness, return to Godhead, liberation from material life, devotional ecstasy, spiritual identity, and eternal service to Krishna.
- The newcomer is told that ordinary life is material illusion, but chanting, prasadam, guru, temple life, and devotional service open the path to the real future.

- The promise is intimate and cosmic: you are not merely improving yourself; you are recovering your eternal relationship with Krishna.
- Present sacrifice is reframed as purification: regulated sex, dietary restriction, chanting rounds, temple service, donations, book distribution, and guru obedience.
- If joy fades, the answer is rarely that the system overpromised. The answer is more chanting, less offense, more surrender, more association, more purity.

The strongest defense. Devotional practice offers genuine spiritual joy and liberation from material suffering.

The counter. Devotion becomes future faking when the ordinary human world is devalued so completely that the only acceptable future is deeper institutional surrender. If every disappointment proves material contamination and every cure requires more temple loyalty, the promised return to Godhead functions as a hook tied to a mop bucket, donation box, and guru seat.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Krishna consciousness and liberation from material existence are taught as the deferred goal.

4 · Hoovering

Pulling someone back after they've started to leave, through guilt, love, or fear.

How it shows here

- Someone leaving ISKCON may be pulled back through prasadam, kirtan, festivals, devotee friendships, guru loyalty, and the sweetness of Krishna devotion.
- They may hear: "You are in maya," "Material life is pulling you away," "Just chant again," "Come take prasadam," "Don't commit offenses." (Maya is illusion, the material energy that obscures reality; an offense is a spiritual offense, such as criticizing a devotee or a guru.)
- The community may frame departure as spiritual forgetfulness, contamination, bad association, or lack of surrender.
- Former devotees may be urged to resume rounds, attend temple programs, reconnect with the guru, or return to devotional service.
- If they left due to abuse, burnout, exploitation, or authoritarian leadership, the response may be: "Do not blame Krishna for imperfect devotees."

The strongest defense. Devotees invite people back because chanting and Krishna consciousness bring joy.

The counter. Joy becomes a hook when every alternative life is dismissed as illusion. If leaving is always maya and returning is always devotion, then the system has rigged the vocabulary so only surrender can sound spiritual.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT The phrases the entry lists for someone who is leaving (maya, offense, bad association) come from the movement's own teaching about departure.

Stage 3 · Devalue

You are taught that you are broken, that your perception is unreliable, and that both exits from the trap lead back inside.

You are told that your rounds are not chanted attentively enough, your service is not surrendered enough, and your consciousness is too material. The standard is total and you are always partial.

What it asks of you: Notice that your ordinary human limits were reclassified as spiritual failure.

5 · Devaluation

Reducing your sense of worth so you become dependent on the institution for identity.

How it shows here

- ISKCON can devalue ordinary identity by calling material life illusion, worldly attachment, maya, sense gratification, or forgetfulness of Krishna.
- The newcomer is told that their previous ambitions, relationships, diet, sexuality, entertainment, and self-concept were products of ignorance.
- The ideal devotee becomes humble, surrendered, regulated, obedient to guru, engaged in service, and detached from material desire.
- If someone wants ordinary romance, career, autonomy, or pleasure, those desires can be treated as lower consciousness.
- The self before Krishna consciousness is made to look dirty, foolish, asleep, or wasted.

The strongest defense. Krishna consciousness teaches that the soul's real identity is eternal service to God.

The counter. That becomes devaluation when every non-institutional identity is treated as illusion. If the only "real you" is the one that chants, serves, obeys, donates, and submits to the guru structure, then spiritual identity has replaced personal identity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The teaching that material life is illusion and that the self before Krishna consciousness is ignorance is part of the movement's doctrine, which is what this grade rests on.

6 · Gaslighting

Making you doubt your own experience so you trust the institution's interpretation instead.

How it shows here

- A devotee says temple life is exploitative, and the response is, "That is maya testing you."
- Desire for ordinary romance, food, career, sex, privacy, or autonomy is framed as material contamination.
- Questions about guru authority may be called offense.
- Leaving is interpreted as falling down, bad association, lack of surrender, or being captured by illusion.
- A person's exhaustion from service can be reframed as insufficient devotion.

The strongest defense. ISKCON teaches detachment from material illusion and devotion to Krishna.

The counter. Detachment becomes gaslighting when every ordinary human need is labeled illusion. If only the surrendered self is considered real, then the institution has made personal autonomy look spiritually fake.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The teaching that doubt and ordinary desire are maya, and that questioning a guru is offense, is taught doctrine; its use against a particular devotee's account is reported, not documented.

7 · Double Bind

A trap where both options lead to compliance. No exit serves you.

How it shows here

- Devotees are taught Krishna wants loving voluntary service — and that reluctance is maya (illusion). The love must be freely given, and its absence is diagnosed, corrected, and supervised.
- One must accept a guru to advance, and gurus who later fall are explained as the devotee's poor discernment — the choice was mandatory and its failure is yours.
- Leaving the association of devotees is spiritual suicide; staying under harmful leadership is surrender. The map marks every road out as a cliff.

The strongest defense. Bhakti (devotion) is the yoga of love; no one can be forced to love God.

The counter. Exactly — which is why a system that must monitor, measure, and enforce the love should explain what it is actually cultivating. Love that requires surveillance has already confessed it is something else.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Each part of the bind (reluctance is maya, a guru is required, leaving devotee association is spiritual suicide) is taught doctrine; combining them into a trap is this entry's analysis.

Stage 4 · Confuse

The rewards become unpredictable, the standard keeps moving, the answers stop meaning anything, and the accusation gets turned around.

Criticize a guru and it is your envy, your material consciousness, your bad association. Second-generation members who spoke about the gurukulas were treated as attacking the movement.

What it asks of you: Children reported abuse and were told they were harming Krishna's mission. Sit with the order of those priorities.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Ecstatic kirtan reliably-unreliably delivers transcendence — some nights the room lifts, some nights it doesn't — and the tradition's own explanation (Krishna reveals himself when he chooses) annexes the variability as proof.
- A devotee's standing with temple authorities and gurus warms and cools with service hours, book distribution, and visible surrender, on a scale administered as spiritual assessment.

- Initiation, recommendation, and advancement arrive at authority discretion after years of service whose sufficiency is never defined in advance — the indefiniteness is the tether.

The strongest defense. Krishna's reciprocation is personal and sovereign; the Gita (the Bhagavad Gita, a central scripture) itself says 'as they surrender, I reward them.'

The counter. Between the devotee and Krishna, that is theology. Between the devotee and the temple authority who claims to read the reciprocation and meter the opportunities, it is management — and management by unpredictable reward has a name.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Variable devotional experience and discretionary advancement are features of temple practice; no document in this volume sets out the metering the entry describes.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

The standard of success keeps shifting so you can never arrive.

How it shows here

- A newcomer chants and enjoys prasadam. Then they must chant rounds, follow regulative principles (the rules against eating meat, fish and eggs, taking intoxicants, gambling and illicit sex), accept guru, serve, donate, distribute books, avoid material association, and surrender.
- If they chant but struggle, they are told to chant more purely. If they serve but burn out, they lack devotion. If they question, they risk offense.

- Ordinary life is never enough; the real goal keeps moving toward deeper renunciation and institutional service.

The strongest defense. Bhakti naturally deepens through discipline and surrender.

The counter. Surrender becomes moving the goalposts when every human limit is reclassified as material contamination. If love for Krishna is measured by increasing institutional availability, devotion has become extraction.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The rising sequence of expectations the entry lists (rounds, regulative principles, service, donations) is a pattern of temple practice, and no written rule in this volume sets it.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

Language that sounds profound but means nothing specific — functioning as a shutdown to real questions.

How it shows here

- Guru authority is personal devotion when attractive, institutional hierarchy when enforced, and individual imperfection when abuse is exposed.
- "Material life" can mean greed and illusion, but also family, career, sexuality, autonomy, and outside criticism.
- ISKCON can separate itself from "imperfect devotees" when abuse arises, then fuse itself with Krishna consciousness when loyalty is needed.

The strongest defense. A spiritual path can be true even when practitioners fail.

The counter. That becomes strategic ambiguity when the institution claims sacred authority for obedience but ordinary fallibility for harm. If Krishna is invoked to recruit but separated from the institution when victims speak, ambiguity is doing reputation work.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The shifting use of 'guru authority' and 'material life' is a pattern in devotional speech, and the guru-infallibility question is disputed within the movement.

11 · Projection

Accusing the outside world of the exact thing the institution practices.

How it shows here

- ISKCON communities may accuse leavers of being captured by maya while the institution creates illusion through guru idealization and spiritual hierarchy.
- A devotee questioning exploitation may be accused of offense while abusive leadership is shielded by devotional language.
- Desire for normal relationships, career, sex, or autonomy is called material attachment while the institution remains attached to labor, donations, status, and expansion.
- Critics are accused of contaminating others while secrecy and suppression contaminate the community from within.

The strongest defense. Devotional life requires protection from material illusion and offenses.

The counter. If every criticism is called offense and every exit is called maya, the system has projected illusion onto the person escaping it. Sometimes the illusion is not outside the temple. Sometimes it is the holiness used to protect power inside it.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The accusations of maya and offense the entry describes are devotional speech; whether they amount to projection is this entry's reading of that speech.

12 · DARVO

Deny the wrongdoing. Attack the person who raised it. Reverse victim and offender.

How it shows here

- A devotee reports guru abuse, temple exploitation, child mistreatment, financial pressure, or authoritarian control. The response may deny the problem or call it isolated imperfection.
- Then the critic is accused of offense, envy, maya, bad association, lack of surrender, or attacking Krishna consciousness.
- The guru, temple, or movement becomes the victim of criticism; the harmed devotee becomes spiritually dangerous.
- Former members may be told they are contaminating others by speaking about abuse.

- The institution separates Krishna from the institution when convenient, then fuses them when criticism appears: "Do not blame Krishna," but also "do not attack Krishna's devotees."

The strongest defense. Spiritual movements can have imperfect members without invalidating the path.

The counter. Imperfection is not the issue. Reversal is. If victims are blamed for damaging devotion while abusive leaders are protected as servants of Krishna, then holiness is being used to launder institutional harm.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The sequence of denial, accusation of offense and reversal is a pattern this entry describes from how criticism is answered in devotional speech; this volume cites no court or official record of it.

13 · Normalization / Desensitization

Practices that would seem extreme to an outsider feel normal to insiders because they were installed before critical evaluation developed.

How it shows here

- Newcomers are slowly normalized into chanting, prasadam, temple schedule, regulated diet, sexual restrictions, guru devotion, service, donations, and separation from material life.
- Ordinary desires become desensitized into shame: romance, career, family, sex, entertainment, and autonomy are repeatedly labeled maya or sense gratification.

- Exhaustive devotional labor can become normal because it is framed as seva (devotional service).
- Guru idealization becomes ordinary through repetition of honorifics, rituals, stories, and senior devotee modeling.
- The temple becomes the place where depletion is renamed devotion.

The strongest defense. Devotional life naturally involves discipline, service, and detachment from material illusion.

The counter. Detachment becomes desensitization when people learn to distrust ordinary human needs. If exhaustion, shame, and dependency are repeatedly renamed devotion, the temple has trained the nervous system to accept depletion as holiness.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The routines the entry describes (the chanting schedule, regulated diet, service) are ordinary temple practice; that they are installed so as to dull judgment is this entry's reading. The reform recorded elsewhere on this page (the end of most residential schooling and the Child Protection Office) concerns children, and this page records no equivalent change to the adult routines.

Stage 5 · Isolate

Your world narrows until every voice you hear is inside the system, and everything you came for now runs through a middleman.

For ashram devotees, housing, food, work, community, and identity are all internal. The 'bad association' doctrine discourages contact with critics, ex-members, and outside interpretation.

What it asks of you: If you left tomorrow, what would you have — in savings, in credentials, in people?

14 · Isolation

Shrinking your world until the only voices you hear are inside the system.

How it shows here

- ISKCON can isolate through temple life, guru devotion, chanting commitments, regulated diet, sexual restrictions, devotional service, book distribution, and warnings against materialistic association.
- New devotees may be encouraged to reduce contact with old friends, family, romantic partners, careers, entertainment, and foods because these belong to maya.

- The temple becomes the new family: prasadam, kirtan, seva, festivals, guru, senior devotees, and devotional identity.
- Ordinary desires are framed as material contamination, making outside life feel spiritually degraded.
- If someone leaves, they may be described as fallen, in maya, bad association, offensive, or lacking surrender.

The strongest defense. Devotional life requires association with devotees and distance from material illusion.

The counter. Devotee association becomes isolation when the outside world is dismissed wholesale as illusion. If the only relationships considered spiritually safe are those that reinforce surrender, then Krishna consciousness has become a closed circuit.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Temple life, devotee association and warnings against 'materialistic' contact are ordinary practice; that they narrow a member's world is this entry's reading. ISKCON's own count is about a million congregational members against about 10,000 temple members [20], so full residential life is not the typical case, but this page records no change to the teaching itself.

15 · Triangulation

Inserting intermediaries between you and the thing you came for, so the institution is always in the middle.

How it shows here

- ISKCON triangulates through guru, temple president, senior devotees, scriptures, Krishna, prasadam, chanting, devotee association, and fear of maya.
- A devotee questioning exploitation may be told by others, "Do not commit offenses," "Take shelter of guru," "Chant more," "Avoid bad association."
- The guru becomes the third point: criticism of institutional abuse becomes offense against a spiritual master.
- Krishna is invoked as witness: leaving temple life is framed as leaving Krishna, not just leaving an organization.
- Devotees are compared with surrendered saints, pure devotees, brahmacharis (celibate monastic students), renunciants, and those who gave everything in service.
- The outside world is triangulated as maya: family, romance, career, sex, entertainment, and autonomy are framed as illusion pulling you away.
- Prasadam, kirtan, and festivals become emotional triangulators: beautiful experiences are used to pull the person past unresolved harm.

The strongest defense. Devotee association and guru guidance are central to Krishna consciousness.

The counter. Association becomes triangulation when everyone around the devotee is trained to interpret dissent as maya or offense. If Krishna, guru, scripture, senior devotees, temple life, and fear of material illusion are all used to override one person's boundary, devotion has become encirclement.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Being routed through guru, temple president and senior devotees is ordinary devotional practice, and the entry's examples ('Take shelter of guru', 'Avoid bad association') are devotional vocabulary reported by former members; this page cites no document that shows the pressure. The GBC's written authority over initiating gurus is a structure, not the social pressure this entry describes.

Stage 6 · Extract

Now the harvest: your labor, your money, your identity, your silence, your children's schooling, your capacity to trust yourself.

Book distribution quotas drove aggressive and at times deceptive fundraising. Devotees gave decades of full-time unpaid labor for room and board while the institution accumulated property. Guru donation flows had limited audit. Children were in residential schools with no safeguarding. Criticism was reframed as envy and material consciousness.

What it asks of you: Twenty-five years of full-time work produced no savings, no work history, and no equity — because you were never employed, which saved the institution a great deal.

16 · Flying Monkeys

The community enforces the institution's norms without being asked — mobilized by culture, not memos.

How it shows here

- A questioning devotee may be approached by senior devotees, temple leaders, guru representatives, friends, and service partners.
- The message repeats: “Chant more,” “Don’t commit offenses,” “Avoid bad association,” “Take shelter of guru,” “You are in maya.”
- Devotee association becomes pressure when everyone around the person interprets doubt through the same devotional lens.
- Service obligations, festivals, prasadam, kirtan, and guru loyalty are used to draw the person back before harm is addressed.

The strongest defense. Devotees encourage one another because association is central to spiritual progress.

The counter. Association becomes FLYING MONKEY pressure when no one can imagine that the institution itself is the problem. If every devotee sent to help translates your boundary into maya, the community has become an echo chamber of surrender.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL 'Chant more' and 'avoid bad association' are the movement's standard vocabulary about doubt, and senior devotees answering a doubter with them is ordinary community practice; that it works as organized pressure rests on former-member testimony, and this page cites no court or official record of it.

17 · Smear Campaign

Rewriting your character after departure to protect the institution from the implications of your leaving.

How it shows here

- Former devotees may be labeled fallen, offensive, envious, in maya, bad association, contaminated, or lacking surrender.
- A person exposing abuse may be accused of attacking Krishna consciousness.
- Desire for ordinary family, career, sexuality, or autonomy may be used to portray the leaver as spiritually weak.
- Criticism of guru authority may be framed as offense against a pure devotee.

The strongest defense. Devotional communities must guard against offenses and material contamination.

The counter. Guarding against offense becomes smear when it makes victims look spiritually polluted for naming harm. If the critic is always in maya, the institution never has to face reality.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The labels the entry lists (fallen, envious, in maya) come from the movement's own teaching about offense and departure; their use as a campaign against leavers rests on former-member testimony, and this page cites no court finding.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

Refusing to engage with legitimate questions in order to maintain control.

How it shows here

- A devotee questions guru authority, temple exploitation, abuse, or burnout and is told to chant more, avoid offenses, take prasadam, serve, and stop associating with critics.
- Leaders may separate Krishna from institutional harm while demanding loyalty to Krishna's representatives.
- Concerns are absorbed into devotional language: maya, offense, bad association, lack of surrender.
- The person is not answered; they are spiritually reclassified.

The strongest defense. Devotional practice helps purify the heart and avoid offensive mentality.

The counter. Purification becomes stonewalling when it replaces accountability. If exploitation is answered with "chant more," the institution is using devotion to avoid repair.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Answering a complaint with 'chant more' or 'avoid offenses' is ordinary devotional vocabulary used by members; that it replaces an answer rests on former-member testimony, and this page cites no record of a specific complaint handled this way.

19 · Manufactured Consent

Creating the appearance of choice when the conditions of choice were shaped before you could evaluate them.

How it shows here

- Newcomers "choose" devotional life after being immersed in chanting, prasadam, community warmth, guru reverence, and devaluation of material life.
- Surrender to guru appears voluntary, but doubt is framed as offense and outside life as maya.
- Unpaid service is chosen after being taught that service purifies the soul.
- A person "chooses" celibacy, diet, or temple labor under pressure to prove devotion.

The strongest defense. Bhakti is voluntary loving service to Krishna.

The counter. Love is not fully voluntary when every alternative is called illusion. If the only real self is the surrendered self, the movement has manufactured consent by discrediting the person who might say no.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The entry's examples rest on the movement's teaching about offense, maya and service. The long unpaid labor recorded in sections 3 and 9 is reported by former members, and this page cites no court record that establishes it.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- ISKCON can bond through sweetness and shame: chanting, prasadam, kirtan, festivals, guru devotion — paired with devaluation of material life, sexuality, autonomy, and outside relationships.
- A devotee feels contaminated by maya, then relief through chanting, service, guru approval, and temple belonging.
- Burnout from seva is soothed by devotional praise.
- Leaving feels like losing Krishna, not merely leaving an organization.

The strongest defense. Bhakti is loving devotion that frees people from material suffering.

The counter. Devotion becomes TRAUMA BONDING when the movement first makes ordinary life feel dirty and then offers temple life as purification. If the only relief from shame is deeper surrender, the sweetness is functioning as adhesive.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The cycle of shame and relief the entry describes is drawn from the movement's teaching about maya and purification; this page cites no record that shows the cycle directly.

21 · Learned Helplessness

Teaching you that your own judgment is unreliable until you stop trusting it entirely.

How it shows here

- A devotee burns out and is told to chant more, serve more purely, avoid offenses, and surrender.
- Desires for ordinary life are called maya, so escape itself is discredited.
- Guru concerns become offenses; exhaustion becomes lack of devotion.
- Eventually the person stops trusting ordinary needs and waits for purification.

The strongest defense. Bhakti requires surrender and purification of material desires.

The counter. Purification becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when every need is treated as contamination. If the devotee cannot distinguish exhaustion from ego, the movement has disabled self-protection.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The teaching that ordinary needs are contamination is the movement's doctrine; the entry's examples (told to chant more) rest on former-member testimony, and this page cites no record that measures the effect.

22 · Benevolent Control

Control wrapped in the language of care, so that resisting the control feels like rejecting the love.

How it shows here

- Guru obedience, temple service, chanting rounds, sexual restriction, diet, and separation from material life are framed as loving purification.
- Devotees are told strictness protects them from maya.
- Unpaid labor is framed as seva and spiritual progress.
- Doubt is treated as dangerous association or offense.

The strongest defense. Bhakti discipline protects devotion and frees the soul from material suffering.

The counter. Purification becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when ordinary needs are treated as contamination. If the temple controls body, time, labor, food, sex, money, and thought in the name of love, devotion has become administration.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The framing of obedience, diet and unpaid labor as loving purification is the movement's own language; that the unpaid labor for room and board is a burden rests on former-member accounts (sections 3 and 9), not on a court record.

23 · Infantilization

Positioning the adult believer as permanently childlike and dependent on institutional authority.

How it shows here

- Devotees may be treated as fallen or spiritually immature if they desire ordinary family, romance, career, sexuality, or autonomy.
- Guru and senior devotees interpret what is real spiritual progress.
- The outside world is called maya, making independent adulthood look like illusion.
- A person who questions is told to chant more, serve more, surrender more.

The strongest defense. Devotional life helps people transcend material illusion.

The counter. Transcendence becomes INFANTILIZATION when ordinary adult life is dismissed as lower consciousness. If the only mature person is the surrendered devotee, the movement has redefined adulthood as obedience.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CONTESTED Whether surrender and obedience to a guru amounts to treating adult devotees as children is disputed within the movement; the entry's examples rest on its teaching about maya and on former-member accounts, and this page cites no document on the point.

24 · Identity Erosion

Gradually replacing your identity with a role the institution provides, until you can't separate who you are from where you belong.

How it shows here

- Devotee identity replaces ordinary identity: servant of Krishna, follower of guru, chanter, temple servant, renunciate, surrendered soul.
- Material life is devalued: career, romance, family, sex, entertainment, ambition, and autonomy are maya.
- The person's previous self is treated as illusion or ignorance.
- Guru approval and devotional service become the measure of real identity.
- The self outside devotion is made unreal.

The strongest defense. ISKCON teaches the soul's eternal identity as servant of Krishna.

The counter. Spiritual identity becomes IDENTITY EROSION when every non-devotional self is dismissed as illusion. If the only real you is the one that serves, chants, obeys, and surrenders, the movement has replaced personhood with devotional utility.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The replacement of ordinary identity by devotee identity is described from the movement's own teaching (the soul's identity as servant of Krishna); this page cites no record that measures it.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

Using spiritual language to avoid engaging with real pain, real questions, and real accountability.

How it shows here

- Exploitation is bypassed as seva.
- Burnout is bypassed as lack of surrender.
- Desire for ordinary life is bypassed as maya.
- Guru abuse is bypassed as imperfection of devotees or offense in the critic.
- Chanting is prescribed where repair is needed.

The strongest defense. Devotional practice purifies the heart and frees people from illusion.

The counter. Purification becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it avoids institutional harm. If the answer to abuse is “chant more,” devotion has been used to step around justice.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** ISKCON's own journal records leaders and staff dismissing or silencing reports of abuse in the gurukulas [1], and the abuse itself is documented in litigation and in the movement's 1998 acknowledgment (sections 5 and 8); the 'chant more' wording of the entry's examples comes from former-member testimony. *(sourced)*

26 · Financial Control

Extracting money through spiritual obligation while offering no transparency about where it goes.

How it shows here

- ISKCON financial control may appear through donations, book distribution, temple labor, guru offerings, festival fundraising, food service, and unpaid devotional work.
- Devotees may give time, money, housing, labor, and skills as seva.
- Ordinary career ambition may be dismissed as materialism, while temple work becomes spiritually superior.
- Guru or temple loyalty can make financial limits feel like lack of devotion.

The strongest defense. Devotional service is voluntary loving offering to Krishna.

The counter. Seva becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when unpaid labor and donations are expected as proof of surrender. If ordinary work is materialistic but institutional labor is holy, the movement has spiritualized extraction.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Full-time unpaid service for room and board is described by former members, and temples depend on donations and book sales; that this amounts to extraction without transparency is this entry's reading. Book quotas and unpaid labor rest on former-member and press accounts, and this page cites no court record that establishes them.

Stage 7 · Discard

You become expensive — too many questions, too much independence — and the urgency ramps up until you are removed.

You lose community, housing, and income at once, and you are labeled fallen, envious, or contaminated. Decades of unpaid service leave nothing transferable.

What it asks of you: You were not fired, because you were never employed. That distinction saved the institution a great deal of money.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- ISKCON may manufacture crisis around maya, bad association, guru offense, material contamination, failed chanting, sexual desire, and leaving devotional service.
- A devotee wanting ordinary life is treated as spiritually endangered.
- Criticism of a guru becomes an emergency because offense may ruin spiritual progress.

- Temple life becomes the safe zone from a world defined as illusion.

The strongest defense. Devotional communities warn against material illusion to protect spiritual life.

The counter. Protection becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when ordinary life is treated as contamination. If leaving the temple is framed as falling into maya, crisis has been manufactured around independence.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CONTESTED Whether the urgency the entry describes is manufactured is disputed, because the costs of leaving fall heavily on long-term ashram devotees and lightly on congregational members.

28 · Discard

Removing members who become too costly — too many questions, too much independence, too visible a contradiction.

How it shows here

- A devotee who leaves may be described as fallen, in maya, offensive, contaminated, or lacking surrender.
- Friendships may cool because association with the leaver is spiritually risky.
- The person's years of service are minimized because they "left Krishna."
- Ordinary life becomes evidence of spiritual decline.
- Discard is justified as protecting consciousness.

The strongest defense. Devotees avoid bad association to protect spiritual life.

The counter. Association becomes DISCARD when former devotees are treated as contamination. If leaving an institution is equated with leaving God, the movement has fused itself to Krishna in order to make exit feel like spiritual death.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CONTESTED Departure costs fall heavily on long-term ashram devotees and lightly on congregational members — a real internal difference.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority was attributed to God.

The temple continues, your service is redistributed, and your years become a cautionary example about falling down. The authority is the guru's, which is the previous guru's, back to the founder — a chain ending with someone deceased.

What it asks of you: To the movement's real credit, it published its own account of what happened to its children. Ask what has been paid to them, and to how many.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A devotee who leaves temple life is replaced by another newcomer drawn by kirtan, prasadam, and community sweetness.
- The former devotee becomes fallen; the new devotee becomes enthusiastic proof that Krishna consciousness works.
- Service roles are reassigned quickly.
- Guru loyalty is refreshed through new disciples.
- The temple's need for labor and devotion continues.

The strongest defense. Devotional service continues because Krishna consciousness is bigger than one person.

The counter. Devotion becomes REPLACEMENT when people are valued by service output. If the temple can replace the burned-out devotee with a fresh one while calling the leaver fallen, the sweetness has become a recruitment cycle.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL That a departing devotee's service is quickly reassigned and newcomers arrive is ordinary temple practice; this entry cites no record of a specific case.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to God — who isn't available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- ISKCON can say temple life is voluntary while outside life is repeatedly described as maya, sense gratification, and bad association.
- Guru authority is sacred when obedience is needed, but individual failure when abuse is exposed.
- Service is voluntary, but refusal may be treated as lack of surrender.
- Newcomers are fed, loved, and included before fully seeing expectations around chanting, diet, sex, guru loyalty, and labor.
- Criticism of the institution is separated from Krishna when defending harm, but fused with Krishna when demanding loyalty.

The strongest defense. Bhakti is voluntary loving service. Do not blame Krishna for imperfect devotees. Spiritual discipline requires seriousness.

The counter. Service is not free if every alternative is called illusion. Separating Krishna from the institution only after harm is exposed is PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY. Discipline becomes control when doubt is offense and exit is maya.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority attributed to a guru chain terminating in the deceased founder, with the initiating-guru system internally contested.

Sources for this section: 1 2 8

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Count grades, not names. A long list of Contested entries says something very different from a short list of Codified ones. A bias to watch for in yourself: people rate the same pressure as "normal" when their own group applies it and as "manipulation" when another group does. Before you judge an entry, try imagining it applied by a group you distrust. Does it look different?

13

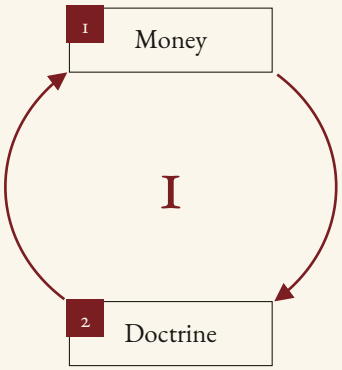
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

How the techniques connect into cycles. A single practice can look harmless on its own. The loops show how one step feeds the next, so that, for example, a newcomer's welcome turns into an obligation.

> The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first. The loops are analysis built from findings recorded elsewhere on this page PATTERN OBSERVED; each step names the section or technique where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Book quotas, temple revenue, and guru dakshina fund the institutions that define what surrender requires.

How it runs.

1. Devotees are taught that surrender to the guru and to devotional service is the path to liberation (technique 3; section 7).
2. The GBC and the initiating gurus set what surrender requires, including service, chanting rounds and donations (sections 7 and 12, technique 22).
3. Devotees meet the requirement through book distribution quotas, temple donations, guru dakshina and unpaid labor (section 9).

4. The revenue and labor build temples, restaurants and property titled to the institution, with weak historical financial transparency to the people who built them (sections 9 and 16).
5. Those institutions again define what surrender requires, and financial limits can be read as lack of devotion (technique 26).

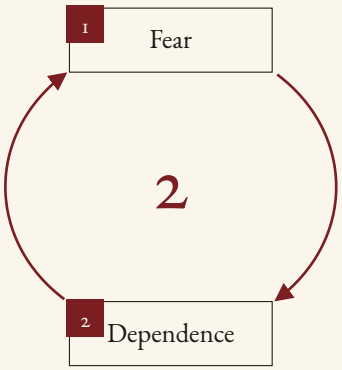
Techniques that feed it. 3 · Future Faking, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 22 · Benevolent Control, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The bodies that set the terms of surrender also receive the giving and the labor that surrender produces. A devotee cannot see where the money goes, and cannot test the terms without the doubt being treated as offense (techniques 19 and 26).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the money becomes visible. Bhaktivedanta Manor, as a registered charity, files public accounts (sections 8 and 9), and a devotee can ask a temple for audited accounts (section 23). Publication of temple accounts is in the hands of temple boards and the GBC. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 9 records that quota pressure produced aggressive and at times deceptive fundraising, including airport solicitation, and section 10 records that temple presidents' standing was tied to the numbers.

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Material illusion and falling down supply the fear, and devotional service supplies the relief, supervised by the guru.

How it runs.

1. The newcomer is taught that ordinary life is maya (illusion) and that the self before Krishna consciousness is ignorance (techniques 5 and 24).
2. Doubt and the desire for ordinary life are labeled maya or offense, so fear attaches to questioning and to leaving (techniques 6 and 27).
3. The relief on offer is chanting, service, guru approval and temple belonging, and the guru supervises it (techniques 20 and 22).
4. Leaving is framed as falling down or as spiritual death, so the fear returns whenever the devotee considers leaving (sections 11 and 15, technique 28).
5. The devotee returns to service for relief, and the cycle repeats (technique 21).

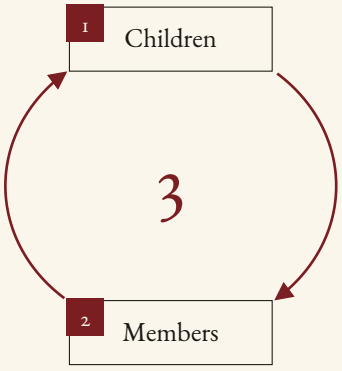
Techniques that feed it. 5 · Devaluation, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 21 · Learned Helplessness, 27 · Manufactured Crisis.

Why it closes. The source of the fear and the source of the relief are the same institution. Each act of relief confirms that the institution is where relief is found, and each doubt is treated as a return of the illusion (techniques 20 and 21).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever a devotee has a life outside the temple. Section 12 records that the costs of leaving fall heavily on long-term ashram devotees and lightly on congregational members (technique 27). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Technique 20 describes a devotee who feels contaminated by maya and then finds relief through chanting, service, guru approval and temple belonging.

3 · Children to Members to Children



Gurukula schooling produced adults with no secular credentials, so the loop closed once, and reform broke it.

How it runs.

1. Children were sent to residential gurukulas, separated from their parents and given minimal secular education (sections 7 and 10).
2. They were raised on the assumption of lifelong devotional service (section 11, technique 13).
3. They reached adulthood without credentials or savings (section 17).
4. The movement's next generation of children entered the same schools (section 10).
5. Reform broke the loop: the model was largely abandoned and a Child Protection Office was created (sections 5 and 10).

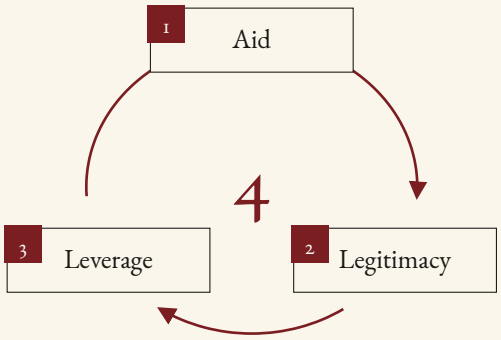
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 14 · Isolation, 19 · Manufactured Consent.

Why it closes. Children formed inside an institution have no other credentials to leave with, so the institution supplied both their formation and their dependence.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It was broken by ending most residential schooling and by creating a Child Protection Office, through reformers and second-generation members (sections 14 and 20). Whether compensation reached the specific children is the unanswered question in section 3. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 17 records second-generation members entering adulthood without credentials or savings, with a childhood the movement has acknowledged but not fully compensated.

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Prasadam distribution and charitable work generate genuine standing and local goodwill. This page records no leverage step in this loop: what the temple does with that standing is not recorded on this page.

How it runs.

1. Prasadam, chanting and festivals are offered freely and warmly (techniques 1 and 2).
2. The welcome earns the temple genuine standing and local goodwill (this card).
3. Once the newcomer is attached, expectations of chanting rounds, dietary rules, service and donations arrive (techniques 1 and 2).
4. The temple's need for labor and devotion continues, so the welcome is extended to new people (technique 29).

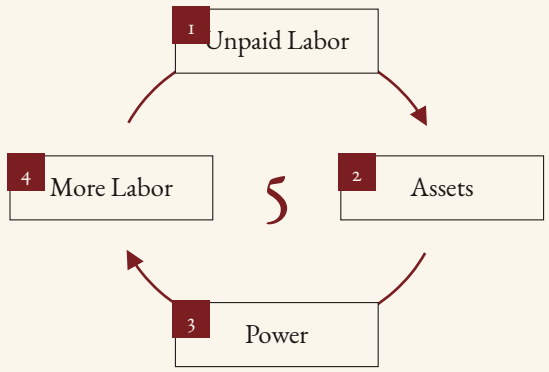
Techniques that feed it. 1 · Love Bombing, 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 29 · Replacement.

Why it closes. The goodwill the welcome earns makes the later demands harder to refuse, and the demands supply the labor that keeps the welcome going.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the welcome carries no expectation, as in the congregational mode, where members attend temple programs without living in the ashram (section 7). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Technique 2 describes the person who came for food and song and may slowly become a laborer for the mission.

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Unpaid devotee labor built temples and restaurants held by corporations, and leaving devotees receive nothing.

How it runs.

1. Devotees give full-time labor for room and board (sections 3 and 9).
2. The labor builds temples and restaurants, and the property is held by temple corporations (sections 7 and 9).
3. Unpaid labor is the movement's economic base (section 9), and ashram devotees depend on the institution for housing and income (sections 3 and 15).
4. Because leaving costs housing, income and community at once, devotees who would leave have reason to stay and keep giving labor (section 15, technique 28).
5. A devotee who leaves receives no savings, work history or equity, and a newcomer takes the vacant place (section 3, technique 29).

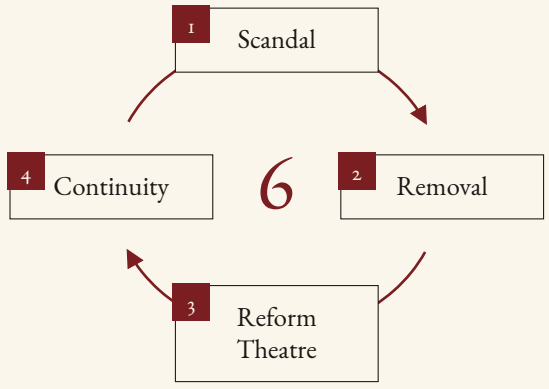
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 28 · Discard, 29 · Replacement.

Why it closes. Because the devotee was never employed, the institution pays no wages or pension and owes nothing on exit, so its assets grow while the people who built them leave with nothing (section 12, stage 7).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the accounts and the title become visible to the people who built the property. Section 23 (questions 3 and 4) asks devotees who holds the property they built and asks temples for audited accounts. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 2 describes a devotee who has cooked for the deities for twenty-nine years without pay, has no bank account of consequence, and has never seen the temple's statement.

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



The zonal ācāryas were removed and the system was actually changed, which is why this loop is partly broken here.

How it runs.

1. Near-absolute regional authority produced documented abuses of power, expulsions and, in one community, murder convictions (sections 5 and 10).
2. Within a decade most of the eleven gurus had been removed, had resigned or had fallen amid scandal (section 5).
3. The GBC dismantled the zonal system and reformed the guru system (sections 5 and 20).

4. The GBC continues to approve and discipline initiating gurus, so authority continues within the same committee (section 7).

5. On this page the change is recorded as real but partial, and as purchased at the children's expense (sections 3 and 7).

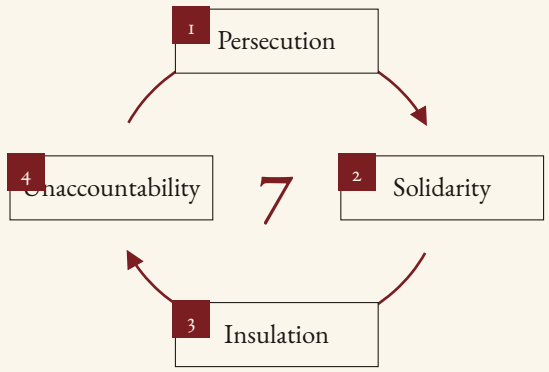
Techniques that feed it. 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 15 · Triangulation, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The body that removes a guru is the body that approves the next one, so the correction and the continuity come from the same committee (section 7).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It is already partly broken: the zonal system ended and the GBC has suspended and removed gurus. Section 20 names what would change this page's findings, which is the GBC publishing the full institutional history of the gurukula era in its own official materials. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 5 records eleven disciples assuming zonal authority and most being removed, resigning or falling within a decade, and section 7 records that the GBC chooses and removes its own members.

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



Anti-cult hostility toward the movement from the mid-1970s is recorded in ISKCON's own journal [22]. This page reads it as invoked to make the second generation's testimony look like an outside attack; no cited document shows it used that way.

How it runs.

1. From the mid-1970s, anti-cult groups in the United States questioned ISKCON, and deprogrammers kidnapped some devotees, as ISKCON's own journal records [22] (recorded in this card only; no other section of this volume records it).
2. The hostility reinforces solidarity inside the movement and the 'bad association' teaching against outside contact (section 11, technique 14).
3. The hostility is invoked so that the testimony of second-generation members is treated as an attack on the movement (section 12, stage 4).
4. Criticism is answered as offense or envy rather than as a report, so the complaint is not addressed (techniques 11, 12 and 18).

Techniques that feed it. 11 · Projection, 12 · DARVO, 14 · Isolation, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling.

Why it closes. Each outside attack that was real makes the next criticism easier to dismiss as an attack, and the dismissal removes the need to answer it.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where criticism is received as a report. The movement's own 1998 acknowledgment of gurukula abuse shows the loop can be interrupted (section 5). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 12 (stage 4) records that children reported abuse and were told they were harming Krishna's mission.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The loops explain why good people stay in arrangements they would never sign up for from scratch. The more you have already put in, the harder it is to walk away. Researchers call this the sunk-cost effect (Arkes & Blumer, 1985), and it works on time, money and relationships alike. Ask yourself: if you were starting today, knowing what you know, would you join?

The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first.

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

Direct, checkable comparisons: a public statement on one side, the documented record on the other, and the receipt that links them. This is the most falsifiable section on the page, because each row either matches its source or it doesn't.

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Devotional service is voluntary.	Twenty-five years of full-time labor for room and board leaves a devotee with no savings, work history, or equity.	FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
Criticism of a guru is envy.	The movement identified the zonal ācāryas as a structural failure, which means criticism was correct.	ACADEMIC SOURCE
Book distribution spreads the teachings.	Quota pressure produced aggressive and at times deceptive fundraising, including airport solicitation.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Women are honored in the tradition.	Statements about women's intelligence remain in the canonical literature and are internally disputed.	ACADEMIC SOURCE

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. The zonal ācārya system was dismantled and residential schooling largely ended — a genuine structural change, and rare in this codex.

Who holds the chair now. The GBC and individual initiating gurus hold it.

Prediction. Prospects here are better than most. Where reform happened it happened because the children who were harmed became adults who would not stop talking.

The zonal ācārya system was dismantled and residential schooling largely ended — a genuine structural change, and rare in this codex.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Maya	It means illusion, the material energy that obscures reality.	It is genuine doctrine, and the standard label for a member's doubts or their family's concerns.	'What you are noticing is not real.'
Blooping	It means leaving the movement and returning to material life.	It is a dismissive coinage that makes departure a comic failure rather than a decision with reasons.	'They left and we will not be asking why.'

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Test one row yourself. Pick a "they say" line you have actually heard said in person, then read the receipt. If the record matches the statement, this page is wrong about that row, and you should tell us. If it doesn't, what does it mean that you had never seen the receipt?

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

What leaving actually costs here, in family, work, housing, money and legal status, and how each of those costs is officially denied. Where the cost is low, the page says so plainly.

What leaving costs

- Leaving costs one's entire community and often years of unpaid labor with no equity. The 'bad association' doctrine frames departure as spiritual death. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY

Leaving costs one's entire community and often years of unpaid labor with no equity.

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	A TYPICAL REPLY (COMPOSITE, NOT A QUOTED STATEMENT)
Community and identity	Yes	A devotee's whole social world is lost; leaving means losing everyone and, for ashram devotees, housing and income at once.	“Devotees are free to live as they wish.”
Economic	Yes	Devotees give years or decades of unpaid labor and leave with no savings, credentials, or work history.	“Service was offered voluntarily to Krishna.”
Spiritual threat	Yes	Leaving is framed as spiritual suicide, falling from the path, or returning to material illusion.	“It's a description of consequences.”
Reputation	Moderate	A leaver is labeled a fallen devotee, envious, or contaminated by bad association.	“We pray for them.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Medium	Doctrinal texts and initiation vows are published. The movement's own journal describes abuse in the residential schools it ran [1] [2]; this page cites no statement on whether it was ever policy.
Informal enforcement	High	Devotional peer pressure and guru relationships carry enforcement.
Leadership distance	Medium	The GBC can disclaim individual gurus and temple presidents — and did, extensively, in the zonal era.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Medium	Guru infallibility teaching is contested internally, so any specific claim can be attributed to a faction.
Cultural outsourcing	Medium	Practices are defended as authentic Vedic culture rather than as institutional choice.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Senior devotees managed complaints and protected gurus' reputations.
Sacred secrecy	Low	The level is unusually low, because ISKCON published its own abuse acknowledgment, which is why the record exists.
Exit cost denial	Medium	Freedom to leave is real; the economic cliff after decades of unpaid service is rarely acknowledged.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Leaving can cost your whole community and years of unpaid labor with no equity, and the "bad association" doctrine can frame departure as spiritual death. A devotee who gives twenty-five years of full-time service may leave with no savings, work history or equity. If you have given years, do you know what you would leave with?

16 The ledger

BEFORE YOU READ

The balance sheet. It shows who benefits, who pays, and what leverage flows back to the institution in return for what it gives.

Who benefits

- Institutional continuity and guru positions benefit, as do the movement's assets built on devotee labor.
- Credit where due: ISKCON's own Child Protection Office and published acknowledgment of gurukula abuse exceed many older institutions' candor. OFFICIAL POLICY

Money out, leverage back

- Devotee labor and donations built substantial temple, restaurant, and property assets titled to the institution, with weak historical financial transparency to the people who built them. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
- Following abuse litigation, restructuring and bankruptcy filings shaped the settlement available to former gurukula students. COURT RECORD
- To the movement's credit: ISKCON published its own acknowledgment of gurukula abuse and created a Child Protection Office — more institutional candor than most bodies in this codex have managed, and it should be said plainly. OFFICIAL POLICY

Who pays

- Gurukula children pay. They are the movement's most severely harmed group, documented by its own admission and by litigation.
  COURT RECORD
- Second-generation members pay, having been raised without secular education or savings.
- Women pay, as they are subject to canonical statements about their status and to documented misconduct.
- Long-term ashram devotees pay; they left with nothing after decades of labor.
- Members of the zonal ācārya era paid, having been subject to near-absolute regional authority.

Sources for this section: 1 2 8

Institutional continuity and guru positions benefit, as do the movement's assets built on devotee labor.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find yourself in this table. Are you among those who benefit, those who pay, or both? Most readers are both. The question is whether the exchange was ever explained to you in these terms, and whether you would agree to it if it had been.

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the weight lands hardest, and what it compounds with: poverty, childhood, gender, a lack of civil alternatives. This is the human stakes stated plainly.

Where the weight lands

The harm recorded in the earlier sections does not fall evenly. The gurukula harm is documented in the movement's own journal [1][2] and in the litigation [3]. The table names who carries it, how, and what it compounds with.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Gurukula children	They suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, documented by litigation and by the movement's own admission.	They were separated from their parents, with minimal secular education.
Second-generation members	They reached adulthood without credentials or savings.	They also carry a childhood the movement has acknowledged but not fully compensated.

Women devotees	They are subject to canonical statements about their status, and to documented misconduct by senior figures.	This compounds in ashram settings with arranged marriages and celibacy expectations.
Long-term ashram devotees	They give decades of unpaid labor and leave with nothing.	They are then left with no work history.
Those who spoke first	They were labeled envious and contaminated before the litigation vindicated them.	They lost their community years before the acknowledgment came.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Gurukula children come first: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, documented in litigation and admitted by the movement itself, while they were separated from their parents and given little secular education. The second generation reached adulthood without credentials or savings. If you are one of those children, the movement has put your harm in writing. Has it reached you?

18 The middle tiers

BEFORE YOU READ

The people in the middle: local clergy, teachers, officials and volunteers who apply rules they did not write. The section exists so that an institution is not collapsed into a monolith, and so that people in the middle can see their own position in it.

The institution's routine work is done below the GBC, by people who apply quotas, run schools and temples, and see the consequences. The table sets out, for each of five roles, what it does, what it sees, what it is asked to do and where it could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Temple presidents	They run the temple and report to the GBC.	They see the quotas, the labor, and the finances.	Make the numbers	To set a distribution quota
Gurukula teachers and school staff	They educate the movement's children.	They see which children are being harmed.	Historically, keep the harm inside the movement	To work in a residential school without external safeguarding
Book distributors (sankirtana devotees)	They raise funds on the street for no pay.	They see what the quota does to honesty.	Hit the target	To conceal what the money is for

Pujaris (priests who perform the worship) and kitchen devotees	They perform worship and cook for thousands.	They see decades passing with no savings.	Treat it as service	To serve without a written record of years given
Second-generation devotees	They hold the movement's conscience.	They see what happened to them.	Move on	To let the acknowledgment stay on paper

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a local leader, a teacher or a volunteer, this section is about you. It is not an accusation: most of the people who carry out a rule did not write it. But the middle tier is also where a rule is most often quietly softened, or quietly enforced. Which do you do, and what would happen to you if you chose differently?

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

Named, dated, sourced incidents: court records, government inquiries, regulators' findings and on-the-record reporting. Read the outcome lines in particular. They show what actually changed, if anything.

Gurukula abuse litigation

WHEN: 2000–2008

WHAT: Former students of the movement's residential boarding schools brought litigation alleging systematic physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The movement had already published an internal acknowledgment of gurukula abuse in 1998. Its own journal also records leaders and staff dismissing or silencing reports of abuse in the schools [1].

RECORD: U.S. court records; ISKCON's own published acknowledgment

OUTCOME: Settled following restructuring and bankruptcy filings by several entities. A Child Protection Office was established and residential schooling largely ended.

TACTICS: 25 · Spiritual Bypassing

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [1] [3]

New Vrindaban (United States, 1983–1996)

WHEN: 1983–1996

WHAT: Thomas Drescher, a devotee of the New Vrindaban community in West Virginia, was convicted of murdering two men: Charles St. Denis (killed 1983; convicted 1986) and Steve Bryant (killed 1986; convicted 1991) [4]. Bryant, who had left the community's faction and made public allegations of corruption, was shot in Los Angeles [4]. The community's leader, Kirtanananda Swami, was indicted on racketeering and conspiracy charges in 1990 [5].

RECORD: UPI, 20 August 1991 [4]; court record summarized in a reference work [5]

OUTCOME: Kirtanananda's 1991 conviction was overturned; he pleaded guilty to one racketeering count in 1996 [5][23].

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

The temple two ISKCONs claimed (India, 2000 to the present)

WHEN: 2000 to the present (review pending)

WHAT: ISKCON Mumbai and ISKCON Bangalore fought for 25 years over who owned the Hare Krishna Hill temple in Bangalore, a dispute rooted in whether new gurus should initiate after Prabhupada [10].

RECORD: Supreme Court of India, 16 May 2025 [10]; review, November 2025 [11]; hearing, 17 August 2026 [19]

OUTCOME: The court found for ISKCON Bangalore, overturning the Karnataka High Court; the review petition produced a split verdict in November 2025, and on 17 August 2026 the Chief Justice said the Court would consider a fresh bench, so the review is still pending [10][11][19].

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Three documented cases on this page rest on a named record. The most common reaction to documented cases is "that was them, not us." Before settling on that, read the outcome lines. Did anything change in the structure that allowed each case to happen, or did one person leave while the structure stayed?

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

What has already been broken once, somewhere, and what would count as real change here. It is a benchmark, not a prediction.

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
The movement's own published acknowledgment of gurukula abuse	ISKCON itself, in print	1998	It cost the movement reputationally, and it is more candor than most institutions here have managed.
The Child Protection Office, screening, and the end of most residential schooling	Reformers and second-generation members	1990s–2000s	It cost internal conflict.
The Turley litigation and settlement	Former gurukula students	2000–2008	It cost years of proceedings and organizational restructuring.
Reform of the zonal guru system	The GBC under internal pressure	1980s	It cost schism and departures.
Chaitanya's own teaching that devotion outranks birth and priestly authority	The tradition's founding figure	16th century	It cost nothing; it is corrosive to every mechanism on this page.

Promises on the record

COMMITMENT	MADE	STATUS	NOTE
ISKCON — child protection following the gurukula settlement	2000s	Kept, partially	A central Child Protection Office with investigative and sanctioning powers was established and operates. It arrived after the harm and after litigation, which the codex records as the sequence rather than as a disqualification.

What would change this page

The GBC publishing the full institutional history of the gurukula era in its own official materials — not in a settlement, in a curriculum — would revise the reckoning findings here.

Sources for this section: 1 2 3 8

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Some rows here record a change that has already happened somewhere; others name what would count as change here. When you are told something "can't change", it is fair to ask: can't, or won't? And who decided?

21 Voices from inside

BEFORE YOU READ

People from inside Hare Krishna / ISKCON who raised the hard question publicly, often at real cost. They answer the objection that criticism only ever comes from outsiders.

- **Nori Muster.** She was a devotee at ISKCON's Los Angeles headquarters from 1978 to 1988, public-relations secretary and editor of the *ISKCON World Review*, and she wrote *Betrayal of the Spirit* (1997) [12].

- **The former gurukula pupils** are the 92 who sued in Texas in 2000 and the larger group of victims who claimed in the later bankruptcy [3].
- **The researchers** E. Burke Rochford and Jennifer Heinlein published a study of the movement's child abuse in ISKCON's own journal in 1998 [1]; a second article on ISKCON's response appeared in the same issue [2].
- **The women devotees** are those whose path to becoming initiating gurus was approved in 2019 and 2021, paused in 2022, and in February 2026 limited to siksa-guru status, apart from one exception [6 18].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Were these people traitors, or the most loyal members their tradition had? Most were treated as the first at the time, and some are honored as the second now. If someone in your community raised one of these questions tomorrow, how would they be treated, and by you?

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

The same tradition under different governments. What a member can say, leave, marry or inherit depends heavily on the state, and these cards show how differently it plays out.

United States

APEX: The apex is the GBC and its regional secretaries [7].

LAW: Civil and bankruptcy courts [3] and criminal courts [4][5] apply the law.

DOCUMENTED: The documented cases are the gurukula settlement [3] and New Vrindaban [4][5].

EXIT: Exit is legally free; the costs are community and, for temple residents, housing and work.

REGULATOR: The regulator is the courts.

TELL: The movement's biggest reckoning came through a bankruptcy court.

United Kingdom

APEX: The apex is the GBC, acting through national leadership [7].

LAW: Charity law applies [9].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is Bhaktivedanta Manor's public accounts [9].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulator is the Charity Commission [9].

TELL: Where a temple is a charity, anyone can read its accounts.

India

APEX: The apex is rival societies, each registered under state law [10].

LAW: Society registration law and the civil courts apply [10].

DOCUMENTED: The documented record is the Bangalore temple judgment and the pending review [10][11][19].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulator is, in the end, the Supreme Court [10].

TELL: A dispute about spiritual succession was fought as a dispute about property, and the review is still pending.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers the United States, the United Kingdom and India. Your country changes what this tradition can do to you, and what you can do about it. If you live somewhere not listed, ask which of these cards your country most resembles. If you are a voter, note that each of these arrangements was chosen by a government.

23 The questions

BEFORE YOU READ

The six questions the documented record could not resolve. Each is set out below: why it is being asked, and a concrete example already on this page that it points back to.

QUESTION 1 OF 6

Your movement admitted in writing what happened in the gurukulas. Ask what compensation reached the specific children, and how many are still waiting.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Admitting harm in writing is a real step. The question asks whether that admission became compensation for the specific children, and how many are still waiting.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that a suit by 92 former gurukula pupils in 2000 led, through Chapter 11 filings, to a $9.5 million settlement in 2005 covering about 450 victims [3].

QUESTION 2 OF 6

If a guru cannot be criticized, ask how the movement identified the zonal ācāryas as a problem — and then ask why that method is not available to devotees now.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The movement once identified its own gurus as a structural problem, which shows it can be done. The question asks why that method isn't available to devotees now.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records the zonal ācārya era (1977–1987), when eleven gurus assumed near-absolute regional authority, and the collapse that

followed. The say-do table records that the movement identified the zonal ācāryas as a structural failure.

QUESTION 3 OF 6

A devotee gives twenty-five years of full-time labor. Ask what he leaves with, and ask who holds the property he built.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Decades of unpaid work build real assets. The question asks what the worker leaves with and who owns what he built.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Devotional service is voluntary" beside former-member testimony that twenty-five years of full-time labor for room and board leaves a devotee with no savings, work history or equity.

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Ask your temple for audited accounts. Note whether the request is answered or spiritualized.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

An institution's reaction to a request for accounts tells you how it sees its members. The question asks you to notice whether the answer is a document or a sermon.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table records temple economies, restaurant chains, festival revenue and donor cultivation. The scorecard marks Accounts only as P (partial).

QUESTION 5 OF 6

Statements about women's intelligence remain in the canonical literature. Ask a temple president to read them aloud and then explain them to the women in the room.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A statement read aloud to the people it describes is harder to explain away. The question asks leaders to stand behind the canonical text in front of the women it concerns.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The day inside shows a devotee reading past a passage "about the intelligence of women," as she has since 1996. The branches table records that women gurus were approved in 2019 and 2021, paused in 2022, and in February 2026 limited to siksa-guru status, with one exception.

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught that criticism is bad association. Ask who is protected by a rule that makes honest speech a spiritual contaminant.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

When honest criticism is treated as spiritual contamination, the rule protects whoever is criticized. The question asks you to name who that is.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table records that the "bad association" doctrine frames departure as spiritual death. The forefront section credits the reforms (the Child Protection Office and the published acknowledgment of abuse), which came because people spoke.

In closing

Your tradition's own founder-figure, Chaitanya, built a movement around the claim that devotion outranks birth, status, and priestly authority — that anyone chanting the holy name has direct access, with no institution in between. That claim is corrosive to every mechanism on this page, and it is yours.

The second generation who forced this into the open did not stop believing. This page does not record how many of them still chant. They simply refused to let an institution's reputation matter more than a child's account of what happened to them. That is not envy. On your own theology, it can be read as a devotional act.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Choose one question and ask it this month, out loud, to a real person who could answer it. Then write down what happened. Were you answered, redirected, or told that asking was the problem? Whichever it was, the response is information.

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

Practical, non-theological guidance for someone who needs to step back or step away safely. It is a safety document, not an argument.

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **If you live in a temple,** arrange housing, money and documents before you leave.

2. **If you were a gurukula pupil,** ISKCON runs a Child Protection Office [8]; you can also go straight to the police or a lawyer.
3. **Leaving is legally free;** the costs are community and, for full-time devotees, work and income.
4. **Find support** [13] [14] [15].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Even if this section is not for you, it may be for someone you know. Most people who leave a high-demand community say that the first person who listened without trying to argue them back mattered more than anything else. Could that person be you?

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

Organizations that can help, each checked directly against its own site, with the date of the check. Nothing here is endorsed beyond that check.

Checked 2026-09-27.

ORGANIZATION	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Faith to Faithless	People leaving high-control religion	UK	**0800 448 0748** (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time) [13]
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** [14]
ICSA	Former members of high-control groups; families	International	Via website [15]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** [16]
Childhelp	Child abuse	US	**1-800-422-4453** [17]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Faith to Faithless** (people leaving high-control religion; UK). People in crisis rarely have the energy to research options. Having a name ready is one of the most useful things you can do for someone else.



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

Every numbered citation on this page, with a named, checkable source. Spot-check a few before trusting the rest; that is the honest way to read any page in this book, including this one.

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10. *The Shillong Times*, "Hare Krishna temple dispute: ISKCON Bengaluru chief hails Supreme Court verdict as 'historic'" (16 May 2025). https://theshillongtimes.com/2025/05/16/hare-krishna-temple-dispute-iskcon-bengaluru-chief-hails-supreme-court-verdict-as-historic/

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12. *Publishers Weekly*, review of Nori J. Muster, *Betrayal of the Spirit* (University of Illinois Press, 1997); and Muster, "Writing Betrayal of the Spirit," ICSA e-library. https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-252-02263-0 · https://www.icsahome.com/elibrary/topics/articles/writing-betrayal-of-the-spirit-muster-it-4-3

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14. Recovering from Religion — (844) 368-2848. https://www.recoveringfromreligion.org/

15. International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA). https://internationalculticstudies.org/

16. NAPAC — 0808 801 0331. https://napac.org.uk/calling-our-support-line/

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WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Don't take this page's word for anything either. People tend to believe a claim more the more often they have heard it, whether or not it is true; this is the "illusory truth effect" (Hasher, Goldstein & Toppino, 1977). Spot-check three citations at random. If any fails, tell us, and it will be corrected and logged.

27 What changed on this page

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated log of what changed on this page: corrections, additions and new sources. Changes are logged in public rather than made quietly.

- **2026-10-03:** Updated the women-gurus ruling (February 2026) and the Bangalore temple case, which is still before the Supreme Court. Corrected the gurukula lawsuit figures (92 pupils sued; about 450 victims shared the settlement), the years of the New Vrindaban killings and the dates of the zonal era. Re-graded nine techniques whose evidence was former-member testimony rather than a court record, so the page now counts one technique as sourced to a named document. Replaced the unsourced size estimate with ISKCON's own figures, rewrote the Book Trust row from its own history, removed four generic money cards that did not fit, and marked the stock replies to critics as composites.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (Bhaktivedanta Manor accounts 2020–2024), two more documented cases, Voices from inside, three regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page keeps a public log of its own changes, mistakes included. Does the institution you belong to, give to, or were raised in keep one like it? If not, how would you know what it got wrong, and when?

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License), regular, italic and bold, with true small capitals and old-style figures in text and lining tabular figures in tables. Laid out with Paged.js in Chromium from the same Markdown that feeds the website. US Letter, single-sided, tagged for accessibility and checked against PDF/UA-1 with veraPDF. Built 2026-10-27. Text checked 2026-10-03.

Palette: ink, oxblood, gold, cream, rule. Seven type sizes. Rules of 0.4 pt and 2 pt only.